



Vevers du Les Invisibles

A Genre Guide for OWbN

A packet for Serpent of the Light Players

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Introduction

So you wanna play a Cobra?

There are a vast number of role-playing options because of the sheer diversity available to the Serpents of the Light and the unique beliefs that come with many different faiths. Though all Cobras have a penchant for occultism of some kind, beyond this they can vary greatly. Most embraced are from Haiti or North Africa, but there are many exceptions. From underworld mob bosses to occult laboratory geeks; the options are endless. They regularly immerse themselves in mortal society and accrue allies and contacts among them. All of this work is done to manipulate and control Cainite and Kine alike.

Though their magic is accomplished through acts of faith, this does not mean that they are not capable of being dark and cynical. Cainite Vodou can be a very dark practice as it involves sacrifice and sometimes some questionable components. Many Cobras use the tactics of the Setites and they argue that they are fighting fire with fire.

Whatever their particular beliefs are, a Serpent is should never be easily dismissed as they can make formidable allies, but can be horrifying and deadly foes. From casting curses, rending a Cainite's soul from its body, and then finishing it off with a warm Presence-laden smile, Serpents can be terrifyingly effective while still having the time and resources to enjoy the finer things in unlife.

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History of the Cobras

The Serpents of the Light were once part of the Children of Damballah, a Setite cult from West Africa. They broke away from the Followers of Set after being harrassed by the Cohort of Wepwawet and found safe haven amongst the Sabbat. Within the sect, their inclination toward religious practice make them especially suited for positions as Pack Priests and other positions within the Clergy. This is not to say that Serpents cannot be found among the Black Hand, but they tend toward the religious aspects of the Sect at large.

Serpent of the Light theology draws from every major religion of West Africa and the Caribbean, individual practitioners either staying true to one specific dogma, such as Santeria, or choosing to blend multiple sources together.

The Serpents hold a great deal of hatred toward the Follows of Set and they often work to destroy them by any means possible. This hatred is met with equal disdain on the part of devout Setites as they consider the Cobras to be heretics.

Cobras practice both Voudon Necromancy and Thaumaturgy, refering to both as Wanga and do not differentiate between the two (for more information on this please see the Serpent of the Light Wanga Packet).

In their short time amongst the Sabbat, the Serpents of the Light have established themselves as formidable allies and have risen through the ranks of their Sect mostly because of their *Gifted* nature and their talents for mortal influence. In many ways they still apply the tactics of the Setites to their dealings with mortal society, but they see this as a counter-force to the insidious corruption of the clan they left behind.

Partly due to an effort to prove themselves to the sect, the Cobras have begun to put a great deal of weight behind recognition and title. This means a great deal of effort has been put into establishing rank and prestige within the clan, both to demonstrate their individual accomplishment and to communicate their abilities to other Cobras.

Ranks

Though there are different denominations and faiths practiced amongst the Serpents of the Light they all have similar ranking systems. Often the particular faith will determine what ritual may be performed to move from rank to rank, but the overall idea is the same. Initiations are not only done for attaining a higher station within the clan, but minor ceremonies are conducted for major benchmarks in a Serpent's life (any time an Advanced Discipline is earned, after a great accomplishment or significant event). Rank advancement should be handled entirely by Storytellers, with Rank 3 being notified to the Setite Coordinator .

Rank 0- *A'Bete Sereine*

Those Serpents that are new or not interested in the deeper mysteries are referred to as "*A'Bete Sereine*". These make up the rank and file of the Serpents of the Light. Any Serpent of the Light may begin a new cell of Serpents, referred to as a *shanpwel*. All new Serpent PCs start out as *A'Bete Sereine*.

Rank 1 - *Hounsi Kanzo* (Bride of the Loa)

The Initiate recognizes their beliefs in their particular faith and has begun the process of greater spiritual understanding. The Initiate spends a great deal of time studying and often supports those above them in rank. This can mean mundane tasks such as gathering supplies for ritual or offering themselves for possession of the Loa. (OOC Requirement: Occult x2, 2nd Basic in any starting Wanga or Necromancy)

Rank 2 - *Papa/Mama*

Once the Initiate progresses to a point where they are capable of performing rituals for others and building up their spiritual knowledge they can take on the title of *Papa* or *Mama*. There is typically a major ceremony that occurs to make the transition from Initiation to the Priesthood. They are capable of performing any task, except initiating others. (OOC Requirement: Must have first achieved Rank 1! Occult x5, Advanced in at least 3 paths of Wanga and/or Necromancy, at least 10 levels abilities divided amongst Theology/Thanatology, and lore amongst the following Lores: Spirit, Wraith, Serpent of the Light)

Rank 3 - *Asogwe*

At this point the Cobra has recognized the pinnacle of understanding in their particular faith and can work well with any of the Loa/Orisha. They are also privileged with the capability of initiating others into the faith. *Asogwe* are expected to instruct others in the arts of all Wanga, and to join a *shanpwel* if they are not already a member of one. (OOC Requirement: Must have achieved Rank

2! Occult x5, Advanced Presence, Advanced Serpentis, Advanced in at least 3 paths of Wanga and/or Necromancy, at least 15 levels abilities divided amongst Theology and/or Thanatology, and lore amongst the following Lores: Spirit, Wraith, Serpent of the Light)

Rank 4- *Empereur*

These are the four elders of the Serpents of the Light, those who have unlocked the highest mysteries of the spirits. The Empereur are the heads of the clan, and bless each *shanpwel* by gifting their *Asogwe* with the *madoule d'estole*. *Madolue d'Estole* are only gifted to *Asogwe* and their *shanpwel*; those *Asogwe* who have not yet joined a *shanpwel* have not yet completed their duty to the clan to be awarded such a gift, as it is a gift to a whole and complete *shanpwel*. (NPC Only)

Prestige

In establishing themselves as a permanent part of the Sabbat the Serpents of the Light have put a great deal of importance on making themselves useful and respected. In keeping with their previously established tradition of creating grand lineages for themselves by using people or spirits that represent an aspect of what they aspire to be, the Cobras have come up with prestige titles that symbolize personal achievements or attributes that are significant either to the clan or the Cobra in question. Other prestige may be created by a Serpent cell, but be prepared to explain your unusual, impressive title to outsiders. Below is a list of the most common Prestige used today:

Rank 1-4: As a show of respect, those who have achieved greater initiation into the mysteries of the Serpents of the Light are referred to by their rank title, which is also their prestige.

President: Cobras who found and lead a cell (a *shanpwel*) are referred to in respect as *President*. It is their duty to see that the cell has the resources and facilities to carry out their religious practices, as well as attract or help train (or even become!) an *Asogwe* to complete their group. Once they do, they are to immediately contact the Empereurs to receive their blessing.
OOO Requirement: A PC must possess one influence at 5, Resources x3, and have at least two other Cobras in their cell. If the shanpwel has attracted an *Asogwe*, please contact the Serpent of the Light subcoord for confirmation and to receive the *madoule d'estole*, the cornerstone of the cell's altar.

Cheval: These Cobras possess an innate gift bestowed by the Orisha, and because of this gift they are better attuned to the universe and its workings.
OOO Requirement: A character possesses skill in second sight, such as Orracular Ability

Mirror Gazer: Some Serpents are able to speak with the Loa before they are even aware of it. Their talent to see and hear through to the other side makes them particularly skilled in Necromancy. This does not represent achievement of the necromantic means to view the lands of the dead, but a separate means to do so.
OOO Requirement: A character possesses an ability to speak with or hear the dead, such as Medium or Speaker With The Dead.

Serviteur: A Serpent that has created a unique ritual or path can attain this title, as their service to the loa must be great indeed for them to bless their efforts.
OOO Requirement: A character must create a unique path or ritual.

Sabbat Clergy members: Serpents that have also become members of the

Sabbat Clergy, whether they have achieved the rank among the clan or not, are referred to as Papa or Mama (whichever is appropriate).

Wanga

The magic of the Serpents of the Light, collectively called Wanga, is a terrifying and potent power. Through entrancing ritual and bloody sacrifice, the Wangateurs call upon the might of the Loa to bring about their wishes on the world. Through this, the Cobras can lay powerful curses, animate zombies, alter the weather, rain fire from the sky, and much more.

The roleplay of using Wanga, be it the thaumaturgy called 'Wanga' or the Voodoo Necromancy, is extremely important to the genre of the Serpents of the Light. Wangateurs must call out, verbally, to the loa they invoke and often times make sacrifices. Be graphic with the descriptions of what you're doing, and try to over play it; It's startling and strange, so take the chance to freak someone out! A popular movie to reference is the James Bond film *Live and Let Die*; there is a houngan ritual scene depicting the chanting, drumming, dancing, and costuming that goes into 'voodoo' ritual. This is not standard in all voodoo cultures, in fact many are quite reserved, but this will put you in the right frame of mind to consider how you should play what is going on when you spend the blood to cast something.

As your pack charges forward, sever the head of a black chicken, fling the blood at your enemies, and call out to El Cristo Negro before you throw the social test for Soul Steal!

For more information about Serpent of the Light Necromancy and Wanga, please reference the Serpent of the Light Necromancy and Wanga Packet.

Credits & References

This document is meant to be used with the following books:

Blood Sacrifice: the Thaumaturgy Companion (softcover), ISBN 1-58846-222-6
Authors: Dean Shomskak and Ari Marmell
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Blood Magic: Secrets of Thaumaturgy (softcover), ISBN 1-56504-246-8
Authors: Jim Moore, Jess Heinig, Justin Achilli, Patrick Lambert, Robin D. Laws, and James Moore
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Clanbook: Followers of Set (softcover), ISBN 1-58846-204-8
Authors: Dean Shomskak
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Mind's Eye Theatre : Laws of the Night *Revised Rules for Playing Vampire* (softcover), ISBN 1-56504-589-0
Authors: Jason Carl, Jess Heinig, Peter Woodworth
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Mind's Eye Theatre : Laws of the Night *Sabbat Guide A Supplemental Guide to Laws of the Night* (softcover), ISBN 1-56504-732-X
Authors: Justin Achilli, Bruce Baugh, Clayton Oliver, Ree Soesbee
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Clanbook: Followers of Set (softcover), ISBN 1-58846-204-8
Authors: Dean Shomskak
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Clanbook: Setites (softcover), ISBN 1-56504-215-8
Author: Richard Watts
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Libellus Sanguinis 3: Wolves at the Door (softcover), ISBN 1-56504-203-4
Authors: Jason Langlois, Michael Lee, Clayton Oliver
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Mind's Eye Theatre: Laws of Elysium (softcover), ISBN 1-56504-536-X
Authors: Jason Carl and Shane DeFreest
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Mind's Eye Theatre : Laws of the Night *Storytellers Guide A Sourcebook for Minds Eye Theatre* (softcover), ISBN 1-58846-503-9

Authors: Kieran Dewhurst, Earl "Glas" Durboraw, Matthew Hooper, Edward MacGregor, Brett Smith, Cynthia Summers
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Mind's Eye Theatre: *Laws of the Wild Revised Rules for Playing Werewolf* (softcover), ISBN 1-58846-501-2
Authors: Bruce Baugh, Heather Grove, Alan J. Kravit, Ellen P. Kilrey
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Mind's Eye Theatre: *Oblivion* (softcover), ISBN 1-56504-501-7
Authors: Richard E. Dansky, Jennifer Hartshorn, J. Michael Rollins
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