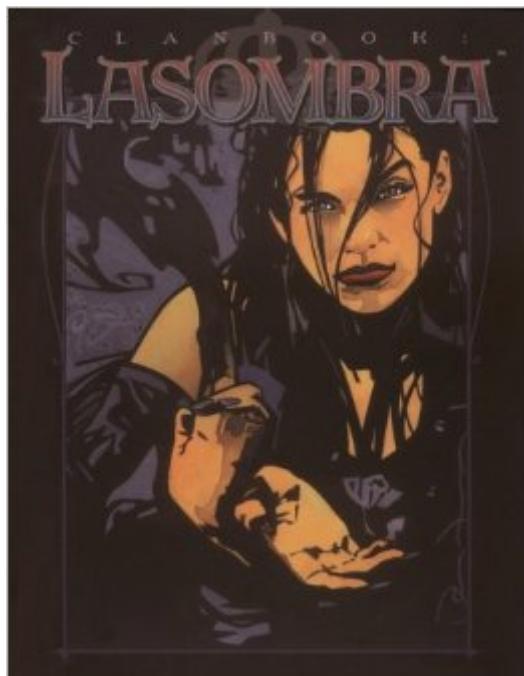


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Clanbook: Lasombra



Synopsis

Vampire story that chronicles the Lasombra clan.

Book Information

Series: Vampire: The Masquerade Clanbooks

Paperback: 104 pages

Publisher: White Wolf Publishing (December 26, 2000)

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Customer Reviews

Packed to the brim with in-depth information about the Lasombra, there is simply an astounding volume of knowledge in this book: Everything from why the Lasombra behave in such hideous fashion to why they love the sea. The motivations of the clan are revealed- the Lasombra are no longer cardboard cutouts, but are shown to have believable drives and goals. They may be monsters, but they are monsters possessed of dark nobility and great dedication. For example, some Lasombra believe that God created vampires to serve Him by tormenting mortal sinners; these vampires believe they are carrying out God's will by inflicting pain and suffering. Other Keepers seek to discern the secrets of the Abyss, the primordial essence of darkness. Some few even see themselves as the driving force behind mankind- the shepherds that keep the mortal sheep in line and productively occupied (from a Cainite point of view, that is). New Lasombra secrets are also divulged in this book. Several variants of the Path of Night are given, and the mystical importance of the Abyss is detailed. Further, the book looks at the Lasombra clan Disciplines from the Keepers' perspective, and explores the uses and significance of Obtenebration. A detailed history of the Lasombra clan is given, from the ancient legacy of the Antediluvian to the modern nights. All told, this is an outstanding piece of work. Before reading this book, I knew next to nothing about the Lasombra clan. Their brief write-up in the core rulebook portrays them as little more than

generic masters of EEEE-vil, and I always thought the Lasombra were rather dull. That changed when I read the new Clanbook: Lasombra. The writing is excellent- in particular, I loved the narrative history of the clan- and there's something in this book for everyone.

The new CLANBOOK LASOMBRA offers wonderfully details- clan factions (including antitribu), Lasombra skepticism of origin legends, Chinese bloodlines, Embrace traditions, how the Occult rating relates to Obtenebration, and a better sense of Montano and Gratiano. It has many standard series features- MET statistics, character templates, merits and flaws, a discussion of clan disciplines, a sample pack (Lasombra computer hackers!), and noted Lasombra (less basic but more multicultural than the original). It's also the first new CLANBOOK on the Sabbat. It emphasizes Humanity over Paths of Enlightenment but gives extensive treatment to the distinctively Lasombra Path of Night. (Other VtM books assign important Lasombra to the Path of Power and the Inner Voice- not even mentioned here, unfortunately.) It describes Path of Night variations (the Path isn't written out here so you must refer back to VtM's basic rules) and introduces Abyss Mysticism, a practice by which Lasombra merge with darkness. An improvement in the new CLANBOOK: LASOMBRA is the emphasis on young Lasombra instead of elders, making the clan seem less cartoonishly pompous. It features Asian, African and Northern European Lasombra not the usual Spanish Lasombra. Rather than being traditionalistic, the Lasombra seem cut off from their own history because so many elders died during the Anarch Revolt. A minor problem is that there's almost too much introduced for atmosphere and basic themes to fully develop and not enough follow-up on earlier material- characters like Medina and Lopez, for example. Also, the original CLANBOOK series was more interesting visually than the new one. The original LASOMBRA featured white type on (appropriately) black pages. (LIBELLUS SANGUINIS I's Lasombra chapter also does this in places.) Darkness oozed over the page from the pictures illustrating Obtenebration. The new CLANBOOK: LASOMBRA uses only conventional white pages and the art loses impact because of this.

Upside- The prelude is pretty entertaining and exemplifies the general attitude of many young Lasombra- The clan's history is delivered in sessions narrated by various Lasombra (concluded by a Lasombra antitribu's suicide note, strangely enough)- Details how the majority of Lasombra go about observing, testing and training recruits- Briefly describes Lasombra culture and its many, many unofficial "factions" as well as official ones and the supposedly non-existent Lasombra antitribu- The basic break-down of procedures for dealing with the Courts of Blood is rather helpful- The

Lasombra's comments on the Sabbat bloodlines and the other clans are more informed than average (but, perhaps unsurprisingly, there's nothing of consequence said about the Kiasyd)- Takes a closer look at the basic Obtenebration powers and provides more advanced ones as well as interesting suggestions of ways to approach peculiarities of a Lasombra's manifestation of Obtenebration- Explains a little about the occult and Abyss mysticism- There are actually a few appealing Merits and Flaws (Controllable Night Sight, Death's Reflection)- There are several pseudo-templates of variations of the Path of Night as it's presented in the core rulebook and some of them look like they'd be very interesting to adopt- There are some great character templates (the Accuser, Angry Young Man, Successful Mass-Embracee, Harpy, Student of the Abyss)- The sample brood of mentally-unbalanced Lasombra computer hackers is quite interestingDownside- There's relatively not that many notable Lasombra mentioned- The book's formatting oversights do not make finding specific entries any easier

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