

# JAMBALAYA

The Natural Woman's Book of  
Personal Charms and Practical Rituals

LUISAH TEISH

Introduction by Starhawk



**HarperOne**

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## THE FIRST WORK: HOUSEHOLD MAGIC

### To Spiritually Clean a House

- Moving clockwise, place a teaspoonful of salt in all the corners of the house, beginning at the front door and ending at the back door.
- Sprinkle bay rum on the tip of a new broom and beat the walls from top to bottom at the corners.
- Moving counterclockwise, pick up all the salt from the corners and flush it down the toilet.
- Now mop the floors in a solution of first urine (drink a glass of water before retiring and collect the urine in the morning before doing anything else), 2 tablespoons of brown sugar, and perfume.
- If your home is also your place of business, add 3 pennies (or other coins, depending on the amount of business you want to attract) and Chinese or Van Van floorwash\* (2 tablespoons).
- As you are mopping the floor, speak aloud the kind of life you want to live in the house. Do this in each room. Throw the water out of the back door.
- Light a blue Peace Candle behind the front door with an image of St. Michael over the door. Put fresh-cut flowers in each room.

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\*These can be purchased at your local candle shop or botanica.

## **To Make a Bed for Sound Sleep**

- Turn the mattress over with the change of the moon (new, full). Sprinkle the mattress with talcum powder and love oil. Cover it with crushed magnolia leaves, or place lavender sachets in the corners of the bed. Sheet it. Place a bowl of water with perfume under the bed at the place where you lay your head. Change the water at least once a week to keep dreams clear.

## **The Fussball (To Ensure Domestic Tranquility)**

### **INGREDIENTS**

A butter knife	A package of grated sweetened
A wooden bowl	coconut
A piece of white cloth	A jar of honey
Three pennies (an old one, a birth year, current year)	A little fresh water

1. Scrape the dirt that has gathered in the corners of your house out. Sweep the floors of each room, bringing the piles of dirt to the center of the floor. (For carpet, use a broom moistened with bay rum or Florida Water.)
2. Place this debris in a wooden bowl. Be sure that each room is cleaned. Sweep the walls and ceiling if necessary.
3. Sprinkle the debris with fresh water. Remember the causes of discord in your home.
4. Dump the package of grated coconut into the debris. Stir with your hands.
5. Drip the jar of honey over this mixture, make sure it saturates all the debris and coconut.
6. Gather this mixture into a ball. Make it nice and round. Push the old penny face down into the bottom of the ball, the birth-year penny in the center sideways (standing on edge),

and the new penny face up in the top of the ball. Make a pledge *to be* the peacekeeper in your home.

7. Wrap the ball in the white cloth and dispose of it at a public waste can near a church, hospital, or bank. Wash the wooden bowl with salt water and put it away. Use it only for this conjure ball.

This ball is especially good for putting an end to screaming matches.

(Channeled to me by the ancestor Lydia, New Year's Eve, 1982)

### How to Stop Gossip

I define gossip as the discussion of another person's problems for entertainment. Vicious gossip takes a grain of truth and stretches it out of proportion, with the intention of slandering another's name and/or causing and furthering disruptions between people. (I make a distinction between gossip and concerned conversation. Concerned conversation happens between members of an extended family. Its aim is to find solutions to problems, soothe feelings, and promote mutual laughter between members.)

I have seen people lose their jobs, their loved ones, and sometimes their lives because of gossip. Gossip is the pastime of weak minds and flimsy spirits. Vicious gossip is an atrocious misuse of the power of the word. I detest it!

This charm is to be used *only* when face-to-face attempts at reconciliation have failed.

### INGREDIENTS

Salt	A spool of black cord
A whole beef tongue	Dragon's Blood ink
A piece of virgin parchment	9 steel pins
paper	A whip or leather belt
A can of ground black pepper	A piece of black cloth
A fountain pen	

1. Split a cheap beef tongue in half, beginning at the base (wide end). Leave the tip intact.
2. Write the name of the gossiper on the virgin parchment: “May the wagging tongue of (name) burn till bitter turns to sweet.” (If you do not know the name, simply use “the wagging tongue.”)
3. Lay the paper lengthwise in the center of the tongue, and cover the entire center with black pepper.
4. Close the tongue and fasten seams with the steel pins. Put four pins on each side, and pierce the tip with the ninth pin.
5. Wrap the tongue from base to tip in black cord. Wrap it tightly.
6. Place the tongue on a piece of black cloth and put it in a dark closet or under a piece of furniture.
7. Rise every morning at 6 A.M. and whip the tongue with the leather strap. Think of the disharmony caused by the gossip as you beat the tongue. Do this every day until the tongue begins to smell of decay.
8. Then cover the tongue with salt and wrap it in the black cloth.
9. Take the tongue for a ride to a large body of water. As you throw the tongue in the ocean, lake, or river, say, “May her/his mouth be cleaned.” Return home by a different route. Wash your hands with salt and water, rinse your mouth with salt water, and eat a piece of something sweet.

*Do not, hereafter, mention the name of the gossiper. Hold no grudge against her. If you participated in any way in the spreading of the rumor, forgive yourself and the other person. And do not under any circumstances indulge in vicious gossip against anyone. The rumors will soon stop.*

## Pouring Money

To be done by an even number of people

### INGREDIENTS

A strong desire to attract abundance	A green candle
The change from your pockets	A Rose of Jericho
Two bowls of water	A symbol of wealth (Ace of Pentacles Tarot card or a prosperity bill)
A chant for wealth (see the following example)	

1. Stand or sit in a circle.
2. Place your wealth symbol under, before, or beside your green candle. Light the candle.
3. Put all the change (coins) from your pockets into one bowl. Fill the bowl with water.
4. Pour the bowl of money and water into the empty bowl held by the sister on your right, while reciting the chant for wealth.
5. Continue to pour the money from one bowl to the next, moving left to right, chanting until every woman has chanted at least eight times (the numeral 8 is also the symbol for infinity,  $\infty$ ).
6. Place the Rose of Jericho in the bowl of water and watch the dry plant expand with life.
7. Place the bowl on the floor near the front door of the house where the ritual has been done.

My altar circle sister Bea Young, of the Aquarian Institute in Oakland, performed this ritual in her enchanted garden. Her garden is her symbol of abundance.

Interesting things happen with this ritual:

First of all, expect bitter arguments over money in the house. If respectfully handled, this argument will expose budgetary excesses,

wrong expenditures of energy, and dormant opportunities. This process is akin to the way the liver throws off poisons to clean the system.

Those who have participated in the ritual find jobs for each other, create mutually lucrative ventures, and share the wealth of unexpected good fortune.

*Important:* Your wealth chant must be affirmative. Here is my favorite chant:

*Out of the Nowhere  
Out of the Air  
Out of the Darkness  
To aid me, I swear  
pile upon pile  
of silver  
of gold  
Come without warning  
As you have been told*



## **THE THIRD WORK: USEFUL CHARMS AND CHANTS**

### **The Mask Macabre**

To be made during a fit of depression

#### **INGREDIENTS**

A thin paper plate	Fireplace, cauldron, or
Matches	metal bowl
A set of colored pencils	A hole puncher
	A piece of string

1. Sit quietly with a frown on your face. Contorting the face muscles will help you get in touch with your pain.
2. Use the colored pens to draw a face on the paper plate that looks the way you feel. Include things that symbolize your negative feelings, experiences, habits.
3. Punch holes in the sides of the paper plate, and tie the string through the holes so that you can wear the mask.
4. Put the mask on the back of your head.
5. Scream out the negative attributes, “jealousy, poverty, fear,” and so on until you feel they are no longer in you.
6. Throw the mask into the fireplace, cauldron, or metal bowl. Watch it burn.
7. Go to a mirror, take a deep breath, and smile. Masks are used by people of all cultures. I am grateful to Bea Young for this exercise.

### **Water-gazing**

Water-gazing is a safe and pleasant way to increase concentration, exercise the imagination, and stimulate the intuition.

1. Choose a clear glass chalice or bowl. Wash the chalice in salt water and let it drip dry.

2. Fill the glass with spring water, clear rain water, or tap water that runs clear. Fill the glass to at least three-fourths of its capacity.
3. Take a deep breath. As you inhale, touch the top of the glass at its corners. Place both hands over the center of the water and exhale. Feel your breath push through the palm of your hands and into the water.
4. Light a white candle and place it to the left or right of your position in relation to the glass.
5. Sit in a relaxed position and look into the glass through the sides and top. Initially do this for at least five minutes a sitting. Later increase it to fifteen minutes a sitting. Allow images to form themselves in the bowl. Write down the images that appear. *Do not* attempt to project images into the bowl. *Do not* become attached to them at first. Simply keep a record of them until they prove relevant to events taking place in your life.

*Gazing in Groups.* Two or more people can gaze for each other. In this case each person involved crosses the water with their hands. The bowl should be placed in the center of the table with candles judiciously placed to give sufficient light. Everyone gazes into the bowl and calls out the images seen. If the image is relevant to someone's experience or aspiration, that person may respond and elaborate on the matter at hand. Group sessions may continue for hours, but should end if group members become sleepy. Water-gazing relaxes the mind, and images often continue their message through dreams.

*To Intensify Concentration.* Fill the glass with crystals that have been washed in ocean water (or sea salt and water) and tempered by fire, and/or place your gazing glass on top of a mirror.

*Disposal of Water.* Dispose of the water accordingly. If the images born of the gazing have been undesirable, take the water for a walk

away from your house and throw it in the street. If terrible news, flush it down the toilet. If good news, add the water to your bath.

When not in use, the gazing bowl should be cleaned and filled with water. A fresh flower should be put in the bowl.

## AFRICAN DEITIES

Name and Nation	Natural Attribute or Power	Personality Type	European Equivalent
Nyame (Ghana)	God, the ultimate power	No description	God
NaNa Buluku (Dahomey)			
Olodumare (Yoruba)			
Olorun (Yoruba)	God of breath	No description	God
Anyanwa (Ibo)	God of the sun	Tired old man	The sun
Lisa (Dahomey)			
Olofi (Yoruba)			
Mawu (Dahomey)	Moon mother	Tired old woman, cool, gentle	The moon
Nana Buluku (Yoruba)			
Fa (Dahomey)	God of fate, owner of divination	Little description	Fate
Orunmila (Yoruba)			
Legba (Dahomey)	Trickster, linguist, warrior, god of the crossroads	Both child and old man, swift, unpredictable	Mercury (Hermes)
Elegba Eshu (Yoruba)			
Ala (Ibo)	Gynandrous earth	Little description	The earth
Asasc-Yaa (Ghana)			
Odudua (Yoruba)			
Iqwe (Ibo)	Androgynous sky, king of the white cloth	White-haired, old, highly ethical, merciful	Jupiter (Zeus)
Obatala-Orishnla (Yoruba)			

Name and Nation	Natural Attribute or Power	Personality Type	European Equivalent
Mami Wata (Ghana)	Mother of the sea, gynandrous ocean	Affectionate, nurturing, large, and attractive	Ocean, Neptune (Poseidon), Juno (Hera)
Agwe (Dahomey)			
Yemaya-Olokun (Yoruba)			
Damballah and Aido-Hwedo (Dahomey)	Goddess of wind, water, fire, and rainbows	Firm, temperamental, handsome, courageous	Uranus
Oya (Yoruba)			
Oshun (Yoruba)	Goddess of love	Beautiful, seductive, versatile	Venus (Aphrodite)
Kamalu (Ibo)	God of thunder, fire, lightning	Handsome, courageous, quick-tempered warrior, man of justice	Mars (Ares)
Hevyoso (Dahomey)			
Chango (Yoruba)			
Gu (Dahomey)	Wild man of the woods, blacksmith	Quietly dangerous man	Pluto
Ogun (Yoruba)			
Ochossi and Osain (Yoruba)	Hunter and herbalist	Of medium stature, sometimes crippled	Vegetation deities
Ogan'elu (Ibo)	God of infectious diseases	Infirm and lusty	—
Shoponno-Omulu-Babaluaiye (Yoruba)			

## THE IBEJI

As noted earlier, Mawu and Lisa were born twins. They are an analogy for the bisexual polarity in nature and human nature:

FEMALE	MALE
Moon	Sun
Night	Day
Cold	Heat
Left	Right
Intuitive	Rational
Soul	Body
Circle	Square
Inspiration	Action
Electromagnetism	Gravity
Negative	Positive

## THE FOURTH WORK: LOVING THE EARTH

### INGREDIENTS

- A mixture of grains, flowers, fruit and vegetable seeds, and spices (for example: oats, wheat, rice, millet, corn, mustard seed, peppercorns, apple seeds, pumpkin seeds; black, red, white beans; calendula flower seeds, and so on).
  - A glass of water with some of your menstrual blood in it. Older and younger (non-menstruating) women may prick their fingers with a needle and put a few drops in the glass.
  - A large bowl.
1. All the women stand in a circle. Place the bowl with the seed mixture on the ground in the center of the circle.
  2. Each woman takes a handful of seed and breathes warm breath on it. She returns it to the bowl.
  3. Each woman pours the glass of water containing her blood into the bowl and stirs the mixture in a spiral.
  4. Each woman takes a handful of the mixture and walks from the center outward, distributing the mixture to the earth as she walks.
  5. In unison and repeatedly, the women speak to the earth. (You may use the following example, but I encourage you to create your own earth reverence statement.)
  6. After the mixture has been distributed, pick a piece of greenery from the earth and place it in the bowl in the center of the circle.
  7. Go inside and share a meal. The greenery in the bowl may be used to decorate altars, worn in the hair, or steeped into a tea for bathing.

## TO THE EARTH

*Earth, while I am yet alive,  
It is upon you that I put my trust,  
Earth who receives my body.  
We are addressing you,  
And you will understand.<sup>11</sup>*

## A PRAYER FOR MEALTIME

*O Great Mother, who bestows abundance upon us.  
We thank you for the living things [name the things you are eating]  
that have sacrificed their lives to nourish us.  
We take this offering into our bodies that we may be strong.  
Make us strong, Abundant Mother, that we may be able to  
Replenish the earth.*

[*She Who Whisper*, 1983]

## BLESSING WHILE COOKING

*All that I have comes from my Mother!  
I give myself over to this pot.  
My thoughts are on the good,  
the healing properties of this food.  
My hands are balanced, I season well!*

*I give myself over to this pot.  
Life is being given to me.  
I commit to sharing, I feed others.  
I feed She Who Feeds Me.*

*I give myself over to this gift.  
I adorn this table with food.  
I invite lovers and friends to come share.  
I thank you for this gift.  
All that I have comes from my Mother!*

[*She Who Whispers*, 1983]



## The Elaborate Indoor Altar

My favorite altar is the elaborate indoor altar.

Choose a corner in a private room. Assuming the house has been cleaned, lay brown or dark green fabric on the floor (to represent the earth) and stabilize it with four stones in the corners.

Now place the circle of waters in the center. Place flowers wherever it pleases you. Get nine white candles and one seven-day black candle. Place the black candle in front of the circle of waters and the nine white candles around the outside of the circle.

Distribute images of the *eguns* at various places on the altar, and place images of living relatives on the wall above the altar.

You have the basic altar; now you can elaborate as much as you like. Here are some suggestions:

1. *The earth pot.* A soup tureen or covered casserole dish containing earth from your place of birth, and as many places as you can get earth from. My personal pot contains Mississippi clay, Mount St. Helen's ash, dirt from a shrine for Yemaya in Ile-Ife, Nigeria; black sand from Maui, Hawaii; mud from the Amazon River in Brazil; and from the Witches Museum in Salem.
2. *A rock basket.* This is a basket of rocks from various places. I have rocks from every continent except China. (Mother East, I'm waiting for you.)
3. *Collected waters.* Small jars of water from various places. I have a wonderful collection of ocean, rain, and river water.
4. *A bowl of grains.* A large bowl containing rice, wheat, oats, millet, corn, and so on.
5. *An herb pot.* A pot of sweet-smelling potpourri. Be sure to add fresh tobacco, cedar, and sage to your herb pot.
6. *A vessel of shells.* A wide-mouthed jar filled with ocean water and seashells, or river water and pebbles.

7. *Natural wood sculptures.* Everywhere you will find pieces of wood that have been intricately carved by nature.
8. *A collection of feathers.* A random collection of feathers can be really beautiful when placed in a vase or stuck through the handles of cups. Check in at the pet store or costume shop.
9. *A bag of bones.* A burlap bag of beef, pork, lamb, fish, and chicken bones.

Now arrange these objects on the altar in a way that makes you feel good about them. *Viola!* You have a beautiful altar.

Some people say, “I’m not good at altar building!” That’s only because they are thinking of it as a task. If you’re having trouble, just set a glass of spirit water and a candle in the area and gaze until the altar tells you how to build it.

I am amazed at how much of what we call interior decorating is really just subconscious altar building. I’ve been in homes of people who swear they are “not the least bit spiritual,” yet I find Grandma’s picture standing next to a lovely bouquet, on a hand-crocheted doilie and a lamp nearby. All that’s needed is a glass of water.

Whatever your choice of altars, understand that as soon as it is built, it becomes “sacred space”; a place between the physical and spiritual world where the *eguns* and the living can communicate in peace.

## AFRICAN DEITY— CATHOLIC SAINT CORRESPONDENCE

African Deity	Brazil	Cuba/ Puerto Rico	Haiti/ New Orleans	Catholic Saints
Elegba: God of the Crossroads	Eshu Pomba Gira	Ellegua	Legba, Liba	San Martin de Porres St. Michael, St. Peter El Niño de Atocha
Obatala: Sky God and Goddess	Oxala	Obatala	Batala Blanc Dani	Our Lady of Mercy Crucified Christ
Yemonja: Ocean Goddess	Imanje	Yemaya	Agwe La Balianne	Our Lady of Regla Mary, Star of the Sea
Oya: Goddess of Lightning, Wind	Yansa	Olla	Aida-Wedo Brigette	Our Lady of Candelaria St. Catherine St. Theresa
Oshun: Love Goddess	Oxum	Ochun	Erzulie-Freda-Dahomey	Our Lady of Caridad del Cobre Mother of Charity
Shango: Fire God	Xango	Chango	Shango John the Conqueror	Santa Barbara St. Jerome
Ogun: God of Iron	Ogum	Ogun	Ogu	St. Anthony St. Peter St. George Joan of Arc
Ochossi: Vegetation Deity	Oxossi Cabaclo	Ochossi	Agao-Wedo	St. Isidro St. Sebastian
Ibeji: Divine Twins	Ibegi	Omo-Melli	Marrasa	St. Cosme St. Damian

## CHART OF THE SEVEN AFRICAN POWERS

Altar	Elegba-Elleggua	Obatala	Yemaya	Oya
Saint	St. Michael St. Peter San Martine	Our Lady of Mercy	Lady of Regla Mary, Star of the Sea	Lady of Candelaria St. Theresa St. Catherine
Day and Number	Monday 3	Sunday 8	Saturday 7	Wednesday 9
Country and Owned Places	Crossroads of the world	Clouds, Ile-Ife, Nigeria	Brazil, Ogun River, Nigeria	River Niger, the Amazon, Wind
Cloth and Bead Colors	Red and black	White with silver or purple	Blue and white. Crystal silver	Red, purple, brown, burnt orange
Favorite Animals and Objects	Rooster, possum, mouse, three stones, crooked stick	Owls, doves, snails, elephant, coconut	Shorebirds, cockroaches, conch shell, gourd rattle	Sheep, locust, black horsehair switch, copper
Favorite Food	Corn, candy, rum	Pears, coconut, black eyed peas	Cornmeal, molasses, watermelon	Red wine, eggplant, plums, grapes
Ritual Greeting	Laroye! Ago Elleggua	Maferefun Baba!	Omio Yemaya	Hekua Oya
Planet	Mercury	Jupiter	Full moon, Neptune	Dark moon, Uranus
Place in the House	Behind front door	Living room	Bedroom, children's room, bathroom	Library, study

<b>Altar</b>	<b>Oshun</b>	<b>Chango</b>	<b>Ogun</b>
<b>Saint</b>	Lady of Caridad del Cobre Mother of Charity	Santa Barbara	St. Anthony St. George
<b>Day and Number</b>	Thursday 5	Friday 6	Tuesday 3 or 4
<b>Country and Owned Places</b>	Cuba, Oshun River, Oshogbo, Nigeria	Trinidad, Sky, Trees	United States, Deep Woods
<b>Cloth and Bead Colors</b>	Yellow, green, coral	Red and white	Green and black
<b>Favorite Animals and Objects</b>	Quail, vulture, parrot, peacock, gold, bells, fans, mirrors, scallop shell	Horses, rams, turtles, pheasant, wood, double axe	Rooster, goat, dog, machete, all iron
<b>Favorite Food</b>	Honey, cinnamon, oranges, pumpkins, French pastry	Apples, yams, corn, peppers	Roots, nuts, meat, berries
<b>Ritual Greeting</b>	Ori Ye Ye O	Kaguo Kabiosile	Onile Ogun
<b>Planet</b>	New crescent moon, Venus	Sun and Mars	Pluto and saturn
<b>Place in the House</b>	Kitchen, bedroom	Fireplace, business desk	Behind the front door

SEVEN AFRICAN POWERS	HAITIAN LOAS
Ellegua	Legba-Carrefour, Damballah, and Aida Wedo
Obatala	Batala, Saint Blanc
Yemaya	La Sirene Balianne, Agwe
Oya	Maman Brigitte, Baron Samedi, the Ghedes
Oshun	Erzulie-Freda-Dahomey
Chango	Damballah La Flambeau
Ogun	Ogoun Ferraille, Ogu Shango

## Elleggua

Elleggua is the one we appeal to in order to overcome indecision. If you have too many options before you, or seemingly none at all, Elleggua will open a road for you, so that you will know what to do.

*Charm.* Acquire three shiny pennies. Hold them in your right hand and tell the pennies (Elleggua) your problem. Then put them in your left hand and tell them the solutions you envision. Now cup both hands together, placing the pennies on the seam line between them and ask Elleggua to help you decide.

Take a walk, three blocks away from your house in either direction. Stop at an intersection where four corners meet. Now walk a square, stopping at each corner. Then walk diagonally through the crossroad. When you reach the center, toss the coins over your left shoulder.

Go home and do not worry about your problem any more. Elleggua will affect people and circumstances in such a way that your best option will be clear to you.

*The Coconut Spirit.* The coconut spirit should be made by someone you consider to be a powerful person and whose love for you has been tested and established. Go to your favorite supermarket and examine the coconuts carefully. Choose one whose face looks like yours. The coconut must have milk in it. Keep this coconut behind your front door for three days, then give it to your “altar mother” to fix for you. Elleggua will bless this coconut child to protect your door.

*Altar Mother:* Wash the coconut in natural water. Dust it with soil taken from a holy place (your altar daughter’s birthplace, a church, a spiritual center, or so on). Now dust it with 7 African Powers or Protection incense. Light a white candle and hold the

coconut over the candle so that the “hairs” on the coconut burn and the incense smokes. Talk to the coconut about your *good wishes* for the daughter in question. Put it on your altar.

During the next three days, sit with the coconut,\* a glass of water, and a lit white candle and talk with the coconut. It will tell you which colors to paint on it and what symbols to use.

*Suggested Painting:* Paint the intersecting lines in the face of the coconut *white* to purify your daughter’s road. Then paint the three sections (1) red, (2) black, and (3) blue.

On the top of the coconut, paint the symbol that will give your daughter the primary power she needs.

My favorite symbol is the crossroads of the world:

In the back of the coconut, the place where the head comes to a point and usually has a tuft of hair, put three bells (jingle bells) on a length of red ribbon and tie it like a pony tail.

Keep the coconut behind your front door for three days. Thank Ellegua for agreeing to protect your daughter’s door.

The next morning deliver the coconut child to his mother. The altar daughter should make an offering of gifts and/or money to the altar mother.

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\*You should sit with the coco whenever you have time. Speak with it as you come and go, and listen for its responses.



<b>PHYSICAL- MATERIAL</b>	<b>MENTAL- EMOTIONAL</b>	<b>SPIRITUAL</b>
Rape	Cowardice	The Unknown
Hunger	Ignorance	Being Hexed
Injury	Insanity	Demons
Death	Darkness	Condemnation
Nuclear Destruction	Racism	Nothingness

## CLEANING THE THREE HEAD CENTERS

Cleaning the head centers requires a bowl of water and your good intentions.

### Simple Cleanings

Place the bowl on your altar. Stand before it with the palms of your hands extended downward and visualize a ray of white or blue light generating from the palms of your hands into the water. Sometimes the color that emanates from your hands will vary; sometimes you will get different colors from each hand. When such variations happen, take note of the colors and their significance, for *eleda* is trying to tell you something.

Say your own blessing or incantation over the water. The incantation may be anything that suits you and your circumstances. My favorite is started by tracing the symbol for woman over the water with the left hand and saying,

In the names of the Goddess, Yemaya, Oya, and Oshun. O Most Holy Mother, you who come to us from the belly of the ocean, you who come to us from the arms of the river, you who come to us from the sky, through clouds in the form of rain, I call on you, Mother, to bless and fortify this water, that I by bathing in it may be blessed and fortified. (Now *name your concerns and talk to the Mother.*) I thank you, Most Holy Mother, for taking upon yourself my concerns and washing them away.

Now the water can be used to clean your aura. There are many ways to bless water. I know a “sister-in-the-science” from Belize who exposes her water to the morning sun at the four corners of her house. Some spiritualists get water blessed by a Catholic priest. I believe that because the priest is lodged in a physical body just as you are, he is subject to human frailty, just as you

are; and I believe that we are all qualified to bless our own water. Water *Herself* is blessed. Your blessing simply personalizes the power of the water.

Dip your hands into the water, and make three circles around the top of the head to activate your *ache*. Allow the water to fly around you, shower yourself in it. Dip your hands again, and pass the water across the back of your neck and off the edge of your shoulders, ask *eshu ni baco to ago* (“be cool”). With wet hands, cross your arms and touch your opposite elbows, pulling the energy across your lower arms and out through the fingertips. Pass the water across your forehead, thanking *eleda* for clarity. At some point in this cleansing, your fingertips will begin to make a crackling sound as you shake them out. You will begin to feel electrical sparks emanating from your fingertips. Dip your hands again, and pass the water down the front of your throat and chest; then shake your hands out. Now throw the water over your upper back; then reach behind yourself, just under your shoulder blades, and pull energy down your spine and off the end of your buttocks, shaking your hands out when the process is finished. Dip them again and repeat the same process down the front of your body and your legs, the backs of your legs, around your feet. End by pulling each of your toes.

For quick removal of heavy negative energies, add bay rum or alcohol to the water. To improve a fair condition, add sugar, bluing, or a nice oil with a perfumed scent. After a quick washing such as this one, you will feel lighter. There will be a subtle airiness surrounding you.

## Natural Bodies

The best cleansing bath is one taken in a body of natural water and requires the assistance of another person. If you have peaceful access to the ocean or a river, it is best to go to the water dressed in clothing that carry the energy of the problems you wish to

wash away. Such clothes may be the dress you wore during your last argument, the wallet that never seems to have any money in it, the shoes from the worst year of your life. The more you look like a vagabond, the better. Psychometry tells us that our clothing retain traces of the energy generated while wearing them.

Sit on the shore for a while and talk to the Mother about your problems. As you walk into the water, chant repeatedly, “I thank you, Most Holy Mother, for taking my concerns and washing them away.” You’re talking to Yemaya now, and you know She loves you. Walk into the water. Then have the other woman rip off the old clothes quickly and forcefully. Then bathe naked in the ocean or river. When you come ashore, dress yourself in fine new clothes. Conclude by leaving an offering such as silver coins, food, or the promise of a good deed. As you leave the area, don’t look back.

This cleansing is beautified by the voices and bodies of several women. Feel free to sing to your Mother, to build a fire on the beach, and to make an oath of reformation. An altar offering should be made to the ancestors of the women who helped with the bath.

Once this bath was given to me by a beautiful and powerful Puertorriqueña. She’d given me a Tarot reading and concluded that my head was oppressed by false notions of what my life should be. In addition to stripping me of the clothing, she gave me a coconut and told me to look at it until I could see my own face in the face of the coconut. I saw the coconut crying, something I’d been doing a lot of at the time. When I began to cry, she told me to shatter the coconut against a rock in the water. It was difficult, and I had to strike it several times before it burst. I came out of the water feeling as if I had forgotten something.

Cleaning the spiritual body gives us more control over our lives. Anytime we expect to encounter a negative experience, we should perform one of these baths. Some days I stop at a service station or at a café restroom for a spiritual cleaning. It helps fight fatigue, depression, and all those vague fears that drain the body.

## THE CLEANING BATHS

Number and Cycle	Attribute	Color	Herbs
Name of Bath		Candle and Water	
9	Purity	White or blue	Anise
White Bath		2 to 4 cans of evaporated milk	
5	Attraction	Yellow or orange	Parsley and yarrow flowers
Yellow Bath		Yellow food coloring	
7	Protection	Blue or white	Lavendar and rosemary
Blue Bath		Blueing balls, or food coloring	
8	Health, wealth	Green or brown	Heal-all or comfrey
Green Bath		Mix yellow and blue food coloring	
6	Courage	Red or white	John the Conqueror, or red peppers
Red Bath		Red food coloring	
3	Power	Purple or Red	Five-finger grass, or mustard seed
Purple Bath		Mix blue and red food coloring	

Number and Cycle	Wash With	Recommended Incense
Name of Bath		
9	Salt	Coconut or Blessing
White Bath		
5	Honey	Patchouli cinnamon
Yellow Bath		
7	Seashells	Peace or watermelon
Blue Bath		
8	White sage leaves or flowers	Myrrh or bayberry
Green Bath		
6	Stones	Helping Hand or John the Conqueror
Red Bath		
3	Two whole eggs	Dragon's Blood or Commanding
Purple Bath		

## **The Care and Feeding of Candles**

Following are recommendations for the care and feeding of candles.

1. If possible, buy your candles in bulk and store them in your freezer.
2. Dress candles by oiling them from the center upward and the center downward. Sometimes you will want to carve the name of the person being “worked” or the intention of the candle down the length of it or on the bottom.
3. When dressing candles, be sure your hands are clean and that you are concentrating on the desired end. Mind the work properly. Your sincerity and intention are 89.98 percent of the drawing power of the candle work.
4. Be sure to use the appropriate color candle. If you buy rather than make your oil, be sure to empower the oil with your personal blessing.
5. Do follow through, do everything you are supposed to do, every day at the same time. If there is a break in the sequence, start all over again.
6. Properly dispose of candle remains. Throw them in running water, bury them, or take them away from your house and throw them in a bush or public garbage can.
7. Be aware of what is thought and said when a candle sputters. There’s a message there.

## **Some Important Don'ts**

1. Don't blow candles out. Wet the tips of your fingers and extinguish the flame, or place a saucer on top of the candle's glass.
2. Don't put fresh candles in a dirty glass. Always wash the glass with salt and water.
3. Beware of glassed candles that burn dirty. The shape the soot takes and its density speak to the extent of the negative forces you are fighting.
4. Don't use broken candles. Cut them neatly down to size and use them for quick or minor charms.
5. Don't allow candles to get dusty. Wash your candles with salt, scrub until clean, then refrigerate.
6. Don't let shopkeepers dress your candles for you. This is the mark of ignorance, and many dishonest shopkeepers will get you embroiled in undesirable energy patterns and extravagant expenses.
7. Don't discuss your candle magic with people you don't trust or who tend to ridicule ("bad-mouth") spiritual work.
8. Don't reuse a partially burnt candle for a different purpose.
9. Don't "overwork" candle rituals. Do them, then wait for results.



## CANDLE CLASSIFICATION CHART

Name	Shape	Colors	Duration	Purpose
Offeratory	Thin, cylindrical	All colors	Approximately three hours	General altar use
Devotional	Thick, cylindrical	All colors	Days according to use	Praise and oath
Seven-day	Thick, glassed, cylindrical	All colors	7 days, 24 hours each	Personal astral
Wishing	7 knots of wax, stacked	All colors	7 one-hour days	To make wishes come true
Votive	Small, glassed, tublike	All colors	8–15 hours in glass	General altar use

## CANDLE CLASSIFICATION CHART *(continued)*

Symbols	Shape	Colors	Duration	Purpose
Female	Shaped like a woman	Green, red, black, white	7 days at 15 minutes each	Red = love Black = reverse bad luck White = general purpose Green = wealth, health
Male	Shaped like a man	Green, red, black, white	7 days at 15 minutes each	Red = love Black = reverse bad luck White = general purpose Green = wealth, health
Snake or Cat	Shaped like the animal	Red, black, white	7 days	Attract power, wisdom, spiritual helpers
Skull	Human skull	Red, black, white	Weeks if used properly	Dispelling-uncrossing *Healing and study
Yoni/ Goddess Head	Large and beautiful	All colors	Months, if used properly	General altar use
Reversible	Thick, cylindrical, 1 foot long	Red interior, black exterior	9 days, one hour a day	To reverse a hex or crossed condition

## Making Your Own Oils

Most *botanicas* sell a wonderful assortment of oils for candle work. You can also get very pleasantly scented oils at holistic health food stores and body shops. They are a nice indulgence. But our primary concern is with the potency of the oil for your spiritual work. I prefer to prepare my own oils; maybe you will too.

In Column 3 of the Candle Work Color Chart, you will find several recommended herbs for making oils. The body of herbs the Mother has provided us for spiritual work is phenomenal. Most herbs have a myth behind them, and a hint of their power is found in the name (five-finger grass, life everlasting, grain of paradise), the color (lavender, white sage, red clover), or the shape (star anise). The herbs listed here are simply some of *my* favorites. In truth, the best herbs to use are those growing wild in your area, ones you have grown yourself, and the ones that have been repeatedly used for a specific purpose in the past. All herbs have life energy in them and, with clear intention, can empower the oil and your ritual.

Begin with a pure oil such as olive oil or sesame oil. Crush your herb, seed, or root with a mortar and pestle until you can smell the fresh scent. Put a healthy portion of the herbs in a jar of oil and cover tightly. Set this in a cool place for no less than three days before use. The proportion of oil to herbs is at your discretion. My own tendency is to be heavy-handed with the herbs and to let it set for two weeks before using. The important things are clear intention, pure oil, fresh herbs, and a definite scent.

## CANDLEWORK COLOR CHART

Color	Attribute	Make Oil With	Suggested Incense
White	Purification, clarity, blessing	Mustard seed, anise seed, blessed thistle	Blessing, Coconut
Red	Passion, vigor, courage	Guinea pepper, hyssop, red clover	Helping Hand, Crucible of Courage
Blue	Protection, peace	Valerian, poppy seed, magnolia leaves	House Blessing, Protection, Peace Powder
Green	Abundance, health	Heal-all, coltsfoot, comfrey	Frankincense, Success, Healing Hands
Gold	Wealth	Calendula flowers, thyme, grains of paradise	Success, Fast Luck, Follow Me
Yellow	Attraction, creativity	Patchouli, Yarrow, lemon verbena	Cinnamon, Come To Me, Compelling
Orange	Concentration	Bay leaf, celery seed, rosemary	Concentration, Success
Brown	Stability	Local wild grass, flowers	Seven African Powers, Templo
Pink	Honor, gaiety	Myrtle, uva ursi	Sandalwood, Blessed
Purple	Power	Five finger grass, lavender	Power, Commanding
Silver	Meditation- serenity	Witch's grass, rose bud, watermelon seed	Tranquility, Meditation
Black	Release	Garlic, Spanish moss, cubeb berries	Dragon's Blood, Uncrossing, Reversible

## Set-up for Candle Ritual

1. Draw a large circle on the floor of your altar with a combination of a sturdy grain and a sweet essence. Good combinations are (a) cornmeal and bee pollen, (b) millet and lavender, (c) wheat and rose petals, (d) rice and cloves.
2. Now draw two intersecting lines through the circle. Place four votive candles in their glasses, and place one at each point on the circle.
3. Draw a smaller inner circle with the intersection of the lines in the center of this inner circle.
4. Place your personal candle in the center and the candles representing the energies you want to attract on each side of the personal candle at the ascendent and descendant lines of the inner circle.
5. Lighting procedure: Invoke the four directions. Starting with the east, light each candle as you invoke. Then light the personal candle, the left, then the right candle, with the appropriate invocation for each.

*Note:* The color of the candle will depend on the nature of the work.

### TO ATTRACT A LOVER

1. Outer candles at the cardinal points will be white votives.
2. Personal candle center will be grounded as per instructions and will be of your favorite color.
3. Left-point candle will be yellow for attraction. Right-point candle will be red for passion. (Both must be safely grounded.)

### TO ATTRACT WEALTH

1. Same as for lover.
2. Same as for lover.
3. Left-point candle will be gold for wealth. Right-point, green for abundance.

#### FOR PEACE IN THE HOME

1. and 2. As for lover.
2. Use a brown personal candle with a blue left candle and a white right candle.

#### TO INCREASE MENTAL FACILITY

1. and 2. As for lover. Use pink or white personal candle with orange left-point and purple right-point candle.

#### FOR PROTECTION FROM CROSSED CONDITION

First reread the discussion on hexing at the beginning of this chapter, then use uncrossing or reversible candle as your personal candle with a blue left and a white right candles.

#### FOR GOOD HEALTH

Use white personal candle, green left, and red right candle. In general: Inquire of your ancestors what your needs are, then listen to your head.

The votive candles will burn constantly and will burn out before the three center candles. This is permissible because they have now set up an energy force field that is absorbed and reinforced by the drawing material. The three center candles will burn a little (5–15 minutes) each day while you are concentrating on your desire. Each day, move the left and right candle closer to the personal candle until they touch each other. Then allow them to burn out completely. Dispose of them properly.

### **Grounding the Candles**

Although fancy metal candleholders are pleasant to the eye and add beauty to the altar, your primary concern should be the potency of the charm and safety in handling the awesome power of fire. I advise putting the seven-day and votive candles in their glasses after

dressing and setting the glass in a bowl of water (the *Da*) before placing them on your altar.

The devotional and offeratory candles should be dressed with the appropriate oil, and the foundation for it should be made as follows:

### INGREDIENTS

A baby food or other small jar	Four pennies
Celery seed	A glass or metal bowl of water
Salt water, sweetened water	Your petition, properly
Magnetic sand	written and folded
Soil	Color candle, properly dressed

1. Find a small jar and wash it thoroughly with salt water. Leave a little salt water at the bottom of the jar.
2. Fill the first half of the jar with potting soil, dirt from your earth pot (see Chapter 6) or your yard. Place your properly written petition in the dirt and push it down in the jar.
3. Now sprinkle a pinch of celery seed over the dirt and cover it with another teaspoon of dirt. Try to use dirt that has wood chips or other organic material to increase potency.
4. Place four pennies (sidewise) in the dirt at the four directions. Push them down into the dirt so that the top of the pennies lie just above the dirt line. (The head of the penny is facing center and is visible.) Sprinkle a heaping teaspoon of magnetic sand over the dirt, being sure to cover the pennies, and putting a healthy portion of sand in the center of the dirt.
5. Fold the four fingers of the right hand over, holding them in place with the thumb. Make the opening in the palm large enough for the candle to pass through with some tension. Place the oiled candle in the hand socket. Now place your left hand over the right in the same manner with the thumb on top of the candle wick. Place both hands and candle over

- the jar. As you push the candle down into the dirt, tell it, yourself, and the universe why you are burning the candle: “For love and vigor,” “For peace in my home,” and so on.
6. When the candle is placed, fill in the spaces around the candle with soil. Plant it firmly. Water it with sweet water (a little honey added).
  7. Place the jar containing your candle in a bowl of water and place it on your altar. Now you are ready to light your candle with the appropriate invocation.

*Note:* This is necessary for the personal, center candle. The left and right candles may be done this way also, but simply grounding them in the soil will suffice.

You have planted your request in solid, lively earth. It is well grounded. You’ve planted seed, the potential for growth. The four pennies and magnetic sand are there to attract energy from the four directions. The salt water keeps the desire clean, the sweet water for encouragement and beauty. You have spoken the petition three times. Remember that three is a magical number, the number of Elegba the Divine Trickster, and of St. Expedite, the saint of speed. Your request is already on its way. Believe in the power of the Mother. Prepare yourself to receive the good when it arrives.

At this point you can go on with your daily business or go to sleep. Your altar is working on your behalf in the utmost safety.

## **Guidelines for Written Petitions**

For petitions, you will need the following:

1. *Paper.* You can purchase a sheet of virgin parchment at most botanicas at \$5–\$10 a sheet. It is paper made from the vagina of a virgin lamb and is very durable. If you can afford it, buy it; if not, rice paper, paper with wood chips, or your favorite stationary will do.



2. *Writing Tools.* Most Voudounsists use a fountain pen for writing petitions, and nothing but petitions are written with this pen. My personal mothers tended to use the tip of a feather shaven to a nice point or a toothpick.
3. *Ink.* Dove's Blood is used for attracting positive energies and Dragon's Blood ink is used for repelling strong negative energies.

It is good to use these products because anything that standardizes the ritual adds to its potency. However, I must say that in an “emergency” situation I have written petitions on notebook paper with a ballpoint pen, and the charm worked. And in cases where it was necessary for me to dispel seriously disruptive influences, I have used a brown paper bag and a cayenne pepper paste.

*Petition Layout and Wording.* Look at the example of a petition.

1. It has your name on it. This confirms, for the spirit, who is doing the work. It should be done this way regardless of who the work is being done for. Say that you are the daughter of (write your mother's maiden name). It doesn't matter whether you like your mother or not. She may be the worst redneck, a terrible sexist, or crazy out of her skull—she is still the vessel of your incarnation. Those who do not know their natural parents should name their adopted mother, the oldest woman in their altar circle, or simply use the word *Iya* (*Yaruha* for “Mother”) and the name of the appropriate Goddess. But if you know your mother's name, you must honor her.
2. Give the date of the day you are beginning the charm. I tend to follow Merlin Stone's advice and use the agricultural date rather than the Christ-biased date (9983 rather than 1983 A.D.) or just the year number will do ('83). Check in with the stars and write down the major astrological influences under which this charm was done. I especially

watch the movement of the Moon and Venus. Take note of major squares and oppositions.

3. State the need clearly, giving the desired result in the text: “Let there be love and vigor”; “Give us courage and clarity”; “Give the power of wealth in the form of money—\$10,000;” “Give me the love of sweet lips.”
4. Always be sure to write the asterisked statement that you will accept an alternative. This is a vote of confidence in the spirit, a recognition that the ancestors and deities are wiser than you. It states your willingness to accept the good that is coming to you.
5. Say thank you, because you know that you already have had your request fulfilled.
6. Sign your name to the petition. This too is a statement of confidence. Respect it as a document. Your signature is your own spiritual hieroglyphic, it tells the spirit something about your need and your present state of being.
7. Read the petition out loud. Look intently at what you have written. Is this really what you want?

## FOLDING THE PETITION

1. *To Attract.* If you are trying to attract a particular energy, start at the top of the paper and fold it toward you. Then turn the folded paper vertically and fold it toward you again.
2. *To Dispel.* If you are trying to send a particular energy away, start at the bottom of the sheet and fold it away from you. Turn it vertically and again fold it away from you. (The same is true of the candle work. If your process is that of dismissal or subtraction, you move the candles further apart.)
3. *To End a Relationship.* In the example on love, if you want to be free from a relationship, you would first set up your candles as per instructions. Your petition will read: “Free me from (*name the person*).” Place the petition in the grounding

of your personal candle, and place a candle representing the person you want release from on the left, with a black release candle placed on the right. Everyday you will move both candles further away from you until they touch the votive candles and then allow them to burn out. The remains of these candles you will take for a ride far away from places you frequent, throw them over your left shoulder, and don't look back. Then you will come back home by a different route (even if it means going through another town). Look forward to the day when you no longer think of or feel anything for the person you have dismissed.

## RITUAL FOR THE UNKNOWN ANCESTORS

1. *Take food to the kitchen*: universal; food from our respective cultures.
2. *The earthpot*: African, but pot contained soil from all lands.
3. *Smudging*: African, Latin, Native American, European.
4. *Feeding the earth, invoking directions*: Native American, African way with special invocation to Turtle Island\* because we stand on Native American soil.
5. *Addressing the moon*: universal; African chant.
6. *Salutations to Africa as the Mother of Humanity and to the ancestors of all people*: To ensure a sense of kinship, we mounted pictures of humans from all cultures on the walls, and each participant was asked to gaze on them. The ritual could not continue until each person could honestly say, "We are of one blood."
7. *Explanation of the ritual*: Egyptian, with East Indian Music.
8. *The boat of souls*: universal; northern European boat.
9. *Salutations to the Seven Continents*: South America, Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, the Islands of Earth, and the lost continents; Salutations were done by seven different people.
10. *Mourning and a litany of the lost*: addressed all humans who have died without proper burial.
11. *Statement on death and rebirth*: Egyptian.
12. *Anointment of the mummy*: Egyptian; mummy was made of clay and seven grains; it contained a crown chakra, heart, womb, and penis, with symbolic blood in its veins.
13. *Prayer for resurrection*: Egyptian.
14. *Honoring the eldest and youngest*: universal.
15. *Self-blessing*: universal but done wiccan way.

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\*Turtle Island is a Native American name for the continent of North America.

16. *Dance movements*: African.
17. *Charge of the Star Goddess*: Native American.
18. *Joyful noises*: universal and original.
19. *Closing the directions*: universal, done Native American way.
20. *Eating and celebrating*: we ate food from all cultures, and my altar sister Jamie Miller gave an exquisite belly dance performance.

The success of this ritual and many others confirms my belief that as humans we make *cultural notions* on *universal principles*. The ancestral offering in Africa is made with coconut, in China with rice, and in South America with cornmeal; but everybody worships. The truth of the matter is that all religions are about the worship of nature and reverence of those who have gone before—even in Christianity. The difference is that in some traditions it has become shrouded in obscure symbolism.

# Notes

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