

## *Mirage: the Bargainer's Art of Pride*

**Knacks:** Farsight, Memory, Mesmerize, Shatter, Watcher

**Apprentice Degree:** Clairvoyant

**Adept Degree:** Seer

**Master Degree:** Oracle

In the land of Théah—and especially Montaigne—mirrors have power. A Mirage Sorcerer has learned to harness that power. No one is certain where the Sorcery originated, though it is known to be one of the Bargainer's Arts, and therefore, as tainted as Sorte or Porté.

It manifests most commonly in Montaigne, and occasionally in Avalon, where it is believed to be a derivative of Glamour, given as a gift by the Sidhe. Some scholars claim that the Montaigne acquired the Sorcery solely through the force of their vanity, having sold their souls to mirrors long ago. Some even theorize that it occurs in the children of those who have lost their souls to mirrors, born with a portion of their awareness on the other side of the looking glass.

Mirage Sorcerers have worked diligently to see their art fade from public knowledge. Because the Sorcery requires a mirror (or, in a pinch, some other reflective surface) to function, it can be contained—even nullified—by breaking every mirror one can find.

### **Apprentice Degree**

As an Apprentice, you may use your fledgling powers (in the form of the Farsight Knack) to look into one mirror and see what is being reflected in another. Your clairvoyant abilities are limited to the present, and work most effectively when viewing images reflected in a mirror to which you are attuned. There is no range limit on this ability, but if an attempt fails, it cannot be tried again for the rest of the Scene without breaking the mirror.

### **Adept Degree**

As your powers increase, so does the strength of your clairvoyant ability. You may now, within limits, look into any mirror and view events that have been reflected in that mirror in the past, or will be reflected in the future. You may not see anything that happened before you were born, and you may not peer into the future by more than a year. Each week (or fraction thereof) that attempt to peer into the future increases the TN of your attempt by one. Every two years (or fraction thereof) that you attempt to look into the past increases your TN by one.

### **Master Degree**

When you become a Master, your abilities are at their zenith. Your ability to look into the past is no longer limited to your own lifetime; you may peer without limits into reflections of the past and the future. The TN penalties you incurred as an Adept no longer apply. Instead, your TN is increased by one for every five years (or fraction thereof) you attempt to look into the past, or every one year (or fraction thereof) you attempt to look into the future.

### **Sorcerous Knacks:**

**Farsight:** By concentrating on any large mirror, you may see what is being reflected in another mirror somewhere else, or what has been (or will be) reflected in that particular mirror at another time. In order to perform this feat, you must roll Resolve + Farsight against a TN of 20, with any modifications for peering into the past or future as described above, or under the Memory Knack. If you attempt to see what is reflected in a mirror you are not familiar with (but which someone else can describe to you), your TN for success is Raised by 10. This Knack takes several minutes to use, and if anything is going on that might distract the Sorcerer (such as combat),

the TN is increased by 10 in addition to any other modifiers. No one but the Sorcerer sees what is reflected in the mirror, though his trancelike state will be obvious to everyone, and he remains completely vulnerable to attack (with a TN to be hit of 5, though any successful attack immediately breaks the trance). Images from the past are distorted, as if seen through a light haze, while images of the future are blurry, and specific details may be difficult to pick out.

**Memory:** When a Mirage Sorcerer wishes to attune himself to a specific mirror, he rolls Resolve + Memory against a TN of 20. Success on this roll ensures that the Sorcerer never suffers a TN penalty for unfamiliarity when attempting to view the reflection in that mirror from another location, or when looking into that mirror to view the past or the future. Furthermore, each Raise taken on a successful roll provides one Free Raise on all attempts to view the past or future through the mirror, or to look through that mirror remotely. There is no limit to the number of mirrors a Sorcerer may attune himself to, however, when an attuned mirror breaks, the Sorcerer suffers Flesh Wounds equal to his Mastery Level in Kept dice. At any time, the Gamemaster may spend a Drama Die to have something happen to one of the Sorcerer's attuned mirrors, causing it to break (rendering it useless to the Sorcerer) and inflicting damage as specified above.

**Mesmerize:** To use this power, the Mirage Sorcerer must be in close proximity to his chosen victim (either in physical contact to use the power without speaking, or within whispering distance to activate the power with his voice) while the target looks into a mirror. If these conditions are met, the Sorcerer may, by spending an Action, make a contested roll of his Wits + Mesmerize against the opponent's Wits. If the opponent wins the contest, the Sorcery has no effect. If the Sorcerer wins, the victim is utterly transfixed by whatever he sees (or thinks he sees) within the mirror. Only an attack which inflicts a Dramatic Wound will disrupt the enchantment; shaking, slapping, or even covering the victim's eyes or dragging him out of the room will have no effect. If the victim is left alone, he can attempt to beat the Sorcerer's roll and break the enchantment with a new Wits check every twenty-four hours. Unless one of these checks succeeds, he will remain entranced until he starves to death, or until the Sorcerer wills the enchantment to end.

**Shatter:** Generally considered a last-ditch defense, as it removes the source of the Mirage Sorcerer's power, shattering allows the Sorcerer to damage an opponent by attacking his reflection in a mirror. The power may be invoked in two ways: the first, and more common, requires the Mirage Sorcerer to spend an Action striking any mirror in which he can see his victim's reflection. If the mirror breaks, the victim immediately takes a number of Flesh Wounds equal to the Sorcerer's Rank in Shatter times his Mastery Level (thus, a Master of Mirage inflicts  $5 \times 3 = 15$  Flesh Wounds with this attack). The second use of this power requires the Sorcerer to look into a mirror (even from a distance) that contains the reflection of his chosen victim. He must spend an Action to attempt a contested roll of his Resolve + Shatter against the opponent's Resolve. If the Sorcerer loses this roll, the Sorcery has no effect; if he is successful, the mirror explodes violently into sharp fragments. Anyone standing within ten feet suffers one die of damage from the glass or metal shards, and the Sorcerer inflicts a number of Flesh Wounds equal to his contested roll on the victim. If the Sorcerer uses an attuned mirror in this attack, he may apply any Raises to which he is entitled on this roll, but he still suffers damage when the mirror breaks.

**Watcher:** Having determined that there is some sort of bizarre, mystical world "through the looking glass," it should come as no surprise that some Mirage Sorcerers have made contact with those that dwell there. Once per day, by cutting his own palm (inflicting one die of Flesh Wounds) and pressing the wound against a mirror, he may summon one of these ghostly figures to that mirror for a number of minutes equal to his Mastery Level. By drawing the Sorcerer's blood through the glass, the spirit agrees to travel to any one mirror specified by the Sorcerer (even if he has never seen it himself) and, the next time it is summoned (and fed), truthfully answer a number of "yes or no" questions equal to the Sorcerer's Rank in this Knack about what it witnessed there (if anything). Some Mirage Sorcerers summon a different entity every time they

invoke this power; others seem to call the same spirit over and over again and, over time, the two develop a peculiar sort of friendship (and may come to other sorts of arrangements). Similarly, some Sorcerers see nothing but shapeless apparitions, while others report that the figures seem almost human, except for the bloody stumps where they should have hands.

### Game Master's Notes

Obviously, the clairvoyant aspects of this improved version of Mirage are taken directly from the female version of Scrying (per the Sophia's Daughters book), which does not exist in the Poisoned Shadows campaign. Rather than having a "stepped" progression in appearance, a Mirage Sorcerer of any power level casts no reflection whatsoever, bringing it more into line with other Sorceries in the game.

As the *Noblesse Oblige* e-book describes, Mirage allows the Surneth races on the other side of the Barrier to peer through into the mortal realm. Mirage and Porté share some sort of supernatural connection, which will be expanded upon (at this website, anyway) in future publications. Adoption of these rules in lieu of the preliminary version provides greater game balance, and provides mechanical explanations for some of the game's little mysteries (e.g., Cardinal Erika Durkheim is clearly a Mirage Sorcerer, with a Rank of 3 in Watcher, rather than a Porté Sorcerer).