

Sorcelli and the Veil

Since time immemorial the people of Celena have always known that there is something else beyond the ordinary mundane of the physical, for where else could the power compelling the movements of the air and sea, the force holding us fast to the ground, or the very spark of life in any being come from but some alter-place? A place of power, layered across and inextricably linked to this world, invisible and impervious directly to most, but from which energies flow to affect all things in some way.

In Celena they call this place and power the Veil, and control over it the art of Sorcelli.

The training of a Sorcellier brings unequivocal evidence of this alter-place, It can even be seen (to the properly enhanced and trained eye) as a ghostly and swirling shroud, it's forms and energies fitting closely, but not quite perfectly, to our own.

Common immutable substance such as tree and rock is usually mirrored most closely; more malleable and motive substance such as water or fire is far less tightly fitted. Worked matter follows a similar model of connection but also retains a haze of its former self, so a roof slate might hold an echo its cliff origin or a plank a memory of the tree. But it is in living things that the energies of the Veil and reality have greatest vigour and discourse.

All living things have a patterning of energies in the Veil, but sometimes (albeit not very commonly) great energy and movement there can be found sheathing the smallest creature in the mundane, whilst conversely a strong and vigorous youth might be blanketed in lose fitting but placid energies in that alter-place. The strength and vigour of connection is termed *Veillien*, in Sorcelliers it is pertinent to how much they can impinge their own will upon the Veil, and in others their natural strength and resilience to the affects of its energies.

Sometimes these energies of the Veil are present in forms similar to those as they would have when shrouding a creature of the mundane, but free-drifting, without connection to a corresponding subject in the material world.

Named Veilings, It is these convenient energies which Sorcelliers harness to enhance and create their Familliere, and it is even possible (very rarely) for one of these same drifting forces to come across and attach itself undirected to a creature, usurping or assimilating that creatures existing Veil-form into its own.. Such a creature in the mundane would certainly display unusual and perhaps amazing powers, they too are gathered under the same term of Veilings (with a suffix of kind e.g. Veiling-wolf)

It is almost certainly these 'un-tethered' or naturally empowered Veilings which give rise to many of the stories of ghosts unexplained supernatural occurrences and monsters that fill the peasant myths of old Celena.

All other powers of the Sorcelliers arts also come from the manipulation of the Veil and its energies, and as it is currently taught there are three specific forms, each able to achieve different things by drawing power from the veil to affect the mundane world in distinct ways.

Illusion:

To shroud the truth of reality with the truth of the Veil. Though often thought of as the weakest of the forms, Illusion has, if viewed in terms of significance to the successes of Celena throughout history, been arguably one of the most important. Able to affect large groups of people and areas without the arduous efforts of the other forms it has been used to great effect in the various wars throughout history, as well as in the less well publicised machinations of house and court.

There are three increasingly difficult Specialisations:

Au Veil: Change or create the perceptions of smell and taste. Such as confusing the scent of a tracked, or hiding the flavour of rotten food or sour wine.

Coeur Veil: Change or create perceptions of sight and hearing. Muffle footsteps and darken shadows, change the appearance of person or place, or speak words that can be heard across a battlefield by only one other or all the men there present.

Grande Veil: Change or create perceptions of touch and 'instinct' or emotion. Give a shadow the feeling of solidity, make something feel hot when cold or soft when hard. Create a feeling of safety around a place or layer emotions of hate or desire upon others.

Animer

To enliven the mundane with the vigour from beyond the Veil. This form deals with the gathering and control of Veilings, the un-associated collections of energy from the Veil, This power is basic for any Sorcelli which affects directly, by force or enhancement, the physical state of the mundane. It is usually longer to enact than either of the other forms and generally more difficult than Illusion. But although the energies can only be released or controlled at close range, once done the Sorcelli itself usually lasts for much longer periods without continued active effort. Importantly it is one of each of its three specialisations that are used to create one of the Familiare types of Celena.

Ancre D'Entrain: Use the energies of the Veil for a very simple and contained 'physical' task or effect. Pushing something over, lifting something from the floor to horseback, holding a door shut against assault, or a torch with a flame that burns steady in hurricane winds. This form specialisation is key in creating the Fouge Familiare.

Ajouter L'Veil: Adding the energies of a Veil to enhance (or impair) a living thing. Enhancing a sense so a person could see in the dark or follow scent like a hound, restore vigour and healing injury, or holding prisoner's limbs immobile. This specialisation is used to create the Bet'nay.

Animes Immobile: adding the energies of the Veil to give life to the inanimate. Making a door that closes itself once passed through, a pump that activates on command, or a coach able to move without horse to draw it. This specialisation is vital in creating the Jai-nay.

Maitrise

To alter the fixed laws of reality with the malleable conditions beyond the Veil. By far the hardest, most tiring, and transient in duration, of the forms, often requiring extreme effort or constant renewal, it is nevertheless considered by many to be the pinnacle of the Sorcellier's craft, and truly its powers are the stuff of legends. Any effects that will create, alter, or destroy (without existing basis in the mundane), matter or energy are the province of this form. In essence the Sorcellier works in reverse of the other arts, creating veilings at will where none existed before, and then directing or layering them to produce within the mundane world his desired effect.

Anor Naturelle: Draw and manipulates the energies of the veil to temporarily alter the natural laws in the area to those the Sorcellier desires. Drawing storm clouds and winds in calm conditions, making something shed its weight until it floats into the air, or slowing a musket ball by making the air as thick as mud.

En Suciter: create Veilings and force them to mould the substance of reality to match thus creating substance from nothing. Crating real physical items with all the normal characteristics, breathe underwater (by creating air in the lungs), Hurl balls of fire from hands or make an invisible wall as hard as iron.

Fait Altre: Circumvent reality altering the state of the entire Veil in an area. Instantly step from one place to appear a hundred miles away, destroy something utterly both in the mundane and in the Veil, old the process of aging still, re-grow limbs, fly, etc..

Rotes: Sorcellier's are initially taught to enact their art by utilising 'Rotes', specific tried and tested methods for producing a certain effect. But regurgitating a manipulation of the veil by rote is certainly not the only way, skilled and experienced masters of their forms are able to weave the Veil to their desired purpose at will without prior guidance or preparation.

Familiere: The creation of Familiere is a prime example of Rotes, usually each family has a few practiced and secret methods for creating specific Familiere and gurd these secrets jealously.

Of the three types, creation of the Fouge is fairly straightforward and comparatively swift to enact usually requiring only one Sorcellier to complete. Fouge are 'mindless' and only able to perform the task to which they were initially set

The Bet'nay can be somewhat trickier... not in a more draining sense, but temperamental to get right (thus the often differing abilities displayed by one Bet-nay to the next). Creation of the Bet'nay also requires the living subject of an ordinary mundane animal (sometimes captured from the wild but more often bred in captivity for the purpose). In essence a Veiling is gathered and infused into the body of the animal; the process instantly gifts the creature with enhanced intellect, allowing them to learn to speak the rudiments of Celenan in a matter of weeks along with enhanced powers.

Hardest and usually most expensive is the creation of the Jai-nay, an object of the highest quality is needed, with all parts that will be required to move made to be as resistance free and smooth to manipulate as possible. Several Sorcelliers usually combine to such efforts and the process of gathering and imprinting a Veiling can be extremely exhausting. Once the rote is successfully completed a semi-intelligent automaton is created, fully able to move and utilise any accessories it has been created with. They are capable of responding to external stimulus with pre-instructed actions and can follow fairly complicated commands without further intervention.

The Veileaux religion: Before the arrival of the Serayn religion the (common) people of Celena worshiped the Veil itself in an animistic religion, seeing it as the source of creation of the entire world, as well as the force that gives life to the creatures therein. The religion was called the Veileaux faith (meaning 'to flow from the Veil') and holds that the Veil is a conscious and broadly benevolent and nurturing force looking over creation as a mother would her children. Its practitioners also claim that the Veilings are in fact cognisant entities that live in a mirror world alongside our own, and further that each of us is twined to their own protective spirit (which can be seen in reflections). They see the supernatural hand of these entities as guiding and sometimes interfering with the efforts of man usually to the direction some unseen plan of the mother Veil. Modern Celenan's have for the main moved beyond these primitive superstitions, and Sorcelliers in particular are be quick to point out that there is no evidence of any awareness or intelligence in the veilings other than that displayed by any creature to which they are connected to.

The waning of the blood: It is common comment that the number and power of Sorcelliers produced in recent times seems to be somewhat less than it once was, but the terrifying truth whispered only amongst those with the gift is how dramatic this slide actually is. In the last three generations the number of children born to the noble houses each year slid from around child per ten to nearer one in one hundred, some families have yet to produce a single Sorcelli gifted child at all this decade. Those that have been born have also proved to be far less potent than their grandparent's generation and there is even talk that in two generations there may be none born with the talent at all! The reasons for this decline is completely unknown and without precedent but Sorcelliers across the country have been charged by the King to try to discover cause and more importantly a cure.

Game mechanics: (NB: this is all TBC after some play)

Every manipulation or rote has a few key elements that will determine its difficulty. As a GUIDE:

Form difficulty: 1-9 (+1 for Au Veil, +9 for Fait Altre)

Speed of manipulation: 0 for base of 4 rounds for a rote, 6 for free-act, +1 per round reduction.

Number of targets: 0 for 1 target, +1 for small group (2 or 3),
+3 for large group (4 to 8), +6 for crowd (9-15), etc...

Area &/or distance: 1 for *form appropriate* "immediate" distance,
+ 3 small extra area or distance, +5 for large area or distance, etc...

Potency of effect: base of 3 for most normal uses by form, then between -2 to around +6

Duration of effect: base of 0 for immediate/instant/form approp, +1 per form appropriate increase.

Special circumstances: or basically a catch all for me to add whatever modifier I feel appropriate! 😊

Rotes are cheaper due to trial and practice; reduce difficulty by 5% / valid game use to a max of 30%.

Example costs:

False Visage (5), Darksight (9), uproot a tree (12), stop a musketball (17), instant elsewhere(30)....

Crit fail (roll 1 on wild dice) = The effect fails possibly with negative results* and leaves the Sorcellier mentally exhausted several hours rest will be required before further attempts at Sorcelli.

Normal Fail = Nothing happens, the Sorcellier feels tired but can try again after 2 rounds.

Normal Pass = the effect occurs as desired, the Sorcellier is tired but can act again instantly if desired

Crit pass (2 x required diff) = exceptional effect and Sorcellier actually feels energised by the effort!