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## The Origin of Enchanted Mirrors

Jason Constantine Ford

As Ilene waited in the foyer, she started to entertain doubts as to whether or not she would get answers to a question that had plagued her for several weeks. Looking at the numerous skull sculptures that stood upon various stands in the room, Ilene felt a certain sense of guilt about being where she was. Even though she could feel a presence of evil at the fortune telling business where she was seated, her curiosity persuaded her to remain where she was. She was continually asking herself a question as to how her friend, Meryl, a member of the White Lotus Society like herself, was able to access a supernatural world that only she could not access. She thought back to a month ago, at a meeting of the White Lotus Society, when Meryl was briefly transported from the normal world to a supernatural world known as Hyper Silesia, before returning to the normal world, and not giving an account to others in the society about her experience. She remembered a change in Meryl from her entrance to and exit from a magical portal as well as the look of triumph on her face as she stubbornly refused to relate her experience to the same people who witnessed both her disappearance and return. All questions that were asked of her were simply turned down as an intrusion into Meryl's privacy.

Meryl's silence on the matter had only one result upon the character of Ilene: it nurtured a combination of both jealousy and curiosity within her with the latter being much stronger than the former. As Ilene's curiosity continued to bite against her patience, she started to become weak in observing the rules of her society such as the avoidance of skulls and the touching of dead bodies. For weeks, she experimented with black magic rituals such as the calling of the spirits of the dead in total contravention of the rules she was obligated to obey. None of these rituals gave her even a hint as to what the answer to her key question was. As the seconds were ticking away on her clock toward her appointment with a fortune teller, Ilene briefly contemplated walking out from the foyer until she saw a customer leaving the fortune tellers' office. Soon after this, the fortune teller appeared. It was a young woman with long black hair tied up in a bun.

"Are you Ilene Chirac?"

"Yes, that's me."

The woman extended her hand to Ilene. "I'm Antoinette Reveilles. Please come in." Antoinette led her to the office and gestured toward a seat. "Have a seat." Antoinette went behind her desk where she took out a variety of objects from a suitcase and placed them on the desk. The objects were a Zodiac map of the universe, a skull and a crystal ball. Antoinette placed the Zodiac map on the middle of the desk with the skull positioned directly on top of an image of the sun and the crystal ball stationed beside an image of the earth. Antoinette seated herself on her chair where she read through a file before returning her attention to Ilene.

“The report I have before me states that you desire to know about limitations within your life and the means of overcoming these limitations. Am I correct?”

“Yes, I’ve come here for answers about a personal issue.”

“What’s the issue?”

“I won’t be going into detail about it. If you can read people’s fortune, you’ll know what I’m talking about.”

"You want results, you’ll get them. Believe me, I’m authentic. Come closer to me."

Ilene did as she was requested to do. "Show me the palm of your right hand." Ilene obeyed her. Antoinette took hold of Ilene’s right wrist as the palm of her hand was outstretched. Not long afterwards, a few clouds could be seen moving inside the crystal ball. The clouds were travelling around the middle of the inner rim of the crystal ball in an anti-clockwise direction. The pace of the clouds started off slow and then gradually picked up in speed until they were circling inside their contained environment at a fast speed that would have been hard for any human eye to catch up with. Although the clouds were moving very fast, Ilene’s eyes were fixed on them as her level of awareness managed to keep up to speed with their movement. As Ilene appeared to be fixed in a state of trance, Antoinette used the skull to remove the crystal ball from its’ position. Ilene immediately reacted to this by looking at Antoinette in a state of shock.

“What did you do that for?” She asked.

“I was simply releasing you from your state of trance.”

Antoinette lifted up Ilene’s hand very slightly as she continued to hold onto her wrist. “If you want me to know where your fortune lies, you need to be silent and still.” Antoinette used her forefinger to trace the lines on the palm of Ilene’s hand. As this was happening, Ilene could feel an invisible force making contact with her hand. A tingling sensation could be felt directly below her hand. Although she felt like raising an objection to Antoinette, she decided to obey the request that was made of her. As the forefinger of Antoinette’s right hand was slowly passing over each line within the palm of Ilene’s hand, Antoinette was waving her other hand in the air in various directions. She continued to do this, until her forefinger stopped at an upward curve that jutted from a horizontal line, a third of the way up from the top of the palm.

“How I pity you? You were so close to reaching a higher state but failed to reach it.”

“What did you see?”

“I saw you in a room with other people. You were all meditating in the lotus position until a magical portal appeared at the end of the room that your group was facing. An invisible force prevented everyone except one woman from entering the portal. Not long afterwards, I saw that same woman return without mentioning her experience to everyone else. She came back with something inside her bag. Do you desire to know what was in her bag?”



“No, I just want to be able to enter that portal and come back like she did.”

Antoinette opened a drawer that was underneath the desk and took out a small grey colored skull charm which she placed near the crystal ball. “This charm will give you the power to know what she knows, to do what she can do.”

“How will it help me?”

“You need to come from behind her when she is not aware of your presence and circle the charm behind her head seven times.”

“How long will it take for this to work?”

“That same night, the spirits associated with the charm will take her power away from her and give it to you.”

Meryl picked up a collection of pamphlets that were left on a table in the games room. They ranged from advertising for natural remedies to beauty care products with the exception of one of them. The odd one was a pamphlet for Mystique Fortune Tellers in Sauvignon. She opened up the pamphlet and looked inside at the various services offered such as stress therapy, therapy using charms and a program for reaching enlightenment. When Ilene returned home, Meryl held the pamphlet out in front of her.

“That doesn’t belong to me.” Ilene said.

“Are you sure about that?”

“Yes, you know I’m not interested in those things. Melanie must have left it behind.”

Meryl briefly thought of the possibility that Melanie, a friend of theirs, may have been responsible for the pamphlet but shook her head.

“Why didn’t you answer my call and texts in the last few hours?”

“I’ve been busy with Michel. I’m trying to bring us back together.”

“It was only three weeks ago that you told me you don’t want to see him again.”

“My situation is hard to explain. You know what it’s like. Once your feelings for a guy resurface, it’s hard to take them away.”

“If it isn’t yours, I’m throwing it in the bin.” Meryl immediately did what she said she would do.

Later that night as Meryl was busy watching a comedy on television, Ilene circled the skull charm around the back of her head seven times before going to bed in the hope that she would attain whatever knowledge or power that was present in Meryl. As Ilene rested in her bed with the sheets covering her body, she was unable to close her eyes. Her previous level of curiosity was being replaced with feelings of regret. Ilene’s conscience was being weighed down by guilt over her actions through the course of the day. Her betrayal of both Meryl and the White Lotus Society were confronting her with the betrayal of Meryl being the hardest to endure. *What did Meryl do to deserve this?* Ilene could not come up with an answer to her own question. The only thing she could do was to allow her mind to replay the wrong deeds she committed from one act of deceit to another. Her denials about the pamphlet, her false accusation against Melanie and her invocation of a charm against Meryl were making her feel very low. She was no longer interested in gaining the power that was achieved by Meryl on that morning session with the White Lotus Society, but Ilene was convinced deep down

inside of her that once the power was transferred to her, it would stay in place.

In her anxiety, Ilene lifted herself out of bed and left the room. Entering the games room, she collected a handful of darts and took aim at the bull's eye. The first two throws hit the outer circle while the third throw completely missed the board. It immediately became clear to Ilene that nothing was working right. Her attempt to remove the guilt of her actions from her mind was already failing. Ilene thought very hard about her situation as she contemplated how her guilt could either be removed or even become less than it already was. As she continued to search for answers to her problem, an idea came to her head. She thought about the charm and its' power and logically concluded that destroying the charm would probably destroy her guilt. Ilene passed from the games room to the lounge room and was ready to break the charm in half and throw it in the bin. Upon entrance into the lounge room, Ilene saw smoking coming out between the two doors of a wardrobe. Ilene immediately knew the source of the smoke. It was coming from the charm. She opened the wardrobe doors and stared at the charm for several seconds.

Being aware of the duty that was required of her, Ilene reached out for the charm but as soon as her fingers made contact with it, she felt tremendous physical pain. It was like a drop of boiling hot oil falling on her skin. Ilene felt like screaming out but held herself back so as not to wake up Meryl. She quickly ran to the kitchen where she used a tap to run cold water on her fingers. Despite her experience of misfortune, Ilene was still determined to destroy the charm. The guilt plaguing her was outweighing her own physical pain. After having cooled herself down with the running water for at least ten minutes, Ilene took out a pair of baking gloves from the draw. She persuaded herself that she needed to return to the games room as soon as possible, however, by the time that Ilene was back there, the room was already half full with smoke. She opened a few windows to let the smoke out before returning her attention to the charm. Ilene picked it up with the bakers' gloves and brought the charm to the shed where she placed it on the ground and took hold of a hammer. She swung the hammer back over her head and was ready to bring it down on the charm until the hammer became a lot heavier. It became so heavy that she dropped it behind her back.

*What's going on?* Ilene could not understand how a hammer could suddenly become so much heavier in the space of a few seconds. As the hammer was an ordinary instrument without any supernatural powers unlike the charm, Ilene was perplexed as to how it could change. The only possible answer she could come up with was to suggest that the charm could have power over the hammer. *Could there be a living being inside it?* Ilene realized that if the question she raised could be true, the possible entity living in the charm would have to be truly evil. Ilene walked toward the charm, ready to kick it until she could feel a flashlight glowing in her eyes. She turned toward the source of the light and saw three people staring at her from the door of the shed. A woman holding a flashlight was flanked by two men with knives in their hands. The woman was Antoinette.

"I wouldn't get near it if I were you." Antoinette said.

"What are you doing here?" Ilene asked.



“I’ve come to collect you and Meryl.”

“Why are you doing this?”

“For the same reason that you came to see me.”

The two men dropped their knives and sprung into Ilene so fast that she was not even able to scream before one of them covered her mouth with his hand while the other one proceeded with the task of tying up both her hands and feet. Soon afterwards, Ilene’s mouth was gagged as she noticed the men leaving the room. A few minutes later, both Ilene and Meryl were dumped into the back of van where they were blindfolded. They were not given the chance to see either themselves or their surroundings until their gags were removed in what appeared to be a cellar where the only form of light was a globe that was dangling in the air from a wire that was connected to the ceiling. Both Ilene and Meryl were tied onto wooden chairs with their hands behind their backs. Feelings of regret returned to Ilene as she was convinced that the charm was the instrument that led Antoinette to her home on account of a clear knowledge that nothing regarding her residence was given to Antoinette. To add to this, Ilene’s residence was a government restricted location only known to family and friends. The charm would have been the only conceivable of means of finding her as she saw it in front of her eyes once again. It was placed on a table where Antoinette and the two men were seated directly in front of both Ilene and Meryl. One of the men left the table and removed the gags from both women. Ilene responded with silence while Meryl reacted to her surroundings as one who was in a state of shock by looking around the room before turning her attention to Antoinette.

“Who are you people? Why are doing this to us?”

“We need information from you.” Antoinette answered.

“I don’t have any information, you’ve got the wrong people.”

“I don’t think so.” Antoinette gazed briefly at Ilene before returning her attention to Meryl.

“Your friend reported you to me.”

Meryl turned her head towards Ilene. “How could you do this?”

“I made a mistake, I’m sorry.”

Meryl reacted to this by shaking her head in disgust. Antoinette left the table and walked towards Ilene and Meryl with the charm in her hands.

“Tell me what you know!”

“No, I’m not telling you anything.” Meryl responded.

“If you don’t give me what I need, I’ll suffocate you to death.”

Meryl was silent.

“I’m giving you one last chance.” After these words were spoken, smoke was coming out of the charm. It was spreading in the direction of both Ilene and Meryl. Meryl pretended not to be affected by the fumes she inhaled while Ilene was coughing.

“Meryl, give her the information before we die.”

Meryl simply ignored her as Antoinette turned around and left the room with the men following behind her. After their departure from the room, the smoke from the charm was rapidly increasing. As it spread throughout the room, Ilene was crying out for help while

Meryl remained silent. Being convinced that she was going to die, Meryl persuaded herself to accept her fate. As she saw the agony on Ilene's face and the tears falling down her cheeks, Meryl remained calm. She firmly made up her mind that she would rather die in a relaxed state than perish in a state of psychological torment. With a cloud of smoke becoming even thicker in front of her eyes, Meryl was beginning to feel drowsy. She simply closed her eyes with the belief that she would never see this world again.

Meryl woke up to see herself in another room. Both her hands and feet were tied up on the same chair as before. As she looked in front of herself, she saw someone else. It was Antoinette. She was seated on a table with a crystal ball in her hands. Antoinette left the table with the crystal ball and crouched down in front of Meryl as images were appearing inside the crystal ball. Meryl gazed into it. She saw an image of herself in her previous profession as a weaver of silk. Meryl saw herself twisting individual threads of raw silk before doubling two or more of them together and then twisting them again before the crystal ball was restored to its normal condition of being transparent. Antoinette smiled at her.

"Fortunately for you, this crystal ball gathered all the information I needed while you were asleep."

"I don't believe you."

"Really?"

"Yes, the only information you've got is what you've showed me."

Antoinette lifted herself and paced around the room. "If that's all the information I gained, you won't react to what I'm able to say."

"Say it!"

"I've found your elixir of youth."

Meryl looked away from Antoinette and cast her head down toward the floor. She was unable to speak as her features were filled with grief.

"My discovery is proof that my words are true. I know everything about you, especially your brief trip to Hyper Silesia."

Meryl returned her attention to Antoinette. "You've got to return the elixir to me. I don't want to live this life looking old."

"If you want it back, you have to comply with my wishes."

"What do you want of me?"

"I need you to weave silk and do other jobs."

"I'll do it as long as you return my elixir."

"I won't return the bottle, I'll share its contents with you. You know the bottle never dries up."

"Where's Ilene?"

"Ilene?" Antoinette shook her head. "I thought she betrayed?"

"She's still my friend."

"Don't worry about her, she's alive. I'll use her like I use you."

Soon after these words were spoken, the same two men as before, entered the room where they untied Meryl and led her down a corridor to a room with various instruments for



the making of silk. Antoinette and one of the men left the room while the other man stayed behind with a gun in his hand.

“You know what your job is. Start doing it.”

“Aren’t I going to get anything to eat or drink?”

“Antoinette will decide on that. Just do your job.” He took hold of a hand held electric steamer and gave it to Meryl along with a piece of paper outlining the duties she was required to do. “Steam the silk at the other end of the room. After that, read the instructions I’ve given you.”

Meryl responded by doing as she was told to do. She gently stroked each cocoon of silk with the electric steamer several times. After this, she unwound the filaments from four cocoons at once to make a single thread and continued on with this process for every single thread that she would make. As Meryl did her job, she took a look back at that man through the corner of her eye. He was still holding his gun. After two hours, Meryl had made a sufficient amount of threads to fill a basket. She read through her instructions and proceeded to the middle of the room where she placed individual threads of raw silk on a rack where they were twisted into pairs or groups of three and then twisted again until a large rectangular cloth was made after another two hours of work. Without warning, the man snatched the cloth from Meryl and placed it over a large frame that was a little bit smaller than the size of a door. The cloth fitted perfectly over the frame as the man smiled with approval. The man picked the cloth up and placed it over his shoulder before grabbing hold of Meryl with one hand and pointing a gun at her with the another hand.

“You’ll be coming with me.”

“Where are you taking me?”

“Don’t ask questions, just do what you’re told.”

After being led down several corridors, the man took Meryl into what appeared to be a temple. They walked down an isle with pews on both sides of them. In front of them was a sanctuary where an idol was set up on a throne. It was a female version of the grim reaper on account of it having breasts and hair flowing underneath its’ mantel. The sight of a skeletal face with human hair on its’ head made Meryl uncomfortable. She reacted to its’ appearance by walking with her head bowed down. As soon as they reached the foot of the sanctuary, Antoinette appeared from out of a side door with a crown in her hands. She placed the crown on the head of the idol and walked toward Meryl and that man.

“This is a very special day for you.”

Meryl shook her head fiercely. “No, I don’t support evil.”

“What makes you think this is evil?”

“You’re worshiping a devil.”

“We worship Time.”



Meryl was about to interject Antoinette until she saw that man pointing the end of a gun into her face. Antoinette placed a hand on the man's shoulder.

"You don't need to go that far. We can still use her." She put her hand out. "Can I have my cloth?"

The man responded by giving Antoinette the piece of cloth before she returned to the sanctuary. She lifted up an empty frame that was about the exact same size as the one in the silk making room and used sticky tape to attach the silk cloth to the frame before ringing a bell. Soon afterwards, another man appeared with two transparent glass buckets which he placed on the floor before leaving the room. The buckets were about three quarters full with one containing leaves and the other one containing human blood. Antoinette took out a wand and started chanting in a foreign dialect in front of the statue. After this was done, she placed the frame on the ground and poured the contents of the bucket of blood onto the frame and then did the same with the bucket of leaves. She rang the bell once more. That other man entered the sanctuary once again with Antoinette's skull charm and a container that Meryl was familiar with. It was her own bottle containing the elixir of youth. Meryl was about to protest until she felt the point of a gun protruding into her back. For the next few minutes, Antoinette was singing a song in that same dialect to her goddess as smoke was coming out of the charm. After the song was over, she placed a few drops of the elixir of youth onto the frame. The frame was immediately transformed into a mirror as everyone except Meryl erupted in song to a goddess.

Meryl woke up to see herself in bed. Sitting on a chair directly opposite her was that same man with a gun in his hand. She gazed around the room. It was different from the others in regard to its' banality. It was completely plain without any decorations. The only furniture there consisted of the bed Meryl slept on as well as a few chairs and a table. She noticed a sliding door leading to a toilet at the far end of the room.

"I'll need to go to the toilet."

The man pointed to the sliding door. "That's the toilet over there. Don't be too long."

Leaving the bed, Meryl entered the toilet and closed the door behind her. She turned on the tap and drank straight from it. It was such a great relief for her to taste water for the first time since arriving at her place of imprisonment. After she used the toilet, memories were coming back to her. She recalled her captors singing to their goddess as something unusual happened to the mirror. She saw a brief sparkle come out of its' top right hand corner. It was shortly after seeing this that Meryl passed out. *Why did I pass out?* This question kept recurring in her mind until she remembered her trip to Hyper Silesia. That sparkle was the same kind of sparkle that she saw inside her mind while she was meditating at a group meeting of the Lotus Society before a portal opened up to give her entrance into Hyper Silesia. After entering that world, Meryl recalled seeing those same kinds of sparkles in a mountainous region where she found a bottle of the elixir of youth. She realized that although the mirror had been transformed into an instrument of evil, it still retained some good from the drops of the elixir which completed its transformation. After Meryl thought more carefully about her situation, an idea came to her head. She closed her eyes and



searched through her mind, hoping to find traces of the sparkle which knocked her out. After a few seconds, she found a glimmer of this same sparkle within the depths of her mind and opened her eyes. Leaving the toilet, Meryl walked straight up to the man.

“I’ve got a speck in my eye. Can you help me?”

“No, that’s not my problem.”

“Just have a look. Maybe you can take it out.”

“O.K., I’ll have a look.”

The man pulled himself close to Meryl and looked directly into her eyes. As he did so, a sparkle was emitted from out of Meryl’s right eye. The man immediately took a few steps backward and dropped his gun. He shouted out the word ‘bitch’ before Meryl took hold of a chair and struck him across the head with it, knocking him out. She searched through his pockets and found a swipe card and various keys, including a key for a corvette. Meryl then used a pillow case and bed sheets to gag the man and tie up both his hands and feet before using a key to leave the room. From there, she walked down a flight of stairs into a courtyard. In the middle of it, she saw a gazebo with that same mirror that was recently created. To Meryl’s astonishment, the mirror appeared to have the figure of a human being inside of it. As Meryl walked toward the gazebo, the appearance of the figure in the mirror, become clearer to her vision, amidst an atmosphere of nighttime darkness surrounding her. It was Ilene. Reaching the mirror, Meryl held onto the left and right sides of the frame with both her hands as the figure of Ilene appeared to be asleep.

“Wake up, Ilene. It’s Meryl.”

Ilene opened her eyes and looked at Meryl. “How did you make it here?”

“I escaped.”

“Don’t worry about me, leave before they find you.”

“Do you know the way out?”

“No, I’ve got no idea. Just leave before it’s too late.”

Meryl heeded Ilene’s advice by turning around and running in the opposite direction from whence she came. Past the courtyard, Meryl found herself in a car park with five different cars. One of them was a red corvette. She entered it, turned the car on and drove toward an exit gate. To her own disappointment, the gate suddenly closed. Not being deterred by this occurrence, Meryl put her foot on the accelerator in the hope of smashing the gate until the car stopped abruptly. Her foot was still on the accelerator but it would not work. Looking around her, she saw a black cloud enveloping the car before one of its doors was opened up. Meryl felt herself being pulled by a hand. The next thing that she was aware of was the sight of Antoinette and a few men looking down on her as she lay on the ground with a sore back. Antoinette was smiling.

“I’m going to make you suffer like you’ve never suffered before.”

After hearing these words, Meryl was filled with regret. She wished that she never stopped to talk to Ilene. Now it was too late for her to regret that mistake. As the cloud of black smoke was increasing in size around her captors and herself, Meryl knew that her next suffering would be far worse than any other previous experience in her life.