

Mirror

Written by

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Outline

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MALLORY (12), sits at the kitchen table in her home, eating cereal. Her mother, LISA (40's), sits across from her, sipping coffee and looking out the window. The sun is shining.

MALLORY

Mom?

LISA

Yes, honey?

MALLORY

Why isn't your hair red?

LISA

(pause)

It just isn't. Little twists in my DNA that you don't have, maybe.

MALLORY

Was dad's hair red?

LISA

He didn't have any.

She looks back out the window.

MALLORY

I read in one of my books that hair colour can be different from your parents. So like, you have dark hair, and I have red hair, and mine is curly, and yours is straight.

Mallory pauses.

MALLORY

Was dad's hair curly?

LISA

(she flinches, annoyed)

I just said he didn't have any. What are you reading anyways?

MALLORY

A book on human biology! I got tired of reading fake things so I decided to learn some more about science.

LISA  
You're too nosy for your own good.

MALLORY  
Am not! I just like to learn.

Mallory pauses. She swirls her spoon in the grey milk leftover from her cereal, frustrated.

MALLORY (CON'T)  
Besides, you won't let me do anything else.

Lisa sets her coffee down and looks at Mallory. Like her daughter, she's frustrated.

LISA  
Because I want to keep you safe.

MALLORY  
More like imprisoned.

LISA  
Mallory! This is not a prison, this is your home.

MALLORY  
Yeah, but why can't I go to a normal school? You can barely teach me math, and you don't like science.

LISA  
Oh, so now it's my teaching skills? Do you want me to take away your books?

MALLORY  
No! I just...

She pauses again. Lisa stares.

MALLORY  
Momma, I want to go somewhere. I can't stay here forever, I'm almost 13.

Lisa laughs out loud. Mallory slams her spoon on the table.

MALLORY  
This isn't funny! You don't let me do anything! I don't even have friends! All the characters in my books, they have friends!

LISA

Don't talk to me that way, I am your mother! You are a child! So you read books, you think you can handle the outside world?

Lisa stands and begins to walk towards Mallory.

LISA

You want friends, Mallory? You want to build these relationships with love and care and trust, only to have them leave? They all leave. That's what I'm protecting you from. And if they don't leave, they deceive and cheat and use you until they can't anymore. Is that what you want?

Mallory says nothing. She stares at her bowl.

LISA

(louder)

Look at me! Is that what you want?

MALLORY

(tearfully)

No! I just...

Mallory starts to cry. Lisa softens immediately, wrapping her arms around her daughter.

LISA

Honey, I'm sorry. I just love you so much. I know it's hard, trust me, I have been through it all.

MALLORY

I'm lonely momma. I'm bored and lonely. All I do is read. What happens when I get older?

LISA

What if I took you to the store for a treat? Would you like that?

MALLORY

(smiling)

Yes! I would like that very much!

LISA

Okay baby. Let's braid your hair

first, what kind of style would you like?

MALLORY

I think I want French.

2 INT. LISA'S ROOM - DAY

2

Mallory is staring at herself in her mother's mirror. She touches her cheek, running her fingers along the beauty mark on the right side of her face. She twirls an orange curl around her finger. Lisa comes out of the washroom with a hair brush and two elastics.

LISA

Sweetie, can you grab the mirror from my nightstand drawer? I'm going to switch the laundry loads before we leave.

Lisa exits. Mallory walks over to the drawer, opening the top one. She shifts items around while looking for the mirror, stopping once she sees the glimmer of the silver handle. She picks it up, noticing a brown folder, and since her mother isn't there to tell her no, decides to investigate it.

She opens the top, dumping out various documents and what looks to be a birth certificate. Mallory picks up the document, and the name on it reads: ANGELINE FINNEGAN.

She then sees the cut out of an old newspaper article.

MALLORY

(reading article headline)

"A woman is left widowed and childless after horrific highway collision".

Mallory holds the paper in her hands, staring at it. She is trying to make sense of these items.

LISA

(O.S.)

Sweetie, what colour hat do you want to wear? I'll grab it now!

MALLORY

(scrambling to put items away)

The green one! Please!

Mallory quietly shuts the drawer, sitting on the bed with her legs crossed. A moment later, Lisa walks into the room, hat

in hand.

LISA

Ready?

3 INT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

3

Mallory sits in the passenger seat with Lisa beside her. She looks up at her mom, smiling. Lisa puts the car in park and looks at Mallory, smiling back.

LISA

I'll be right back, okay? You want strawberry?

Mallory nods. Lisa smiles and kisses her forehead.

LISA

Stay put.

Lisa exits the car and Mallory watches her walk to the entrance. She looks at all of the people outside the car, focusing on the young kids with their friends. She frowns, looking down at her shoes. They look brand new, having barely been worn.

Mallory looks back up at the kids walking in and out of the store. Seeing the other kids her age walking with no parents, she feels courageous. She undoes her belt, opens the car door, and steps out.

Mallory hesitates, looking back up at the people, but shuts the door behind her anyway. She walks to the entrance of the grocery store, slightly overwhelmed at all that's around her. She walks into the store and is greeted by STORE ASSOCIATE.

STORE ASSOCIATE

Hello!

Mallory smiles shyly but keeps walking, too nervous to talk to him.

She sees a board off to the side full of photos. Curious, she gets closer, noticing all the photos are children. One of the pictures has the same name Mallory saw on the birth certificate: ANGELINE FINNEGAN.

The little girl in the photo has bright, curly red hair, a big toothy smile, and a freckle on her right cheek. All the exact same features as Mallory. She then turns her head to bright red letters that read "MISSING" above the board.

Mallory then turns her head to the convex mirror tucked in the corner near the board, examining herself. Her red hair on fire under the cap, her freckle sparkling on her cheek. She looks back at Angeline's photo.

STORE ASSOCIATE

Is your mom around?

Mallory jumps, turning to face the associate. He looks at the board behind her, pausing, and looks back at the Mallory.

MALLORY

Uh, I... she's in the store. She'll be back soon.

STORE ASSOCIATE

(Gently)

Here, why don't you come with me?  
We'll call her from our office.

MALLORY

I'm not sure, my mom--

LISA

(yelling)

Mallory!

Lisa emerges from the checkout and grabs Mallory's hand.

LISA

(to the associate)

I'm so sorry! She's my daughter.

The associate stares at Lisa. Mallory is looking at the photo again. Lisa follows her gaze and notices the board behind them. Her eyes widen.

STORE ASSOCIATE

Ma'am, with all due respect, you don't--

LISA

Don't what?! Look like her mother? I AM her mother!

Lisa pulls Mallory's hand, but Mallory doesn't move, neither does the associate. Mallory lifts her head to look at her mother.

MALLORY

(calm)

Even the store guy thinks we don't look alike.

LISA

What?

MALLORY

I don't look like you. I look like her.

Mallory points to the board. Lisa's face goes blank.

STORE ASSOCIATE

Sweetie, if this isn't your mom, you can come with me and we'll call--

LISA

(to the associate)

This doesn't concern you!

MALLORY

Who is that, mom?

Lisa says nothing. The associate pulls out a walkie-talkie and speaks into it, inaudible.

MALLORY

Why do you have her name in your nightstand?

LISA

(turning her head back to Mallory)

What?

MALLORY

The paper with her name! I found it in that folder, with the news article. Why do you have it?

Mallory looks at the board again.

MALLORY

She looks like me.

Mallory lets go of Lisa's hand, backing away. She sees a man dressed like a cop walking towards them. His vest reads 'SECURITY'.



LISA  
(frazzled, angry)  
You were supposed to wait in the car!

MALLORY  
(quietly)  
You weren't supposed to lie to me.

Lisa stares at Mallory, reaching her hand out, but Mallory backs away again. She isn't scared of the grocery store, or all of the noise, or all of the strange people. She's scared of Lisa.

LISA  
(nervous)  
Mallory?

She stares at Lisa for a moment. The tension cuts both of them like a knife. Mallory opens her mouth and lets out a scream.

CUT TO: BLACK