# THE MIRROR

EMMY LI

SHE WAS ALREADY DRIFTING OFF TO SLEEP, eyelids drooping. The lowered sound of the TV in the background and the continuous pattering of rain on the roof seemed to fade as the world went fuzzy.

Just as she was about to doze off, a sharp knock on the door awakened her from her reverie. She flinched violently, jumping up from the couch, heart pounding. Her eyes shifted over to the door, where another knock followed.

"W-who is this?"

A pause. Then, a voice spoke. "Hello? Is there an Amelia that lives here?"

The voice from behind the door was faint and muted, but it was quite high-pitched and obviously a girl's. Amelia's mind whirled as she wondered who could have come to her house.

"Yeah . . . what do you want with her?" Her voice was shaky, giving away her obvious discomfort.

The girl behind the door stayed silent for a little while. The only noise was the consistent drumming of rain. Then, she spoke again. Her cheery voice rang through the empty house. "I assume this is Amelia I'm speaking to. Uh . . . it's kind of hard to explain. Once you open the door, it'll be obvious. The best explanation I can give is that we look . . . kind of similar?"

"What?" Amelia furrowed her brow, confused. *We look* kind of *similar? What kind of excuse is that?*

At this point, the knocking grew more impatient. "Hurry up, I'm freezing out here. And don't you dare think of leaving me out here after I gave up everything for you." This time, the voice had a malicious edge to it. Amelia shivered as a draft of cold air seemed to come from nowhere.

"Excuse me, I have every right to leave you out there. You're a complete stranger." But even as she said this, she edged closer to the door, albeit staring at it warily.

THE MAILER REVIEW, VOL. 15, NO. 1, FALL 2021. Copyright © 2021. The Norman Mailer Society. Published by The Norman Mailer Society.

There was pounding on the door this time. "Let me in."

Then silence. It seemed like the girl had realized she was acting quite weirdly, because she had quickly corrected herself. "Please? It's actually really important, and I've been waiting for *so, so* long . . ."

Against her better judgment, Amelia put her hand on the doorknob. It was freezing cold, and she winced. "Alright. I hope this is worth my time . . ." she muttered to herself.

Although she only pulled open the door a little bit, a gust of wind caught the opening door and it swung backwards, hitting the wall with a loud thump. A burst of lightning flashed across the sky, dancing between the clouds. In that moment, Amelia saw something . . . quite curious.

"Who . . . are you?" Amelia froze. There was no way that this could be possible. Standing in front of her was an exact replica of herself. She seemed to be looking in a mirror. The same, sparkling-brown eyes that she saw every day staring back at her in the bathroom mirror was right in front of her. Soft, brown locks fell from her shoulders, and she even had the same short ring finger on her right hand.

Amelia's heart jumped up to her throat, and she started to shut the door. The girl hastily stuck her foot inside the doorframe. "Wait, wait! Hear me out. Hi, I'm Cassandra! Can I come in and talk for a while? Please? I have nowhere to go tonight, I was really hoping you would let me stay over."

She tried to pry the door open, and seeing as that wouldn't work, sighed and stepped back. Her foot, however, still kept the door open.

"I know it's a lot to take in, but if you would just let me in, I'll explain everything."

There was a pause as Amelia considered it. Then, with a heavy sigh, she opened the door once more and beckoned the girl who was soaking from the rain to come inside. Cassandra beamed and bounced in. It seemed that they were the complete opposite; Amelia was silent and observant, while Cassandra seemed to not have a care in the world, always happy and bubbly.

"Oh, I forgot to mention, you can just call me Cass. All my friends do." She plopped down on the couch as if she already owned the place. Amelia frowned. That movement perfectly copied hers; it reminded her of many afternoons coming home from school, casually throwing her books onto the table.

Sighing once again, and going to the other chair, Amelia asked, "So, why are you here? And how do you know me? Or my address?"

Cass's eyes shone so bright, they were like stars. "Well, I found your picture on this website! And I was, like, so amazed that, like, you and me were the same! I just had to do a bit of digging around and I found you! I have school off back where I live, so I decided to come meet you. I mean, wouldn't it be *so* cool to meet your doppelganger? This way I can tell ALL my friends back home that I got to meet another me!"

Cass said this all very fast, so it was hard to understand, but Amelia got the gist of it. So *that's* what happened, huh? It makes sense. Cass seemed like a nice person, so she'd let her stay a couple of days.

"Wait, you decided to travel all this way by yourself to meet me? I'm flattered," Amelia cracked. Cass giggled hysterically, as if that was the funniest thing ever. "Why wouldn't I want to see what my doppelganger's life is like? It would be so cool!"

"Well Cass, it's your lucky day today. I don't have school either, so you're free to stay." Amelia grinned, happy to have someone to spend her lonely days with. Cass squealed, hugging Amelia like they were already best friends despite only meeting just a couple moments ago.

"Come on, let's have an official welcome party!"

It's been six days already. Every day the girls had lots of fun, visiting all the places around the area, sleeping late and waking up late. They ate whenever they wanted, wherever they wanted, whatever they wanted. Cass had asked many, many questions, both about her personal life and about everything around her. At this point, Amelia was pretty sure Cass had the passwords to pretty much everything she had.

"Hey Ami, I'm going to go to the bathroom. Be right back!" Cass called over her shoulder as she headed out, closing the door softly. The light in the room flickers and then stabilizes again. Amelia didn't spare it a second glance; it had been winking on and off all day. The weather was turning bad again; that's why they were inside today.

The weather was oddly reminiscent. Amelia looked up through the window, where the cold, dreary sky seemed to mope around, dripping tears all over the ground. The rain, buffeted by the heavy wind, seemed to rain down like little pellets on the glass of the window.

She leaned back, shutting off her phone and placing it on the table in one swift motion. Her eyes shut and she sat there, thinking about everything that had changed this past week.

Come to think of it, how did Cass even find her? She didn't think she'd ever given her address out anywhere on the internet . . . even if she had a massive fanbase on social media, didn't mean she wasn't careful with personal information on the internet.

Just then, Cass came back. "I'm back," she said offhandedly, and plopped down on the floor, picking up her phone.

"Hey . . . Cass?" Amelia wasn't sure if she wanted to ask this question.

"What's up?"

"Can I ask you something?" There was a pause.

"Sure, anything!" Cass put down her phone slowly, swinging her piercing gaze to Amelia. They made eye contact for almost a full minute, and Amelia was slightly unnerved. From day one, she had noticed that Cass had an unusually intense stare. Her brown eyes were much sharper than Amelia's soft, hazel eyes.

"How . . . how exactly did you find me? I don't recall having given my address anywhere. . . . "

There was a tense silence as both girls looked at each other with such distrust. Then, Cass beamed. "Oh, silly, I should have told you! Here, come over to this room, and I'll show you." She stood up, beckoning Amelia over.

Amelia sighed, relieved. If Cass was treating it like no big deal, then maybe it was just her overactive imagination acting up again. She stood up, following Cass to the other room.

In that room, there was a giant mirror. It hung above the bed like a humongous painting. The bed wasn't small, and on both sides of it there were small tables with lamps on each one. There was a closet off to the right.

Cass was already on the bed, studying the mirror closely. When she saw Amelia had followed her, she tugged her onto the bed, staring at the mirror, one hand reaching out to lightly touch the pristine surface of the reflective glass. "Do you see that? It's our reflection. We look exactly the same. Now look closer." She pushed Amelia closer to the mirror. Amelia, her nose an inch from the surface, frowned. She started to straighten up again, but Cass's hand stayed at her neck, firm and unyielding. Amelia could see a sinister grin on her face. "Do you see this? This mirror . . . it will take you someplace else."

With one hard shove, Cass pushed Amelia into the mirror. The mirror seemed to shift around her, encompassing her, enveloping her, drawing her close. Amelia screamed, twisting back, trying to get Cass's hands off her. But

what she hit was not flesh. It was the hard, cool surface of a mirror. And Cass was on the other side.

Shrieking, Amelia banged on the smooth surface of the glass. She tried kicking it, punching it, scratching it; doing everything she could to try to break it. Nothing worked. And on the other side of the mirror, faintly, she heard Cass say coldly, "I'm terribly sorry. If you put up that much of a fight, I might even start feeling guilty about what I've done! But you know, it feels awfully good to be here. I'm sure you wouldn't understand; all your life, you've been coddled. You have no idea what it's like for people who grew up in more . . . unfortunate circumstances."

Amelia tried to reason with Cass with tears in her eyes, but Cass shook her head. Her mask of indifference had started to crumble as she revealed a manic smile. "A pity, really, that it was you. Perhaps if it had been someone less kindhearted, I wouldn't feel this pang in my chest that I do now. But what's done is done, and I can't say I regret it."

Cass had gotten off the bed, maliciously waving goodbye to Amelia. By this time, she had already started wailing against the clear glass, no longer trying to escape. She knew there was no hope.

"Goodbye, Amelia. It was nice knowing you while it lasted."

*Click*. The light went off, and there was the faint sound of the door closing and the lock sliding shut.