

## Reflection

by Gracie Higgs  
Alfred Deakin High School



I stare into the mirror. My face is framed by my hair, standing out in the glass. I blink. My reflection stares back at me, mirroring my movements.

“Are you ready?”

The voice echoes up from downstairs. I jerk my head up, away from the mirror. It’s today.

I look back in the glass and frown. I wish I didn’t have to go. And yet, some things cannot be avoided.

I put on a fake smile, attempting to cover the true emotion within. Cover it up. Don’t let anyone see.

“Put on a happy face. No one will know,” I whisper to my reflection.

To my surprise, the girl standing inside the mirror shakes her head. I step backwards.

“Everyone will know.” She smiles and tilts her head, lips stretching too wide to be normal.

I continue to back away. My heartbeat gets louder and faster, my breathing increases. The reflection in the mirror just gazes at me.

I close my eyes, trying to shut out the world that is closing in on me. I breathe deeply until I have returned to normal.

I open my eyes. The reflection is normal. It looks like me. I frown, it frowns. I wave, it waves. I breathe a sigh of relief.

“Just my imagination,” I say.

“Come on!”

I plaster a smile back onto my face and head downstairs. My sister is next to the door, impatiently tapping her foot.

“Finally. Let’s go.”

She opens the door and steps outside. I follow her. The door swings shut behind me, creaking softly. And of course, it's raining.

The pitter-patter of the droplets falling sounds louder than normal. Our footsteps make small splashing sounds as we walk to the car.

My sister gets in and turns the key, starting the engine. I open the door and stop.

A puddle has formed at my feet. My reflection stares up at me. I brush my hair out of my face and smile. The reflection smiles back.

I start to get into the car but something makes me hesitate. The reflection in the puddle is smiling, her teeth growing sharper and her lips stretching to the side of her face.

A drop of water hits the face and it ripples out of existence. I shake my head and jump into the car, afraid.

It's my imagination. I tell myself over and over. Just my imagination...

The car backs out of the driveway. My sister taps a button and the radio blasts at us, drowning out the rain. We cruise down the street, music blaring. I gaze out of the window, pretending to be watching the rain.

But truly, I am thinking. Deep in thought, the face of my reflection swimming in and out of my mind.

Everyone will know.

What had she meant by that? What had I meant by that? The car comes to a stop and I get out, still remembering the face that had been burned into my mind.

My sister gets out of the car and comes around to stand next to me.

"Are you ready?" she asks for the second time.

I put on a happy face and look at her. I nod, beaming. But I am not ready. I am not happy or okay.

We head inside the building but I stop my sister before we enter the room.

"I... I need to go to the bathroom quickly."

I turn and briskly walk down the hall before she answers. I glance back and see her open the door and enter the room. I start to run. I dash through the corridors until I finally come to a stop outside the bathroom.

My hand rests on the doorknob. I am torn between getting answers and doing the right thing. The rain increases, pounding heavily above me, and I make my decision. I yank open the door and walk inside.

There it is. My reflection. Mirroring me in the glass. My smile slides off my face. I approach the mirror, cautiously reaching towards it.

The girl on the other side of the glass reaches towards me, and our hands meet on either side of the mirror. She grabs my hand, reaching out of the glass.

She scowls. Glaring at me, she starts to pull me inside the mirror. I place the other hand on the wall to attempt to stop her, but she is too strong and her grip is too tight.

“WAIT!” I scream. My voice echoes around the room, bouncing everywhere. I squeeze my eyes shut, waiting to be dragged into the mirror.

To my surprise, my reflection pauses. Her hand is still clamped around my wrist, but when I open my eyes she is just standing there. I open and close my mouth like a fish, too shocked to speak.

The girl in the mirror glares at me and looks at her other wrist. The meaning is clear. GET ON WITH IT.

“What did you mean? When you... you said ‘everyone will know’?” The words blurt out before I can stop them.

She smiles. For a moment I think I’m free, but then her grip tightens and she drags me inside the mirror. My scream is drowned out as I enter the reflected world.

I am lying on the floor. Or in the air. I can’t tell in this dimension. All I can see is black. Everything, absolutely everything is black. I get to my feet and turn around. A large square of glass is suspended above me.

And on the other side of the glass is my reflection. No, I am her reflection now. She grins at me, then whispers.

“Put on a happy face.”

I fall to my knees, terrified, tears streaming down my face. I will not put on a happy face. Not anymore.

Thoughts rush through my mind, not lingering long enough for me to process what they are. What just happened? Why? Suddenly, I hear a door open and then close.

“Is anything wrong?”

I blink and look through the square. My sister is standing next to ex-mirror-me, chatting.

“Everything is fine. Let’s go.”

I run to the square and press my hands against the glass. Why can’t I get out? Why won’t my sister see me? I watch, helpless, as my sister walks out of the room, leaving me alone.

Nothing more than a reflection.