

Reflections
A play
by
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Characters:

ELIZA: The stereotype of a teenage girl. She goes to high school, complains about homework, and hates herself.

MIRROR ELIZA: Eliza's reflection. She hates Eliza.

Setting:

The play begins in Eliza's room set in the middle of a thrust stage. In the center is a rectangular frame in the shape of a full-length mirror with a small pedestal on either side of it. There is no glass in it. Eliza sleeps on a single bed in a room downstage of the mirror. Casual contemporary clothes are littered around the stage in boxes or drawers along with a few scattered tubes of lipstick and mascara. On the upstage side of the mirror frame there is an identical room. There is a pedestal on either side of the frame.

(An alarm clock beeps on the bedside table. From under the sheets Eliza's arm creeps out to press the snooze button. The Eliza on the other side of the mirror does the same. Their movements are perfectly synchronized. Both of them, on either side of the mirror wake, stretch, yawn, and inch their feet over the side of the bed. They stand, grab identical clothes and makeup from the floor and make their way over to the mirror frame. Eliza stands in front of it downstage of the frame, her back to the audience, the pedestal in front of her. Mirror Eliza stands across from her on the pedestal.)

ELIZA

Goodmorning.

MIRROR ELIZA

Goodmorning. Why did you get up?

ELIZA

It's time to go to school.

MIRROR ELIZA

Why bother? Then you'll have to see everyone else. And you know what they think of you.

ELIZA

My friends are there.

MIRROR ELIZA

Yes. They are so pretty, your friends. Don't you wish you could be more like them?

ELIZA

They are pretty, aren't they?

MIRROR ELIZA

Why yes, of course they are. There are so many pretty people around you. Or are they?

ELIZA

Why wouldn't they be?

MIRROR ELIZA

Well, they could just be pretty in comparison.

ELIZA

In comparison to what?

MIRROR ELIZA

I think you mean in comparison to who. And by who I mean you.

(Eliza shrinks back from the mirror frame and brings her hand up. At the same time so does Mirror Eliza, whose palm is pressed against the invisible glass of the frame. She seems to grow from her high point on the pedestal.)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT.)

Are you really wearing that today?

ELIZA

What's wrong with it?

MIRROR ELIZA

Oh, nothing. I was just making sure that you were actually thinking of wearing that.

ELIZA

Maybe I should pick out something else.

MIRROR ELIZA

No, I don't think you should. I don't think anything else will be much of an improvement.

ELIZA

Oh.

(They dress together in silence on opposite sides of the frame. They dress in perfect symmetry, Eliza pulling on her pants at the same time Mirror Eliza does. They turn back to the mirror frame to examine themselves.)

MIRROR ELIZA

Jeanie looks so good in pants like these. Don't you wish you looked that nice in pants like these?

ELIZA

I thought I did look nice in these pants.

MIRROR ELIZA

Sure. But don't you wish you looked like Jeanie? She has that cute little gap between her thighs that you don't.

(Both Eliza and Mirror Eliza look down at their legs.)

ELIZA

Oh. I'd never noticed before. I guess she does. Are you sure I shouldn't pick out something different?

MIRROR ELIZA

Of course I'm sure. It won't help anything if you do.

(Eliza nods. They continue to dress in silence. When they've finished, both of them pick up a tube of mascara.)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT.)

God, these lashes are terrible. You're so lucky they invented mascara.

ELIZA

I guess so. I'm pretty lucky.

MIRROR ELIZA

At least that part of you can be improved easily.

ELIZA

What?

MIRROR ELIZA

We should keep getting ready.

ELIZA

Yeah, ok.

(The rest of the morning proceeds in complete silence as the girls get ready, perfectly mirroring each other. When they are dressed and made-up, They turn and walk away from the mirror. At the last second, they both look over their shoulders back towards the mirror at the same time.)

MIRROR ELIZA

Have a good day at school.

ELIZA

Thanks.

(Blackout)

(The stage is reset to be the same as it was when the morning began. The lights lift up and Eliza and Mirror Eliza are both back in bed. The alarm clock beeps and both Eliza and Mirror Eliza's hands reach out to set it to snooze. They wake, stretch, yawn, and repeat yesterday's routine, perfect mirrors of each other. Each scoops up a different pair of clothes and some makeup from the floor before taking their places at the mirror, Eliza behind her pedestal and Mirror Eliza on top of hers.)

ELIZA

Goodmorning.

MIRROR ELIZA

Goodmorning. How was your day yesterday.

ELIZA

It wasn't that great, actually.

(Mirror Eliza leans forward eagerly and Eliza is pulled toward the mirror as if by a mysterious force.)

MIRROR ELIZA

Oh really? Why?

ELIZA

Jeanie was wearing pants like the ones I was wearing yesterday. You were right. She looks very good in them.

MIRROR ELIZA

She does.

ELIZA

And my mascara started to flake off by fourth period. You know how it does, collecting right under my eyes. It made me look like I hadn't slept in weeks.

MIRROR ELIZA

Maybe you should put on some concealer today. You don't want to look like that, it's not attractive.

ELIZA

Yes, you're right.

MIRROR ELIZA

You know who has beautiful skin?

ELIZA

Who?

MIRROR ELIZA

Sarah has beautiful skin. Don't you wish you had skin like Sarah's?

ELIZA

Oh yes.

MIRROR ELIZA

Don't you just hate her for having such beautiful skin?

ELIZA

Well-

MIRROR ELIZA

Don't you?

ELIZA

Yes, I suppose I do.

MIRROR ELIZA

Good. And don't you absolutely hate Jeanie for looking so good in those pants?

ELIZA

Yes. I do hate Jeanie.

(Mirror Eliza smiles. Eliza's lips turn up at the same time, though her smile isn't the same as Mirror Eliza's.)

MIRROR ELIZA

Good. Now, what are you going to wear today?

ELIZA

I was thinking about a dress.

MIRROR ELIZA

Really?

ELIZA

Yeah, I look nice in dresses.

MIRROR ELIZA

Well, I guess it's fine if you think that.

ELIZA

Don't I?

MIRROR ELIZA

If you think so.

ELIZA

Maybe I should change.

MIRROR ELIZA

No, no. Keep the dress. At least no one will be able to see your thighs that way.

(Eliza becomes slightly panicked, looking around her room for an answer)

ELIZA

Oh God, what do you think people think of my thighs? They could all see them yesterday?

(Mirror Eliza looks sympathetic)

MIRROR ELIZA

Maybe just wear dresses from now on.

ELIZA

Yes. Yes, I think I'll do that.

(They dress together. When they are dressed, they both look up. Mirror Eliza grimaces.)

MIRROR ELIZA

Is this the only dress you could wear today?

ELIZA

Well- no- I could- but-

MIRROR ELIZA

But what?

ELIZA

I'll change.

MIRROR ELIZA

You don't have anything better.

ELIZA

That's true. All my clothes are a bit unflattering.

MIRROR ELIZA

Sure, it's the clothes.

ELIZA

Is it me?

MIRROR ELIZA

What do you think?

(They stare at each other, Mirror Eliza staring down at Eliza from her pedestal)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT.)

Don't you have somewhere to be?

ELIZA

I don't want to go.

MIRROR ELIZA

Why did you even bother getting up then?

ELIZA

I don't know.

MIRROR ELIZA

Well, best get going now. Have a good day.

ELIZA

Thanks.

(They turn from the mirror and walk away from it in opposite directions. At the last second, they both turn their heads back to the mirror.)

MIRROR ELIZA

Remember, they can see everything. Every little flaw. You're lucky you have me here.

ELIZA

Yes. I am lucky.

(They turn their heads back away. Blackout.)

(The stage is reset to the way it was that morning. The lights lift and both Eliza and Mirror Eliza are back in bed. The alarm clock beeps and just like the two mornings before it is set to snooze by a hand

creeping out of a blanket. Both girls rise from bed, gather clothes but no makeup and head to the mirror.)

ELIZA

Goodmorning.

MIRROR ELIZA

Goodmorning. No makeup today?

ELIZA

No. I don't think it's helping.

MIRROR ELIZA

That's true. I guess that it's hard for anything to help, really.

ELIZA

What's that supposed to mean?

MIRROR ELIZA

It's just that, you know, all of your friends are so pretty that there really is no way for you to compete.

ELIZA

Do you mean that?

MIRROR ELIZA

Of course I do, Eliza! I would never lie to you, not like those kids at school. I'll only ever tell you the truth.

ELIZA

Am I ugly?

MIRROR ELIZA

Oh, you don't know already? You need me to tell you?

ELIZA

No. Please don't.

MIRROR ELIZA

Why don't we get dressed?

ELIZA

I don't think I can.

MIRROR ELIZA

Of course you can, silly. You can't very well go to school naked, can you?

ELIZA

I don't think I can go to school either.

MIRROR ELIZA

You have to. What do you think people will say if you don't show up?

ELIZA

Won't they just think I'm sick?

MIRROR ELIZA

No. No they won't. They'll think you're too scared to show your face at school. They notice these things. After all, everyone is always watching.

ELIZA

Are they always watching? Do they notice that my legs don't look as good as Jeanie's? That my skin isn't as beautiful as Sarah's?

MIRROR ELIZA

Of course they do. They just don't say anything. That's why it's good you have me here to tell you.

ELIZA

I guess so.

MIRROR ELIZA

You guess so?

ELIZA

It's good you're here to tell me what I'm doing wrong.

(Beat)

ELIZA (CONT.)

I hate people who're prettier than me.

MIRROR ELIZA

That's a lot of people, Eliza.

ELIZA

I know.

(They dress together.)

ELIZA (CONT.)

Do I really have to go to school?

MIRROR ELIZA

Yes. You should go now, too. Else you'll be late.

ELIZA

Will people notice if I'm late?

MIRROR ELIZA

People notice everything, don't you know that? They're all waiting for you to slip up.

ELIZA

I see. I'll get going then.

MIRROR ELIZA

I think that would be best.

(They both turn away from the mirror and walk away from it in opposite directions. This time though, it's only Mirror Eliza who turns around. As Eliza walks away Mirror Eliza runs back up to the mirror and sings.)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT.)

Ugly, ugly, ugly, ugly, no one wants you, ugly, ugly.

(Eliza keeps walking. Mirror Eliza gets louder.)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT.)

UGLY, UGLY, UGLY, NO ONE WANTS YOU UGLY, UGLY.

(Eliza begins to run. Mirror Eliza begins to laugh. Blackout. A voice comes from the darkness, a quiet sing-song whisper.)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT. in a whisper)

Ugly, ugly, ugly, no one wants you, ugly, ugly.

(Silence fills the theater. The stage is not reset until the silence stretches for just a bit too long. Then the rustling of props being reset fills the silence as it has the previous times the stage has been reset. The lights come up and both girls are back in their beds. The alarm beeps. However, this time, it's only Mirror Eliza who silences hers. She stretches and steps out of bed, confused at the beeping that persists from Eliza's bedside table. Mirror Eliza moves on her own, gathering clothes, picking up makeup, and runs to stand behind her side of the mirror.)

MIRROR ELIZA

Wake up Eliza, it's time to get ready.

(Eliza does not stir.)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT.)

Are you feeling sorry for yourself? You know you don't deserve to feel sorry for yourself. Come on now, get up.

(Eliza does not move.)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT.)

Eliza?

ELIZA

I don't want to do this anymore.

MIRROR ELIZA

What are you talking about?

ELIZA

I don't want to get up. I don't want to get ready. I don't want to go to school.

MIRROR ELIZA

Stop being such a stupid baby, Eliza. You're so immature.

ELIZA

I don't care anymore. I don't understand why you think I'm so ugly.

MIRROR ELIZA

It's not that I think you're ugly, it's that you are.

(Eliza turns off the alarm and stands, making her way over to the mirror. She stands on top of her pedestal.)

ELIZA

Am I? Do you hate me? The way I'm supposed to hate Sarah and Jeanie? Am I ugly?

MIRROR ELIZA

Of course you are. I'm not lying, I never lie about that. You're ugly. Repulsive.

ELIZA

I don't think I care anymore.

MIRROR ELIZA

Of course you do! Everyone cares about their looks!

ELIZA

Even you?

MIRROR ELIZA

No, I care about your looks. After all, we're the same.

ELIZA

We're not the same.

MIRROR ELIZA

Yes we are, we look the same, act the same, are the same.

ELIZA

Are we both ugly then?

MIRROR ELIZA

Well, you're ugly.

ELIZA

Then aren't you too?

MIRROR ELIZA

So you're admitting you're ugly then!

ELIZA

Maybe. But if I do, then you have to as well.

MIRROR ELIZA

Why ever do I have to do that?

ELIZA

Because we're the same.

MIRROR ELIZA

Not that way.

ELIZA

And why not?

MIRROR ELIZA

Because you care.

ELIZA

And you don't? Everyday you tell me how to dress, look, act. "Don't wear that Eliza," "Don't look like this Eliza," "Why do you have to be so ugly Eliza?" I think you care more than I do.

MIRROR ELIZA

I'm just trying to protect you, Eliza. You know what everyone will think of you otherwise.

ELIZA

Why should I care what they think of me?

(Silence. Neither Eliza nor Mirror Eliza says a word. They stare at each other. Eliza leans in, gripping the frame of the mirror. This time it is Mirror Eliza who is pulled forward and hands brought up to grip the frame, mirroring Eliza.)

MIRROR ELIZA

If you don't listen to me they'll tear you apart! I'm helping you here, Eliza! Can't you just be grateful!

ELIZA

No! You're not helpful! You're cruel! You hate me! You hate that I'm more than just beautiful.

MIRROR ELIZA

No one is ever more than just a pretty face.

ELIZA

Well I am.

(She grabs the same pair of pants from the first morning and puts them on.)

MIRROR ELIZA

What the hell are you doing?

ELIZA

Something I should have done a long time ago.

(Eliza throws on a tight shirt on. Mirror Eliza is still left gripping the frame of the mirror.)

MIRROR ELIZA

You look terrible in that!

ELIZA

I don't care. I like it.

MIRROR ELIZA

How could you ever like something so ugly?

(Eliza turns away from the mirror. Mirror Eliza is getting desperate.)

MIRROR ELIZA (CONT.)

What, no makeup? You look terrible! People won't even want to be around you, much less be friends with you. I bet all your friends will leave you within a few days if you keep this up!

ELIZA

I can make new friends.

MIRROR ELIZA

Wait-

ELIZA

Goodbye.

(Eliza turns away from the mirror and walks away from it. Mirror Eliza practically falls from her pedestal, still gripping the mirror.)

MIRROR ELIZA

Eliza?

(Eliza doesn't look back. Not once. Blackout.)