

Not Me

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Staring back at me was her. The only thing between us a sheet of silver backed glass. Superstitions about mirrors are not something I believed in. That was until I saw her, *Not Me* in the soot covered brass mirror I had bought at an auction. I had assumed the antique piece had survived a housefire and when polished up would make the perfect addition to my room.

It had not dawned on me until I had begun the restoration process that the brass frame of the mirror was largely unscathed by soot or fire damage. Only the mirror itself was blacked out by the substance. The night I had finished cleaning the mirror up and brought it into my sanctuary, my room, was the night I saw her, *Not Me*.

Most nights she is far behind me looming in the corner of the room. Her whispers filling the once comforting silence of my cottage, and as I try to listen the words become less coherent. From time to time, she is right over my shoulder. Her incomprehensible nonsense being force fed into my ears and the only thing that drowns her out is covering the distorted portal through which she speaks.

I find it most dreadful when I uncover the mirrors face to find her instead of me. Mirroring me. Mocking me. I know I am me and she is *Not Me*. Her face is not mine no matter how hard she tries for it to be. I will not fall for this invasion of my sanctuary.

No matter how close I look her ghastly features elude me. The harder I look the less I see. The more I try to listen to the whispers she speaks, the more my head whirrs. And it eventually fades to black.

Always, I wake up in bed tucked away. When I sit up and stretch, I see her, *Not Me* there in the reflection staring back. At the foot of my bed yet only in the visage of the mirror.

I do not trust *Not Me*, but she is half decent company. She listens to my problems when I speak and takes the stress away from me. But every time I see not me, I think she looks a bit more like me. I do not see how this can be because I am me and she is she, but her in the mirror is *Not Me*.

The way her raspy whispers creep into my mind an evil tongue I do not speak. She hurts my head and breaks my mind. Fighting for consciousness it came to me the words she mouthed said: "Please, free me."

In unison we, *Not Me*, and me we pick up the crystal from my alter raise it to the glass as we swing. One. Two. Three. My knuckles are bleeding and I drop the crystal to the side. Before me the mirror cracking on either end the veil is broken.

On the other side I see the girl who is her and is *Not Me*. Her voice no longer hazy the truth she speaks, the secrets of me. The knowledge she knows stolen from my mind while I sleep, the mirrored girl who is *Not Me*.

"Darling why?" She says. *Not Me's* voice sounds a lot like me. Rotting hands reach for me her ice cold hands feel as if they intend to rip my being from my body. "Tell the truth it shall set you free."

Hands wrapped around my throat I cannot speak. Although, who would be there to hear me scream? It is only me and *Not Me* for miles and miles all that surrounds us is trees. When someone comes looking, they will find broken glass and she who is me. The *Not Me* I did not want them to see.

All that I am and will ever be. All that is left and what it stole is me from me. Reaping my soul and secrets from my sleep. *Not Me* consumes whatever I speak for she is the side of me I didn't want to keep. Her physical form here beside me as now *Not Me* knows I can hear her speak. She knows the things I try to keep and merges into me.

I thought I had to set her free but why did I ever let her leave? The *Not Me* and the secrets she keeps. The one you were not meant to see.