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Fairest of Them All

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Fairest of Them All // Tracy Akers

There aren't any mirrors in my bedroom.

So I can have bouncy hair and live inside an oak tree. I can cast spells and mix potions. The only time my nose is crooked is when it gets in the way of reading. My lips might be purple or black, my eyes just the same—never having to worry if my teeth are stained. I only have skin when my fingers brush my cheeks, sometimes they're smooth and other times I feel more grooves. I can dance and sling magic everywhere, and I can paint the rounded walls any color I want to. I can sing to broken glass and see a thousand eyeballs, never knowing which two are mine. I can tap my pointed feet as I walk across the hardwood floors, only realizing how giant they are when I trip over them. I can laugh at myself, point at my feet, and keep waving my wand.

I hear the door creak; my mom's visiting my tree. I stumble toward the sound, clapping my palms, the shiny bangles clanging together on my wrists—they aren't real gold but they're just as shiny. She enters with a flat silver pool in her hands. I race over to her and stand up on my toes. I poke it with my fingers, hoping that I can enter new worlds through it—more oak trees, maybe a small sea. She gently brushes my hands aside and takes the mirror and places it on my radiant wall.

For the first time, I see my witchy self. I pull at my dark frizzy curls, pucker my dull pink lips. I look at my mom and laugh. I look back at the thick glass. Inside of it, the walls of my tree turn back to cream, bed posts standing alone amongst the square, tall whiteness. My wand disappears from my desk. My bubbling pot becomes a boom box. The dangling glass shards I once sang to turn into the feathers of a homemade dream catcher.

First the magic fades, then the witch. I watch a girl grow up inside the silver pool. The shiny glass took away all the magic, a dark curse that makes every princess sleep. Instead of painting my world, I paint my lips, my eyes, my cheeks. I watch a girl inside of a reflection—a forgotten queen. I can hardly remember now, when I was the fairest of them all.