

The Mirror's Prison

by Anthea Chow, age 14, Coquitlam

I never believed in curses. Ghost stories were for children—until I inherited the mansion on Ash Street. The house was a ruin, its walls stained a cold, ashen gray, like the color of death itself. Vines had crept up windows and pulled at boards like bony fingers, and the wind whined through broken shutters like the crying of something lost.

The locals avoided it. Some said it was haunted. Others whispered things less pleasant. But I was drawn to the possibility of lost history.

One night, as a storm churned outside, I wandered the rotten halls of the mansion. A chill ran through me, sharp and biting. I spotted a tapestry hanging crooked from the wall, its fabric moth-eaten and faded. Behind it, a small door revealed itself, locked tight but not bolted.

I forced it open. A rush of stale air spilled out, thick with dust, rot, and something else. Something *wrong*.

Inside was a tiny room. The walls were blackened with age and in the center stood a cracked mirror, framed by twisted vines carved in tarnished silver. The glass was cloudy, swirling with shadows thicker than the surrounding night. The moment I stepped inside, the air thinned as if it had been holding its breath for centuries.

When I peered into the mirror, my reflection blinked—and smiled.

But it wasn't me.

A grim, unnatural smile stretched too wide, revealing teeth like daggers. Behind me, a figure lurked—pale as bone, its eyes glowing unearthly green.

I spun around.

The room was empty. But the air hung heavy, suffocating, as if the shadows themselves were watching.

That night, the whispers began. Low and breathless, curling through the walls like smoke. They spoke my name in a voice cracked and ancient—like dry leaves rustling over forgotten graves.

I tried to ignore it. But the mansion changed.

Hallways stretched to impossible lengths; doors vanished, and the air grew thick with despair. Every mirror I passed reflected the same thing: the dark grin, the glowing eyes, the slow, terrible smile of the thing trapped inside.

My skin grew pale, and my hands trembled. I heard footsteps behind me but saw no one. At times, cold fingers brushed my neck, leaving ice where they touched.

One night, before the broken glass, I saw the shadow stretch out. Its skeletal, clawed fingers dragged across the surface as if it were water. The biting cold seeped into my bones, pulling me forward.

I tried to back away, but my legs froze.

The mirror rippled. My reflection grinned wider.

I screamed silently as the darkness swallowed me whole.

Now trapped behind the glass, I watch the world go on without me. My face rigid in that monstrous smile. I see through its eyes. I feel what it touches. I hear it whispering into the ears of the sleeping.

Outside, the mansion waits—silent and hungry.

And deep within the silver frame, a second smile begins to form.

The mirror is never empty.
