

She Had it Coming

Queen

Therapist

Orderly

Scene I: a hallway in an insane asylum – er – mental health facility – the Therapist is about to enter, and is talking with Orderly.

THERAPIST: (rushing in from offstage)

Sorry I'm late. How is Her Majesty today?

ORDERLY: In this weather, I'm amazed you made it at all. She's been pretty calm this week. Except?

THERAPIST: Except?

ORDERLY: New nurse gave her polished silverware. She caught her reflection in the spoon and freaked out.

THERAPIST: Violence?

ORDERLY: Never knew you could twist a stainless steel knife into a Gordian knot with human hands.

THERAPIST: Ouch. But she didn't try to injure herself, did she?

ORDERLY: No... not this time. We did have to sedate her, but she's been calm for the last day or so. We've started giving her plastic silverware. It's gold-tinted, and high quality, but it's the only non-reflective material we could find.

THERAPIST: Not a bad idea, though. Yours?

ORDERLY: (blushes)

Yes, actually.

THERAPIST: Good call.

(beat)

I'll just go in now... bring her to me in ten?

ORDERLY: Sure thing, Doc.

Scene II: *inside the interview room. The Therapist has tried to make it comfortable. It's got two wing chairs and a coffee table, but one of the chairs has manacles attached to the legs... just in case. THERAPIST is seated in the chair that doesn't have restraints. ORDERLY enters, guiding QUEEN along.*

QUEEN: (haughty)

Unhand me, you rube. I am perfectly capable of entering a room unaided.

ORDERLY: (*gently teasing*)

I'm only trying to make sure you get in without tripping. You know that rug is out to get you.

QUEEN: It has tripped me up more often than is strictly polite.

ORDERLY: Exactly.

(*He guides her to the empty chair, then addresses the Therapist*)

I'll bring your tea in a minute.

THERAPIST: Thank you.

(*addresses the Queen*)

You will join me for tea, won't you?

QUEEN: And those lovely lemon biscuits?

THERAPIST: Of course. We cannot do without them.

QUEEN: No, we can't. You were late today. You will, no doubt, blame the rain.

THERAPIST: You're right. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. I'm told you had a bit of a kerfuffle this week.

QUEEN: The silverware was taunting me.

THERAPIST: Taunting you?

QUEEN: It showed my reflection, old and ugly. It spoke in her voice, telling me she still lived and was still more beautiful. Youth is wasted on the young, the nubile, the innocent.

THERAPIST: Is it? Or is it just that as we age, we regret the loss of that youth and innocence?

QUEEN: (*musings*)

Perhaps it is both.

THERAPIST: You may be right.

QUEEN: Does she live on? The girl?

THERAPIST: Your daughter, you mean?

QUEEN: (bitter)
That slut is no child of mine.

THERAPIST: Stepdaughter, then. Yes, she lives.

QUEEN: Has she woken?

THERAPIST: Her coma persists.

QUEEN: They should pull the feeding tube and let her die.

THERAPIST: Would that solve your problems? I remember you telling me that the mirrors spoke to you before she was ever part of your life.

QUEEN: (softly)
They always have.

THERAPIST: Always?

QUEEN: It began when I was a young girl. I had... spots...

THERAPIST: You mean acne?

QUEEN: No. Chicken pox. Caught it from the butler's son. His case was worse, left him pock-marked. I feared I would be the same, and the mirrors... the mirrors told me I would be worse.

THERAPIST: Was your actual reflection so bad?

QUEEN: I couldn't look. What if they were right?

THERAPIST: What if they weren't?

QUEEN: You don't know. You cannot know. The whispering. Look at me, Agathe. Look and see your future. You will be old and ugly, and your heart will be black with madness and evil.

THERAPIST: That's a lot for a mere mirror to share. Most looking glasses in my experience simply reflect an image.

QUEEN: I could not look.

(There is a knock at the door and the Orderly comes in with a tea tray. A teapot, two cups, milk, sugar, honey, plastic spoons, and a plate of lemon cookies, shaped like half-moons.)

ORDERLY: Time for tea. Tea for two.

THERAPIST: Thank you so much. We may need some extra time today; is that a problem?

ORDERLY: I'll adjust the schedule.

THERAPIST: Thank you.

ORDERLY: No problem, Doc.

(The Orderly leaves the room)

THERAPIST: Would you like to pour, ma'am, or shall I?

QUEEN: You do it. My hands are all a-tremble.

THERAPIST: Are you alright?

QUEEN: That's a loaded question, sir. If I were quite alright, I would not be in this... place. I think we both know I have not been alright in a long while.

(Therapist pours tea for two, adds milk and sugar to Queen's cup and only sugar to his own. He pushes the plate of cookies near to Queen. They will both eat and drink as the scene continues.)

THERAPIST: I meant, are you more... has something changed since I last saw you?

QUEEN: They did not cover the glasses in the bathroom.

THERAPIST: And?

QUEEN: They told me my breasts were sagging from age. They told me I had crows' feet near my eyes. They told me I was no longer beautiful.

THERAPIST: Did you look into the mirrors, to confirm what they said?

QUEEN: I tried. I... the mirror at home has been whispering in my head. It never tells me I am old or ugly. It simply reminds me that *she* will always be younger and prettier, even in her long sleep.

THERAPIST: In your head?

QUEEN: That mirror's voice never leaves me. It is the voice that told me to cast her out, to send the hunter, to send the apple. It is the voice that sought her blood.

THERAPIST: Why did you want her blood?

QUEEN: Elizabeth Bathory bathed in virgin blood to keep herself ever-youthful.

THERAPIST: That's disgusting.

QUEEN: Rather. But a drop of the child's blood... a drop given to the mirror... that would stop the voice. Would confuse the looking glass.

THERAPIST: Its voice told you that?

QUEEN: It told me so many things... It told me she would steal the hunter's affection.

THERAPIST: I thought you sent him to kill her?

QUEEN: I sent him to take her heart, as he had already taken mine. I sought him to capture her heart and then betray her. Instead the fool became besotted with the girl.

THERAPIST: He was your lover?

QUEEN: Of course.

THERAPIST: Did your husband know?

QUEEN: My husband died not long before the girl came of age. He never could resist elderberry wine.

THERAPIST: You poisoned him?

QUEEN: But of course. He was old and feeble and believed his daughter to be the most beautiful creature on Earth. And the mirror... the mirror told me that he was no longer needed. I had his wealth. I had his home. I had his daughter...

THERAPIST: You also had his son. Do you remember that? Do you remember your son?

QUEEN: *(softly)*
I remember. He was handsome and bouncy, and then he... wasn't.

THERAPIST: He died, didn't he?

QUEEN: They said it was SIDS... only they didn't call it that, then. They called it 'crib death.'

THERAPIST: Did you have help, after, to cope?

QUEEN: I did not require assistance. I had Jeremiah.

THERAPIST: Jeremiah?

QUEEN: My hunter. I had him, in my home, in my bed.

THERAPIST: And the mirrors?

QUEEN: Their voices were quiet for a time. And then they were not.

THERAPIST: When did the mirrors start speaking to you again?

QUEEN: Jeremiah mentioned that the girl was becoming a beautiful woman.

THERAPIST: And?

QUEEN: He said she was the only person more beautiful than me.

THERAPIST: And you were jealous.

QUEEN: I was *angry*. And the mirrors told me how to escape my anger. Ruin the girl, retain my beauty...

THERAPIST: When you looked in mirrors then, what did you see?

QUEEN: I saw... I saw sadness. I saw loneliness. I saw a woman who wanted love but could never had it.

THERAPIST: Why couldn't you?

QUEEN: Excuse me?

THERAPIST: Why did you feel you couldn't have love?

QUEEN: My mother told me I was unlovable. The mirrors told me the same. "Look at you, all that beauty and no heart. Cold as ice, alone for life."

THERAPIST: When the mirrors speak, do they use your mother's voice?

QUEEN: How did you know?

THERAPIST: If you could confront your mother, right now, what would you want to say to her?

QUEEN: I don't... I could never...

(Therapist pulls out a small hand mirror and offers it to the Queen.)

THERAPIST: Why don't you try. This mirror has a ... a special spell on it. It has no voice to taunt you. Look at it, look into it, and talk to your mother.

QUEEN: I cannot...

THERAPIST: I'm right here, your majesty. You're not alone.

QUEEN: (takes the mirror with shaking hands)
Mother...

THERAPIST: Tell her what you feel.

(The Queen stares into the glass and for a moment it seems as if she will speak to her mother and start the process of vanquishing her personal demons. But then she throws the mirror across the room.)

QUEEN: She had it coming... the little slut. She had it coming. The mirror told me to do it. The mirror said... Does she live on? She cannot... she cannot stay young forever.

THERAPIST: *(calmly, but slightly deflated)*
I can see we need more time together.
(Therapist presses a button set into the arm of his chair.)

I think you should rest now, madame.

QUEEN: I think you may be right. I must get my beauty sleep.

(she smiles, but it's tinged with true madness)

The mirrors don't lie. Rest will make them see. I can still be beautiful.

She can't stay young forever.

She had it coming.... She can't stay in her box forever. Beauty and life both fade.

ORDERLY: *(entering without knocking)*

Are you ready for your nap, now, your highness?

QUEEN: Yes, thank you.

(beat)

You're such a strapping young man. Have you ever done any hunting?

(Orderly walks out with the Queen, who continues babbling as they exit. Therapist finishes his cup of tea.)

Scene Three *the same interview room. Therapist is making notes on a pad, which he sets aside when Orderly returns.*

ORDERLY: Hey, Doc, you ready for your next patient?

THERAPIST: Yes, I believe so.

(beat)

Do you think I'm doing any good?

ORDERLY: They're always calmer after they see you. Why do you ask?

THERAPIST: She almost had a breakthrough today... Almost... but...

ORDERLY: *(encouraging)*

Almost is better than not at all.

THERAPIST: Yes, I suppose it is.

(takes a deep breath)

Well, then, who's next?

ORDERLY: Red.

THERAPIST: Oh... she's always quite pleasant. Any issues this week?

ORDERLY: Aside from her usual hoarding pastries? Nope, she's been a gem.

THERAPIST: Alright then; send her in.

Blackout.