

Losing his reflections

John was always considered a profoundly vain and extroverted person. He couldn't walk past a shop window without looking at his reflection and touching his most precious asset - his hair. His home was a fairly-modern one-bedroom flat in Islington. He complained about the cost of living in such a place but this was more than compensated by being amongst his fellow 30 something upwardly mobile hipsters.

He had installed mirrors in every room. Most rooms had more than one, even the loo had two large mirrors including one on the back of the door so that he could even admire himself whilst 'on the throne'.

The living room had huge mirrors on all four walls and in the bedroom he had wardrobes built with full height mirrors on all the doors. Apart from the odd photograph of his parents and siblings, every other photograph on the walls and furniture was of him and all were very carefully posed and many were of the same or similar poses but taken from different angles.

Mornings were the worst, getting ready always took far too long, although he would never admit to that, and this often caused him to be late for work much to the annoyance of his boss.

First thing every morning he would rise and immediately check his reflection in the wardrobe doors and straighten his hair before he ever thought of anything as mundane as a shower or breakfast.

Always before he left home for work he would check his reflection again in the mirror adjacent to his front door and, if not being happy with his appearance, would change his clothes or brush his hair again and then stand in the hall once more to check himself in all the mirrors before he dare finally leave his flat.

When it came to girlfriends he had never had anything close to a long-term relationship. Friends would arrange blind dates for him but he was never happy with the girls once they turned up. Either they were too tall, not pretty enough or not sufficiently well dressed, he never liked being outshone, but equally didn't like being let down by his partners appearance.

But then one night, whilst having an after-work drink with friends he was checking his hair in a mirror as usual when he heard a voice behind him say "Looks ok to me, not bad at all".

He turned around and his heart raced as he looked at the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. His first thought was 'surely she's not talking to me', but then he realised there was nobody else there, just him, and the girl. Her eyes sparkled like diamonds and her lips were blood red. Her skin was like porcelain and he thought her parents must have been Greek gods at least.

"I'm sorry, are you talking to me?" he asked.

"Of course I am" the girl replied, "Who did you think I was talking to?"

"Yes, of course, sorry" he replied. "I'm John and you are?" and he held out his hand waiting to shake hers, she took it and said "I'm Harriet, can I buy you a drink?"

"Yes I suppose so" he said, "but shouldn't it be me buying you a drink?"

"Maybe" she said "you can buy the next one if you like. It is the 21st Century you know".

The drinks flowed in quick succession and by midnight John was pretty drunk and almost falling asleep at the table.

"Should we leave now?" enquired Harriet. "Where do you live. I'll walk you home, shall I?"

"Yes ok, I live quite close" said John, "would you like to come back for a night cap?"

Harriet agreed and they left the bar and walked slowly down the road with Harriet holding John's arm in an effort to stop him falling over.

Once inside the flat John opened a bottle of wine and they both carried on drinking and continued way into the night.

In the morning John awoke with the worst headache he'd ever had. He couldn't remember going to bed, or anything else about the evening. He turned over in the bed and vaguely remembered bringing a girl home with him the night before but only a dent in the pillow was evidence that anybody else had ever been there. Harriet had obviously got up very early and had already left the flat.

As he tried to get up his head was spinning. He sat on the edge of the bed and felt a slight pain in his neck. His first thought was that he had slept awkwardly and his neck was stiff. He tried rocking it from side to side but that didn't help, his neck was still sore. He rubbed the spot where the pain was worse with his hand but as he took it away he noticed there was blood on his finger tips.

He immediately jumped up to look in the wardrobe mirrors but as hard as he looked, there was no reflection, he couldn't see himself in the glass! He checked his hands and he could see them both so he assumed he was ok. Again he looked in the mirrors but still there was no reflection and a mix of fear and absolute confusion entered his thinking.

He ran into the bathroom and looked into all the mirrors there but he still saw no reflection. His brain was working overtime. Am I alive, he thought, am I dead, am I dreaming. What is happening to me?

He turned on the shower, switched the dial to cold and jumped in. His body trembled with the cold but he withstood it for as long as he could to make sure he was fully awake. Well, at least I'm alive, he thought, but as he passed the mirrors on the way out of the room he was still unable to see his reflection which increased his worries still further and added confusion onto confusion.

He wondered if he was invisible and if he was, was he invisible to other people, would they be able to see him? He quickly washed and dressed and rushed out of his flat, but this time he didn't look in the mirror by his front door. What was the point - he knew he wouldn't see any reflection.

He pressed the button to call the lift and waited by the doors.

The lift approached, the doors opened and inside already was Mr Jacobs from the floor above. "Good morning John" beamed Mr Jacobs with a huge smile on his face, "How are you today. You look great".

"Oh, I'm fine Mr Jacobs" replied John, "How are you, and how's Mrs. Jacobs?".

This chance meeting immediately altered some of John's feelings. Gone was the fear of being invisible but the confusion was still there. If he can see me I must be ok, he thought, but why can't I see my reflection in the mirrors?

As the lift doors opened on the ground floor he quickly made his way to the large doors that led to the street and he walked outside, almost colliding with a lady who just happened to be passing the building.

"Be careful" she shouted, "you nearly knocked me over".

Well, he thought, she can see me as well so I must be ok and so he continued walking briskly along the road just to confirm that everybody could see him.

Unfortunately, further down the road there were some shops. The first shop he came to was a gentlemen's clothes shop and as he passed he couldn't help but stop and look at the shirts and trousers in the window display.

As he looked, other people were passing, some were looking at the displays in the window and standing next to him was a young man admiring a brightly coloured shirt.

As John looked he could see the reflections of the man in the window but what caught his eye, or rather didn't catch his eye, was his own reflection. Where was it? he still couldn't see it.

His heart sunk once again and he decided that he now needed to return, very quickly, to his flat. He turned away from the window, unhappy with not being able to see himself but as he turned towards home he walked straight into a girl who was walking in the opposite direction.

"Hello John" she said. "Remember me?" It was Harriet, the girl from the night before.

"Hello" he said. "It's you! why did you leave? and what happened last night, do you know what I did to my neck, look at this", and he pulled his collar down and showed the girl his neck.

"Oh, I did that", she confessed "and have you noticed anything else since last night?".

"Yes, I have strangely enough" he said "I can't see my reflection in the mirror any more and I don't understand why".

"Well, John, it's like this" she said "You will never be able to see your reflection again. In fact, nobody will be able to see your reflection. You know you always spent far too long looking at yourself in the mirror, didn't you?".

"Why not?" he screamed. "What has happened to me".

"Well, unfortunately you see, I'm a vampire and last night I bit your neck and drank some of your blood and now you are also a vampire. But look on the bright side, you'll probably live forever. Good isn't it, but I'd suggest you get rid of all those mirrors in your flat!".