

14th March, 2007

MIRROR MIRROR

DEAR DIARY, I met this girl many, many years ago but I remember the day like yesterday. She had the saddest eyes I've ever seen. I couldn't help myself, I said to her, why such sad eyes? She said to me, who me, my eyes aren't sad. I said I'm looking right at you and your eyes are sad, so yes you, why so sad? She said I don't know what makes you say that, maybe you're tapping into something deep down inside. I said take a seat, talk, tell me what makes your beautiful eyes so sad? She said life I guess. I said what about life? How old are you for life to have made you so unhappy already? She said I'm 22 and I guess a lot of little things have happened and I don't think I deserve them although I think somehow I've been instrumental in it happening to me. I said well do tell, what's been happening? She said I left home 2 years ago and wish I didn't, it was the biggest mistake of my life. I said why did you leave home? She said because I thought no one would notice. I said is that a good reason to leave home? She said no, but I just thought I would be happier being independent. I felt restless and bored and didn't think me leaving would matter. I said where do you live? She said a horrid cockroach infested one bedroom flat. I said living in a pokey flat is not what you expected from independence I guess, maybe you thought it would be a bit more fun! Being away from home for the first time is never normally all that it's cracked up to be, even if it means you gain your independence. Maybe for you, it would have made more sense to stay at home with your parents where there's supposed to be love and security. I said do you live alone? She said my boyfriend has moved in with me. I said from your tone, that makes matters worse doesn't it? She said 100 per cent. I don't want him there. I said then why is he there? She said because he wants to be. I said so you have no say. She said I guess so, but I just put up with it. I said why? She said I dunno. I said do you love him? She said no but I don't love myself anyway so what difference does it make? I said, you have to love yourself or you will not put value on yourself. She said well I don't value myself otherwise I wouldn't put up with him. I said put up with what, what's he like? She said he's more bad than good. She said he doesn't help with the rent, bills or the housework, I'm acting like a complete doormat and I don't recognise this person anymore because I used to be strong, not just strong, but I used to actually like me, my fizz has gone and I've lost my way. He goes out all the time with his friends. He's verbally abusive and I know he sees other women. He doesn't like me and he sure doesn't like himself, he has more issues than anyone I know. He has no self respect and he certainly doesn't respect me

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or my home and basically I just sleepwalk through life or cry myself to sleep because I do nothing, say nothing and feel like nothing. I said why are you doing this to yourself? Why do you give him permission to do this to you? She said I dunno. I've lost my self confidence and my sense of direction. I actually feel quite depressed. She said I hate my job and I hate my life. I'm bored and disappointed and I'm too ashamed to speak to my family about it all. Even my friends assume I'm OK. I said I bet everyone around you knows you're **not** OK, if I can see it, so can they, but they can't save you, you have to save yourself. I think I'm pregnant she said. I can't bear to find out for sure she added, because then the nightmare really begins. I said why didn't you protect yourself? She said because I don't care enough. I said I feel for you. I said I wish I could step into your body and take over and give you the strength that you need to change the direction of your life. I said pray to God for strength, he will answer you, even if you've lost faith. Praying can't hurt. I told her you need to know that you have to place value on yourself otherwise no one will value you. She said I know but I don't know where to start. I said find the beginning, the place where you hungered for life, look for the middle, the balance, the calm and the good vibrations and visualise a happy ending. I added I'd love to bump into you in 10 years from now. See where you are and what you're doing with your life and we then parted company.

My path crossed with the same girl just briefly, many years later. I said to her how's it going? She said well it's been good and it's been bad! It's been a real journey. But I made it through to the other side. She said I've learned many things about life, karma, spirit, inner strength, fight for survival and people and mostly I found my true self. I've also forgiven myself for sleepwalking through some of the best years of my life. Although in all honesty, they can't have been the best years, as I think the best years are yet to come. I now value who I am and if the people in my life do not value me, I stop, think, let them know and let them go. She continued; I have a strong friend & family network, I don't hide how I feel with silence and I know myself now and I actually love myself too. I still have a lot to learn but this time I look forward to the learning process. I'm learning every day from my victories and mistakes and I'm also learning that it makes no sense to sleep walk, it makes no sense to repeat negative behaviour nor does it make sense to just walk around with your fingers in your ears hoping that the bad things aren't really happening. It's been a long journey of self discovery. I've learned that positive thinking, honesty, faith and laughter work for me.

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I said goodbye to that girl whose eyes were no longer sad, I stepped away from the mirror, sprayed on some perfume, put my shoes on and popped my *Musiq Soulchild* CD in my handbag. I walked out the door, into my car, put on my *Musiq* and headed off on another journey. That girl could be you in your past life, that girl could be you right now. She could be your sister, your daughter, your niece, your friend, your step-daughter or the girl next door.

But on this occasion, that girl was me!

August Mayfield