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Donna glanced in the mirror and quickly looked away. The mirror was no longer her friend. There had been a time when she would have stared at her reflection for hours, doing her makeup one way and then redoing it another. She would have tried different hairstyles, hair up, hair down, hair curly, hair straight, hair bands, barrettes, clips, and accessories of every kind. Then there were the hats, wool hats, felt hats, and straw hats. Mirrors were created to reflect the various looks of the looker, and Donna had always been a good looker in more ways than one. She spent hours perfecting her various expressions, she laughed, she cried, she pouted, she screamed, looked coy, surprised, afraid, and of course her ultimate favourite, Donna blowing kisses towards the mirror. She had been such a cheeky girl.

Reflecting back over the years, Donna couldn't believe she had wasted so much of her life, staring at herself in the mirror and watching her reflection. But she had been young back then, young and beautiful. Her skin was soft and glowing, her eyes large, and doe-eyed. Her lashes were long and luscious, her cheeks a rosy pink, and her lips, were like two rare pink petals.

Donna sighed and took a step closer to the mirror, taking a deep breath she steeled herself as she studied her reflection. Gone was the beautiful young girl she had once been and in her place stood a faded shadow of what once was. Gone was her crowning glory, her hair no longer thick and luscious, no longer golden blond tresses. A mature woman stood in the mirror, her hair streaked with silver strands. 'Face it, it's just gray,' she finally capitulated; for the gray hairs far outnumber the gold.'

Gray, gray, gray.

Gray hair, gray sallow crepey skin stretched tight over what once were high Slavic cheekbones, there were now wrinkles around her neck that resembled the waddle on a turkey's

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neck. Her eyes looked small and beady, the lids droopy and hooded. The long lashes were now stubby and few and far between.

She had jowls that sagged with every turn of her head. She searched the antique framed mirror but found no trace of the girl she had once been.

Her eyes suddenly caught something reflected in the mirror. Behind her on the fireplace mantle stood her wedding picture. She had made such a beautiful bride and Ken was such a handsome groom. She missed him, missed him terribly. She focused on the photograph, she in her white lace dress and Ken in his handsome black suit. He had a slightly mischievous smile on his face but hers was one of pure joy. The wedding had been small, with only a handful of family and friends, but what a time they had had. They had enjoyed the weekend honeymoon in Niagara Falls before coming back to their hometown of Oshawa and purchasing a beautiful new home in Harmony Heights. The very same home that Donna stood in at this very moment

Beside the large photograph on the mantle was an array of smaller photographs. On one side, pictures of their children and on the other side, their grandchildren. She had always loved being a mother, and she still did. She was close to her children and although they all had busy lives they always managed to get together for the holidays. She was blessed, truly blessed. Life had been hectic, but, oh how rewarding. She remembered the hours she had spent, taking her children to dance class or to baseball practice. She remembered the many trips they had taken together as a young family, especially the road trips, hadn't they been a hoot?

Ken had always been a great provider, which had allowed her to be a stay-at-home Mum and get involved with all her children's activities. She had joined several parent activity organizations as well, anything to support and encourage her children, they were her pride and joy. She had lost Ken the summer her twins turned eighteen. Struck down in his prime. Fortunately, he had left the family well provided for and she never had any financial worries and she was grateful for that blessing too.

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Then there were the grandchildren. She finally understood the saying. "Grandchildren, love to see them come; love to see them go." They were an exuberant bunch, that was for sure. It was such a shame that Ken had missed out on the opportunity to know them. Several had been named after him. He would have been so proud...and honoured. If there was one regret, and there really were very few, it was that she wished Ken had been given more years left on this earth. It was all so long ago, and yet sometimes it felt like only yesterday.

She stared in the mirror vaguely for a moment, trying to remember what she had been thinking about. Oh yes, the family. Lately, her mind liked to play tricks on her. She found her place in her reminiscing, like a bookmark that marked a finished chapter in a book. Getting old was sometimes such a trial, one day you felt like a spring chicken and the next day you felt old; old, and decrepit.

So, their kids had graduated, got married, and had families of their own. She doted on her grandchildren, every single one of them, all seven of them. It made for a fun time at Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter and all the other visits that they had as a close-knit family. Those birthday parties always got a little wild sometimes didn't they? Oh well, c'est la vie. That's life. Where did the time go? It sometimes just seemed to slip away.

Birthdays, yes they had just recently got together to celebrate a birthday. Now whose birthday was it? She paused to remember. Oh yes, it had been her birthday. Another decade had gone by. What a lovely dinner and what well-thought-out gifts. They really shouldn't have, she told herself. But they were like that. She had so much to be thankful for. Her children were attentive and loving, and her grandchildren were on the way to becoming well-mannered children. Her health was good, there was that odd twinge in her chest lately but she was sure it was just due to carting out those bags of fall leaves to the bottom of the driveway for pickup. She could take little vacations when and if she wanted, putter around in her garden, and meet with friends for swimming and lunch. Yes, life was good even though the mirror was a scary place to look at these days. Her children insisted that those ugly crows feet by her eyes were

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just laugh lines or character lines. They were such sweet liars, but she appreciated their efforts. These days It was all about the spin you put on things.

She looked once again at the wedding picture of herself and Ken. She blew him a kiss, the sassy one she had perfected by practicing in the mirror all those years ago.

She glanced down at the small console table beneath the old mirror, picked up today's mail and glanced through it. One white envelope floated to the ground and she bent over to pick it up. She was getting very clumsy these days and that familiar twinge in her chest was there again, stronger this time. As she straightened she saw something in the mirror. She gave a small gasp of surprise. There behind her was a tall figure.

She stood perfectly still, one hand going to her chest, the other made a desperate grab at the console table but only succeeded in knocking it to the ground, scattering mail, her keys, and her wallet. She stared at the reflection, unable to fathom the meaning of the sudden appearance. Her heart started racing. Had she left the door unlocked, had a stranger broken into the house?

He wore a long white robe and there seemed to be a soft glow about him. He was beautiful, yet strong at the same time. Then she noticed his benevolent smile, which reminded her a little of her grandfather; nothing to be afraid of here, she decided. He had a faint aura surrounding him, an ethereal, otherworldly energy. She suddenly realized why he was there, and being a woman of strong faith; she felt at peace.

He beckoned to her and she hesitated. He held out his hand, summoning her. She was no longer afraid, there was still a little pain which was diminishing quickly, a sudden deep chill engulfed her, but not even a drop of fear. She was ready. She glanced at her wedding photograph on the mantle in the reflection behind her. She smiled faintly and blew him one last kiss. "It's okay Ken, I'm coming now."

She turned to the robed figure and held her hand out to meet his.