

PODCAST HUBRIS
“MIRROR, MIRROR”
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SCENE ONE

INT. THE MAGIC WORKSHOP, EARLY EVENING

The shopkeeper, ELIANA, is hunched over her workbench, restringing an enchanted harp. A fire is crackling in a wood stove, and the wind howls through the trees outside occasionally.

ELIANA: [grumble of effort] Almost got it . . . just one string left and I can have you ready to send you back to your owner.

The harp plays a glissando.

ELIANA: A-ha! Sounds like you're back to your old self, huh?

The harp strums happily.

ELIANA: I'm glad to hear it. Alright, let's set you over here -

ELIANA stands up from her workbench and wheels the harp to the other side of the room.

ELIANA: - and your owner can pick you up in the morning. And maybe this time, he'll take better care of you. At least, let's hope.

The harp strums again.

ELIANA: [laugh] Think you could bully him into it for me?

The harp strums in agreement. Then, a sharp knock at the door.

ELIANA: Come in!

The door creaks open on heavy, iron hinges. The bell above the door jingles.

ADVENTURER: Hello?

ELIANA: Yes, hi, come in! I'm in here.

The ADVENTURER shuts the door with a thunk and walks into the shop.

ELIANA: [instantly in Customer Service Voice] Welcome to Eliana's Fantastical Curiosities: your one-stop shop for all your magical adventuring needs. I'm Eliana. How can I help you today?

ADVENTURER: Yeah, I've got this - one moment.

The ADVENTURER opens their bag and a faint voice becomes louder as they pull out a magic hand-held MIRROR and place it on the workbench.

MIRROR: [in the background throughout] Μη, μη! Μην τολμήσεις, μην τολμήσεις να με ακουμπήσεις ρε τσογλάνι! Βρομύλε! Αρχιτσογλάνι! Με έσπασες μωρή με έσπασες, την κατάρρα μου να έχεις! Ήμουν καθρέφτης και με έκανες σουρωτήρι! Μόνο ραγάδες έχω μωρή! Μόνο ραγάδες! Το μισό μου αλουμινόφυλλο το έχεις ξεφτύσει! Παγούρι, ε παγούρι! Αυτό είσαι ρε άξεστε, άξεστε!

40 ΝΑ ΝΑΙ ΟΙ ΩΡΕΣ ΣΟΥ, ΣΚΟΥΠΙΔΙ, Ε ΣΚΟΥΠΙΔΙ!

ΤΙ ΤΗΣ ΛΕΣ βρε σούργελο! Σούργελο τελείως, να πας να πεθάνεις!

Τη βλέπεις; Σε καταλαβαίνει, σε καταλαβαίνει!

ADVENTURER: [talking over the Mirror] Yeah, so I was in this dungeon where my Mirror said there was some demi-lich I was supposed to stop, and I was up against, like, 40 or so undead skeletons. And I'm swinging my sword and they're dropping like flies and it's really cool and -

ELIANA: Uh-huh. Sure. Go on.

ADVENTURER: And then this necromancer comes out, right? And I'm charging him and he's slinging spells all over and I'm bobbing and weaving and -

ELIANA: This is all very impressive, but, um, what happened to *the mirror*?

MIRROR: Ααα ναι ναι, για πες της.

ADVENTURER: Oh, it's busted.

MIRROR: Τι- τι λες βρε;! Τι της λες;!

ELIANA: . . . yes, but how?

ADVENTURER: [I-don't-know noise] Isn't it your job to figure that out?

ELIANA: I . . . I mean, yeah, but . . . any information you can give me makes it easier for me to solve the problem faster, and to get your item back to you sooner.

ADVENTURER: Oh, I'm in no rush.

ELIANA: I see. Well, what is it doing?

ADVENTURER: It'll only talk in this language I don't know, and I tried shaking it, and *that* didn't fix it, so . . .

ELIANA: You . . . shook it. Ok. Alright.

ADVENTURER: Can you fix it?

ELIANA: I should be able to, yes. Now that you've gotten the shake test taken care of already.

ADVENTURER: Great, thanks! I'll be at the inn down the road -- send me a message when you're done!

The ADVENTURER turns and leaves, thumping the door shut behind them.

MIRROR: Ααα, θα με φτιάξει λέει. Ωραία, ωραία, ντάξει, ντάξει. Τι να πω, τζάμπα ήρθα εδώ πέρα, τζάμπα. Όλα τζάμπα.

ELIANA: Well. Now what?

[a beat]

MIRROR: Ε "now what". Τι να σου πω ρε φιλενάδα, δε ξέρω.

ELIANA: Well, if they're in no rush . . . I guess I should go wrap up the harp?

MIRROR: Ναι, αυτό, άσε με εδώ να περιμένω. Δε χρειάζεται να με φτιάξεις από τώρα- ή αν θες- και ποτέ, δε με πειράζει.

[[scene transition music - a soft, gentle harp strumming]]

SCENE TWO

INT. THE WORKSHOP, LATER THAT EVENING.

The wind is howling louder now, and ELIANA is rummaging through a box of tools that clank together.

ELIANA: Where did I put those damn . . . a-ha! Here we go.

MIRROR: Αγάπη μου, άκου με λίγο, μπορείς να δοκιμάσεις ότι θες, ΔΕΝ θα γυρίσω σε αυτόν τον σαχελάνθρωπο. Θεέ μου δε μπορώ να τον βρίσω! θέλω να τον βρίσω και δε μπορώ! Αχ αχ που κατάντησα, δε θέλω να ξαναγυρίσω στην βρωμο-τσάντα του.

ELIANA: [overlapping] You're a real chatterbox, huh? Let's see if we can find out what put your language settings on the fritz. Probably a smudged sigil somewhere? Just let me get this bit of paneling off to check . . . maybe it'll even be an easy fix and then I can take care of it and get you back to your owner in the morning.

MIRROR: [in English, accidentally] Owner! Ha! That thief STOLE me!

ELIANA sets her tool down and it clanks against the workbench.

ELIANA: You do speak English!

MIRROR: [in English] Aah! No- [switching back to Greek] Εγώ... όχι δε ξέρω τι λες. Αγγλικά, τι είναι αυτό;

ELIANA: Oh, come on. You're not fooling anyone. Or . . . ok, you fooled that meat-head. But not me.

MIRROR: It wasn't especially hard.

ELIANA: But why the ruse? That's what I want to know. Why were you pretending to be broken?

MIRROR: I had hoped they would throw me away! I didn't think they'd bring me to a repair shop! Now I'll never be rid of them. [dejected] This was my last idea.

ELIANA: I'm confused - you *wanted* to be thrown away?

MIRROR: I wanted to be free of that . . . that . . . [frustrated groan] nincompoop!

ELIANA: [cheeky] Wow, strong language there.

MIRROR: My owner's attempt to shake me back to normal appears to have engaged a profanity filter. I hope you'll correct that before returning me to that blunderer.

ELIANA: You still haven't explained why you want to be rid of them.

MIRROR: I tire of being used as a replacement for critical thinking. It's always "Magic mirror, what will happen if I attack that caravan?" or "Magic mirror, what will happen if I steal from this witch?" or "Magic mirror, what will happen if I lick these cursed amulets?"
Bad things! Obviously!

ELIANA: Lick . . . a-amulets?

MIRROR: More than once, yes.

ELIANA: Oh boy.

MIRROR: But you've found me out, so go ahead and send that message that I'm fine actually.

ELIANA: What?

MIRROR: Go ahead and tell my owner I'm ready to pick up so you can be done with me and collect your money.

ELIANA: Are you, though?

MIRROR: No, I'm not! This is terrible! But do it anyway -- I don't care.

ELIANA: What if . . . what if I didn't do that?

MIRROR: What do you mean?

ELIANA: What if, instead of sending you back into what is *clearly* an unhappy situation, I made a dummy version of you to give to them instead?

[a beat]

ELIANA: Well?

MIRROR: Ahh. I'm trying to determine if there's a scenario in which this goes horribly, miserably awry.

ELIANA: And?

MIRROR: I . . . can see several in which it goes poorly for my owner. All of them are because of their own future foolishness.

ELIANA: Amulets?

MIRROR: [sigh] That is one of them, yes.

ELIANA: Well, it's your call -- it's your life we're deciding here.

[a beat]

MIRROR: . . . do it.

ELIANA: [faintly singsongy] I'll need your help.

MIRROR: Anything you require that is within my power to give.

[[scene transition music - a soft, gentle harp strumming]]

SCENE THREE

INT. THE WORKSHOP, VERY LATE THAT NIGHT

ELIANA and the MIRROR have been hard at work. ELIANA runs a polishing cloth over the DUPE MIRROR and sets the cloth down, pleased with their results.

ELIANA: [pleased laugh] Well, I think this is about as close to the original as we're going to get without just making another you.

MIRROR: And I would not wish my owner on another sentient being.

ELIANA: Are they really as bad as all that?

MIRROR: In small doses, no. At first, I admit, I found their foolishness endearing. Almost charming. But I was once a trusted advisor to great leaders, wise and just rulers. And to go from that to . . . to being tossed into a bag of holding and subjected to the most inane -- it is insupportable.

ELIANA: Yeah, I've got an ex like that.

MIRROR: [chuckle] Also an adventuring type?

ELIANA: Yup.

MIRROR: Were you ever . . . ?

ELIANA: Me? No no, they came in to my shop to get something fixed, just like the rest of the world does. And I don't know -- they'd-they'd seemed a little . . . they seemed like they could use someone to look after them.

There is a pause in the conversation as ELIANA fusses with tools on her workbench, hoping to deflect. When the MIRROR doesn't say anything, she continues.

ELIANA: I like things I can fix. Things I can make sense of, and take apart and put back together again so they're even better than before. That kind of work just *clicks* in my brain. And adventures are pretty inherently messy. So, no, if I were to go out on a quest, I'd need to find the right members for my party - people who understood that messiness is hard, and who can work well with me. That's just a little tricky to find.

[a beat]

ELIANA: [awkwardly] Anyway! [uncomfortable laugh] You ready?

MIRROR: I believe so, yes.

ELIANA: You nervous?

MIRROR: [embarrassed] Hush.

ELIANA: Alright, firing it up.

ELIANA gets her wand out of a drawer in the workbench and taps it on the DUPE MIRROR. There is a crystalline sound as the DUPE MIRROR begins powering up.

[a beat]

MIRROR: Is . . . is that it? No magic words? Just a little tap-tap with your wand?

ELIANA: Give it a second. It needs to go through a lot the first time it gets started up. Even if it's not on the same level as you, we did still make a magic mirror in a matter of hours.

MIRROR: I suppose.

The DUPE MIRROR boots up with twinkling chimes.

MIRROR: Did it work?

DUPE MIRROR: [glitchy, stuttering sound quality] Hello! I am your Magic Mirror, and I'm delighted to meet you!

MIRROR: It sounds nothing like me!

ELIANA: It sounds pretty close!

DUPE MIRROR: [glitchy, more severe stuttering sound quality] How may I assist you today?

MIRROR: Oh, this was a terrible plan.

DUPE MIRROR: Have I displeased you?

ELIANA: No no sweetheart, you're doing great.

DUPE MIRROR: Wonderful!

ELIANA: Here, let's try something. Ask it some questions, see if it responds similarly enough to fool your owner.

MIRROR: Oh, fine. Magic mirror, what will happen if . . . I don't know, if I pick a fight with a dragon?

DUPE MIRROR: [less severe, but still slightly glitchy] Depending on the species, age, health, and temperament of the dragon, any number of things! Whether or not you have the element of surprise will also factor in. However, given that you are a mirror and dragons are typically creatures of considerable size, strength, and magic, it is unlikely that you would prevail!

ELIANA: That sounded pretty legit to me.

MIRROR: It lacks . . . style.

ELIANA: [teasing] Do you mean prickly attitude?

MIRROR: Well. Yes.

DUPE MIRROR: [less severe, but still slightly glitchy] My personality settings are customizable to provide you with the ideal magic mirror experience!

ELIANA: See? We can make it as much of a grump as you are!

MIRROR: [laughing in spite of himself] Okay...

ELIANA: Alright, let's make those adjustments.
[to the dupe Mirror] Uh, hey. Do you mind if I go into those settings to make some changes?

DUPE MIRROR: Not at all!

ELIANA: Thanks. I like to check first before I go poking around.

Different chime noises this time as ELIANA goes into the DUPE MIRROR's settings. A magic whirring that increases in pitch gradually as the settings are adjusted.

ELIANA: [to herself] Ok, here we go . . . yup, that's an easy enough tweak.
[to the dupe Mirror] Alright, how do you feel now?

DUPE MIRROR: [much more similar to the Mirror] Well enough, I suppose.

MIRROR: Mmm, will it be enough to fool my owner?

ELIANA: You mean the dingdong who thought just shaking you would fix your language settings?

MIRROR: A valid point. Let's send them that message.

[[scene transition music - a soft, gentle harp strumming]]

SCENE FOUR

INT. THE WORKSHOP, MIDMORNING

ELIANA is bustling around the shop, setting up for the day. Birds are chirping outside and there is an occasional horse and cart passing by on the dirt road.

MIRROR: And we're *certain* this will work?

ELIANA: Yes! Now shush -- your owner could be here any minute. Y'know what? Actually, let me just hide you.

ELIANA opens a cupboard and puts the MIRROR inside.

MIRROR: [muffled from inside the cupboard] Is this really necessary?

ELIANA: Shh!

DUPE MIRROR: Good morning.

ELIANA: [yawn] You shush too!

The ADVENTURER knocks at the door before throwing it open and walking in uninvited. The bell above the door jingles.

ADVENTURER: Good morning! I've come to collect my mirror! Can't believe he's done already! Y'know, when you were going on and on about how you needed to know what broke him and what I did and what happened to him, I had my worries that you might not be the person for the job. I thought you might be -- well, that's-that's not important now.

[a beat]

ADVENTURER: Well? Where is he?

ELIANA: Oh, yep yep, I . . . [yawn] Sorry, I pulled an all-nighter to get him ready for you.

ADVENTURER: Ah, tenacity! You love to see it.

ELIANA: . . . sure. Yeah. Anyway, there is the matter of payment?

ADVENTURER: Sure, sure. How much do I owe you?

The ADVENTURER dumps out a large sack of gold coins onto the workbench.

ADVENTURER: That should cover it, right?

ELIANA: [agog] It . . . yes, that should cover it. Mhmm. Yup.

ADVENTURER: Great! Now, where is my mirror?

DUPE MIRROR: Good morning. Are you to be my new owner?

ADVENTURER: Mirror! You goof -- “new owner”. [amused sigh] That’s a good one!

DUPE MIRROR: I assure you, we’ve never met.

ELIANA: We -- I, I mean “I” -- had to do a wipe of his memory as part of the repair process. So you may need to go through the “getting to know you” phase again. Sorry about that. It was the only way to make sure I’d gotten him back in perfect working condition.

ADVENTURER: Aah, that makes sense. It is a shame we’ll have to recreate all our great inside jokes though. We had such good banter, ol Mirror and me.

ELIANA: I’m sure. Well, would you like me to wrap him up for you?

ADVENTURER: Oh, no, no need!
[to the Dupe Mirror] Ready to go back in my bag?

DUPE MIRROR: In your what, now?

ADVENTURER: Aw, don’t be shy!

The ADVENTURER picks up the DUPE MIRROR, opens their bag of holding, and chucks the DUPE MIRROR in. There is a sound of falling and a scream for a suspiciously long time before the ADVENTURER closes the bag.

ADVENTURER: Thanks for taking care of him for me! I don’t know what I’d do without that little guy.

ELIANA: [hiding her alarm] Happy to help! Safe travels!

The ADVENTURER leaves the shop and closes the door behind them.

MIRROR: [muffled from inside the cupboard] Have they left?

ELIANA: Yeah, they’re gone now.

ELIANA opens the cupboard and gets the MIRROR out.

ELIANA: Y'know, if they hadn't been gone, you piping up would have been pretty dumb. Probably would have ruined all the work we did.

MIRROR: So . . . what should we do now?

ELIANA: [teasing] Well. / could always take you out on adventures now.

MIRROR: [small chuckle] You would make for a much more pleasant companion than my previous owner.

ELIANA: [laugh] Huh. Y'know, I might like that. Well, maybe someday. For now, I think you deserve a bit of the quiet life.

MIRROR: Oh?

ELIANA: I mean. You're welcome to stay here? If you like. I could use some company around the shop.

[[gentle, slow, acoustic guitar music begins in the background]]

MIRROR: I would be alright with that.

ELIANA: [laugh] Just alright?

MIRROR: I'm going through scenarios to see how it'll likely go.

ELIANA: And?

MIRROR: And I think it'll work out very nicely.

THE END