

Mirror

By Bob Daniels

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(Lights come up to reveal what appears to be a live video. In that video we see Dick, in the process of dressing up, looking in the “mirror”. He is preparing for his performance, to begin in a few minutes. He does not have his wig nor several clothes items on yet. He is not aware that the audience sees what he is doing.)

DICK

More wrinkles. *(He applies a bit more powder to his eyes.)* No. Still there. 60 years and I can't hide them as well as I used to. Maybe if I smile less broadly, I'll squint less. *(He works on his smiling.)* No. *(Sighs.)* Wrinkles, wrinkles everywhere. *(He looks at his hands.)* All of those spots. *(Applies makeup to his hands.)* Ahhh. That's better.

(Indicating the mirror.) Why am I talking to you? Is my life so empty that I end up talking to my reflection? No, no, my life isn't empty. It's a full life. *(Reacting to the mirror.)* My personal life? Married? Of course! My wife—Monique--and I have been together more than 35 years now. I have three beautiful children—THREE! Not only that, but two small grandchildren as well.

(Reacting to the mirror) The children? I guess they're fine. I haven't seen them in a long time. They're busy with their successful lives. We did a good job of raising them. *(Reacting angrily to the mirror.)* No, I haven't seen them! They're busy, okay?

(A beat)

Maybe they find it hard to talk to me. I don't know. Let's talk about something else. *(Reacting to mirror.)* Monique? She's a good wife. A fun person to be with, people tell me. With so many friends, she always seems to light up a room. She amazes me.

(Reacting to the mirror.) Me? I think I'm shy in life. I can't handle the attention. If I walk into a room as I really am, I start to wonder what these people are thinking of me.

(Reacting to the mirror) What? Do they know about this? Yes, they know, but we don't talk about it. Everybody pretends that Daddy is off on business. They call it sales. I call it therapy.

(Reacting to the mirror.) Yes, I am a transvestite. I like the clothes, the glitter, the makeup. I like this make-believe world.

(To the mirror) You don't understand. I'm not a good communicator. My wife and I had a wonderful marriage. Our children kept us busy. Then, one by one, they left the nest. My wife and I looked at each other. We did not have anything to say anymore.

Am I a good communicator? I think I am. My wife seems to be the better communicator. I don't think I am the communicator she wants me to be. She would constantly ask me what I am thinking, and I'd tell her truthfully, "Nothing."

She wouldn't believe me. She says it is impossible to think about nothing.

My problem is, when I'm thinking about something, it's not what I want her to know.

So I always say "nothing."

(A beat.)

(Picks up his wig and puts it on.)

My wife has the most beautiful hair. Skin most soft and smooth. I always admired how she looked. *(Looks at his brasts.)* She has nicer breasts than I do. I've tried hard to make mine look more "natural," but it doesn't work.

My wife is the most beautiful woman. *(Reacting to mirror.)* Did I tell her? Well, no, I am not sure how to tell her. We don't really talk with each other. But I think we both understand each other.

I think we understand each other.

(Reacting to the mirror.) What do I mean? Well, a few years ago, while alone at home, I could not help but go through my wife's belongings. She had a small section

of “fat clothes” which she hasn’t worn in a long time now. I tried a dress on. It fit.

I liked it. A little makeup, silk stockings, nail polish...I became my wife. No, no, I don’t mean an exact replica of her, but I felt myself inhabiting her being.

(Reacts to the mirror as if chastised.) Okay, I lied. That was not the first time I tried on a woman’s clothing. I remember when I was little I’d sit and watch my mother put on her makeup. My mother and I did not communicate much. She was always having her mental illness for the day. But when she put on her makeup, something magical happened. My mother would become a different person. An elegant person! Her bra, her girdle, her stockings, her high-heeled shoes. She would smile, stand up straight, look so proud. People would admire her for her changed persona.

I liked that magic and I wanted that for myself. When mother would go out, I would do the same thing I saw her do. Lipstick. Eyeliner. Rouge. Then I would follow it with whatever clothes would fit me There was something very comforting in putting each item on. Then the magic would happen. I was no longer me! I was somebody else!

This was my secret for many years. I hid it from everybody around me except my friends who enjoyed the same magic. I went to clubs and performed my act. Everybody loved me!

(Reacting to mirror.) What do you mean, did my parents ever know? I think my mother always knew. But her mind, her body could not handle the truth. My father once caught me with some makeup and clothes in my suitcase as I was coming home one morning. He looked at my things and tears welled up in his eyes. I did not know what to say. This was a man I looked up but whom I never knew. My father asked, “Have I been a good father to you?” I didn’t know what to say except to nod my head. “I want you to have good life.” And that was it. Subject closed.

(A beat.)

“I want you to have a good life.”

(He pauses. Looks carefully in the mirror.)

As I get older, I don't like you *(indicating the mirror)* so much anymore. These wrinkles. This sagging butt. No, that is not me. I need magic! I want magic!

(indicating outfit) I love this dress. My wife has one just like this. I think she liked the fact that I showed so much interest in her clothes, hair, and make up. Where'd you buy that? What color is that? She seems happy in this marriage since we find things in common to talk about.

Does she know about this life I lead? She does. But, like my mother, she doesn't talk about it.

(A beat.) Oh, God, is that what this is all about? Being with people who don't want to talk about things? We talk and talk and talk about nothing. And here I am, talking to you, mirror! Is this the best I can do? *(Stops. Rests his head in his arms on his dressing room table.)*

(A beat. The lights flash in his room. He reacts.)

One minute to stage time? I didn't see the earlier warnings. Mirror, wish me luck. *(Re-adjusts wig. A dab of lipstick.)*

(Sighs.) It's magic time. *(He gets up and leaves, looking despondent.)*

(The Dick we see coming on the stage is completely transformed in his energy. He is vivacious, gregarious. His energy is contagious. He is now DICKIE)

DICKIE

(singing—upbeat and bouncy)

**We've got another fantastical night
We're gonna make it worth your while.
I've got my guests galore,
You'll see what we have in store,
It's guaranteed to make you smile!**

**I'm Dickie the Queen
I guarantee a scream
A night of happiness galore.
The lights! The set! The costumes! The me!
I'll be your entertaining whore!
Tonight—I'm yours!**

(song ends)

Hello, people! Look at you all! Better yet, look at me!
Don't I look lovely tonite? I did all of this for you!

This evening while riding here in my limousine, the
driver kept looking at me in his rear-view mirror. I
was flattered...until I noticed his rear view was
focused on my (*indicates his butt*) rear-view!

I've been trying all of these latest American diets.
There's the Atkins, the South Beach, the Wanking
Willy, and the Dickie Dutch diet. With Atkins you eat
all the pork you want, with South Beach you trim the
fat, and Wanking Willy you beat your meat until its
tender, and with the Dickie Dutch, you let someone do
the porking! It hasn't done anything for my weight
yet.

Can we bump up the houselights so I can get a better
look at our lovely audience?

(House lights come up)

*(Surveys the audience. Indicating different people
there.)* Oh yes, I remember you. And you. And yes,
you were grabbing my tits the other night. Just
kidding, just kidding! *(To a man in the audience.)* Oh,
you're just my type. Far better than my husband! Are
you good in bed? I should hope so, since I haven't
been getting any!

(House lights dim.)

(Reacting to audience.) You want to know about my
husband? My husband, people, is the most boring man
ever! I try to kiss him and he thinks I'm trying to start
a conversation! *(Demonstrates kissing him) (as Dick)*
"...and how was your day?"

My husband has so many little secrets. He thinks I
know nothing, but I know everything about him. I'm
the one who washes his underwear and I can see
where he's had his little "outings."

Do I talk about this with him? Why would I do that?
Sitting at our morning coffee with the newspaper:
"Dear, how was your date last night?" It's not so much

about my wanting to know. I don't want to talk about it. I don't want him to explain himself to me.

You see, I'm happy with how things are now. Oh we don't talk about those things. I mean, what can we say?

Let sleeping dogs lie. As long as he goes to work, brings home a paycheck, doesn't yell at me, doesn't have bad breath, doesn't drink too much, everything is just fine. We get so obsessed with analyzing ourselves and our partners. Sometimes it's best just to accept our partners for who they are.

(A beat.) And accepting ourselves for who we are.

(A beat. She shrugs off the impending thoughts.)

(Regaining his energy, forcefully.) "Accepting ourselves for who we are!" Haven't you ever heard anything so ridiculous?

(Responding to audience.) Of course I've accepted myself for who I am! *(A beat. He can't do this.)* What am I saying? I have no fucking idea who I really am.

(A beat. Determined.) I just want to be happy. I want this to be life forever! I want the lights, the audience, this whole me! Me! Me! Away with my husband, away with living a lie! Away with being hurt.

(He's lost his train of thought. Desperation. Immediately lands into his opening musical number.)

(singing more forcefully)

**We've got another fantastical night
We're gonna make it worth your while.
I've got my guests galore,
You'll see what we have in store,
It's guaranteed to make you smile!**

**I'm Dickie the Queen
I guarantee a scream
A night of happiness galore—**

(He stops. He looks at the audience. They have become his "mirror")

Don't look at me like that, please.

(Suddenly Dick is self-conscious of who he is. He begins to realize that he is a parody. He touches his dress. Looks at his hands. Feels his face. Strokes his hair.)

Truth. Illusion. Magic. *(A beat.)* I don't know who I am anymore. *(A beat.)* I don't know my husband. We don't talk at all. I don't understand him. Lies. I don't even know my children. They don't come to see me anymore. Lies. They're ashamed of me. We're one big happy family. Lies. I'm 60 now and I enjoy this life.

Lies.

(A beat.) I need magic.

(Sings, with resignation.)

**I'm Dickie the Queen
I guarantee a scream
A night of happiness galore—**

(He stops.)

Happiness. I don't know happiness. *(Screams)* I want magic! I don't want to be old! I don't want to be alone! I don't want to be a lie! Goddamit, what do you think I am, some kind of joke?

Don't you know who I am? *(Calms down. Listens a moment. Reacts to audience.)*

You don't, don't you. Funny, neither do I.

(Removes wig. Wipes off part of his makeup)

I'll start with who I was. Then go to who I will be.

(Sings, with growing conviction.)

**I'm Dick, I was the Queen
I could guarantee a scream
A night of happiness galore
For you the audience, I was yours.**

(Singing with more determination)

**I'm Dick, I gonna be mean.
I'm going to create a big scene.
Just you wait, you'll see what it's all for
Come back next time and I'll be—**

(He stops, defiantly. Surveys the audience.)

Good night.

(He bows and exits.)