

# *Birthdays Eve*

Character Description: Female – middle age

Emotional Range: Medium

Complexity: 1 2 ③ 4

*(Set in the early 40's in a Southern town lives REBA. She is a sheltered woman that suffers from mild mental illness that is made worse by her old fashioned and controlling mother who still treats her like a teenage girl. She is having a moment of reflection, thinking about the eve of her 32<sup>nd</sup> birthday that has recently passed. She references an imaginary twin; who is truly a representation of her fear. She speaks with a proper southern twang and the awareness of her illness does not seem present to her. She is speaking to her friend, who lives in her mirror.)*

## REBA

*(sitting in front of a large grand mirror)* I was just thinking about my birthday last week. *(she giggles)* T'was the night before my birthday and what exactly was a woman to do? There was wind all about, strong, gusty. Like it was singing my very own birthday tune--- whistling between the houses. It was indeed beautiful. Standing before myself, bare naked I wondered--- how should I tend to my womanly self- this year? I can clip, razor or tweeze, Momma will not allow me to use wax. I thought, what is a woman to do to remain as such? It's like nature calls us to be men at this age. Momma says that a woman is to have no unwanted hair. *(proudly)* So each year on my birthday I rid myself of it all. Except what's on my head of course. *(giggling, she stands, more excited than before)* I want to be more woman than ever before! So this year, I pondered what kind of torture would I put myself through to be such. Which would make me prettier to my own self? *(in a whisper)* What I secretly wanted to do was to climb out of my window and go up onto the roof top. Looking up at the starry night sky. I could sing a song of appreciation to them all for keeping a close eye on me every single night. I would have too! Climbed onto that roof top- if it wasn't for her. *(she points to the woman in the mirror)* She always talks me out of my grand ideas. Humph, some say we were born back to back but I'm not so sure of that. Though--- I can't ever remember my life being without her at my side. I think Momma gave her to me as a present. Well, that day, on my birthdays eve was no different, she told me all of her secrets – she can be such a nuisance. So I just kept looking into this old mirror. It's where my friends are, like you. It's the same mirror that I've been looking in since I was a girl, but I am no girl anymore. Even though this room still looks the same, my arms are much longer. My neck is thicker than a girl, and my shoulders are

strong now. Girls only have the makings of these things--- of what I've got. My breasts, well they sit onto my stomach now, Momma says that's not womanly at all. But she- she (**pointing at the girl in the mirror**) says exercise might just ruin me. I've never been very athletic. It's 'cause, momma says I'm special. I just look at them in the mirror and imagine what they might have looked like if someone would have ever loved them other than me. My hips- Well Momma says they are a little too wide, but my own eyes- they interpret them as perfection- especially on my birthday's eve. I pay real close attention on this day, it's a ritual of sorts. Me standing before myself. I aim to see if I'm going to look any different the next day. Momma said a woman ages like a tomatoes in the sun or a lemon in the shade. I try to make sure I'm on the right side. I think it's good to get to know yourself at least once a year. Maybe twice. Like on Valentine 's Day, if too many of your friends get chocolate and you get nothing, you might want to get to know yourself then too. I don't have to worry about that though. You and momma are my only friends. It can become quite a tragedy to lay alone on birthdays so I choose to stand with myself. It's just like another person is there. So --- I did just that. I stood there. Looking closely and running my hands down me, loving myself. It's the only place I can love me actually. Once I step foot outside this house, she jumps up--- ready to tag along. As old as we are I have not quite figured out how to leave her behind yet. I'm just fine until she starts to whisper in my ear- telling me quietly what everybody is really thinking about me. She reminds me of my hair, and my thighs and my voice. How scratchy it can be when I get nervous. So I don't say one thing to nobody, not one thing except to her. I hold her real close during those moments because it's then that she is my only friend. But when we get home, it becomes so easy to set her aside and just ignore her whispers. Oh and on nights like my birthday eve I just wish her to go away so I can express myself like a woman should without her meddling in any of my affairs. One of these birthday eves I'm going to silence her- completely. Then I can step out onto the roof and do whatever a woman on the roof likes to do, it's no business of hers at all. I can stand strong against the wind with my womanly self, stand in my own thing and hear my birthday song loud and clear. It's a gift you know. And I keep missing it's fullness. But not next year. I can see it now, I'll have my own conversations with myself and just feel- like me. She makes me think that's bad. She keeps reminding me that the stars won't appreciate my singing back, they'll think I'm a freak show or something or another, hmph! I don't like those kinds of reminders. I just want to feel free you know. Free. Free like the men do sometimes. Like the women in Africa do. Momma says we all come from African people somewhere down the line, well when can I express my African, outside of just in front of this mirror? (**angrily**) If it wasn't for her, well I believe I could. I don't call her by name. In fact, I don't call her nothing. She just shows up. She is scary too. Real, real scary. Some people say the

reflection in the mirror is actually backwards. If that's true, then right side forward, she would be the scariest of all. And if that's true I might be scary too. I choose not to think too much about it. ***(she holds her ears, closes her eyes and sings)*** La-la-la, la- la-la. La-la-la- ***(she opens one eye, to peak out. Then aborts the motion and continues)*** One of these birthday eves she'll be gone from my side, but until then, I'm gonna just stand here, behind these closed doors with my only friends and listen to my birthday song sweep between the houses- just like a woman should.

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