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Reflections

A Play in One Act

Colin and Mary Crowther

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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PRODUCTION NOTES

The setting represents an hotel bedroom and adjoining bathroom, created simply and imaginatively, for example using different sized white cubes, seen against a dark curtained setting.

R is the bedroom. CR, angled outwards, there is a long white cube on legs with drawers painted onto it in shades of grey. This will serve as a dressing table. It has a white mirror frame above it. A small white cube is pulled up to it, painted to look padded. This will serve as a stool. DR—through the mirror as it were—is a black cube. C there is a long white cube painted in greys to look like an ottoman, standing at the foot of an unseen bed. (A luggage trestle in front of or behind the ottoman will be useful for the suitcase, and a ‘headboard’ UC will help to give the effect of depth to the bed). Now imagine a line from UC to DC. This is the wall dividing bedroom from bathroom. On that wall, DC is the unseen door, above that a white, free-standing, full-length mirror frame, and above that a white coat stand.

L is the bathroom. ULC, two white cubes, one behind the other, are shaded in greys to look like a WC. LC, two more cubes, one on top of the other, angled outwards, look like a pedestal hand basin with a mirror frame above it. DSL—through the mirror as it were—is a tall black ‘cube’. Between the loo and the hand basin stands a towel rail with a white towel on it. Together these items represent the bathroom.

There is a door to the bedroom CR, a door to the bathroom DC and a window to the bathroom UL above towel rail. These are all mimed. (Only where directed should any attempt be made for the reflections to mimic the movements of the people—we are dealing with alter egos—the mirrors show the main characters not so much what they are doing as what they are thinking and feeling).

The play is divided into scenes for use in rehearsal, each scene representing a new reflection and a chance to take stock and change gear and pace. But in performance, the scenes should flow together without a break. The play is followed by an optional Reprise. Even if you do not use it in performance, it could be useful to start rehearsals by reading it aloud as it gives the actors a quick overview of the emotional shape of the play.

Colin and Mary Crowther

*O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!*

Robert Burns

Other plays by Colin and Mary Crowther, published by
Samuel French Ltd:

Footprints in the Sand (Colin Crowther)
The Lost Garden (full length)
Noah's Ark (for children)
Till We Meet Again
Tryst (Colin Crowther)
Just Passing

REFLECTIONS

SCENE 1

She sits on the ottoman, dressed in a white towelling robe — clearly the property of the hotel — and white slippers with pink pom-poms, a ghastly gift from him, so she has to wear them. Her Reflection, looking frumpy in baggy greys, sits on the black cube DR and watches her, adopting a very glum posture

He sits on the loo, dressed in a white shirt and black socks, his white boxer shorts round his ankles. (For reasons which will soon become apparent, he may wish to wear black briefs and a shirt with long front and tail) His Reflection, looking smart and slim in greys, sits on the black cube DL and watches him, but adopting a very jaunty posture

She and He both stare glumly out front. Pause

Her Oh...flip!

Him Oh...heck!

Their Reflections spin to face out front

Her Reflection Mirror, mirror, on the wall...

His Reflection Who's the fairest of them all?

His Reflection } (together) Don't ask us or your face will fall!
Her Reflection }

They cackle like wicked old witches, then spin to face US and remain very still, but in their original jaunty/gloomy postures. He and she start speaking, growing ever faster

Him Oh heck.

Her Oh flip.

Him Oh heck.

Her Oh flip.

Him Oh heck.

Pause

Her What have I talked myself into?

Him What have I done?

Her I've always hated a fuss.

Him A dinner dance!

Her Perhaps I should have said.

Him She'll be expecting it. Slap-up do... dinner...dancing... speeches...

Her When he told me, I could have died!

Him But the look on her face!

Her I wanted the floor to open up and swallow me!

Him Made it all worthwhile!

Her I hate parties.

Him She's only ever been to three — in the whole of her life — I remember, she told me.

Her I walked out. Every time. I never planned to. I'd just be popping out for a breath of air, but somehow I'd keep going till I found myself back where I started—home.

Him She always had to leave early. So she missed out, poor thing.

Her Like the last one we went to.

Him My works Christmas do.

Her He got drunk.

Him Drop too much. Bit of a laugh, really.

Her I could have cried. Everyone looking. I swore to myself then...

Him Maybe I should have warned her.

Her You'd think he'd have realized.

Him Not sprung it on her like that. Surprise!

Her I nearly fainted.

Him But tonight I'm determined. We're going to be the centre of attention.

Her I hate that!

Him I love that!

Her And they'll all be thinking, (*self-deprecatingly*) "How did he end up with her?"

Him (*proudly*) They'll think, "How did someone like him get someone like her?" (*Puzzled*) So why do I have this feeling that tonight ...

Her Tonight is going to be ...

Him } (*together*) A disaster!
Her }

Pause

Him Oh heck!

Her Oh flip!

They both rise

Him Perhaps we can get away early.

Her We'll just have the meal.

Him And slip away during the dancing.

Her I hate dancing.

Him But I love dancing.

Simultaneously, she shuffles over to the long mirror, her eyes glued on those stupid slippers that make walking so awkward and he shuffles over to the other side of the same mirror, shuffling because his shorts are still round his ankles. They look at their reflections in the mirror, and sigh

Her The thing about dancing...

Him The thing I really love...

Her Really hate...

Him Is that when I'm dancing, I feel like I'm walking on air. (*He twirls to demonstrate*)

Her Like an elephant on stilts. (*She twirls to demonstrate*)

Him I feel I can be anyone — the person I was always meant to be — Fred Astaire... John Travolta... (*He takes one foot out of his shorts and does a characteristic dance step in the style of one of his idols*)

Her But talking, just the two of us, lights down low — then I can sparkle, talk for hours, fly — I'm Audrey Hepburn... Julia Roberts...

He stops dancing

Him It's just making a speech I hate.

Her I hope he doesn't try to make a speech.

Him Only solution — get drunk first!

Her He'll get drunk, then nothing will stop him.

Him Like at the Christmas do. At work. Dead proud of that one.

Her His friends egg him on.

Him Great bunch of lads!

Her But he's the one who ends up looking a fool.

Him The look on the boss' face!

Her One more speech like that and he will lose his job.

Him He looked just like our old Headmaster!

Her Might be a good thing. It really doesn't suit him.

Him Funny, even then it was always them, egging me on. But always me getting caught.

Him }
Her } (*together*) Maybe the time has come to move away.

Simultaneously, they move away from their mirrors, heading back for the ottoman or loo. He stops halfway, turns us, lifts the front of his shirt and looks down

Him Are you all right down there?

She stops halfway, turns DS, and clutches her tummy

Her Oh. I feel sick. Again.

Him I'm sorry about last night. I should never have let the lads do that to you. I thought it would wash off by now.

She turns to look at the bathroom door

Her Do you think I should tell him?

He turns to look at the bathroom door

Him Do you think I should tell her?

Her No. Not now.

Him } (together) { I'll tell her tonight.
Her } (together) { I'll tell him tonight.

She turns to cross to the dressing table. He pulls up his shorts

Her (calling) Are you all right in there?

Him (calling) I'll be out in a minute.

She sits at the dressing table. He crosses to the sink

SCENE 2

Him }
Her } (together) It's too late to back out now.

Simultaneously, their Reflections start to move. Her Reflection swivels to face DR; his to face DL. Once in position, Her Reflection mimes filing away at a broken finger nail, then giving up and biting it. His Reflection mimes patting aftershave onto his cheeks then smoothing it in. Meanwhile, the real "He" shaves with an electric razor. The real "She" paints her nails

Her I wish Mum was here. Oh, it might not be too bad. Just another

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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