

**Lindsay Wincherauk**

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**A 60-YEAR-OLD-MAN RUNNING IN** 

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STORIES

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**LIFE WITHOUT**



# LIFE WITHOUT



# LIFE WITHOUT MIRRORS

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Olivia longed for days when her husband, Frazil, used to look deeply into her shimmering blue eyes and say, *"I love you. You're the most beautiful creature on earth."* Words, long gone, after Frazil started fucking his waif-Victoria Secret-thin, supermodel-beautiful assistant, Mia.

After two months slipped by, and fucking Mia wasn't enough, one night, Frazil began fucking Mia's open-relationship boyfriend, Stuart, during a cocaine-fuelled bender. A truth revealed to Olivia when Frazil returned from the office, his breath stinking of four double bourbons, and his lips crusted with Stuart's—

*"Sit down, Olivia. I have something to confess,"* Frazil meekly uttered, his eyes darting around the room, avoiding contact with Olivia. Frazil's face was contorted out of shape, his left cheekbone drooping; his piercing green eyes shaded with guilt. His confession was meant to give him permission. To dump his guilt. To hurt.

Tears rolled down Olivia's face. She'd become broken. Suicidal. Floundering.

*"Sweetie..."*

*"Stop. I don't want to know. Don't tell me what I already know. I love you. That's all that matters."*

*"Sweetie, I must tell you...."* as if the endearing term carried meaning, *"...it's the only way we can move forward, salvage our love. I wouldn't have strayed if it weren't for the fact, you started looking like a sloppy cow."*

Olivia collapsed to the floor.

*"And as for Stuart, it's because of the times, it's so confusing now, people are allowed to explore, to fuck whomever they want, it means nothing, it's just Stuart."*

If Olivia had the strength of willpower, Frazil would have been out the door that night, never to be allowed back in. But instead, she said, *"Frazil, we can get past this. I know you don't mean to hurt me. I'll try harder."*

Thus commenced Olivia's downward spiral erasing every shred of esteem as her being started to be eviscerated.

Olivia numbed her days with the vapidness of daytime television and tumblers of vodka.

In the weeks that followed, Olivia joined hot yoga, attended boot-camp-style workouts, had Botox done to the point where her forehead was located in the middle of her skull. And she took spin classes until her ass was so sore, she could no longer sit down, let alone walk.

All of this helped Olivia drop from a healthy SIZE 8 to a gaunt, emaciated SIZE 2 as scabs of flesh began flecking off her face.

But it wasn't enough. Frazil kept fucking Mia + Stuart + several others. Upon returning from work, late one night, Frazil said to Olivia, *"Honey, have you done something to your hair?"*

Olivia raced to the bathroom, tears washing fresh scabs off her face, looked into the mirror, and ranted incessantly about how *ugly, unworthy, unlovable, and undesirable* she was. She rambled on about how perfect and desirable Frazil is, especially since he'd been cycling steroids + bringing home gallon-sized drums of protein powder. Olivia's life was unravelling, while Frazil's, was swaddled in hedonism.

Another Botox treatment. Another spin class. More yoga. Fingers down the throat after every meal, and SIZE 2, was still too much to be worthy of Frazil's love. Olivia's skin had become stretched to the point it now sported a mirror-like sheen. Except for the flaking scabs, of course.

Dripping from hot yoga, Olivia stopped at a dive bar on the way home one afternoon, slammed back a couple of shots of swill, and then continued her broken stroll home. Along the way, as she was passing a homeless encampment, she heard a man, wearing a dark hoodie, his eyes being consumed by his skull, whistle and say, *"Is everything okay? You look broken. My name is Ryan."*

Olivia was being noticed; she felt a twinge of love; she felt a sense of belonging. *"Honey, here,"* Ryan poured a line of white powder onto the back of his hand, *"have a little bump; it will help take the edge off. It will offer you a way out."*

Olivia snorted. Walked away. A warm rush blasted through her veins. For a moment, she forgot about Frazil, Mia, and Stuart. For a moment, she felt whole.

The next day, she walked the same path. Met with Ryan. Bumped and bumped and —  
The following day, she was down on her knees, between two tents. Excrement steamed a mere few feet away on the grass as a lineup of what could be described as the lowest of the low waited for their turn with Olivia: offering her nothing more than baggies of Crystal Meth.

Every day, more men, some of them so brutally putrid, vomiting became part of the quest for acceptance as Olivia took dick after dick; somehow, she liked it.

Three months into Olivia's new life, she'd finally dropped down to the SIZE 0, which she believed would make her desirable enough for her perfect husband, Frazil.

But instead, when Frazil returned home that night, with his eyes darting around the room, he looked Olivia's way, smirked, and said, *"Did you get a new dress?"*

Olivia yearned for days to return when Frazil would look into her now dying eyes and say, *"Honey, I love you. You are my everything. You are the most beautiful creature on earth."* Not: *"Did you get a new dress?"*

As the months slipped by, with Olivia drifting into a hallucinatory graveyard, Olivia kept visiting the homeless camp. Her gums started bleeding, her hair began to fall out in

clumps, and the clouds and trees began talking about her. She purchased one-hundred identical dresses to change into when she got home to be presentable for Frazil. She'd power-wash herself daily to blast away the toxic chemical smell of rotten eggs or cat urine. Meth often emits from users' pores.

One night, with Olivia's being wilting away, devastation visible even to the blind, when Frazil returned home from his job as a rocket scientist, the lowest of the sciences. Frazil reeked of booze + Tom Ford perfume (Mia's scent); he brushed past Olivia + said, "I'm going to skip dinner tonight, I'm exhausted," and then pounded a bourbon + retreated to bed. Olivia longed to hear, "You're beautiful." What she received instead was: *snoring*.

The next day, the sun dribbled into their bedroom, eventually blasting Olivia + Frazil in a warm glow, signalling the start of a new beginning.

*"Olivia, darling, I'm sorry, I've been a horrible husband, I love you, I truly do, I'm giving up Mia. I'm giving up, Stuart. All I need is you. Have you lost weight?"*

They hit the open road. Frazil was taking them to Vanity, the town where they were married. Frazil was on a mission to renew their vows.

Vanity used to be a town where the elite went to *see-and-be-seen* and to bask in the shallow tediousness of perceived perfection.

Vanity used to be on the highway, now the route bypassed it; death was the town's most likely outcome.

Three miles before the town limits... bu...bump ...their Audi Quatro's rear-view mirrors shattered.

They checked into their room in Hotel Bliss. Frazil offered Olivia a bump of Ketamine to bring her down from the speediness of meth. Olivia rushed to the bathroom to freshen up: the bathroom was mirrorless.

**NIGHT 1**

They ventured out for dinner, the night sky erasing reflections from vehicles + store windows.

They passed the meatpacking plant + a Value Village. Workers, and shoppers, were pouring into the street, looking as if they could adorn fitness magazines or flaunt themselves on fashion runways.

At the restaurant, their server, Maude, no words could describe her ghastliness, festering sores on her face, somehow: she was married to a Tom Brady lookalike.

The citizenry of Vanity never sported frowns. Vanity was thriving.

**THE NEXT DAY**

Frazil took Olivia shopping for new clothes. She asked the clerk if there was a mirror to check out her look.

*"Honey, does it fit? Is it comfortable? What do you need a mirror for? There are no mirrors or reflections or cameras or artists' portraits or words to describe looks or critics or... vanity... there's no vanity, in Vanity. Our off-leash dog parks are filled with pugs. We all drive tan Toyota Corollas. We're happy. I've never seen my face."*

### DAY 3 IN VANITY

By the third day, Olivia's health: miraculously returned. Her skin began glowing. Frazil doted over her saying sorry after sorry after —

Olivia flashed back dazzling smiles. Frazil felt loved, his manipulation complete.

It was time to return home. One last meal, this time with Maude and her Tom Brady, lookalike husband. *"Thanks, Maude, you saved my life!"*

Free of the shackles of beauty, and with Olivia's face morphing from gaunt to once again radiating, marriage salvaged, it was time to check out, to return to their lives, revigorated.

Just as they were about to check out of their room, Frazil smiled warmly and said, *"Honey, turn off the television. It's time to go home."*

Olivia grabbed the remote, but before she could hit the power button, BREAKING NEWS flashed across the screen, followed by GRIZZLY DISCOVERY. The images flashing on the television screen were of the park across the street from Frazil's office, next to a strip club and landscaping business.

Frazil plopped down on the edge of the bed, mouth agape, body trembling.

*"Two bodies were discovered today in a shallow grave. I must warn you, the images we are about to show are disturbing."*

Olivia sat down next to Frazil, clutching his right hand, consoling him.

When their eyes returned to the flashing screen, what they saw was, *"OMG, I think that's Mia's body + Stuart's. OMG."* Frazil's skin became littered with goosebumps.

Olivia chuckled.

Checked out, they hit the road heading home to the city. Mile three out of Vanity... bu...bump... their Audi Quatro's rear-view mirror unshattered, reflecting once more, as did the vehicles outside mirrors. Frazil pulled over to the side of the road to inspect the damage. He peered into the Audi toward Olivia; his reflection fired back a *waif-thin* body, wasting away.

Three months later, with their lives returning to a new normal, Olivia began to eat whatever she wanted, never sticking to *this-or-that* for too long. Her skin started glowing, her skin became taught, she started her own yoga studio, + she removed all mirrors from their home. Olivia went from haggard to the utmost of perfection. She dressed how she wanted, dropping off all of her designer garb at the homeless encampment. Olivia had successfully become the most stunningly gorgeous version of herself, herself.

Frazil, on the other hand, his life quite literally began frazzling. He lost his job, + he

started spending his empty days down on his knees in return for bumps of Crystal Meth.

As one day morphed into the tragic nightmare of the next, Frazil's gums started bleeding, his hair began falling out, his eyes retreated into their sockets, and his body began to devour itself. And, oh yeah, he wore a black hoodie, every day, hood up, crack pipe flashing burning embers from inside the ghoul-inhabited hood.

Olivia began loving Tia, Mia's twin sister, on the side.

Every night, Frazil broke more when Olivia returned home, grinning from ear-to-ear, scented with Joe Malone perfume, Tia's favourite scent.

After an exceptionally long day at the homeless camp, Frazil looked up to the sky, only to be greeted by a talking cloud saying, "Go home, loser."

Frazil began walking. He passed a restaurant at the base of a thirty-storey tower. Olivia + Mia sat in the window, stealing kisses. Distraught, Frazil raced up the stairs of the building, stepping out onto a ledge on the rooftop: his destiny thirty floors below.

Olivia + Tia ambled out of the restaurant, hand-in-hand, walking lockstep, when suddenly, SPLAT, Frazil's body smashed into the roof of a car, windows exploding, thrusting shards of glass towards the passers-by.

Olivia glanced at Frazil, life draining from his frail, broken body, and said, "Frazil, sweetie, did you get new shoes?"

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## LIFE WITHOUT MIRRORS

### *OLIVIA + TIA*

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Love is taken from heartache. Mia swayed past the frame, entering Olivia's sight.

Knees shaking. Heart pounding. Falling, hitting play. *Fell*. But no, pause. Olivia's with Frazil + Frazil has brought Mia into Olivia's life, fracturing it, shattering her, in his coquetting abuse.

Olivia crumbles into a ball on the floor. Her life was ripped to shreds. Frazil is her love – but with a single beat of her heart – Mia's being entered her, swallowing her, confusing her, from this day forth.

Frazil was fucking Mia, not caring for a second what his openness was thrusting on a fragile soul.

Mia's beauty was far too great to be worthy of description. Stunning. Outrageous. Dangerous.

And then, Mia was gone, dead, buried in a shallow grave.

Three hearts broken by one, Frazil came home; Mia desperately wanted to escape.

At Mia's funeral, Mia returned to the absolute perfection of Tia, her twin sister.

Olivia found hope once more. An exit door. It was time to repay Frazil for his indiscretions. Mia glanced into Olivia's eyes; one stare was all it took; tomorrow had arrived, and every tomorrow after that. The exit sign started flashing brightly – Frazil's destiny, about to expire.

It took only three months for Frazil to unravel in plain view. Drugs. Drinking. Drugs. Sexual abuse, festering disease lurking in each encounter. Destruction was found in need of another baggy. A bump. An encounter. A disappearing face.

And then.

**SPLAT.**

Life draining. Heaven's door slammed shut. Frazil was gone.

Olivia chuckled once more and then tumbled into Tia's waiting arms. The past no more. The future is bright.

Lips locked. Hands clenched together. Late at night, when Olivia + Tia called out each others' names, the only sound they heard was the sound of their hearts beating in the perfection of synchronicity. Their lives had become an endless dance. The pain had been cloaked in the warmth of their serenading hearts.

One year after Frazil's death, they screamed out their love for the whole world to see, marrying in the town of, Forevermore, thirty miles down the road from Vanity.

Standing by their side, Maude + Tom Brady. And Ryan, who had put down his crack pipe and started instructing yoga.

Tia had risen to the top of the fashion world and became the editor-in-chief of the world's top fashion magazine: LOOK.

A magazine Tia and Olivia were far more beautiful than any cover.

Tia's career had her galivanting worldwide, from city to fabulous city: New York, Rome, London, Paris, Seoul, Tokyo, Milan, and on and on and on.

Olivia's yoga studio/chicken shack/ice cream parlour took the world by storm; 11,000 locations opened around the globe.

And with unstoppable momentum, Olivia began offering spin classes with a twist: Electric Bikes. Exercisers hoisted themselves up onto the cycles, put their feet up in stirrups, + had gin and nachos delivered right to their rides. The spin classes were a rousing success and blasted Olivia's business into the stratosphere, doubling once more the number of global locations. Kaching. Kaching.

Olivia + Tia became rich beyond belief.

However, Olivia + Tia wired differently than most. The pains of their past retreated into

hiding. Allowing happiness to blast into their lives in all of its glory.

*"Honey, every time I look into your eyes, my heart warms; I know I will be okay. You are the tonic embracing my soul; you, we, complete us. Smiles have replaced frowns. With us together, darkness no longer exists."*

Olivia + Tia had more money than they could ever spend.

So, they gave back.

First, they built a modest apartment complex for the people Olivia met in the homeless encampment. People her late father exploited running The Labour Crooks. An agency founded on marginalizing the marginalized more by exploiting their sweat. Leaving them broken shells reeling in the clutches of addiction. As men like Olivia's father convinced themselves, they created humans. And by keeping them down, having a living product to use up and spit out once he drained their last drops of blood.

From watching her father exploit, Olivia developed an unquenchable thirst to crush the industry that provided a lifestyle of riches and want.

By building the apartment complex and commissioning several others, she restored dignity to those left behind in the humanities race towards greed. By constructing the apartment complex + providing nutritious foods weekly, three agencies stumbled into bankruptcy because their industry's pawns were no longer useable.

Tia's career required her to fly around the world regularly. Olivia is often at her side. Although a private jet and staying in five-star hotels were desirable options, they flew coach and stayed in, at the very most: three-star hotels. Donating the \$\$\$ difference to worthy causes in the cities they visited. Feeding those less fortunate. Providing hope.

Olivia was a suspect in the murders of Mia + Frazil. Her name was cleared because of her solid alibi. At the time of the murders, she was at the local hospital's ER, comforting Lyle, an entitled douchebag who free-fell into the homeless encampment after he spent his pre-inheritance from his father – expecting more to come – it never did.

Why was Olivia comforting Lyle?

In a moment of meth-induced psychosis, while down on her knees, she chomped off Lyle's dick because she believed it was a demon attempting to possess her.

They rushed to the hospital. Lyle's dick; far too chomped to be reattached.

One month later, the remaining part of his stump was lopped off. And Lyle began transitioning into Amanda.

In a rush to close the murder case, CCT cameras caught Frazil's Audi at the burial scene. The images didn't capture Frazil disposing of the corpses; however, the case was still stamped: CLOSED. The authorities had chosen to overlook the fact in the video, there appeared to be someone sitting in the passenger seat of Frazil's car. Inside the trunk, the police found a bloody boning knife, zip ties, + tarps.

Then SPLAT. Frazil dead. The real killer?

As the days flew by, Olivia + Tia's love blossomed. With age, they became increasingly, intoxicatingly, beautiful. Their lives were blissful. Olivia and Tia were cloaked in the world of happily-ever-after, each other being the only thing they both wanted and needed from life.

Except?

*"Olivia, babe, what do you think; should we bring a child into our lives?"*

Olivia threw her arms around Tia, gushing in happiness.

*"Yes. Yes. Yes."*

*"Sweetie let's do it, the natural way. Let's find a donor. I think you, my gorgeous, perfect Olivia, I think you should carry our child."*

Olivia made an appointment to begin the process. The appointment was in one month.

That night they drifted into a heavenly dreamland.

## **TWO DAYS LATER**

Tia returned home. Wailing. Blubbering. Trembling. Breaking.

*"What's wrong? What happened? Are you sick? You can tell me anything?"*

Tia threw herself down on their bed, covered her head with a pillow, her tears reaching critical.

*"Honey, what is it? I'm here. We can get through, whatever this is? Tell me. I love you. I love you."*

Tia gingerly removed the pillow from her face. Her eyes were swollen and bloodshot. With tears still blasting from her eyes, she looked at Olivia, her voice quavering, and said, *"I'm pregnant."*

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MORE TO COME!

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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