

MAN IN THE MIRROR
EPISODE 101
PILOT

by

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TEASER

INT. BIANCA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE UP ON - A sheet of old paper. On in, a road is painted green, the borders are gold. The road turns to the right.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - the green road is actually a letter "O" that fills the screen. Slowly, more letters appear, showing the classic beginning of fairy tales.

RICHARD (OS)
Once upon a time...

As we keep pulling back we see more and more lines of text, and the drawing of a big starry snowflake.

RICHARD (OS) (CONT'D)
... a far away Kingdom welcomed the arrival of the Winter with the first snowflakes.

A little girl GIGGLES OS. The book is richly decorated with plenty of intricate patterns and drawings. A male hand turns a page. A wedding ring is clearly visible.

RICHARD (OS) (CONT'D)
The Queen sat sewing at her window. Distracted by the beauty of the snow, she pricked her finger with her needle...

RICHARD, 32, reads her favorite tale to BIANCA, a lovely 7 years old girl with beautiful sparkling big eyes, full of emotion. She listens like there was nothing else in the Universe.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(continuous)
...and three drops of blood fell into the snow. The Queen made a wish, to have a child as white as snow with lips red as blood.

PULL BACK to reveal a lovely scene of father and daughter. Bianca's room is decorated by someone who truly believes on fairy tales, with dolls and drawings of Princesses, castles and, of course, a lot of pink.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(continuous)
Soon afterwards, the Queen had a beautiful daughter, as white as snow and lips as red as blood.

BIANCA
The Princess.

We leave this tender scene and follow the corridor towards the kitchen. There's a broken glass in the floor and spilled liquid around it. A couple of stains of blood nearby.

RICHARD (OS)
But the joy didn't last long since
the Queen died.

Enter the kitchen and witness a battlefield: a bowl of soup overturned and the soup spilled all over the floor, another bowl shattered and the salad everywhere. Broken dishes, a roasted turkey untouched in the center of the table.

RICHARD (OS) (CONT'D)
The King then took a beautiful but
proud woman as his new wife. She
became the Princess' Stepmother.

Behind the table, VALERIA, 28, lies sprawled on the floor. She has a black eye and blood in her lips. Her tears have washed out her eyeliner. She's trying to light up a cigarette but her shaken hands are not helping. She gives up and stands up with difficulties. She grimaces and feels her ribs, in pain.

RICHARD (OS) (CONT'D)
She could not stand anyone
surpassing her in beauty.

Valeria takes something from the table and starts walking painfully towards Bianca's room, following Richard's voice.

RICHARD (OS) (CONT'D)
She had a magic mirror and every
morning she stood before it.

Valeria leans on Bianca's door frame and breathes with difficulty. Inside the room, Bianca, unaware of the presence of her mother, looks hypnotized at her father, wanting more.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
She looked at herself, and said...
What did the Stepmother say? You
know it, don't you? We have read
this tale a thousand times.

Bianca giggles. Of course she does.

BIANCA
(as reciting a prayer)
Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is
the fairest one of all.

Richard laughs. Valeria looks at her daughter with a smile that hides sadness and terror.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Valeria standing on the door frame, watching at her husband and daughter. She's holding a huge knife, hiding it behind her back, glittering in the darkness.

The white, shiny blade fades into...

ACT ONE

EXT. STREET - DAY

Rain over tarmac. The rain drops create tiny explosions of water as they hit the moving road. As we move over it a white broken line, like a slash, passes through. Then another. And another. Unstoppable, like life.

PULL BACK to reveal a CAR entering frame.

It's a gray day.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

A protection grill separates the back and the front seat of this POLICE CAR. A blurred neighborhood passes quickly through the passenger window. The mirror shows the only sharp image: BIANCA, our little girl has turned into a teenager girl, 16. She's looking at her own reflection. She's looking at nothing. Is she under custody?

REVERSE ANGLE, and there she is, her elbow on the armrest, her hand holding her chin. A black bonnet just above her beautiful black eyes, same color as the rest of her clothes. She's pretty but the last thing she wants to do is to show the world. She looks like a convict being driven to the execution chamber. Truth is not far from that.

RICHARD (OS)

So, what do you want for your birthday?

Richard, her father as seen in the teaser, 46 now. He's in uniform, his shades don't let us see his eyes. He asks without looking at her, trying to break the ice. His eyes on the road.

BIANCA

Nothing.

Richard looks at her, a bit impatient. Is he worried? Upset? This is not a man who expresses his emotions easily. But he tries at least.

RICHARD

Bianca, this is not easy for me either.

Bianca just stares at the emptiness. And yes, Richard is upset.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
That attitude is not gonna help
you, miss.

Bianca just shrinks a little. She just wants to disappear. Richard notices. He tries again, softer.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
You have to try to blend this time,
Princess.
(no reply)
It didn't work before, I know. But
maybe now it will be different.
(an idea)
Look, nobody knows you in this
town, you can be whoever you want.
A fresh start.

That actually half makes sense to Bianca. She looks at him for the first time in this trip. She opens her mouth and--

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(yelling to the car in
front)
Move your ass! Light is green!

Richard activates the siren a couple of times. WHOOP-WHOOP. The car in front of them hurriedly moves forward.

Bianca looks back at her mirror. The moment passed.

EXT. RIVERVIEW CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL - DAY

The early century classic building of the School appears in frame. A sign reads "Riverview Catholic Secondary School" and below in smaller print "Tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today".

Many students walk or are driven on their first day of class. Richard's police car stops right at the entrance.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Bianca takes her bag and puts her hand on the handle. How she wished she didn't have to go there.

RICHARD
This is your Castle, Princess. Go
get them.

Bianca half smiles to him. A Princess. Yeah, sure. She opens the door.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Hey!

He points at his cheek. Bianca looks around, embarrassed. Are you serious? Here? As he leans over, we can see a deep scar crossing his left eye, usually hidden by the shades. Every time Bianca sees this, something turns inside her.

SCHOOL BELL rings. Outside, all the students walk to the main entrance.

Bianca hesitates for a moment, then quickly pecks her father. She opens the door and gets out.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Princess! I'll pick you up at 5, okay?

BIANCA

Dad! No... I...

But Richard is already off.

MADISON (OS)

That's cool, the Princess and the baby sitter Cop. Isn't that a movie?

Bianca looks up, stunned by the comment. Are they talking about her? But who else?

Following the laughter she finds MADISON, 16, blond hair that took a few hours to do at the hairdresser. Beautiful and she knows it and she uses it. She's resting on BRAD, 21, a tall, handsome guy, who has his arms around her waist and his butt on a shiny red Ford Mustang.

Madison looks at Bianca for a few seconds, studying her, until she loses interest. She turns around and kisses Brad passionately.

MADISON (CONT'D)

See you later, tiger?

BRAD

My place?

She rubs her hands on his chest, a sensual look on her eyes.

MADISON

If you are a good boy.

She winks at him and leaves him by his car. She walks to the entrance, intertwining her arms with two girl friends. She shoots a quick last glance to Bianca and gossips with her friends.

Bianca looks at them, disappointed. A bad start. She walks to the entrance.

INT. R.C. SECONDARY SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY

A river of students flow in the corridor. Some laugh, some rush late for class. All know exactly where to go. All except one. Bianca stays in the middle of the corridor, no idea where she should go.

BIANCA
(to a rushing student)
Excuse me...

Nothing. Before she knows it the corridor is empty. A second bell goes off. Shit! That's a really bad first day.

The door to the female toilets opens and Madison steps out with her two friends, JESSICA and ARIADNA. Jessica nudges Madison. And she transforms into the best ever Samaritan.

MADISON
Hi. Sorry for what happened to before, it was stupid, we were joking about a movie and you just--

BIANCA
(apologies accepted)
It's okay, don't worry.

Madison offers her hand.

MADISON
I'm Madison. This is Jessica and Ariadna.

Bianca shows a shy smile. She shakes hands with the three girls.

BIANCA
I'm B-Bianca.

MADISON
Excuse me?

BIANCA
Bianca. It's "white" in Italian.

MADISON
Oh, that's so sweet. Do you know where you have to go?

Madison takes the paper from Bianca's hand and examines it.

BIANCA
(smiles)
I'm a bit lost.

MADISON

History. We are going to the same class. Come with us.

BIANCA

Thanks!

Madison returns the paper and shoots a quick look to her friends. She starts climbing up the stairs. All the others follow, including Bianca.

Walking down comes BENJAMIN, 15, not handsome in a classic way but attractive, not very tall. He doesn't belong to any social label and is proud of it. He stops when he sees Madison, Bianca and the girls. He looks concerned. Madison shoots a look at him, "get the hell out of here". Benjamin looks sadly at Bianca and keeps walking down.

MADISON

Are you Italian?

BIANCA

No... no. My mother is -- uhm... was... from Italy. Milan.

MADISON

Oh. Is she...? Sorry.

BIANCA

It's okay, it was long ago.

MADISON

Well, here it is. History. After you.

BIANCA

Thank you so much, I was so scared to miss my first class.

MADISON

Don't mention.

Bianca opens the door to the class room.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. R.C. SECONDARY SCHOOL - UTILITY ROOM - DAY

But it's not a classroom, it's the Utilities room.

BIANCA

What?

Madison pushes her in and closes the door, holding the handle. She and the girls jiggle. Jessica turns off the light. CRASHING SOUNDS of Bianca tripping over everything in the room.

BIANCA (CONT'D)
No! Please! No!

Bianca RAPS the door desperately and tries to open the door but Madison holds it with all her body weight. She's laughing.

MADISON
The motherless bitch is strong!

ARIADNA
Use this.

Ariadna brings a broom stick and locks the handle with it.

BIANCA
(screaming, terrified)
Open the door! Please! Open the door!! Let me out!

The three girls run away laughing as Bianca POUNDS crazily at the door.

MADISON
Don't be scared! There's no one in there -- Oh! Maybe your mum's ghost!

Jessica and Ariadna crack up. They enter a classroom, no trace of regret on their faces.

BACK TO THE UTILITIES ROOM - ON BLACK

We hear Bianca still rapping the door until she stops and slides to the floor. She finds her phone and turns its light on.

BIANCA'S POV

As she uses the small light to see where she is. Brooms, buckets, washing liquids... It looks creepy. One of the buckets has been turned over and the content spilled. Something that doesn't smell good at all. And it's all over her clothes.

She sits back in the corner of the dark room, holding her legs with her arms. She sobs quietly. The light of the phone goes off.

INT. R.C. SECONDARY SCHOOL - HISTORY CLASS - DAY

A teacher, MS ABRAMS, 48 -elegant, tall, thin, sad-, stands in front of the blackboard. On it, two words are written with chalk: "FRENCH REVOLUTION".

Exactly in the middle of the class sits Madison with her little army. Jessica and Ariadna, left and right. JOSH, a tall, muscular, dark haired kid, and ARNIE, slim, red hair, clever, sit at each side of the girls.

Madison pays attention to class, she looks like the perfect student. Jessica whispers something to Ariadna. Madison shush her. Ms Abrams sees them and nods at her "thank you".

MS ABRAMS

Who can tell me why the Aristocracy wouldn't allow the people to be literate?

Madison rises her hand. Ms Abrams smiles.

MS ABRAMS (CONT'D)

Ms Bright?

MADISON

Control. Knowledge is power. By keeping the people illiterate they could control them easily.

MS ABRAMS

Very good.

The bell RINGS. The students start gathering their stuff.

MS ABRAMS (CONT'D)

(raising her voice)

Please, remember that the History Essays National Competition is due next week. Winner will represent our school in Bangkok.

Some cheer, some sigh discouraged.

JESSICA

(to Madison)

Will you take me with you?

ARIADNA

You took her last year.

MADISON

Girls, this year I'm going with a very special gentleman.

ARIADNA

Are you gonna do it?

MADISON

Who told you we haven't done it yet?

The girls' eyes go wide as a Coliseum but before they can ask for all the details --

JACK (OS)
Ms Abrams!

Ms Abrams looks up from her desk and to the door, and so do the rest of the students. JACK, the janitor, 56, holds Bianca by her arm. She's pale and her clothes are dump.

JACK (CONT'D)
I think I found one of your kids.

Ms Abrams looks disgusted. She looks at her watch, then checks her notebook.

MS ABRAMS
Ms Bianca-- Brooks.

BIANCA
I- I am sorry, the girls...

MS ABRAMS
You are an hour late, dear. First day and already trouble. It's not a good start, I have to say.

BIANCA
No, but-- You have to listen to --

MS ABRAMS
Jack, please take her to Detention, I'll go there after the break.

JACK
Yes, Ms Abrams.

Bianca lowers her head and accepts her destiny, knowing there's nothing she can do. Madison smiles at her, she's enjoying this.

MADISON
She stinks.

Everybody around her laughs.

Off Bianca's killing look at Madison as the door closes in front of her.

INT. R.C. SECONDARY SCHOOL - DETENTION CLASS - DAY

Bianca sits at one of the desks, with nothing to do. She's depressed. All her worst fears are turning into reality. Her phone BUZZES.

INSERT - the phone. A text message from "Dad" reading "How's it going, Princess?".

Bianca ignores the message. Anyway he's going to find out soon when they call him.

She's not alone in the classroom. PETE, 16, pale skin, long hair that covers one eye, a hat with a skull sewed to it, bubble gum permanently in his mouth. And RITA, 16, fuzzy hair, several piercings and tattoos, one of them visible on her neck. Both are bullies' food.

The two kids are staring at her, probably the only distraction in the room. Finally Rita decides to break the ice. She takes a piece of chewing gum from Pete's packet and offers one to Bianca.

PETE

Hey!

RITA

Want some?

Bianca looks at her. She seems genuinely friendly. She shakes her head.

RITA (CONT'D)

I'm Rita. This is Pete.

Pete salutes.

PETE

And you are...?

BIANCA

Bianca.

RITA

Why are you here?

Bianca looks down. She doesn't want to talk about it. Pete looks at Rita. An understanding between them.

PETE

Madison, right?

Bianca looks up at them.

BIANCA

What's wrong with her? I didn't do anything.

RITA

Don't blame yourself. She always does the same, specially to new ones.

PETE

She's the Queen.

BIANCA

Nobody does anything?

RITA

You keep a low profile for a while. She will get bored and pick another victim to play with.

BIANCA

Yes, but--

RITA

Her parents are super-rich, like super... rich... Same as her friends. It's better not to say anything.

BIANCA

Great. You can do whatever you want as long as you have the money or the power. This world sucks.

Bianca feels a bit down. It seems this is not the first time she suffers from this kind of situation.

RITA

It's not that bad down here if you know how to handle.

BIANCA

Bullshit, you have to be up there to start changing stuff.

(lost in thought)

Anyway, it's always the same shit. New place, no friends and already screwed up.

RITA

We can be your friends.

Rita doesn't know it but she just made Bianca's day. Off the first half smile we've seen in Bianca's face.

EXT. RIVERVIEW CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Bianca walks alongside Rita and Pete. A really bad day is turning to be not so bad. She's even laughing. But not for long.

MADISON (OS)

How was your first day, Princess?

Bianca and the others freeze in place. Madison and her gang wait for them outside the school jurisdiction. She and the girls sit on Brad's car hood.

MADISON (CONT'D)

I see you met the school scumbags. If you want to climb the popularity ladder you start way below.

Brad comes from behind and rips Pete's hat from his head..

PETE
Hey, give it back.

Brad holds the hat out of Pete's reach. Brad is too tall and strong for him. Rita is silent, trying to be invisible.

BRAD
What are you going to do, faggot?
Are you going to tongue me to death?

JESSICA
(laughing)
Faggot!

ARIADNA
Hooooooooo-mo!

Pete clenches his teeth. This is not the first time this happens but it bothers the hell out of him.

Brad plays with the hat, passing it to Josh and Arnie. Pete knows it's useless trying to catch it. The hat goes back to Brad. He puts it on his head, mocking Pete.

BRAD
(mocking)
I am a model!

BIANCA
Give him the hat.
(staring at Madison)
Ask him to give it back.

Madison eyes widen, surprised and a bit flattered that she recognizes who is in command.

MADISON
Or what?

Bianca turns to Brad and without blinking throws a kick right in the balls. Brad bends down in pain. The girls gasp. Bianca grabs Pete's hat from his head.

BIANCA
Run!

Rita wakes up and grabs Pete by his sleeve. They bolt down the street. Bianca dashes the other way. There's a moment of confusion on Madison's gang.

MADISON
Get me that bitch!

Josh and Arnie run after her. Madison and the girls jump into the car. Bianca is really fast but the guys are well trained and are catching up.

Bianca is running blindly, she still doesn't know the neighborhood. She turns a corner and finds herself in a dead-end street.

BIANCA

Shit!

The footsteps are approaching. She looks around, looking for a place to hide. Barely hidden behind some dumpsters there's a small door and on top of it a sign: "Antiques".

MADISON (OS)

Check that street!

Bianca breaks into the shop, her only hope.

INT. ANTIQUES SHOP - NIGHT

Bianca enters hurriedly into the shop, some bells TINKLE after she closes the door behind her. She tries to hold them to stop the sound. Then peeks outside, it seems they are not following her but she cannot be sure.

SHOPKEEPER (OS)

The shop is closed.

She turns around, startled but there's no one to be seen. Where did that voice come from? Her eyes adjust to the dim light and finds herself plunged into the past.

The shop is lit with warm, dim lights. The narrow corridor leads to a desk at the far end of the shop. A small door in the middle of the corridor.

On each side of the corridor, rows and rows of shelves full of objects coming from different places and ages. All is clean and silent. She turns and sees a shadow in the door window.

BRAD (OS)

Maybe she got in here.

MADISON (OS)

Check it out, bitch!

Bianca gasps. She panics. She sees the door in the middle of the corridor and plunges inside. Her feet lose contact to the ground and she falls down the wooden stairs to the basement with loud BANGS and CRASHES.

INT. ANTIQUES SHOP - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Bianca lands hard on her right arm. She puts a hand on her mouth to muffle her scream. Her arm hurts a lot! She drags her body and hides behind a huge vase, staying very still.

She sneaks a peek up at the top of the stairs where the door is still open. The bells on the door TINKLE.

SHOPKEEPER (OS)
I said it's closed, do you
understand English, thug?

BRAD (OS)
Yo, grampa, we are looking for a
friend, a girl --

The SHOPKEEPER appear on top of the stairs. Bianca hides a little more.

SHOPKEEPER
There's nobody here. Get out now or
I'll call the police.

MADISON (OS)
Let's go, guys.

The bells tinkle again. The Shopkeeper looks forward as the door is open and shut. He looks at the door open. Then down the stairs to the basement. Did I leave it open like that? He closes the door again. Bianca breathes for the first time in minutes.

VOICE (OS)
(a whisper)
Bianca.

What was that? Bianca looks around, not sure of her senses. Now that the door is closed the only light is the blue moonlight coming from one of the small windows on the top of the side wall.

She can see people walking outside, maybe it's Madison and her gang. They are walking away, anyway. Bianca stands up with difficulty, she got more than one bruise. Ouch.

The basement is full of boxes and objects covered in white bedsheets. The moonlight hits on a tall, long object leaning on the wall in front of Bianca. It's also covered by a white bed sheet.

The sheet dances slightly with the breeze. Bianca looks at it, slightly puzzled. Then at the top window. It's closed. She passes her hand over the sheet covering a coat stand near her. No breeze. No breeze anywhere except in that object.

VOICE (OS) (CONT'D)
(a whisper)
Bianca. Come.

Bianca turns, eyes wide open. The voice came from the tall object and it was clear this time.

BIANCA
(quietly)
Is anybody there?

Bianca walks to the tall object, the dancing sheet drawing her attention. She touches the bed sheet, soft as silk. She uncovers it.

It's a mirror.

She gasps. It's the most beautiful mirror she's ever seen, profusely decorated with intricate shapes and figures. Bianca passes her fingers over the shapes, some of them look like beautiful angels and others like horrible demons. A war between good and evil.

Bianca looks at her reflection. It's not her. Well, it is. She sees her eyes, her mouth, her face. But it's not her. The girl looking at her back looks... beautiful, confident, in control, powerful. Bianca has never seen herself like that. She cannot take her eyes off herself.

She caresses the surface of the mirror, in awe, her reflected hand following hers. She seems hypnotized until her phone buzzes. She takes it and puts it at eye level, still unable to take her eyes off herself.

INSERT - the phone. A message from dad. "Where are you?".

BIANCA (CONT'D)
Shit!

As hard as it is to break the connection, imagining her father mad at her is even worse. She rises her arms holding the bed sheet and ouch! It hurts. She covers the mirror again and climbs the stairs slowly.

-- END OF SAMPLE --

-- Please, contact me --

-- if you are interested in the full script --