



Whatever After

MIRROR MIRROR

SARAH MLYNOWSKI



Scholastic Press/New York

Copyright © 2025 by Sarah Mlynowski

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Press, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.,
Publishers since 1920. SCHOLASTIC, SCHOLASTIC PRESS, and associated logos are
trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility
for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or
transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying,
recording, or otherwise, or used to train any artificial intelligence technologies,
without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding
permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department,
557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either
the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance
to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is
entirely coincidental.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available

ISBN 978-1-339-00280-4

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 25 26 27 28 29

Printed in Italy 208

First edition, October 2025

chapter one



Plot Twist

We're finishing up dinner — burgers and fries with extra ketchup, my brother's favorite — when Mom says, "Abby. Jonah. We have something important we need to talk to you about."

She gives my dad a meaningful look across the table.

I freeze.

Jonah, busy dipping the last French fry in ketchup, asks, "Are we going to Disney?"

Huh? We don't live near any of the Disney parks. And we definitely don't need to go to Disney to see fairy tale characters.

But that's a whole other story. I promise I'll get to it later.

Mom shakes her head. "It's not about a vacation."

"Okay . . ." I say tentatively. I take a sip of water, feeling a little nervous. Is it about summer camp? Tomorrow is the last day of school, and next week I'm supposed to go to camp at Green Acres with my besties, Frankie and Robin. And my sometimes bestie, Penny.

My dad clears his throat. "The thing is . . . your mom and I got a call. About us taking over a very successful law office. Back in . . . Naperville."

I almost spit out my drink. "Wait, what?" I ask, my heart racing. "Naperville? *Our* Naperville?"

"Yes," Dad says.

Jonah's eyes go wide. "We're moving back to Naperville?"

My mom hesitates. "Well . . . no. Maybe? We don't know."

I can't believe it. Naperville is where Jonah and I were born and where we lived before moving *here*, to Smithville. Less than a year ago! It took forever to find the best toppings at the frozen yogurt store and the best swing at the park. Never mind the best friends. And now we might be leaving?

"We haven't made any decisions yet," Dad adds quickly. "It's an incredible opportunity for us. But we know the last move wasn't easy. We want to discuss it as a family."

My head spins. Naperville! I try to steady my hands against the table.

Do I *want* to move back there? No. I'm happy here in Smithville. Really happy!

Sure, I was miserable when we first got here. We moved to Smithville right before the start of fifth grade. But then I met Frankie and Robin — and, yes, Penny — and they became my best friends. And I discovered the magic mirror in my basement . . .

I can't leave my best friends! I can't leave my magic mirror!

"I can't leave!" I cry, my throat closing up. "What about camp? What about, um, our basement?"

Dad frowns, looking confused. "We'd *probably* have a basement in our new house in Naperville," he says. "And you'd still go to Green Acres Day with your friends, Abby. The move wouldn't be until the end of the summer."

"And Sadie and Alexandra are in Naperville," my mom reminds me. "Don't forget about them."

Sadie and Alexandra were my best friends before I moved. "But I barely kept in touch with them," I say. "What if they don't want to be my friends anymore?" A lot changes in a year. Look at my life! Everything changed this year.

“It would be nice to be near Nana again,” Jonah says slowly.
Oh. Right. Nana is in Naperville. And I miss her a lot.
Like, a lot a lot.

On the other hand, how can I leave the magic mirror?
“Abby?” my mother says, putting her hand on my shoulder. “You okay?”

“I . . . I . . . don’t know.” Uncertainty twists through me.
“I don’t want to leave my life here. But I guess I miss stuff in Naperville, too.”

“Jonah?” Dad asks.

My brother shrugs, mopping up the remaining ketchup on his plate with his index finger. “Either’s cool.”

He doesn’t seem fazed at all. How is he not fazed? This is a big deal. A really big deal! And Jonah has best friends here, too: Isaac and Ben.

“We don’t have to decide tonight, do we?” I ask, my voice breaking.

“No, no,” Mom says, shaking her head. “Of course not. We’re just putting it on the table, so to speak.”

I nod. Okay. It’s on the table. Right next to the now-empty plate of fries.

“Let’s all sleep on it and talk more tomorrow,” Mom adds.

* * *

How in the world am I supposed to sleep with such a huge issue hanging over my head? Impossible! I toss and turn and turn and toss.

I wanted to call Frankie and Robin (and even Penny) right after dinner to tell them the news, but the lump in my throat was too big. I didn't think I could even speak the words — *I might be moving back to Naperville* — without crying.

I toss onto my right side. I can't move back to Naperville. Once you leave a place, you leave. You don't go back!

I toss onto my left side. But I'd love to see Nana every week.

I toss onto my stomach. But if we move to Naperville, I might never go into fairy tales again. That's the biggest problem of all.

See, here's the thing.

I really do have a magic mirror in my basement. And it's a really huge deal.

A long time ago, a fairy named Maryrose was cursed to be trapped inside that mirror.

Jonah and I discovered the mirror was magic by accident one night. Jonah banged into it while playing a game he'd invented called flying crocodile.

The first time he bumped into it, the mirror started to hiss.

Yes, hiss. He knocked on it, and the mirror turned purple. Yes, purple!

Why was he playing in the basement at 11:30 P.M. when he should have been sleeping? Unclear. Anyway. He ran upstairs to get me. Obviously, since I am only ten, I was asleep. But he woke me up and insisted I go downstairs with him, so I did, careful not to wake our parents.

Jonah knocked on the mirror again. It started hissing.

He knocked again. The glass turned purple.

The third time he knocked, the reflection started to swirl. And then it turned into a vacuum-like suction thing and slurped us both inside. It sucked up some of our parents' law books, too, which they luckily have not noticed are missing.

And we fell right into the story of *Snow White*. We messed things up for Snow at first — but then we fixed them. We made it back home, and the next time we knocked on the mirror, we got sent into the story of *Cinderella*. After that, *The Little Mermaid*. All year, we've been going through the mirror into different fairy tales. We never chose where we went. Maryrose would send us to stories she wanted us to fix. Eventually, we helped Maryrose escape the mirror, and now she's traveling around the fairy tale world with Tink, the fairy from *Peter Pan*.

I toss onto my back. Maybe we could take the magic mirror with us to Naperville. Sure, it came with our Smithville house, but it could be moved, couldn't it?

My covers suddenly feel like a weight. I push them off and tiptoe over to the jewelry box Nana gave me. The box shows drawings of fairy tale characters. After Jonah and I go inside a story, the characters on the box transform to show the changes we made.

Snow White, for instance, is wearing my lime-green pajamas. Cinderella's wearing a baker's hat. There's Sleeping Beauty. Rapunzel. The Snow Queen. Beauty. Princess Coco from *The Frog Prince*. Hansel and Gretel. All twelve of the dancing princesses. And more.

All the characters are wearing different outfits from the ones they started in.

Maybe there's nothing left for me to change in fairy tales. Maybe my work there is done.

But the only way to know for sure is to ask Maryrose.