

Down the Rabbit Hole – episode #1 – Elizabeth's letter

[Anon voices] Empathy Museum presents A Mile in My Shoes.

[Three voices, speaking different parts of the sentence in turn] From Boldface and Women in Prison – this is Down the Rabbit Hole, a series of letters and personal stories from three women who access The Beth Centre in London. That's Rita and Elizabeth, and I'm Angel.

[Elizabeth] From me: When was the last time you looked into a mirror? What did you see? Did you see a fat face? Skinny face with wrinkles you can actually count? Did you see dry skin with yellow patches here and there, with loads of blackheads around your nose and forehead? Or maybe you saw tiny persistent hairs growing on your chin? Did you see your messy eyebrows and your hair in disarray? When you opened your mouth, did you see how yellow your tongue is? How about your teeth? Oh, you haven't brushed them today? Ah, but you don't have to worry right? There are plenty cosmetics and makeup down Brixton market you can buy. Oops. But how if you have no money? Oh, that's okay. You can just forge on, looking and feeling awkward because you can't buy a facial treatment in that beauty shop your best friend goes to. You can't buy moisturisers, foundations, exfoliators. sponges, tweezers, toothpaste, lipstick, or even a comb.

Now have another look in the mirror. What do you see? Tell me the real reason your skin is dry with wrinkles you can actually count. Why do you see fat and/or skinny face with blackheads around your nose and forehead? Why is your hair in disarray?

Look further into the mirror. What do you see? Oh, you see that invisible scar left on your face by Mr. A? Or was it Mrs. B? Do you see other people's actions internalised into yourself? Do you see your father or mother shouting at you for any minor misdemeanor? Do you see your partner accusing you of things that you're actually innocent of?

Now have another look into the mirror. What do you see? Do you see where you have come from? Do you see where you are now? Do you see who you really are?

Now have a final look into the mirror. Through your eyes, can you see your soul? Is your soul made up of pink lipstick, expensive moisturisers? Are you really those invisible scars? Is your soul a sum of all of the physical attributes you saw in the mirror a while ago? Or are you really the most beautiful creation of all creation? Look into the mirror again. Can you see?

[Anon voice]

This episode was produced by Jesse Lawson and Nada Smiljanic. Down the Rabbit Hole is a 10-week workshop series and podcast produced by Boldface, in collaboration with Women in Prison.