I stepped out of the cab into the cold morning air. “Welcome, officer. Welcome to Mirror Villa.” My host was an old man, the manager of the villa that had been converted to a hotel. He looked like he didn’t earn enough despite being the manager of the ostentatious villa. Even on this chilly morning, he was without a jacket or shawl with his shirt sleeves frayed at the ends. I was shivering in my jacket even after entering the villa. It was a cold, severe place and the full-sized mirrors adorning the walls seemed to suck the light out. Maybe it was just me but the place seemed to whisper of death, reflecting the eight murders that had happened in the past few months.

“Tell me, how did these murders happen? Didn’t you notice anything?” “No sir,” he replied, “I don’t stay here at night. I have my own place a few miles from here and all the murders happened at night”. The murders had become a nightmare for the police. Eight people in two months; all of them killed in the same way at the same place- the mirror room on the top floor of the villa. The man who built the villa was eccentric and loved mirrors for some reason. He had specially built a mirror room like the ones seen in a country fair. They were all strangled by a single piece of wire but there was no sign of the murder weapon. My first night there was eventful. In the middle of the night, I heard glass falling and shattering as though someone was breaking the chandeliers. I picked up my torch and walked out. “Who’s there?” I shouted and the sounds stopped. I tiptoed along the corridor listening intently. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw my reflection in one of the mirrors raise a hand though my hand wasn’t raised. As I turned to check carefully, a hand touched my shoulder and I jumped. “**Jesus Christ!!”** Behind me stood the manager. “You scared the hell out of me!” I shouted. I had forgotten that he was asked to stay here for the duration of my stay. I looked at the mirror again but everything was normal. My reflection stared back at me with a puzzled expression.

The next day, I decided to investigate the mirror room. The manager accompanied me. He didn’t talk much but his presence somehow made me feel uneasy. “How long have you been here?” I asked as I examined the mirrors that showed distorted reflections. “Fifty years,” he replied,” I’ve been here long enough to hear the old stories. If you ask me sir, this place is cursed.” “By the Evil Witch of the North, right?” I laughed. “You can laugh sir, but the last woman who laughed at my words was the first to die in that room.” That sent a chill up my spine and I turned away from him. Naturally, the manager was a suspect but there was proof that he was home on every night of the murders. “Hey, there’s a wedge here.” I touched the wedge between the mirror and the wall and the mirror slid open smoothly. Inside was a room filled with women’s clothing, jewellery etc. It looked like a collection. “Did you know about this?” I asked. “No sir, the owner Mr. Grant, never mentioned this room to me. I don’t even think he knows.” I examined his shocked expression carefully but couldn’t discern whether it was genuine or not.

That night as I lay sleepless in my bed, mulling over the case; I heard a woman scream. I jumped out of bed and ran out trying to find the direction of the sound. But it was no use; the sound seemed to emanate from the walls themselves, loud and directionless. I took a heavy lamp from a nearby table ready to attack. Suddenly, my reflections in the mirrors all turned to look at me and then all at once ran out of the mirrors. To see no reflection despite standing in front of mirrors; the sight was nerve-racking. I gingerly walked towards one of the mirrors and something liquid fell on my shoulder. I touched it to find my shoulder coated with blood. The scream started again and it wasn’t directionless anymore. It was coming from the mirror room. I ran up the stairs desperate to prevent another murder. I burst into the mirror room and the door shut behind me locking me in. My reflections distorted by the mirrors again turned in my direction and started banging on the glass with their fists. The scream increased in volume and I realized that I was screaming. In utter desperation, I hurled the lamp at one of my reflections and the mirror shattered. Sparks flew as the wires behind the mirror shorted. A figure ran out of the hole behind the mirror and tried to tackle me. I punched him and he flew sideways. The reflections in the other mirrors flickered and went out as the wires continued to spark. I picked up the lamp and hit it on the man’s head. He blacked out. I checked his face and found that he was the elusive owner, Mr. Grant, who had ignored all calls from the police. He was supposedly residing in L.A. The door had fallen open when the wires short-circuited. I locked the mirror room and went to the manager’s room locking that too from the outside.

I walked down the mirrored corridor alone reflecting on the events of the past two days. The owner, Mr. Grant, was a psychotic but ingenious man. He had cleverly designed and built secret rooms behind the mirrors and used advanced video recording and special effects to project disfigured faces on the mirrors. He had put a trip wire in the mirror room which strangled anyone who touched it. The irony is that he strangled himself with it before the police arrived. A man torn by the loss of his love, he had taken to killing every guest that checked into his villa. The woman had committed suicide in the mirror room by hanging herself with a wire. Sometimes, bad pasts can ravage people worse than any kind of physical pain. I stared at my reflection in the mirror. It would never scare me again