

Her name was Connie. She was fifteen and she had a quick, nervous giggling habit of craning her neck to glance into mirrors or checking other people's faces to make sure her own was all right. Her mother, who noticed everything and knew everything and who hadn't much reason any longer to look at her own face, always scolded Connie about it. "Stop gawking at yourself. Who are you? You think you're so pretty?" she would say. Connie would raise her eyebrows at these familiar old complaints and look right through her mother, into a shadowy vision of herself as she was right at that moment: she knew she was pretty and that was everything. Her mother had been pretty once too, if you could believe those old snapshots in the album, but now her looks were gone and that was why she was always after Connie.

Connie is a typical girl of 15, with a nervous giggle who thinks she's pretty and loves nothing more than to stare at her own image in the mirror—just to confirm her own beauty. She believes that there's nothing more important than being pretty.

"Why don't you keep your room clean like your sister?

Connie thinks that her mother is old now and has lost her looks and is jealous of Connie's beauty. Connie feels this is the real reason why her mother is always chastising her.

How've you got your hair fixed—what the hell stinks? Hair spray? You don't see your sister using that junk."

Her sister June was twenty-four and still lived at home. She was a secretary in the high school Connie attended, and if that wasn't bad enough—with her in the same building—she was so plain and chunky and steady that Connie had to hear her praised all the time by her mother and her mother's sisters. June did this, June did that, she saved money and helped clean the house and cooked and Connie couldn't do a thing, her mind was all filled with trashy daydreams. Their father was away at work most of the time and when he came home he wanted supper and he read the newspaper at supper and after supper he went to bed. He didn't bother talking much to them, but around his bent head Connie's mother kept picking at her until Connie wished her mother was dead and she herself was dead and it was all over. "She makes me want to throw up sometimes," she complained to her friends. She had a high, breathless, amused voice that made everything she said sound a little forced, whether it was sincere or not.

Connie's sister, June is plain and overweight, and Connie feels that her mother accepts her more and thus praises June while telling Connie that she can do nothing right.

Connie seems to feel that she is an adult and wise enough to know more than her mother. Connie tires of listening to her and wishes that "her mother was dead".