

# Conceal, Don't Feel

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This little drabble takes a look into Jessica's thoughts during the episode *Mirror, Mirror On the Wall, Part 1*. While Seth is spilling his guts to her in her kitchen, Jessica is trying desperately not to cry. She never does, despite the intense emotion crackling in that scene. She rarely got emotional like that, but it wasn't because she was cold. She didn't want anybody feeling sorry for her. She was a strong woman, but it took a lot to maintain that strength. And sometimes, she couldn't conceal her emotion any longer.

This is also the first part in a short series of stories about the *Mirror, Mirror* two-parter, inspired by a certain Disney movie.

Written for the Definitive Guide to *Murder, She Wrote's* Fanfic 100. Prompt: *Chains*.

*If Frank Fletcher were still around, you wouldn't be spending half your life chained to that typewriter and the other half chasing around the country, no sir. You'd be out smelling the salt air at sunrise.*

As the door closed behind her best friend, those words still echoed like an icy blast in Jessica's mind. As Seth had said them, it had taken all of her willpower not to blink. If she had, the tears that had sprung to her eyes would have spilled out onto her cheeks, and that was the last thing she wanted. She didn't want to be pitied for being a sensitive baby any more than she wanted to be pitied for making a hermit out of herself.

And there was the rub, as they said. Seth had not been wrong in saying that her face hadn't seen the light of day in six weeks. As a matter of fact, there had been several periods of time recently when she hadn't set foot out of the house. Her book had taken up so much of her time that she had chained herself to nothing but her writing.

As much as she would have liked to deny everything, Jessica knew that Seth was telling the truth. And the truth hurt. But she wasn't about to let him see her cry. Even now, she was fighting to control her emotions, just as she always did.

Conceal the tears. Don't feel the pain.

*Don't feel, Jessica. Don't feel!*

But her heart was nowhere near that frozen. Seth had not said what he said out of malice. The harshest of truths had been spoken in the tenderest of voices. He wouldn't have hurt her for the world.

*Oh, for pity's sake, woman, that's the last thing I want to do. I just think maybe you ought to get off the treadmill while you still have a chance.*

What exactly did he want her to let go of? Her writing, her career, the life and stability she'd created for herself after Frank's death? Or did he just want her to break the chains of her obligations for once and be free? More to the point, what did *she* want?

As she watched her dearest friend leave, Jessica knew immediately what she *didn't* want. She didn't want to be chained anymore. But as she resumed her place at the kitchen table, she could almost see the shackle running from her typewriter to her wrist. Her hands were chained to her work. Her feelings were chained to her deepest heart.

Concealing her feelings wasn't an option anymore. As she blew a stream of air over the paper in her typewriter, a lone tear trickled down her cheek - for Seth and for herself.