

The Princess in the Mirror

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Panel 1: A 7-year-old Filipino girl sits cross-legged in front of a TV watching her favourite princess movie on TV. The princess on the screen is blonde with blue eyes and wearing a sparkling pink gown.

1. SOFIA (Caption): When I was little, I **loved** princess movies.

Panel 2: Close-up of young Sofia's face as she happily watches the screen, in a cartoon style but emphasizing her dark eyes and a bulbous nose.

2. SOFIA (Caption): I always wanted to be just like them.

Panel 3: Frame of her bedroom wall, covered with posters and dolls of princesses.

3. SOFIA (Caption): Beautiful. Brave. Important.

4. SOFIA (Caption): The only problem was...

Panel 4: Young Sofia looking at herself in the mirror with a sad expression while putting on a princess tiara.

5. SOFIA (Caption): **None** of them looked like me.

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Panel 5: Young Sofia drawing a picture of herself as a princess, with lighter skin and more European features.

1. SOFIA (Caption): When I would imagine myself as a princess, I began changing myself in my own imagination.

Panel 6: Young girls on a playground talking about their favourite princesses.

1. CLASSMATE #1: I'll be Cinderella!

2. CLASSMATE #2: I'll be Aurora!

Panel 7: Young Sofia stands with a dropped expression, hesitating before speaking while the girls look at her.

3. SOFIA: I'll be...Mulan, I guess.

Panel 8: Young Sofia looks down at her reflection in a puddle while the other girls keep playing.

3. SOFIA (Caption): There were princesses of colour, but none of them looked quite like me.

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Panel 9: Years later, Sofia is now a teenager scrolling through social media, filled with posts of influencers and celebrities who are slim, White, and fit conventional Western beauty standards.

1. SOFIA (Caption): As I got older, those thoughts never really disappeared.

Panel 10: Sofia stares at her own reflection in her phone camera.

2. SOFIA (Caption): I still compare my **skin, nose, body...**

Panel 11: Sofia's reflection on her phone becomes surrounded by images of White celebrities and princesses.

3. SOFIA (Caption): to people who were **never** meant to represent **me**.

Panel 12: Sofia puts her phone face down, puts her head in her hand, rolling her eyes with a frustrated expression..

4. SOFIA (Caption): And somehow, I convinced myself that...

5. SOFIA: Maybe *I'm* the **problem**.

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Panel 13: Sofia is at a family gathering, surrounded by her Filipino relatives laughing, eating together, and smiling.

1. SOFIA (Caption): Then I started paying more attention to the people closest to me.

Panel 14: Sofia looks through an old family photo album with her Lola (grandmother) wearing a tiara at her debut.

2. SOFIA'S LOLA: This was your Lola when I was your age.

Panel 15: Close-up of the photo while Sofia analyzes it, noticing her grandmother's beauty with similar features to her own.

3. SOFIA (Caption): For the first time, I saw a princess with my own features staring back at me.

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Panel 16: A long panel showing her family members singing karaoke, eating together, laughing, and smiling.

4. SOFIA (Caption): Features that carried history, culture, and generations of stories.

Panel 17: Sofia stands in the doorway of her childhood bedroom, with her old princess posters still on the walls.

1. SOFIA (Caption): The princesses never changed...

Panel 18: Sofia looks at herself in the mirror.

2. SOFIA(Caption): but ***I did***.

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Panel 19: Close-up of Sofia's face in the reflection, as she smiles confidently.

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Panel 20: Sofia sits at her desk, drawing, with photos of her family along her desk.

4. SOFIA (Caption): I spent ***years*** searching for myself in stories.

Panel 21: Sofia puts up a drawing of a princess with similar features to her, displayed beside family photographs.

5. SOFIA (Caption): Now I know a princess doesn't ***have*** to look a certain way.

6. SOFIA (Caption): A princess can look like me too.