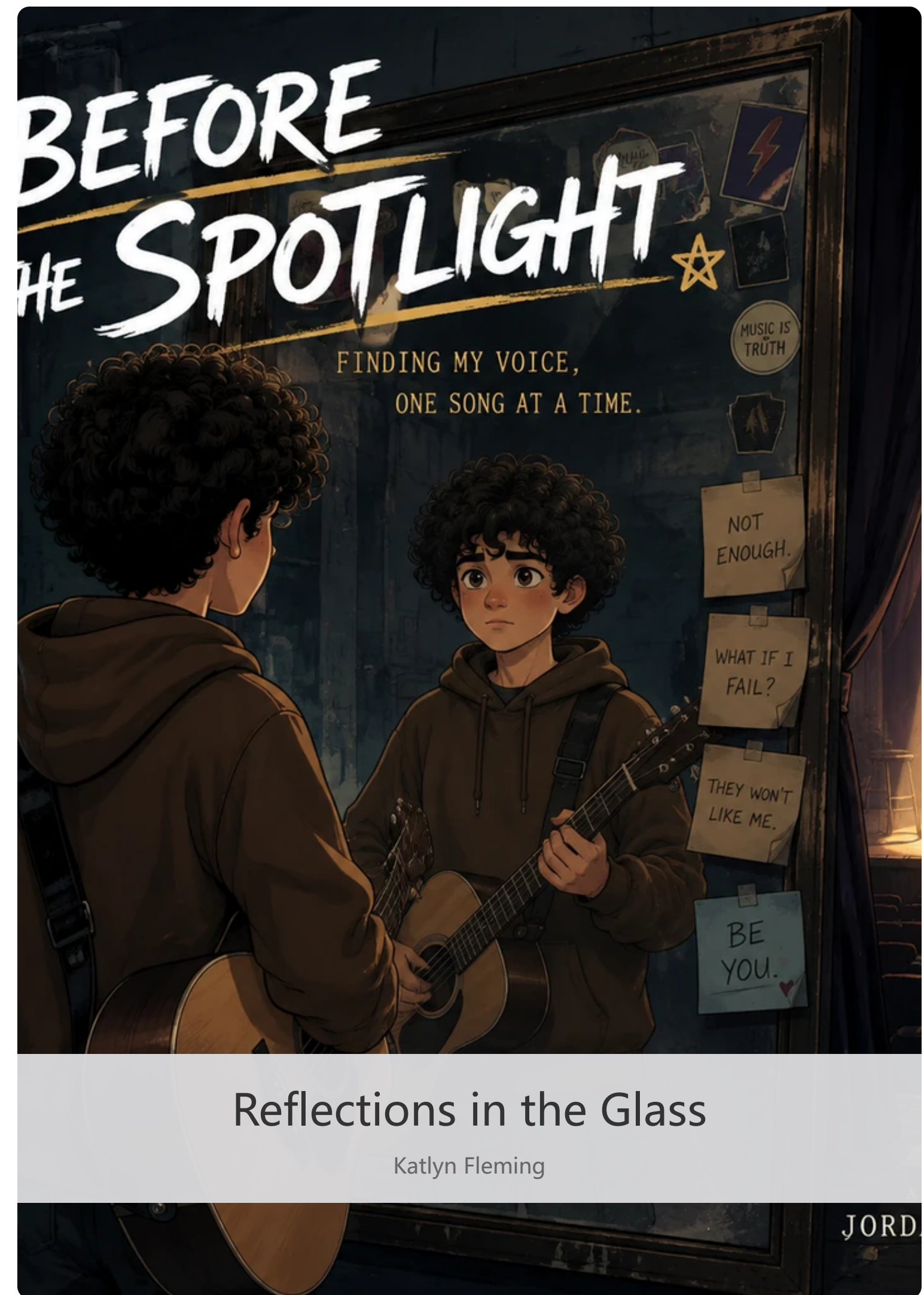




Reflections in the Glass

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Leo stands before the fogged-up bathroom mirror in his oversized cozy brown hoodie, gently wiping away the steam with his sleeve. His dense, dark curls bounce as he studies his anxious expression on the morning of the high school talent showcase.



Adjusting the drawstrings of his hoodie, Leo leans closer to the glass and attempts a brave smile. In the warm bathroom light, his unruly black ringlets frame a face full of quiet determination and nervous energy.



He steps into his sunlit bedroom and picks up his worn acoustic guitar resting beside a clutter of song sketches. Sitting on the edge of his bed, he hums a gentle melody while running his fingers softly across the strings.



Downstairs, Leo steps out into the crisp autumn morning with his guitar case slung over his shoulder. Golden leaves swirl around him as he walks to school, his hands tucked deep into his hoodie pockets while mentally rehearsing his lyrics.



Inside the buzzing school hallway, classmates rush past with colorful banners and stage props. Leo pulls his hood up slightly to quiet the surrounding noise, finding a peaceful corner backstage to tune his instrument.



Peeking from behind the heavy velvet curtain, Leo looks out at the packed auditorium illuminated by glowing stage lights. Feeling his heart race, he runs a hand through his voluminous curls and takes a slow, steady breath.



His name echoes across the sound system, and Leo steps into the warm spotlight at center stage. The bright lights catch the soft texture of his brown hoodie as he adjusts his microphone before the quiet audience.



As his fingers strike the opening chord, the stage anxiety fades into a wave of quiet focus. His rich, soulful voice fills the hall, carrying the raw emotion of the song he wrote in his quiet room.



Reaching the soaring chorus, Leo plays with complete freedom, his dark curls swaying with every passionate beat. The entire crowd rises to their feet in a thunderous wave of applause and cheers.



Back home that evening, Leo wipes a fresh patch of steam from the bathroom mirror with a joyful, confident smile. Looking at his reflection in his cozy brown hoodie, he finally sees an artist who was brave enough to let his true light shine.