

Liar Liar

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Rated PG

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Summary: An introspective, semi-sad, first-person POV piece from Lois' perspective about the difficulties in her relationships. Set in late season two.

A/N: Thanks to Sue S. and AngelFinally for being great betas and giving me so much advice on this!

I was always conscious, on some level, that I did not have a good father. At least, for as long as I can remember. It was the little things that told it to me, really. A missed recital, a forgotten birthday, all those times he'd spent working late because he valued his job more than he valued spending time with his daughters. When other people were around he'd put on this false veneer- a smile, a hug, sometimes even a pat on your head or even kiss my mother's cheek. Those empty moments, those moments without him meant more in the long run than any apology gifts or those you-know-I-love-you lines. Those moments where his words were lost in the echoes of his actions.

Then there were the times I overheard. The muttered curses under his breath, the outright statements of wishing he'd had a son. The fights with mother when he'd say something hurtful about hating us all and wanting to leave and I'd be the one left stroking Lucy's hair as she cried on my shoulder in her bedroom.

As far as I could tell, other people's fathers weren't like that. When I'd go spend the night at a friend's house, or when I was at a party or just talking with friends in general about their parents. They were nice, polite, always affectionate and never derisive. They wouldn't insult them in public, or criticize them too harshly for a relatively good grade on an essay even if it wasn't A+ material. I think I hated that most about my father- nothing I did was ever good enough for him. Even if I was doing excellent in English- and really in all of my classes- he would question the minus sign at the end of the A on my math test. It was always "Well, there's room for improvement, Lois" — in the mildest of cases. Never "Great job, honey," or "Wow! I can't believe you won the talent show!" or even a "Better luck next time, champ." I never had that dad.

I've always had a pretty difficult father. His methods weren't necessarily abusive, but painful. Never encouraging, but derisive. I didn't have a very loving childhood, but I always assumed it had to be better than somebody's.

It hurt all the same.

Regardless of how lousy of a father I knew he was, I didn't put the pieces together yet. In fact, I distinctly remember the day I realized that Sam Lane was more than just a bad father- he was a bad man.

A philanderer. A cheat. An unethical doctor. A heartless listener. A spineless man.

A liar.

By the time he walked out of our lives, I knew he was a bad man. But that knowledge only compounded the strength of the fact that Samuel Lane was a bad father- and that hurt. That hurt more than any of the small things that had tipped me off to begin with. Even though the gifts or apologies were never enough to make up for his lack of emotion, it sure beat his lack of presence at all.

I was fourteen when my father left us. It was the middle of

my freshman year. Lucy was only nine. Mother was hysterical. I didn't have much time to mourn for myself, between all that was going on that I had to tend to first. So, I did what I could then; what I do best now (besides reporting of course):

I bottled it up. And I let my anger fuel me.

I was there for Lucy when she was down. I was there for Mother, when I could be. And I did my best to keep her away from the alcohol- at which I obviously failed.

I learned to distrust everyone around me, to distance myself, to develop a strong passion for truth. In fact, I became strangely obsessed with it. Once I was out on my own, it was all that mattered to me. I would write about it, search for it in every person I met- or even, down the line, interviewed. I need to know if there really are honest people out there. In a weird way, my dad leaving us is what really set me on this path to begin with. If I hadn't learned those skills, been forced to learn them, maybe I wouldn't have gone into journalism. Or at least, maybe I wouldn't have been so damn good at it. But it feels too weird to think of being thankful to someone who so completely ruined your life, even if you made yourself a better person through the hard times. And yet, I can never thank him. I don't even know if I'll ever forgive him, or even be able to look him in the eye without the past haunting me.

Well, I guess I can't feel gracious just yet. Things are still kind of up in the air right now.

With my father out of the picture- and without someone specific to fixate my hatred on- I learned to hate liars. I'd lash out at my sister for lying about if she finished her homework and hate my mother incrementally more for every time she'd swear to stop drinking and then go back on her word.

Unfortunately, that also seems to be where I have my biggest blind spot. If it's not someone close to me, that's fine. Set me on a case, and I'll pursue the culprits full force. I can smell the shifty nature, the half-truths, the outright falsehoods they try to sway me with- and sooner than they can pull a trigger, I've got them right where I want them. Sure, it's reckless sometimes. But I get results.

The trouble comes when I am close to someone. In fact, it's like an exponential equation- the closer I am to somebody, the less liable I am to see through them. I am a romantic at heart- people would laugh if they heard me say that, but it's the truth. It's why I believe so strongly in Superman. I want to be able to believe in someone- believe they'll stop, or change, or simply acknowledge I'm right or that they should change, even if they can't or won't.

I'd wanted to believe that my mother would really stop drinking this time. I'd wanted to believe that Paul really cared for me, instead of just trying to get some. I'd wanted to believe that I could actually land a guy like Claude and we would have a long, romantic tryst that could end with something other than humiliation- something other than him just being in it for the story. I believed my father when he said he'd show up for my wedding to Lex Luthor.

Lex.

That man's name still makes me shudder. I know he's in prison now, and that event was a while ago, but I will never forgive myself for being so thoroughly duped by him. I mean, I almost married the man! And our entire relationship was built on a heap of lies. In fact, I'm not so sure I could even come up with one truth he'd said to me in all the, albeit, short time we'd dated. Well, I suppose that's not quite true. Lex told me half-true things. He just bent them until they were unrecognizable. Until they were good enough to serve his purpose

Well, they do say women marry their fathers. And I'm certain that marrying Lex Luthor couldn't have been much different from doing exactly that- except that I'm sure I'd have ended up dead or mysteriously "missing" at some point in our marriage. That

would be a change- for the worse.

Lex Luthor was the devil incarnate. It kills me to know that I had fallen for him despite that fact. It wasn't even as though I had truly loved him- not the heart-quickening love, not the head over heels kind of love. Not the love I am now enjoying yet still fighting.

No, it wasn't love. It was comfortable. Easy. Familiar. Normal. But not love. I would run to him when he called, he would lavish me with expensive gifts and trips and meals, and then put me down like I was merely a toy he was playing with and moved on to whatever else struck his fancy. And I turned a blind eye to it all, willing myself to believe this was normal. Completely blind to what was right before me- the love staring me right in the face, carefully watching me from the sidelines, the truth in his expression and every small thing he did that made me smile.

That was my father's fault, too. I believed the man who said he was what he wasn't over the man who laid bare his soul to me. How messed up is that? I was incredibly lucky to have Clark in my life. I'm not sure I ever would have seen the truth if he hadn't been there, showing me in so many ways what true love really was. And at the last second, I finally saw sense.

Only to be dragged through the mud again.

When Clark took back his admission of love, I was hurt. When I realized about two weeks later that he still loved me- because let's be honest, it's obvious- I was angry. He had lied to me. Clark. The one man I had come to depend upon, who would never lie to me. I didn't know what to make of it. I was hurt, angry, and well, in a way, I loved him all the more for it. He told the lie to protect me. Because he couldn't risk losing me from his life in any way, shape or form. Even if it meant we couldn't be together romantically.

No, we'd moved past that. That's why I was able to start dating him eventually, and had forgiven him for his small lie.

We were happy. Are happy. Well...

It's moments like these when I regain that blistering hatred for my father. I don't know why I do it, but it's there, wiggling at the back of my mind, making me wary and suspicious.

I still don't trust Clark.

Don't get me wrong. I enjoy spending time with him, he's a great guy and we always have a blast- to say nothing of his kissing skills- and he's sweet and thoughtful and polite and always has my back, and I love him dearly for it all- I mean, care for him dearly. I don't think I love him just yet. I mean, maybe I do, but with what I know, I'm just not sure I'm ready to commit to that. Not just yet. Not until I know.

I hate myself for even thinking this way. If I care for Clark so much, then why shouldn't I let it go? I want to- I want to so, so very badly. It wouldn't be the first time I've ignored the signs, tried to move on from these things. But I can't.

He's lying to me.

Clark Kent- from Nowheresville! — is lying to me. And I don't know why. Is it me? I've always believed that he had the biggest crush on me, even has been in love with me. Perhaps since we first met. But then he does things- little things- that either I've just never noticed before or simply never cared to, and they add up. What is he running from? Me? An actual committed relationship? Is he as scared as I am? We have been getting much closer recently, and even I'm aware where this relationship could lead us. But if he's getting cold feet, he should just come straight out and tell me. And if he's not getting cold feet...

If he's not, then I don't know what to think. He's hiding something from me, I just know it. What, I have no clue. Sometimes- a lot of times, actually- he looks guilty about it. Like he knows he's hiding something from me, lying to me, hurting me... but he refuses to do anything about it. Maybe this wouldn't work out after all. Maybe I should just leave it be, go back to

obsessing with my work and keeping my personal life down to a minimum. Clark could hurt me. Hurt me worse than any of the other liars I've invited into my life or simply had to deal with because of circumstances.

Clark could hurt me even worse than my father.

Suddenly there was a knock at my door, and I jump to answer it. "Coming!"

And there he is, standing there, staring at me with that look- the first-glimpse-of-me-for-the-day look. The one where he smiles like I'm the only person in the world and his dark eyes get that extra sparkle in them. The one where he takes in my form appreciatively as though for the first time. The one that says "I love you" and "I'm in awe of you" and makes those butterflies awaken in my stomach.

"Hi," he says, grin widening more into his usual demeanor.

"Hi," I huff, slightly out of breath. From racing to the door, I tell myself. Not from my racing heart and that utterly delicious gaze.

"You ready to go?"

And after all this morning's debate, all of the agony I put myself through, debating my feelings for this man- I nod, the flipping feeling in my stomach being all I can focus on. That and his beautiful eyes.

"I already got your coffee. I know we were working pretty late last night."

My gaze switches from him to the proffered beverage and my hands reach out greedily for the warm cup. He was so thoughtful. I take a sip and smile, savoring the flavor and watching his expression soften briefly when he thinks I'm not looking.

"Mmm... Perfect," I reply, more prepared now. I swiftly reach for my bag and sling it across my shoulder, shooting him a smile of my own. "Let's go."

As we walk out of my apartment, I can't help but reflect on how silly I've been. Because no matter what Clark's hiding from me, and no matter how painful the fallout might be when it comes, I can't deny the feelings- even the love- that I have for him. To try and keep my distance or put a stop to it would only be lying to myself. I've done that for too long as it is by avoiding him, turning him down, running when I've gotten too scared.

I will not hurt him.

And I will not turn myself into a liar.

THE END