

Your Liar

Scene 1: An Interrogation

"Inhale... Exhale... sigh."

"Can you not describe whatever sound effect you are making? If you want my attention, I can teach you a better way to earn it," A man responded while leaning back on his chair.

"SHUT UP, Jared. Can you please stop playing around and tell me what happened! Why do you have to make it harder for both of us," screamed Ferilla as she slammed on the dusty table.

"Chill, ma'am. I think you need to listen to some *New Age Music*. Listening to it could help you in attaining a more peaceful state of mind. It's a shame that this dilapidated shelter probably doesn't have anything fancy like a phonograph," Jared replied as he made a quick scan of the house Ferilla brought him to.

Ferilla's face tensed up upon hearing Jared's playful remarks. Her palms below the dusty table formed a fist, as if ready to throw down against a certain someone. Nonetheless, she exhales a deep sigh, and pulls a bunch of posters from her bag before scattering them on the table. Afterwards, she points her finger to one of the posters that contains the face of a woman, "Tell me what happened to Lisa."

Jared shrugs his shoulders, "I have told you many times already. I have no idea why she disappeared as I have nothing to do with her."

"I know that you are the last person she met before she vanished. At the very least, you should have possessed an important clue," Ferilla said as she leaned her shoulder forward.

"Why don't you ask the culprit who has been making those people in the poster disappear. Oh, that's right. After all the lives you sacrificed, You still couldn't figure out the identity of the perpetrator," Jared replied as he held back his laughter.

"Please, Jared. You are the only lead that I have to solve these cases," Ferilla pleaded, "so many people have been missing and so many of my friends lost their lives as they attempted to find them. Don't you feel compassion, an obligation perhaps, for the families who kept wandering to my office, hoping that I somehow managed to find any clues regarding their loved ones?" Ferilla replied as tears rolled down her cheeks.

"I don't know these families, so..." before Jared finishes his sentence, Ferilla rose, slammed her hands on the table, before delivering a warning, "If you still refuse to cooperate, I will send you

back to that cold dark windowless cell where your only food is any creature that happens to slip inside your solitary confinement.”

“Haven’t you done that already to me? Actually, why do you have a change of heart? Why do you bring me here instead of keeping me in that cage where you actually have a chance of making me kneel down before you, begging you to stop thr suffering? Why on earth you brought me to a shelter in the middle of nowhere, where your reinforcement is miles away from you?” Jared snarkily commented.

Ferilla quickly realized that this approach is unproductive and began to calm down. As she regains her composure, Ferilla sits down and replies, “Emotions were high at that time. You were the only one who might know what on earth was going on. Yet, you refuse to divulge any information that could help us. Of course, people would suspect you and give you a hard time for that.

“After all that torture, nonetheless, I was actually quite impressed you are still adamant in keeping your mouth shut while still maintaining your sanity. Therefore, I brought you here so that nobody can find us. If there is even a person near this house, they are probably more eager to find scraps of food littered around this district rather than finding out whatever you are hiding. I know you have a reason to hide whatever it is that you want to keep from us. That is why, you can be assured that whatever conversation we had here, it would be confidential.”

“Aren’t you afraid that I might have a grudge against you because you let your friends treat me like the animal I am?” Jared said, as his face tensed.

Ferilla replied, “You had always been an insufferable clown but I can’t imagine you hurting other people. If you are still angry for what we have done to you, you can vent your pent up anger on me. For all I know, I deserve it.”

Jared went quiet and threw his only conversation partner a curious look. “Ok, where do you want me to start?”

“Thank you,” Ferilla replied as she relaxed her shoulders.

“You see, however, I am feeling a little bit amnesiac, so I want you to fill in the gaps of the story I told you. Think about what choices that I would make because I forget what decisions I have made in the past,” said Jared.

“Why are you insistent on making both of our lives hard?” Ferilla asserted.

“Think of it as my way of venting my pent up anger on you,” Jared smiles.

“Fine, I would let it go. Start at the point just before the first body was found,” Ferilla said, as she gritted her teeth, bracing herself to listen to what would be a long-winded story.” “Also, do not begin your story with ‘Once upon a time’ anymore. I am sick of it,” Ferilla added.

“You know me so well,” Jared commented as he began to recount his testimony.

[Fade to black]

Scene 2: A forgiving Landlord

[Scene Changes to a private room]

In a dimly lit chamber, a gentle knocking sound is heard from an old door. “Knock, knock”, oh now there are two knocking sounds now, louder than the previous one. A moment of silence then ensues, quickly broken by a repeating slamming on the door followed by a scream, “JARED, I know you are there. Lemme in!”

- Jared: “Look Hugh, this is not a good way to treat your own property. Let alone your tenant. I would like to speak to your manager.”

- Hugh: “I am the freakin manager, Jared and if you keep on behaving like this, you would leave me no choice but to rely on the enforcers to get you out of my premise.”

- Jared: “And then what? You think you can find another tenant willing to stay in this excuse you called home?”

- Hugh: “Maybe I can’t. But if you are still not willing to compensate me, for what has been long overdue, I want you out of my house! ”

- Jared: “Hugh, I need to remind you that you are not being yourself.”

- Hugh: “What is it now?”

- Jared: “If you kick me out of this house, where would I go? You know me enough to understand that I can’t survive out there. If I die, will you be able to bear the guilt of letting me die? the guilt of killing another human being? As a fellow homo sapiens, I have to remind you that this rude behavior is not you, Hugh. Wake up!”

- Hugh: “Please stop that, Jared. You are not the only one short on money. Look, Jared. You dress well and always make sure to groom yourself. Surely you would be able to save a bit of fortune had you cut back on that wasteful spending of yours ”

- Jared: “Shh, those are off limits Hugh. Listen, I have just finished making my new masterpiece which I am sure would compensate for my 3 months of unpaid rent.”

- Hugh: “You said that a month ago. I am still waiting for that paycheck you promised me.”

- Jared; “Now it is different. Here, let me show you.”

- Hugh: “No, no, no. I seriously don’t need to see those abominations you call art anymore. Actually, calling it an art would do disservice towards all hard working artists in this city.”

- Jared: "You know what? I will show you that you are wrong. I was actually thinking about paying you back with interest after selling this masterpiece of mine. But, I changed my mind because your judgment is too clouded with worldly obsessions to understand my art."
- Hugh: "They say that art is subjective. Thus, it is either your stuff is not art or there are some objectively bad arts out there."
- Jared: "You would eat up those words later. Now, get out of my way Hugh. The market is about to be disrupted."

I swiftly left that shoddy residence, bringing with me my beautiful masterpieces which would net me so much money that Hugh would regret ever mistreating me. "All of the work is done and all I need is one stroke of luck," I assured myself.

[Scene Changes to the city center]

Scene 3:How I met your past self

Thus, I departed to the city center, a place of which the light of the sun could hardly get through the industrial smokes that filled the sky, a district in which the sound of machinery alternates with the loud voices of market vendors trying to promote whatever they are selling to people that wanders about.

"Those people sure have the lungs to constantly scream about how awesome whatever they are selling is, even though they are just selling mundane goods like food and dresses. I wonder if I should join their screaming contest to sell my elegant art as well?" I thought to myself.

As I ponder about how to find a patron who can see the significance of my art, I bumped onto an old friend.

- Jared: "Hello, Ferilla. I miss you already."
- Ferilla: "Jared, I can't lend you any more money. At least, not until you have paid what you owed to me, first."
- Jared: "It was very impolite of you to make such a quick assumption about me."
- Ferilla: "Because that's what you often do whenever you greet me with that fake smile of yours."
- Jared: "You have no idea how much you hurt my feelings."
- Ferilla: "Sorry about that. It's just that you annoys me too often"
- Jared: "Your apology is welcome and I would welcome it even more if you could financially reimburse the damage you did to my heart."

- Ferilla: "If you are done here, move aside. I am waiting for my co-worker here and I prefer doing it without catching any glimpse of your face."
- Jared: "Let me show you something to cheer you up."
- Ferilla: "Or your art."
- Jared: "Wow, manners lady."
- Ferilla: "Do not push my buttons, Jared."
- Jared: "Chill, girl. What were you and your comrade meant to do, anyway? Is it still about the missing people?"
- Ferilla: "Yes. This week, there were 6 additional reports of missing people, higher than last week. This could be the beginning of something serious. So we have been put on high alert."
- Jared: "Don't worry about it, you guys will succeed. I have already sent positive energy to the universe so that whatever that causes those people to disappear, will be revealed soon."
- Ferilla: "You might as well just pray for world peace."
- Jared: "Anyways, I gotta find rich people to sponsor my art, where is the best place to find them."
- Ferilla: "With all due respect, I don't think there is a market for those abstract art you usually make."
- Jared: "Cheesus, after all the positive energy I have sent you, you are giving me back me negative energy? C'mon girl!"
- Ferilla: "Just go to either the entertainment district or the market. You have lived longer in this city than me! Why do you even need help to figure your way around the city?"
- Jared: "Because I just want to give you a chance to add good karma to yourself."
- Ferilla: "Just leave me alone, Jared."

As she turned her back on me, I pondered where I should go. The entertainment district or the market?"

[Fade to black, Scene changes to present. In the house where Ferilla interrogates Jared]

- Jared: "So, which way did I go, Ferilla?"
- Ferilla: "How the hell do I know? Why do you even need to ask?"
- Jared: "Because I want to give you a chance to show that you understand me."

- Ferilla: "Stop being so petty and continue with the story."
- Jared: "Have you ever considered that I could lie as I tell you my version of the story?"
- Ferilla: "I thought you already agreed to share your story with me."
- Jared: "And you agreed to fill holes in my story because, as I said, I am a bit forgetful."
- Ferilla: "You really are enjoying playing this game, aren't you?"
- Jared: "Think of this as your opportunity to increase the credibility of my story by filling the gaps in my testimony with bits that you believed to be the truth."
- Ferilla: "What if my guess was wrong? What if I wrongly speculate your destination or whatever decision you made at a certain point in time?"
- Jared: "Then, I will make up something that represents the consequence of the decision you thought I made."
- Ferilla: "So, you would make up lies if I make a wrong guess? I thought honesty is something we have agreed on, implicitly."
- Jared: "Do you want to continue our conversation at a later date?"

[Fade to black, Scene changes to past, in the perspective of Jared]

All right. I think I am going to go to the market. I got a good feeling about this.