

Lies

by Lindsay Price

Characters

Alexa (17) and Martine (14). Sisters.

MARTINE sits on a couch. Her eyes droop and her head drops onto her chest. She jerks her head up and shakes it back and forth, trying to stay awake. After a second though, her eyes close and her head drops to her chest. It stays there.

ALEXA enters as if she's trying not to wake anyone. As soon as she sees her younger sister MARTINE she stops. She looks very sad. She approaches MARTINE and sighs, contemplating whether or not to wake her. ALEXA gently shakes MARTINE on the shoulder.

ALEXA: (softly) Hey. Hey. Marty.

MARTINE: (jerkling up) I'm awake! I'm awake! (she looks around blearily) Where am I?

ALEXA: In the living room.

MARTINE: (yawning) I closed my eyes for just a second.

ALEXA: It's three am.

MARTINE: Is she?

ALEXA: No.

MARTINE: Are you sure? Did you check?

ALEXA: Her car's not in the drive.

MARTINE: Maybe she took a cab. She could be upstairs?

ALEXA: I thought you only closed your eyes for a second.

MARTINE: Would you check?

ALEXA: Sure.

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ALEXA exits. MARTINE pats her pockets and pulls out a cell phone. She presses a speed dial number and listens. Whoever she's calling is not picking up. She slams the phone shut and holds it to her chest.

ALEXA: (offstage) She's not here.

MARTINE: What?

ALEXA: (entering) She's not here.

MARTINE: She's not answering her phone. (pause) How was work?

ALEXA: All right.

MARTINE: Are you tired?

ALEXA: Yes and no. My feet are tired. My back is tired. My brain is buzz, buzz, buzz...

MARTINE: You shouldn't work so much.

ALEXA: (gently) You should go to bed.

MARTINE: She said she'd come home at eleven tonight.

ALEXA: Uh huh.

MARTINE: What is she doing at three am?

ALEXA: Don't know.

MARTINE: Oh shut up. You do too know.

ALEXA: So do you.

MARTINE: I was hoping it was something different. (hopefully) Maybe she was in a car accident.

ALEXA: (choking on a laugh) And that's a good thing?

MARTINE: It would be an explanation. She could be at the hospital right now. And she lost her phone. That's why nobody's called. She's lost her phone and her purse. (she stands)

ALEXA: Where are you going?

MARTINE: (moving) To the hospital. She's Jane Doe in a coma and we're the only ones who can identify her.

ALEXA: Marty.

MARTINE: We have to go!

ALEXA: She doesn't mean it.

MARTINE stops. She doesn't look back.

ALEXA: She doesn't mean it.

MARTINE: Mean what?

ALEXA: When she lies. She just does it.

MARTINE: She said she'd be home by eleven. Again.

ALEXA: And she meant it when she said it.

MARTINE: She looked me in the eye. She swore.

ALEXA: She believed it.

MARTINE: Huh. I thought she'd come through this time. She's so good at pretending to be sincere.

ALEXA: She wasn't pretending.

MARTINE: Then why isn't she here?

ALEXA: Why don't you go to bed? She'll be here in the morning.

ALEXA starts to exit.

MARTINE: Alex? When do we stop believing her?

ALEXA: Hey.

MARTINE: I think I'm ready. I don't want to do this anymore.

ALEXA: Don't talk like that.

MARTINE: So I just let her stick knives in my heart?

ALEXA: Don't talk like that.

MARTINE: Right in my heart. When she looks me in the eye and –

ALEXA: She doesn't mean it!

MARTINE: She doesn't mean it when she says she'll be home at eleven either.

ALEXA: You can't not believe your mom.

MARTINE: Why?

ALEXA: Did you study?

MARTINE: Of course. Did you?

ALEXA: There was a huge group of grad students celebrating something. I never got a break.

MARTINE: Hmm.

ALEXA: (yawning) I'm going to fail big time tomorrow.

MARTINE: Can we disown her?

ALEXA: Marty.

MARTINE: Can we?

ALEXA: I'm not talking about this.

MARTINE: Why not?

ALEXA: We're not doing this. We're going to go to bed and she'll be here when we wake up, making toast. Like always. She's never missed that, she won't miss it tomorrow.

MARTINE: I don't care about the toast. It's not good enough. Making toast is sloppy seconds to being here right now when she said she'd –

ALEXA: (interrupting) What did you say?

MARTINE: What?

ALEXA: Sloppy seconds? Where did you get that?

MARTINE: I don't know. She said it on the phone to someone. I guess. Chad or Brad or Winston or whoever. Can we leave her a note?

ALEXA: No.

MARTINE: We're out of here, smell you later, enjoy the toast!

ALEXA: And where would we go? And do what?

MARTINE: I could get a job too.

ALEXA: You have a job. You are going to study and get a scholarship. You are going away to a good school and you are going to support me in my old age. That's the plan.

MARTINE: I'm not supporting her.

ALEXA: We'll talk.

MARTINE: Don't you want to go away to school?

ALEXA: The money'd be wasted.

MARTINE stands and looks out the window.

MARTINE: She's not coming home. Is she.

ALEXA: No. I don't think so.

MARTINE starts to pace.

ALEXA: Don't get upset.

MARTINE: I'm not upset.

ALEXA: It's not worth it.

MARTINE: I'm not upset.

ALEXA: You won't be able to sleep. You won't do well on your test.

MARTINE: *(waving her hand as if swatting a fly)* Please. I could write that test in my sleep in a coma in another time zone. I could write that test with one hand tied behind my back. I could lose all my limbs, I could be limbless and ace that test. I know what I have to do.

ALEXA: That's the plan.

MARTINE: I know the plan.

ALEXA: So stop pacing.

MARTINE: Can't.

ALEXA: Why?

MARTINE: *(outburst)* The plan is stressing me out.

ALEXA: You have four years.

MARTINE: I have four years to stress out.

ALEXA: Don't say that.

MARTINE: Why not?

ALEXA: You stress me out.

MARTINE: Great. We'll all stress out together.

ALEXA: Did you... did, in conversation, accidentally, did you ever...

MARTINE: What?

ALEXA: Did you ever tell mom about the plan?

MARTINE: Uh uh.

ALEXA: Good. Good. It would... probably be better if she didn't know.

MARTINE: You want me to lie?

ALEXA: I didn't say that. If she doesn't know, you don't have to say anything, then it's not lying.

MARTINE: Not saying something is lying.

ALEXA: Depends on your point of view.

MARTINE: Besides she might steal the money.

ALEXA: I didn't say that.

MARTINE: She would.

ALEXA: She might.

MARTINE: I hate her.

ALEXA: Don't say that.

MARTINE: It's three in the morning! There's no food in the house—

ALEXA: I'll go grocery shopping tomorrow.

MARTINE: With what?

ALEXA: You shouldn't have to think about this.

MARTINE: She doesn't care. She doesn't care and she doesn't love us.

ALEXA: Shh. Shh.

MARTINE: She doesn't love us. You and me. Alex and Marty.

ALEXA: She does, she does.

MARTINE: She loves Alexa and Martine. Pretty girls in pretty dresses that can be shoved into glass boxes. Alexa and Martine taken out once a year and shown off. These are my beautiful daughters

Alexa and Martine. Aren't they beautiful names? I always wanted to be surrounded by beauty and then back in the box we go.

ALEXA: Let's stop talking about her.

MARTINE: Why does she say she loves us when she doesn't?

ALEXA: Let's talk about something else.

MARTINE: There's nothing to talk about.

ALEXA: Tell me the story.

MARTINE: No.

ALEXA: I want a little blue house...

MARTINE: I should just go to bed.

ALEXA: I want a little blue house... Say it.

MARTINE: With a little fence and a little dog. Everything little.

ALEXA: Not because we can't afford it...

MARTINE: But because it's hip and chic. I want hamburger helper in the cupboard.

ALEXA: We could have steak.

MARTINE: I like hamburger helper.

ALEXA: I'll buy some tomorrow. Two boxes. What else?

MARTINE: I don't want to do this.

ALEXA: We can talk about the future. What we're going to do when you're done school and we can leave. We can be a family. Alex and Marty. We can act like a family. No dresses. No glass boxes.

MARTINE: Who gets to be the mom?

ALEXA: We'll take turns. You go first.

MARTINE: Go study for your test. I don't want you to fail.

ALEXA *laughs*.

MARTINE: I'm serious.

ALEXA: It doesn't matter. I just need to keep it together for three more months and then *(she make a rocket noise and gesture)* Reggie says I can go full time whenever I want.

MARTINE: Last time I checked you were seventeen.

ALEXA: Reggie doesn't know that.

MARTINE: Hmm.

ALEXA: You're not my mother, Marty.

MARTINE: I know.

ALEXA: I'm the best bartender he's got. That's what matters. *(MARTINE looks away)* What? I'm making money. For us.

MARTINE: I don't want you to lie.

ALEXA: It's not lying, Marty.

MARTINE: Uh huh.

ALEXA: It's different.

MARTINE: How?

ALEXA: I would never lie to you. That's the difference.

MARTINE: *(in her face)* Promise.

ALEXA: *(backs away)* Why do I have to do that?

MARTINE: Why are you getting defensive?

ALEXA: I'm not. I'm not. Don't worry about me. You have a job and I have a job and let's just focus on that. Ok. *(MARTINE is staring at her)* What? What?

MARTINE: You lying about anything else?

ALEXA: Are you accusing me of lying?

MARTINE: No.

ALEXA: Why would you do that to me?

MARTINE: I didn't say anything.

ALEXA: I know what I'm doing.

MARTINE: OK.

ALEXA: You believe me, don't you?

MARTINE: I do. So promise me I'm never going to do this.

ALEXA: What?

MARTINE: I'm never going to sit up at three in the morning waiting for you.

ALEXA: Marty.

MARTINE: Promise.

ALEXA: I know what I'm doing.

There is a pause.

MARTINE: How much money do we have saved?

ALEXA: *(Not expected that)* What?

MARTINE: For the plan. How much?

ALEXA: Some.

MARTINE: How much is some?

ALEXA: We're on track. Don't you —

MARTINE: I don't care, Alex. I just want to hear a number.

ALEXA: I know what the plan is. I am completely dedicated to the plan. Don't you ever think for a second that I'm not thinking about socking money away for us. That the plan isn't going to happen. We're going to get away from here and have a picket fence. A beautiful life. We're going to have a beautiful life, Marty. Do you understand? I'm never going to leave you and I'm going to make the money we need and there will be no discussion otherwise.

MARTINE: Is there any money?

ALEXA: I'm not answering that.

Pause.

MARTINE: OK.

ALEXA: Say you believe me.

MARTINE: *(looking out the window)* There she is.

ALEXA: Say you believe me. Say you think I'm telling the truth.

MARTINE looks at ALEXA. *Pause.*

MARTINE: I believe you. *(she sighs)* I believe you.

They stare at each other as the lights fade.

— THE END —