

## The Liar

Characters: Roland, a regular looking teenage-boy with a slightly *horizontally* long nose (also the narrator)

Hina, a girl with snow-white hair, tied to a bun

Knit, a little boy with innocent eyes

(There's a lush forest, decorated with firm trees, their leaves glimmering in the sun like emeralds. On top of a smaller tree is Roland, a regular, tanned boy, sleeping atop its branch, relaxed as can be. He's awoken by the judgmental thoughts of the viewers watching him as he snores, hopping up as he begins to speak.)

Roland

W-what are ya spying on me for, ya creep? (He pauses, eyes darting back and forth as he sits) Oh, you're here for a story, are ya? Alrighty then, guess I can cut the pirate accent. Let's see...

(He stops, tapping his forehead as he brainstorms)

Right! Here's a story, one that occurred not too long ago. Just two months ago, actually, when semester exams were right around the corner! It's the beginning of a relationship. A relationship that would later blossom into something great, something more! A journey of lies and..

(A phone call rings, as Roland picks up and mumbles something distant, tone annoyed as he leaps off stage. Just as he's nearly out-of-view, he reaches his hand out for a final word)

Well then, go on! The story isn't just gonna come to you! Go!

(The stage shifts to a school setting, like that of the private schools you see in movies. The walls are marbly, reflecting the glimmer of an approaching summer. Out of a distant car comes Roland, walking, hands in pocket to put on a "cool" facade that hides his lack of sleep. In the distance is Knit, dashing towards Roland like a voracious T-rex.)

Knit

Big bro Roland!

Roland (extravagantly posing)

Yo, Knit! How are ya today?

Knit

Good! (he raises an eyebrow, head facing up to Roland's sore eyesockets) Uh, why are your eyes surrounded by black, big bro?

Roland

Oh, these? (pointing towards eyes as he kneels closer) Don't tell anyone, but these are actually battle scars!

Knit

Seriously, big bro?

Roland

Mhm! You see, last night I was fighting these great monsters! Upon them were great beasts, at least 50 feet in height! There were five of them – one was a giant spider, head laced in horns and poisons that cried with the tears of its past victims. The other was a lizard-bird, hair swaying back and forth in its winds of evil. And the other-

Knit

Wait, big bro. Aren't these the monsters you showed me last time? Like from the show you watched?

(Roland pauses, mouth gaped open, eyeballs practically popping out his sockets as he stands shocked)

Uh.. big bro?

Roland

Well, Knit! I suppose it's time I told you. (He gets closer, whispering) The thing is, I can actually travel *into* TV shows!

Knit

Seriously, big bro? So were you the hero that was fighting those monsters on the screen?

Roland

That's right!

(He pauses, eyes glowing a hue of unusual solemn)

At least it's who I'd *want* to be.

(As Roland kneels, from beside him walks a girl – average in height, hair white as snow, eyes blue in the sky's reflection. His eyes follow her steps, turning to hearts as his lungs thump in place of his heart, which is up in the sky)

Knit

Uh, big bro? Why are you looking at big sis?

Roland

Wait, she's your sister?

Knit

That's right. (pause) Wait, don't tell me...

(Roland and Knit have a staredown, bolts of sweat racing down the former's neck)

Is she an enemy who we have to eliminate? No, it couldn't be! Is she.. (gasp) the monster that you mentioned you fought?

Roland

What?

Knit

The personalities would add up, but it couldn't possibly be..

(Roland side steps to Knit, wrapping his arm around the boy)

Roland

That's right! And you *must* invite me to your house so I can get rid of her! Help me out here, Knit! This is your first mission as my sidekick!

Knit (teary eyed)

Of course, Big bro! I'll do anything for you!

(Knit scurries away, wailing as Roland stands, arms crossed in pride. He turns to his wrist, making note of the time as he sprints to his next class)

Roland (panicked)

Man, time passed by fast! I could've sworn I had a good twenty..

(As he runs Roland bumps into Hina, Knit's sister)

Wha-

Hina

Ah, sorry 'bout.. (she pauses, eyes staring intently at Roland) it's you!

Roland (flustered)

Me? You *know* me?

Hina

*Know* you? How *wouldn't* I know the same guy who coaxed my brother into calling me a monster?

(Roland stands, face wiped in despair as she spoke)

Roland (panicked)

I-I'm sorry, but I can ex-

Hina

Explain? What is there to "explain" when you're the very reason my brother's been pushing me away?

(The bell rings)

Listen, stay *far* away from him. (under her breath) I don't need anyone else tearing our family apart.

Roland (weak)

Right. Sorry.

(She walks away, as Roland goes the opposite. The lights fade as the stage cuts back to the lush forest, where future Roland narrates. He makes his way back on stage, looking annoyed)

Roland

Oh, you're still here. How's the story so far? Good, huh? Well, you wouldn't *see* it from there, wherever you're seated, but those words kept echoing for an entire week at least. It was embarrassing, even though I didn't really do much wrong. But it *did* make me think of how I

presented myself. I'd kept telling these tall tales of achievements and talent, but behind that mask I worked just as hard as everyone else, and some bit of me always wanted the praise that came along with that. It's annoying when people chop up all you do to talent and throw invisible tomatoes at you as they scorn. Though ironically, *she* was the one that'd change all of that.

(Roland's phone rings again as he frolics off, face strangely pleasant)

(whispering) This next part's my favorite.

(The scene cuts to Roland, standing ahead of a small room in an apartment complex. On his waist is a strapped lunchbox, hands fidgeting as he awaits for an answer. And as he stands, the door opens.)

Knit

Big bro, you're here!

Roland (hands shaky)

Yeah, guess I am!

Knit

Come in, big bro! Mom's out right now, so it's just me and Hina.

(The two enter the room, and it's a regular apartment room. Ahead of the two sits a living room. Standing high above the worn-down couch is a portrait of a family – a mother, two kids, and a father with his face scratched out.)

Roland (hands sweaty)

Huh. Nice place ya got here.

Knit

Thanks! (He looks around, eyes narrow in caution as he begins to whisper) So, when are we gonna defeat *her*?

(Roland smirks, shuffling within his lunchbox to bring out a stack of comic books)

Roland

I thought ya'd never ask! The time is nigh, little one! And to defeat her, we'll use *these*! (pointing to the books)

Knit

Wow! Big bro, are you gonna bring her into the books so you can use your superpowers to defeat her?

Roland

That's exactly it! By the time we're done, she won't know what hit her!

(A door creaks open, and from out the door comes Hima, hair messy as she yawns. Her eyes dart toward Roland, immediately dilating as she steps back)

Hina

What are you *doing* here?

Roland

I, uh... I was..

Knit (proud, legs shaky)

Big bro's here to defeat you, monster! He used his superpowers to sense your spiritual energy was off, and determined that you aren't my sister, but a creature from the spawns of fiction! Prepare yourself!

(Knit points to her, back snapped up in confidence. Hina stares at him, losing a little bit of luster. Her eyes drag to Roland, who just stands, face drowned in utter shock as his eyeballs pop, nose drooling)

Hina (solemn)

Seriously. You told me you'd stay away, yet you turn right back around, enter *my* home, and drag my little brother even deeper into your lie.

(She pauses to take a breath, and as she's about to unleash another barrage of words, Knit stops her)

Knit (voice shaky)

Stop it, monster! You've already taken away my big sis, and I can't let you try hurting big bro too. (he pauses, legs shaking as he shrinks) A-and even if you tried fighting Big bro, he'd easily defeat you! He'll get back my big sis from you! Just watch!

(Hina stops, eyes welling as she watches. She glances at Roland, then back at Knit, walking to the kitchen without a word)

Roland

W-We'll just be.. At the couch.

(The two make their way to the couch, where Roland lays down the books. He opens them up, gesturing for Knit to come closer)

Alright, listen closely. She's gonna be a tougher opponent than we thought. (He smirks) And so, we'll have to prepare ourselves!

Knit

But how?

Roland

Well, I thought you'd never ask. First, we'll have to increase our spiritual energy! And to do this... we'll have to read!

Knit (whiney)

What?? But I only want to listen to *your* stories, big bro!

Roland (whispering)

Well, that's no good! Don't tell anyone, but this story's main character is actually my great great grandfather!

Knit (shocked)

Really??

Roland

Mhm! So c'mon, let's get going.

(The two heroes read through the comic, sharing laughs and giggles with each chapter. As they laugh, Hina watches intently from afar, almost scared from the sight. And as they laugh, she approaches the two, eyes glaring at Roland)

(whispers to Knit) Move out, this is where the *real* battle begins.

(Knit scurries away, finding shelter in the kitchen as Hina monitors him. She turns back to Roland, sitting with him, face intense)

Hina

Tell me, how would you describe your relationship with him?

Roland

Oh, with Knit?

Hina

Mhm.

(Roland stops for a second, pondering)

Roland

Hm. If I had to put it in words, I'd say something like.. Friends, maybe?

Hina (faintly)

Huh. Doesn't seem like that to me.

Roland (panicked)

O-oh, sorry. I didn't mean to cross boundaries there, considering how you told me to..

Hina

No, I mean how... it's *stronger* than that. He... (she pauses, sighing) he admires you. A lot. I mean, you're all he ever talks about.

Roland

He talks about me?

Hina

Too much.

Roland

Does that include the.. *stories*?

Hina

Yep.

Roland (embarrassed)

Oh, sorry bout' that.

Hina

No, you don't have to apologize. If anything, I should be the one saying sorry for what I said a few days back. I think I was just.. jealous, in a way.

Roland



Jealous? What do you mean by that?

Hina (with slight quivers, in the midpoint of tears and laughs)

Well, it's.. Complicated. It's like how you feel the calling to take care of your siblings as the oldest. I've wanted to be that for a long time, but he just.. kept ignoring me. And so, you can imagine my frustration when he comes back one day talking about this "big bro" who made him laugh.

Roland

Oh. I-I'm sorry.

Hina

No, it's not your fault. It was me being selfish, is all.

(Hina smiles, eyes drawing towards the comics)

Still, I have to thank you.

Roland

Seriously? For what?

Hina (with slight quivers, in the midpoint of tears and laughs)

Well, for a lot. Even if it wasn't by me specifically, you still made him laugh. You brought him back, in a way. The little brother I knew.

Roland

Oh.

Hina

It's weird, really. Personally, I could never talk about a single man that much. (pause) Humans are weird. One second, they can nuzzle you with all the love they can give, and you feel as if you're atop the entire world. And before you know it, they're gone. Sometimes willingly, sometimes not. It's frustrating.

(The two share a moment of silence, crickets singing in the back as they sit)

Roland

Yeah, I get it.

Hina

You do?

Roland

Mhm. It's such a wild switch. It's like you said, love like that can make you feel atop the world. And they're right there with you, holding your hand as you stare at the stars. But then they just kick you off, and as you fall, you can't even see their face. You don't know if they're crying in grief, or laughing as your tongue ripples while you cry out to no one.

(Hina leans closer, getting a good look at Roland's face)

Hina

Y'know, you don't *look* like a noble.

Roland

Well, I'm not really a noble. At least, not in the way you'd expect.

Hina

What's that supposed to mean?

Roland

Do you *really* want me to vent that badly?

Hina

Only if you'd like.

Roland

Guess I'll have to, then.

(He puts his hand out, eyes asking her to join him)

Hina (a bit uneasy)

Am I supposed to..

Roland

It's a family tradition. We always do something with our hands before telling a story. Sometimes we hold hands, sometimes we just wave. We find it makes us more.. immersed!

(Hina smiles, hand pressed against Roland's as he inhales)

Alrighty then, let's start! So it all started in a hospital, as you.. probably guessed. I woke up, and bear with me as I try to recall, but I'd imagine two faces – one of my dad, face wrinkled and, hopefully proud. The other was my mom's, eyes barely open in exhaustion. Now, this child, this rascal – he wasn't your average baby, no. He was energetic, and it's said that at the mere age of twenty seconds, he began to walk!

Hina

Something tells me that last part wasn't so honest..

Roland

What is journalism without biases and misinformation? (pause to unheard applause) Moving on! His parents had these great expectations for him! They gave him two names. They tried playing it off as a metaphor for a coin with two sides, but really they just couldn't come up with a compromise. His first name – Roland. It means land, or something like that. But his other name, his name denoted to him by his father, was Kiboko.

Hina

And what does that mean?

Roland (smiling)

Child of Hope. You see, my father did all he could to prevent me from getting bullied. Like, imagine bullying a dude called "Child of Hope".

Hina

Yeah, that *would* seem stupid. Though it's not like everyone would know the meaning.

Roland

Silence, this is *my* story. Logic doesn't apply here. Moving on! This child, no matter how hard his parents pushed against it, got hooked on a certain piece of media. The medium of animation! There was always something and books and literature that seemed to bore him. Really, he was just too lazy to read. But animation? It was different! There was enough movement on screen to keep him hooked, enough sound effects to jolt him awake, and enough story to matter. It was magnificent!

Hina

Let me guess, *this* is where you got hooked on *Ricardo's*?

Roland

That's right, young one! Excellent guess! Now, considering his lack of access to streaming services, he was viewing this show blindfolded. No story to build off of, just pure fight and humor. And it was great, but he needed something more! He wanted.. To create!

Hina (excited)

Shoot, you're an artist?

Roland

No, I was gonna mention how horrible I was at drawing afterwards. But, moving on! He realized his hands, no matter what orders they received, just simply wouldn't heed to his commands. And so, he moved on to writing! He wrote stories, and kept writing and writing. They were initially just botches of fight scenes that consisted of "he punched" and "he shouted" and "he fell", but it was a start. But as he kept writing, he realized that punching and shouting couldn't make a story. He needed character, and for a character, he needed an origin.

Hina

Oh, so-

Roland

Let me finish! Well, he got this origin he very much wanted. But plot twist! It was upon his own life! Just like Ricardo, his father had frolicked away to whatever unknown lands he saw ahead, and the boy was left – just him and his mom. Before, he was Kinoko. A child of Hope. But he took on a new mantle, that which his mother bestowed upon him.

Hina

Oh, I'm.. sorry to hear that.

Roland

Shush! You're supposed to give your thoughts *after* the ending! Lemme finish, I have something cool in mind.

(Roland pauses, tapping his head again to brainstorm)

Huzzah!

Hina

I thought you'd..

Roland

Shh, watch this. Moving on! He was in despair, drowning in sadness, but guess what! He didn't let that stop him! More specifically, Ricardo didn't. You see, just before dad left, I was able to get him to buy me a streaming service. And when he left, all I had was this show. On the screen was a boy, riding on trains as he fights kaijus and titans. It's wacky, but it got me through a lot of stuff.

(Roland pauses, smirking with internal chuckles)

And here he is, bonding with the girl he likes using the same show that brought him out of that darkness. Bam! Man, that was smooth.

(Hina's face slowly steaming red as their eyes lock)

Hina (severely panicked)

Wh-what? What kind of stupid ending is that?

Roland (smirking)

Told ya it'd pay off!

(Hina looks down, body shaky as Roland stares, sweaty)

Ah... sorry.

(She straightens up, back straight. And as Roland stares, his fears slip away as she starts to laugh)

Hina (laughing hard)

Are you serious? What kind of ending even *is* that?

(From the corner comes Knit, legs slowly shaking as he approaches, wooden sword in hand)

Knit

K-keep away from big bro, monster! Big bro, if she's laughing, that must mean you lost, right?

(Roland's smirk widens as he arises, long nose shimmering in the lights above)

Roland

Worry not, Knit! Watch and learn!

(Roland hits a pose of pure extravagance, posing as he winks to Hina to fall)

Hina (weakly)

Oh no... (falls over)

Roland (fatigued)

Worry not, little one. We've defeated the demon within her! She'll wake up soon enough, and she'll be back to her usual self.

Knit (as he yawns)

Thanks, big bro.. I knew you'd win in the end.. (He collapses, snoring as he collapses)

(Hina rises, approaching the defeated Knit as he sleeps. She carries him to his bed, placing him down as she gives a smile. The sky outside turned dark, stars glimmering proud as they watch over the three. She makes her way back to the living room, where Roland laughs to himself while reading the latest comic volume. His eyes turn to her, glowing mellow as they stare)

Roland

Back already?

Hina

Mhm.

(Roland chuckles, gesturing at her to sit with him)

Roland

Check this out! (Pointing at the comic) He's fighting this...

Hina

Shh, I wanna read it for myself.

(The two narrate each page together, chuckling with each event. As they laugh, they turn to each other.)

Roland

...So.

Hina

...So.

Roland

Who's your favorite character?

Hina

Probably Nino.

Roland

Oh, I like her too! She's had some great moments throughout the series.

Hina

For sure! And it's weird because people've been hating on her for relying on her weapon for fights? Like, isn't that the point of *every* swordsman and gunsman, like, ever?

Roland

Guess they're frauds now!

Hina

For sure...

Roland (cheeky)

My glorious king Ricardo could *never* though!

Hina

That's... fair. He's **the** symbol of liberation for his people. (pause) He's who I want to be.

Roland

Same here. Though I don't think I'd ever reach his caliber. In his world of slavery, racial divide, corruption, kaijus, and yokai, he's somehow able to make it all seem so happy.

(Hina pauses, face solemn)

Hina

You don't see it, do you?

Roland

See what?

Hina

You're already him, at least to me and Knit. Ever since our father died, Knit hasn't been able to muster a single smile. And it hurt mom. A lot.

Roland

I'm... sorry to hear that.

Hina

So you can imagine her joy when he comes back from the school laughing, talking about this "big bro" who made him happy with his ridiculous stories. (pause) You should've seen the look on her face when she heard him giggle.

Roland

Oh. Well.. good for him!

Hina

(She pauses, pondering before facing him)

I'm sorry.

Roland

No, it's alright! There's no need to apologize, we all have that..

Hina

Imagine if you'd seen the very man who brought your brother out of his sorrows, and told him to his face that you hated him! You'd.. you'd be doing the same if you were me.

(Roland pauses, eyes staring at the comic again)

Roland

That's.. Fair. (pause) Considering we're on the topic of apologies, I'll apologize too.

(He stares at her intensely, eyes caring)

I'm sorry. I dragged your name in the mud without knowing who you really were, or what you were going through. I apologize.

Hina

No no, it's alright, we all-



Roland

Well well, look how the tables've turned. But really, I meant it when I said it was alright. Flaws make us human. Y'know, if you'd just rapidly apologized that day when we collided, I would've been a little turned off.

Hina (slightly sarcastic)

Well, that's good to know.

Roland

No, really! That spark of *something* was what made me want to know you so badly!

(She looks at him intently for the final time, eyes showing gratitude)

Hina

Thanks. I needed that.

Roland

Mhm. (long pause) Say, what's your name?

Hina

It's Hina. Nice to meet you.

(The scene shifts back to the lush forest, where Roland comes digging out the ground)

Roland

Ah, so you're back. Hopefully you enjoyed that. Anyways, let's move on to act 2- (pause, looking to the right) Wha- what do you mean we're reaching a limit? (pause) Ya serious? (pause) Wha- (longer pause) 15 pages? What's that supposed to- (pause) Wh- whatever. (he turns back to the audience) Anyway, hope you enjoyed that. There was a bit more afterwards, but hey, as long as you had fun, that's all that matters. (Eyes dart to a nearby tree) I'm.. gonna go back to bed.

(He climbs up the same tree, laying on the same branch he was once on. He flips an eye open, checking the audience one last time)

Oh and, before you go, please rate the story something good as you leave. Maybe a good 95/100 points. That'd make it worthwhile. Maybe you can write your own story later or something, I don't know. (awkward pause) Uh, that's it, you can leave now! Thanks!

