

Afterthoughts

A **Teen Titans** story

Written by Corey W. Smith

“We’ll be searching for a way to reverse the effect...”

I hate lying.

And yes, I know that, technically, I lie every day. Even if it *is* a lie of omission. But that’s different. It’s not that I don’t *intend* to tell them. It’s simply that I haven’t yet figured out how best to say, ‘*Oh, hey guys, by the way, my father’s going to destroy the world and kill everyone in it sometime in the next year or two. I thought I should mention that. But please don’t be too mad at me for it, or leave me alone, okay?*’

Yeah. Right.

Anyway, this feels different. More... deliberate, somehow. Almost insulting.

Or maybe it’s just more cowardly.

There’s certainly no comparison in terms of scale or magnitude. Which is another reason this doesn’t make sense. Why should such a comparatively tiny and well-intentioned little falsehood *feel* so much worse than The Big One? I suppose that I *have* had my entire life to grow accustomed to living that biggest of all lies, but even *that* seems to bother me more than it used to, lately.

It must have something to do with the company I’m keeping.

That must be it. This was the first time I’ve actively, consciously lied to *them*. Not just by *not* telling them something, but by telling them what I knew wasn’t true.

And Cyborg lied, too. His sensors had to have told him the truth. But he just stood there, and went right along with the lie... I guess neither of us were brave enough to tell them.

Because then, we would all have to face it.

I think Starfire knew. Somehow. She was so sad... I didn’t catch a single flicker of hope or optimism from her, throughout the ‘ceremony’. Just grief.

Robin said we’d bring her back. He might have even believed it. But he’s too smart not to figure it out, sooner or later.

Which leaves Beast Boy. And with him... I can’t tell. At least, not yet. Maybe it’s just too soon. I hope. Because his senses would tell him the same thing that mine and Cyborg’s have told us, if he were willing to accept it. But the trouble is, nobody wants to believe the lie more fervently than he does.

Nobody wants to face the truth.

And the truth is... it’s just a rock that looks like her, now. That’s all that’s left.

They can’t comprehend the scope of what she did. Sure, we all see the result, but they can’t grasp the *process*, they have no frame of reference.

They can’t, or they won’t, realize that... in order to channel *that much* energy, to exert *that much* control, she had to *become one* with the Earth – not just mentally, but also physically.

She had to become *one* with the rock she was standing on.

She isn’t *trapped inside* the rock. She *is* the rock. It’s not a hollow shell; the stone goes all the way through.

And there's nothing alive inside.
I know this to be undeniable, immutable fact.
So, then... why am I standing here, in this cave, in the middle of the night, staring
at that stone face?
And why do I want, more desperately than anything, to *break* it into pieces?
Do I really hate her that much?
“*You know, Raven... I never liked you.*”
Even though it's just a cold, lifeless statue?
“*Come on, Raven. What stings the most? ...That I tricked you? ...That I nearly
wiped out your team?*”
There is no more threat. There is no more Terra. She's not here. She's gone.
“*...That everyone liked me better than you?*”
Is that it? Can I not allow her to be remembered as anything but a traitor?
“*...Or is it that deep down inside, you really believed I was your friend?*”
She could not possibly have known what she nearly unleashed.
Maybe it's not a good idea for me to keep staring at her – at *the* face. Look down
at the plaque, instead.

TERRA
A TEEN TITAN
A TRUE FRIEND

Is that a lie, too?
...No.
I *decide* that it isn't.
What she said, what she thought, what she chose. She paid for it all, in the end.
And none of it matters.
Because, I realize, this isn't really *her* monument.
It's *ours*.
And that's why I can't break it. Why I won't.
They deserve that much.
“*...Who's in control, now?*”
“I am,” I tell her calmly, as I turn to leave.
She doesn't hear me or respond, of course, since she isn't here.
And that doesn't matter, either.

-Fin-

<p>(Teen Titans and all related characters are © 2006 DC Comics.) (This story is based on Warner Animation's version of those characters.)</p>
--