The Reciprocals: Owing and Forgiveness

By: Elena Swecker

It was just last Sunday when a group of my friends and I went to the movie theater to see the showing of *Insurgent*. It was also just Sunday when I made an unintentional mistake that may stay with me for the rest of my life and I might never be able to correct it.

I walked into the movie theater, overflowing with excitement. Only Riley was there with me because we took her, but we had invited so many more people. Soon, my friends started flooding in; Manali, Nandini, and Megan all joined in the lobby, bubbling over with anticipation for watching the movie together. Our voices overlapped creating a volume that was booming. Our exclamations of joy were rude to ones around us, but we didn't notice. We were so caught up in the moment that I don't even remember if we were thinking about it or if we really cared (now, after the fact, I realize my level of inconsideration).

We were talking and joking; all of us were having a good time. When we finally entered the theater, time flew. I don't know if it was because we were all whispering the entire time or because we just were so engulfed in the plot of the movie. We commented on everything from the book/movie comparison to the casting of the movie and if it was the correct actor/actress for each character.

At one point, after talking for a while, we got to a climatic point in the movie that many of the people in my group didn't understand. It was related to the book, so I was going to explain to them what was going to happen next. Finally, someone in the row in front of me turned around and said, “Stop, please! I don't want to know what happens.”

After that I felt so awful that I had spoiled it for her. I was being so inconsiderate. I didn't even think about how loud I was being and how my words would affect others. I agreed that I would apologize to her once the movie was over.

But I was too scared.

I was too afraid to tell her that I had messed up. That I was sorry. I was too frightened to express to her my apologies that I had been so inconsiderate. It was ironic because I had just written an essay about spoiling and how I would try not to spoil something for someone else. Then, the very next day, I turned around and accidentally ruined the movie for someone. I had the chance to make up for it, and I could have, but I hesitated. Then, I could have gone after her, but I said that I didn't know what she looked like, but I just I could have figured it out. I was not brave enough. I had a chance and I missed it just because of my petty nervousness. I owed her for what I had done, but I didn't take the chance to undo it with forgiveness. I didn't take the chance to cancel out what I had owing with forgiveness.

I was too scared to admit my wrongs then.

But I'm glad that I wasn't too scared to admit them now.

“I Know!” I Mean “You’re Right!”

By: Elena Swecker

“I know! I thought of that to!” I said in frustration. I was sitting in the exercise room of my house, sunlight pouring through the big 6 foot windows. My dad was riding on his stationary bike, panting as he rode. I was sitting on the floor, wrapped in a blanket, sweating because of the cycling athlete next to me. Brainstorming was very hard to do, especially in this situation. I had gotten an assignment to write about a lie I wish I hadn't told and I couldn't think of anything! I had been looking and researching for such a long time. I had actually told little lies as a joke just so that I could write about them. I had finally resorted to discussing it with my family to see if they had any ideas.

So that's how I ended up in this uncomfortable position on the floor of the bright but stuffy room in my house. My dad and I had gone through every possible angle on this prompt. We thought able white lies and half lies and hiding-information lies, but we couldn't think of anything.

But then, we had an idea. It was kind of ironic actually. I told a lie during our telling-a-lie brainstorm. And you probably already know what it is.

“I know!” I said again. I was getting frustrated because of all this thinking. My dad was trying his best to help, but I was refusing to think hard enough. But he finally came up with a great idea based off of what I had just said.

Saying “I know” is a lie in itself. Obviously, I don't actually know because if I did, others wouldn't have to explain the situation to me.

Then, my dad started to explain how saying “I know” could work for a topic for my paper. I didn't like the idea because then I would have to regret saying it. At least... I would have to admit that I regret saying it.

Saying “I know” is definitely a lie, the more I think about it. 1) It's not true. 2) I don't mean what I say. 3) I was lying to myself along with others.

So first, as I was saying, it's not true. When I say, “I know”, it would be interpreted that I mean “I understand” when really, I might not actually completely comprehend what someone else is trying to say.

Maybe I have a certain angle on a topic that I understand, but the new perspective of the other person is not something that I fully know about.

Or maybe I do know about the topic, but I only know about part of what the other person is thinking.

Possibly, I have a general idea about what the other person is thinking, but I don't know the specifics.

But, in this case, I think that the most likely reason in this case and in most other cases would be that I am just being dismissive. I don't want to talk about the subject anymore so I say, “I know”, so that we move on from that specific topic.

So saying “I know” for all of these reasons is definitely a lie and is not completely the truth.

Next, I might not mean what I say. That basically is just what I was saying before when I was explaining the reason that “I know” isn't completely the truth.

What I don't understand easily myself is that I didn't say 'I know' because I *actually* know. I said 'I know' because I didn't want to talk about it anymore. I had just gotten frustrated after a while so I just didn't want to continue talking about topics for this paper because it was annoying me so much. And it wasn't anybody else's fault but my own.

When someone says 'I know' (or at least when I say it), it is more of a dismissive comment than anything. Well, it’s more a lie than anything, but a dismissive comment is definitely second place for describing that saying.

Lastly, along with not telling the truth to others, I'm actually lying to myself to. I wanted more than anything to know what the other person was talking about. To be superior, and such. So, I convinced myself that I did actually know.

But my dad called me out on it. He realized what I really meant and tried to explain it to me. Of course, he was right. I was being stubborn and just wanted the conversation to be over with.

Personally, I think that lying to myself is the worst out of the three ways that saying 'I know' is a lie.

But do I regret it?

I think that the answer would have to be yes. Even though there wasn't any immediate consequences, there will be in the future.

What I mean is that right when I said 'I know', I did lie to myself, but that consequence wasn't too bad. If I continue to say 'I know', it might become a habit and *then* I might have a problem.

It is quite possible that I will continue to lie to myself for many years to come if I continue to say 'I know' now. That probably not going to be a positive influence when related to lying to myself.

No. Let me correct myself.

It *definitely* is not going to be a positive influence when related to lying to myself.

So, I started rethinking how I lie to myself and how I can stop it. But all this thinking made me frustrated. *Don't get frustrated.* I thought to myself. *You just need to spend more time on this topic.*

Groan.

“I know!”