

Rating: G

Improv: #4 - wish - memory - glow - fall

Ship: very slightly Clark/Lex

Summary: Lex contemplates trust issues after 'Leech'

## Traditions by Penemuel

Lex slouches in the chair and leans his head back, fingers loosely holding the drink resting on the padded arm. Looks through the amber liquid at the fire roaring in the fireplace, finding a strange comfort in the golden glow.

Even though he knows he shouldn't be, he's hurt by her betrayal. He even expected it, or he wouldn't have been prepared -- but it still stings. Foolish, he knows, but he had *hoped*...

Trust -- it's an alien concept for a Luthor. Trust can hurt you; trust can ruin you.

This is what his father taught him, and for the most part he learned it well. It kept him from a crushing, humiliating failure. And really, she betrayed him first. It doesn't matter to him that he's responsible for her downfall. Trust and loyalty isn't their way -- cutthroat business maneuvers, baiting and setting traps, and betraying those they claim to care for are the ways of the Hardwicks and Luthors.

Even when it isn't business, he thinks bitterly, the memory of Clark's hurt expression intruding on his wandering thoughts. And he has to wonder what he's lost there -- if there's any chance at all to salvage what he was working towards.

He was wrong about Clark, and may have ruined their friendship over the fact that he could have sworn on his life that the boy was hiding some huge secret. He'd been so *sure* -- Clark was a terrible liar and there was definitely *something* he had been lying about.

Sits up again and downs the remaining scotch. Then foolishly, feeling like he's a child again, squeezes his eyes shut and makes a wish. And hurls the glass into the fire, smiling as he hears it shatter against a log.

It amuses him to fall back on another Luthor tradition. Remembers sitting with his mother on the huge, soft merino wool rug; her arms and a soft throw blanket wrapped around him as she explains that one of the expensive crystal champagne flutes is shattered in the fire because she made a wish. Remembers leaning back and looking up at her, asking what she wished for. Remembers her shaking her head and explaining that wishes lose their power if you tell someone else what the wish was.

Remembers his father walking in and accusing her of filling his head with fairytales and nonsense, although there's a rare twinkle in his eyes as he does so. Remembers her giggling

and wrapping the blanket around him as she stands up, then whispering in his ear that the wish had come true...

Lex figures that wishing this way is much safer for him -- he's never had much luck with shooting stars. He takes a deep breath and opens his eyes to look into the fire, focusing on his wish as he repeats it to himself: *I wish that Clark Kent will forgive me for being such an ass...*

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