

February 28, 2010

Dear Laura ...

A long-time friend of mine called me several months ago to say that she just found out that her recently deceased godfather—someone she had idolized for her whole life—had been physically abusive to his son—the son, still a very dear friend of hers. Needless to say, she was very upset at finding this out. Her entire world had been turned upside down. And to make matters worse, she found herself angry at her friend (the son) for telling her about his father's unfortunate behavior. Why did her friend have to make this revelation? Why did he feel a need to shatter her world?

After the conversation was over, I started thinking about the internal struggle that her friend must have fought for the last fifty years. Balancing reality and his true feelings about his Dad with the constant and glowing adoration that our mutual friend had for her godfather.

Then I started thinking about you and your sister and our situation—a situation that is seemingly the reverse of the one my friend is experiencing. After all, your world depends on me being a horrible person—someone to whom you can place blame upon for everything that is wrong with your life. I have so often wanted to write you, call you, or contact you in some manner to try and resolve things. Every time this happens, I try to place myself in your situation and imagine your reaction to my attempts to contact you. But should you allow yourself to know me, you might, in time, come to realize that I am not the person that your Mom has made me out to be. She has made me out to be a horrible person in an effort to create the separation between us—and has used you as a means to punish me. It might be that you come to feel anger at me for causing you to see your Mom in a different light. It might be that you eventually come to feel anger at her—someone who has raised you and protected you most of your life—because of what she has done.

Just as my friend needs to understand why she was told about her godfather's behavior, it is important that you know why I still wish to make contact with you—even though it will be difficult for everyone involved. Understand that I can accept you being angry at me, not wanting to see me ever again—even hating me. My wish, though, is that you do so because of who I am—not because of the person your Mom has made me out to be—or what she professes I may or may not have done. All I have ever wanted is to give you that chance to know me. This is the one thing your Mom has prevented—and feared—over the last eighteen years.

The Web sites that I created for you (www.26april.net) and your sister in 2005—and have been gradually building up over the last four years—are the only way that I know of to give you the opportunity to get to know me without the stress of having to be in my presence. The sites are always there for you—whenever you are ready. It has been, and still is, my hope that through my music, my art, and my writing that you can get at least a little glimpse of who I really am.

It might also be that you fear me. It is my belief that any such fear may well be the result of things your Mom has said about me. I know that your Mom uses fear to achieve her goals. I know this because she created some pretty intense fear within me—fear that if I didn't accept her terms for the divorce, criminal charges of sexual abuse would be filed against me—fear that I might spend time in jail—fear that she would tell everyone in my life what actions I supposedly committed—fear that she would tell everyone in my life about my difficulty with gender. I am so very sorry that I allowed these fears to keep me from you over the years. I have now set those fears aside and am reaching out to you, praying that you are now old enough to see things in a different light and judge things for yourself.

I want to make certain that you understand that you have nothing to fear from me. I suspect that it is the truth about what did or did not occur almost twenty years ago that your Mom fears. Even more so, I suspect that it is the possible loss of a relationship with you and your sister when that truth arises that your Mom fears above all else. I want you to know that your Mom has nothing to fear from me—all is forgiven. I never want you to be in a situation in which you must choose between us. We are both your parents. Each of us should be a part of your life. You deserve that.

When I spoke with your Mom last year at the GMU Symphonic Orchestra Concert, she mentioned something about therapy and an opportunity for healing. I want to make certain that you know that I have always been willing to be involved in any therapy or efforts to heal. What we have all been through has been difficult, to be sure. We all deserve an opportunity to deal with the hurt, the anger, and the pain and to place it all in the past where it belongs. I know that GMU has a center for Counseling and Psychological Services on campus. Perhaps that might be a good place to start. Just let me know where and when and I will be there.

It goes without saying that I wrestle every day with the desire to do something that will result in you becoming part of my life again—and balance this with not wanting to hurt you, cause your world to turn upside down, or not wishing you to be angry with me—or perhaps even with your Mom. At the end of each day, as I say my prayers and glance at your picture before turning off the light, I make every attempt to leave this all in God's capable hands. But eighteen years is a long time to endure the absence of you from my life. My faith that all will be made whole waivers at times, I have to admit. I remind myself that God has a plan for each of our lives—that it is a good plan—and that He picked us to be part of His special plan because He loves us so very much. I believe that it is good to wait upon the LORD and to have faith in Him and His plan—faith above reason. According to our faith, be it unto us.

My apologies for intruding into your life. I do pray that all is well with you. May the GOOD LORD keep you happy, healthy, and safe each and every day of your life.

Much love always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'LJM' with a stylized flourish.