

When Love Is A Lie

Chapter 5:

Life had been good for Katherine, until she turned eighteen. That was when everything shattered. Her father went to prison, and the shock pushed her mother into a deep depression. Their family business collapsed soon after, and with it, so did any chance of continuing Austin's treatment.

Just like that, everything landed on Katherine's shoulders. The burden of the entire family.

Those years nearly crushed her. She worked endlessly, carrying more than any young woman should, trying to hold the broken pieces together. After marrying Julian, for a brief moment, she thought she'd found someone who could save her, but even that hope slipped away.

The memory tugged at something buried deep inside, and her eyes quietly filled with tears.

As the sky outside turned from gold to grey, her mother, Ivy Clarke, approached. Ivy worked at the hospital and had been looking after Austin, making sure he stayed safe.

“It’s getting late,” she said gently. “Julian must be off work by now. You should head home. Don’t give him any excuse to be upset.”

Katherine’s response was calm but honest. “I won’t be going back. I’m divorcing him.”

Ivy froze.

“Was it Julian’s idea?” she asked, her voice uncertain.

“No,” Katherine replied. “It was my idea.”

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Before she could say more, Ivy quickly cut in, her voice laced with panic. “Why would you even think of doing that? He’s not even the one pushing you away after what happened last night. Katherine, you have to understand — people like us... we can’t expect the Nashes to treat us as equals. Their pride runs deep. Sometimes people make mistakes; these things happen.”

Katherine looked at her mother, stunned.

“Who told you what happened?” she asked slowly.

Ivy met her daughter's pale, drained face. Her heart ached, but she couldn't bring herself to say it outright. "I've failed you. I couldn't protect you. But think about it, darling—if you walk away from Julian now, what happens to me? To Austin?"

Ivy didn't answer the question directly, but Katherine already knew the truth.

It could only have been Eloise behind last night. She was the only one capable of pulling the strings like that. She probably reached Ivy first, too, feeding her words to keep Katherine silent. After all, Eloise had never liked her.

As Katherine looked at her mother's downcast, apologetic face, something inside her froze. The bitterness ran so deep it almost made her laugh.

The home she poured everything into was never truly a place of safety and love. Her hands curled into fists at her sides. She shook her head slowly, more in sorrow than defiance.

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