



Lies and Other Acts of Love

By Kristy Woodson Harvey

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Dear Carolina was praised as “Southern fiction at its best.”* Now author Kristy Woodson Harvey presents a new novel about what it really means to tell the truth . . .

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Her granddaughter, Annabelle, on the other hand, is as truthful as they come. She always does the right thing—that is, until she dumps her hedge fund manager fiancé and marries a musician she has known for three days. After all, her grandparents, who fell in love at first sight, have shared a lifetime of happiness, even through her grandfather’s declining health.

But when Annabelle’s world starts to collapse around her, she discovers that nothing about her picture-perfect family is as it seems. And Lovey has to decide whether one more lie will make or break the ones she loves . . .

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Lies and Other Acts of Love By Kristy Woodson Harvey Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #115458 in Books
- Published on: 2016-04-05
- Released on: 2016-04-05
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.30" h x .90" w x 5.40" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 352 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for *Lies and Other Acts of Love*

"*Lies and Other Acts of Love* establishes [Harvey] as a major new voice in southern fiction. This book stirred mighty emotions in me, yet left me with a sense of peace. A truly delightful read."—Elin Hilderbrand, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Rumor*

"A richly detailed, intergenerational tale of love, loss and loyalty. Harvey pulls the reader into the hearts and souls of her characters."—Heather Gudenkauf, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Weight of Silence*

"Harvey crafted a story so perfectly detailed that we could imagine ourselves on a wrap around porch in the south with a tall glass of sweet tea."—Liz Fenton and Lisa Steinke, authors of *Your Perfect Life* and *The Status of All Things*

"The title fits this novel perfectly as readers learn the lengths people will go to protect their families. The author draws parallels between the two characters, which aids in reminding readers that women of all ages go through the same kinds of problems. Readers will be able to visualize what's written, making this an engaging and entertaining page-turner."—*Romantic Times*

"Harvey's second novel is full of abandon, caution, love and hurt, buoyed by two spirited women who learn how to take control and when to give it up."—*The Salisbury Post*

"Winsome and wise, *LIES AND OTHER ACTS OF LOVE* shows us that true, strong marriages are forged as much out of pain as passion. Kristy Woodson Harvey treats both Annabelle, the young, naive heroine, and Lovey, the formidable matriarch, with skillful tenderness. Fans of Southern fiction, especially book clubs, will flock to this engaging, heartfelt story."—Sonja Yoerg, author of *House Broken* and *Middle of Somewhere*

"Harvey brings small-town North Carolina alive with spot-on details and interesting characters... the gradual revelations of "lies and other acts of love" in one North Carolina family offer insights into the complexities of life and love."—*The Greensboro News & Record*

"A touching look into the lifetimes of love, heartbreak, and resilience of a grandmother and her granddaughter, *Lies and Other Acts of Love* offers insight into the complexities of bonds--of family, friends, and everything in between--and the importance of what one does when those bonds are broken. Kristy Woodson Harvey's second book is a feel-good must read that is sure to remind you of the cherished memories and relationships in your own life."—*Deep South Magazine*

Praise for *Dear Carolina*

"Kristy Woodson Harvey weaves a story around characters with rich, complicated lives we all identify with. Harvey's story walks through the life of an ever-changing family and beautifully shows how a family comes to be. Not only by blood, but also by choice."—Jodi Thomas, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Betting the Rainbow*

“*Dear Carolina* is Southern fiction at its best. It shows us that love is not without sacrifice, and there’s little in life that doesn’t go down easier with a spoonful of jam. Beautifully written.”—*Eileen Goudge, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Replacement Wife*

“*Dear Carolina* is like the Southern women within its pages and those who will love this book, sweet as sweet tea on the outside and strong as steel on the inside. Kristy Woodson Harvey is a natural.”—Ann Garvin, author of *On Maggie’s Watch* and *The Dog Year*

“Southern to the bone and full of engaging characters...Kristy Woodson Harvey’s debut novel captures your heart and doesn’t let go; her keen insights into a mother’s love will stay with you long after the last page.”—Kim Boykin, author of *Palmetto Moon*

About the Author

Kristy Woodson Harvey is the author of *Dear Carolina*. She holds a degree in journalism and mass communications from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a master’s in English from East Carolina University. She lives in North Carolina with her husband and son.

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Annabelle

Storm Chasers

My grandmother, Lovey, says that there are two types of people in the world: the kind who flee to the shelters at the first threat of a hurricane, and the kind who wait it out, hovering over their possessions as if their fragile lives offer any protection against a natural mother that can take them out of the world as quickly as she brought them into it.

I come from a long line of the hovering kind.

As I sit across from my grandmother in her stately living room, the dimmed bulbs of the chandeliers reflecting off the scotch that I most certainly will not drink, I laugh as she says, “Well, why wouldn’t I go to the beach? I’ve ridden out every other hurricane of the last half century there. Haven’t blown away yet.”

Her accent, Southern, proper, moneyed and with that particular Eastern North Carolina flair, is one that you rarely hear anymore. And I would listen to it forever. It is the voice in my head, imparting her wisdom, and I know it will remain so for the rest of my life.

She pushes the stylish bangs of her silver hair, cut increasingly shorter as the years have gone, and I can’t help but see that glimmer in her eye, the one of her mother, a grand lady whom I met only a handful of times but whose presence is stamped in my memory like the check endorser at my daddy’s office. It is the same glimmer of my grandmother’s sister, my great-aunt, one of those sturdy forces that, during the Second World War, moved with her war correspondent husband. While the bombs rained down on London every night, she refused to flee or even gather her children into the bomb shelters under the street. Instead, she bathed her small sons, scrubbed their dinner plates, laid her damp dischcloth over the sink and steeled her jaw against the Germans attempting to take her right to parent as usual. She sealed her fate by signing every letter to my great-grandmother, “I’ll write you in the morning.”

My own mom, nearly a foot taller yet lacking those long, thin, graceful features of my grandmother’s,

chimes in, "Mother, that is absolutely ridiculous. You will stay right here. There's nothing you can do if a storm comes, and I'm not going to sit around here wringing my hands that you're floating down the street in the rushing floodwaters."

I smile into my buttery scotch, as my mother has never been one to flee from the storm. At least once a day the city manager she handpicked to advise her on all political dealings will say, Mayor, I suggest you refuse to comment on that matter.

But she, like the women before her, is incapable of turning the other way, of snuggling warmly in the cellar until the tornado passes.

"Have you forgotten who's the mother and who's the child here?" Lovey asks.

It is then that I begin to wonder: Am I a storm chaser too? Would I walk to the market in spite of the shrapnel? Now I know. Sometimes it's best not to ask the questions if you'd rather not learn the answers.

Lovey

The Light

My momma always told me that honesty was the most important thing in life. But I've never understood why people are so hell-bent on honesty. It's not the truth that sets you free. The truth is the thing that destroys lives, that shatters the mirror. The truth is selfish and shameful, and better kept to oneself. In fact, I'm quite sure that the only things that paper-clip any of our lives together are the white lies. They are the defibrillators that bring us back when we were on the brink of succumbing to the light.

As I lie in my four-poster mahogany bed with the giant canopy, the one I made love to my husband in for decades, I raise myself onto my elbows and study his features across the room as the moonbeams stream through the crack in the curtains, pouring into the open, snoring mouth, revealing the secret that the teeth seen in the daylight are only another ruse, that time has taken yet another one of my husband's rights; the confinement to the hospital bed is not the only indignity.

He startles awake and, as so often happens in the middle of the night, turns his head from side to side, almost frantically, searching for me, the one who has been beside him since he was scarcely more than a boy. It is a clear reminder that, though I have always perceived myself as completely dependent on him, the leaning goes both ways. "Lovey," he says, in his almost devastatingly lucid middle-of-the-night voice.

"Yes, my darling."

"Can I get you anything?"

I smile the heartbreak smile of a master who knows she should put the dog down, allow it some peace. But the bile soars at the thought of him being gone from me, and I steel myself once again. "Not a thing, sweetheart. Are you all right?"

"As long as you're here, I'm perfect."

As he settles back down to sleep, to the snoring that is my morning rainfall, I remember the last time he whispered that in my ear, only days before the stroke, as we danced slow and close in the kitchen after a nightcap on the patio.

Short-term memories, I remind myself, not letting my mind wander back to those early years together, to the days we met, to the nights I knew I'd found my true love. Living in the past, I've always thought, is a sign of dementia. Slipping into those old memories, dwelling on the "what was" instead of the "what could be" means that it's almost over. And so I will myself to stay in the here and now, though it becomes harder and harder.

Tomorrow, I remind myself, we have an appointment with that new neurologist. He'll have some answers. He'll have a cure.

And as I relax back into a pile of down pillows, the thought, though I have willed it not to, crosses my mind: The lies that matter most are the ones we tell ourselves.

Annabelle

Fanfare

My Lovey is the one who gave me my name. Annabelle. When she gave birth to my oldest aunt, the first of five daughters, she received Tasha Tudor's A is for Annabelle as a gift. She had dreams of petticoats and pantaloons and parasols and all of those other prissy "p's" that a woman dreams she might lose herself in when she is expecting her first child, those fantasies that can only ensue before one has experienced the realities of spit-up and cloth diapers and sleep deprivation of levels that boggle the mind. It became apparent five daughters later that the Annabelle in the story really was nothing more than a beautiful china doll, a representation of something that didn't exist in her hair-pulling, clothes-stealing, fighting-over-the-bathroom home.

But when I was born, all of that was going to change, thought my grandmother. I was a bit of a miracle baby, the result of a lot of prayer and some rather primitive, cost-prohibitive fertility treatments. So, this time, Lovey had those Tasha Tudor dreams all over again with a granddaughter that could be free from the burden of sibling rivalry. Lovey dressing me in the finest, most impractical fashion and saying, "'A' is for Annabelle, Grandmother's doll," is my earliest childhood memory.

I was telling my husband Ben all of this, lying beside him in our bed at Lovey and D-daddy's beach house.

Instead of responding, he turned his head, smiled and said, "We have to get a boat."

It was the same thing Ben had said to me every single morning of the beach trip, as we woke, the sun bathing wood-paneled walls, its shadow stretching and spreading like a dog after a nap. I turned over and kissed the rippled chest of my—unbelievably—husband.

He was so good-looking, so romantic, so unnaturally calm that I couldn't be ruffled by his only flaw, which is a flaw pretty much anyone would possess: A week with my extended family in my grandparents' oceanfront Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, home is too much for the man to take. Since Lovey, headstrong as ever, had insisted on veering into the storm, we decided we would all go. Mom, Dad, Lovey, D-daddy, Ben, and Mom's four sisters. We had visions of giggling over Pictionary in the candlelight. But, as so often happens, the storm passed right over with little fanfare, and we were left with a gloriously beautiful week of lounging.

I kissed Ben and said, "Take that gig you were offered in Raleigh. Nothing is keeping you here."

He smiled, revealing the dimples that lured me to him in the first place. “Not true. You are keeping me here. I’m afraid if I leave you hanging around the Shoals Club in that bikini one of the frat-boy bartenders will pick you up.” He raised his eyebrows and pulled me in for a kiss that meant he had more than just kissing on his mind.

“So, TL,” Ben said, using the “true love” initials that he had given to me the night we met. “Where do we stand on that boat?”

I swept my hair into a ponytail, my feet thudding on the hardwood floor, gritty with sand. I laughed, gave my husband a quick kiss and said, “Get a little rest. You deserve it.”

I trotted down the bare hardwood steps. I had been coming to this house for so long that, in my mind, I could already see D-daddy sitting in his chair at the head of the table, buttering his toast. It must have been from the early morning that my brain was foggy because, when I got to the landing, where I could see the dining table below, his wheelchair pulled to the end, a uniformed nurse feeding him his cereal and wiping the milk drips with a bib, my breath caught in my throat.

Somehow, in the relaxation of vacation, I had forgotten about the reality of the present.

“Hi, Annie,” my aunt Louise practically sang. She was sipping hot tea, sitting in a cane-back dining chair, her feet propped on a ladder-back one. The mismatched seats, collected from antique auctions over the decades, were one of my favorite things about the house. Louise’s tan skin looked even darker against the raw wood paneling of the wall behind her. She was already in her bikini with a crocheted cover-up over top and, even from a distance, you could tell her body was perfectly sculpted underneath. “It’s just because I never had babies,” Louise would say, brushing aside the fact that, at fifty-three, she could still pull off the look better than most teenagers. She was a yoga instructor through and through, from her body to her soothing voice to her calm demeanor. It was amazing how different five sisters could be.

“Where’s your suit?” she asked, glancing me up and down in my flannel pajamas with the multicolored polka dots. It was not my normal nighttime attire but perfect for the beach. In direct contrast to most older people, Lovey cranked the AC to sixty-five and nearly froze us all to death.

“I just wanted to run down and see what everyone was up to before I changed.”

Lovey strolled in, mug in hand, looking so much like she had since I was a child that I forgot she was in her late-eighties, not the same sixty-year-old woman she had been when I started coming here. I descended those final two stairs and leaned down to kiss Lovey on the cheek. Telescoping out from underneath her bathing suit cover-up were the legs that she said self-tanner made young again. I silently wished for her genes, free from the puckered, rippled skin of old age, as she said, “Get dressed, darling. We’re going to the club. If we don’t get there early, we’ll never get an umbrella on the beach.”

I kissed D-daddy on the cheek, the skin that was once taut on his robust, healthy frame now sagging and tired. I ignored the glassy look in his eyes, the thought that maybe he didn’t know who I was. “Thanks so much for having us, D-daddy,” I said brightly. “We’re having the best time!”

“You’re welcome,” he said, nodding, still not making eye contact with me.

Forty minutes later, Ben in tow, we had managed to get the entire crew out to the beach. Ben was laughing as Lovey said, “Sally, he may be a millionaire now, but I’m still glad you didn’t marry him. I never trusted that boy.”

My aunt Sally, her blond hair held back with bobby pins, raised the eyebrows above her bright blue eyes at me and said, “Momma, I am certainly glad Doug isn’t here to hear you say that.”

“Why shouldn’t I?” Lovey asked, her voice getting high and indignant, showing that spark that was my favorite thing about her. “I would think your husband would be happy to know that I’m glad you married him instead of Kyle Jenkins.”

“Hey,” I said. “Why isn’t Doug here?” Sally was the breadwinner of her family and Doug hadn’t worked in decades, so I knew his job wasn’t the reason he couldn’t come down for the week.

“Oh,” she said. “Well, he just had some things to get done. It was kind of last minute after all.”

“Ohhhh,” Mom chimed in. “Didn’t want to be here with all of us?”

“What?” Dad asked, feigning confusion. “I can’t imagine why this wouldn’t be Doug’s dream vacation.”

I smiled at my dad, even though he couldn’t see me with his shirt over his face, his olive skin already darker from a couple of hours in the sun. He was holding my mom’s hand, and they were as relaxed as I had seen them in months. Mom usually had a phone and an iPad attached to her, ready to attend to municipal business at a moment’s notice. From pampered housewife to full-time city runner must have been a serious leap. But, as anyone who knew her could plainly see, this role was made for her.

Ben patted my hand, and I smiled at him, almost dozing underneath the huge umbrella that now ensconced most of my family.

“Where is that cute waiter?” Lovey said, looking around for anyone in khaki shorts and a white polo with the club’s red insignia.

“You don’t need one of them, Lovey,” Ben said. “You’ve got me now.” He winked at her, squeezed my knee and said, “Anyone want anything?”

I swung my legs over the side of the blue lounge chair and said, “I’ll come with you.”

“Waters all around,” Lovey said. “Forty-six minutes until it’s time for a little noon cocktail.”

Ben and I held hands walking up the sand and then leaned against the weathered teak outdoor bar. He said, looking around, “Doesn’t this place sort of remind you of Dirty Dancing?”

I shrugged. The morning tennis, afternoon swims and late-night band parties did seem a little like a throwback, something that surely didn’t exist in reality anymore. But here it was, parents moving their kids to the beach for the summer for surf lessons and sea turtle camp, forging friendships that would last a lifetime. Maybe it was because it was how I grew up, but it all seemed a little enchanted to me. Down here, even as a kid, there was a sense of freedom and safety that was so hard to find in a world that seemed to be becoming scarier and less predictable by the minute.

“Nobody puts Baby in a corner,” I said, smiling.

“I just can’t imagine staying in a place like this all summer,” Ben said. “Seems like kind of a snobby, unrealistic way to raise your children.”

I felt my forehead wrinkle. I had always figured that I would spend my summers at the beach like my family had, raise my children on this same strip of sand that had raised me. “I guess it isn’t the real world, but I

think it's amazing to get to have this time that's so carefree."

Before I could elaborate, I felt a finger on my shoulder. I turned my head and hoped that my gasp wasn't audible.

I hadn't laid eyes on Holden Culpepper since the night I stormed out of his car more than a year earlier. In that instant, our entire past flashed before me, like the building was collapsing and I knew I was trapped. That completely forgettable face, with the mousy brown hair that was thick but somehow fell short of luscious or beautiful, was peering at me. It was like looking at a man come back from the dead. I couldn't remember the last time I'd even thought about him.

Oddly, the first thing he said to me, before we could even exchange hellos, was "Do you remember the night we met?"

I backed up nearly imperceptibly, afraid of where the conversation was going. But I remembered anyway. I was a freshman and he was a senior when I spotted Holden alone in the corner of a crowded fraternity house, music blaring, strobes flashing and smoke of every imaginable kind mingling through the orgy of dancers.

"That's Holden Culpepper," my big sister in the sorority had whispered, stumbling on grass-stained, five-inch heels. She was one of those girls that bleached her hair so the dark roots always showed through, the kind of girl that you knew would still be smoking a pack a day, stumbling drunk down the sidewalk at forty, while ruminating—loudly—that she hadn't found a husband up to her impossible standards.

"You know, his dad's the Culpepper Fund." Then she leaned in closer and, with her thick breath, said, "Apparently Holden's worth five million dollars already—and he's only twenty-one."

Casey would have been going after Holden herself, but she was already taken. She was dating her fraternity-president cocaine dealer, Jack, who was tall, dark, handsome and one hell of a dancer. "I like a self-made man," she used to say. I could always picture Jack's face on the front page of a newspaper, when he was all grown up, a captain of enterprise with a magazine-spread family, being dragged away to white-collar prison by his perky bow tie.

Holden, on the other hand, was precisely the kind of man a mother dreams her daughter will marry. Type A, straitlaced and possessing the kind of trust fund that generally only appears in *Town & Country*. And he had been what I wanted. When I had been that superficial college girl, enamored of money and appearances, Holden was exactly the kind of catch I was looking to hook.

Coming out of my memory and back into the present, I squinted at Holden, realizing his question was still hanging there, the last summer item on the sale rack. "Sure." I shrugged.

"Well, you were right," he said.

"Right about what?"

"White lighters."

I smiled in spite of myself. I had walked to Holden that night and leaned beside him on a nonfunctioning radiator. I crossed my arms, looked down at his hands and sparked my lighter to the end of the cigarette hanging between his lips. He smiled out of one corner of his mouth and said, "Isn't that supposed to go the other way around?"

I had shrugged and leaned in close enough that my bare shoulder brushed his blue-and-white-checked one.

He was wearing my favorite combination: neat khaki shorts with an oxford, Gucci loafers and a monogrammed belt buckle.

“I guess it should,” I said. “But I looked over and saw what you were about to do, and I didn’t want you to be cursed.”

He looked confused, which made me notice a small scar over his eyebrow that lent his face something distinct. “White lighters,” I said. “Don’t you know they’re bad luck?”

I had thought I was completely in control of that conversation until the moment he stunned me, saying, “White lighter or no, seems like this night has been pretty lucky for me.”

“So why,” I asked Holden, snapping back into the clear sunshine of the present, “was that white lighter bad luck for you?”

“I didn’t catch a single fish today.” He smiled nervously.

I couldn’t decide if I was more pleased or confused by this conversation. I would have imagined that Holden hated me, that he wished we’d never even met. But here he was, pleasant and joking, remembering with a smile what had transpired between us.

“Thanks for getting—well, you know—back to my mom.”

I nodded. “Right,” I stammered. “Well, it wasn’t right to keep the ring.”

The ring—the five-carat art deco family heirloom—was what Holden gave me, down on one knee at Jost Van Dyke, in the midst of one of the most famous New Year’s parties in the world. The glow of the lights from hundreds of boats crammed into the tiny harbor was almost as intoxicating as the rum punch or Kenny Chesney’s sweet voice on stage—an impromptu surprise from the star who was just a partygoer like everyone else that night.

It was a glorious beginning to what turned out to be a tepid engagement. Squinting at Ben’s back as he ordered, I realized that Holden was talking again, and, already, I wasn’t listening to what he was saying.

It was such a reminder of life with Holden after he had graduated from MBA school and the party was officially over. Every sentence out of his mouth started and ended with something about work or the market or a pain-in-the-ass client. I hadn’t seen him in more than a year, and it seemed like pretty much nothing had changed. When he started ditching our plans and all of our friends because he was working almost every weekend, that was the last straw. I had begun to feel as though the dress had appeared much more glamorous on the runway than in real life. Or maybe it just didn’t look as good on me as it did on the model.

That last night, heading down a Charlotte, North Carolina, highway on our way to his parents’ for dinner, I had spent my day at inane cake tastings, dress fittings, florist appointments and, in short, had had just about enough. As he blabbed on and on and on about mutual fund performance, I said, “Your cruise control isn’t working.”

“Of course it’s working,” he said. “It’s a brand-new Range Rover, for God’s sake. You just hit this button.” He leaned over me to instruct.

“I know how to do it,” I snapped. “I’ve driven your car a hundred times.”

“Well then hit the brake and try again.”

I hit the brake, accelerated, and punched the button. The cruise control snapped into place, and, just as quickly as it had set, went loose again. I glared at Holden to show him my annoyance.

“You must have hit the brake,” Holden said.

I don’t know what it was about that exact moment that made me completely lose control. But the real issues in a couple’s relationship are rarely the ones they fight about. It’s the insignificant arguments masking the problems, piling on top of each other, gathering like raindrops that, combined together, finally cause the dam to burst. I zoomed toward the exit, flipped around on the overpass, and, before he even knew what was happening, was back at my house, slamming the door behind me. Holden rolled the window down.

“Annabelle, what in the hell is the matter with you?”

I spun around and hissed back at him, “I didn’t hit the damn brake.”

That was pretty much the last thing I had said to Holden. Until now. “Well I’m glad to hear that work is going well,” I said.

Ben turned around about that time, his hands full of six drinks. “Hey, babe,” he said, furrowing his brow in concentration, trying to juggle all those plastic cups, completely unaware that he was about to come face-to-face with my ex-fiancé for the first time.

“Holden,” I said, “this is Ben.”

Ben gestured toward the cups. “I would shake your hand but—”

Before he could finish the sentence, Holden took a swing right at Ben’s face. As Ben lost his balance, all six of those drinks went straight up in the air, raining down on the patrons of the crowded bar. I heard the general unhappy rumble as I felt my eyes widening and my hand come to my mouth. I glanced over my shoulder, surveying the damage, and saw Lovey laughing like she was reconnecting with old friends. I wanted to be horrified and indignant, but, when I saw Lovey laughing, that incredible, joyous laugh that takes over her entire body, I started too.

Ben shrugged his shoulders—he wasn’t the kind of person to get ruffled easily—and said, “Dude?”

“You could at least have the decency to fall down,” Holden shouted, drawing every eye in the place toward him.

I wanted to walk the twenty feet to the edge of the sparkling pool, dive in, and stay underwater until everyone had gone home for the night and had enough to drink that they had forgotten about this scene.

“I’m sorry?” Ben asked. “Did I do something to you? Do I know you?”

“You stole my wife, you prick.”

Holden was quieter now, but still seething with anger like I’d never seen him. That was what I had been looking for when we were together. A little emotion. I wanted someone to get worked up over me—at least as much as he got worked up over the prime rate.

“I think you must be confused,” Ben said. “I’m married to Annabelle.”

Holden looked at me incredulously. “Yeah. I’m aware of that,” he said. “And I’m supposed to be married to Annabelle.” I’m sure Holden was wondering how our relationship could have meant so little to me that my

husband didn't even recognize his name. Truth be told, I was wondering the same thing.

I glanced at Lovey out of the corner of my eye, now recounting the story to Mom, Lauren, Sally, Martha and Louise. They all started laughing, and, though I didn't want to, I joined them. I saw Holden walk to my grandmother and kiss her on the cheek. "Sorry, Lovey," I barely heard him mumble under his breath.

"It's all right, darling," she replied. "She's worth fighting for."

"It is not all right," my mother said through gritted teeth. I knew she would be mortified over the public humiliation. At least we were out of town, where the effect on her latest polls would be minimal.

"Boys will be boys," Lovey said.

"I'm so sorry," I said to Ben as Holden walked away. I put my hand up tenderly to his red cheek.

The bartender handed Ben a cup of ice, and he held it to his swollen eye. I was holding my breath, waiting for Ben to say something, knowing he must be angry. But then I started laughing all over again. "This would never have happened," Ben said, smiling as best he could with his frozen cheek, "if you had let me get a boat."

I rolled my eyes and felt myself exhale. He wasn't mad. Lovey walked over and said, "Well, Ben, I guess you and Dan have more in common than we could have imagined."

"How's that?" he asked.

"You are both willing to fight for the woman you love." She winked at him.

He smiled and said, "I was trying to keep it together so I didn't embarrass you. But if I'd known that's how you felt about it, I would have given him a fight that he'd never forget."

I leaned into Ben's side and said, "There's nothing to fight about. You've already won."

I looked at Lovey, expecting her to say something. But she had that faraway look in her eye, the one that was becoming increasingly familiar. I understood her reasons—no matter how silly they might have seemed to others—for not wanting to dwell on the past. But, even still, though she might not have talked about her memories, I could tell that now, more and more, Lovey was with us in body. But her mind was wandering to a happier time, with D-daddy, when life was simpler and the world was a little less of a fight.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jonathan Nelson:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Yep, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open or perhaps read a book entitled Lies and Other Acts of Love? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have some other opinion?

Allison Carson:

What do you in relation to book? It is not important to you? Or just adding material when you require something to explain what your own problem? How about your time? Or are you busy individual? If you don't have spare time to accomplish others business, it is give you a sense of feeling bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. They have to answer that question due to the fact just their can do that will. It said that about e-book. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is proper. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this specific Lies and Other Acts of Love to read.

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