

The Lie

**Written by
Dillon Belmonte**

Copyright (c) 2025

**Draft
information**

**Contact
information**

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT — BEDROOM — LATE MORNING

A battered smartphone rattles against the cluttered nightstand.

PETER ANGEL (22), disheveled and weary, cracks open his eyes and groans. He blindly fumbles for the phone and answers.

PETER

(sleepy)

Hey, Mom...

MOM

Peter! Oh honey, did I wake you? I just wanted to tell you I was talking to Mrs. Klatch from church. I told her all about my brilliant son — how you're top of your class, making me proud every day.

Peter's eyes snap open. He glances at the clock: 11:45. Class started fifteen minutes ago.

PETER

(faking alertness)

Oh yeah? Wow. Thanks, Mom. Yeah... I've been up for a while, just getting ready. Busy day, you know.

MOM

I always knew you'd be the first Angel to make something of himself. You're making me proud, sweetie. I post on Facebook all day about you, "My Peter's got his whole future figured out." All my girlfriends love it!

Peter scrambles, yanking a wrinkled shirt over his head, trying to stuff a foot into a shoe while balancing the phone.

PETER

Yeah, it's been a lot, but I'm doing my best. Just... trying to stay on top of it, you know?

MOM

(Surprised)

Stay on top? Honey, you're ahead. That's what your professors told you last week, right?

(MORE)

MOM (cont'd)
You didn't forget to send me that
grade report, did you?

Peter freezes. His mind races.

PETER
Uh... no, I've just been swamped.
I'll send it tonight.

Mom hums, content.

MOM
I'm so proud, Peter. I brag so much,
sometimes I think the dog's the only
one left who doesn't know.

Peter's eyes flick across the room — his desk is covered in
crumpled failed exams. He forces a smile into his voice.

PETER
Love you, Mom. I gotta go!

MOM
Okay, sweetheart! Talk to you after
class!

Peter hangs up, tossing his phone onto the bed. He scans the
room for his keys, panic mounting as he overturns piles of
clothes and books.

Finally, he digs through his backpack — the keys were there
all along.

PETER
(Sarcastic)
Of course.

EXT. STREET - LATE MORNING

Peter sprints out of his apartment, backpack swinging
wildly. The BUS approaches the stop across the busy street.

Peter waits for an opening, bouncing with impatience. Cars
zip past — no break.

A break in traffic — Peter bolts, narrowly avoiding getting
clipped by a car. The bus rolls away just as he reaches the
curb.

The bus pulls away.

He stands there, breathless and defeated.

EXT. SIDEWALK — MOMENTS LATER

Peter power-walks down the street, dodging students, weaving past coffee shops and fast-food joints.

Suddenly, his phone rings again. MOM.

Reluctantly, he answers.

PETER

Hey, Mom.

MOM

You sound out of breath. Are you rushing to class? You didn't oversleep, did you? That's very unlike you, Peter.

PETER

(stumbling for words)

No, just... walking fast. Almost there.

MOM

I hope so. You know how proud I am. I tell everybody you're the first Angel with a bright future. Peter, are you sure everything's okay?

Peter steps off the curb — his ankle rolls violently. He drops his phone and collapses onto the sidewalk with a sharp gasp.

PETER

(gritting teeth)

I'm fine, Mom. Just... dropped my phone! I'll call you later, okay?

MOM

Peter, you sound off. Are you hurt? What's going on?

PETER

I'm fine. Just gotta go. Love you, Mom.

He hangs up, biting back pain as he stands and limps forward.

INT. COLLEGE HALLWAY — LATE MORNING

Peter forces himself up the stairwell, sweating, pale, grimacing. He pushes open the classroom door.

INT. CLASSROOM — MOMENTS LATER

The room falls silent as Peter stumbles in, his ankle twisted, dirt on his clothes, face streaked with pain.

He limps awkwardly to his seat, bumping knees and bags, finally collapsing into his chair.

DAN PERKINS (22), sharp but kind, leans over.

DAN

Dude... what the hell happened to you?

PETER

Everything. I overslept, missed the bus, twisted my ankle, almost got hit by a car... and my mom keeps calling. She thinks I'm still on top of everything.

DAN

Peter, you know she's not stupid, right? She probably already knows. You can't hide it forever, man.

Peter stares at the floor, his world crumbling.

DAN (cont'd)

You've gotta tell her the truth. Before she finds out the hard way.

Peter says nothing as the Professor dismisses class. Dan lingers until Peter finally moves.

They walk out together.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT — EARLY AFTERNOON

Peter limps through the door, tossing his bag aside, collapsing onto the couch. He breathes deep, trying to collect himself. A hard KNOCK at the door.

He limps over, opens it — and standing there is ANNIE, casserole dish in hand.

The look on her face shifts from cheerful to deeply concerned the moment she sees him.

MOM

(concerned)

Peter... oh my God, what happened? Look at you.

She rushes inside, setting the dish down, circling him.

MOM (cont'd)

Your face is pale, your ankle's twice
the size it should be — Peter, are
you hurt? Were you in an accident?

Peter's walls begin to crumble, his voice small. He
collapses on the couch

PETER

I... I'm fine. I just—

MOM

Don't you dare say "fine." You look
like hell. I knew something was off
on the phone. You've been lying to
me, haven't you?

Peter looks down, the silence an answer all by itself.

PETER

I... I've been lying, Mom. About all
of it.

Annie freezes. The shock on her face quickly hardens into
raw fury.

MOM

You lied to me? After everything I've
done for you? After all the nights I
stayed up praying for you, defending
you, telling everyone how proud I
was — and you just let me make a fool
of myself?

PETER

I didn't want you to be disappointed.

MOM

Disappointed? I am disappointed. More
than you'll ever know. You lied to
me. You lied to yourself. What were
you so afraid of? That I'd stop
loving you? Is that it?

MOM (cont'd)

I knew it. I knew something wasn't
right. The way you paused on the
phone. The way you never sent me that
grade report — always "too busy,"
always "next time."

Her voice rises, hurt turning into anger.

MOM (cont'd)

And your stories never added up! One week you said you had a paper due, the next you told me it got pushed back – but you couldn't even tell me the topic! And those late-night calls, always too tired to talk, always "studying." You've been stringing me along for months!

Peter lowers his head, swallowing the lump in his throat.

MOM (cont'd)

I've been bragging about you to everyone like some blind fool. Defending you every time your aunt asked questions, making excuses for why you didn't come home on breaks. And you just sat there and let me.

Her voice finally softens, just a crack.

MOM (cont'd)

You lied to me, Peter. And the saddest part is... I think I always knew.

Peter wipes at his face, the tears falling freely.

PETER

I just didn't want to fail you. I thought if I kept lying, maybe I'd have time to fix it. But I couldn't. I couldn't fix it.

PETER (cont'd)

I didn't know how to stop, Mom. Once I started lying... it felt easier than telling you the truth. Every time I wanted to say something,

PETER (cont'd)

I pictured how proud you looked – how happy you sounded when you talked about me, and I couldn't take that away from you. I thought if I worked harder, I could fix it before you ever found out. But I just kept falling behind. And the lies just kept stacking up.

His voice cracks, defeated.

PETER (cont'd)
I didn't want you to think I was a failure.

Annie stands there, arms crossed, chest rising and falling with deep breaths. Her voice softens – just slightly.

MOM
Peter... I've never needed you to be perfect. I never cared about grades or awards – I cared about you. I've loved you since the minute I held you, and nothing you do could change that.

She pauses, her voice breaking slightly.

She steps closer, placing a hand gently on his shoulder.

MOM (cont'd)
But you lying to me – that's what broke my heart. Not the grades, not the classes... the lying. If you'd just told me months ago, I wouldn't have been mad. I would've understood. I would've been there, like I've always been.

MOM (cont'd)
I don't need a perfect son. I need an honest one.

She sits next to him on the couch and puts her arm around him.

PETER
I just... I wanted you to be proud... I didn't want you to look at me the way I thought you would.

MOM
You've always been enough for me, Peter. Even when you mess up. Even when you fall short. I don't care about some report card. I care about you. I wish you had trusted me with the truth instead of carrying all this alone.

PETER
I didn't know how to stop lying. I got so deep into it... I felt like the truth would upset you more than the lies.

MOM

You're my son. All I wanted was for you to be honest, not perfect. I'd rather hear the worst truth than the prettiest lie. Remember that. Always.

Peter nods, his throat too tight for words.

MOM (cont'd)

Next time, you tell me the truth the second it gets hard. Not when you've got nothing left.

She hugs him again, more gently this time.

MOM (cont'd)

We'll figure this out. Together.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT — LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The room is quiet. Peter sits slumped on the couch, ankle wrapped. Annie is nearby, her coat draped over the chair, holding her phone in her hands.

She glances at Peter, who is finally resting.

Her eyes widen and she opens her Facebook app.

MOM

Well... today was one for the books. My son finally admitted he's been lying about his grades, and let me tell you, it broke my heart. But I'm proud of him for telling me the truth — even if it was months too late.

She glances at Peter, who notices her typing.

PETER

(half-joking)

You're not seriously posting about this, are you?

Mom, unfazed, keeps typing.

MOM

People ought to know the truth. Besides, you know me — if it happens, it ends up on Facebook.

She taps Post with a satisfied smile, while Peter slumps deeper into the couch, shaking his head.

PETER

You're unbelievable.

MOM

And you're still my son. Even if all
my girlfriends know your business
now.

They share a small, honest laugh – the first real one all
day.