

***These Shining Lives* by Melanie Marnich**

CHARLOTTE

Stop it, Katie! Just shut up! You can't make it better, okay?! So, stop trying with your silly optimism. It's ridiculous. Grow up. They did this to us! They did this and they knew it! They threw us away for a few watches! That's what we're worth! That's what you're worth! So, spare me the "maybe this" and "maybe that," okay?! It does me no good. I'm— I'm so sorry. I just don't— I don't have anyone else to— Who's gonna take care of my mom, Katie? Who's gonna take care of her? Okay. That's that, then. I better get home. You, too. Big day today, huh? I'll see you later.