

William Gardener

Act I, Scene 2 (A) — Two years later

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Sometimes you think you could almost kill your brother Charles. The past two years have been terrible for Barbara and Charles, and your brother is to blame for all of it. While it still hurts you that she chose your brother over you, it hurts you even more that he's utterly destroying every chance Barbara has for happiness.

While you have finished up at law school, the two of them have been struggling in every sense: emotionally, financially, romantically... You hear about all of it from Barbara when she calls you in tears after Charles has vanished again. It used to be only a few times a month, then once a week. Now it is a couple of times a week. You can't stand how much he is hurting her and you wish there was something, anything, for you to do about it.

While you're starting to make some real money in your career, Charles can barely hold down a job as an English teacher at a high school. He wants to quit even that to gamble on a job in theater. He drinks. He gambles. He vanished for a week last summer. And the worst of it is that you're convinced there is another woman.

You saw the two of them together last week, just talking. But you've seen that look in your brother's eyes before. He used to look at Barbara that way. The woman apparently both works at the high school and is involved in the theater with Charles. That he would do this to Barbara is the worst blow imaginable.

You plan to confront Charles about it tonight, quietly if you can. He needs to shape up and treat Barbara the way she needs to be treated. She needs someone who actually loves her enough to be there for her and put her needs before his own. And if he won't deal with it, you'll take what you've seen right to Barbara. She has a right to know.