

Setting

Act II, Scene 2 (BGL) — Eight years later

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This year, the garden party is celebrating Stephanie's 17th birthday, but all is not well in the Gardener family. Stephanie has been caught driving drunk and her court date is next week. While this is the first time she has been caught, everyone knows it's not the first time she has been off drinking. Barbara is concerned about her behavior.

William has strong connections, and with a little pushing, he could get the case put in front of a lenient judge, and either get her off entirely, or get her off with a slap on the wrist. He has certainly done it for Charles in the past. At the same time, does Barbara really want to turn to him for help when he can barely be a father to his daughter normally? Even if he will help, is it a good idea to get Stephanie off the hook for this? On the other hand, maybe if William would show he cared for her a little more, she wouldn't be acting out like this.

If Stephanie does get convicted, she will lose her license until she's 18. She has an after school job working at a restaurant that she needs the car to get to. Barbara has been very busy with at work, and could not drive her. If Stephanie gets convicted, she would probably have to quit her job. Barbara encouraged her to get a job in the first place to learn some responsibility, and the money has really helped out. If she has to quit over this it might be a good lesson, but it would also leave Barbara and Stephanie on even more tenuous financial footing.

Charles Gardener

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Poor Stephanie. You know exactly what she's going through. You certainly got in trouble enough as a teenager. Adolescence is hard, especially without a father figure in your life. While William has always provided for Barbara and Stephanie, he hasn't really spent a lot of time with his daughter. Even though William has been so absent, Barbara has never let you help out with Stephanie the way you would have liked.

After William's neglect led to this, the least he can do is help his daughter out of her legal trouble. He's a well-connected lawyer, and he's certainly helped you out of jams before. It's his abandonment that led her to this anyway.

Maybe you can offer to help out more in the future. Maybe you really need to spend more time with Stephanie, regardless of what Barbara thinks. If William won't be a father to his own daughter maybe you can help out. You've been there; you know a lot of what she's going through. You should take her aside today and really talk with her about what's going on in her life.