

William Gardener

Act II, Scene 1 (BGI) — Four years later

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There has never been a time where you felt as down and out as you do right now. Your career was the one great success in your life... and the firm you spent your entire adult life with has folded. It folded because of some bad decisions by senior partners and a lot of internal politicking gone awry. It wasn't your fault, but everyone at the firm that dedicated themselves to the place paid the price for it.

You lost Barbara years ago... but you always prided yourself on still being able to provide something for Stephanie. Tonight is your daughter's 9th birthday and for the first time you had to think twice about getting her all the gifts she wanted. You've cashed in a good portion of your investments already to keep you floating while you try to find a place at another firm. With the old firm folding though, you're likely to have to start some ways back from your old position wherever you wind up. You also have no idea how long it is going to be before you do find a new position.

Barbara and Stephanie are struggling to get by since the amount of child support you were paying dropped. That is not something you ever wanted to happen, but it has. Barbara has put on only the thinnest veneer of sympathy for what you're going through; at the end of the day she wants your money. If it wasn't for Stephanie, you'd have a lot less tolerance for Barbara. As it is, you're doing what you can.

Surprisingly, your brother Charles has had a string of good luck lately just as bad luck came your way. He's got a minor role in a television show being shot locally. While he's still not making the kind of money you used to bring in, he also doesn't have the more expensive life that you are currently locked into. The mortgage payments alone on your house are more than he is used to spending. And you know he's just waiting to show off that he's succeeding while you're failing. You expect he may well offer to help Barbara and Stephanie out now just to rub it in your face.