

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.

William Gardener

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While everything between you and Barbara is broken at this point, you have always tried to look out for your daughter, Stephanie, whenever you could. This latest mess is a really big one though and you really need to make sure both Stephanie and Barbara understand that.

You've already made a few calls and you have it set up so that Stephanie can get off the hook for this DUI at her court date next week. All that you need is to make sure that Barbara and Stephanie will go along with it. At the same time, you need to really make it clear that you can't do this indefinitely and that you won't always be able to pull the strings that are needed if this becomes a pattern. That's all the more so since you got your position at a new firm a few years back.

Frankly, you're also worried for Stephanie. You know that you haven't always been there for her as much as you'd like, in no small part because of how difficult things are between you and Barbara. That said, she clearly needs a father right now, someone who will help set her straight and make sure she steers clear of this kind of danger in the future.