

Setting

Act I, Scene 2 (B) — Two years later

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Barbara and William Gardener have been married for almost two years now. William graduated from law school this spring and has just started a good entry level job at a large firm. They bought a house, and are starting to plan a family. On the surface, they are the perfect young couple, but underneath, something is missing. Despite William's gentle and caring ways, Barbara is lonely. She has been spending more of her time with friends, and less time with William. He's been so busy with work, but that isn't all. He never moved her in the way Charles did.

As she has been looking for something more, Charles has been right there. Charles has not found anyone else, and he's still head over heels for Barbara. He tries very hard to support his brother, but when Barbara comes to him, he can't help but think that it should have been him instead. The passion between them is still palpable to everyone except William. Even after the shocking proposal two years ago, William can't really believe his little brother would ever hurt him like that.

Meanwhile, Virginia has been watching all of this with great concern. She sees the same patterns in Barbara and William's marriage that happened in her marriage to Frederick, and she knows how lonely that can be. At the same time, she is very worried about the interaction between Barbara and Charles. The marriage vows are sacred; a little loneliness does not change that. She has been looking for ways to coax William and Barbara back together. William loves her so much. If only she could convince him to show it a little more. He's so quiet, so responsible. Barbara needs to truly know how important she is to William. Virginia has been trying to encourage William to be a little more like his brother, without losing his stability.

Barbara Gardener

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There can't be another quiet night tonight. There just can't be. You are still young and alive, not an old lady. You married William for his stability, but that alone doesn't make a marriage. You understand that now.

The past two years have been hard, and it keeps getting harder. With every sedate evening and perfectly arranged day, your tolerance for William diminishes. And he seems completely blind to it all, no matter how many times you have pushed to liven things up. He's too tired or just isn't interested.

First he was busy with law school, and now he's working all day every day. The house is nice, but it is empty and so is your life. Everything looks perfect, but you need something more than a nice facade on your life. You are worried that if something doesn't change soon, the only way you'll ever have more is with someone other than William. There has been some talk of a child, but you just don't know if you are ready for that, especially with the emptiness in your life with William.

You look at the life Charles is living and you can't help but wonder how it could have been with the two of you. He's so vibrant and alive in every way that William isn't. You've been to see the last few plays he has been in at the local theater. Afterwards, you've joined him and some of the members of the cast for drinks. It feels so good to be alive for awhile, and you wish that feeling could last. You're not sure you've ever really fallen out of love with Charles, and from the way he looks at you, you're sure he feels the same way.

The passion between you and Charles is still there, just beneath the surface. It has been building like a volcano over the past few months. The thought of hurting William appalls you, but you just aren't sure you can keep going on this way. You need to break through to William that you need more in your life. Something that you hope you can get from your husband, so that you don't have to keep fighting against turning to his brother for it.

This better not be another quiet night. If it is, you don't think you can keep going on without getting some of what you need somewhere else.