

Setting

Act I, Scene 4 (BG) — Five and a half years later

~

This year, as for the past four years, the garden party has been shifted from Barbara's birthday to that of her five-year old daughter Stephanie. After William and Barbara divorced, Barbara has struggled as a single mother. William has contributed financially to Stephanie's upbringing, but rarely visits. Since he made partner in the law firm, he hasn't had enough time to help out. Besides, he still finds it hard to see Barbara like this, but he knows that he can't go back.

Charles has remained connected, at least as connected as Charles ever was. He has drifted in and out of Barbara and Stephanie's lives. They have been involved on and off, but he is such a destabilizing influence that Barbara never wanted him to be too present in Stephanie's life. She always felt that letting Charles become a father-figure to Stephanie would be worse than no father. With his flair for the dramatic, he could break her heart almost by accident. She's young and grows attached too easily. How could she handle it if he suddenly disappeared? Still, they reconnect occasionally, and Stephanie is quite fond of him.

Recently, however, a new issue has come up. Barbara's mother, Virginia, has had a stroke, and can no longer manage on her own. Barbara needs to decide whether to care for her in her home or send her to a nursing home. Without additional help, she probably can't afford the cost of a nursing home. However, Barbara is very busy chasing after Stephanie, and the extra work of caring for an ailing parent would be difficult. She has been considering going back to college to become a teacher once Stephanie is in school, and caring for Virginia might make that impossible. At the same time, tuition might make the costs of a nursing home even more prohibitive.

Barbara Vela

Act I, Scene 4 (BG) — Five and a half years later

~

You had so many dreams at one point. You wish you knew what happened to them. You never imagined that you'd wind up a divorced, single mother, working a dead end job, while also trying to support an ailing mother. Life can be bitterly cruel.

William provides some financial support for Stephanie. If it wasn't for that, you really don't know what you would do. Still, it isn't enough now that Virginia can't help with Stephanie during the time you need to work. You're going to have to ask William to either fork over some more money for day care or spend some of his precious time with his own daughter. His career is so important to him, though, that you can't imagine he'll choose the latter. Probably for the best anyway.

You're neck-deep in forms to help cover some of the costs associated with Virginia's medical care now. She was living with you and Stephanie before the stroke, but since then, everything has just spiraled out of control. As much as you hate to do so, you don't have any choice but to put her in a nursing home. She isn't doing well enough to get by on her own while you're working and you have to spend almost as much time helping her as helping Stephanie while you're home. You have no clue how you'll afford it, but you don't have a choice.

Charles... you wish you knew what to do about Charles. It is clear to you now that he cares for you more than William ever did. Hell, he even cares more for his niece, Stephanie, than does William. He'd love to help out, but you don't trust him and you wouldn't trust yourself around him. The last thing your life needs is more complications, and Charles is one big complication.