

Setting

Act I, Scene 3 (ACF) — Two years later

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Barbara's marriage to Charles is well and truly on the rocks this time. The question isn't simply whether the marriage will survive long term. The big question is: will their marriage even survive tonight's party?

Barbara's affair with William ended a month ago at William's prodding. Barbara has decided it was a mistake and moved on, blaming her indiscretion on Charles' own bad behavior. William, however, has been carrying guilt for the affair ever since. He feels that this has been going on too long and he can't bear the secret of his betrayal of his brother, no matter what Charles himself has done. Tonight he plans to confess and beg Charles' forgiveness.

Meanwhile, after the end of the affair, Barbara has been wondering more and more whether she made the right decision. She's pregnant, and, not only is she not entirely sure whose child it is, she's not sure which she would prefer. While she was in the affair with William, she could see the stability that she had given up. Now that it's over, she's left without a buffer against the tumult of her marriage. She hasn't yet told anyone she's pregnant. If she tells Charles that she's pregnant with his child, he'll almost certainly forgive her any trespass. On the other hand, if she can convince William it's his, maybe she could leave Charles and marry William - if William would even have her after the past few months.

Meanwhile, Charles got a new job teaching theater at the local college. However, with Barbara so upset, Charles has become ever more volatile. He doesn't understand what's going on with her, and he can't fix it, which just makes him angry and frustrated. All he wants is to resolve things, but sometimes he thinks it's not even worth it anymore. He feels like he doesn't even know his own wife, and doesn't know what to do.

Virginia is watching this all from the sidelines with tears in her eyes. She doesn't know for sure about the affair, but she is hoping desperately that Barbara and Charles can resolve their issues. Will their marriage survive all the betrayals?

Virginia Vela

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Your daughter's marriage is falling apart, and sometimes you think you're more upset about it than she is. She and Charles have been fighting constantly. The past month, things seem to have gotten even worse. You don't know what happened, but Barbara has just snapped. You used to blame it all on Charles, but right now he seems desperate to make things work, and she won't even listen to him.

You're worried that Charles and Barbara are going to divorce, but you're even more worried that they're not going to do it until too late. Barbara and Charles both want children, and if it wasn't for all this fighting, now would be the time. Charles just got a good job at the local college, teaching theater: exactly the sort of work he's always wanted. They're settling down, this could help smooth things out.

Right now, the thing that you're most worried about is that they'll try to patch things up, have a child, and then wind up divorcing anyway. If they're going to get divorced, they should do so now, before there are any children in the picture. It may be too late for the marriage (though you hope it's not), but it's not too late to deal with this before there are children to be hurt by it.