

# *Setting*

## **Act II, Scene 4 (AHJMP) — Fifteen years later**

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Stephanie and Zach Bloom are doing fairly well. They have two children; Jessica, age 10, and Michael, age 7. They've had their financial struggles, but they have managed to get by. Since Michael started school, Stephanie has been taking night classes to get a bookkeeping certificate. Zach's boss wants to retire soon, and has been talking to Zach about arranging for him to take over the garage where he works.

Things have not been going as well for Charles and Barbara. A few years back, Barbara was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. This year she had to quit her job, and caring for her has been taking more and more of Charles' time. Money has been very tight since Barbara stopped working, and Barbara and Charles are fighting about it yet again. Things are made even worse by the fact that Charles can't leave: Barbara can't make do without him, even for a few days.

Since Charles and Barbara refused to accept Zach twelve years ago, Stephanie's relationship with her parents has been very strained. Last year, Barbara reached out to her daughter. With her failing health, she wanted to mend fences. Since then, Stephanie has been talking more with her parents, and she and Barbara have begun to rebuild their relationship.

Stephanie and Zach have been discussing whether or not to help out Charles and Barbara, and if so, how to do so. Stephanie is still very angry at her parents for their rejection of Zach, but Zach worries that if she doesn't help, and her parents continue to suffer, Stephanie will regret it. After watching her mother struggle to care for Virginia, she doesn't want to take on that sort of responsibility. At the same time, the family doesn't have a lot of extra money to go around. They could possibly pay for someone to come in and help out Barbara one or two days a week, but money would be really tight. Stephanie could try to get over to pitch in a few days a week, but she's already very busy, between work, taking care of her kids, and her own school work. At the same time, if she doesn't help in some way, she's not sure how long her father can keep going.

Will Stephanie and Zach help at all? If so, will Stephanie devote time to caring for her mother, or will she simply pay for help and be done with it? Can Barbara and Stephanie mend their broken relationship this late in the game?

# *Zachary Bloom*

**Act II, Scene 4 (AHJMP) — Fifteen years later**

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Your life with Stephanie has been a complex, but wonderful one. The two of you have both wrestled with so much in your past, but have found strength together. You now have two amazing children, stable employment, and a comfortable home. Yes, it has been a struggle, but you've made it here together.

Your own parents both died when you were younger and you've never had the chance to be close to Barbara and Charles. The two of them pushed you and Stephanie away when your engagement was announced and have only tried to build a real relationship in the past couple of years when things started going downhill for themselves.

These days, your primary concern has to be your own family: Stephanie and your two children. Things are only going okay for you at present, and it isn't as though either of you have a lot of time or money. However, if Stephanie really wants to help out, you'll make some accommodations. You know what it is like to lose your parents and you're worried that if Stephanie doesn't do something to help out now, even if it is limited, she may regret it.