

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.

Charles Gardener

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It's been two years since Barbara turned you down and decided to marry your brother, and you still can't get her out of your head. It hasn't been easy, staying close to them all this time, especially watching Barbara suffer. Women need attention, passion, love. All William can offer is a perfectly planned life. He does love her, but you wouldn't know it from the way he acts. She's bored out of her mind with him.

It would have been different if she had married you. You know it wouldn't have been a fairy tale, there would have been some problems, of course, but she wouldn't be wasting away like this. Maybe there's still time to change things. Maybe it's not too late.

You couldn't really stand to do that to your brother. He's done so much for you over the years. At the same time, Barbara has been turning to you more and more often. Just for little things: help with something while he's at work, going for a walk with her, picking up something at the store. But you still see the way she looks at you. The passion in her eyes has never changed. Every time you see her when William isn't there, you dream about carrying her away. Maybe not forever, maybe you can't have that at this point, but just a few hours with her. Your brother would never need to know.

You know she's been thinking about it too. The way she'll let her fingers brush yours. The way she looks at you when she thinks no one's looking. You miss her touch, and you can't stand to see her so lonely. Who knows, you might really be helping your brother. Surely she'll leave him if it goes on like this. Maybe seeing you on the side would keep her from leaving him.

Oh, that's just silly and you know it. You just can't stand seeing her all the time and having to be so careful. You miss her so much.