

# *Setting*

## **Act II, Scene 1 (ADEHJ) — Four years later**

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Since Virginia moved in with Barbara and Charles, the financial issues that they faced have gone from bad to worse. They were having a hard time paying rent, but then the medical bills leading up to Virginia's death put them further into debt, and her funeral strained their already tenuous situation to the breaking point. Barbara is still considering applying to college, but she doesn't have the money for tuition. They have been having a hard time just paying for rent and groceries. Charles' job at the college doesn't pay very well, and their 9-year old daughter Stephanie brings her own expenses.

Last week, things got even worse. Frustrated by the issues at home, Charles took off for a few days. He spent most of that time playing cards and drinking, and he lost more money than they can afford. If they don't get some extra help from somewhere, they will be risking eviction. Barbara has been alternating between yelling at Charles and crying. Neither of them know what to do, or where to go from here. Barbara has considered trying to find work, but she has no marketable skills and a young daughter to care for. Meanwhile, Charles has been working up his courage to ask William for a loan. William still hasn't forgiven Charles for all the heartache he caused Barbara, and Charles doesn't want to humiliate himself in front of his brother again.

Meanwhile, William isn't sure whether to volunteer to help. He's doing well on his own, but he tries to be responsible and save. He's helped Barbara out with small things a few times before, mostly gifts for Stephanie. He doesn't want to reward Charles' bad behavior. If Charles gets forgiven and helped every time he screws up, how will he ever learn? It will be just like the affair Charles had all over again. Besides, if William helps now, what about the next time? How can he draw a line to keep this from happening again?

# *Charles Gardener*

**Act II, Scene 1 (ADEHJ) — Four years later**

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You've really done it this time. Everything was hard to begin with. After Virginia died, you didn't really have enough money to deal with the funeral and Stephanie's expenses. You were struggling, and when you're struggling, you and Barbara fight.

You've gotten better at dealing with it, but this time it was too much. So you did what you usually do when that happens: you went out to drink and play cards with your friends. This time, however, you had too much to drink, stayed out too long, and lost too much money on the cards. You barely have enough to pay rent this month, let alone Stephanie's expenses.

You've worked so hard since Stephanie was born. Now you don't know what to do. You could probably turn to William for help, but he's never completely forgiven you for hurting Barbara because of the affair you had several years ago. You can't stand to humiliate yourself in front of him, yet again. He might well help, but can you stomach asking?