

Setting

Act II, Scene 4 (AHINO) — Fifteen years later

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Stephanie and Zach Bloom are doing well. They have two children, Jessica, age 10 and Michael, age 7. Stephanie has recently gone back to work as an accountant. With her help, Zach bought the garage where he works, and the business has been fairly successful. He has even hired a couple new people to help out.

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 money 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.

Stephanie and Zach have been discussing whether or not to help out, and if so, how to do so. After watching her grandmother languish alone in a nursing home, Stephanie feels like she should provide more personal care to her mother, maybe even buying a larger house and inviting her parents to move in. At the same time, with two children, Stephanie's work, and Zach's business, none of them have much time to help. They could pay for someone to come in and help out Barbara a few days a week, but Stephanie feels like she should do more. Will that even help enough to make a difference? Maybe Barbara really needs to be in assisted living somewhere. Can Stephanie and Zach afford that? Do they want to?

Zachary Bloom

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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 come to know and accept both Barbara and Charles as a new set of parents. Despite a rocky start due to concerns about your past, they eventually accepted you and brought you into the family. Watching Barbara slowly deteriorate has been incredibly painful.

It is going to be a hard balance with all of the responsibilities that you and Stephanie share, between your own jobs and your two children, but you want to see if there is some way that the two of you can pitch in personally. You know that Stephanie still feels some pain about seeing her own grandmother only occasionally in a nursing home and if possible you'd like to avoid having her deal with the same with her own mother. Plus, Barbara did take you in, and you want to show her that you care and appreciate her, and won't abandon her now just as her life is at its toughest.