

Setting

Act II, Scene 4 (BGINP) — 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 Barbara. A few years back, Barbara was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. This year she had to quit her job, and has gone on disability. Charles has been coming by to help out a bit, but he's not the most reliable caretaker. Money has been very tight since Barbara stopped working and what the state provides doesn't go very far. A state nurse stops by once a week, but Barbara really needs more help than that.

Since Barbara refused to accept Zach twelve years ago, Stephanie's relationship with her mother has been very strained. Her children have spent more time with Charles than they have with their own grandmother. At least Charles accepted Zach. Last year, however, Barbara reached out to her daughter. With her failing health, she wanted to mend fences. Since then, Stephanie and Barbara have begun to rebuild their relationship.

Stephanie and Zach have been discussing whether or not to help out Barbara, and if so, how to do so. Stephanie is still very angry at her mother for her rejection of Zach, but Zach worries that if she doesn't help, and her mother continues to suffer, Stephanie will regret it. 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. Besides, after watching her grandmother languish alone in a nursing home, Stephanie feels like she should provide more personal care to her mother, but isn't certain how much time she's willing to spend with Barbara. Besides, Stephanie'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 her mother will get by. 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?

Stephanie Bloom

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You're worried about your mother. You're so grateful that she finally reached out, but you still haven't forgiven her. At the same time, no matter how angry you still are, it's painful to see her suffering. Your mother's MS has been getting steadily worse, and she had to quit her job this year.

You and Zach aren't struggling too badly right now. Maybe you could give your mother some money to hire someone to come in and help out a few days a week. It isn't much, but it might make the difference. It would make things tighter for your family, but someone needs to take care of your mother and you really don't have the time or the patience. On the other hand, is that really what you want to do? If you want to rebuild a relationship, is buying someone else's time the right way to do it? You saw your grandmother languish in a nursing home. She was so lonely and angry, being left to strangers. That sort of care needs a personal touch. You feel you should help out more yourself, but you have work, classes, and two young children to care for. Besides, are you really ready to spend that much time around your mother?

You just don't know what to do. You feel like you should help out, but you still resent her rejection of you and Zach. You feel so lost.