

Setting

Act I, Scene 3 (BDF) — Two years later

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Barbara's marriage to William is well and truly on the rocks. The question isn't simply whether the marriage will survive long-term. The big question is: will their marriage even survive tonight's party?

Over the past two years, William has thrown himself more and more into his work. The relationship between him and Barbara - never a terribly passionate one - has grown more and more distant and strained. William loves her in his own way, but the only way he knows to show it is by working hard for her, bringing home a good paycheck, and making sure that she has a stable life.

Meanwhile, Barbara is bored stiff. She craves attention and passion. She misses the passion that she had with Charles, and wonders whether she made the wrong decision in marrying William. Charles has gone off to start a new job teaching theater at the University, and his life finally seems to be coming together. Barbara has recently found out that she is pregnant, and she is terrified that having a child with William will trap her in this boring life forever.

Charles has phased in and out of Barbara's life. He will try to be there for her and comfort her, then find himself getting too close and leave. She made her choice and he doesn't want to betray his brother again. They have gotten a little too close once or twice, but each time, Barbara has stood her ground, and Charles has felt guilty and left them alone, sometimes for months. It's hard for him to be around them. He can't stand to see Barbara so lost and lonely.

Virginia is very worried about the state of her daughter's marriage. She is hoping desperately that Barbara and William can resolve their issues, but she also worries about Barbara feeling trapped. She hopes that a child might help the marriage, but is afraid that they will have a child first, and divorce after. Will Barbara and William's marriage survive?

Barbara Gardener

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How did it come to this? A dull and empty marriage, and now you with a child on the way.

You have a horrible feeling about tonight. You know that you need to tell William about your pregnancy, but somehow that will make everything all too real. You will find yourself trapped for the rest of your life this way. A big house, nice things, a child, but a passionless and rarely-home husband.

It isn't that William doesn't provide for you, or that he is off being irresponsible like his brother Charles would have done. No, he's out working hard at the law firm because he wants to give you all the material comforts you could ever need. Somehow that makes it all that much worse. After the past few years, any hope of real passion in this marriage has dried up.

You know that you're keeping the child. Despite everything, you couldn't imagine not having it. This little child will need and care for you in a way that no one else has. The question is whether or not the stability and financial support that William provides is enough. Can you stick it out purely for these things, or do you need to get out now, however hard it will be for you and your child alone?

There aren't any easy answers, but you and your child are going to have to live with whatever you choose, for the rest of your lives.