

Setting

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

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

Barbara has recently found out that after the blow up over Karen, Charles actually did start cheating on her. She had been planning on going through with her birthday party tonight, but at this point, she's not sure she can handle the situation. It's time to confront Charles about what he has done to her, especially at this important time. She has big news and needs to know whether or not Charles will truly be there for her.

Barbara's affair with William ended a month ago, at William's prodding. Barbara has decided it was a mistake and moved on, blaming her indiscretion on Charles' own bad behavior. William, however, has been carrying guilt for the affair ever since. He feels that this has been going on too long and he can't bear the secret of his betrayal of his brother, no matter what Charles himself has done. Tonight he plans to confess and beg Charles' forgiveness.

Meanwhile, Charles got a new job teaching theater at the local college. After he left the high school, he and Karen broke up over Charles' guilt about cheating (and the slow dimming of their own passion). Charles is ready to beg Barbara's forgiveness and try to start over, if she'll have him.

Virginia is watching this all from the sidelines with tears in her eyes. She doesn't know for sure about all the cheating that has been happening, but she is hoping desperately that Barbara and Charles can resolve their issues. Will Barbara and Charles' marriage survive all the betrayals?

Barbara Gardener

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How did it come to this? Your husband has been cheating on you. You had been cheating on him, with his brother. You are now two and a half months pregnant, and you can't be sure who is the father. Where do you even go from here? You wish you knew.

You have a horrible feeling about tonight. You know that you need to confront Charles about his affair and find out if he is still committed to this marriage. If he is, you need to figure out what and how to tell him. He needs to know about the child you are carrying, but you need to know first whether or not there is a marriage worth trying to save.

William is wracked by guilt over the affair and you're worried he'll just blurt it out to Charles. It was William that ended the affair because he just couldn't stand the thought of hurting his brother any more. But right now, your needs and the needs of your child-to-be come first. You and your child are going to need to know where you stand and anything else is secondary.

If Charles isn't going to, or can't focus on your marriage, you need out now. You aren't sure what you are going to do if it comes to that, but you won't raise your child in a situation like this. You just can't, no matter what comes of it.