

Setting

Act II, Scene 1 (BGI) — Four years later

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While William helped to pay for Virginia's care, since Virginia's death, he has not reached out to Barbara. He has always been responsible about paying child support and given Stephanie nice gifts, even if he never spent very much time with her. A few months ago, his firm folded. He has still been helping out when he can, but right now he is struggling to make mortgage payments while looking for a new job.

Barbara's part-time secretarial work does not pay the bills, and with William out of work, she isn't getting much from him. Taking care of a 9-year old has a lot of small expenses, and just keeping up with the rent is hard enough. She's not sure how she can make ends meet.

Charles, on the other hand, had a break recently. He got a few stage parts, and from there has gotten several advertising roles, and even a minor role in a television show being shot locally. For the first time, he actually has a little extra money, although most of it has gone to gambling and a string of short-term girlfriends. He's always been willing to help out with small things, but Barbara doesn't like turning to him. He's still infatuated with her, but she doesn't want him around Stephanie too much. Will Barbara turn to him, and, if so, will he be able and willing to help with something this big?

Barbara Vela

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Since William's firm folded, things have been hard for him. He had a good education and has years of experience though, so you don't know why it is taking him so long to get another job. In the meantime, his child support payments have dropped and left your daughter, Stephanie, in a real bind. You don't have any real sympathy for him though given the size of the house he has for just himself, or the fancy car he drives. He doesn't know how to live frugally and so you and Stephanie are suffering for it.

While William's luck has vanished, Charles seems to have picked up tons of it: several recent roles in advertisements and now a minor role in a television show being shot locally. Charles is thriving in a way you never thought possible. While it is likely he'll crash and burn at some point, given his proclivities, he's doing well right now. You're hesitant about letting him share too much of his recent good fortune with you or with his niece, Stephanie. You don't want to risk any kind of dependency on him, or especially having your daughter get too close to him before he flames out.

Maybe you can use Charles' recent success and largesse to shame William into picking up some of the financial slack though. You know it has to gall William to no end that he's now out of a job. If a show of appreciation for a little short-term help from Charles could kick William into cutting back his own spending so he can support you and your daughter, that would be just fine by you.