

Setting

Act I, Scene 3 (ADF) — 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?

Since the fight over Karen, nothing has gone well for them. Barbara hasn't really trusted him since, but she's never dug up any evidence that he did cheat on her. Charles has only grown more distant. They barely talk except when they're fighting. Sometimes Barbara almost wishes she had found evidence of an affair. Then at least there would be someone to blame it on. As it is, everything is falling apart and neither seems to know why.

Meanwhile, Barbara has been wondering more and more whether she should just leave Charles and try to start over. Recently, however, that option has gotten more complicated: Barbara is pregnant. She hasn't yet told anyone she's pregnant. If she tells Charles that she's pregnant with his child, he'll almost certainly do everything he can to make up with her. At this point, she's not sure she wants that. Maybe she could still leave Charles and patch things up with William. William has his own problems, but at least he's stable.

Meanwhile, Charles got a new job teaching theater at the local college. However, with Barbara so upset, Charles has become ever more volatile. He doesn't understand what's going on with her, and he can't fix it, which just makes him angry and frustrated. All he wants is to resolve things, but sometimes he thinks it's not even worth it anymore. He feels like he doesn't even know his own wife, and doesn't know what to do.

Virginia is watching this all from the sidelines with tears in her eyes. She is hoping desperately that Barbara and Charles can resolve their issues. Will their marriage survive all the betrayals?

Charles Gardener

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You don't know what's happened to Barbara lately. You've been trying so hard, but it seems like everything you do is wrong. You can't handle it. Everything you say leads to a fight; every time you try to make up with her she winds up in tears. You love her so much, but you can't handle this anymore.

You know you shouldn't leave as often as you do, but you can't handle the screaming matches. It's not like you're doing anything wrong when you leave. Maybe you drink a little too much, maybe you put a little too much money on the cards down at the bar, but you've never cheated on her and you always come home eventually. Even if it takes a few weeks sometimes.

You know you're not the easiest person to live with, but this isn't fair. You love Barbara and want to be with her, but you just can't seem to make her happy and every time you fight things get worse. Lately you only see that passion in her eyes when she's yelling at you. It almost makes you glad of the fights. When you aren't fighting, she hardly looks at you at all.

You really don't want to leave Barbara. She's the love of your life, and you want to be with her and raise children together, but you can't take much more of this. If something doesn't change soon, one day you're going to walk out the door and not come back.