

# *Barbara Gardener*

Act II, Scene 2 (AHL) — Eight years later

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Stephanie takes after her father far too much for your liking at times, and this is certainly one of those times. The recklessness, the pleasure-seeking, the impulsiveness, and the blindness to the consequences... you don't know what to do with her. It has taken decades for Charles to mostly grow up, but you despair of what might happen to your daughter if she doesn't learn right from wrong sooner rather than later. The kind of thrills that kids today are chasing after are a far cry from the relative innocence of your youth.

The question now is what to do about Stephanie. Next week she has a court date. A court date! You never wanted to wind up one of those parents who takes their teenager to a court date! She was driving while seriously intoxicated. She was damn lucky that neither she nor anyone else wound up hurt or dead. The worst of it is that she just doesn't seem to care, or to grasp the severity of the situation.

William is now a very well-respected and well-connected lawyer in the local community. He could probably pull a few strings and see that nothing too terrible happens to Stephanie. However, you aren't sure whether or not that is the right thing to do. If Stephanie really just doesn't get it yet, maybe losing her driver's license and having to do a lot of community service would be a good thing. Maybe it would scare her straight in a way that coddling sure hasn't.

At the same time, that would mean that Stephanie couldn't keep her current job. You'd been pushing for awhile for her to get a part-time job after school, and she got one just recently. A car is needed for her to get to the restaurant and, with your own work schedule, you couldn't drive her there. If she can't drive there, she can't work. Times are tight financially, and without what she brings in your family would be struggling that much more.

Tonight, which was supposed to be a celebration, looks like it is going to be a lot more of a headache than anyone imagined. You just wish you knew what the right thing was to do for your daughter.