

# *Setting*

## **Act II, Scene 4 (AHINP) — Fifteen years later**

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Stephanie and Zach Bloom are doing well. They have two children: Jessica, age 10 and Michael, age 7. Stephanie has recently gone back to work as an accountant. With her help, Zach bought the garage where he works, and the business has been fairly successful. He has even hired a couple new people to help out.

Things have not been going as well for Charles and Barbara. A few years back, Barbara was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. This year she had to quit her job, and caring for her has been taking more and more of Charles' time. Money has been very tight since Barbara stopped working, and Barbara and Charles are fighting about money yet again. Things are made even worse by the fact that Charles can't leave: Barbara can't make do without him, even for a few days.

Since Charles and Barbara refused to accept Zach twelve years ago, Stephanie's relationship with her parents has been very strained. Last year, Barbara reached out to her daughter. With her failing health, she wanted to mend fences. Since then, Stephanie has been talking more with her parents, and she and Barbara have begun to rebuild their relationship.

Stephanie and Zach have been discussing whether or not to help out Charles and Barbara, and if so, how to do so. Stephanie is still very angry at her parents for their rejection of Zach, but Zach worries that if she doesn't help, and her parents continue to suffer, Stephanie will regret it. If Zach and Stephanie do decide to help out, they have the money to make a difference. They could pay for someone to come in and help out Barbara a few days a week, but that won't mend the wounds the way personal care would. After watching her grandmother languish alone in a nursing home, Stephanie feels like she should be the one to care for her mother. Just providing money won't heal their relationship. At the same time, with two children, Stephanie's work, and Zach's business, time is limited.

Will Stephanie and Zach help at all? If so, will Stephanie devote time to caring for her mother, or will she simply pay for help and be done with it? Can Barbara and Stephanie mend their broken relationship this late in the game?

# *Stephanie Bloom*

**Act II, Scene 4 (AHINP) — Fifteen years later**

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You're worried about your parents. You're so grateful that your mother finally reached out, but you still haven't entirely forgiven her. At the same time, no matter how angry you still are, it's painful to see her suffering. Your mother's MS has been getting steadily worse, and she had to quit her job this year. Your father isn't coping well at all. You're almost surprised he's still there.

You and Zach are doing alright financially. You've thought about helping out. Maybe you could hire someone to come in and provide care a few days a week. It isn't much, but it might make the difference. On the other hand, is that really what you want to do? If you want to rebuild a relationship, is buying someone else's time the right way to do it? You feel you should help out more yourself, but you have a full time job and two young children to care for. You can't spare much time. Besides, are you really ready to spend that much time around your mother after all these years?

On yet another side, you remember what it was like watching your grandmother dying in a nursing home. She was so angry, being cared for by strangers. No matter how often you and your mother visited, she always felt alone. That sort of care should really be provided by someone the patient knows and loves. You just don't know what to do. You want to help out, but you still resent her rejection of you and Zach. You feel so lost.