

# *Barbara Gardener*

## **Act II, Scene 1 (ADEHJ) — Four years later**

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The past few years have been the hardest you've ever faced in your life. From giving up on your dreams of a college degree to your mother's death a few months ago, it is hard to imagine how much worse things could get. To make matters worse, Charles has failed you, both financially and emotionally. While you've struggled to care for Stephanie and deal with your grief, he's been more combative and distant than ever before.

Last week, he disappeared for a few nights. Desperately, you even tried to get ahold of him at his job at the college, but he had blown off from there too, calling in sick. When he eventually came back home, he was still wasted and your bank account was almost empty. You don't even know how many hours you spent yelling and crying at him about what he had done to your family.

Your last hope is with William. If you can't get some financial help from him, there is a very real chance of losing the house you rent, not to mention having more of your various debts go into collections. You know that Charles doesn't want to rely on his brother. There isn't any choice though, and if it ends up hurting Charles enough to motivate him more in the future, all the better.