

Setting

Act I, Scene 3 (ACE) — 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?

Barbara has recently found out that after the blow up over Karen, Charles actually did start cheating on her. She had been planning on going through with her birthday party tonight, but at this point, she's not sure she can handle the situation. It's time to confront Charles about what he has done to her, especially at this important time. She has big news and needs to know whether or not Charles will truly be there for her.

Barbara's affair with William ended a month ago, at William's prodding. Barbara has decided it was a mistake and moved on, blaming her indiscretion on Charles' own bad behavior. William, however, has been carrying guilt for the affair ever since. He feels that this has been going on too long and he can't bear the secret of his betrayal of his brother, no matter what Charles himself has done. Tonight he plans to confess and beg Charles' forgiveness.

Meanwhile, Charles got a new job teaching theater at the local college. After he left the high school, he and Karen broke up over Charles' guilt about cheating (and the slow dimming of their own passion). Charles is ready to beg Barbara's forgiveness and try to start over, if she'll have him.

Virginia is watching this all from the sidelines with tears in her eyes. She doesn't know for sure about all the cheating that has been happening, but she is hoping desperately that Barbara and Charles can resolve their issues. Will Barbara and Charles' marriage survive all the betrayals?

Charles Gardner

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After almost a year of carrying on a passionate, beautiful, guilt-ridden affair with Karen, you have finally come to realize what you should have known all along: Barbara is truly the most important thing to you and you can't live without her. You dumped Karen, and have come back to beg Barbara's forgiveness. It's been easier since you got a job at the college and don't see Karen every day.

Poor Barbara. Your wonderful, caring, loving, faithful wife. All these months, you've treated her like garbage, and she's been always at your side, waiting for you. Sure, there have been fights, and plenty of them. And you deserved everything she threw at you. The names she called you could never be as bad as what you actually were. She was perfect, the ideal wife, and you may have thrown it all away.

You know that she's about ready to give up on you. You've seen the look in her eyes, especially recently. She must know what has been going on. Your only chance is to confess everything from the very start and beg her forgiveness. Karen never really meant anything to you. She was just an escape. You got carried away by how she was beautiful and available.

Barbara needs to understand that she is, always has been and always will be your one true love. Karen was a mistake. It will never happen again. You just need Barbara's faithful, caring love and reassurance. How could you do this to such a wonderful woman as Barbara?