

Setting

Act I, Scene 3 (ADE) — 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.

Meanwhile, Charles got a new job teaching theater at the local college. After he left the high school, he and Karen recently broke up over Charles' guilt about cheating (and the slow dimming of their own passion). He is ready to beg Barbara's forgiveness and try to start over, if she'll have him. She's not sure whether she can take him back, after this betrayal- Can she ever really trust him again? Meanwhile, in her turmoil, she has often wondered whether she made the right choice. Would she have been happier with the stable William? He has been there for her through all this, calm and reassuring. He never tried to take advantage of her in her grief, despite how close they got, and she respects him for it. She knows he still loves her. Even if they don't have the passion of her marriage to Charles, at least she knows William would never cheat on her.

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 their marriage survive the betrayal?

William Gardener

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Your brother has ruined the best thing that ever happened to him: his marriage to Barbara. He's gone more nights than not drinking, gambling, or off with his actress girlfriend Karen. You don't know if you can ever forgive him for what he has done to Barbara. You've been as supportive of Barbara as you possibly could, but you don't know how much more she can take.

You plan on calling out Charles for his infidelity tonight and challenging him to shape up. You hate to ruin Barbara's party, but something needs to give. Better to take the time now than to see this drag on any longer. What Charles has done is nearly unforgivable, and that is saying a lot when it comes to family.

You get the feeling from talking to Barbara that she realizes this as well and that some kind of breaking point is necessary. Over the past several weeks, she's been so... quiet. You think she's finally realizing, just as you have, that things can't go on without a real change. Tonight is the time for that change.