

Setting

Act II, Scene 3 (BGN) — Six years later

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This party marks Stephanie's 23rd birthday and she has brought her boyfriend, Zack Bloom. Zack and Stephanie know each other from high school, and Zack has had a troubled past. He went to juvie several times for drug-related offenses and assault. While he hasn't been arrested since he turned 18, Barbara is not certain she trusts his claims of being clean. There were rumors that he was dealing serious drugs to his classmates, and even that he was part of a gang. His tattoos and shaved head don't make him easy to trust.

Stephanie had a hard few years after the drunk driving incident. Losing her driver's license and her job just sent her into a downward spiral. She wound up getting involved in drugs and going through court-mandated rehab. However, since William died of a sudden heart attack a few years back, Stephanie has pulled herself together. After his death, she took some of the money she inherited and went into therapy. She got a job at the supermarket and moved out into a small apartment in town. Since William's death, Charles has also tried to help out with Stephanie's recovery. He sees a lot of himself in her struggles.

Stephanie ran into Zack at the supermarket and they began reminiscing about high school. Soon enough they were dating, and now, almost six months later, they have come to this party to announce their engagement. Barbara is happy that Stephanie has found someone, but she is worried about Zack. She really hoped that Stephanie would pull herself together and go to college, and now she's afraid that won't happen. She's even more worried that Zack might still be dealing, and that this could set Stephanie up for a relapse.

Stephanie Gardener

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This party is very important to you. Zack just proposed, and this is your opportunity to tell your mother. You know she's worried about him, and you understand why, but Zack is clean these days, and his determination has helped you stay clean as well. If your mom can't look beyond his past, how can she look beyond yours?

Sure, you met him in high school when you were both struggling, but seeing his progress has made you aware of what is possible. If he was able to pull himself out of serious addictions and very lucrative dealing, surely you could deal with your own problems. When you met him at the supermarket, you were amazed at how different he had become.

You are going to marry Zack regardless of what your mother says. You love him and you are happy together. Being with Zack is the first time your life has actually felt stable or made sense. You both have jobs; you're paying rent; you're getting by. You've even started talking about having kids together.

Your mother has a very simple choice: either she accepts Zack and you, or she rejects you both and you go on with your life without her.