

# *Charles Gardener*

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

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Even after all these years, it's hard to see Barbara suffering. You try to come by to help out some, but you've never been very good at this sort of thing. You try to cheer her up, but you can't really give her the regular help she needs with chores, or taking care of herself. You don't really even know why you still come by. You've gotten a little closer since William died, but the spark has been gone for many years. If you had any sense you would just leave town.

But that would mean leaving your job, and leaving your niece and her kids. Even before Barbara and Stephanie started making up, you spent as much time as you could with Jessica and Michael. You've always loved kids. Why did you spend so long pining after Barbara? You could have grandchildren of your own to play with. You've had plenty of girlfriends. You could have been happy with one of them, couldn't you?

And yet, here you are, in your 60s, still traipsing after Barbara. Years after her divorce, years after your brother's death. You just can't leave her to suffer alone. It's not like Stephanie does much to help.

That's not fair and you know it. Stephanie and Barbara have only just now begun to mend the bridges that Barbara burned years ago. Besides, Stephanie and Zach are very busy. They're raising two young children. They both work. You just wish you had a better solution.