

Setting

Act I, Scene 3 (ACF) — 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'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, after the end of the affair, Barbara has been wondering more and more whether she made the right decision. She's pregnant, and, not only is she not entirely sure whose child it is, she's not sure which she would prefer. While she was in the affair with William, she could see the stability that she had given up. Now that it's over, she's left without a buffer against the tumult of her marriage. She hasn't yet told anyone she's pregnant. If she tells Charles that she's pregnant with his child, he'll almost certainly forgive her any trespass. On the other hand, if she can convince William it's his, maybe she could leave Charles and marry William - if William would even have her after the past few months.

Meanwhile, Charles got a new job teaching theater at the local college. However, with Barbara so upset, Charles has become ever more volatile. He doesn't understand what's going on with her, and he can't fix it, which just makes him angry and frustrated. All he wants is to resolve things, but sometimes he thinks it's not even worth it anymore. He feels like he doesn't even know his own wife, and doesn't know what to do.

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

Barbara Gardener

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How did it come to this? You had been cheating on your husband - with his brother. You are now two and a half months pregnant, and you can't be sure who is the father. Where do you even go from here? You wish you knew.

You have a horrible feeling about tonight. You know that you need to confront Charles about his instability - the drinking, the disappearances, the fights - and find out if he is still committed to this marriage. If he is, you need to figure out what and how to tell him. He needs to know about the child you are carrying, but you need to know first whether or not there is a marriage worth trying to save.

William is wracked by guilt over the affair and you're worried he'll just blurt it out to Charles. It was William that ended the affair because he just couldn't stand the thought of hurting his brother anymore. But right now, your needs and the needs of your child-to-be come first. You and your child are going to need to know where you stand and anything else is secondary.

If Charles isn't going to, or can't focus on your marriage, you need out now. You could try to convince William that the child is his. Either way, you won't raise your child in a situation like this. You just can't, no matter what comes of it.