

Setting

Act I, Scene 3 (BDF) — Two years later

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Barbara's marriage to William is well and truly on the rocks. The question isn't simply whether the marriage will survive long-term. The big question is: will their marriage even survive tonight's party?

Over the past two years, William has thrown himself more and more into his work. The relationship between him and Barbara - never a terribly passionate one - has grown more and more distant and strained. William loves her in his own way, but the only way he knows to show it is by working hard for her, bringing home a good paycheck, and making sure that she has a stable life.

Meanwhile, Barbara is bored stiff. She craves attention and passion. She misses the passion that she had with Charles, and wonders whether she made the wrong decision in marrying William. Charles has gone off to start a new job teaching theater at the University, and his life finally seems to be coming together. Barbara has recently found out that she is pregnant, and she is terrified that having a child with William will trap her in this boring life forever.

Charles has phased in and out of Barbara's life. He will try to be there for her and comfort her, then find himself getting too close and leave. She made her choice and he doesn't want to betray his brother again. They have gotten a little too close once or twice, but each time, Barbara has stood her ground, and Charles has felt guilty and left them alone, sometimes for months. It's hard for him to be around them. He can't stand to see Barbara so lost and lonely.

Virginia is very worried about the state of her daughter's marriage. She is hoping desperately that Barbara and William can resolve their issues, but she also worries about Barbara feeling trapped. She hopes that a child might help the marriage, but is afraid that they will have a child first, and divorce after. Will Barbara and William's marriage survive?

Virginia Vela

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Your daughter's marriage is falling apart, and William doesn't understand why. You know he loves her, but she needs to know it. You know what it's like to hang on for years in a loveless marriage, and Barbara doesn't even have a child to keep her company. Women need a little more passion, a little more intensity. Women are emotional creatures. William thinks that bringing home a good salary should be enough, but he doesn't understand.

Meanwhile, Barbara is at her wits end. If things don't change, you expect that she will leave him. You have talked with her about ways to bring him out, ways to make things better, but nothing she does seems to help. It's possible that a child is the right answer here. With a child, maybe William's stability would be more important than his distance. A child could provide the love that Barbara is missing, and might even bring William out a little more.

On the other hand you're worried that she'll try to patch things up, have a child, and then wind up leaving him anyway. If she's going to leave him, she should do so now, before there are any children in the picture. She needs to make a decision soon, one way or the other.