

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?

Charles Gardener

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Since Barbara accepted William's proposal, you have tried very hard to move on. You briefly dated Karen, a secretary at the high school where you worked. She was in a play with you and it was exciting for a little while, but she could never measure up to Barbara. When you got a job teaching theatre at the college, you and Karen parted ways.

Recently, it has been getting harder and harder to keep away. You can't stand watching Barbara wither away like this. William loves her, you know that, but he never shows it. He doesn't give her any of the love, passion and attention that you could give her. Barbara needs to get out of that marriage before she's trapped by a child. She's wasting away.

It's not just for you. Sure, you would take her back if she came to you. Of course you would; you still love her. She's still the only woman in the world to you. Really, though, you would want her to leave William even if you knew she would never come back to you. She's dying in that relationship.

You haven't pushed because you didn't want to hurt your brother, but you can't watch this any longer. Whatever happens, you need to convince her to get out of that relationship before she loses herself altogether.