

# *Setting*

## **Act I, Scene 3 (ADE) — 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 has recently found out that after the blow up over Karen, Charles actually did start cheating on her. She had been planning on going through with her birthday party tonight, but at this point, she's not sure she can handle the situation. It's time to confront Charles about what he has done to her, especially at this important time. She has big news and needs to know whether or not Charles will truly be there for her.

Meanwhile, Charles got a new job teaching theater at the local college. After he left the high school, he and Karen recently broke up over Charles' guilt about cheating (and the slow dimming of their own passion). He is ready to beg Barbara's forgiveness and try to start over, if she'll have him. She's not sure whether she can take him back, after this betrayal- Can she ever really trust him again? Meanwhile, in her turmoil, she has often wondered whether she made the right choice. Would she have been happier with the stable William? He has been there for her through all this, calm and reassuring. He never tried to take advantage of her in her grief, despite how close they got, and she respects him for it. She knows he still loves her. Even if they don't have the passion of her marriage to Charles, at least she knows William would never cheat on her.

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

# *Barbara Gardener*

**Act I, Scene 3 (ADE) — Two years later**

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How did it come to this? Your husband has been cheating on you. He's out drinking, gambling, or off with his pretty little actress almost as many nights as not. And here you are at home, now two and a half months pregnant. 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 affair and find out if he is still committed to this marriage. 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. Right now your needs, and the needs of your child-to-be, come first. You and your child are going to need support. You are going to need a stable environment. You need to know where you stand. Anything else is secondary.

If Charles isn't going to, or can't focus on your marriage, you need out now. You love him, but not enough to subject your child to life like this, not knowing if or when their father might or might not be there. You aren't sure what you are going to do if it comes to that, but you won't raise your child in a situation like this. You just can't, no matter what comes of it.

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# *Charles Gardner*

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After almost a year of carrying on a passionate, beautiful, guilt-ridden affair with Karen, you have finally come to realize what you should have known all along: Barbara is truly the most important thing to you and you can't live without her. You dumped Karen, and have come back to beg Barbara's forgiveness. It's been easier since you got a job at the college and don't see Karen every day.

Poor Barbara. Your wonderful, caring, loving wife. All these months, you've treated her like garbage, and she's been always at your side, waiting for you. Sure, there have been fights, and plenty of them. And you deserved everything she threw at you. The names she called you could never be as bad as what you actually were. She was perfect, the ideal wife, and you may have thrown it all away.

You know that she's about ready to give up on you. You've seen the look in her eyes, especially recently. She must know what has been going on. Your only chance is to confess everything from the very start and beg her forgiveness. Karen never really meant anything to you. She was just an escape. You got carried away by how she was beautiful and available. All you really need is Barbara. If Barbara will just turn back to you, everything will be fine. How could you have ever doubted her? There was never such a woman as Barbara. You don't understand how you let Karen turn your head.

Barbara needs to understand that she is, always has been and always will be your one true love. Karen was a mistake. It will never happen again. You just need Barbara's caring love and reassurance. How could you do this to such a wonderful woman as Barbara?

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# *William Gardener*

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Your brother has ruined the best thing that ever happened to him: his marriage to Barbara. He's gone more nights than not drinking, gambling, or off with his actress girlfriend Karen. You don't know if you can ever forgive him for what he has done to Barbara. You've been as supportive of Barbara as you possibly could, but you don't know how much more she can take.

You plan on calling out Charles for his infidelity tonight and challenging him to shape up. You hate to ruin Barbara's party, but something needs to give. Better to take the time now than to see this drag on any longer. What Charles has done is nearly unforgivable, and that is saying a lot when it comes to family.

You get the feeling from talking to Barbara that she realizes this as well and that some kind of breaking point is necessary. Over the past several weeks, she's been so... quiet. You think she's finally realizing, just as you have, that things can't go on without a real change. Tonight is the time for that change.

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# *Virginia Vela*

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Your daughter's marriage is falling apart, and sometimes you think you're more upset about it than her husband. She and Charles have been fighting constantly. You've heard rumors that there's another woman. The past month, things seem to have gotten even worse. You don't know what happened, but Barbara has just snapped.

You're worried that Charles and Barbara are going to divorce, but you're even more worried that they're not going to do it until too late. Barbara and Charles both want children, and if it wasn't for all this fighting, now would be the time. Charles just got a good job at the local college, teaching theater: exactly the sort of work he's always wanted. They're settling down, this could help smooth things out.

Right now, the thing that you're most worried about is that they'll try to patch things up, have a child, and then wind up divorcing anyway. If they're going to get divorced, they should do so now, before there are any children in the picture. It may be too late for the marriage (though you hope it's not), but it's not too late to deal with this before there are children to be hurt by it.