

# *Setting*

## **Act II, Scene 3 (BGM) — Six years later**

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This party marks Stephanie's 23rd birthday and she has brought her boyfriend, Zack Bloom. Zack and Stephanie know each other from high school, and Zack has had a troubled past. He went to juvie several times for drug-related offenses and assault. While he hasn't been arrested since he turned 18, Barbara is not certain she trusts his claims of being clean. There were rumors that he was dealing serious drugs to his classmates, and even that he was part of a gang. His tattoos and shaved head don't make him easy to trust.

After William was able to get Stephanie off the hook on the drunk driving charges, she started pulling her act together and graduated high school. After William died of a sudden heart attack a few years ago, Stephanie used a chunk of her inheritance to go to community college, and is now working on an accounting degree at a state university. She will be graduating this winter and has been doing well in her classes.

She ran into Zack at the supermarket and they began reminiscing about high school. Soon enough they were dating, and now, almost six months later, they have come to this party to announce their engagement. Barbara is happy Stephanie has found someone, but she is worried about Zack. She's afraid that Zack could pull Stephanie off the successful path she seems to have found. Barbara is particularly concerned that Zack might still be dealing, and that this could set Stephanie up for a relapse.

# *Barbara Vela*

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You're worried about your daughter, Stephanie. Of course, you're almost always worried about your daughter, but this time it's different. She's been seeing this Zack for almost six months now and you're worried that the two of them are getting serious. While Stephanie has had a number of relationships before now, many of which worried you, Zack's history is horrible. You don't want your daughter getting seriously involved with someone who sold cocaine to kids in high school!

When her father, William, passed away a few years ago, Stephanie used some of her inheritance to go to college and she should be getting a degree this winter. You're terrified that Zack will lead her down a very dark path, throwing away her future. When you and William had agreed to help her out with her first DUI several years ago, Stephanie seemed to appreciate it and she did get somewhat better. She is in college after all, but she's still on a precipice.

You need to straighten your daughter out, however rough it will be in the short-term. You love her and you need her to realize that she can't have bad influences like Zack around. He's no good for her and if she doesn't make the changes in her life that need to be made, she's going to wind up in a very bad place in the years to come.

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# *Charles Gardener*

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Since William died, you have really tried to be there for Stephanie. You know what it's like to lose a father young, and you see a lot of your struggles playing out in her, except without the influence of a stable older brother. You're really worried about Stephanie's new boyfriend, Zack. He reminds you too much of yourself as a young man, and not in good ways. He was in and out of juvie up until he turned 18. He seems to have straightened out, but it's hard to tell whether he really has or whether he's just gotten better at hiding it. Even if he has cleaned up, he might just go back to his old ways the first time things get difficult. You've heard rumors that he used to deal drugs. Will he start again when money gets tight?

Stephanie is going to graduate from college this winter and you're so proud of her. You worry, though, that her newfound stability might be more fragile than she thinks, and Zack could pull things off kilter. Of course, she has been dating Zack while in college, and still done well. Maybe he really is getting his act together. If so, he might even be a good influence on her. They could either help each other out or start a cycle and drag each other back down. That is, assuming he isn't still using, and you're not sure about that.

You know that Zack is important to Stephanie, and you would never be one to look down on the demands of the heart. If they truly love each other, that's enough of an answer for you, but you need to make sure Stephanie is sure about this, and that she knows what she's getting into.

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# Zachary Bloom

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You were alternately ecstatic and terrified driving over to the family gathering with Stephanie. You love her madly and when she accepted your proposal of marriage, it was better than any high. You know she loves you too and that the two of you are going to make a life together, but you're very worried about how the announcement is going to go with her mother, Barbara, and her uncle, Charles.

Yes, you had a troubled adolescence. Stephanie had some troubles too, if nothing like you did. But you got your shit together. You got clean and you're staying clean. Hell, you don't even drink. In the past few years you have held down a steady job at a garage and managed to get by on your own. With Stephanie, you're convinced that all the worst of your troubles are far behind you and it is smooth sailing ahead.

Now you just need to be able to convince Stephanie's mother and uncle of this.

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# *Stephanie Gardener*

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This party is very important to you. Zack just proposed, and this is your opportunity to tell your mother. You know she's worried about him, and you understand why, but Zack is clean these days, and his determination has helped you stay clean as well. If your mom can't look beyond his past, how can she look beyond yours?

Sure, you met him in high school when you were both struggling, but seeing his progress has made you aware of what is possible. If he was able to pull himself out of serious addictions and very lucrative dealing, surely you could get through college. When you met him at the supermarket, you were amazed at how different he had become.

You are going to marry Zack regardless of what your mother says. You love him and you are happy together. Being with Zack is the first time your life has actually felt stable or made sense. He has a job, and you're almost finished with college. You've even started talking about having kids together.

Your mother has a very simple choice: either she accepts Zack and you, or she rejects you both and you go on with your life without her.