

Setting

Act I, Scene 4 (AH) — Five and a half years later

~

This year, as for the past four years, the garden party has been shifted from Barbara's birthday to that of her five-year old daughter Stephanie. Since Barbara got pregnant, both Charles and Barbara recommitted to their marriage. While there have been many fights since, and many of the same problems are still present, the birth of their daughter Stephanie strengthened their marriage. Even during the worst times, both of them have reason to stay and work things out.

William has never married, but has become a very successful lawyer. He is a doting uncle, giving Stephanie many gifts, and sometimes taking the entire family to the zoo or other events. He doesn't have a lot of free time with his practice, but much of what he does, he spends on his niece.

Recently, however, a new issue has come up. Barbara's mother, Virginia, has had a stroke, and can no longer manage on her own. Barbara and Charles need to decide whether to care for her themselves, or send her to a nursing home. They recently bought a new house, and the cost of a nursing home would be hard on them. Charles doesn't make a lot of money at the college. However, Barbara is very busy chasing after Stephanie, and the extra work of caring for an ailing parent would be difficult. She has been considering studying to become a teacher once Stephanie is in school, and caring for Virginia would make that very difficult. At the same time, tuition might make the costs of a nursing home even more prohibitive.

Barbara Gardener

Act I, Scene 4 (AH) — Five and a half years later

~

Stephanie is a joy in your life, but also a headache. The antics of a five year old are both delightful and never-ending. With her entering school, you had been planning on going back to college yourself. You'd like to see if you could get the education you need to be a teacher; raising Stephanie has made it clear how much you enjoy teaching and working with young children.

However, a few months ago your mother Virginia had a stroke. After she got out of the hospital, she came to live with you. That has changed everything; Charles' salary barely covered the cost of living for the three of you and now you have to take care of your mother as well. Virginia can't entirely manage on her own anymore and the four of you are piled in a two bedroom house. Between struggling to help your mother in her limited capacity and taking care of a five-year old child, you fear that your dream of being a teacher may not be reachable.

While you hope to be able to enjoy the garden party with the family, it is a good time to also talk about what is going to be done with Virginia. If she is put in a nursing home, she will almost certainly be able to get better care than you can provide. At the same time, it is expensive and she won't be with family all of the time. You'd visit, probably daily when possible, but it still wouldn't be the same. The cost means you probably won't be able to go back to college for a teaching degree without significant financial aid. Is it just better to forget about that for a few years? It pains you, but the answer is probably yes.

Charles is not dealing with the situation well at all. You're worried that all the stress is taking a toll on your marriage in a way that nothing has in years. You know he wants to see Virginia in a nursing home, but you feel terrible about what seems to be a choice between his comfort and your mother's wishes. Some kind of decision needs to be made, but you don't know what it is going to be.

Setting

Act I, Scene 4 (AH) — Five and a half years later

~

This year, as for the past four years, the garden party has been shifted from Barbara's birthday to that of her five-year old daughter Stephanie. Since Barbara got pregnant, both Charles and Barbara recommitted to their marriage. While there have been many fights since, and many of the same problems are still present, the birth of their daughter Stephanie strengthened their marriage. Even during the worst times, both of them have reason to stay and work things out.

William has never married, but has become a very successful lawyer. He is a doting uncle, giving Stephanie many gifts, and sometimes taking the entire family to the zoo or other events. He doesn't have a lot of free time with his practice, but much of what he does, he spends on his niece.

Recently, however, a new issue has come up. Barbara's mother, Virginia, has had a stroke, and can no longer manage on her own. Barbara and Charles need to decide whether to care for her themselves, or send her to a nursing home. They recently bought a new house, and the cost of a nursing home would be hard on them. Charles doesn't make a lot of money at the college. However, Barbara is very busy chasing after Stephanie, and the extra work of caring for an ailing parent would be difficult. She has been considering studying to become a teacher once Stephanie is in school, and caring for Virginia would make that very difficult. At the same time, tuition might make the costs of a nursing home even more prohibitive.

Charles Gardener

Act I, Scene 4 (AH) — Five and a half years later

~

You have a daughter now. You can't just run off. But right now, you desperately want to. You and Barbara have been fighting over her mother Virginia. You don't know what the right answer is, you just know things can't go on the way they are. Barbara has been making herself crazy trying to care for both Stephanie and Virginia.

You know money is tight, you don't make much at the college, but there has to be some way to find the money to put Virginia in a nursing home. You understand that Barbara feels bad about it, she thinks that it's her responsibility to care for Virginia personally, but she just can't do it. It's draining her, it's straining your marriage and it's hurting Stephanie.

Plus it's making you crazy. Every time Virginia asks you the same question three times in a row again, you want to scream at her, you want to get away. It's not her fault. You know that, but it's so hard to deal with.

Still, you know Barbara wants to go back to school, and money is tight. Can you really afford to put Virginia in a home? Can you afford not to?

Setting

Act I, Scene 4 (AH) — Five and a half years later

~

This year, as for the past four years, the garden party has been shifted from Barbara's birthday to that of her five-year old daughter Stephanie. Since Barbara got pregnant, both Charles and Barbara recommitted to their marriage. While there have been many fights since, and many of the same problems are still present, the birth of their daughter Stephanie strengthened their marriage. Even during the worst times, both of them have reason to stay and work things out.

William has never married, but has become a very successful lawyer. He is a doting uncle, giving Stephanie many gifts, and sometimes taking the entire family to the zoo or other events. He doesn't have a lot of free time with his practice, but much of what he does, he spends on his niece.

Recently, however, a new issue has come up. Barbara's mother, Virginia, has had a stroke, and can no longer manage on her own. Barbara and Charles need to decide whether to care for her themselves, or send her to a nursing home. They recently bought a new house, and the cost of a nursing home would be hard on them. Charles doesn't make a lot of money at the college. However, Barbara is very busy chasing after Stephanie, and the extra work of caring for an ailing parent would be difficult. She has been considering studying to become a teacher once Stephanie is in school, and caring for Virginia would make that very difficult. At the same time, tuition might make the costs of a nursing home even more prohibitive.

William Gardener

Act I, Scene 4 (AH) — Five and a half years later

~

The last several years have been good for you. With Barbara and Charles finally settled down, and no significant demands on your own time, you've poured yourself into your work. To say that your career is going well is an understatement.

You appreciate these family garden parties every year. They're a nice chance to relax a bit and pamper your young niece, Stephanie. You gave her a dozen gifts earlier on this evening, most of which she utterly adored. You know that Barbara and Charles are going through a rough time financially right now, so you're happy to give Stephanie the toys her parents couldn't afford.

You were very sorry to hear about Virginia's recent stroke. The thought of being trapped in a failing body and mind horrifies you more than a little bit and dealing with Virginia this evening has been a challenge. You don't know how Barbara and Charles manage to live with it every day, especially with the four of them packed in a small two bedroom house. They have some hard decisions to make about what to do as Virginia continues to slide downhill. You don't at all envy them having to sort it out.

Setting

Act I, Scene 4 (AH) — Five and a half years later

~

This year, as for the past four years, the garden party has been shifted from Barbara's birthday to that of her five-year old daughter Stephanie. Since Barbara got pregnant, both Charles and Barbara recommitted to their marriage. While there have been many fights since, and many of the same problems are still present, the birth of their daughter Stephanie strengthened their marriage. Even during the worst times, both of them have reason to stay and work things out.

William has never married, but has become a very successful lawyer. He is a doting uncle, giving Stephanie many gifts, and sometimes taking the entire family to the zoo or other events. He doesn't have a lot of free time with his practice, but much of what he does, he spends on his niece.

Recently, however, a new issue has come up. Barbara's mother, Virginia, has had a stroke, and can no longer manage on her own. Barbara and Charles need to decide whether to care for her themselves, or send her to a nursing home. They recently bought a new house, and the cost of a nursing home would be hard on them. Charles doesn't make a lot of money at the college. However, Barbara is very busy chasing after Stephanie, and the extra work of caring for an ailing parent would be difficult. She has been considering studying to become a teacher once Stephanie is in school, and caring for Virginia would make that very difficult. At the same time, tuition might make the costs of a nursing home even more prohibitive.

Virginia Vela

Act I, Scene 4 (AH) — Five and a half years later

~

You know something important is happening tonight. It's one of those parties. You like the parties. Everything has gotten a lot harder since the stroke. You just need things to get back to normal.

You should get a cup of tea. You'll feel better with a cup of tea. It's ok, mom will take care of things.

No, wait. That's not right. You're here with your daughter Barbara. She's trying to take you out of your house because she thinks you can't take care of yourself. That's not true. You can handle things ok. You just wish you could talk a little more clearly so you could explain that to her.

She wants to put you in a nursing home. You don't want to go to a nursing home. You want to stay home where you belong. You like it here. Plus the roses would die if you left.