

~~written. It's about how awful life is, and how everything gets betrayed. But then Hamlet tries to make things better. And he dies!~~

ANDREW. Which tells us ...

DEIRDRE. At least he tried!

ANDREW. But why do I have to be Hamlet? I can get another show, maybe even movies. I don't need Hamlet.

DEIRDRE. But Andrew — you went to drama school.

ANDREW. Only for two years.

DEIRDRE. But wasn't it wonderful? The great plays — Ibsen, O'Neill — nothing under four hours. And Shakespeare — didn't you love it?

ANDREW. Sometimes. But I left.

DEIRDRE. Why?

ANDREW. (*Thrilled by the memory.*) *LA Medical!* The bucks! *TV Guide.* My face at every supermarket check-out in America, right next to the gum. I felt like — every day was my Bar Mitzvah. Everyone I saw was smiling, with an envelope with a check. That's what California is, it's one big hug — it's Aunt Sophie without the pinch.

DEIRDRE. Andrew, Jim Corman was terrific, but now you're back.

ANDREW. On a whim. The show was dead, I thought, okay, try New York, why not? Take some classes, maybe do a new play, ease back in. But now — this place. (*He gestures to the apartment.*) *Hamlet.* That's not the plan.

DEIRDRE. Of course it is! It's your old plan, your real one! You know the only thing that would be better? Better than *Hamlet*?

ANDREW. The Cliff notes?

DEIRDRE. *Romeo and Juliet.* Remember, when we did that scene in class? (*Deirdre runs up the stairs to the roof, stopping at the landing, which she will use as Juliet's balcony. Her acting should be long on eagerness, if somewhat lacking in technique. She is very big on expressive hand gestures. As Juliet.*)

O, swear not by the moon,

(*She points to the moon.*)

the inconstant moon

(She points to the moon again.)

That monthly changes in her circled orb
Lest that thy love

(She points to Andrew.)

prove likewise variable.

(Andrew leaps up to the landing, with the bannister still separating him from Deirdre.)

ANDREW. *(As Romeo.)* What shall I swear by?

DEIRDRE. Do not swear at all,
Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

ANDREW. My heart's dear love ... *(Andrew climbs over the railing, and they kiss. Passionately.)* Oh, Deirdre ...

DEIRDRE. Andrew ... *(Another kiss.)*

ANDREW. Will you ... stay?

DEIRDRE. Yes. Upstairs. Isn't there an extra room? On the roof?

ANDREW. Deirdre.

DEIRDRE. Andrew — you said you understood. I can only give myself to the man I'll love forever. The man I'll marry.

ANDREW. So marry me!

DEIRDRE. Andrew, that's so sweet.

ANDREW. Why won't you take me seriously? I'm not just talking about sex. You believe in things. And you almost make me believe. You *are* Juliet.

DEIRDRE. Exactly! And you'll be Hamlet! I can see it! *(Descending the stairs.)* Andrew, I do want to get married, and I do want to have sex, it's just ... I've waited so long. I have so much invested in this. I mean, if it wasn't absolutely perfect, it would all just be wasted. I'd feel so silly.

ANDREW. *(Following her down the stairs.)* Deirdre, you're a 29-year-old virgin. And you tell everyone. I think fear of silliness is not the issue.

DEIRDRE. Oh, but won't it be wonderful, once I know for sure? Won't you be glad that we waited?

ANDREW. *(Kneeling beside her.)* Deirdre, sex is wonderful. Take my word. It's right up there with unicorns and pot-

pourri, And antique lace and bayberry-scented candles. Deirdre, even Laura Ashley had sex.

DEIRDRE. That's true ...

ANDREW. When will you know? When will you be sure?

DEIRDRE. Soon ... maybe. I know I'm being impossible, but it's not that I'm a prude. I just want — everything! And it's happening!

ANDREW. It is?

DEIRDRE. Of course! You're going to be Hamlet, and I'm going to be ... *Ophelia*. Oh Andrew, could I audition? Would they let me?

ANDREW. I guess I could ask them ...

DEIRDRE. Would you? And it wouldn't be sleazy, because I'm not sleeping with you! Isn't that perfect?

ANDREW. Deirdre, that's nuts. It's like ... show business for Mormons. *(Deirdre grabs her shoulderbag and runs up the stairs to the roof.)*

DEIRDRE. It's going to be the best! Good night, sweet ...

ANDREW. Don't say it! If I can't have sex, I don't know why I should play Hamlet.

DEIRDRE. Sweet prince! *(Deirdre exits out the door to the roof.)*

ANDREW. *(To the heavens.)* What is this — a test? No sex? Shakespeare? It's like high school! *(He goes to the phone and dials; he holds Lillian's bottle of champagne in his free hand. Into the phone.)* Lillian? It's Andrew. When you get back, please call the people at the theater. Tell them I'm cancelling. And I'll be back at the hotel tomorrow. So goodbye, Hamlet, and goodnight, Barrymore! ~~*(Andrew opens the bottle of champagne. As the cork pops, thunder and lightning explode. The lights all go out, and the wind moans. The clock from the belltower tolls again. As much melodrama as possible. A spotlight hits the door to the roof, at the top of the stairs. The door swings open, and smoke pours out. A triumphant trumpet flourish is heard, followed by a grand musical processional, which should continue under Barrymore's entrance. A figure is silhouetted in the doorway to the roof. The spotlight illuminates the figure: it is John Barrymore, striking a dramatic, melancholy pose. He is dressed as Hamlet; he wears black tights, a black velvet tunic with a wide, slashed neck, and a jewelled belt from which*~~