

bodkin." Quietus? Bodkin?

BARRYMORE. Quietus means death; a bodkin is a dagger.

ANDREW. And this next sentence, "Who would fardels bear..."

BARRYMORE. A fardel is a burden. Any burden.

ANDREW. So why can't we change it? Why can't I just say, so with all this garbage in the world, why not just stab yourself? Instead of dragging your fardels around? Then it would be clear, then people would get it!

BARRYMORE. Angels and ministers of grace, defend us! Tell me — if you loathe Shakespeare, if Los Angeles is so alluring — why did you audition?

ANDREW. Because my agent made me! And because Deirdre loves *Hamlet*! And because — because they asked me!

BARRYMORE. Because they asked you?

ANDREW. Because somewhere, someone thought that maybe, just maybe — I could do it. That I wouldn't have to be just Jim Corman, rookie surgeon, for the rest of my life. On TV, no one cared if I was talented, I had the right twinkle, the demographic appeal. And after a while, I started to think maybe that's all I had. That if I didn't show up, they could just use the poster. But I came to New York and somebody said, wait. Maybe Andy Rally could do Shakespeare. Onstage. Say those lines.

BARRYMORE. Act!

ANDREW. Yes. But they were wrong! I belong on TV, I know that. And it's not a crime. And I'm sorry I got you down here, and I'm sure that if you go back and talk to whomever, you can get this whole *Hamlet* deal cancelled. Because I'm really tired, and my girlfriend won't sleep with me, and I think my agent is very ill but she refuses to discuss it. And my life is an embarrassing joke, so if you'd please just leave, I'd appreciate it!

BARRYMORE. Can you imagine you're the first performer to experience such misgivings? Can you possibly believe that every prospective Hamlet did not tremble, and pale, and bolt? *Hamlet* will change you, Andrew, make no mistake. And the deal, as you term it, cannot be cancelled. And I cannot depart

these premises until you have fulfilled your destiny. You approach a crossroads, and a decision must be made. What are you to be — artist, or lunchbox?

ANDREW. Stop it!

BARRYMORE. You are no longer Jim Corman.

ANDREW. Get out.

BARRYMORE. And you are not yet sensitive Mike Sullivan.

ANDREW. You don't know that.

BARRYMORE. You are Hamlet!

ANDREW. No! *(Andrew and Barrymore are facing off; neither will give an inch. Barrymore finally makes a decision.)*

BARRYMORE. Right! *(Barrymore strides to a tall, bulky object standing in a corner; the object is completely shrouded in a sheet. With a flourish, Barrymore tugs the sheet away, revealing a carved mahogany cabinet.)*

ANDREW. *(Astonished.)* That's not mine! How did that get there? *(Barrymore opens the cabinet, and removes a sword, a duelling rapier. He tosses the sword to Andrew, who catches it.)* A sword? Oh my God. *(Barrymore strides to the opposite side of the room. He tugs a sheet from another shrouded object, revealing a suit of armor.)* I should call the movers. *(Barrymore removes a second sword from the suit of armor. He tests the sword, bending it, and then raises it above his head. He points it at Andrew.)*

BARRYMORE. En garde!

ANDREW. What?

BARRYMORE. The drama's conclusion. Hamlet's duel and death. *(Barrymore begins to advance to Andrew, brandishing his sword.)*

ANDREW. Excuse me? I can't fence.

BARRYMORE. Hamlet can. I can. *(Barrymore takes a swipe at Andrew, who jumps back.)*

ANDREW. Stop that! I hate swords! I hate violence! *(Barrymore takes another swipe. Andrew breaks away, rapidly.)* I have a gym excuse!

BARRYMORE. As does Hamlet, until the closing moments of the drama. At last, he takes action. He assumes a tragic stature. *(Barrymore feints at Andrew, who jumps again.)*