

a golden dagger hangs. A full-length cape swirls about him. He is phenomenally sexual and dashing; he is the very image of a sly, romantic hero. Barrymore lifts his head, still appearing quite severe. He smiles rakishly. He surveys the apartment; he's been gone a long time. He slowly descends the staircase, studying what has become of his former residence. Finally, Barrymore sees Andrew. Andrew is frozen, holding the champagne bottle. Barrymore smiles at him.

BARRYMORE. Dear fellow. (Barrymore spots the bottle. He grabs a glass and heads for Andrew; he hasn't had champagne in ages. He holds out the glass, gesturing to the bottle.) May I? (Andrew remains frozen. He tries to speak; only choking sounds emerge from his throat.) Pardon? (Andrew tries to speak again, but cannot. He holds out the bottle; Barrymore takes it, fills his glass and drinks, with vast enjoyment.)

ANDREW. You're ... him.

BARRYMORE. Am I?

ANDREW. You're ... dead.

BARRYMORE. You know, occasionally I'm not truly certain. Am I dead? Or just incredibly drunk?

ANDREW. You're ... Barrymore.

BARRYMORE. Yes. Although my father's given name was Blythe; he changed it when he became an actor, to avoid embarrassing his family. Your name?

ANDREW. (Still completely unnerved.) Andrew. Rally. It's really Rallenberg. I changed it, to avoid embarrassing ... the Jews.

BARRYMORE. (Surveying the premises.) Behold. My nest. My roost. (Indicating where things had been, perhaps with musical cues.)

A grand piano. A renaissance globe. A throne.

ANDREW. You're dead! You're dead! What are you doing here?

BARRYMORE. Lad — I'm here to help.

ANDREW. Wait — how do I know you're a ghost? Maybe you're just ... an intruder.

BARRYMORE. (Toying with him.) Perhaps. Cleverly disguised as Hamlet. (Andrew slowly sneaks up on Barrymore. He touches Barrymore's forearm. Barrymore is very nonchalant.) Boo.

ANDREW. But — I can touch you. My hand doesn't go through.

BARRYMORE. I'm a ghost, Andrew. Not a special effect.

ANDREW. But ... ghosts are supposed to have powers! Special powers!

BARRYMORE. I just rose from the dead, Andrew. And how was *your* morning? Now shall I truly frighten you?

ANDREW. (*Not impressed.*) I'm not afraid of you.

BARRYMORE. Shall I cause your flesh to quake?

ANDREW. (*Very cocky.*) You couldn't possibly.

BARRYMORE. Shall I scare you beyond all human imagination?

ANDREW. Go ahead and try.

BARRYMORE. In just six weeks time, you will play Hamlet. (*Andrew screams.*)

ANDREW. (*Genuinely terrified.*) Oh my God, you really are him, aren't you?

BARRYMORE. John Barrymore. Actor. Legend. Seducer. Corpse.

ANDREW. So — it worked. The seance. Felicia, her mother — she brought you back, from over there.

BARRYMORE. Not at all. You summoned me.

ANDREW. I did?

BARRYMORE. As a link in a proud theatrical tradition. Every soul embarking upon Hamlet is permitted to summon an earlier player. From Burbage to Kean to Irving — the call has been answered.

ANDREW. Wait — you mean you're here to help me play Hamlet? Because you did it?

BARRYMORE. Indeed.

ANDREW. Okay. Fine. Then the problem's solved. Because I'm not going to play Hamlet. No way. So you can just ... go back. To ... wherever.

BARRYMORE. I'm afraid that's not possible.

ANDREW. Why not?

BARRYMORE. I cannot return, I will not be accepted, until my task is accomplished. Until you have ...

ANDREW and BARRYMORE. Played Hamlet.

BARRYMORE. Precisely.

ANDREW. (*Completely floored.*) Oh no. Oh my God. You mean, if I don't go through with it ...

BARRYMORE. Then I'm here to stay. Within these walls. Trapped for all time, with a television actor.

ANDREW. Well, excuse me — I happen to be a very good television actor! And I don't need any dead ham bone to teach me about anything! Even if I were going to play Hamlet, which I'm not, I could do just fine! All by myself! *(Barrymore glares at Andrew. He removes a small leatherbound copy of Hamlet from a pouch on his belt, and tosses it to Andrew.)*

BARRYMORE. Very well then. Hamlet. "To be or not to be."

ANDREW. That happens to be the speech I did at my auditions. And I got the part. *(Andrew tosses the copy of Hamlet back to Barrymore.)*

BARRYMORE. Proceed. *(Barrymore reclines full length on the couch. Andrew, very full of himself, decides to show Barrymore a thing or two. He strides U., and turns his back. He hunches over.)* Yes?

ANDREW. I'm doing my preparation.

BARRYMORE. Your ... preparation.

ANDREW. Yes. My acting teacher taught me this. Harold Gaffney.

BARRYMORE. Harold Gaffney?

ANDREW. The creator of the Gaffney technique. Act To Win. I can't just do the speech cold, I have to get into character. I have to become Hamlet. I'm doing a substitution.

BARRYMORE. A substitution?

ANDREW. I'm thinking about something that really happened to me, so I can remember the emotion, and recreate it.

BARRYMORE. And what are you remembering?

ANDREW. It's a secret. Otherwise it won't work. Be quiet, I'm going to act.

BARRYMORE. Why do I feel we should spread newspapers about? I'm sorry, I shall be silent. Out of deep respect. Road closed — man acting. *(Andrew turns, and moves D., facing out. He makes a small snuffling noise. He loosens up his shoulders, like a prizefighter shadow-boxing. He makes a few faces; he is being ultra-naturalistic, very Method. He makes an ungodly howling noise, then slaps his own face. He repeats this. Barrymore watches all this, appalled.)* You know, Andrew, I am dead, and I shall be for