

ing. (*Deirdre begins ascending the stairs to the roof. She turns to Andrew, longingly.*) My liege?

ANDREW. (*Disgruntled.*) Yeah, to a nunnery. (*Deirdre trembles visibly, and utters a passionate moan.*)

DEIRDRE. Oooh! (*She runs upstairs and out the door to the roof.*)

GARY. Reading? She's reading?

ANDREW. I don't understand it.

GARY. Still no...? (*He makes an obscene hand gesture denoting sexual intercourse.*)

ANDREW. No, Gary. Still no hand gestures.

GARY. Whoa. Man, if I was with a lady for that long, and there was still no return, I don't know, I might start thinking trade-in. Turn-around. And who's this? (*Gary gestures to Barrymore. Andrew looks at Barrymore, shocked that Gary can see him.*)

BARRYMORE. Of course he can see me. Because it won't make any difference. (*Introducing himself to Gary.*) John Barrymore.

GARY. Barrymore. Right. Disney? VP?

BARRYMORE. No. I'm an actor.

GARY. An actor! Whoa! Not another one. Good luck, big guy. I mean it. See, that's what's great about you guys. You're both actors, you're like in direct competition, but you can still give the appearance of friendship. See, I'm fucked up, I can't be friends with anyone like me.

BARRYMORE. We understand.

GARY. I mean, the way I monitor, there's only bungalow space for so many hyphenates, right?

BARRYMORE. Hyphenates?

GARY. Writer-producer-director. Gary Peter Lefkowitz.

BARRYMORE. Ah. I see. So, if you also designed the scenery, would you require an additional name?

GARY. Cute. That's cute. (*Admiring Barrymore's outfit.*) Great look. What is that? Japanese? Washed silk?

BARRYMORE. Hamlet. Shakespeare.

GARY. Right. Nice. Retro.

BARRYMORE. Sixteenth century.

GARY. Whoa. God, other centuries. Like, people who

weren't me. Okay, tell me, total truth, am I like the most self-obsessed person you've ever met? My answer? Yes. Okay, enough about me. Figure of speech. Andy, Andy boy, Andy my love — we got it. Green light. The go-ahead. Network approval! A pilot and five episodes!

ANDREW. A pilot and five episodes — of what?

GARY. Of the show! Of *our* show!

ANDREW. What are you talking about?

GARY. Okay, I didn't tell you. Because I didn't want you to be disappointed, and blame me, if it didn't go. But it went! I used your name to tip it through the hoop. I told the network it was your all-time favorite project, that you were ready to roll. And after Jim Corman, you're network candy, they're crawling.

ANDREW. Really?

GARY. America cries out! Your commitment was just the push!

BARRYMORE. But he's not committed. He's playing Hamlet.

ANDREW. Well ...

GARY. Wait a second — which network?

BARRYMORE. In the park. This summer.

GARY. What, it's like for some special? Hallmark Hall Of Fame?

BARRYMORE. It's not for anything. It's ... theater.

GARY. Wait, let me get this. It's Shakespeare, right, it's like algebra on stage. And it's in Central Park, which probably seats, what, 500 tops. And the only merchandising involves, say, Gielgud cassettes and Mostly Mozart tote-bags. And on top of this, it's free. So Andy, tell me, who the hell is representing you nowadays?

ANDREW. Lillian is all for it.

GARY. Lillian! Jesus, of course. Andy, I love her, but she's a war criminal. I'm not kidding. She's a ten hour documentary waiting to happen. Okay Andy, fine, do your little show in the park. Is it a deduction? I mean, it's not even dinner theater. What, they sell whole wheat brownies and little bags of nuts and raisins. It's snack theater. It's Shakespeare for

squirrels. Wait, just answer me one question, one simple thing: why? Why are you doing this? Are you broke?

ANDREW. No. I have savings.

GARY. Is there a bet involved?

ANDREW. No!

GARY. Andy — are you in some sort of trouble?

ANDREW. Yes Gary, that's it, you finally hit it. Joe Papp has my parents.

GARY. *Hamlet.* Andy, I have to say this, 'cause we're buds, and I cherish that budship — but think reputation. Word on the street. When folks — let's call 'em Hollywood — when they hear that you're doing the greatest play in the English-speaking world, they're gonna know you're washed up!

ANDREW. Gary ...

GARY. I'm serious. You haven't had offers? Nothing? What about the commercials? That Trailburst crap?

ANDREW. Gary, have you ever seen those ads? Have you seen what I have to work with?

BARRYMORE. What?

GARY. A puppet. A furry little chipmunk. It's cute.

ANDREW. It's a *hand puppet*. (*To Barrymore.*) Have you ever worked with a puppet? There's some guy, kneeling down near your crotch, working the puppet. And he's doing a chipmunk voice, into a microphone. And the guy, the chipmunk operator, he says, (*In a high-pitched, cutesy chipmunk voice.*) "Oh Andy, can I have a Trailburst Nugget?" And I say no, they're for people, not chipmunks. And he starts ... to cry. And I ... (*Andrew can't quite continue.*)

BARRYMORE. You what?

ANDREW. (*Mortified.*) I ... kiss him. On the top of his little chipmunk head.

GARY. It's great!

ANDREW. It's disgusting! It's humiliating! I didn't spend four years in college and two in drama school to end up comforting someone's fist! It's not even a decent product. Trailburst Nuggets are like sawdust dipped in chocolate, and they have more calories than lard.

GARY. And that's why you're doing *Hamlet*?