

"I Hate Hamlet"

written by Paul Rudnick

(His New York apartment is literally haunted by the ghost of John Barrymore, and thus, TV star Andrew Rally is persuaded to play Hamlet in Central Park. After the premiere, he evaluates his own performance. It is noted: the monologue must grow extremely passionate. Andrew must be transported back to the previous performance.)

Andrew: Last night, right from the start, I knew I was bombing. I sounded big and phony, real thee and thou, and then I started rushing it, hi, what's new in Denmark? I just could not connect. I couldn't get a hold of it. And while I'm...babbling, I look out, and there's this guy in the second row, a kid, like 16, obviously dragged there. And he's yawning and jiggling his legs and reading his program, and I just wanted to say, hey kid, I'm with you, I can't stand this either! But I couldn't do that, so I just keep feeling worse and worse, just drowning. And I thought, okay, all my questions are answered -- I'm not Hamlet, I'm no actor, what am I doing here? And then I get to the soliloquy, the big job, I'm right in the headlights, and I just thought, oh Christ, the hell with it, just do it!

To be or not to be, that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
and by opposing, end them.

And I kept going, I finished the speech, and I look out, and there's the kid -- and he's listening. The whole audience -- complete silence, total focus. And I was Hamlet. And it lasted about ten more seconds, and then I was in Hell. And I stayed there. But for that one little bit, for that one speech -- I got it. I had it. Hamlet. And only eight thousand lines left to go.