

Turning Point

Emma – Hello Dede. (to the bartender) Champagne please.

Dede – Emma, do you remember the fairy tales we used to take turns reading to Emilia? Like the one about the two princesses? Every time one would open her mouth, out came diamonds and rubies, and every time the other one opened her mouth out came newts and hoptoads. Newts and hoptoads coming out.

Emma – Yes. One of those little toads has already made an appearance.

Dede – Really? When?

Emma – Tonight, in my dressing room when you said I shouldn't have bought that dress for Emilia.

Twice you said it. Just before a performance. I danced better tonight than I have in years.

Dede – So I heard.

Emma – Oh. Another little toad. You must have kept quite a few bottled up all these years.

Dede – No. Embalmed, really.

Emma – No, I think not. Why don't you let them out. I don't have a performance tomorrow.

Dede – Ok. (Holds out her fists) Pick. (Emma picks one) Oh. This is a tiny little one. I'd practically

forgotten him. Why'd you make your best pal doubt herself? And her hubbie? Why Emma?

Why'd you take the chance of lousing up her marriage? Why'd you say to me "You'd better have

that baby cause if you don't you'll never hold onto Wayne". Why'd you say all that? I'm just curious.

Emma – You have a curious memory. But don't we all. As I remember, I said if you had an abortion, you

might lose Wayne.

Dede – No, that's sweet, but that's inaccurate. I remember exactly your words for lo these too many moons,

and eventually I figured out why you said them, because I also remember that you said "Forget about

Michael's ballet, there'll be others." You clever little twinkle toes. You knew a ballet like that comes along

once in a career and you wanted it. Real bad. So you lied to make sure you got what you wanted.

Emma – Dede, I've never had to lie to get what I wanted, I'm too good.

Dede – Really?

Emma – Yes.

Dede – And I suppose if you said “bullshit” you’d say it in French, wouldn’t you?

Emma – If that word came as naturally to me as it does to you I’d have used it several times by now, in English,

and I think it’s more appropriate that you say it to yourself for trying to blame me for what you did.

Dede, the choice was yours. It’s much too late to regret it now.

Dede – Same to you, Emma. You darling.

Emma – I don’t regret mine.

Dede – Then why are you trying to become a mother at your age?

Emma – Oh, that’s not a little toad. That’s rather a large bullfrog. I don’t want to be anyone’s mother.

I think of Emilia as a friend. And one reason I tried to help, stupid me, I thought it would make you

happy if your daughter became what you wanted to be and never could be.

Dede – Meaning you? It’s so lovely to you.

Emma – Well obviously you think so.

Dede – No, and anyway, I doubt Emilia could become you. She's as talented as you are and she works as hard.

There's one thing, dearest friend, that you are that Emilia, poor darling, is not.

Emma – And what, pray tell, is that?

Dede – A killer. You'd walk over anybody and still get a good night's sleep. That's exactly how you got where

you are Emma.

(Emma walks over to Dede and throws her drink in Dede's face)

Dede – Good girl. (She gets up and leaves)

Emma – Dede, (she goes after her) Dede! (Catches up, grabs her arm)

I'm sick to death of your jealousy over this time in....

Dede – So am I!

Emma – Stop blaming your goddamn life on me! You picked it!

Dede – You picked it! You took away my choice! You never let me find out if I was good enough!

Emma – You weren't! You weren't good enough and you knew it, that's why you married Wayne.

Dede – I loved Wayne!

Emma – So much so that you said to hell with your career?

Dede – Yes!

Emma – And got pregnant to prove it?

Dede – Yes!

Emma – Oh, get right with yourself! You got married because you knew you were second rate, and

you got pregnant because Wayne was a ballet dancer and in those days that meant queer, so you had to prove he was a man so you had a baby...

Dede – That's a goddamn lie!

Emma – That's the goddamn truth and you know it! You saddled him with a baby and blew his career.

And she's grown up and better than you ever were and you're jealous!

Dede – You're certifiable! You'll use anything for an excuse!

Emma – I'll use what for what excuse?!

Dede – For trying to take away my child!

Emma – I'll return the compliment – you're a liar!

Dede – You're a user, you know that? You're a user and you always have been for your whole life.

First me, then Michael, pretending to be in love Michael. Then Adelaide, and now Emilia.

Emma – How Emilia?

Dede – How Emilia! That display five minutes ago upstairs. Courtesy, embrace, applause, that wasn't for her, that was for you.

You were using Emilia so that everybody in the room would say "Isn't Emma wonderful? Isn't Emma marvelous?"

Emma – That's crazy.

Dede – You know something? You are wonderful – you really are amazing! It is incredible how you keep going on.

You're over the hill and you know it! You're terrified! All you've got are your scrapbooks, your old toeshoes,

and those stupid ridiculous little dogs! Well what are you gonna fill in with, huh? Not my daughter!

You keep your goddamn hands off my daughter!! (Dede shoves her)

Emma – I'm better for Emilia than you are!

Dede – You are?!

Emma – Listen to me! The reason she came to me was because her mother wasn't there. Her mother

was too busy screwing her head off!

Dede – You bitch!! (she slaps her)

(They catfight – pull hair, spank each other, etc.) (Dede starts to laugh, stops fighting, they both laugh)

Oh...if there'd been a photographer here you'd have had a whole new career! (continued laughter)

Emma – Oh! I must look awful! (Continuing to laugh)

Dede – No you don't. You look beautiful.

Emma – Oh dear... (Both continue to laugh)

Dede – I don't know how you do it.

Emma – Give me your comb and I'll show you. I'll take this half, thank you. (Both still laughing)

Oh Dede, I lost an earring.

Dede – I'm sorry.

Emma – Oh, I'm not.

Dede- You're not?

Emma – No. I'm not. Oh...(more laughter)

Dede – Why, that jealousy...it's poison you know...it'll make you a monster.

Emma – It does make one a bear...

Dede – You got off some bull's-eyes.

Emma – So did you. Oh Dede, I don't really remember what I said about having the baby. But I do know I would

have said anything to make sure I got that ballet. I just had to have it. You were good.

Good enough to threaten me.

Dede – Jesus. Oh. Emma, you don't know how many years I wanted to hear you say just that.

(They hug)

SCENE

