

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?

¹Every 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)

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)*