

PAMELA. Any word on Justin?

BINGHAM. No, I'm trying to get some word but they keep putting me on What? Hello? Is this the Emergency Room, I'm calling about a Mr. Justin Hicks.....

OH NO!

MURIEL. *What is it?!*

PAMELA. *What happened?!*

BINGHAM. It's the cafeteria! *Would you please just give me the..* Forget it. I give up.

(He hangs up the phone.)

PAMELA. Where's Louise?

BINGHAM. I'm not sure. She's supposed to call.

MURIEL. Well, she'd better hurry up about it! The match resumes at nine o'clock. That's in fifteen minutes!

PAMELA. Which is why we need to pick a replacement. I started making a list at home.

(i.e. the notebook)

MURIEL. "Replacement?" There are no replacements in golf! What are you talking about?!

PAMELA. *(getting the book)* Just because I knew you were going to be a pain in the neck, I took the liberty of looking it up. Under the inter-club rules, "either team may nominate a replacement for any competitor who is injured before the end of play."

MURIEL. That's ridiculous.

PAMELA. It may be ridiculous, but it's in the book. This is not the PGA, the rule is meant to foster friendly competition, it gives us one last chance to win, so I suggest that you stop complaining about it and *focus on the other members of the club! Harry Teller!!*

BINGHAM. Low 90s.

PAMELA. James Davidson.

BINGHAM. Moves the ball with his foot when he thinks no one's watching.

PAMELA. Herzberg.

BINGHAM. No long game.

PAMELA. Williams.

BINGHAM. No short game.

PAMELA. Stilwell.

BINGHAM. No game at all. Look, none of these people can replace Hicks. They're not good enough. I went through all of them before I found Tramplemain.

(DICKIE walks in.)

DICKIE. Good morning, Quail Valley!

(He's wearing another of his famous sweaters, and this is the loudest and ugliest of them all. To go with it he wears bright paisley pants.)

PAMELA. Did you have to kill it, or did it crawl onto your chest and just give up.

MURIEL. I like his sweater.

DICKIE. Thank you, Muriel. Well, well, what have we here? Shall I call it The Crouching Cup? You know that will look awfully nice in my lobby next to its little brothers and sisters. Love family. Oh dear, you all seem rather gloomy this morning. Not feeling so jaunty, are we Bingham, now that the sock is on the other shoe, eh?

BINGHAM. You mean the shoe is on the other foot.

DICKIE. Sorry?

BINGHAM. You said the sock.

DICKIE. I meant the sock.

BINGHAM. No you meant the shoe.

DICKIE. Don't mean the shoe.

BINGHAM. Of course you mean the shoe, it goes on the foot!

DICKIE. Ah, but you cannot have a shoe without a sock, so there is no difference.

BINGHAM. Of course there's a difference! It's called the *English language*. It has to do with communicating in an orderly fashion and not saying every piece of drivel that happens to come spilling out of your mouth!

DICKIE. Oh, oh, a bit touchy are we? Nerves a bit frayed? You should have taken my little offer of yesterday, eh? Called off the bet. A bird on the wing is worth two in the air? Eh? Hm? Hanh?

BINGHAM. I'm simply not answering you.

DICKIE. Well you'd better say something, because you have ten minutes to choose a replacement for Hicks or you lose the game. Now it seems to me that you might as well forfeit and save us all a bit of time, but I suppose that's up to you. Yes? No? Fine. You have ten minutes.

(He starts to exit.)

I wouldn't blame yourself too hard. You can't make straw without bricks.

(He exits. MURIEL lets this sink in. Then she picks up two bottles of champagne and a plate of food and says:)

MURIEL. I'll go talk to him. See what I can do.

(She walks out after DICKIE.)

PAMELA. Martin Schneiderman.

BINGHAM. I just want to say, before the prow of the boat shoots heavenward and the entire ship hits bottom, that I appreciate all your efforts on my behalf. Even after last night, which gave new meaning to the term "drunken embarrassment." You're a brick, as the English say. A shot in the arm. I would now sing "You're The Top" by Cole Porter but I'd be arrested under the musical cruelty act.

PAMELA. Are you finished?

BINGHAM. Yes.

PAMELA. Martin Schneiderman.

BINGHAM. Chokes when he's ahead.

PAMELA. _____.*

BINGHAM. He's never ahead.

PAMELA. _____.

BINGHAM. He died over Christmas but he still might be our best prospect.

PAMELA. *(throwing the list on the table.) You'd think there'd be somebody on this Goddamn list!*

(LOUISE hurries in from outside.)

LOUISE. Hi!

BINGHAM. Well?!

PAMELA. How is he?!

LOUISE. Not so good. His arm's broken – they said it was a freak accident – and he's on so many pain killers, he's acting crazy! He's incoherent! He's like flying out the window!

BINGHAM. Tell him to move over, I'll join him.

LOUISE. Any luck with a replacement?!

PAMELA. No.

LOUISE. Geez, it seems incredible. I mean it's not like everybody in the world doesn't play golf these days. You'd think there'd be somebody here at the club.

(They all sit gloomily and sigh. They're at their lowest ebb.)

What about you, Mr. Bingham?

BINGHAM. My last round was a hundred and four.

PAMELA. I have only two sports, drinking and smoking. And if I could do them without lifting my arm, I would.

BINGHAM. You don't play, do you Louise?

* Here and in the space two lines later, theaters should insert the names of local worthies who are familiar to and beloved of the theatre's particular audience – the local mayor, perhaps, or the school board chairman – someone who will be known to the local audience night after night. For example, at the world premiere of the play at the Signature Theatre in Arlington, Virginia, I used the name of the theatre's Artistic Director and it was one of the biggest laughs in the play.