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SF PERUSALS

Samuel French Acting Edition

Ken Ludwig's The Fox On The Fairway

SAMUEL FRENCH

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KEN LUDWIG'S THE FOX ON THE FAIRWAY was first produced by the Signature Theatre (Eric Schaeffer, Artistic Director; Maggie Boland, Managing Director) in Arlington, Virginia from October 12 – November 14, 2010. The production was directed by John Rando, with sets by James Kronzer, costumes by Kathleen Geldard, lighting by Colin K. Billis, and sound by Matt Rowe. The Production Stage Manager was Kerry Epstein and the Production Manager was Timothy H. O'Connell. The cast was as follows:

JUSTIN . . . . . Aubrey Deeker
LOUISE . . . . . Meg Steedle
BINGHAM . . . . . Jeff McCarthy
PAMELA . . . . . Holly Twyford
DICKIE . . . . . Andrew Long
MURIEL . . . . . Valerie Leonard

KEN LUDWIG'S THE FOX ON THE FAIRWAY was subsequently produced by the George Street Playhouse (David Saint, Artistic Director) in New Brunswick, New Jersey on March 25, 2011. The production was directed by David Saint, with sets by Michael Anania, costumes by David Murin, lighting and sound by Christopher J. Bailey. The Production Stage Manager was C. Renee Alexander. The cast was as follows:

JUSTIN . . . . . Reggie Gowland
LOUISE . . . . . Lisa McCormick
BINGHAM . . . . . Peter Scolari
PAMELA . . . . . Amy Hohn
DICKIE . . . . . Michael Mastro
MURIEL . . . . . Mary Testa

FOREWORD

The Fox on the Fairway is a farce, and it was written in homage to the great English farce tradition that began in the 1880s and flowered in the 1920s, '30s and '40s.

A farce, essentially, is a broad comedy where the emphasis is more on the story and the plotting than on the emotional journey of the characters. It typically has a broad, physical, knockabout quality and is filled with recognizable characters who find themselves in precarious situations. Great farces are minutely plotted, and part of the joy we take from a great farce comes from the beauty of the play's architecture. When a complex story ticks along without missing a beat, then fits together perfectly at the end like a Chinese puzzle box, we leave the theater feeling exhilarated. The experience might be described as catharsis through laughter.

Farce on stage begins with Plautus in the 3rd century B.C. Twenty of his plays survive, and Shakespeare used several of them as sources of plot and character in the most overtly farcical of his own plays, including *The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* Farce recurs again and again in the history of British stage drama, from Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* in the 17th century to David Garrick's one-act curtain-raisers in the 18th. In fact, virtually all of the comic masterpieces written at the end of the 18th century, including *She Stoops to Conquer* by Oliver Goldsmith and *The School for Scandal* by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, have strong farcical elements throughout.

The particular tradition that I'm honoring in *Fox* is a kind of comedy that first appeared in 1885-1887 in a number of tremendously successful comedies by Sir Arthur Wing Pinero (the first playwright in history to be knighted). These include *The Magistrate, The Schoolmistress,* and *Dandy Dick.* They are all set in upper-middle-class England amid clerics and judges, teachers and students, youngsters and oldsters, where youth ultimately fools old age and gets what it wants. Close on the heels of these plays, in 1892, appeared what is probably the most successful farce of all time, *Charley's Aunt* by Brandon Thomas. It is the zany story of an Oxford student who dresses up as his friend's aunt in order to help the cause of true love and thwart the older generation.

Beginning in 1922 the playwright Ben Travers wrote over a dozen comedies known as the Aldwych Farces (because most of them were first produced at the Aldwych Theatre in London), including *A Cuckoo in the Nest, Rookery Nook, Plunder* and *Thark.* These featured the same group of actors from play to play, involved amorous uncles, forbidding mothers, opinionated servants and innocent ingénues, and became tremendously popular with the English public. The Travers tradition was then carried on, and indeed enriched, by many of England's finest dramatists, such as J.B. Priestley (in *When We Are Married*), Terence Rattigan (in *When the Sun Shines*) and Noël Coward (in *Blithe Spirit* and *Look After Lulu*). Along the way there

were some outstanding one-offs, like *Tons of Money* by Evans and Valentine, and *See How They Run* by Philip King. (P.G. Wodehouse wrote the greatest farces of all time in this tradition, and he did it for over 75 years during the first three-quarters of the twentieth century. In Wodehouse's case, however, they are in the form of novels and short stories.)

What the plays in this tradition have in common is not only their wildly funny stories and characters, but a firm sense of their own innocence. Their authors were very aware of the sex-fueled, often bitter French farces by Georges Feydeau written in the decades around 1900; but that is not exactly what they wanted to emulate. They wanted Feydeau's extravagant plots, colorful characters and breathless climaxes without the adultery and the pessimism. Thus emerged the singular tradition of British farce.

In *The Fox on the Fairway* I've tried to touch base with some of the specific characteristics of this genre to try and keep the banner flying for what I consider to be an important yet endangered tradition. For example, many of the above-mentioned classics had sporting themes, probably because professional sports have a jaunty yet competitive edge that can bring out the best (and worst) in all of us. Some of the farces in this tradition revolve around bets; many of them concern marriages on the brink of disaster; some involve authority figures brought down to earth; and all of them concern young love fighting for survival.

It is important to put this genre into its own context. If it is judged – wrongly – in comparison to emotional comedies (say *Twelfth Night* or *Private Lives*) or intellectual comedies (say *Volpone* or *Major Barbara*), critics who don't understand the genre will find it wanting in emotion and intellect. If it is judged in comparison to the edgy farces of Joe Orton and Alan Bennett (say *Loot* or *Habeas Corpus*), it will not be found savage enough. The joy of the farces by Travers and Priestley, Pinero and Thomas, is in their plotting, wordplay, rhythm and exuberance. They all have a breezy quality that is intentional. For me, these plays reach a genuine depth of artistic merit, but it is the kind of depth we associate with great technique – in painting, for example, with composition, brushwork, and the choice of subject matter. If a critic finds Charley's Aunt too "frivolous," then he has not entered the theater with the right critical tools.

Finally, I've written this play not only as an homage to the earlier tradition, but also as a reminder of the values that the tradition embodies, things like innocence, humor, good sportsmanship and honor. My hope is that it is still possible to come together in a darkened theater and embrace these values with a sense of joy. If so, there may be hope for us yet.

Ken Ludwig
April 2011

I encourage theaters to put this Foreward into their programs and press packets. To download an electronic copy, please visit The Fox On The Fairway *web page at www.kenludwig.com.*

CHARACTERS

JUSTIN

LOUISE

BINGHAM

PAMELA

DICKIE

MURIEL

SETTING

The Tap Room of Quail Valley Country Club, this year.

For Olivia and Jack

ACT ONE

Scene One

(We're in the Tap Room of Quail Valley Country Club on a summer's day this year. There's a bar at the back, a sofa, a chair, and a large picture window [the fourth wall] looking out on the golf course. A bag of golf clubs is propped in the corner. It's a beautiful room at a beautiful club.)

(The room has five exits/entrances. French doors upstage lead out to a patio and then the golf course. Through them we can see the 18th hole in all its glory. Stage right of the French doors is a door to a closet. Stage left of the French doors is the bar. The bar is flanked by two doors, which lead to the kitchen as well as other parts of the club, including the director's office. One or both of these doors can be swinging. Finally, down right, there is a hallway. It leads to other parts of the club, and there is a blue chair [out of sight] near the end of it.)

(As the lights come up, a sort of prologue begins involving most of our characters. It consists of a series of lines about the game of golf, which are said in motion, to the audience, as the characters begin the action of the play.)

(First, **JUSTIN**. *He's about 25 years old, offbeat, sweet, anxious, a bundle of nerves with unruly hair. At the moment, he's excited about some news he has to deliver. He's dressed up (for* **JUSTIN***) in a sport coat and tie, and he runs in from the outside patio.)*

JUSTIN. Louise!…Louise?!

(He turns to the audience:)

As-as-as Mark Twain once said, "Golf is nothing but a good walk spoiled." *Louise?!*

(He runs out. **LOUISE***, a waitress at the club, now hurries in from the kitchen. She's a knockout – 23, leggy, good-natured, and a little ditzy. She's in her own world which is very innocent and wonderful to visit.)*

LOUISE. Justin?…Justin?!…

(to the audience)

Golf is easy. The first thing you do is buy clothes that don't match.

(She hurries out. As she goes, **DICKIE BELL** *and* **HENRY BINGHAM** *enter from opposite sides. They are the Executive Directors of rival country clubs, both in their mid 40s. They glare at each other, then turn to the audience:)*

DICKIE. I'm not saying my golf game is bad but if I grew tomatoes, they'd come up sliced.

BINGHAM. Golf spelled backwards is flog. Think about it.

(As they go, **PAMELA***, 39, beautiful, tanned, and very sophisticated, walks through on her way to a board meeting. To the audience:)*

PAMELA. Golf and sex are the only things you can enjoy without being good at them.

JUSTIN. *(off) Louise?*

*(***PAMELA** *turns and hears* **JUSTIN** *and smiles.)*

PAMELA. *(to the audience)* And so we begin.

(This signals the beginning of the play proper, and the lights change. As **PAMELA** *disappears,* **JUSTIN** *hurries into the room looking for* **LOUISE***.)*

Louise, guess what?! I have surprise for y -… Louise?…Louise?!

LOUISE. *(off) Justin?*

(Simultaneously, as **JUSTIN** *goes out through the door to the left of the bar,* **LOUISE** *comes in through the door to the right of the bar.)*

Justin, I -…Justin?

JUSTIN. *(off)* Louise, I've got to talk to you! Our entire lives are at stake!

(She goes off through the door to the right as he comes in through the door to the left.)

Louise?

LOUISE. *(off)* Justin?!

(And he heads off through the door to the right, as she comes on through the door to the left:)

JUSTIN. *(off)* Louise?!

LOUISE. Justin, I'm in the Tap Room. I'm standing just in front of the bar near the window!

*(***JUSTIN** *enters through the door on the left.)*

JUSTIN. There you are.

LOUISE. Justin! What are you doing here? And look at you, you're all dressed up. What is it?!! What's going on?!!

JUSTIN. Don't I get a kiss first?

LOUISE. Oh, sorry.

(She puts her hand on the back of his neck and gives him what looks like the best kiss of the century. It's totally unselfconscious and enormously sexy. She releases him as matter-of-factly as she kissed him and he reels backwards.)

So what's up?

JUSTIN. I'm-I'm-I'm-I have a surprise for you.

LOUISE. I love surprises.

JUSTIN. I know you do. Well, the first thing is…I-I work here.

LOUISE. Where?

JUSTIN. Here at Quail Valley. Isn't it great?! I work for Mr. Bingham. I'm his new assistant. So now we can see each other all the time!

LOUISE. *The* Mr. Bingham? As in the head of the club?

JUSTIN. Yeah. Isn't it something?

LOUISE. Justin, that's fantastic! When did you start?

JUSTIN. About five minutes ago. And I haven't even been fired yet!

LOUISE. That is so great! But how did you get the job?

JUSTIN. Well, a few days ago I-I stopped by the club to say hi, and I saw Mr. Bingham chasing some man across the ninth green, trying to hit him with a 7-iron. He was shouting "You incompetent bungler!" – so just to be funny I said, "You should use a pitching wedge so when you hit him you'll get more loft," and he turned to me and said, "Would you like a job, because any moment now there'll be an opening," and so he gave me an interview!

LOUISE. Oh, wow. Then it must have gone well.

JUSTIN. It went like a dream! I-I told him how much I love golf and I think that impressed him. I mean not that I'm allowed to play here, as an employee.

LOUISE. Did you tell him your scores?

JUSTIN. Yeah. He said what did you shoot the last time you played and I told him the truth – it was a hundred and thirty-six – and he laughed so hard that he spit up his coffee. So at least I put him in a good mood.

LOUISE. Well, I think you play very well.

JUSTIN. Thanks. *You* played for a while.

LOUISE. Not as well as you. I'm not *that* good.

JUSTIN. Aw. Anyway, he told me all about the job and said I'd have to work really hard.

LOUISE. I'm not surprised. He's tough as nails. Somebody told me he eats barbed wire for breakfast, but I said that's not possible, it's not on the menu. I also think he's unhappy in his personal life.

JUSTIN. Is he married?

LOUISE. Yeah. He calls her Lady Voldemort, She of Darkness. But you know this is tournament weekend, so if he hired you now he really must have confidence in you.

JUSTIN. Tournament weekend?

LOUISE. Yeah. Every year we play Crouching Squirrel Country Club for the Inter-Club Championship. It's a really big deal. Sort of like Troy versus Greece in the 8th century B.C.

JUSTIN. Night school?

LOUISE. We're studying the Homeric epic. I'm reading *The Iliad*. Our teacher asked us what *use* we thought it would be, studying Homer, and I said maybe picking up old blind Greek men. But he said we should compare the story to our everyday lives and this tournament has turned out to be like perfect!

"O hear thou Gods of the game of sticks
And little dimpled balls,
For thou hast pitted Crouching Squirrel
Against Quail Valley
And the greens this day are tricky!"

That's part of my term paper, I'm writing a sort of ode to golf. And Quail Valley is just like Troy cause we always lose.

JUSTIN. Always?

LOUISE. For the past five years. And Mr. Bingham gets really upset about it. Between you and me, I think he puts money on it. Muchacho dolores.

JUSTIN. Listen, I haven't even told you the *big* surprise yet.

LOUISE. You haven't?

JUSTIN. See, now that I have a full-time job, I have a salary, right? And-and you have a salary. So you see what that means?

LOUISE. …Two salaries?

JUSTIN. Right…and with two salaries, I guess we can afford to…

(He takes a ring box out of his pocket and opens it. Then he gets on one knee. Her jaw drops.)

Louise Margaret Heindbedder, will you marry me?

LOUISE. Oh, Justin! Oh! Yes! Yes! Yes! A hundred and forty-seven times yes!!

(She kisses him and hugs him and dances around the room.)

Oh, Justin! Oh look at this *ring*.

JUSTIN. It was my grandmother's.

LOUISE. Wow.

JUSTIN. It's been in my family for over 40 years.

LOUISE. Oh my God. Oh, Justin, you've made me the happiest woman in this room! Let's make out!

*(***LOUISE** *starts getting very enthusiastic with* **JUSTIN**. *She kisses him with passion and runs her fingers through his hair. Then she starts removing his belt.* **JUSTIN** *can't help responding and has his hands all over her – at which point* **MR. BINGHAM** *enters. He's carrying a framed photo of a golfer. He watches them for a moment.)*

BINGHAM. …Excuse me?

JUSTIN & LOUISE. *Ahhhh!*

JUSTIN. Mr. Bingham, I-I-I was looking for you!

BINGHAM. And you thought you might find me in Miss Heindbedder's brassiere?

JUSTIN. No. No, no. This is special!

LOUISE. He's telling the truth!

BINGHAM. You know this could be a record. Hired and fired in ten minutes.

JUSTIN. No! No sir, listen, I-I-I just asked Louise to marry me.

BINGHAM. And did she say yes or was that your consolation prize?

LOUISE. I said yes. I mean I'm in love with him!

BINGHAM. You know that's genuinely touching. I'm very moved. Inside. My giblets are doing a little dance of joy. But may I remind you that this is a country club and not a cathouse, and that if anyone else had walked through this door and seen your live demonstration of "The Kama Sutra," *I would have had to FIRE BOTH OF YOU!*

JUSTIN. I'm sorry, sir.

LOUISE. Me too!

BINGHAM. Miss Heindbedder you may go. Or would you like one last grope to keep you going until lunch time.

LOUISE. …I'm fine sir.

(She exits.)

JUSTIN. Sir, I'm-I'm very sorry, only we just got engaged, sir. Pretty soon I'll be a married man!

BINGHAM. Oh aren't you lucky. Marriage. Such a wonderful state. The state of marriage. I believe it's located above Alaska. Same climate but in my case there's no drilling allowed.

JUSTIN. Aw, you're putting me on, aren't you sir. As they say these days, "You're messing with my head."

BINGHAM. Wouldn't that be a pleasure. But no, not today, because today of all days I will let nothing spoil the fun.

JUSTIN. Is there something special happening, sir? I-I know it's Tournament Weekend.

BINGHAM. It is indeed.

JUSTIN. Do you think we have a chance, sir?

BINGHAM. "Do we have a chance?" No, Hicks, we don't have a chance. We have a shoe-in.

JUSTIN. A new member, sir?

BINGHAM. A new member indeed. The fellow's name is Tramplemain. There he is. Look at that extension. Mwa.

(He kisses the picture he carried in.)

And he is the nicest man in the entire world. He joined the club about a month ago, he's in finance, I think, plays golf as a hobby and his last four rounds were 75, 73, 76, and *71! Ha!*

(He casually takes a picture of another golfer off the wall and drops it in the trash, then puts up Tramplemain's picture in its place.)

JUSTIN. So what happens next? We just start the tournament?

BINGHAM. Not quite. In about five minutes we have the "Signing Ceremony." The Director of Crouching Squirrel, my counterpart, a man named Richard Bell, who, I might add is the lowest chiseling son of a bitch who ever walked the earth, and I say that with all due respect, arrives in one of his ugly sweaters and we sign the Tournament Book, thereby confirming the names of the players. Then he and I shake hands, I excuse myself, I wash my hand and we're off and running.

(He glances out the window.)

Ah, here he comes now. You can always tell it's him from the heavy shoes he wears. They're meant to hide the cloven hooves inside the *Dickie Bell, how are you Dickie Bell.*

*(***DICKIE BELL** *enters. He's an unpleasant man full of bonhomie. He's wearing the ugliest bright yellow sweater in existence.)*

DICKIE. Hello Henry, just look at you, don't you look marvelous! A little tired, though, eh? Around the eyes? You've got to stop working so hard, old boy. It's just too late. Life has passed you by, eh? Ha ha ha ha ha ha!

BINGHAM. Nice sweater, Dickie. Very understated.

DICKIE. Do you like it? It's called Positano yellow, I believe.

BINGHAM. Ah yes. Italian word for vomit, I think.

JUSTIN. Hel-hello.

BINGHAM. So sorry. Dickie Bell, Justin Hicks.

DICKIE. Capital. Just capital to meet you.

BINGHAM. "Capital?" Are you English today?

JUSTIN. Would you like a drink? I-I can –

DICKIE. Don't mind if I do. So what if it's early. So's the worm. Otherwise he wouldn't catch anything.

BINGHAM. You mean the bird.

DICKIE. Sorry?

BINGHAM. You said the worm.

DICKIE. I meant the worm.

BINGHAM. No you meant the bird.

DICKIE. Didn't mean the bird.

BINGHAM. Of course you did. The early *bird* catches the *worm.*

DICKIE. Yes, but if the worm wasn't up even earlier, the bird couldn't catch him. So the worm's the early one. Right, eh? Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!

BINGHAM. Oh that's excellent, Dickie. You could go on stage with that one.

JUSTIN. Maybe I should, uh –

BINGHAM. Yes, of course, I'll see you later.

*(***JUSTIN** *exits.)*

So, Dickie, how's it going?

DICKIE. Oh I can't complain and who'd listen anyway, eh? Ha? Big day of golf ahead. Mm? Love golf.

(He looks out the 4th wall toward the golf course.)

And how's the wife? God, I love Muriel, she's such a strong woman. Like a Sherman Tank. No feet, she has treads on the bottom, churning forward over the landscape.

(He makes a tank-going-over-terrain noise.)

Keeps you in line, eh? Ha ha! Love that.

BINGHAM. I'm sure you do.

DICKIE. Now, now, it's just a joke, we can all take a joke from time to time, eh? And speaking of jokes, how's your team this year?

BINGHAM. …I beg your pardon?

DICKIE. I said how's your golf team. Speaking of jokes.

BINGHAM. Are you honestly standing here in *my* tap room, drinking *my* liquor and insulting my club?!!

DICKIE. Now, now I didn't say you don't have a chance. It's golf, eh? Drives, chips, putts, who knows what could happen.

BINGHAM. *(bravely)* Yes, of course, you're right. In fact, just to show you I'm not a sore loser, I suppose I should put a little money on it, shouldn't I.

DICKIE. Now there I agree with you. A bit of joustering I call it. A clash of arms. So what do you say? How much?

BINGHAM. Oh I don't know. You do have the better players of course.

DICKIE. Not necessarily! Where's your spirit? Let's hear it for Quail Valley. Chucka chucka chucka!

BINGHAM. Chucka chucka chucka!

DICKIE. So what do you say, shall we call it ten?

BINGHAM. Well –

DICKIE. Ten thousand dollars, straight up, no odds.

BINGHAM. Ten thousand dollars! Oh, I couldn't.

DICKIE. Well, if it's too much money –

BINGHAM. Let's make it twenty. I mean why not. What's a little wager between friends, hm?

DICKIE. Well now, if you're talking twenty, I suppose we should say thirty.

BINGHAM. Forty.

DICKIE. Fifty.

BINGHAM. A hundred.

DICKIE. A hundred thousand?

BINGHAM. What's the matter? Afraid, are we? Not man enough? Oh, Dickie, you disappoint me.

DICKIE. I'll tell you what. I'll go for a hundred thousand dollars on one condition. That if I lose, I'll pay you *two* hundred thousand dollars, but if you lose you pay me a hundred thousand and throw in your wife's antique shop.

BINGHAM. …Muriel's shop?

DICKIE. Muriel. Your wife. Big woman. Wears camouflage.

BINGHAM. Her antique shop?

DICKIE. Ye Olde Crock. Now I know it's not worth a hundred thousand, but I've always had a fondness for it. I like all that wood, the old tables, mirrors.

BINGHAM. But she loves that shop. She lives for it. If anything happened to it, she'd kill me. She'd murder me. I'd be a dead golfer.

DICKIE. Oh all right, I understand. Get on her bad side and she might shoot you with those swivel guns near the hatch. "A-a-a-a-a-a-a!" So let's just call it off, no bets, just golf.

BINGHAM. We can still bet the cash, of course.

DICKIE. Nah. Why bother. You know me, I don't like to go halves.

BINGHAM. Oh come on. Make it interesting. A hundred each way. Or seventy-five. Or fifty.

DICKIE. Nah. Not worth it. Cheers. I'll come back later and sign the book.

(He heads for the door and walks out.)

BINGHAM. …All right.

DICKIE. *(returning)* What's that?

BINGHAM. I'll do it. One hundred against two hundred.

DICKIE. And you throw in The Olde Crock?

BINGHAM. My wife?

DICKIE. The shop.

BINGHAM. Oh. Yes.

DICKIE. Done! Let's shake on it. Ha ha! What a man. Congratulations. You got me again, you devil. Shall we sign the bookage? Give it the old Johnny Hancocks?

BINGHAM. Oh let's. Why not. Then we'll have the whole day ahead of us just for golf.

*(***DICKIE** *signs the book.)*

DICKIE. Ah, I see you have Tramplemain down here.

BINGHAM. Oh, you've heard of him, have you?

DICKIE. I've seen him play. Good man. Good short game.

BINGHAM. Oh, I think he's a little better than just "good," don't you? I'd say excellent. Or crackerjack. Wouldn't you say that?

DICKIE. Yes I would actually. But there's a problem here. With Tramplemain.

BINGHAM. Well, let's see. Did I spell it wrong? Wrong color ink? I'm sure I can fix it.

DICKIE. No, it's not that. It's just that you've got him in the wrong column. He's playing for us.

BINGHAM. …I beg your pardon?

DICKIE. Tramplemain joined Crouching Squirrel yesterday afternoon. And resigned from Quail Valley. I'm sure you'll find his letter in your mail this morning.

BINGHAM. …What did you say?

DICKIE. I said Tramplemain changed country clubs. He's playing for us now.

BINGHAM. But he can't do that.

DICKIE. Oh come now Henry, anybody can resign from one club and join another.

BINGHAM. But…but…Now wait a second! You put him up to this, didn't you?

DICKIE. Now, now.

BINGHAM. And you arranged the timing!

DICKIE. That's hardly the point –

BINGHAM. Of course it's the point! You come in here and make a bet when I think I have Tramplemain and then you…You're trying to cheat!!

DICKIE. Oh stop it, Henry. It's a free country. We have the Bill of Rights and Wrongs.

BINGHAM. Yes, but…But! Ha ha! BUT! We have *rules*, don't we? Inter-club *rules* that were written fifty years ago. Wait, they're right over here, look!

(He pulls a rule book off a shelf, then flips madly to the right page.)

BINGHAM. *(cont.)* "Except in the case of injury, you may not introduce a *new name* into the Tournament Club Book within less than twenty-four hours before start of play." Ha ha ha ha ha ha! Here it is, in black and white! We start playing in twenty minutes, Tramplemain is a new name, I win, you lose, end of discussion.

DICKIE. Well, you've got the rule correct, old man, but I didn't break it. You see we're *not* introducing a new name into the Book. Tramplemain's name is right there, it's merely in the wrong column. So we're easily within the rules, twenty-four hours, spelled correctly, in the book.

(He heads for the door and spots the mail.)

Ah, look at this. Today's mail, and there it is. From Tramplemain. See you on the links. And say hello to Muriel for me!

(He makes his tank-over-terrain noise as he exits.)

*(***BINGHAM** *tears open the letter and reads it. Then sits down, weak at the knees. He starts shaking violently.)*

BINGHAM. Jesus Christ.

(He calms himself, thinks for a moment, and hurries to the phone and dials.)

Hello, *hello!*…Yes, put Roger Paisley on please. It's Henry Bingham. …*Henry Bingham, one of his oldest clients do you need a hearing aid, you old bat?!!*…Ah, Roger, it's Henry here. I was wondering, as my banker, if you might do me a favor. I'd like to take out a second mortgage on the house and…Oh not too much, let's say two hundred thousand. Oh and by the way, make sure you don't use the Olde Crock for any of the collateral…No, not Muriel, the shop. You know Mu –…Hm? What? Say that again? Who wants to buy her shop?…But they're developers. Why would they – ?…Tear it down and put up a shopping mall? Well I'm sure she'd never agree to –…two million d -? Now let me get this straight: You say that Bell and Son Builders are offering to pay two million dollars for Muriel's antique shop so they can tear

it down and…Did you say Bell and Son? That wouldn't be run by Dickie Bell, the fellow who's director of… Oh my God! So *if* let's say he won the shop in I don't know a wager of some kind, he wouldn't have to *buy* it at all, he could just…*Well why didn't you tell me all this before?!*…Well if the offer came *in* last night you should have *called* me last night!…*Yes,* I'll still need the second mortgage unless Quail Valley Country Club *burns to the ground in the next twenty minutes!*

(He slams the phone down – at which moment, **PAMELA PEABODY** *enters. She's blondly beautiful, about 39, and extremely soigné. Her clothes are impeccable and she has seen it all. Clearly she's a member of the club.)*

PAMELA. Hello, Mr. Bingham.

BINGHAM. Mrs. Peabody. How are you?

PAMELA. Oh I'm all right, but you're not so good, I'm afraid.

BINGHAM. I'm sorry?

PAMELA. I've just come from a meeting of the Club's Executive Committee. Do you want the good news or the bad news first?

BINGHAM. Bad news?

PAMELA. No, I'll start with the good news. The good news is that the committee realizes that it was not your fault that we lost the Inter-Club Cup five years in a row. The bad news is if we lose it again you're fired.

BINGHAM. They can't fire me, I'm a member of the club!

PAMELA. Not if you're fired, apparently.

BINGHAM. But I've run the club for them for the past five years.

PAMELA. Vindictive bastards, aren't they. Drink?

BINGHAM. At 10:15 in the morning?

PAMELA. I know, I got a late start.

(She goes behind the bar and gets a bottle of brandy and pours two glasses. Meanwhile, **BINGHAM** *sits down and puts his head in his hands.)*

PAMELA. *(cont.)* Look, it can't be that bad. We could still win the tournament, couldn't we? We must have some pretty good players.

BINGHAM. *(laughs hollowly)* Not good enough. It's medal play and now they have Tramplemain.

PAMELA. Tramplemain?

BINGHAM. Best player in the city. It was arranged by your ex-husband, the all-time snake in the grass Dickie Bell.

PAMELA. Snake in the grass is too kind for him. What about venomous weasel-toad jackal from hell.

BINGHAM. You had a good marriage, then.

PAMELA. *(getting caught up in her feelings)* Lying, adulterous, clawed rat-vulture from the Kingdom of Mordor.… Pissing, fly-specked, warthog-lemur from the Land of *Vomit.*

(catching herself)

Hahahahaha. These are jokes, Mr. Bingham. To cheer you up.

BINGHAM. *(tries vainly to smile)* Yes, of course…

PAMELA. Oh come now. Surely we have someone who can compete with this Tramplemain. What about that boy I just passed on the practice tee? He looks quite good.

BINGHAM. I have no idea who you're talking about.

(We hear the distant thwack of a golf ball. **PAMELA** *goes to the picture window and looks out.)*

PAMELA. There he is. He's still at it.

(Thwack.)

Look at that drive, it's straight as a die.

(Thwack.)

There's another one. That must be 300 yards. I'll bet he has incredible back muscles. Honestly, come look.

*(***HENRY** *sighs and drags to the window. Thwack.)*

See what I mean? The kid's a champion.

(Thwack.)

BINGHAM. Oh my God, that's Hicks.

(calling through the door)

Hicks!…*Hicks, get in here!*

JUSTIN. *(off)* Yes, Mr. Bingham!

PAMELA. Who's Hicks?

BINGHAM. He's my new assistant. Hicks!

JUSTIN. *(off)* Coming!

*(***JUSTIN** *rushes in.)*

Oh, sir, I'm-I'm-I'm so sorry! I-I-I was passing the practice tee and there was this driver lying there on the ground and I thought I'd try just one shot and-and-

PAMELA. Where did you learn to hit like that?

JUSTIN. I-I started early, I guess.

BINGHAM. What's your handicap?

JUSTIN. *My* handicap? About scratch.

BINGHAM. *Scratch?*

PAMELA. What do you shoot? Normally, on a good round?

JUSTIN. Oh I don't know…About 69 or so. I shot a 64 once at Lakeview in Connecti –

BINGHAM. Oh stop it! You told me you shot a hundred and thirty-six!

JUSTIN. I did. It was a tournament and we played two rounds. I shot a 69 and a 67. It would have been 66 but I blew the last putt. I could have killed myself. But honestly, sir, I-I-I'll do anything to make it up to you. I mean I know I shouldn't have even picked up the club, but I'm so happy about Louise and all and I –

BINGHAM. *Shut up! I need to think!* This could be…Wait a second. Are you lying to me?

JUSTIN. No, sir. Why would I –

BINGHAM. Here. Take this.

(He hands **JUSTIN** *a putter that was in the corner, and he puts a golf ball on the carpet in front of him.)*

Do you see that blue chair? Down the hall? Hit the right leg.

JUSTIN. You mean putt it?

BINGHAM. No, Hicks, I mean walk over and break it in half with your head *of course I mean putt it!!*

JUSTIN. Sorry.

*(***JUSTIN** *has a short, eccentric pre-shot routine – he shakes one foot, then the other, etc. – then lines up the putt and hits it. We watch the ball travel across the room, through the doorway, there's a pause while the ball keeps traveling and clunk.* **BINGHAM***'s eyes gleam.)*

BINGHAM. Do it again.

(Same drill. Ball on the floor, swing, roll, disappears, clunk.)

JUSTIN. *(happily)* If you'd like, I can do it left-handed.

BINGHAM. Oh my God.

PAMELA. Tell me, why aren't you a pro or something?

JUSTIN. Oh, please, I'm not *that* good. And I'm inconsistent! One round it's 69, the next round it's 66.

*(***PAMELA** *and* **BINGHAM** *exchange a look.)*

See, I get upset under pressure and if something bad happens, I can go to pieces!

BINGHAM. All right, listen to me Hicks and listen *very carefully.* You are going to play for Quail Valley today in the Inter-Club Tournament and it starts in less than ten minutes! Now let me make something entirely clear. I want you to play the best golf you have ever played in your whole life. I want you – *look at me!* – I want you focused, I want you sharp, I want you at the top of your game. If you win the tournament, I'll arrange playing privileges for you here at the club year-round for the rest of your life and I'll pay for your honeymoon. *However,* if you do *not* win the tournament, I will fire you from this job, I will ruin any possible chance you have of ever marrying Louise, and you will die alone and childless without the price of a golf ball in your pocket *IS THAT CLEAR?!*

PAMELA. I thought golfers were supposed to feel relaxed before playing.

BINGHAM. *Then feel relaxed, goddamit!*

JUSTIN. *Yes sir, I'm relaxed!!*

BINGHAM. Now go to the pro shop, pick some clubs and an outfit and charge it to me.

JUSTIN. You, sir?

BINGHAM. Yes!

JUSTIN. Is there a team color I need to choose for the outfit?

BINGHAM. No, just anything, pick what you want.

JUSTIN. Blue shorts?

BINGHAM. Blue shorts are fine.

JUSTIN. And I saw this sort of red-bricky-colored polo shirt as I walked by the –

BINGHAM. *PICK WHATEVER YOU WANT, I DON'T CARE IF IT'S A SUN DRESS, JUST PUT IT ON AND GET BACK HERE!!*

JUSTIN. *Yes sir!*

*(***JUSTIN** *runs out.)*

PAMELA. Now he's relaxed.

BINGHAM. Well I'm sorry but this happens to be very important!

PAMELA. I hate to bring this up, but doesn't he have to be elected to membership in order to play in the tournament?

BINGHAM. Good point, good point. All in favor of Justin Hicks say aye.

PAMELA. Henry, I barely know him.

BINGHAM. Pamela, *please*, I need your help! We've known each other since we were children. I've seen you through at least three ma- …

PAMELA. Three marriages? Thank you for that.

BINGHAM. No no. No. No no. I didn't say marriages. I was going to say three mmmmmarvelous terms as Treasurer of the Board!

PAMELA. One term.

BINGHAM. One term.

PAMELA. As Vice President.

BINGHAM. Vice President.

PAMELA. Is there something at stake here I don't know about?

BINGHAM. Well…

PAMELA. You put some money on it, didn't you.

BINGHAM. Yes.

PAMELA. A lot of money.

BINGHAM. Well…Yes.

PAMELA. Oh what the hell, put my name down.

BINGHAM. You're a wonderful woman. I'll go fix the books, they're in my office.

(He rushes off through the club door and **PAMELA** *watches him go.* **PAMELA** *pours herself another glass of brandy as* **DICKIE** *enters. He's still wearing his hideous sweater.)*

DICKIE. Pamela.

PAMELA. Oh my God, now I need two drinks.

DICKIE. I was about to say it's nice to see you again.

PAMELA. And I was about to say get the hell out of here.

DICKIE. Pamela –

PAMELA. Do you realize that if you'd bought that sweater *while* we were married it could have been grounds for divorce all by itself.

DICKIE. I didn't buy it, it was a free gift.

PAMELA. And that should be a lesson to you: never use box-tops to acquire wearing apparel.

DICKIE. Very funny. As it happens, I have a secret admirer who sends them to me in little brown parcels. She signs herself "Scaramouche." I was hoping it was you.

PAMELA. Oh, please, if I ever sent you a package in brown paper it would be ticking.

DICKIE. I don't know what I ever did to you that was so terrible.

PAMELA. How about sleeping with every woman in our neighborhood. You covered the entire subdivision, house by house. It was like watching Sherman march through Georgia.

DICKIE. And you were never unfaithful, I suppose.

PAMELA. Never.

DICKIE. Oh, please.

PAMELA. Never. Not once.

DICKIE. Well, I didn't mean to be!

PAMELA. You didn't mean to be 13 times?

DICKIE. You knew I had an eye for the ladies. Why did you marry me?

PAMELA. I was rebelling against my parents. They said you were a no-good, two-timing, second-rate louse but I said no you were merely dumpy, dull and delusional.

DICKIE. Well, you all got that wrong, didn't you. I believe I've made a little something of myself, eh? Hanh? Director of Crouching Squirrel Golf and Racquet Club.

PAMELA. A job which *I* got you so you'd stop living off me!

DICKIE. That was a court settlement!

PAMELA. That was highway robbery! Three thousand dollars a month.

DICKIE. The judge believed me.

PAMELA. The judge liked you for some bizarre reason.

DICKIE. Of course she liked me. I slept with her.

PAMELA. You slept with the judge?

DICKIE. Mm. And I told her you were promiscuous. She was appalled.

PAMELA. That's it! How much did you bet on this tournament?!

DICKIE. None of your business!

PAMELA. It *is* my business because I'll see to it that you lose every penny of it!

DICKIE. When the swans fly home from cappuccino.

PAMELA. Capistrano, you idiot!

*(***BINGHAM** *hurries in.)*

BINGHAM. I took care of the books –

(sees **DICKIE***)*

And oh my God, I think your sweater's gotten even louder. It seems to change color like a living organism.

DICKIE. You can both insult me all you like, but the fact is I'm about to win a tournament. Now the Starter needs to know who you're putting up against Tramplemain. I assume it's Sullivan and you're moving everybody up a notch.

*(***BINGHAM** *and* **PAMELA** *glance at each other.)*

BINGHAM. No, no, it's not Sullivan. It's one of our fairly newer members. His name is Justin Hicks.

DICKIE. Right, I'll tell them.

(He heads for the door, then pauses.)

Justin Hicks. Isn't that the fellow I met earlier?

BINGHAM. Right.

DICKIE. I had the impression he worked here.

BINGHAM. No, no, he's a member. Full-fledged, good standing. Awfully nice fellow as it happens. Gynecologist, I believe.

DICKIE. *(suspicious)* How long has he been a member here?

BINGHAM. Oh let's see, he's fairly recent, I believe. He applied here last winter, joined up in March and now he's a member.

DICKIE. He applied last winter and joined in March?

BINGHAM. Yes, so what? That's what I said!

DICKIE. Well that's very odd now isn't it considering *that your club has a one-year waiting list for new members! Now what's going on here?! You're pulling a fast one, aren't you?!!*

PAMELA. He's my nephew.

DICKIE. What?

PAMELA. My nephew.

DICKIE. You don't have a nephew. And what's that got to do with it anyway?

PAMELA. Relatives of members don't have waiting periods, and of course I have a nephew, he's my brother's son, but you wouldn't know that because you spent the entire six months of our marriage being promiscuous to a degree unrivalled since the Age of Caligula. So I suggest that you go find one of your flexible admirers and join her on a lawn chair next to the fairway so you can watch Quail Valley beat the crap out of Crouching Squirrel, now get the hell out of here.

DICKIE. To the spoils go the victor and I intend to be one of them.

*(***DICKIE** *exits.)*

PAMELA. Mr. Bingham?

BINGHAM. Yes, Mrs. Peabody.

PAMELA. You and I have a mission.

BINGHAM. We do?

PAMELA. We are going to see to it that Quail Valley wins this tournament and that my ex-husband, Mr. lying, goat-withered, can't-keep-his-zipper-up, wart-sucking adulterer from the Planet Piss-Head loses every penny.

BINGHAM. I love you.

(At which moment, **JUSTIN** *rushes in with* **LOUISE** *and he's wearing a brightly-colored golfing outfit – looking just as ridiculous as a full-dress golfer should.)*

JUSTIN. How do I look?! The truth?!

BINGHAM. Like a Christmas ornament. Now stand up straight!

JUSTIN. *(happily)* Up straight.

PAMELA. Chin up!

JUSTIN. Chin up!

BINGHAM. You're representing Quail Valley, young man, and I want you to go out there and give it your best no matter what!

LOUISE. Don't worry, Mr. Bingham, I know he'll win it. I gave him the best good-luck charm in the world. I kissed his balls!

*(***JUSTIN** *beams happily.)*

It always gives him so much confidence!

PAMELA. I'll bet it does.

LOUISE. And with the help of Aphrodite, goddess of love,
The Trojans spied the long par five and said
"It shall be conquered!"

(From offstage we hear the **STARTER** *speaking over a loudspeaker, which echoes over the course. Like all Starters, he speaks in a monotone.)*

STARTER. *(off)* Ladies and Gentlemen: welcome to the 43rd Annual Golf Tournament between Crouching Squirrel Golf and Racquet Club and Quail Valley Golf and Country Club.

(applause, off)

BINGHAM. All right, come on, come on…what are you doing?!

*(***JUSTIN** *is on the floor doing push-ups.)*

JUSTIN. It's part of my pre-shot routine.

BINGHAM. Not now, you idiot! Just get out there and play golf!

JUSTIN. Right-o!

*(***JUSTIN** *and* **LOUISE** *hurry happily out the door.)*

BINGHAM. *(to* **PAMELA***)* Are you coming?

PAMELA. I'll watch from here.

*(***BINGHAM** *hurries out.)*

STARTER. *(off)* For our first match this morning we have Mr. Steve Tramplemain and Mr. Justin Hicks. Will Mr. Hicks please come forward?

BINGHAM. *(off)* We're right here! All set! No problem!

*(***PAMELA** *wanders to the picture window in the fourth wall and looks out.)*

STARTER. *(off)* The first hole is a short par 4 playing two hundred and eighty-four yards to the front of the green. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Justin Hicks.

JUSTIN. *(off)* Hey, watch this!

SPECTATORS. *(off)* Go, Justin!

Go, Justin!

STARTER. *(off)* Will Mr. Hicks please refrain from doing push-ups in the tee box.

(More laughter off – as **BINGHAM** *hurries in through the door.)*

BINGHAM. I can't watch, I just can't watch.

PAMELA. Shhh!

BINGHAM. Couldn't he just act normal like everybody else?!

PAMELA. Come look. He's addressing the ball.

STARTER. *(off)* Quiet, please. Quiet on the tee.

(Silence. Thwack. Enthusiastic cheers from the crowd:)

SPECTATORS. *(off)* All right, Justin!

Get in the hole!

PAMELA. Oh my God, what a shot!

BINGHAM. *(hurrying to the window)* Let's see. Where?

PAMELA. There! It's heading straight for the green!

BINGHAM. Holy Hannah.

PAMELA. He could reach it in one!

BINGHAM. Come on, come on…

PAMELA. Come on, just a little farther…

BINGHAM. A little farther…

PAMELA. *…COME ON, YOU SON OF A BITCH!*

(Thump. It lands on the green.)

He did it. He's on the green. We could actually win this thing.

BINGHAM & PAMELA. *(scream) YES!!!*

*(***PAMELA** *has jumped onto* **BINGHAM** *and is straddling his stomach with her legs – and they realize it just at the moment of – blackout!)*

End of Scene

(Lively music takes us into…)

Scene Two

(That afternoon, about 6:30.)

(When the lights come up, **BINGHAM** *is alone in the Tap Room, setting up an ice bucket.)*

BINGHAM. *(singing)* "Zip ah dee doo dah,
Zip ah dee ay,
My oh my what a
Wonderful day!"

(There is a boom of thunder, and **BINGHAM** *looks up.)*

STARTER. *(off)* There will be a short rain delay, so please take shelter. After 16 holes the score remains Tramplemain at minus one and Hicks at minus nine.

BINGHAM. "Plenty of sunshine
Coming my way,
Zip ah dee doo dah
Zip ah dee ay!"

*(***PAMELA** *appears at the door in a new outfit.)*

PAMELA. You sound cheerful.

BINGHAM. *(turning)* Hello, Mrs. Peabody and oh my God you look glamorous.

PAMELA. Why thank you Mr. Bingham. I thought I should get into the spirit of things.

BINGHAM. Well that's certainly the spirit of something all right. A little champagne? De petit caviar?

PAMELA. Aren't we counting our chickens a bit?

BINGHAM. With an 8-shot lead on the 17th? It's true, of course, golf being so dangerous, that he might run afoul of the famous wild gophers of the 18th green.

*(***PAMELA** *laughs – at which moment* **DICKIE** *enters.)*

DICKIE. Ah, Bingham—I was hoping to catch you. Hello, Pamela.

PAMELA. Richard.

DICKIE. Now listen, Bingham, I have a deal for you that you can't refuse. Now there is no doubt in my mind that this Justin Hicks of yours is a put-up job, but I will permit the game to go forward to its natural conclusion provided we call off the bet. Now you certainly can't ask fairer than that!

*(***BINGHAM** *laughs in his face and happily leaves the room.)*

DICKIE. Bingham! Bingham, listen to me!

*(***DICKIE** *runs after him. As he goes,* **LOUISE** *enters from the kitchen carrying a tray with snacks, which she starts distributing around the room.)*

PAMELA. Hello, Louise.

LOUISE. H-hi…

(Sniff. There's a catch in her voice and she wipes a tear from her eye. She's been crying. She starts refilling all the nut and snack bowls but she's pouring so much that the bowls overflow and there are nuts everywhere. She barely notices. She's so distraught that she can hardly breathe.)

PAMELA. Louise, is something the matter?

LOUISE. N-no.

(sniff)

Not really. I mean it's nothing important, I'm sure it will…it'll-it'll –

(She starts to cry.)

PAMELA. Oh, Louise dear, sit down. Can you talk about it?

LOUISE. *(haltingly, through her tears)* It's just that I…I…*I lost my engagement ring!!*

PAMELA. You lost it?

*(***LOUISE** *nods, unable to speak.)*

Are you sure?

(Nod, nod.)

LOUISE. *(gasping for air)* I – I was in the bathroom and the ring was loose – I told Justin it fit perfectly but it didn't – and as I was flushing the toilet, I pushed the handle and it fell off into the water *and I flushed my engagement ring down the toilet!!*

PAMELA. Louise, calm down –

LOUISE. *The toilet!!*

PAMELA. *Louise!!* Just listen! Now this is a very big day for Justin and I think you should wait to tell him about it. He has a lot on his mind right now.

LOUISE. Oh, I know that, Mrs. Peabody, and I'd never say anything to him in a million years. I mean, when you get to know him better, you'll see that if he gets upset about anything, he goes right off his game.

PAMELA. …Really?

LOUISE. One time last summer his mother called him in the middle of a round because she had the flu and he-he got so upset he spoiled a 12-point lead in like three holes.

PAMELA. But how could he – ?

LOUISE. He just whacked at the ball like he didn't care. You see, he's very close to his mother.

PAMELA. I see, but –

LOUISE. And I can understand how he feels because I was a foster-child and for a while I didn't even have a mother –

PAMELA. Yes, I see, but –

LOUISE. Though I'll admit that his mother can really get on my nerves sometimes –

PAMELA. *Louise!* I understand. But you're not going to tell him, right?

LOUISE. Right. I'll just keep it all bottled up inside –

(sob)

PAMELA. Good.

LOUISE. And I won't tell *anyone.*

(sob)

PAMELA. Excellent.

LOUISE. Unless he asks me *and then I won't be able to stop myself!*

(She bursts into tears and runs from the room.)

PAMELA. Louise!

(She starts to run after **LOUISE** *when – Ring! It's the telephone. She hesitates for a moment – then grabs the phone.)*

Yes?!

(Squawk!)

Hold on…Mr. Bingham?

BINGHAM. *(off)* Yes?

PAMELA. Your wife's on the phone.

BINGHAM. *(off)* Tell her I'm not here!

(Squawk, squawk!)

PAMELA. She says she heard that.

*(***PAMELA** *puts down the phone and runs after* **LOUISE**. *The moment she's through the door,* **BINGHAM** *enters from the kitchen and picks up the phone.)*

BINGHAM. Now how on earth could you possibly hear that, Muriel? You must have the ears of a Cherokee Indian.

(Squawk, squawk!)

No, I *like* the Cherokee, Muriel. They're very good trackers. We have one as a member and he hasn't lost a ball in ten years.

(Squawk!)

What's that?

(Squawk, squawk, squawk, squawk!)

Yes, I heard you! There's a package being delivered here, priceless vase *for* the store, you won't be *at* the store, you're having a facial and would therefore miss the delivery and I'm to guard it with my life. *Got* it!

(Squawk! Squawk!)

You too, dear, good-bye.

(He hangs up – at which moment, **JUSTIN** *appears at the door to the course. He's carrying a golf club.)*

JUSTIN. Hi, Mr. Bingham.

BINGHAM. Justin! What are you doing here?!

JUSTIN. There's a rain delay.

BINGHAM. Oh right, right, right, of course. Come in. Well.

(He takes a breath and smiles broadly.)

Justin.

JUSTIN. Mr. Bingham.

BINGHAM. Justiiiiiiin.

JUSTIN. Mr. Binghaaaaaam.

(They both laugh happily and slap each other. It's a guy thing.)

BINGHAM. What can I possibly say, young man, but *well done!*

JUSTIN. Thank you, sir.

BINGHAM. Have a cigar.

JUSTIN. I don't smoke, sir.

BINGHAM. Then have two so you can practice.

JUSTIN. Thank you, sir.

BINGHAM. Now Hicks, I want you to use this rain delay to relax and prepare yourself mentally for the final hole.

JUSTIN. Yes, sir.

BINGHAM. I want you to focus and think about nothing but golf. Now close your eyes. Remember, Hicks, golf is not a game, but a way of life. A religion, if you will, with its rules and traditions, its customs and its practices. It says that life is noble and never slovenly. It says that life has grandeur and deeper meaning. It is the game of Sam Snead, of Arnold Palmer and of Jack Nicklaus.

(Both men cross themselves.)

BINGHAM. *(cont.)* It began, of course, with the ancient Egyptians, who used sticks to strike the heads of their enemies. It then reemerged in Scotland in the year of our Lord 1450 at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club

of St. Andrews. At the time, the balls were covered in goat-skin, the players had a mere four clubs to choose from, and the caddies were little drunken Irish people, but at least it was a start; and I want you to think about these traditions as you visualize the putt ahead of you on the 17th green. I want you to *feel* it as the club swooshes like a parabola through the crisp, clean air. Golf is Zen and Zen is Golf. You are a Buddhist now Hicks. Ommmmmmm.

JUSTIN. Ommmmmmm.

BINGHAM. This day is called the Feast of Crispian.

JUSTIN. It is?

BINGHAM. No, you idiot. That's Shakespeare, to inspire you.

JUSTIN. Oh, sorry.

BINGHAM. Ommm.

JUSTIN. Ommm.

BINGHAM. This day is called the Feast of Crispian. We few. We happy few. We band of brothers. Ommmmmmm.

JUSTIN. Ommmmmmm.

BINGHAM. Are you ready now, Hicks?

JUSTIN. I think so, sir.

BINGHAM. Are you going to *win?!*

JUSTIN. *Absolutely, sir!*

BINGHAM. Let me hear the Quail Valley cheer! Chucka, chucka, chucka!

JUSTIN. Chucka, chucka, chucka!

BOTH. *(like a steam train building speed and power)* Chucka, chucka, chucka! Chucka, chucka, chucka! Chucka, chucka, chucka! Chucka, chucka, chucka, chucka, chucka, chucka!! *To victory!!*

(The telephone rings. **JUSTIN** *answers it.)*

BINGHAM. No, don't!

(Squawk!)

JUSTIN. Sir, it's your wife.

BINGHAM. *Yes,* Muriel?

(Squawk!)

Yes, I said I would check with the front desk, wait a moment, it's call waiting.

(Click.)

Yes?…Thank you, I'll be right there.

(Click.)

That was the front desk, Muriel, the package is here, I'll go sign for it.

(Squawk, squawk!)

Fine, come see it whenever you please!

(hangs up; to **JUSTIN***)*

I'll be right back.

(pinching **JUSTIN***'s cheeks)*

What a smile!

*(***BINGHAM** *exits.* **JUSTIN** *is pumped. He marches around the room in triumph humming Hail To The Chief. Then* **LOUISE** *enters with a tray.)*

JUSTIN. Dee-dee-dee-dee, dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dah!!…Louise!

LOUISE. *(hiding her left hand)* H-hi, Justin.

JUSTIN. So what do you think?! Are you proud of me?

LOUISE. Are you kidding? I'm-I'm like busting my buttons just watching you out there.

JUSTIN. Gee, thanks.

*(***LOUISE** *tries to go about her work, but since she can't use one of her hands, she uses her elbow and shoe to try and clear the tables of the nuts she's spilled.)*

LOUISE. And I'm-I'm really glad that there's nothing going on to distract you and all.

JUSTIN. Thanks.

LOUISE. Cause you've got to keep focused, right? So you don't think about other things like...

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