

**18 Holes**  
**By**  
**Gene Kato**

## 18 HOLES

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**18 Holes** would not even be in existence if it not for two extraordinary people:

For My Dad - Mike Kato

Who gave me the 767's, was there when I found the last \$20.00 Driver in the English-speaking world, and has had thousands of hours of conversation with me at the tee-box.

&

For Jessica

Who not only survived the initial workshop with only two days rehearsal, but who tirelessly put in countless hours trying to get the Denver production "just right". You have my deepest thanks and I am forever in your debt.

18 Holes is as much your story as it is mine.

-- Gene Kato, December 22, 2007

**18 Holes** was produced by Next Stage and received its World Premiere on August 1, 2008 at the Aurora Fox Studio Theatre in Aurora, CO. The cast and production crew were as listed below.

CAST

(In order of Appearance)

LYLE-----Daniel Langhoff  
DOUG-----Joey Santos  
HAL-----Robert Michael Sanders  
ARTY-----Joseph Johnson  
IVAN-----Benjamin T. Koucherik  
NATE-----Jason Maxwell  
TRIONA-----L. Corwin Christie  
NORMA-----Kerry Beebe  
ERWIN-----Arthur Goodman  
GERALDINE-----Sharon Kahn-Kahn  
HATTIE-----Rosey Waters  
YVONNE-----Suzanna Wellens  
SYDNEY-----Robin Litt  
PARIS-----Patric Call

PRODUCTION CREW

DIRECTOR-----Jessica Clare  
STAGE MANAGER-----Mary Coan  
SET DESIGNER-----Biz Schaugaard  
LIGHTING DESIGNER-----Karalyn "Star" Pytel  
COSTUME DESIGNER-----Karla Puskas  
SOUND DESIGNER-----Gene Kato  
FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER-----Missy Moore  
PUBLICITY-----Gloria Shanstrom

*The lights come up on a spot far downstage left. A GREENSKEEPER (LYLE) polishes the number "1" on the hole marker. As he speaks to the audience, lights slowly come up on a "green" at the end of the first hole.*

**LYLE.** Golf is a funny game. Never did understand the point when I was younger. Why folks would drive themselves crazy taking a stick that is way too skinny and tryin' to hit a ball that was way too small at a hole that was way too far away was beyond me for a long time. I mean, think about it, if a person were to take a baseball bat and run around in the hills tryin to beat the hell out of a bowling ball, he'd be branded a nut and locked up . . .but golfers . . .they're not crazy. . .they're sophisticated sportsmen. The pillars of society in many instances. People from all walks of life. Every race, age, gender . . .and I mean all of them, because these days it goes way beyond "both". I'm talkin' man, woman, undecided, indeterminable, transsexual, transgender, transcontinental, you name it . . .at one time or another they've been out here on the links pitching grass with a Pitching Wedge and pitching fits in the process. Welcome to Somewhere, TX. Just a hop, skip, and a jump down Highway 288 - a stone's throw away from Houston. I'm surprised you found us. Most folks miss the dirt road. (*He pauses for a moment to stretch*) Oh, I'm sorry. Not sure where my manners were. Didn't introduce myself. My name is Lyle. Just Lyle. Yeah, I do have a last name, but all of you would forget it anyway, so I won't burden you with the vowels and consonants. I've been working here at the Brazoria Bend Golf Course for what seems like a lifetime. You see, my father made me get this job years ago as a summertime thing. Never intended to stay. Hell, I didn't want to be here in the first place. But, I was told that I needed to get outside and get some fresh air. It was supposed to build character or some stupid crap like that. I don't know if it did, but I quickly found the golf course to be much more than just trees, grass, sand, and goose shit. It's a prime breeding ground of true human emotion. You can watch folks be jubilant and defeated all in a matter of seconds. Deals are made and lives are changed

everyday. Right here. Well, maybe not on Hole Number 1, but certainly oftentimes by Hole 18. I mean think about it. You aren't even out here, but CEO's, doctors, and lawyers are out deciding the fate of the world as they ponder on whether to grab an 8-Iron or a 9-Iron, to chip or to putt, to wait it out . . . or to play through. I've seen it all. The best of the best and the worst of the best in perfect (or not so perfect) harmony with nature and each other. . . sounds like quite a show, huh? It can be. *(By now the lights have come up full on the green. LYLE grabs a flag and walks onto the surface. He places the flag in the hole. Two golf balls drop onto the green.)*

Fierce competitors, it looks like. Makes me wish my dad and I would have played more golf when I was younger. Too Bad.

Maybe I would have understood sooner what he was trying to tell me through the game. Golf is not about winning or losing. It's all about the conversation that happens while you're waiting to play.

*(He walks off the green and spins the Number 1 marker around. We are now at Hole 2. LYLE exits. TWO MEN walk onto the green, HAL and DOUG. Both are in their thirties. HAL walks over to the ball closest to the flag. He seems agitated, but insistent on maintaining his composure. DOUG steps onto the green and calls to an offstage player.)*

**DOUG.** You don't have to kill it, Son. Just give it an easy swing and knock it up here.

*(A moment later, a golf ball arches over the men and disappears on the opposite side of the stage.) I said hit it easy! That was way too hard. Easy! (A YOUNG BOY of about eight, ARTY, races across the stage and disappears in a frantic chase to get the ball.)*

Remember, Son . . . !

**ARTY.** I know, Dad! Easy! *(He's gone. DOUG looks up at HAL.)*

**HAL.** So, we're on Hole 2 now. An average game of golf takes 4 hours to play. *(He looks at his watch)* It's 9:00 am. We should be done by. . . what? . . . 6:00?

**DOUG.** I know. I know. I'm really sorry. His mother couldn't take him today and he's my kid. What can I say? *(The ball arches over the men and disappears in the direction they came from.)*

**HAL.** By the way he's swingin' that club... "FORE!" I think would be appropriate ...and I'd learn to say it really loud. *(ARTY races*

*back across the stage and disappears.)*

**DOUG.** Look at that energy. Do you remember when you could run non-stop like that?

**HAL.** Are you kidding? These days I can't even remember remembering when I could run like that. *(HAL putts the ball into the hole. DOUG continues to stare at his son.)*

**DOUG.** Wait a second! Arty! What club are you using?

**ARTY.** *(Offstage)* Putter!

**DOUG.** No! No! No! Arty! You don't slam away at a golf ball with a putter! This is a simple chip! Use the chipper or the pitching wedge! *(ARTY walks onto the green.)*

**ARTY.** It's more fun with the putter.

**DOUG.** I don't care if it's more fun! Golf is not about fun, Arty! It's about playing properly! *(ARTY stares at DOUG for a long moment.)*

**ARTY.** Are you gonna yell at me when I swing? You're gonna break my concentration. I thought you said golf was a thinking man's game?

**DOUG.** It is. So think about what club your gonna use before choosing something as stupid as a putter to pitch with!

**ARTY.** But how can I think if you're yelling at me?

**HAL.** He's got a point, Doug.

**DOUG.** Because I'm older than you and I know how the game is supposed to be played. I'm your Dad. I have experience. So, you listen to me and do what I say.

**ARTY.** Hal, didn't you beat my dad on the first hole?

**HAL.** Um, yeah. Yeah, Arty I . . .did.

**ARTY.** So, maybe I should listen to Hal, Dad.

**DOUG.** What?

**ARTY.** Hal plays better than you do. So, shouldn't I listen to him? *(To HAL)* What club should I use, Hal? *(HAL chuckles and looks from DOUG to ARTY.)*

**HAL.** I think maybe you should listen to your dad, Arty.

**DOUG.** Yeah, listen to your dad . . .Me, Arty! This is a putting green, right?

**ARTY.** Right.

**DOUG.** And when you're putting, you're supposed to use what?

*(Silence from ARTY)*

A putter, Arty! A putter! Now if you're still not on the putting green, you can't putt! That's why it's called the putting green, okay? *(More silence. ARTY walks off the green and disappears.)*

**HAL.** 7:00 at the latest, right? I think we lose light at around 7:15.

**DOUG.** Kids! You know? What seems like simple common sense . . . *(ARTY reappears)*

**ARTY.** Can I ask you something?

**DOUG.** Arty, for cryin' out loud! There are people waiting to play this hole! Will you just hit the damn ball?!

**ARTY.** Mom doesn't yell at me when we're having fun.

**DOUG.** I'm not yelling. I'm just talking to you very . . . pointedly . . . and loud. You know? So you'll understand me better.

**ARTY.** The louder you talk the more people can understand you?

**DOUG.** Sometimes. Now hit the ball! *(ARTY disappears again.)*

**HAL.** You know, Doug. We can always play another day. If you want to spend time with Arty, I can take a rain check.

**DOUG.** Don't be ridiculous. It's fine. He'll get the hang of it.

**HAL.** Yeah, I know, but . . .

**DOUG.** *(Overlapping)* Hal, it's fine. *(To ARTY)* That's right. Nice and easy. Swing through the ball. SHIT! *(The ball arches over the stage. ARTY races after it)* Son of a bitch! Arty! You could roll the ball up here and get closer to the hole.

**HAL.** I'll just sit in the cart and wait this one out. *(HAL starts to leave the green. ARTY'S ball rolls up near the flag.)*

**DOUG.** I don't believe this.

**HAL.** Did he hit that?

**DOUG.** Are you kidding? No. He took me literally. He rolled it up here. *(ARTY walks up onto the green.)* Why did you do that?

**ARTY.** You told me to roll it.

**DOUG.** I said you could roll it, Arty.

**ARTY.** Isn't that the same thing?

**DOUG.** I didn't mean for you to actually do it!

**ARTY.** You said I should do what you told me to do. So I did.

**HAL.** You did say that, Doug.

**ARTY.** I don't know why you're yelling at me! I did what you told me to do!



**DOUG.** Arty, you are purposefully trying to make me angry! How you could be so stupid as to think I would tell you to roll the ball up here is completely beyond me! Now, we are on Hole 2! I am not going to put up with this for another sixteen holes! (*ARTY looks at DOUG, then at HAL and runs off the green. There is an awkward pause that remains between the men.*)

**HAL.** I'll look after him. (*HAL exits after ARTY. DOUG turns to the audience.*)

**DOUG.** There's a strange moment in the life of every father. It's when you're standing in the delivery room and you see the look on the face of your child for the first time. You feel whole. Complete. It's like being a child and an adult all at the same time. You're so happy. Here in front of you is this little life that you're now responsible for and at the same time it's a gift from God. It was like that when Arty was born. I was so thrilled. I remember holding him close to me and being able to smell his newness . . . his innocence. I could look down and see that he was his own little person, but he was also a clean slate. He could be anything. I can clearly recall that I just wanted him to be healthy and happy. That's it. Healthy and happy. As his father, I owed that to him. His mother and I had the obligation to do whatever we could to insure that life was good to him. That was the pact we made. (*Pause*) When I woke up this morning and my wife told me she was leaving me, all I could think about was Arty. How hurt he would be. How he may never trust us again because he's always put his trust in the fact that we would always be a family and we'd always be together. So, why does the job fall on me to tell him? How can I do it? How can I take a perfectly healthy boy and break his heart? (*DOUG picks up the balls and walks off the green.*)

*LYLE enters and changes the Hole marker to "3". Two YOUNG MEN in their late teens or very early twenties stand in the middle of the green. Both are wearing golf attire that was obviously borrowed from older men. The clothing is too big and doesn't match. They have no golf bags. The first, NATE carries only a 7-Iron. The other, IVAN, holds only a sand wedge. Their golf balls are the colored kind one might find at a putt-putt course.)*

**IVAN.** This is the third hole, Nate. I don't do the golf thing. It's

not me.

**NATE.** She's here. I swear she is.

**IVAN.** I don't care! This is expensive.

**NATE.** What are you worried about? I PAID!!!

**IVAN.** Still. It's nuts.

**NATE.** Man, when I was out here last week with my uncle, she rode up in that beer cart and I'm not kidding you . . .the game stopped! She got out of that cart, did her little titty bounce up to us and dollars jumped out of pockets and beer was flyin'! It was like being at Oktoberfest . . .without the Germans, but there was plenty of sausage, though. *(He laughs at his joke.)* You got me? You got me? Yeaaaaahhh, you do. You just wait. You'll see.

**IVAN.** It's just a girl.

**NATE.** No! No! Don't you say that to me! You have no idea what it's like. It's so . . .GREEK! *(IVAN drops his colored ball on the green and putts it around while he talks.)*

**IVAN.** I just don't know what that means.

**NATE.** It means there is something about the golf course beer girl that is legendary, epic, titanic! And when I say titanic, I don't mean fat unless we're talkin' "P..H..A..T"! You got me? You got me? Yeaaaaahhh you do. *(Pause)* No, I mean she's larger than life. I've done research on this.

**IVAN.** Research? You just saw her for the first time last week!

**NATE.** Yeah, but since then, I've snuck onto other courses to check this out.

**IVAN.** And?

**NATE.** There's definitely a pattern. They're all like this. It's like some secret society of hotties that are here strictly for the viewing pleasure of the elite.

**IVAN.** This is a public golf course. Not a country club. You and I certainly don't qualify as the "elite", and this whole notion of a golf course employee being like something from the Greeks is just idiotic.

**NATE.** Oh, yeah? Get this. When we were here the other day . . .she spilled water down the front of her shirt. *(IVAN looks at NATE as if he expects more to follow.)*

**IVAN.** So?

**NATE.** Sirens.

**IVAN.** Sirens?

**NATE.** Sirens. Yeah, that water splashed down her shirt and that was it. Odysseus, My friend! O-D-Y-S-S-E-U-S! No man could turn her down!

**IVAN.** Somehow, I doubt that. *(Nate pulls Ivan to the edge of the green and gestures out over the audience.)*

**NATE.** Mark my words, Buddy. This is the landscape where upon the appearance of the mythical beer girl . . . every putter becomes a driver, if only for a brief moment.

**IVAN.** Can you take your arm out from around me when you talk like that? You're kinda freakin' me out a bit. *(NATE removes his arm)*

**NATE.** Sorry.

**IVAN.** How long do we have to wait before she gets here?

**NATE.** What are you in such a hurry for? That kid on the hole in front of us keeps knocking his ball back and forth over the green. Trust me, we have plenty of time. *(IVAN picks up his ball)*

**IVAN.** Alright, fine. I'll hang around. But I'm not playing this stupid game. Takes me forever to hit the ball down here with only a sand wedge. So, what's your plan?

**NATE.** I hadn't really thought that far ahead.

**IVAN.** You're joking.

**NATE.** No. Really.

**IVAN.** Nate, it's like 350 degrees out here! Don't tell me we came all the way out here and you're just gonna wing it! Didn't you see her at the clubhouse? Didn't you make a plan?

**NATE.** No, I work best under pressure. *(He pauses.)* I hope she shows up. *(IVAN glares at NATE.)*

**IVAN.** What does that mean? You hope she shows up? You mean you don't even know if she's working today?!

**NATE.** I didn't want her to think I was stalking her!

**IVAN.** You are stalking her!!!

**NATE.** *WE* know that, but there's no reason she has to. I don't want to alarm the poor woman! Just give it time. She'll show. We'll buy a beer and you'll see.

**IVAN.** A beer? It's 9:30 in the morning.

**NATE.** Coke, water, Gatorade, whatever! The point is ... you'll see what all of the fuss is over. That's why you're out here!

**IVAN.** Look, we've been all over this! It's not the right time! Jesus! Why won't you just drop it? (*IVAN kicks his colored ball around the stage and looks ahead to the other hole. NATE turns to the audience.*)

**NATE.** My grandfather use to tell me, "Nate, if you ever learn anything about friendship . . .remember this one simple thing: A true friend always has your best interest at heart and loves you so much they're willing to piss you off to help you." That sums up how I feel about Ivan. You see, he's in a bad mood because a year and a half ago, his girlfriend left him for another guy. Big deal! (*He pauses for a second.*) Never liked that user-friendly nut job. Ivana...(*A beat. Then like a vampire*) I wanna go sleep with other men. (*He collects himself.*) Sorry. I couldn't resist. Anyway, the reason I'm out here wasting all this time is because the beer girl is supposed to meet us. When I was here last week, I met her and she seemed like a great girl for Ivan: red hair, okay shape, friendly. All of the things he likes in a woman. She even had a nice name. Nicole. Just kinda rolls off the tongue, doesn't it? Nicole. (*IVAN seems to be getting more and more agitated.*) What worries me is that he's getting so upset about being here, that he's gonna screw it all up. Part of me thinks I should tell him. . .but now I'm too afraid he'll just get more upset. Poor guy. It's taken him all this time to get over losing one girl and he has no idea that he's about to lose another before he even has her to begin with. (*NATE looks out over the audience*) Any idea what's with those women on Hole 1?

**IVAN.** Can't you stay focused on one woman at a time?

**NATE.** It's just a question. I'm just wondering what's with the hats. Besides, who says I'm not focused? (*He looks out over the audience again.*) I think I see her! Yep, it's the cart with the tarp on it! SCORE! Come here! (*NATE rushes over and begins fixing IVAN'S hair.*)

**IVAN.** What the hell are you doing?!

**NATE.** I just want everything to be perfect!

**IVAN.** So, you're fixing *my* hair?!

**NATE.** Just a little.

**IVAN.** Nate, don't touch me. Look, I'm just gonna go over here and stand under one of these trees until you're through.

**NATE.** Don't you want to stick around and buy something?

*(Pause. IVAN stares at NATE.)*

**IVAN.** Not really.

**NATE.** She'll be here in a second, Man. Why don't you just hang out?

**IVAN.** I am gonna hang out. I'm gonna hang out over there in the shade.

**NATE.** Ivan, I . . .

**IVAN.** What is with you, Man?! I didn't want to come out here in the first place! This is your girl, your sport, your bag, your moment! Not mine! *(IVAN strolls across the green)*

**NATE.** Ivan, I told her you'd . . .! *(IVAN stops dead in his tracks. He turns back slowly to face NATE.)*

**IVAN.** You told . . .who? . . .what? *(NATE slowly backs away from IVAN.)*

**NATE.** It's not so much a "told", it was more of a "mentioned in passing" kinda thing. *(IVAN grabs NATE and threatens him with his sand wedge.)*

**IVAN.** Speak!

**NATE.** Okay, okay! I told the beer girl about your troubles and thought . . .

**IVAN.** *(Overlapping)* You set me up with a total stranger?! Are you completely out of your mind?!

**NATE.** She's not a total stranger. I knew her.

**IVAN.** I don't believe this! You! I don't believe you!

**NATE.** Look, she's a nice enough girl. You'll like her. She's a Methodist! *(IVAN glares at NATE.)*

**IVAN.** I have no fucking idea what that means!!!!

**NATE.** Ivan, it's been a year and a half. Ivana is gone. This is a good thing! Besides, the two of you were fated!

**IVAN.** Fated?!

**NATE.** Yeah, your name is Ivan and you were dating someone named Ivana. That's like you dating your sister!

**IVAN.** I'm leaving. *(NATE jumps in front of IVAN brandishing his 7-Iron like a samurai sword.)*

**NATE.** Take one step off this green and I swear to God, I'll hobble you. I saw Misery six times. I learned a lot from Kathy Bates!!!  
*(During the following exchange, TRIONA drives up unnoticed by the guys. She is around the same age as the guys and is so gorgeous it's almost obscene. She watches the boys for a moment.)*

**IVAN.** Bring it on, Asshole. I have a sand wedge. The head is thicker!

**NATE.** Yours may be thicker but mine is longer. Made for going the distance buddy! And I can! I'm not afraid of a little roughhousing!

**IVAN.** You have no right to interfere in my life!

**NATE.** You gotta get back on the horse! I know you don't want to do it, Man, but you have to! For your own good! You know the old proverb: Sometimes you gotta fuck the fat chick! It's in the Bible! Moses said that! Besides, I'm saving you! She was a whore!

**IVAN.** Don't you call her that!

**NATE.** Okay. She was a trollop! A strumpet! A turnstile!

**IVAN.** You son of a bitch!!! *(The guys dive at one another and go into a full out fight. The lights dim. TRIONA turns to the audience. She speaks with a slight Scottish accent.)*

**TRIONA.** I wish I could put into mere words what I feel when I see lads carryin' on and such. Each and every one of them makin' a damn fool ass out of himself at every possible turn. My Da always warned me about the dangers of bein' a beer lass. "Triona, we raised ya' better than that, Luv. We sent ya to America so you could have an opportunity to get away from the ale drinking, pint swallowin' degenerates that littered the streets of the homeland. Couldn't ya at least work at a Starbucks? At least there ya get all the coffee ya can drink and ya don't dress like you graduated from the patio section of a second rate Hooters!" *(She walks over to the frozen statue of NATE and IVAN.)* I not even supposed to be here today and look at this. Hole 3 and already, there's a fight brewin'. Looks like these two lads are right fond of one another. It's not every day I see a 7-Iron and a sand wedge comparin' size, girth, and stayin' power and willin' to go the distance to prove it. *(She laughs)* My Da just doesn't understand men. He mustn't.

Otherwise, would he have sent me all the way here from Scotland to get away from the fighting idiots? Looks more like I went around the block than around the world. *(A beat)*

I wanted to know what I was up against when I was getting ready to start goin' out with men. I figured ma mother was a bad choice to ask because she picked my Da, who knows nothin'. So, I went to my Da's mother, Nanny McTavish. Nanny told me the most important thing to remember about men is: Beer may make them loud . . .but if you give the poor souls enough . . .eventually, they'll be quiet. *(She gives a slight snicker, then exits. IVAN and NATE fall to the ground in a crumpled state. They're exhausted.)*

**IVAN.** My ribs hurt.

**NATE.** Come on. Get up. *(He pulls himself to his feet)* She'll be here any . . .*(NATE looks around the course)* Shit!

**IVAN.** What? *(IVAN stands and walk up to NATE)*

**NATE.** She's already passed us!

**IVAN.** I thought this was a setup. Why didn't she stop? *(A pink golf ball drops onto the green. The guys scramble for safety.)*

**NATE.** *(Yelling toward the offstage player)* HEY! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO YELL "FORE" YOU STUPID OLD BAG!

**NORMA.** *(Offstage)* Fore!

**NATE.** It's a little late now! How do you like this? *(NATE picks up the ball and hurls it back at the unseen player.)* FORE! See? That's how it's done!! *(A white golf ball drops very close to them. They scramble.)*

**NORMA.** *(Offstage)* FORE!

**NATE.** Goddammit!!! *(NATE picks up the ball and throws it offstage again)* FORE! Back at ya! *(Both balls drop on the green only seconds apart. One rolls to Nate's left, the other to his right.)*

**NORMA.** *(Offstage)* FORE! *(IVAN grabs NATE by the shoulder.)*

**IVAN.** Forget it. Let's just get out of here before we're beaned in the head.

**NATE.** I hate old people. Old people and fat people that smell like sour milk. I hate that.

*(Pause)* She's here somewhere. Let's play on. *(IVAN and NATE race off the green and exit. LYLE enters and changes the green number to "4". He quietly exits. NORMA and ERWIN, stroll onto*

*the green. Both are in their sixties. NORMA walks with confidence and appears to be enjoying the game. ERWIN drags behind, already tired and frustrated. NORMA walks over to her ball and putts it in the hole.)*

**NORMA.** I win again!

**ERWIN.** Yeah, you sure do.

**NORMA.** I told you to watch those videos I bought, Dear. They really help the game. I'm a regular Tiger Woods.

**ERWIN.** Yeah, the likeness is scary. Look, I've been playing golf for forty-five years. I'm not changing my game now.

**NORMA.** Okay, my little B.R. *(ERWIN just looks at her.)*

**ERWIN.** B.R.?

**NORMA.** That's my new nickname for you.

**ERWIN.** Uh-huh. Is that like J-Lo or some nonsense like that?

**NORMA.** It's short for Brer Rabbit. Wanna know why?

**ERWIN.** No. *(He walks over and prepares to putt his ball. He stops, though, and looks up...unable to putt until he knows.)*

Alright, why?

**NORMA.** Why what?

**ERWIN.** Why? Why are you going to call me B.R.?

**NORMA.** Cause you're just stuck in the tar, Baby. *(She laughs hard at her little joke. ERWIN stares at her for a few moments, shakes his head, then turns back to putt his ball. NORMA walks around and looks at his putt from the opposite side.)* You're gonna miss the hole.

**ERWIN.** Norma, please. This is very bad golf etiquette.

**NORMA.** But you're gonna miss the shot!

**ERWIN.** It's my shot to miss!

**NORMA.** And you're gonna do it! *(ERWIN putts. He misses the hole.)*

**ERWIN.** Son of a . . .

**NORMA.** *(Overlapping)* I told you.

**ERWIN.** Will you please be quiet and let me play my game?

**NORMA.** Hey, no problem. *(She backs up a few steps. ERWIN walks over and lines up for his next shot. NORMA taps her foot on the ground. ERWIN stares at her, then her foot. She stops. He lines up again. She begins sighing very heavily.)* Norma, for god's



sake!

**NORMA.** I'm sorry, B.R., but I can't help it.

**ERWIN.** Again with the B.R.!

**NORMA.** You say it's bad etiquette for me to talk you through a shot? I say it's worse etiquette to not tell someone something when you know they're gonna screw themselves up.

**ERWIN.** *(Mostly to himself)* I'm getting a headache . . .

**NORMA.** The videos clearly state . . .

**ERWIN.** *(Continuous)* . . .and it's only hole 4.

**NORMA.** *(Continuous)* . . .that you have to take not only the slant of the green but wind velocity as well.

**ERWIN.** What are you? A pilot? We're not landing a plane at Hobby Airport, Norma, we're playing a very unsuccessful round of pasture pool!

**NORMA.** There's no need to get that upset, B.R.

**ERWIN.** Look. Enough with the B.R. crap. You're like Uncle Remus on Estrogen. . .barely. Just let me play the game. Please? *(During the following few putts, NORMA stays opposite ERWIN, always eyeing the shot. ERWIN lines up. He putts.)*

**NORMA.** Miss. *(The ball rolls by the hole. Frustrated, ERWIN lines up the shot again. He putts.)* Miss. *(Again the ball rolls by the hole. He walks over and lines up for a third time. He putts.)* Nope. *(The ball misses for a third time.)*

**ERWIN.** YOU'RE MAKING ME MISS BY ALL THE PRESSURE YOU'RE PUTTING ON ME!!!!

**NORMA.** It's an easy shot.

**ERWIN.** Fine! You putt it! *(NORMA walks over and looks at the shot.)*

**NORMA.** Simple. Check the angle of the green. *(She does)* Check the wind direction.

*(She does)* Check the wind speed. *(She does)* As they say on the video. . .nice . . .and . . . *(She putts the ball).* . . .easy. *(The ball drops in the hole. ERWIN fumes.)* The videos really do help.

Now, your turn.

**ERWIN.** What do you mean, my turn? You just sank my ball.

**NORMA.** Nah, it doesn't count. The flag wasn't pulled. You didn't say the flag needed to stay. I should have pulled it out. So,

you get another crack at it. Kind of like a putting mulligan. . . a "puttigan" Get it? Like "Putt again"? *(Pause. Silence.)*

**ERWIN.** Oh, I get it. *(He glares at her.)* Believe me. I do. Let's just move on.

**NORMA.** You're not finished.

**ERWIN.** I am for this hole. *(ERWIN grabs his putter and storms off toward his bag. NORMA turns to the audience.)*

**NORMA.** When you reach 65, I've always heard you're supposed to live out the rest of your life in what's called "The Golden Years". I wonder who it was that thought that term up. Probably some young person who didn't want to be bothered by the numerous inconveniences that old age can deal out. Golden. Sounds like something a salesman would say. I often try to equate my life to the color of gold. . . but it just doesn't seem to fit. If these years are supposed to be the ones where you sit back and place a value on what you've learned and what you've experienced in a lifetime, does one color really do them justice? I mean, you only have to look at the sky to see the master plan for God's colors in action. Take for example a day. The Golden time of the day is certainly not at night. If that was the case, we'd all wake up blind in the morning. No, it's in the middle of the day when the sun is high and dreams can be seen just an arm's reach away. I suspect that most people's lives are like that. *(Pause)* Once the kids moved out and our career years were over, Erwin and I couldn't figure out how to spend an hour together, let alone the rest of our lives. The weeks stretched into months and then into years. I no longer had the companionship of the young man I'd married. My best friends became an overweight cat and a thirty year-old cuckoo clock. Every hour on the hour I couldn't tell if the cuckoo was telling me the time or telling me what I'd become for staying there. Hmm. Golden. Like the sun. I've come to the conclusion that life has a way of turning rather quickly from something sun-like to something more along the lines of a shooting star. . . a dying blast of a forgotten dream. . . a fiery end to the hopes and ambitions that brought us together in the first place. So, it begs the question...are our fading years really golden? Are they a happy time? Is it blissful when patience runs thin and first love has long departed?

When life is left...tarnished? *(She pauses again, then looks the audience.)* But, then again, I suppose tarnish is just a dirtier form of gold. *(The lights return to normal. ERWIN strolls back across the green.)*

**ERWIN.** Norma? *(She looks up, hopeful.)* Let's go. *(He continues across the green and offstage. NORMA follows. LYLE enters and changes the hole marker to "5". He whistles as he exits. FOUR WOMEN trudge onto the green. GERALDINE (71), HATTIE (45), YVONNE (41), and SYDNEY (21). The three older women sport gaudy orange hats. SYDNEY carries hers.)*

**GERALDINE.** This looks as good a place as any, Ladies. *(The three older women drop their golf balls onto the green. HATTIE turns to SYDNEY.)*

**HATTIE.** Sydney, come on now. We're supposed to be having fun out here and your wrecking the mood.

**YVONNE.** Hattie, leave the poor girl alone.

**HATTIE.** I'm just saying that we've all gone to great pains to experience golf in this way and she's not being part "of the group".

**SYDNEY.** You're not even playing golf. You're cheating your way through the course.

**GERALDINE.** Sydney, Dear, don't be fresh...and please speak only when spoken to.

**SYDNEY.** I was just saying...

**GERALDINE.** Only when spoken to, Dear.

**SYDNEY.** You just spoke to me.

**HATTIE.** *(Overlapping)* We all heard you...and she was speaking at you, not to you.

**GERALDINE.** Sydney, Dear, put your hat on. The sun is likely to burn a hole right in the middle of your head.

**SYDNEY.** I'm sorry, Grandma. I...it's just...*(She looks at her hat, then back up)* Well, to be honest, the orange hat kinda scares me.

**GERALDINE.** Scares you? What on earth for? It's just a hat - and you must always remember, My Dear, that those who wear hats are notorious for elevating the social order which is the glue that keeps all civilized societies flourishing. No hats. No order. *(Silence for a moment)*

**SYDNEY.** It's too orange.

**HATTIE.** Sydney, just put the hat on! It will make your grandmother happy!

**GERALDINE.** She's right, Dear. It would make me happy. *(The ladies begin putting in the background. SYDNEY turns to the audience. The lights dim.)*

**SYDNEY.** Twenty-one is an awkward age. Especially, when you are trying to break free of the bounds of money. There's an old saying that "money begets money". Apparently, when you come from a world dominated by greenbacks and credit cards you're always stuck there. That's partly true. You see, I have a love for fashion. Unfortunately, I don't have the money to cultivate that love into a career. So, my Aunt Yvonne suggested I ask my grandmother for the money to go to fashion school. *(Pause)* A word of advice to all of you young girls: Never ask an older person about fashion. Oh, Grandma is considering financing the school endeavor, but she wants me to experience what she calls "fashion in action". Hence, the orange hats. *(She looks around, then, lowers her voice.)* I don't know if you know this or not, but there is a secret society of women who speckle the major (and sometimes minor) metropolitan areas of this country. Each wearing an orange hat. Not a baseball cap, not a beanie . . . but something similar to -- *(She holds her orange hat up)* THIS! *(She examines it)* So, in order to get the money I need. I have to spend the better part of the summer hanging out with these women and wearing this hat. Today was "golf day" which was not looked on with a lot of favor by many of the "orange juliuses", as I call them. There was some talk about it being too hot and -- Wouldn't cards be more sociable? -- or something like that. Anyway, Grandma is the "head OJ" and insisted they "explore the difficulties and refinement" of golf. So, all of the women borrowed their husbands' golf clubs and here we are. All thirty-six of us making our way around the links like a bunch of sunburned thumb tacks. *(She shakes her head.)* Now, I'm not sure what this group does in private, but if they wear hats like this in public, you mark my words -- they are a "ballsey and dangerous" bunch of ladies. Afraid of nothing -- and that's kind of scary if you think about it. I mean, it's orange. ORANGE! Think about that. The Mafia won't even go THAT far. *(The lights return*

*to normal.)*

**GERALDINE.** How are the rest of our group making out? *(The three women look out over the audience. SYDNEY pulls back a step or two.)*

**HATTIE.** Looks like Clara is heading back to the clubhouse.

**YVONNE.** I knew she wouldn't make it. She didn't want to come in the first place. *(A YOUNG MAN in his mid-twenties stumbles onstage carrying four golf bags filled with clubs. He drops them in a heap on the edge of the green.)*

**HATTIE.** Ah, Paris. Good, you're here.

**PARIS.** Sorry, I didn't have a good enough hold on one of the bags and the 5-iron kept sliding out.

**YVONNE.** Honestly, Mother, why you didn't just rent a cart is beyond me.

**GERALDINE.** I know that, Dear. However, I remind you, money doesn't pop up like dandelions. Besides, I'm sure our caddie friend here wants to earn his money like a true young man. *(She turns to PARIS)* Right? You don't want to look like a weakling, do you? You want to be your own man and not take charity or handouts, right? *(PARIS looks from woman to woman, then, settles on SYDNEY.)*

**PARIS.** I'm fine. Really. It's not that awkward.

**GERALDINE.** That's right, Young Man. Only thirteen holes to go. *(She looks at her ball.)* Now, Mr. Caddie. What club should I use? *(PARIS looks around again. Did he hear right?)*

**YVONNE.** Mother what kind of question is that? You use the...

**GERALDINE.** *(Overlapping)* Ah ah ah! Only when spoken to. Besides, Yvonne, you're going to insult the Caddie! It's his job to instruct! *(She turns back to PARIS.)* Now? Which one? *(A huge smile crosses her face as she waits in anticipation for her "instruction".* PARIS throws another awkward look at SYDNEY, *then says...)*

**PARIS.** Um... well, you're putting... so...I recommend ... the...um...putter.

**GERALDINE.** *(Very grand)* EXCELLENT! CADDIE! HAND ME THE PUTTER!

**PARIS.** Um...you're holding it.

**GERALDINE.** So, I am. Now, how do you suggest I hit the ball?

**HATTIE.** Toward the hole would be nice. (*GERALDINE looks at PARIS*)

**PARIS.** Yeah...I agree with her. (*GERALDINE nods and putts. PARIS turns to SYDNEY.*) Nice hat.

**SYDNEY.** Don't even get me started on this thing. Sorry about the bags.

**PARIS.** Oh, there just having fun. I don't mind.

**SYDNEY.** I meant the golf bags. (*PARIS lets looks an uncomfortable laugh. SYDNEY smiles.*)

**PARIS.** What are you doing out here?

**SYDNEY.** Playing golf.

**PARIS.** No. Not even close.

**SYDNEY.** I'm trying.

**PARIS.** You've never been on a golf course in your life, have you?

**SYDNEY.** It shows? (*Pause*) I'm out here trying to get my Grandmother to send me to fashion school. I have to spend the summer going around with the Sunset Society in order...

**PARIS.** (*Overlapping*) The what?

**SYDNEY.** Look around you. You didn't think this was a coincidence, did you?

**PARIS.** Actually, I thought it was a joke.

**SYDNEY.** No. No joke. They take there head wear very seriously. These hats are like a member of the family.

**PARIS.** (*He looks out over the course*) There's so many of them. The way the orange hats contrast the green grass they look like a bunch of old pimentos swimming around in a jar of Spanish olives.

**SYDNEY.** 36.

**PARIS.** Yeah I guess so. Nine foursomes. (*HATTIE, YVONNE, and GERALDINE finish putting and turn to find the two standing very close.*)

**GERALDINE.** Paris, will you please return my putter to my bag?

**PARIS.** Sure.

**HATTIE.** Sydney, I'd like a word. (*The couple splits. HATTIE takes SYDNEY to the opposite side of the green.*)

**SYDNEY.** Mother, don't start.

**HATTIE.** He is the help, Sydney. Just the help.

**YVONNE.** I think he's kinda cute.

**HATTIE.** Yvonne. Shove off!

**SYDNEY.** Mother, . . .

**HATTIE.** Look, I'm not going to get into this with you. Just knock off the flirting.

**SYDNEY.** I wasn't flirting. (She holds up her hat) We were just chatting about this ridiculous thing!

**HATTIE.** Let's get one thing straight. You may hate the Sunset Society, but your grandmother loves it!

**SYDNEY.** She can have it.

**HATTIE.** (*Continuous*). . .and I'm not going to have you disrespect our position in front of all of our friends by carrying on with a golf course caddie!

**SYDNEY.** Carrying on?

**HATTIE.** Call it whatever you want. Just quit!

**SYDNEY.** Oh, I see. It's bad enough that you have to drag me out here in front of God and Mother Nature to play this ridiculous game with all of these self-aggrandizing, under-socialized, hothouse tomato-looking peacocks! But now! Now! You accuse me of acting inappropriately just because I spend a few minutes chatting with the only sane person out here?

**YVONNE.** Yes, I think that's what she was doing.

**SYDNEY.** Well, you let me tell you something, Mother ...the only reason I'm out here at all is because I have a goal. I have a direction. Unlike you. Your head is only going one place...and I think we can all see where that is! (Dead silence ensues. HATTIE suddenly looks as if she is on the verge of tears. She collects herself and walks over to SYDNEY. PARIS and GERALDINE walk back over.)

**HATTIE.** Okay. You got a free pass on that one. I may get a lot of grief from you - but I still expect at least a minimal amount of respect from my daughter.

**SYDNEY.** Yeah? Well...that street is traveled both ways, Mother. Both ways. (*HATTIE storms off the green and disappears.*

*YVONNE follows, reluctantly. GERALDINE motions for PARIS to grab the golf bags. He does and quickly exits after the women.*)

**GERALDINE.** Well, well, well. Goal oriented are we? Only out

here to get something from me, huh? Well, dividing my family is not going to endear me to your cause, Sydney. This is not what I had in mind for an afternoon out

**SYDNEY.** Me, either. *(Silence. GERALDINE begins to walk off the green, then stops, turns back.)*

**GERALDINE.** I know you don't agree with our lifestyle, Sydney. You never have. Despite the privilege it's given you. You want to break free? You want to be something more? Good for you! But, without family, what do you really have? Nothing...and mark my words I can make sure it damn well stays that way.

**SYDNEY.** Is that a threat?

**GERALDINE.** Oh no, Dear. That's a promise. *(Pause)* You want fashion school? Then you best start working on delivering me a family. See? I'm inserting a different goal for you.

**SYDNEY.** You're joking. You saw what just happened.

**GERALDINE.** Sydney, I'm rich and Republican. You know that means I have no sense of humor. I saw a frustrated mother who is scared of losing her daughter.

**SYDNEY.** She and I . . .

**GERALDINE.** *(Overlapping)* Are more alike than you want to admit. That's the deal. One family. One dream. Take it or leave it. *(GERALDINE leaves the green and disappears. SYDNEY is left alone for a second, then walks off the green. LYLE enters and changes the hole number to "6". IVAN and NATE stand on the green. Their clubs lie on the fringe.)*

**NATE.** No - I just think bisexuality is a myth!

**IVAN.** A Myth?

**NATE.** Absolutely, it's not a condition. It's just basic human stinginess in action. You know?

**IVAN.** I suppose.

**NATE.** Truly, it is. Like the old saying goes - "You can't have your Jake and Edith, too". I say, save some for those of us that can make up our fucking minds! *(Pause)* Any sign of her?

**IVAN.** You can see as far as I can. Do you see her?

**NATE.** Shit.

**IVAN.** I can't believe you did this to me! Makes me seem like I'm desperate!



**NATE.** Believe me -- I'm desperate for you!

**IVAN.** Three holes and there's no sign of her.

**NATE.** See? Now you're sounding desperate.

**IVAN.** I am not! I just want to set the record straight!

**NATE.** Whatever, just don't give me any crap about making you sound desperate if you're gonna act it. Besides, desperation is your calling card.

**IVAN.** I wouldn't say that.

**NATE.** Of course you wouldn't . . .you're you. But look at yourself - classic nut case in a nice package. (*IVAN glares at NATE.*)

**IVAN.** Okay, there's that gay side again.

**NATE.** Hey, I'm not the one runnin' around a golf course looking for a hot girl trying to tell her that I'm not interested in her.

**IVAN.** Just keep looking. (*TRIONA enters from the hole "behind them". She quietly watches.*) How far can a beer girl go?

**NATE.** "All the way" if we play our cards right. (*He laughs. IVAN shakes his head and sits near the edge of the green. NATE follows.*) You know what your problem is?

**IVAN.** Nope, but you're gonna spill it. (*IVAN sits at the edge of the green. NATE follows.*)

**NATE.** Look, you're my best friend, right?

**IVAN.** I'm your only friend.

**NATE.** And vice-versa. (*IVAN looks around, then nods*) Good, we've cleared that up. Ivan, it's time.

**IVAN.** Time for what?

**NATE.** Don't be obtuse. It makes me want to hit you. (*TRIONA retreats farther into the bushes.*)

**IVAN.** I just wish you would have told me. You know what happens when I get surprised.

**NATE.** Look, that is nothing more than psychosomatic. It can be overcome. Mind over matter and all that bullshit. Just pull it together and say hello. Breathe. She's just a woman, Man. You know, sugar and spice and titties that are nice, or however it goes. You got me? You got me? Yeaaaaahhh you do.

**IVAN.** My god, I hope you never have kids.

**NATE.** Not interested in having them, just want to run a few drills

on making them.

**IVAN.** I'm just a little worried that's all.

**NATE.** I know, but that's why I wanted to come out here with you, for moral support.

**IVAN.** It was your setup.

**NATE.** That's true. It is. Yeah. *(IVAN just stares at NATE as he stands shaking his head.)*

**IVAN.** I'm getting thirsty. *(TRIONA steps from the bushes.)*

**TRIONA.** I'd luv to help ya, but my cart is stuck in a wee ditch near the 4th hole tee box. *(The boys jump up and stare at her.)* I see ya don't have a cart, so I'll be on my way. I'll catch up with ya as soon as I get mine free. *(They continue to stare.)* Cat got yer tongue? *(She walks up to NATE and looks him in the eye.)* You didn't seem so quiet a moment ago with all that stuff about friendship and titty talk. Why so quiet now?

**NATE.** I'm -- sorry -- I didn't get your name?

**TRIONA.** I didn't tell it to ya. *(She smiles and walks over to the IVAN.)* And you? Lookin' for me, are ya?

**IVAN.** *(Clearing his throat)* Um--yeah. Look, Nicole, I. . .

**TRIONA.** Nicole? I'm not Nicole.

**NATE.** *(Simultaneous, with TRIONA'S previous line)* She's not Nicole, Buddy. *(IVAN looks from one to another.)*

**IVAN.** *(To NATE)* But, I thought you said you set this whole thing--

**NATE.** I did.

**IVAN.** And--?

**TRIONA.** She's not here. I am.

**IVAN.** Where is she?

**NATE.** Who the hell cares! *(To TRIONA)* I don't believe I got your name.

**TRIONA.** No, Lad, ya didn't. And might I remind ya', you said that same thing to me not ten seconds ago.

**NATE.** Oh, that accent. I love Australian women.

**TRIONA.** Okay, you're not the smart one, are ya?

**NATE.** Oh, Honey, if I can hang out with you, who needs brains?

**IVAN.** Nate, cut it, okay. *(To TRIONA)* No Nicole?

**TRIONA.** She's sick. They just called me in to fill in for the day

and so far, I've managed to pop holes in three Coca-Colas, drive over two cans of beer, and get my cart stuck in a ditch. I haven't even made it around all eighteen holes, yet. (*IVAN turns to NATE.*)

**IVAN.** Nicole is sick.

**TRIONA.** Yep, just as I thought. You're the smart one. (*Pause*) Like I said, the drinks and I will be back as soon as I can get ma cart unstuck.

**IVAN.** We'll be more than happy to help. What can we do?

**TRIONA.** You can help by stayin' out of me way. (*She smiles, then laughs slightly and walks off the green and exits.*)

**NATE.** Oh, my GOD! Did you get a look at that?!

**IVAN.** You're embarrassing.

**NATE.** I'm a guy! What do you expect? We both have our downsides. You're desperate and I'm embarrassing. It all evens out. (*He looks after TRIONA*) I'm going after her. To help.

**IVAN.** She said she was coming back.

**NATE.** That was a verbal ruse.

**IVAN.** A what? What the hell is that?

**NATE.** You know a ruse. That's--verbal.

**IVAN.** That was not a ruse. That was an "I'll be back with your drink in bit, Jackass."

**NATE.** Call it what you want. She digs me. I know these things.

**IVAN.** No you don't. She pegged you right off. She looks like a smart girl.

**NATE.** Australians usually are.

**IVAN.** She wasn't Australian. She sounded British or Scottish, or something like that. Not Australian. You didn't even get her name. A ruse. Give me a break.

**NATE.** Didn't need the label. Besides, a ruse by any other name. Would it smell as sweet? You got me? You got me? Yeaaaahhh you do. (*IVAN glares at NATE.*) I'm going after her.

**IVAN.** No! I've already been embarrassed by you once today. I'm not gonna let you do it again. Now, come on. (*He pulls several golf balls from his pockets and drops them on the green.*) I've been picking these things up all along the course, let's just putt them around until she gets back. No rush on the hole in front of us.

**NATE.** Fine. Stay here. Play with your balls. I'm going after her.

*(IVAN blocks the way with his sand wedge.)*

**IVAN.** You're not going.

**NATE.** Man, get out of the way.

**IVAN.** I mean it.

**NATE.** She's getting away! Let me pass! *(NATE tries to walk around IVAN, who steps into his path again.)*

**IVAN.** No.

**NATE.** What the fuck is up with you, Man? Nicole isn't here so all bets are off!

**IVAN.** Right. All bets are off!

**NATE.** You're scarin' me a little.

**IVAN.** Leave the girl alone. *(NATE looks at IVAN, then smiles.)*

**NATE.** A lot better lookin' than Ivana, don't you think?

**IVAN.** Stop it.

**NATE.** Look at you. Comin' to life again after all this time.

Good! You're my best friend and I want you sexually active. I need you sexually active! It gives us something to talk about. Not this one, though. She's mine.

**IVAN.** *(He swings his sand wedge)* No. Not even close.

**NATE.** We're not gonna do this again, are we? It's so Shakespearean.

**IVAN.** Knock it off, Nate! I swear to God, I'll get all Luke Skywalker on your ass! *(He raises his club in the air like a light saber)*

**NATE.** Oh, Luke Skywalker, huh? You just remember, Motherfucker, he lost a hand and wanted to bang his sister! Sound familiar?

**IVAN.** Now we're back to the whole Ivan/Ivana thing!

**NATE.** Fine. You think you can take her from me. Be my guest. Give it your best shot. *(NATE turns to walk off the green. IVAN hits one of the golf balls. It whizzes past NATE. He whips around.)*

**IVAN.** Got your attention?

**NATE.** Are you crazy?! You can give a person brain damage with a flying golf ball!

**IVAN.** Don't give me such a beautiful opening line like that. *(NATE turns again and walks away. IVAN hits another ball. It*

*zings past him.)*

**NATE.** Son of a --! Knock it off!

**IVAN.** I've watched you do this to women our entire lives! Not this one! *(He hits a ball. NATE scrambles.)* I'm not kidding. You drag me out here... *(He hits another ball. Throughout the following NATE continues to dodge the golf balls.)* You embarrass me! You know when I get caught blind-sided, I become irrational! You know that! She seems like a nice girl! I'm not going to stand for it, Nate! Not again! Not this time! Not again! Not ever again! You think this is Shakespearean? Maybe it is! But I think it's time the Juliets of this world have a Romeo that can look out for them! *(NATE stands and backs away. IVAN hits the last ball square and it shoots up and disappears offstage. We hear several voices yell "FORE", then a distant scream. NATE and IVAN react to the impact offstage. NATE turns back to IVAN.)*

**NATE.** Congratulations, Romeo. You just clocked Juliet with a Titleist. *(NATE runs offstage in the direction of the ball. IVAN looks out at the audience.)*

**IVAN.** One swing. That's all it took. I've heard golfers always say it's that one swing that gets you from hole to hole. That most of the time you spend your whole afternoon swinging hard and tearing up the grass. That's supposedly the lot of the weekend golfer. Nothing more than a frustrated gardener -- only you pay to work the land with the most expensive hoe imaginable -- *(He holds up the club)* A sand wedge. *(He laughs a slight, uncomfortable laugh.)* My irritable side has a way of rearing its ugly head when I least expect it. I can't seem to control it. The anger just wells up inside of me and the only way I can think of to release it usually ends up -- *(He shakes his head)* There were warning signs. Not trivial ones. Real signs. You see, Ivana left me not because she was a bitch, or whore, or whatever foul label Nate likes to slap on her namesake -- No, she left because she was frightened. Frightened of the yelling. Frightened of the unpredictable rage which would pop up around the most mundane issue. Frightened -- Frightened of me. *(He looks at his club)* It's kinda odd how things work out. We're taught that you have to be patient -- that you have to be careful with your words, and actions, your intentions -- You

have to be caring and respectful to other people's feelings. All of these things are what make a perfectly sane and loving human being. That if you abide by this code, this list of rules, this set of emotional commandments, then anything is possible. Anything at all. For some, it comes in the form of money, or riches, or happiness -- For me -- It comes in the form of being so noble, so protective, that I manage to hit the object of my valiance and nobleness from 200 yards away with a ball that's only an inch and a half across. There's my hole-in-one. Somehow, I have a feeling no one will want to celebrate it with me. *(IVAN slowly walks off the green. LYLE enters and changes the hole number to "7".*

*NORMA runs onto the green. ERWIN enters. His legs are bleeding from being sliced by stickers and thorns in the "rough". NORMA races over to the hole, reaches in and pulls out a pink golf ball. She kisses it, turns and shows it to ERWIN. He just stares.)*

**NORMA.** That's another par for me. *(ERWIN grumbles slightly.)* Aren't you going to finish the hole?

**ERWIN.** I've snow-birded the hole. There's no point.

**NORMA.** You've what?

**ERWIN.** Snow-bird. 4 over par. I pick it up and move on.

**NORMA.** You actually write down four over?

**ERWIN.** Yes, it's called a snowbird.

**NORMA.** Oh, I see. You cheat.

**ERWIN.** It's not cheating. It's accepting the hole has beaten you.

**NORMA.** But you gave yourself a score.

**ERWIN.** Yeah, four over.

**NORMA.** But you've hit it four over and your ball still isn't in the hole.

**ERWIN.** Yeah?

**NORMA.** So, how can you do that? You're not snow-birding -- You're low-balling.

**ERWIN.** What are you worried about?! You're winning!

**NORMA.** Yes, I am. I'm a winner. Because I'm honest and I play with the pink golf ball. Maybe if you . . .

**ERWIN.** *(Overlapping)* I've always used the snowbird and I am NOT going to play the greatest American sport with a pink golf ball.

**NORMA.** Scottish.

**ERWIN.** What?

**NORMA.** It's a Scottish sport. The game originated in Scotland. Not America.

**ERWIN.** Yes, but all the best players are American. The Scottish are drunks. The only thing they know how to play is the top of a bottle. *(Pause)* My goddamn legs are cut up.

**NORMA.** That's because you refuse to hit the ball in the short grass.

**ERWIN.** It's called the fairway.

**NORMA.** The fairway. I know -- you're never in it.

**ERWIN.** I was fine until I hit my ball near that goose nest. Damn bird nearly killed me.

**NORMA.** She thought you were after her eggs.

**ERWIN.** Did you get a look at those goose eggs? They're like four times the size of a golf ball and I was at least ten feet away from the little bitch. I don't know what ruffled her feathers.

**NORMA.** She probably saw how you play and got worried. *(ERWIN grumbles)* I'm sorry you're not having more fun.

**ERWIN.** We haven't even completed the front nine and I'm way behind in the score, I'm bleeding to death, and I have to look over my shoulder to see if Mother Goose is hunting me down. How can this be anything but fun? *(Thunder rumbles in the distance.)*

**NORMA.** Well, we can always quit. It's about to rain, anyway.

**ERWIN.** Norma, I realize this is the first time we've played golf together, but I think there is something we should be clear on. Rain or shine - I don't quit.

**NORMA.** Erwin, it's just a game.

**ERWIN.** True. But -- I don't quit. You may be a quitter, but not me.

**NORMA.** But, I'm winning.

**ERWIN.** Is it really necessary for you to keep bringing that up? We both know the score.

**NORMA.** After what I've heard about your snowbirds, I can't be too sure. I could be way ahead of you, but I guess we'll never be able to calculate that, now will we? And just what do you mean by "keep bringing it up"? I've brought it up once and only as a point

of reference.

**ERWIN.** Everything with you is a point of reference!

**NORMA.** Why are you so upset? I'm not the one cheating.

**ERWIN.** I am not cheating!!! It's perfectly legal!

**NORMA.** Then if that's the case, it's your ball.

**ERWIN.** Again with the ball.

**NORMA.** Pink is very progressive.

**ERWIN.** Give me strength.

**NORMA.** It looks like a little Epcot Center.

**ERWIN.** Yeah, on Gay Pride Day.

**NORMA.** It gets the job done.

**ERWIN.** That's it! We're settling this right here and now!

*(ERWIN storms off the green and returns with 2 balls and a putter.)*

**NORMA.** What are you doing?

**ERWIN.** Putting contest. I'm gonna prove to you it's not the pink ball.

**NORMA.** Are you sure you want to do this? The last time you tried to prove anything to me, you ended up locked in the trunk of the car for four hours.

**ERWIN.** This is different.

**NORMA.** I told you there was no safety latch, did you listen? This is gonna be the same thing. No safety latch. You're gonna be stuck looking the fool again. *(ERWIN glares at her.)*

**ERWIN.** Putt. *(A putting match commences between the two. No matter how many strokes it takes ERWIN to sink his putts, NORMA always manages to beat him by one stroke. They do this a few times. ERWIN gets more and more angry with each sunk golf ball. Finally, he can stand it no more and hurls his golf club across the green. NORMA stands near the flag, watching him. She quietly picks up her ball from the hole.)*

**NORMA.** I'll be in the cart. *(ERWIN takes a step, then, stumbles slightly.)* Erwin? What is it?

**ERWIN.** Nothing. I'm -- I'm fine. I just -- I just need to rest for a moment. *(Pause)* Get the cart. *(Reluctantly, NORMA walks away and exits. ERWIN rubs his left arm and hand slightly. He turns to the audience.)* Little tingles. Life is full of them. Looking at



Norma, I remember all of the little tingles I've had in my lifetime. But none was as exciting and breath-taking as my first tingle. Not long after the Korean War, I managed to make my way into a dance hall for a drink. I was on leave and I pushed my way through the smoke-filled room. That's what G.I.'s did. Find a little alcohol to celebrate another day lived through and if you could muster up a toast to those who had given their life for this great country, then a raised glass wasn't looked at with any such skepticism. In fact, it was a well-known ceremony. Like the Indians that smoked the peace pipe or the knights that drank from a golden chalice before heading off to defend kith and king, we were all part of a brotherhood of unspoken heroes. Only I never felt very heroic. I was just a guy in a dance hall looking for someone to dance with. Looking for that one girl to spend the evening with sipping from a glass and drinking her in - a simultaneous salute to all things living. *(He rubs his arm again)* The first real tingle happened when I walked up to the bar and bumped into this little slip of a thing standing around, looking the room over, laughing, talking to anyone who happened by. I leaned over and said, "Can I buy you a drink?" She smiled and said, "With a smile like that, I may let you buy me two. I'm Norma." *(A smile crosses his face)* It's funny how that first smile can burn itself into your memory like a brilliant photograph. Your mind can race through and see it in glorious sepias, and brilliant blacks and whites, all the while managing to create a color of its own. The memory allows you to relieve these moments over and over again because they were the ones that really mattered in life. They were the ones that gave you "little tingles". *(He shakes his head)* That was the greatest tingle I'd ever encountered. *(He rubs his left hand again)* Up until now. *(Pause)* Seems no matter the type of tingle. You still get butterflies in your stomach and still end up scared for your life. *(He walks slowly off the green. LYLE enters and changes the hole number to "8". Lights up on an empty green. PARIS yells from offstage.)*

**PARIS.** One at a time. Just shoot one ball at a time. *(Three balls land on the green at almost the exact same instant. One zings across the green and disappears. From the direction the ball went,*

*we hear an off stage voice yell, "Hey, watch it, Lady!")*

**YVONNE.** *(Entering)* I'm sorry, Sir! I'm very new at this! VERY new! *(She exits after the ball. HATTIE, GERALDINE, and SYDNEY stroll onto the green carrying putters. Thunder crashes. It's closer than it was in the previous scene.)*

**HATTIE.** Here it comes. Rain. Why does it always rain when we do something outside? It's like Mother Nature knows we have plans. Do you think she's a misogynist?

**SYDNEY.** I don't think a woman can be a misogynist. Unless you think Mother Nature is Father Time in drag.

**GERALDINE.** Did I mention that I have no sense of humor?  
*(From offstage YVONNE yells--)*

**YVONNE.** FORE! *(The sound of a golf swing, a ball going through tree branches, then birds scrambling for safety.)*

**HATTIE.** Jesus! She is really awful.

**GERALDINE.** She's what the Mexicans call "El Terrible".  
*(pronounced "tare-ee-blai)*

*(PARIS stumbles on with the golf bags. He looks off in the direction of the ball and shakes his head. YVONNE enters)*

**YVONNE.** Did anyone see where my ball landed?

**PARIS.** *(Pointing offstage)* Over there by that bird. I think you may have killed a goose.

**YVONNE.** Really? *(He nods)* Shit. Is it against the law to kill a goose? I don't have to have a license, do I?

**HATTIE.** What you need is a cleaner swing. A little something to keep in mind, Dear: A birdie is getting the ball into the hole one under par -- not hitting an actual bird in the head with it. *(Thunder rolls)*

**GERALDINE.** Ladies! This is not honoring the Orange hat.

**YVONNE.** Okay, while we're on the subject of the weird -- What exactly is "honoring the hat"? What is that supposed to mean?

**GERALDINE.** I don't understand the question.

**YVONNE.** The hat? Honoring? Meaning?

**GERALDINE.** Oh, my god! Did she just ask that? What a question! Are you feeling alright?

**HATTIE.** *(Simultaneous with GERALDINE'S last line.)* She's gone crazy! Completely lost her mind! I warned you about her!

*(SYDNEY walks over to PARIS)*

**SYDNEY.** Here we go.

**YVONNE.** I'm fine. I just don't see how disagreeing about my golf swing is "dishonoring the hat". I mean -- it's just a hat -- not a living, breathing thing -- a hat. Orange material on a cardboard frame.

**GERALDINE.** Yvonne, are you trying to upset me?

**HATTIE.** Us!

**GERALDINE.** Us! Are you trying to upset us?!

**YVONNE.** It was just a question.

**GERALDINE.** No! It most certainly was not just a question! It was an outright attack and it was thoughtless! What has the Sunset Society ever done to you? Besides, you know what this organization means to me! You know that! You've always known - and I will not have you belittle the very symbol of feminine camaraderie out of nothing more than simple spite for your sister! *(Silence. GERALDINE starts to leave. She stops, turns back.)* Why must you continue to be a disappointment to me? Why must you continually break my heart? Haven't you done enough? *(Silence. HATTIE moves closer to GERALDINE. YVONNE takes off her hat at stares at it.)*

**YVONNE.** This is not the place to bring up family history, Mother! Not in front of everyone! It's in bad taste! *(Silence)* How can you stand there and speak of camaraderie and in the same breath speak to me like this? I've tried to talk to you about what happened! What more do you want from me?

**GERALDINE.** I think I made myself clear.

**YVONNE.** No, you didn't. All you did was contradict your own philosophy. It's a hat!

**GERALDINE.** It's a symbol!

**YVONNE.** AND I'M YOUR DAUGHTER!! *(Silence. YVONNE walks off the green toward her ball. SYDNEY and PARIS watch her go.)*

**PARIS.** Yvonne, wait. *(PARIS grabs her golf bag and exits after her. SYDNEY turns back toward her mother and grandmother.)*

**HATTIE.** Not a word from you.

**SYDNEY.** I didn't say anything. Did I really need to? *(HATTIE*

*laughs an exasperated laugh. GERALDINE putts her ball into the hole.)*

**HATTIE.** There you go.

**SYDNEY.** What?

**HATTIE.** As usual, you said more by what you didn't say. It's a talent of yours.

**SYDNEY.** Wow. What is it? My birthday? You're acknowledging my talent?

**HATTIE.** Must we go through this again, Sydney? I don't want another scene like we had earlier.

**SYDNEY.** What do you call what just happened?

**HATTIE.** I call that a lapse in good judgment by your aunt. That's what I call it.

**SYDNEY.** And your part in it?

**HATTIE.** I was stating a fact.

**SYDNEY.** A hurtful fact.

**HATTIE.** Oh, please! Enough! I was honest. If honesty hurts, then that's not my problem! She should grow up! It's about time! She's forty-one years old! A little far along for hand-holding!

**SYDNEY.** Hand holding around here just gets you drug through the mud. She's better off.

**HATTIE.** What is with you and all of this cheekiness today?

**SYDNEY.** Seems to me in this case, cheeky is just another word for honest. But, I guess it all depends on where you stand at any given moment, huh? *(Thunder crashes. YVONNE walks back onto the green followed by PARIS.)*

**YVONNE.** I'm through. I'll meet you in the clubhouse.

*(YVONNE looks at each face, then turns and silently walks off the green and exits.)*

**SYDNEY.** You're just going to let her go?

**GERALDINE.** It's her choice, Dear.

**SYDNEY.** Her choice? No. Not hers! Yours! It's your choice!

**GERALDINE.** Sydney, cut the acting. *(SYDNEY is visibly stung by this. She collects herself, looks straight at GERALDINE -- and calmly says...)*

**SYDNEY.** I'm sorry, Grandma. You're right. *(She turns to HATTIE)* I apologize, Mother, for raising my voice to you. It was

wrong of me. (*HATTIE looks at SYDNEY unsure how to respond.*)

**HATTIE.** Well...I...um...I guess I forgive you. (*SYDNEY turns to GERALDINE*)

**SYDNEY.** I suppose there is always more to learn from my elders, right?

**GERALDINE.** Now, you're getting it, Dear.

**SYDNEY.** (*Turning back to HATTIE*) After all, Mother, you're the poster child for honor and respect, aren't you? You're always there for Grandmother - no matter what. Completely selfless, right?

(*Silence. GERALDINE'S eyes narrow.*) You can bet I'll learn from you how to treat the person that gave birth to me. And I promise you- you can look forward to you and I having the same type of relationship when you're Grandmother's age. You can bank on it. Right Mom? Bank on it? (*She turns to GERALDINE.*)

And you. I was wondering. Can you teach me how to talk out of both sides of my mouth while playing both sides of the fence? (*SYDNEY gives PARIS her putter and crosses the green in the direction YVONNE departed.*)

**GERALDINE.** Sydney, remember what I told you earlier. I meant what I said. (*SYDNEY stops. She doesn't turn around.*)

**SYDNEY.** That's the scariest part of the whole thing. (*She exits without looking back. HATTIE and GERALDINE stand in silence for a moment. Thunder.*)

**PARIS.** Are we gonna finish out the round? Looks like most of the groups in front of us are calling it quits.

**GERALDINE.** (*After a pause.*) Bring the bags in. We'll decide out of the rain. (*GERALDINE exits. PARIS turns to HATTIE wondering what to do.*)

**HATTIE.** Just...collect the bags and meet us back at the clubhouse. (*Thunder crashes*)

**PARIS.** It's too bad...about your family.

**HATTIE.** Just get the bags and mind your own business. We're not paying you for input. (*PARIS smiles*)

**PARIS.** Of course it is. That's what we caddies do - we give advice.

**HATTIE.** Well, we don't need yours.

**PARIS.** Of course, because you people are doing so well on your

own. My mistake. I wasn't going to preach. I was just going to advise you out of a rough spot.

**HATTIE.** That's your job?

**PARIS.** Rough is our specialty.

**HATTIE.** Collect the bags, Paris (*PARIS smiles, nods, and starts to pick up the bags.*)

**PARIS.** Funny thing about my job - we're supposed to be all-knowing and all-seeing. It's a pretty hefty responsibility considering the complete imbalance between the job description and the realities of execution. Most of the time, the caddie stands idly by knowing all the answers and knowing his words will fall upon the deaf ears of everyone in the game. He's just the flunky. The mule so to speak. Never to talk unless he is asked a direct question. And even then, his words of wisdom, his suggestions -- his seer-like advice will most likely go unnoticed and basically ignored. (*Pause*) Sometimes it's pretty funny -- other times, it's very much like watching a car crash -- unable to do anything. (*Thunder crashes. He looks into the sky.*) What's tough is when the caddie looks on and wants so desperately to intervene and guide conversations away from destructive words -- away from anger - but that's not my job. (*Thunder crashes. He looks up, then out at the audience.*) I'm just the guy in charge of the golf bags. (*He exits. Thunder crashes. HATTIE stands for a second, lost in thought - then exits after him. LYLE enters in a raincoat. He looks up at the sky and changes the hole number to "9". He runs off. Thunder crashes and lighting begins to flash. Two balls lie on the green. ARTY walks onto the green, putting his ball randomly across the grass. DOUG and HAL jog up.*)

**ARTY.** I want to go home.

**DOUG.** We're not going home, Arty. We're only halfway through. It's just a little rain.

**ARTY.** I'm gonna get sick.

**DOUG.** You're not gonna get sick. Now play!

**HAL.** I'm gonna putt out. (*HAL walks over and putts his ball in.*)

**DOUG.** Arty. Just hit the ball in the hole and it's over, we'll grab something to eat while the rain passes. (*ARTY taps the ball around the green.*) Are you keeping score?

**ARTY.** Fifty-seven, fifty-eight, fifty-nine-- (*He putts the ball in the hole*) Sixty! (*He turns to DOUG.*) Hard hole. (*The thunder crashes. The sky darkens a little.*)

**DOUG.** You weren't even trying. Why are you doing this?

**ARTY.** It's fun.

**DOUG.** It's expensive is what it is.

**ARTY.** Mom never worries about the cost.

**DOUG.** Tell me about it.

**ARTY.** Hal, do you think Daddy is uptight? (*HAL and DOUG stare at ARTY.*)

**DOUG.** What did you say?

**ARTY.** I asked Hal if he thought you were uptight.

**DOUG.** I heard you.

**ARTY.** Then, why did you ask what I said?

**DOUG.** It was more rhetorical.

**ARTY.** I don't know what that means.

**DOUG.** It means that somebody called me uptight and you're repeating it! You don't just ask a question like that out of the blue, Arty. It's carefully placed in hurtful conversation! Now, where did you hear it?

**ARTY.** The lightning is getting closer.

**DOUG.** Where?

**HAL.** I'm gonna head inside.

**DOUG.** Hold on a sec, Hal.

**HAL.** Really, Doug. The kid is right. It's about to pour.

**DOUG.** All the same, please -- just hang on a second. (*He turns back to ARTY*) Okay, now spill it. Who told you I was uptight?

**HAL.** I don't really need to witness this.

**DOUG.** Who, Arty? (*ARTY lowers his head and quietly says something inaudible. Thunder crashes over his answer.*) Who?

**ARTY.** Mom. (*DOUG is stung by this and fights to control himself.*)

**DOUG.** Mom, huh? When did she say this?

**ARTY.** I don't remember.

**DOUG.** (*Grabbing ARTY'S arm and shaking him*) WHEN, ARTY?!

**ARTY.** You're hurting me!

**HAL.** Doug, come on. He's just a kid. Kids hear stuff all the time. I'm sure this is completely out of context.

**DOUG.** I'm gonna ask you one more time, Arty -- just so we're clear. Your mother said that?

**ARTY.** Yes, now let me go. I want to go home. (*Thunder crashes.*)

**DOUG.** Home, huh? You want to go home? Well, so do I, Son! So do I! But, unfortunately, we can't! (*HAL and ARTY are caught off guard by the comment.*)

**ARTY.** What?

**DOUG.** Home! We can't go home! It's not there for us, anymore! (*More thunder and lightning*)

**HAL.** Arty, take my putter and put it in the cart, okay. We'll be there in a second. (*The wind begins to howl. ARTY, reluctantly takes the putter and walks off the stage.*)

Okay, Doug. What's going on?

**DOUG.** Family -- you know? (*Thunder crashes.*) Laura is leaving me. (*Pause*)

**HAL.** What?

**DOUG.** She told me this morning. Right in-between pass the coffee and anything good in the paper.

**HAL.** Jesus. Did she say why?

**DOUG.** Does it really matter? I mean, gone is gone, right?

**HAL.** I take it Arty doesn't know?

**DOUG.** No. She wanted me to tell him. That's why he's here.

**HAL.** Why didn't you tell me? I don't want to see this!

**DOUG.** I needed you!

**HAL.** Yeah...

**DOUG.** (*Overlapping*) You're my closest friend, Hal! I didn't know how I was gonna do it and I just wanted you here in the event --

**HAL.** In the event of what?

**DOUG.** In the event -- something like -- THIS -- happened. I figured you'd know what to do.

**HAL.** Son of a bitch, Doug! I'm not even married!! How would I know what to do?

**DOUG.** Because --



**HAL.** Because why?

**DOUG.** Because you know the two of us! And you know Laura! You could be objective! That's what I need right now! An objective eye! I can't act with a clear head because everything about this seems muddy! *(Thunder crashes loudly. HAL looks into the sky.)*

**HAL.** Alright, let's just go into the clubhouse and get out of this weather. We'll figure out what to do.

**DOUG.** Thank you.

**HAL.** It'll be alright. *(HAL exits in the direction ARTY departed. ARTY walks back onto the green. DOUG turns and they meet each other's gaze.)*

**DOUG.** Arty, I'm sorry. *(ARTY walks past DOUG, never saying a word.)* Arty -- *(ARTY continues walking)* ARTY! *(ARTY stops and turns.)* I'm talking to you.

**ARTY.** You're yelling at me. Mom never yells at me. *(It starts raining.)*

**DOUG.** I know. I'm sorry. It's just --

**ARTY.** I'm sure you have your reasons.

**DOUG.** Arty, come on, now! I'm trying to apologize!

**ARTY.** Mom says you yell at her a lot, as well. *(DOUG is at his breaking point.)*

**DOUG.** Oh, she does, does she? Well, let me tell you something about "Mom"! She seems to do a lot of talking to you about things that don't matter, but when the one really important piece of information comes down the pipe -- she forces me to do it! Caring parent? Not so much! More like a coward! YOUR MOTHER IS A COWARD! DO YOU KNOW WHAT A COWARD IS, ARTY?! A COWARD IS SOMEONE TOO AFRAID TO HANDLE THE TOUGH JOBS! THAT'S YOUR MOTHER!

**ARTY.** STOP IT! *(DOUG grabs ARTY by both arms and begins shaking him slightly.)*

**DOUG.** Tell me, Son! When good old Mommy was chatting it up with you, did she tell you that she was leaving? Did she tell you that she wanted to divorce me? Did she tell you that? Did she tell you? Because she goddamn sure as hell didn't tell me!!! *(DOUG lets ARTY go. ARTY drops to the ground, near tears. DOUG*

*regains his composure, sees what he's done and suddenly finds himself on the brink of tears, himself.)*

**ARTY.** It's raining.

**DOUG.** Arty -- I -- I'm sorry. I --

**ARTY.** If Mom leaves. I want to go with her. I don't love you.  
*(DOUG is stung by these words.)*

**DOUG.** No, Arty. Please -- Please don't say that -- I --

**ARTY.** It's true. I don't love you anymore. *(ARTY gets up and runs off the green. DOUG falls to his knees and begins weeping. LYLE enters and quietly watches. Hard rain continues to fall.)*

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