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Cast of Characters

CECIL BURTON: 33. Capable of gentleness and humor, but in pain. In Act II, he plays both himself in the present and his younger self from age 25-33.

GRADY WATERS: Black, early 30's. A real talker with an infectious laugh and an accepting attitude about life. A golf philosopher. This actor also plays **JULIUS BURTON**, a prep school student from Chicago, and a **CADDY** at the Masters Golf Tournament.

YOUNG CECIL: Cecil's younger self, full of optimism and a desperate need for his father's love. He plays ages 15-17.

DALE MORGAN: Late-40's. A redneck who got wealthy in real estate. Paunchy and bigoted. This actor also plays **GENERAL LEVITY**, a somewhat snooty prep school dorm master.

DADDY (FRANKLIN BURTON): Late-40's in Act I, mid-60's in Act II. A man of great humor and charm, but one who has trouble seeing the world any way but his way. Very judgmental and capable of sudden, ferocious anger. A man of great honor who really cares about the world.

MAMA (CARRIE BURTON): Early-40's in Act I, late-50's in Act II. A woman who loves poetry, nature, and her family. She is comfortable with her choice in life, and her guiding optimism is her bane and her blessing.

MARIA LISSANTI: Beautiful, smart, witty, sexy, capable of great love. 17 in Act I, 24-27 in Act II.

JULIUS BURTON: 17. A witty, charming young man, strong and proud. Very opposite in dress and manner from Grady.

GENERAL LEVITY: Late-40's. A bit pompous, very opposite in dress and manner from **MORGAN**.

Production Notes

This play must feel like a round of golf, and, as such, it never stops. It has been broken into scenes for the convenience of rehearsal, and the phrase “as the lights change to” has been used only to indicate transition, not to suggest that the lighting changes for every scene. Sometimes only half the stage needs to be lit, but it should never go to black. Actors must move from one scene immediately into the next as seamlessly as possible.

Since the play is a round of golf, the actors will continually be engaged in behavior appropriate to the golf course. They will clean their spikes or their clubs, they will line up putts, check lines of flight, wash their golf balls, etc. When walking from one shot to another, they will, of course, not walk 200 or so yards; rather, they shall adopt the convention that if they walk several feet, they are now at their next shot.

The following represent possibilities based on a previously produced version of the play. Each theatre, of course, will decide on its own production values.

All the clubs come from a single golf bag, pulled around the stage on a handcart. Necessary costume changes like Cecil’s various jackets in Act II should be in the bag, the idea being that all life comes from the golf bag. Likewise, for obvious reasons, no real golf balls will be used. They will be mimed for all shots, although actors may get real gloves, balls, and tees from the bag to enhance the reality of the play. Balls will also be used where the existence of an actual ball is required by the text. But the swings and putts will be as real as if there were golf balls, and real clubs will be used. These clubs should be differentiated according to character, Grady’s being the most battered, Cecil’s the most polished. Each character will have a different wood cover.

The Set

Since the play takes place in many locations, simplicity is key. There should be two benches, both of which have an upholstered back which flips up to make a couch, and one of which separates in half to make two chairs; a ball washer, three small putting flags secured in a green block base, a free-standing flagstick, and a rolling tray table with a Phelps banner attached in Act I and loaded with drinks in Act II. The stage should be covered with green carpeting, representing grass, with perhaps some sandy carpeting in spots indicating sand traps. A small hillock with detachable daffodils serves as another seating area (it should also be strong enough to stand on), and this hillock may be moved to a new position in Act II. The benches should be placed together to make a bed where appropriate.

Time

The play takes place in 1980 on the Greenville Country Club golf course, Greenville, SC, and in various locales in the past from 1962 to 1980.

ACT I

Scene 1: The First Tee, early morning, June, 1980.

Scene 2: The Putting Green, Summer, 1963.

Scene 3: The Third Tee, June, 1980 and then September, 1963.

Scene 4: Woods off the Fifth Fairway, April 1964.

Scene 5: The Fifth Fairway woods and Fairway, June, 1980.

Scene 6: Glee Club Dance, Phelps Academy, Massachusetts, Nov. 1964.

Scene 7: The Greenville Airport, Christmas, 1964.

Scene 8: A Dorm Room, Phelps Academy, May, 1965.

Scene 9: The Ninth Green, June, 1980.

ACT II

Scene 1: The Tenth Tee, June, 1980.

Scene 2: Veterinary School Graduation, May, 1972.

Scene 3: The Twelfth Green, June 1980.

Scene 4: A Traffic Jam on I-95, July, 1974.

Scene 5: A Rain Shack, June, 1980.

Scene 6: The Burton Living Room, late March, 1975.

Scene 7: The Fourteenth Tee, June 1980.

Scene 8: A Motel Room, Augusta, Georgia, April, 1975.

Scene 9: The Fifteenth Fairway, Augusta National Golf Course, March 1975; various golf courses on the pro tour, 1975-1980; the Fifteenth Green, June, 1980.

Scene 10: The Awards Banquet, Heritage Golf Classic, Hilton Head, SC., June, 1980; The Putting Green outside the Awards Banquet in Cecil's mind.

Scene 11: The First Tee, two days later.

Scene 12: The Eighteenth Green, June, 1980.

PLAY IT AS IT LIES

by Granville Wyche Burgess

ACT I

Scene 1

(Very early morning. In the dark we hear the whack of a golf swing. Pause. Then more whacks. The lights come up on CECIL BURTON methodically hitting drives. An old wooden putter leans against a bench. There is an intensity about his manner, a calm determination, which puts him into a world of his own. He is purposefully hitting away every ball in his bag, swinging very, very hard, crushing drives into the early morning air of a June day, 1980.)

GRADY. *(Enters with his driver, sits, and changes into his golf shoes. CECIL continues hitting:)* Mornin'. I thought I was the only body crazy enough to get up at the crack of dawn to beat the crowd. There's gonna be a horde today with that Father/Son tournament.

(CECIL crushes one.)

Ooeee, you hit that one! Just give me one of those today an' I'll die happy.

(GRADY stretches his body.)

Oh, Law, these creaky ol' bones! I hate gettin' old, don't you? I mean, you an' me ain't exactly linin' up for or wheelchairs, but we ain't boomin' out 300-yarders neither.

(CECIL booms out a 300-yarder.)

Leastways one of us ain't. Ooeee, that one ain't come down yet! Don't you love watchin' a ball float out into the blue. Journey to the unknown, full of the infinite possibility of perfection.

(CECIL glances up, caught by the phrase, then resumes hitting. GRADY goes to the golf bag, puts away his shoes, and gets out ball, tees, and a glove. He stands in the middle of CECIL's pile of balls and CECIL gestures him aside.)

Not my shots, 'course. They're usually journeys into the known full of the limited possibility of gettin' the ball anywhere near the damn green! Hittin' out a few lemons, huh?

(CECIL hits.)

Hey, man, that was a brand new ball! *(Looking at CECIL's balls on the ground:)* You're hittin' away all your— Don't!!

(Too late: CECIL has hit.)

The hole's over there! You must be a professional, pro's the only body I know can afford to do this foolishness. *(Tees up a ball:)* Well, no point in me loosenin' up no more. Here goes nothin'.

(He goes through a complex series of waggles, tics, throat clearings, neck loosening. When he seems about to hit, he suddenly stops, bends down, and removes a single blade of grass. Then he licks his finger and holds it up to check the wind direction. He gives CECIL a big smile. A final series of wiggles and he swings: not a great shot.)

I hate this goddamn driver!

(CECIL tees up his last ball, aiming down the fairway.)

Wanna play together? Oh, hey, I won't yap so much out on the course. I know you gotta respect this game, 'specially playin' with a pro like you. We'll just hack it around together, it'll be fun.

(CECIL hits, then replaces his driver.)

Mister, how'd you ever learn to hit a ball so sweet?

CECIL. My daddy taught me.

(He exits.)

GRADY. Where's he live, I might get him to help me!

(CECIL is gone.)

Damn, sure would like to play with a professional.

(He sees the putter.)

Hey, mister, you left your putter! Look at this ol' thing. Wooden shaft—ancient! Mister!

(He takes the putter and exits. YOUNG CECIL enters with a small putting flag which he places down, then lines up a putt as the lights change to The Putting Green, September, 1962.)

Scene 2 The Putting Green

YOUNG CECIL. *(Standing over a putt, speaking as an announcer:)* “If Arnold Palmer can make this putt, ladies, and gentlemen, he will have accomplished the unprecedented achievement of winning three Masters tournaments. I wonder what he’s thinking, how he’s managin’ to calm his nerves for this crucial ten-footer...” *(As Palmer:)* “Please, God, let this ball go in the fuckin’ hole!”

(YOUNG CECIL putts.)

It’s in! I made it! I made it! I am the greatest!

(He begins dancing around, as DALE MORGAN enters and gets balls, tees, and a glove from the bag.)

MORGAN. No dancin’ on the puttin’ green, Cecil.

YOUNG CECIL. Oh, sorry, Mr. Morgan.

MORGAN. Actually, with these greens it wouldn’t make a shit. You out here with your daddy?

YOUNG CECIL. He’s gonna teach me how to play golf!

MORGAN. You’ll be learnin’ from the best. Maybe I’ll see you down on the practice tee.

YOUNG CECIL. Today we’re just learnin’ puttin’. Daddy says we might as well start with the most important part of the game: gettin’ the ball in the hole. Because, *(Quoting his daddy, staring down the putting hole)* “That’s where you pay the funeral director—at the hole!”

MORGAN. *(Laughing:)* You know, boy, if more lawyers had your daddy’s sense of humor, I wouldn’t mind their hands in my pocket all the time. He could make a Baptist laugh at the Devil.

DADDY. *(Entering with his putter, getting out balls, tees, and a glove:)* Question is, can I make the Devil laugh at you?!

MORGAN. Hey, there, good buddy.

DADDY. Haven't you given up on this game yet?

MORGAN. Not till I conquer it.

DADDY. Nobody conquers golf. The trick is not to let it conquer you.

MORGAN. Oh, no, don't gimme that "golf is a game of character" bull, Franklin.

(During the following he borrows YOUNG CECIL's putter, yanks the ball out of the hole, lines up a putt, and putts.)

DADDY. Name me another sport—hell, name me any other part of life—that demands such mastery over self.

MORGAN. Your daddy's a fanatic about the philosophy of the game, Cecil. That's why I had to stop playin' with him.

DADDY. No, you had to stop playin' with me because I refused to mix business with pleasure. Man cannot serve golf and mammon both!

MORGAN. Golf ain't religion, Franklin.

DADDY. It is the way I play it.

MORGAN. *(To YOUNG CECIL:)* Next he'll have us on our knees prayin' to the Great Handicapper.

DADDY. It wouldn't do you any good, Dale. He's penciled you in for the Fiery Eighteen: no water on the course, you have to hit every shot with a two-iron, and all your putts...

(Morgan's putt stops short of the hole.)

(Holding his fingers inches apart:) stop this short of the cup.

MORGAN. Well, I'll leave you duffers to philosophize about the game, I'm gonna go play it.

DADDY. By the way, Dale, you heard about George Lewis, didn't you?

MORGAN. What?

DADDY. You didn't hear?! Oh, Dale, I was playin' with him yesterday, had the worst day of my life!

MORGAN. What happened?

DADDY. George had a heart attack, died on the twelfth hole.

MORGAN. No! Franklin, that's terrible!

DADDY. You're tellin' me. From then on it was hit the ball, drag George, hit the ball, drag George!

(All laugh.)

MORGAN. Franklin, get on Johnny Carson, make your son proud. Well, lemme see if I cain't find some caddy willin' to do more than follow the shade around the house. Listen to your ol' man, Cecil, he'll learn you right.

YOUNG CECIL. I always do!

(MORGAN exits.)

DADDY. Well, son, you ready to be seduced by the ancient an honorable game of golf?

YOUNG CECIL. How could a game seduce you?

DADDY. Because it's more than a game, it's life. Will power, generosity, self-control, self-delusion, melodrama, comedy, and tragedy—it's all here on the golf course. To play golf is to know the gods truly are laughing at us all, high and low, rich an' poor, out here tryin' our mightiest to put a piece in India rubber in a hole with instruments ill-designed for the purpose.

YOUNG CECIL. That's frustration, not seduction.

DADDY. That's because you've never hit it in the sweet spot, you've never... *(Imitating a swing)* drawn back an' then—wham!—hit out to heaven, uncorked one straight down the middle, a little white dot against the blue, full of the infinite possibility of perfection. This game seduces you with hope that tomorrow will be better, tomorrow you can connect with perfection, tomorrow you can...

(He swings, using his putter.)

hit it in the sweet spot.

(He gets the ball, places it down.)

All right, address the ball.

YOUNG CECIL. Hello, Mr. Ball!

DADDY. Take the game seriously, Cecil. Don't joke around.

YOUNG CECIL. But you joke around—

DADDY. *(Suddenly sharp:)* You wanna play the game my way or yours?

YOUNG CECIL. Your way, Daddy.

DADDY. Now remember: you drive for show, you putt for dough! An' the key to good puttin' is your ability to totally tune out the rest of the world. Somebody moves, you don't see 'em. Somebody coughs, you don't hear 'em. *(Lining up a putt:)* There's nothin' else in the world but you, the club, the ball, an' the hole. The bliss of solitude, I call it.

(He putts and makes it.)

Discipline your mind to find that bliss an' you'll never have the yips.

YOUNG CECIL. The what?

DADDY. The yips. God's punishment for an uneasy soul. Get the yips—start *thinkin'* 'bout how to make the putt, instead of *feelin'* it—an' you'll tense up an'... Yip! Yip! Yip— ! You'll never make another putt.

YOUNG CECIL. Why're they called the yips?

DADDY. *(Gets the ball and returns it to YOUNG CECIL:)* 'Cause that's the ugliest word they could come up with. It stands for "You're in purgatory, stupid!"

(YOUNG CECIL putts too hard.)

Easy!

YOUNG CECIL. I've got to hit it hard enough to make it. Never up, never in. Go for it!

DADDY. Within reason. Now take a practice swing first to get a rhythm.

(YOUNG CECIL strokes a practice putt and accidentally hits the ball.)

YOUNG CECIL. Oops!

DADDY. That counts.

YOUNG CECIL. *(Moving the ball back:)* But it was an accident.

DADDY. Everything counts in golf. If you're removin' a stick an' the ball moves—that's a stroke. Your putter nudges the ball "accidentally"—stroke. An' you call that stroke on yourself even if no one has seen it but you. There're no referees, no umpires, only you an' your sense of honor. A sense that will always remind you of the one of the cardinal rules of golf: play it as it lies.

(He puts the ball where YOUNG CECIL had accidentally hit it.)

YOUNG CECIL. Well, let's play it. You said when I got all A's, you said when I got old enough, you said, you said. Well, this is the day. I'm gonna learn this game so fast we might be playin' neck an' neck in a year!

DADDY. All right, then grip the club.

(YOUNG CECIL does.)

Don't mash it! Hold the club like you do a woman: with a light touch, but firm enough to control her.

(He shows how.)

That's right. Now move your left thumb down the shaft—

MORGAN. *(Entering:)* Goddamn that son of a bitch! They let the bastard in!

DADDY. Who let who in?

MORGAN. That son-of-a-bitch Bobby Kennedy an' that nigger at Old Miss.

YOUNG CECIL. James Meredith?

MORGAN. Yeah. Ross Barnett stood there like he said he was gonna, an' they had the National Guard all around, he made a speech...

(He pulls out the putting flag and throws it. YOUNG CECIL retrieves it.)

An' then the chicken-shit stepped aside an' Meredith marched right in. Next they'll be invadin' South Carolina.

DADDY. "Invadin's" a bit strong, Dale. We can discuss it at the Bi-Racial Committee meetin' tonight.

MORGAN. I ain't so sure I wanna go through with this "peaceful integration," Franklin. What do they want to go to college for anyway? Nary one of 'em could grow pole beans in a pile of horseshit.

YOUNG CECIL. 'Cause if they go to college, they could get a better payin' job, move out of those shacks you rent 'em, maybe buy a house which you could sell 'em. Then they could follow the shade around the house all day long for all you cared.

MORGAN. I see you're your daddy's son. Well, I'd care plenty if the house was in my neighborhood, an' so would your daddy.

YOUNG CECIL. My daddy would not—

DADDY. Cecil, would you excuse us.

YOUNG CECIL. But what about my lesson?!

DADDY. *(Firmly.)* I asked you to excuse us.

YOUNG CECIL. Yes, sir.

(He replaces the flag, then slumps off.)

DADDY. Dale, my advice to you is to leave personal feelings out of this. These Negroes have a good case.

MORGAN. Especially with that mackerel-snapper Kennedy in the White House.

DADDY. Let's meet tonight an' go through with the sit-in at Woolworth's as planned.

MORGAN. With you sittin' right next to that black man?! Picture in the paper one day, appointed judge the next, is that it?

DADDY. If I am ever appointed to a judgeship, Dale, you can be damn sure I earned it! An' when I'm behind the bench, you better hope you real estate developers aren't hauled up before me because I'll look right through that blank check you're wavin' in my face!

MORGAN. Take it easy, Franklin, I didn't mean nothin'. This thing's just got me all hot under the collar. Damn, I was lookin' forward to a nice round of golf!

DADDY. Let's play. We can discuss it out on the course.

MORGAN. What about Cecil, weren't you gonna play with him?

DADDY. This is more important.

MORGAN. All right, I'll meet you on the first tee. *(Calls:)* Hey, caddy! Move your butt, I ain't got all day!

(He storms off. DADDY calls.)

DADDY. Cecil!

(YOUNG CECIL enters, as CECIL comes on to watch.)

We're gonna have to have this lesson another day.

YOUNG CECIL. Daddy!

DADDY. I'm playin' with Dale. I've got to talk to him about this Meredith business.

YOUNG CECIL. Man cannot serve golf an' mammon both!

DADDY. Don't be smart, Cecil. I'll play nine holes, then drive you home.

YOUNG CECIL. I'll walk.

DADDY. Suit yourself.

(DADDY exits with his putter. YOUNG CECIL stares disconsolately after him, then, angrily, takes a swipe at the ball, accidentally knocking it away. He looks after it, then mutters, accompanied simultaneously by CECIL.)

YOUNG CECIL / CECIL. Play is as it lies.

(YOUNG CECIL puts his putter back in the bag, picks up the putting flag, and exits. CECIL moves the bench to a new position, Sits, staring out, humming "Tattooed Lady" as the lights change to The Third Tee.)*

*(*There is no melody to the song; whatever the director and actor decide.)*

Scene 3 **The Putting Green**

GRADY. *(Entering with the old putter:)* Good, finally caught up with you. Took me a little longer to play those first two holes than I planned. *(Writing down his score:)* Always hurts to start out with a ten! Mister... Hey, mister!

(CECIL looks at GRADY.)

Boy, you can really tune out the world, cain't you? You forgot your putter.

CECIL. It's not mine.

GRADY. You sure? It's got a great feel to it. *(Takes a few practice strokes:)* Well, if you don't want it— *(Starts to put it in the bag, CECIL grabs it:)* Maybe it is yours, huh?

(Beat.)

Hey, how come you skipped puttin' out on the first green? Saw you knock your ball close to the hole, then you stood on the edge of the green for the longest time, then ran on off to the second tee. Didn't even pick up your ball.

(He tosses CECIL his ball.)

CECIL. Go ahead, play through.

(He gets out his 7-iron.)

GRADY. Aw, naw, man, you'd be nippin' at my heels all day. An' I hate lookin' back over my shoulder, I'm about to putt, there's some

guy standin' in the fairway, thinkin', "Go ahead an' putt, dufus, ain't gonna make it anyway." Let's just play together.

CECIL. No, thanks.

(He sits on his bench.)

GRADY. Come on it's gonna get crowded soon with that Father/Son tournament. I won't hold you up as much playin' with you as—

CECIL. Play through!

GRADY. Says who?!

CECIL. Look, this is my last round of golf, all right? An' I'd like to play it in peace.

GRADY. Last round? You mean— ? Why would anybody good as you give up golf?

CECIL. I've got some things to think about, okay? I'd rather play behind you so I can take my time.

GRADY. An' I'd rather play behind you so I can take my time. So it makes sense to me that if we both played together we could both take our time. Unless you've got a problem playin' with someone of the "black persuasion!"

CECIL. Don't be ridiculous.

GRADY. I won't if you won't.

(GRADY moves the other bench to a parallel position and sits. Both stare at each other, GRADY smiling challengingly. Then CECIL rises and swings, not bothering to watch the ball. He sits back down. GRADY rises.)

Looks like about ten feet from the pin. What'd you use?

CECIL. Seven-iron.

GRADY. *(Checking his card:)* Let's see, third hole, it's only 160 yards.

CECIL. It's longer than it looks. My advice to you is...

GRADY. Well?

CECIL. You don't need my advice.

GRADY. Just because you give it, don't mean I got to follow it.

CECIL. Hit enough club, that's all.

GRADY. Because of that creek in front of the green? Shoot, I ain't 'fraid of a little water. *(He selects a 6-iron:)* All right...Grip it tight with the last three fingers of the left hand, bend the knees, drop the right shoulder, left arm straight, 60% of the weight on the back foot, 40% on the front— *(He straightens up:)* Ain't it funny all the things we try to remember when if we'd just stand up there an' hit the thing we'd—

(CECIL starts to exit, GRADY hurries to hit.)

Right, okay. Follow through high, an'

(He swings terribly as CECIL ducks out of the way. YOUNG CECIL and DADDY enter with clubs. All watch the shot. YOUNG CECIL and DADDY standing on the Third Tee, September, 1963.)

GRADY / YOUNG CECIL. Go! Hurry! Get legs! Get legs! Stay dry, ball, stay— !

(The ball lands in the water, and GRADY and YOUNG CECIL yell at their clubs.)

GRADY.

I hate this goddamn six-iron!

YOUNG CECIL.

I hate this goddamn six-iron.

(GRADY replaces his divot.)

DADDY. Then why didn't you hit the five?

YOUNG CECIL. You think I wanted to dunk it? If I'd hit it in the sweet spot, I mighta knocked it in the hole.

GRADY / YOUNG CECIL. I'll hit a mulligan.

DADDY / CECIL. No mulligans!

GRADY. How come?

YOUNG CECIL. Why not?

DADDY. That's the rules.

CECIL. The rules say so.

GRADY. You always play by the rules?

(He goes to his bag to get another ball. CECIL watches YOUNG CECIL.)

YOUNG CECIL. I like that idea if you mess up a shot you can always try again.

GRADY. How come they call that a mulligan, mister? **YOUNG CECIL.** How come they call that a mulligan, Daddy?

DADDY. What do you think this game would be like if everybody hit another shot every time they didn't like the first one?

GRADY. Hey, mister! **YOUNG CECIL.** Well, not every time, Daddy—

GRADY. Wait up! **DADDY.** Not ever!

(GRADY exits after CECIL, who re-enters later to watch.)

You want to grow up thinkin' everything you do doesn't have to count if you don't want it to?

YOUNG CECIL. Aren't there ever any second chances?

DADDY. Everything counts. No mulligans. You'd be on the green. if you'd used your head. Golf's a game of inches, the most important of which are—

YOUNG CECIL. *(He's heard it before:)* Those between your ears.

DADDY. You'd think the Country Club Junior Champion would know that.

YOUNG CECIL. Hey, Daddy, I been thinkin'. Let's play in the annual Father/Son tournament this summer. I'm good enough, I won't embarrass you. Wouldn't it be great to have both our names on a trophy?!

DADDY. Maybe.

YOUNG CECIL. Thanks! I'll sign us up. An' could I use your putter? I cain't find one that suits me.

DADDY. No sirree Bob! I'm hangin' onto the this beauty to the grave. It's not your puttin' that's the problem, it's the way you always try to kill the ball, like your hero.

YOUNG CECIL. Arnold Palmer's made \$100,000 this year, first time any golfer's ever done that.

DADDY. Why don't you imitate somebody with a sound swing. Sam Snead. Ben Hogan. Gene Sarazen.

YOUNG CECIL. Gene Sarazen?! He's practically dead!

DADDY. He still hit the greatest shot ever.

YOUNG CECIL. *(A recital:)* I know, number 15 in the '35 Masters. Knocked it in the hole with a four-wood for a two on a par five. A double-eagle. An' "you were there!" But, Daddy, that was long shot over a big pond. How do you know Sarazen wasn't standin' over that shot thinkin', *(Italian accent)* "I seena Snead reacha green from here. But you have-a-to hit heck out of ball, Gino. Blast it, crush it, mash , maul it, kiiiiiiiilllll-a-iiiiiiiittttt!

(YOUNG CECIL swings mightily and falls down.)

DADDY. Because I know Gene Sarazen followed one of the cardinal rules of golf. Know what you can do, not what Snead or Hogan or Palmer can do. Play within yourself.

YOUNG CECIL. How many cardinal rules are there?!

DADDY. Okay, Mr. Comic, get out that Titleist you found yesterday.

YOUNG CECIL. *(Pulls out a ball.)* It's a beauty, see? Not a nick on it.

DADDY. Stand at the markers, walk five steps back, an' tee it up.

(YOUNG CECIL does so.)

Now hit it.

YOUNG CECIL. It's brand new, Daddy!

DADDY. Hit it.

YOUNG CECIL. Cain't I use a water ball?

DADDY. All you've gotta do is "kill it!" Your shot, "Arnie."

(YOUNG CECIL puts down the ball and swings very hard.)

YOUNG CECIL. Hurry! Get legs! Go ball! Please!!!—...

(The ball goes in the creek. He is crestfallen.)

DADDY. You're not Arnold Palmer, you're Cecil Burton. Play within yourself. Cecil, sit down a minute.

(He does.)

I received an application to the Phelps School today. It's a prep school in Massachusetts. I'd like you to apply to spend your senior year there.

YOUNG CECIL. In Massachusetts? Why?

DADDY. To learn something. It'll help you get in the best college. An' you'll meet the right people.

YOUNG CECIL. I like the people down here.

DADDY. These rednecks'll never amount to a hill of beans, Cecil.

YOUNG CECIL. Mr. Morgan's a redneck an' he does all right.

DADDY. Dale Morgan just proves that ol' sayin' that the higher a monkey climbs, the more he shows his ass. Up north you'll meet the sons of bank presidents an' judges an' statesmen, folks who can help you down the line. Cecil, it's for your own good. The South's gonna change, eventually for the better, but there's gonna be a lot of turmoil for a while, a lot of ugliness. Providin' a good education's gonna be the last thing on people's minds.

YOUNG CECIL. I want to stay here with you an' Mama!

DADDY. You can always come back if you want to. Think about the future, Cecil! You've got a fair-sized brain there if you'd ever use it!

YOUNG CECIL. Are you tellin' me I have to go?

(CECIL enters to watch.)

DADDY. I'm advisin' you to. Just like I'm advisin' you that every time you're tempted to swing too hard, put down a brand new ball. Discipline your mind, that's why we play this game. An' that's what you're gonna learn at Phelps.

(He exits.)

YOUNG CECIL. I thought we played this game for fun. (*Calling:*)
Daddy!

YOUNG CECIL/CECIL. (*Simultaneously:*) Aw, what's the use.

(YOUNG CECIL exits slowly, as the lights change to the woods off the Fifth Fairway, April, 1964.)

Scene 4 **The Fifth Fairway Woods**

(MAMA enters with a basket of daffodils, reciting. YOUNG CECIL gets his putter, takes out a poetry book from the golf bag, and joins her. CECIL watches from the side.)

MAMA.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales an' hills
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Flutterin' an' dancin' in the breeze.

YOUNG CECIL.

Continuous as the stars that shine
An' twinkle on the Milky Way
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossin' their heads in sprightly dance

MAMA. The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee
A poet could not but be gay,
In such jocund company:
I gazed—an' gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

MAMA / YOUNG CECIL.

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude.
An' then my heart with pleasure fills
An' dances with the daffodils.

YOUNG CECIL. Does Daddy know this poem?

MAMA. It's one of his favorites. Why?

YOUNG CECIL. Just wondered where he got his "bliss of solitude" idea. It's funny to imagine Daddy recitin' Wordsworth.

MAMA. Oh, your daddy was quite the romantic.

YOUNG CECIL. What?!

MAMA. If only children could see their parents when they were young, they wouldn't be so harsh on them. Just remember, your father never had the advantages you have.

YOUNG CECIL. I know, grew up poor, worked in the textile mill—

MAMA. I'm talkin' about his father dyin' young, about not bein' able to learn from him, pick the good, reject the bad, see the whole picture. Your daddy never had anyone to measure himself by.

YOUNG CECIL. This is an advantage?!

MAMA. Cecil!

YOUNG CECIL. Everything's right or wrong with him, Mama—no wonder he wants to be a judge.

MAMA. Why are you so negative about him today? I won't have it. (*Picks up the book:*) Look at this book. It belonged to your granddaddy an' it's almost brand new. Because your daddy put a cover on it, reinforced the binding with tape. He protects the things he loves. There's a lot of comfort in that.

YOUNG CECIL. Why are you always forgivin' him? He never forgives anything.

MAMA. "The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.
Upon the place beneath..."

YOUNG CECIL. Words, Mama.

MAMA. Words I've used a time or two when you've needed forgivin', honey.

(Beat. MAMA begins picking daffodils. YOUNG CECIL picks up his putter.)

YOUNG CECIL. Mama, I want to be a professional golfer.

MAMA. A professional golfer?!

YOUNG CECIL. Don't laugh! I'm good, Mama, real good. The pro says I'm a natural. I'm gonna win every tournament in the state this summer, captain the golf team at Clemson, then hit the Tour.

MAMA. But you could use your brains, Cecil. You could be so much more.

YOUNG CECIL. What, a judge?

MAMA. What about prep school? You've already been accepted.

YOUNG CECIL. I don't want to go. It's too cold up there, I cain't play golf year round, I'll lose my rhythm—

MAMA. It's so short-sighted, Cec—

YOUNG CECIL. *(Like DADDY:)* Let me finish, will you?!

(They both recognize the tone. Beat. YOUNG CECIL seats MAMA on the hillock.)

Mama, Arnold Palmer's his own corporation: clubs, clothes, real estate. All from his name. Well, Burton woods an' irons has a nice ring to it, too. You'll be proud of me, you'll see. An" so will Daddy.

MAMA. He's not going to like this.

YOUNG CECIL. I know. That's why you've got to tell him.

MAMA. Me?!

YOUNG CECIL. Please, Mama. He won't listen to me. I don't know how to talk to him. But if you pave the way, tell him you think it's a good idea—

MAMA. But I don't.

YOUNG CECIL. I'm askin' for your help! You talked about children seein' parents when they're young. Well, don't parents have to see children, too? When I really crank one, hit it in the sweet spot, an' that little white dot soars out against the blue and then drops down exactly where I want it, I feel like I'm controlling the uncontrollable. Mozart must have felt that way when all the harmonies fell into place, da Vinci when Mona Lisa's smile flashed with mystery. Maybe it's just a silly game to some, but for me it's the nearest I can come to paintin' God's perfection, to harmonizin' with his angels. To give that up is stupid, Mama. To pursue it I call using your brains.

MAMA. I'll talk to your daddy.

YOUNG CECIL. (*Hugging her.*) Thanks, Mama.

(He begins practicing putting strokes.)

MAMA. Why are you always practicing your putting stroke?

YOUNG CECIL. I cain't find what Daddy calls the "bliss of solitude," when I can shut out the world.

MAMA. An' your daddy said this is a good thing?

YOUNG CECIL. In golf it's essential.

MAMA. An' in the rest of life?

YOUNG CECIL. He didn't say.

MAMA. I see.

YOUNG CECIL. But I get a little scared standin' over putts.

MAMA. Maybe it would help to transform the golf cup from somethin' frightenin' to somethin' invitin'. Make the cup a rabbit hole, an...ice cream cone...a flower. A daffodil! Surrounded by beautiful petals. An' in the center of the cup, a dark brown eye, like the flower.

YOUNG CECIL. My inward eye! Kinda like I'm puttin' to myself! It might just work, Mama. (*He strokes a putt*) Yeah!

MAMA. Well, if you beat your daddy, don't tell him where You learned it.

(DADDY calls from off, then enters, furious. CECIL rises to watch.)

DADDY. Carrie! Where in the hell have you been?

MAMA. Frank, what are you doin' here?

DADDY. Do you know what time it is?

MAMA. I'm sorry, dear, Cecil asked me to—

DADDY. I suppose you've forgotten about that dinner at the Morgans'?

MAMA. Oh, my word! I'll run right home and change.

DADDY. There's no time, you'll have to go like that.

MAMA. Franklin, I cain't go to a dinner dressed like this.

DADDY. You'll just have to explain to everybody where you were when you should have been gettin' ready, that's all.

YOUNG CECIL. Daddy, it's my fault, I—

DADDY. This doesn't concern you, Cecil.

MAMA. It'll just take a minute, Frank—

(YOUNG CECIL grabs his putter, moves away and begins concentrating extremely hard, desperately trying to shut out the argument as He strokes putt after putt. CECIL looks at him, then DADDY and MAMA.)

DADDY. I will not be late for this dinner! All the big-wigs are gathered to plot strategy for my campaign for the judgeship, an' I waltz in an hour late!

MAMA.
I'm sure the Morgans
won't mind.

YOUNG CECIL.
The bliss of solitude...
The bliss of solitude.

DADDY.
I mind! I mind when you
completely ignore my
needs! I mind when you
blithely go about your
business like some silly

YOUNG CECIL.
Dance with the daffodils...
Dance with the daffodils...
Daffodils...Daffodils...
Daffodils...Daffodils...

school girl, pickin'
flowers, takin' walks!—

MAMA.

I meant to hurry right
home, but Cecil—

DADDY.

“Meant to!” “Meant to!”
When I mean to do some-
thin', I do it! It's
not like you work all
day! Sometimes I don't
think you've got a lick
of sense!

YOUNG CECIL.

Pretty petals...Pretty
petals...

YOUNG CECIL.

Dark brown eye...Dark
brown eye...Inward eye...
Inward eye...
Inward eye...
Inward eye...
Inward eye...

YOUNG CECIL. Daffodils!

(DADDY continues berating MAMA, mouthing the words, but YOUNG CECIL can no longer hear him. He has shut out the pain. He continues stroking putts, smiling. MAMA collapses on the hill-ock in tears. CECIL looks at her. DADDY mouths a final shout, then exits. YOUNG CECIL strokes a final putt, then looks up happily.)

YOUNG CECIL / CECIL. Bliss.

(YOUNG CECIL smiles. CECIL is pained. MAMA and YOUNG CECIL exit. CECIL sits on the hillock. Beat. GRADY enters as the lights change to the present, still in the woods.)

Scene 5

The Fifth Woods And Fairway

GRADY. Mister?! Hey, mister?! You all right? I saw you come in the woods here, but when you didn't come out, I thought I'd check up on you. Ooeee, look at that hillside, What are those?

CECIL. Daffodils.

GRADY. Mmmm! Hmmm! Hmmm! Idn' it beautiful on the golf course? Smell that grass—like a woman just stepped out of the tub! Hey, I know why you're in here. You're pullin' a Walter Hagen.

CECIL. What?

GRADY. Hagen, you know, the champion—

CECIL. Golfer. Yeah, I know.

GRADY. Well, I always loved that phrase of his: “You’re only here for a short visit, so stop an’ smell the flowers.”

CECIL. I never knew a golfer made that up.

GRADY. Sure. See there, play along with me you might learn somethin’. I might learn somethin’, too, playin’ with a professional.

CECIL. I am not a professional!

GRADY. It ain’t like I called you a name. It’s compliment.

CECIL. I don’t deserve it.

GRADY. Why not?

CECIL. Let’s just play.

GRADY. “Let’s?!” Did I hear the “together” word?! Plural, as in you an’ me an’ the golf course makes three?

CECIL. I’ll try it for one hole. But if you start—

GRADY. Done! What you wanna play for?

CECIL. You mean, bet?

GRADY. Sure. What’s your handicap?

CECIL. (*Automatically:*) Women.

GRADY. Ain’t that the truth!

CECIL. I don’t wanna bet, let’s just hack it around. Where’s your ball?

GRADY. Well, last time I heard it, it was playin’ pinball in the trees.

CECIL. It’s lost?

GRADY. That’s another way of puttin’ it.

CECIL. Come on, you can drop one in the fairway.

(They walk.)

GRADY. Hey, you ever stop to think what kind of golfer famous people would have been? Lizzie Borden, you know, gal who took an axe to her parents? She'd have been a hacker! Napoleon? He'd have had a great *short* game!

(GRADY laughs, CECIL doesn't.)

Get it? He was short an'—

CECIL. I got it!

GRADY. You do one.

CECIL. Here's your ball.

GRADY. Come on! Bet you cain't.

CECIL. Einstein. World's most easy-goin' golfer.

GRADY. How come?

CECIL. It was all relative.

GRADY. That's good! Let's see, I ought to be able to top that—

CECIL. *(Forcefully:)* Will you hit?!

GRADY. Well, if you're 'fraid I might out-think ya'.

(He gets his wedge.)

Let's see now, little chip shot, shouldn't be no problem... Head down... Keep your head...

(He hits, then yells at his club.)

I hate this goddamn wedge!

CECIL. You try too hard.

GRADY. You're not supposed to try?

CECIL. One of golf's wonderful little paradoxes: the desire to hit the ball properly is the chief impediment to hittin' it properly.

GRADY. That something your daddy taught you?

CECIL. No, he taught me the chief impediment to hittin' the ball properly is fathers!

GRADY. What do you mean?

CECIL. It's a long story.

GRADY. You know, that's what I love about golf. It takes forever to play it. It's a great time for a long story.

(GRADY gives him an expectant grin.)

CECIL. All right, but could we play and talk at time?

GRADY. That I can do! I'll just hit a mulligan.

(CECIL starts to protest, realizes it's no use, shrugs. GRADY gets a ball and drops it.)

I'm all ears.

(YOUNG CECIL and DADDY enter. It is summer, 1964. YOUNG CECIL lines up a wood shot.)

CECIL. I never could play with Daddy. My game went to pot every time.

DADDY.
Keep it left, away from the woods.

GRADY.
Gotcha.

(YOUNG CECIL and GRADY hit.)

I said, left!

CECIL. Nice shot! See what happens when you don't try!

GRADY. Damnation, I don't understand nothin' 'bout this game.

CECIL. I could shoot 70 one day, next day with Daddy, couldn't break a hundred.

(They walk. YOUNG CECIL pulls a wedge from the bag, consults his father about his next shot.)

The worst was a Father/Son tournament. I'd finally talked him into playin' it with me.

(CECIL takes out his wedge.)

DADDY. Remember, with a wedge just let the clubhead drop on the ball and *follow through*.

(CECIL and YOUNG CECIL both swing. YOUNG CECIL flubs.)

DADDY. Follow *through!*

GRADY. Dead on the stob!

(YOUNG CECIL replaces his divot.)

CECIL. I followed through.

GRADY. *(The reason why:)* No daddy.

CECIL. Yeah.

(He and YOUNG CECIL get putters.)

Anyway, I couldn't play my way and I couldn't play his.

DADDY. *(Telling YOUNG CECIL how to putt:)* Play it six inches to the right of the cup.

(CECIL and YOUNG CECIL line up their putts, mirror images of each other. They putt towards each other at the same time. CECIL makes, YOUNG CECIL misses.)

DADDY. Never up, never in.

CECIL. Never up, never in!

(YOUNG CECIL throws his club. CECIL raises his putter triumphantly.)

Don't you ever throw a club playin' with me, young man. Master yourself!

(DADDY picks up YOUNG CECIL's putter, puts it in the bag, and continues on.)

YOUNG CECIL. Goddammit, Daddy, master yourself!

(He gets his two-iron from the bag as CECIL moves the bag to a new position.)

GRADY. You said that?!

CECIL. Not so he could hear it.

GRADY. Too bad.

CECIL. I didn't want him to walk right off the course, 'cause we still had a chance to win it thanks to the way Daddy'd been playin'. But on the last hole he was out of it, it was all up to me. I blasted a drive straight down the middle. Walkin' to my ball, I'm thinkin'...

YOUNG CECIL / CECIL. "I'm gonna win it, I'm gonna win it!"

CECIL. Then we reached the ball.

(YOUNG CECIL and DADDY look at the ball.)

YOUNG CECIL. Daddy, it's up against a rock!

GRADY. Uh-oh!

DADDY. Mower must have kicked one up. Better not touch it, the ball might roll.

YOUNG CECIL. I cain't hit it through the rock.

DADDY. 'Fraid you'll have to, or call an unplayable lie.

YOUNG CECIL. That would add two strokes! It's not fair!

DADDY. Who said it had to be? My advice is to do the best you can, an' hope for a one putt.

(YOUNG CECIL carefully places his iron behind the ball. A deep breath, then he swings—but he stops his backswing at the top.)

What's wrong?

YOUNG CECIL. The ball moved.

DADDY. That's a penalty stroke.

YOUNG CECIL. It barely moved a couple of inches!

DADDY. If you move it you're not playin' it as it lies.

YOUNG CECIL. I didn't move it! No one saw it!

DADDY. *You* saw it! You're callin' a penalty on yourself or it's the last round of golf you're ever playin' with me!

YOUNG CECIL. All right!

(Swings angrily. Both stare at each other, not watching the ball. DADDY stomps off.)

GRADY. Ain't that a shame.

CECIL. That's what I thought at the time. But it looks a little different today. It kinda turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

GRADY. How do you mean?

CECIL. Let's play and talk.

GRADY. By the way, who did win that Father/Son tournament?

(MORGAN enters with a trophy.)

Aw, naw!

(CECIL and GRADY exit.)

MORGAN. Helluva a battle, son. Me an' Junior enjoyed the heck out of it. Lissen up, ol' buddy. Pro's been tellin' me he thinks you got the makin's of a professional golfer. You ever need backin' to go on the Tour, you come see me, you hear?

YOUNG CECIL. I don't think that's possible, Mr. Morgan. Not where I'm goin'.

MORGAN. Where's that?

YOUNG CECIL. Up north.

MORGAN. Why'd you wanna do a fool thing like that?

YOUNG CECIL. Seems to be the way the ball lies.

MORGAN. Well, you keep your distance from them Yankees, son. Sleep with a dog an' you'll have fleas.

(He exits. YOUNG CECIL goes to his clubs puts the covers on the woods lovingly, as if saying goodbye. He exits as the lights to the Glee Club Dance, Fall, 1964.)

Scene 6
The Glee Club Dance

(Chuck Berry's "Rock 'n' Roll Music" plays as a silver ball spins, filling the room with dancing light. MARIA enters and looks impatiently around her, moving a little to the music. An announcement is heard.)

ANNOUNCER. *(or GENERAL LEVITY)* Miss Maria Lissanti.

(MARIA stands for a moment, alone.)

Would Miss Lissanti's escort come forward?

(GENERAL LEVITY enters in a white tux coat pushing a tray of punch. He moves one of the benches into place, nods to MARIA, then sees YOUNG CECIL enter in a coat and tie, stare at MARIA, then start to exit.)

GENERAL LEVITY. Mr. Burton, is that your date?

YOUNG CECIL. She cain't be. She's supposed to be fat.

JULIUS. Fat?

YOUNG CECIL. Italian. Pasta. *(Gesturing with his hands:)* *Mamma mia.*

GENERAL LEVITY. Mr. Burton, the depths of your prejudices continue to astound me.

YOUNG CECIL. Couldn't someone else take her, sir? She's so beautiful.

GENERAL LEVITY. Mr. Burton, that is a problem with which you will have to deal as best you can. Now march yourself over there this instant.

(YOUNG CECIL goes to MARIA as GENERAL LEVITY exits. "You've Lost That Loving Feeling" begins playing. He holds out his hand.)

YOUNG CECIL. I'm Cecil.

MARIA. Hi. Maria.

(He continues to stare. She musses her hair.)

YOUNG CECIL. Hey, why'd you mess up your hair?

MARIA. So you wouldn't have to look at me.

YOUNG CECIL. But I like...

MARIA. I know, that's the problem. Could we dance?

(She makes little dancing movements. CECIL is silent.)

"I'd love to, Maria!"

(She drags him into position and they dance silently.)

Guess what I learned in biology today? *(Since he says nothing, she fills in for him:)* "What, Maria?" Frogs are dumb. "Oh, why?" Because if you put a frog in water and slowly turn up the heat, he'll just swim there till he boils to death. But if you throw a frog into a pot of water that's already boiling, he'll jump right out. "Wow, cool."

(He clamps his hand over her mouth.)

YOUNG CECIL. You'd make a lousy ventriloquist. 'Scuse me.

(He puts her hair back in place, but not very well.)

Why are you smiling?

MARIA. 'Cause you'd make a lousy hairdresser.

(She fixes her hair better, then moves to the punch bowl. YOUNG CECIL follows and pours them some punch.)

YOUNG CECIL. Frogs, huh? You like biology?

MARIA. I love it. I'm going to be a veterinarian some day.

YOUNG CECIL. Hope nobody ever leaves you their pet frog. Why do you like it?

MARIA. *(She sits on the bench:)* It teaches you all about life. Take these frogs. They're just like people. You keep making adjustments, acclimating to ever greater levels of stress, you keep handling things until you wake up one morning and you're cooked. But if you can make yourself test the water every day, your instincts'll tell you whether to stay in or to hop out.

YOUNG CECIL. I've hated biology ever since I learned what female spiders do to their mate after making love.

MARIA. Isn't that great!

YOUNG CECIL. Great?! She bites his head off! I mean, I know sometimes the female's left unsatisfied, but that's a might extreme.

MARIA. *(Laughs:)* Where're you from?

YOUNG CECIL. South Carolina.

MARIA. God, the southern accent was designed to seduce women.

(YOUNG CECIL holds his head in mock fear.)

Don't worry, I won't bite.

(He straightens.)

Yet.

(He asks her to dance. They leave their punch on the bench.)

YOUNG CECIL. Do you like this song? I hate it. Who wants to dance slow to a song about losin' that lovin' feelin'?

MARIA. Don't listen to the words, then.

YOUNG CECIL. I won't.

MARIA. Just concentrate on the feeling.

YOUNG CECIL. I will.

(She moves into his arms.)

MARIA. Like it any better?

YOUNG CECIL. It's growin' on me.

MARIA. So, what do you think of us Yankees?

YOUNG CECIL. I hope some of you give me fleas.

MARIA. Huh?

YOUNG CECIL. Nothin'. I love Yankees like a coon loves cornpone.

MARIA. I take it that means "yes."

YOUNG CECIL. I thought I'd hate leavin' home but I don't. There's so much more to do up here. I feel like a rooster with the fence knocked down. I don't even miss golf that much.

MARIA. Golf?

YOUNG CECIL. Don't laugh. Golf can teach you things, too.

MARIA. Is that why you play it, to learn something?

YOUNG CECIL. That's why my daddy plays it. I play it because it's fun. An' because I'm good at it. You wanna learn all about somebody, play a round of golf with 'em.

(He goes to pick up their punch.)

MARIA. Will you play a round with me some time?

YOUNG CECIL. Golf?

MARIA. Whatever.

YOUNG CECIL. Sure.

(He gulps some punch and returns to the tray for more.)

MARIA. My father says golf's the most fun you can have without taking your clothes off.

YOUNG CECIL. It's a lot of fun.

MARIA. Sure. But take what we're doing right now. Our clothes are on, right? *(She snuggles into his arms:)* But which would you rather be holdin', a putter or me?

(He holds her close.)

Touché, Dad!

(GENERAL LEVITY enters. He clears his throat to break up their embrace. They move away, laughing, as GENERAL LEVITY takes off the tray.)

YOUNG CECIL. Wanna go outside?

MARIA. It's against the rules.

YOUNG CECIL. Never up, never in.

MARIA. Is that a proposition?

YOUNG CECIL. No! I mean, yes! I'll explain it to you later. The bathroom's got windows. I'll meet you in the bushes.

MARIA. How southern! Is there a phrase for this?

YOUNG CECIL. I think it's called sap-raisin' time.

MARIA. I'll just powder my...

(She smiles and exits. YOUNG CECIL takes a practice golf swing and lets out a "Whoop!" as the lights change to The Greenville Airport, Christmas, 1964.)

Scene 7 **The Greenville Airport**

(Christmas muzak plays, interrupted by the sounds and announcements of flights and other airport noise. JULIUS, in a light raincoat, brings on two suitcases, then throws YOUNG CECIL his overcoat, hitting him just after his practice swing.)

JULIUS. Damn, Burton! Don't you ever stop? You'll probably rise up out of the grave to take one last practice swing.

YOUNG CECIL. Tough game, doltnose. Takes a lotta work.

JULIUS. Any klutz can do it.

YOUNG CECIL. We'll play a few holes while you're down here, then you'll develop some respect for this game.

JULIUS. Burton, how can I respect a sport where the participants wear green-checked pants, pink shirts with an alligator on them, and two-tone shoes. Not even a pimp would dress like that.

YOUNG CECIL. You'll see.

JULIUS. Where the hell are your parents anyway?

YOUNG CECIL. They'll be here.

JULIUS. Probably rounding up the posse and nailing up the cross.

YOUNG CECIL. What are you so worried about?

JULIUS. I'm worried 'bout the ratio of hankies with guns and blacks with smiles. (*Big smile and southern accent:*) "How do, I'm Julius Jefferson an' I am just tickled pink to be asked to attend your Debutante Ball an' dance with all your purty southern belles cheek to cheek!" An' what'll I do if one of 'em falls for my charms?

YOUNG CECIL. What any red-blooded American male would do. *Penis erectium conscientum non habet.*

JULIUS. (*Mentally translating:*) *Penis erectium...* "A stiff penis hath no conscience!"

YOUNG CECIL. I didn't say it!

JULIUS. No, who did?

YOUNG CECIL. I think it was Cicero.

(*JULIUS scoffs.*)

Vergil? Calligula—?!

JULIUS. All right, all right! Man, why did I let you talk me into bringing them their worst nightmare live and in living *color*.

YOUNG CECIL. Come on, Julius, the south's not that different.

JULIUS. Germany wasn't that different from France except for the Nazis.

YOUNG CECIL. There're no Nazis here. An' no "For Colored Only" signs, either.

JULIUS. You mean you and I can urinate side by side in perfect harmony?!

YOUNG CECIL. Not only that, I'll let you ride in the *front* seat of our car!

JULIUS. Burton, your parents will be dismayed at the wild-eyed radical you've become. I still can't believe your daddy agreed to this, Bi-Racial Committee or no.

YOUNG CECIL. He'll love it.

JULIUS. Whoa, cat! What's this "will" love it? Doesn't he know about your little plan?

YOUNG CECIL. He knows my roommate's comin' to visit an' we're goin' to the Debutante Ball, sure.

JULIUS. Burton does he know what *color* your roommate is?!

YOUNG CECIL. The whole point of integration is, color doesn't matter.

JULIUS. It matters a helluva lot if your color is *black!*

YOUNG CECIL. Did Martin Luther King just win the Nobel Peace Prize because he was black?!

JULIUS. Yeah, that probably had a lot to do with it!

YOUNG CECIL. I choose not to believe that.

JULIUS. You choose— ! Burton, do you know what a pig trimmer is?

YOUNG CECIL. No.

JULIUS. They use it to “trim” the maleness off. But some of your overzealous citizens prefer using pig trimmers on people. I'm not worried, however, I'll just tell 'em “I choose not to believe you're cuttin' my balls off!”

(They adlib an argument as MAMA enters.)

MAMA. Cecil!

YOUNG CECIL. Mama!

(They embrace.)

MAMA. It's good to have you home, honey. Merry Christmas.

YOUNG CECIL. Mama, this is Julius.

MAMA. *(Surprised for a moment, then warmly:)* Hello, Julius, Nice to meet you.

JULIUS. Hello, Mrs. Burton.

MAMA. What were y'all discussin' so heatedly?

JULIUS. Pigs!

(DADDY enters.)

DADDY. Hey, Cec! How's my prodigal son?

YOUNG CECIL. Fine, Daddy. How're you?

DADDY. Keepin' it down the middle.

YOUNG CECIL. Daddy, I'd like you to meet. Julius. Julius, my father.

(JULIUS offers his hand, DADDY takes it.)

JULIUS. How do you do, Mr. Burton.

DADDY. Julius. You're Cecil's roommate?

JULIUS. Yes, sir.

MAMA. Well, if this is all your luggage, let's get a move on.

(JULIUS gets his suitcase.)

DADDY. You an' Julius go on a minute, Carrie. I want to ask my boy 'bout school.

MAMA. Come along, Julius. Tell me about these pigs.

JULIUS. You may be seeing for yourself before long, Mrs. Burton.

(They exit.)

DADDY. Why didn't you tell me?

YOUNG CECIL. Tell you what?

DADDY. Don't be smart, Cecil. About Julius.

YOUNG CECIL. Because I didn't think it would matter.

DADDY. You didn't think— ! *(He lowers his voice, but continues angrily:)* You didn't think it would matter that we'd just waltz into that Debutante Ball without warnin'? You didn't think it would matter that I'd cause a stink that'd make a skunk smell like Christmas, that I'd be the laughingstock of the whole community? Well, you're right about one thing, Cecil Burton: you didn't think!

YOUNG CECIL. Daddy, Julius is the perfect person for this. He's incredibly witty, charmin', he'll show everybody that black people can be more than garbage men and washer women.

DADDY. Folks here cain't see that yet. We can change the law, but the rest will have to follow. It cain't lead.

YOUNG CECIL. All right! He doesn't have to go to the stupid Debutante Ball.

DADDY. No, what he has to do is get back on the next plane home.

YOUNG CECIL. Why!?

DADDY. Because stayin' with us will undermine all I've been trying to do the past five years. Greenville will be peacefully integrated, which is no mean feat nowadays. I've even gotten Dale Morgan to cooperate by building some low-cost housing. But blacks don't sleep in white folks' homes. It's disgusting, but it's the reality. The last thing I want is to give the rednecks an' ruckus-raisers an excuse to pull down everything I've built up.

YOUNG CECIL. Great! This is all about you, huh?

DADDY. No, it's all about you. What were you trying to do, pulling a stunt like this?

YOUNG CECIL. What you taught me!

DADDY. Is that why you failed to inform me Julius is black?

(Beat. DADDY exits. After a moment, JULIUS enters.)

JULIUS. Your father says you want to see me.

YOUNG CECIL. Julius... He wants to send you home.

JULIUS. And?...

YOUNG CECIL. I'll pay for it. The whole trip.

JULIUS. With his money? Then go play a few holes at the club to forget about it? No, thanks.

YOUNG CECIL. I'm as shocked by this as you are!

JULIUS. Really? Let me ask you something, Burton. Were you trying to show me down south, or show somebody else up?

(JULIUS exits. YOUNG CECIL stands despondently as the lights change to his dorm room, early June, 1965.)

Scene 8
The Dorm Room

(The Beatles' "Hold Me Tight" is heard. MARIA enters, gets YOUNG CECIL's suitcase, and puts it on the "bed," which YOUNG CECIL has made by putting the two benches together. As he takes off his overcoat, suit coat, shirt and tie, she helps him put them into the suitcase, first taking out his golf shirt and a pillow. When his golf shirt is stuck over his head, she tickles him. He chases her, and she throws the pillow at him.)

MARIA. I'd better go.

YOUNG CECIL. No!

(He throws the pillow back, and while she bends to retrieve it, he picks her up and carries her to the bed, where they kiss.)

MARIA. You don't want to get caught with a girl in your room the night before graduation.

YOUNG CECIL. How do you know?

MARIA. Your father might feel different.

YOUNG CECIL. My father feels different about a lot of things.

MARIA. Me, for instance.

YOUNG CECIL. He likes you. It's just that a scholarship girl from Rhode Island was probably not who he was hoping I'd fall in love with.

MARIA. I could change my name to Muffy.

YOUNG CECIL. What about your Italian blood?

MARIA. That I'll never change.

YOUNG CECIL. Good.

MARIA. Your father's funny. He can ignore you when you're in the same room with him, then turn around and charm the pants off you.

YOUNG CECIL. It's an ol' southern trait.

MARIA. What?

YOUNG CECIL. Charmin' the pants off people. Especially hot-blooded Italians with incredible secrets underneath those clothes.

(They kiss passionately.)

MARIA. Isn't General Levity making his rounds?

YOUNG CECIL. Not on the last night.

MARIA. Why do you call him that anyway?

YOUNG CECIL. Julius an' I were raisin' Cain one night and he burst in, proclaiming "Gentlemen, there is an air of general levity here that is totally inappropriate!" We laughed our asses off. Back in the days when we used to laugh.

MARIA. Julius still hasn't come around, huh?

YOUNG CECIL. We get along on the surface. But I used to talk to him like nobody else. Hell, maybe I was usin' him for my own weird reasons. I just wish he'd forgive me.

MARIA. He might never. It's a lot easier to forgive people for what they do than for who they are.

YOUNG CECIL. An' who am I?

MARIA. A white man.

(JULIUS is heard singing "Gaudeamus Igitur" offstage, then enters. He sniffs the air.)

JULIUS. Aha! There is an air of general sex here that is totally inappropriate.

YOUNG CECIL. Are you drunk?

JULIUS. *(Revealing a Scotch bottle:)* We have met the enemy and they are ours. Maria, a glass!

MARIA. I'd better sneak out. Looks like things are gonna get a little boisterous.

YOUNG CECIL. Where there're boys, things will be "boys-terous!"

MARIA. Pathetic!

JULIUS. But we won't be boys long. Tomorrow they give us the parchment and—presto-change-o!—instant manhood. Just like the motto of dear ol' Phelps says: Huc venite pueri ut viri sitis.

MARIA. Translation, please.

YOUNG CECIL / JULIUS. "You came here boys that you might be men."

MARIA. Well, "men," I'd better high-tail it out of here so you can graduate.

JULIUS. "High-tail—"? This boy's infected you with. southernitis, Maria.

MARIA. Ain't it wonderful? Bye, y'all!

(Kisses YOUNG CECIL.)

You come to see me, y'heah?

YOUNG CECIL. Okay, Muffy.

(JULIUS mocks her, calling "Muffy!, Muffy!" YOUNG CECIL shushes him while he lets MARIA quietly out. JULIUS puts down his glass to serve as a golf hole.)

JULIUS. Come on, Burton. There's something I've been meaning to do ever since Greenville: beat your butt at that stupid-ass game of yours.

YOUNG CECIL. What're you doin'?

JULIUS. Giving you a demonstration of athletic prowess.

YOUNG CECIL. True, you an' the rest of your iron-pumpin' crew are athletes. But I have attained a loftier perch. I am an artist.

JULIUS. Get out your "balls," Mr. Artist.

YOUNG CECIL. *(Getting balls from the bag:)* The artist and the golfer both teach us how to solve the mystery of life.

JULIUS. In a minute I'm gonna solve the mystery of where you got that big mouth.

(He putts.)

YOUNG CECIL. Missed the whole glass!

JULIUS. Shit!

(Tries again.)

YOUNG CECIL. Missed again.

JULIUS. 'Cause I'm drunk.

YOUNG CECIL. That's another thing golf teaches us: self-delusion.

JULIUS. Shut up, Burton. *(Putts again, misses:)* Goddammit!

YOUNG CECIL. Ah, ah, ah—self-control!

(JULIUS putts and misses.)

0-for-4—

(JULIUS swings back the putter like a driver.)

Hey!

(YOUNG CECIL ducks as JULIUS swings hard yells loudly.)

JULIUS. Aiiiiiiiiii!!!!!!!!!!!!

(The sound of breaking glass.)

YOUNG CECIL. Jesus, Julius, you broke the damn window!

JULIUS. I hate this goddamn putter!

YOUNG CECIL. Easy game, isn't it?! "Me cave man, me kill ball!"

JULIUS. Shut up, Burton!

YOUNG CECIL. You should have seen your face, you were—

(GENERAL LEVITY knocks.)

GENERAL LEVITY. *(From off:)* What's going on in there?!

YOUNG CECIL. Oh, God, General Levity!

GENERAL LEVITY. Open the door!

YOUNG CECIL. Give me the bottle!

(JULIUS gives it to YOUNG CECIL and he stuffs it in the golf bag.)

GENERAL LEVITY. I said open up!

(YOUNG CECIL nods to JULIUS and he opens the door. GENERAL LEVITY enters.)

What's all, this racket, gentlemen? And what happened to that window?

JULIUS. I'm sorry, sir, I broke it.

GENERAL LEVITY. How? ... Well?

YOUNG CECIL. I was showing him how to putt an' Julius got a little carried away. I'll pay for it.

JULIUS. No you will not!

GENERAL LEVITY. Come here, both of you.

(They approach.)

Breathe.

YOUNG CECIL. Sir?

GENERAL LEVITY. Breathe—hard!

(They do so.)

All right, where's the bottle?

(Silence.)

Cecil, you haven't been drinking. Julius has. You can do yourself a great service by telling me where that bottle is.

YOUNG CECIL. Sir, it's the last night. Surely one little indiscretion—

GENERAL LEVITY. May I remind you that the honor code you signed requires you to report any violations or be subjected to disciplinary action.

YOUNG CECIL. That's a ridiculous old code!

GENERAL LEVITY. You signed it, Mr. Burton. Do you have anything to report?

(A long beat.)

YOUNG CECIL. No, sir.

GENERAL LEVITY. Very well.

(GENERAL LEVITY picks up the putter, roams the room, starts to put the putter in the golf bag, finds and withdraws the bottle.)

I don't think you boys will be graduating tomorrow.

JULIUS. Sir, it's my fault. Cecil shouldn't be punished.

GENERAL LEVITY. At the Phelps School we live by an "old" code of honor, Mr. Jefferson. Mr. Burton chose to substitute his own code. Let him live with the consequences.

(GENERAL LEVITY exits. Beat)

JULIUS. You think this makes us even?

YOUNG CECIL. How do you know I did it for you?

JULIUS. It was a dumb thing to do, why ever you did it.

YOUNG CECIL. Maybe I'm ready to do a few so-called "dumb" things for a change. Is there some God of brains handing out certificates? "This was dumb. This was smart." Maybe it was smart because I did it, all. by my lonesome, because I wanted to. When the final stroke is played, then we'll know if it was dumb or smart. Till then, it's just a round of golf, an' by God I'm gonna play it my way: attack the course, hit the hell out of the ball, an' see where it goes.

(JULIUS exits as the lights change to Greenville a few days later. DADDY enters.)

DADDY. Right smack dab in the woods, that's where it's going, along with the rest of your life!

YOUNG CECIL. What was I supposed to do, rat on my friend?

DADDY. You were supposed to follow the rules.

YOUNG CECIL. Maybe we need some new rules.

DADDY. An' you're gonna write 'em, I reckon!

YOUNG CECIL. Let's not get into this. Daddy, please, listen. Maybe this isn't such a bad thing. Now instead of goin' to college I can go on the Tour. If you could back me, Daddy, I could qualify in one, two years, I know I could! An' once we start making' money in tournaments, I could pay you back real fast. I've got it all now, Daddy. The bliss, the discipline of mind, everything you taught me. Plus my own power game. It'd be like both of us out there playin' the Tour. I can win, Daddy, if you'll back me. Will you?

DADDY. Are you out of your mind? Golf is a game, Cecil.

YOUNG CECIL. A game we both love.

DADDY. You don't make a career out of a goddamned game! Is this where all my efforts have led? Is this your burning ambition in life? To be a stupid jock?

YOUNG CECIL. If I love what I do, who cares?!

DADDY. *I care! (Looks at his son with disgust:) A waste!*

(He exits.)

YOUNG CECIL. *(A declaration of independence:) I am not a waste!!!*

(YOUNG CECIL is devastated. Slowly he goes to the bag and gets his putter. Stroking putt after putt, he begins to regain his strength as the lights change to the Ninth Green.)

Scene 9 **The Ninth Green**

(CECIL and GRADY are heard arguing offstage.)

GRADY. By damn, I knew you were a professional!

CECIL. I'm not a professional!

GRADY. But you went on the—

CECIL. A lot of people go on the Tour.

(They enter.)

Tour! Tour! Tour! Who gives a damn any more?!!

GRADY. All right, all right, take it easy. Come, on I'll buy you a Coke before we tackle the back nine.

CECIL. You go ahead, I wanna stay here a minute.

GRADY. Okay, say, uh...where's the machine?

CECIL. The Clubhouse is probably open now.

GRADY. Right. But, uh...just in case it isn't, where was that machine again?

CECIL. Down by the old caddy shack.

GRADY. Yeah, how could I forget.

(Beat.)

Sorry 'bout that Tour stuff. It's just that I couldn't imagine anything I'd. rather do.

(CECIL nods his forgiveness, GRADY exits. CECIL looks at YOUNG CECIL.)

CECIL. Yeah, I couldn't either. Gonna be better than Nicklaus. Better than Palmer. Better than all of 'em. 'Cause you sure could putt. Drive for show, putt for dough, right? Ten ten-footers in a row. You could see that dark brown eye every time. How could you miss?

(YOUNG CECIL stops, hands his putter to CECIL. He is smiling confidently. They exchange a knowing look, then YOUNG CECIL exits. CECIL stands over the ball and putts.)

Missed.

(The lights slowly dim out.)

ACT II

Scene 1 The Tenth Tee

(In the dark we hear the sound of a powerful swing. Beat. Another swing. A longer pause, the mightiest swing yet, then:)

GRADY. *(Still in the dark:)* I hate this goddamn driver!

(The lights come up to reveal GRADY calling after his ball.)

Straighten out! Straighten out— ! *(Disgustedly:)* Damn ball won't listen. What a way to start the back side!

(He looks round for CECIL, then quickly hits a mulligan. It's a beauty. CECIL enters.)

CECIL. Where'd you hit?

GRADY. *(With a big smile:)* Straight down the middle!

(CECIL gets his driver.)

Where you been?

CECIL. Had to call an' tell some folks where I am.

GRADY. *(He sits on the hillock:)* Course gonna be crowded today with that Father/Son tournament— Hey, that must be the appointment you gotta keep, huh? Your tee-off time with your daddy.

CECIL. No.

GRADY. But I figured the returning professional and his father. Get those names side by side on that trophy like you were saying.

CECIL. *(Addressing his ball:)* Fore, please.

GRADY. Why don't you just drop into that bliss of solitude of yours, that way I can keep yappin' and you won't even hear me.

(CECIL stares at GRADY.)

Well, if you've lost that blissful feelin'— *(A la The Righteous Brothers song)* "whoa-oh that blissful feelin'— "

(CECIL straightens, annoyed. GRADY claps a hand over his mouth. CECIL hits.)

Uh-oh, look out! Big ol' hook. Talk to it! Stay out of the woods, ball!

(It doesn't.)

CECIL. You can talk to a slice, a hook won't listen.

GRADY. Hit a mulligan. Go on, hit another ball. Who'll care?

(CECIL hesitates, then gets another ball and hits it.)

Damn, your drives leave the tee like they're late for supper! Still ain't come down.

(They walk.)

CECIL. 'Member when Alan Shepherd hit that golf shot on the moon? What a sense of power, no gravity, that ball just flew forever.

GRADY. Now Reagan wants to cut out the moon program. You know what scares me the most with Reagan running for President? The man doesn't play golf.

CECIL. So?

GRADY. So?! He's got no clue to the human condition. If he's never had to hit a two-iron from deep grass under a low tree limb to a green surrounded by sand traps, how in the hell's he gonna deal with the Russians?

CECIL. My friend, you are a profound political analyst.

GRADY. Agreed. Well, maybe he'll lose.

CECIL. I doubt it. Actors make great politicians. They're both consummate liars.

GRADY. Where have all the honorable folks gone?

CECIL. *(Sings like the Judy Collins song:)* "Gone to graveyards everyone!"

GRADY. *(Laughs:)* Yeah. Lemme ask you, if you buy somethin' an' the cashier gives you too much change back, do you point it out. or keep the money?

CECIL. Point it out, I reckon.

GRADY. What you think makes people keep that money?

CECIL. I think most folks feel life isn't fair, so this is their chance to get a little back. An' they tell themselves, what's it matter, the grocery store or the bank won't miss a couple of bucks. They're right, it won't matter to them, it's got to matter to *you*.

GRADY. That's your daddy talkin' in you now. Say, did he ever make judge?

CECIL. It's not important.

GRADY.
Of course it's important.

We need honorable folks
like him on the bench.

DADDY.
Of course it's important!
(Enters with MAMA:)

I was sittin' right there
on that bench.

CECIL. *(Continuing:)* There's my ball.

(He exits. MAMA searches under the bench.)

GRADY. Wait a minute!— Lawdy mercy, white folks sure can be afflicted!

(He exits after CECIL, as the lights change to MARIA's graduation, spring, 1972.)

Scene 2 The Graduation

(As MAMA and DADDY search, CECIL enters in a sports jacket.)

MAMA. Are you sure?

DADDY. Yes, I'm sure! I'm not senile, you know.

MAMA. I know you're not, dear, I only meant there are several benches here that look the same.

MARIA. *(Entering in cap and gown:)* I talked to Professor Goldberg. You didn't give it to him.

(She goes and embraces CECIL.)

DADDY. I didn't think I had, that was Carrie's fool notion. I hate it when things aren't where they're supposed to be.

MAMA. Are you sure you didn't put it back in your wallet, Frank? I don't know where it is now, but it was there the last time I saw it.

DADDY. I checked there, Carrie.

MAMA. Mind. if I have a look?

(He impatiently hands her his wallet.)

CECIL. Is it this important? Maria an' I have something we want to share with y'all.

DADDY. You think I'd be makin' all this fuss if it weren't?

MAMA. Here it is!

(She pulls out a piece of paper and hands it to DADDY.)

DADDY. Well, what do you know!

MAMA. It was tucked behind a flap, that's why you didn't see it. I swanee, Franklin, I'm gonna carve that on your tombstone: "I don't know where he is now, but he was here the last time I saw him!"

(All laugh.)

DADDY. She'll do it, too!

CECIL. Well, let's hear what all the fuss was about.

DADDY. All the "fuss" is about this letter I wrote Dale Morgan when he questioned my thoroughness in a. title search on some property in Louisiana. Said I had forgotten to include title prior to 1803. *(Reads:)* "Dear Dale: Please be advised that in 1803 the United States acquired the territory of Louisiana from the Republic of France by purchase; the Republic of France had in turn acquired title from the Spanish crown by conquest; the Spanish crown had acquired title by virtue of the discoveries of one Christopher Columbus, duly authorized by Queen Isabella; Isabella, before granting such authority, had obtained the sanction of His Holiness, the Pope; the Pope is Vicar on earth of Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ is the son and heir-apparent of God. God made Louisiana. I hope to hell you are satisfied!"

(All laugh.)

MAMA. You can imagine Dale's reaction to that!

CECIL. Won't you need Morgan's support to move up to Federal judge?

DADDY. You're the one who needs him, not me.

CECIL. I had to get a backer from somewhere, Daddy. An' since you declined the honor...

DADDY. I don't back what I don't believe in.

MAMA. Hey, you two, this is Maria's graduation day.

MARIA. That's right. No golf, that's the rule. *(To CECIL:)* For those among us with an aversion to rules, we'll make it a request.

(She chokes him playfully.)

CECIL. Granted. *(Sitting with MARIA:)* What did you finally do your thesis on, Maria?

MARIA. Spontaneous regeneration.

MAMA. How fascinatin'!

MARIA. Did you know they think we all shared. this ability once, but lost it as higher forms of life evolved. Some lower forms are incredible. Flatworms are my favorite. Any part grafted onto their tail will regenerate a head, and vice versa. Wouldn't it be great if we could still do this?

CECIL. Maybe we still can. Some people swear Nixon has his head comin' out of his tail?

(They laugh.)

MAMA. A Doctor of Veterinary Medicine! That's certainly cause for celebration.

CECIL. *(Proudly:)* It sure is!

MARIA. We've got more cause, too. Tell them, Cec.

CECIL. I've asked Maria to marry me an' she's done me the honor of acceptin'.

MAMA. Oh, Cecil, that's wonderful!

(They hug, then MAMA hugs MARIA.)

I'm so happy for you, honey. You take care of my baby.

MARIA. I will, but I won't baby him.

CECIL. Aw, please!

DADDY. Well, I'm delighted.

(He hugs MARIA.)

You'll be a wonderful addition to the family. We could use some sprucin' up on the looks an' brains department.

MAMA. Speak for yourself, John Smith!

DADDY. Congratulations, son.

(They shake.)

CECIL. You sure it's not condolences? I thought you wanted me to marry the banker's daughter?

DADDY. That was before I met the fisherman's. Now I know why Italy lost the war. Who wants to fight when there're such better things to do?! Say, did I ever tell you 'bout the day I proposed to Carrie?

CECIL. *(Mocking:)* Gosh, I don't think so, Daddy.

DADDY. I didn't?! Well, it's a great story.

MAMA. He's teasin' you, dear. I think Cecil an' I have it down verbatim.

MARIA. I haven't heard it.

DADDY. Well, I'll tell you later. Over drinks.

(They sit together on a bench.)

MAMA. Now, Franklin, you know what the doctor said—

DADDY. This is a special occasion, Carrie. It's not every day I get a beautiful new daughter-in-law. You're not against a little drinkin', are you, Maria?

MARIA. Not on my graduation day.

DADDY. That's my gal! So, where're you two gonna live?

CECIL. Maria's coming on the Tour.

(He stands with his arms around MAMA.)

DADDY. Really? What about putting that degree you just got to good use?

MARIA. I've been in school so long I need a break.

DADDY. Don't waste your education, Maria. Employers don't like to see a hole in that resume.

CECIL. We'd like to be together, Daddy.

DADDY. So, get a job in a pro shop. It's steady income. *(To MARIA:)* You really think this is a good idea?

MARIA. If this is what Cecil wants to do, I support him.

DADDY. Love is blind.

MARIA. Well, I'm starved. We're taking you out to eat.

DADDY. De-lighted! But we'll take you.

CECIL. Daddy, we wanna treat you.

DADDY. No need to, I've got plenty of money.

CECIL. But

DADDY. I always pay—

CECIL. I know, but this is my treat.

DADDY. I always pay!

MARIA. Who cares, just feed me! Carrie, grab this hunk and get him out of here. We'll meet you back at the dorm in an hour.

MAMA. *(Grabbing DADDY' s arm:)* Come along, "hunk!"

(They exit.)

MARIA. All right, gimme my graduation kiss.

(He kisses her perfunctorily.)

Hey, I graduated. with honors. That felt like I flunked!

CECIL. He makes me so damn mad sometimes.

MARIA. Sometimes!

CECIL. Could you believe he's drivin' us nuts lookin' for that letter, then he finds it right in his damn wallet! An. all he says is "Well, what do you know!" How about "I'm sorry for the trouble." I've never heard him say those two words in my whole life: "I'm. Sorry."

MARIA. What brought this on?

CECIL. An' the way he treats Mama.

MARIA. Ohhhhh.

CECIL. Do I treat you like that?

MARIA. You try very hard not to. But some things get passed along whether we like it or not.

CECIL. Nothin's gettin' passed on if I can help it.

(He sits on a bench.)

He doesn't have to flirt with you right in front of her.

MARIA. He doesn't mean anything by it. I think it's kinda cute.

CECIL. Cute?!

MARIA. *(She rubs his shoulders from behind:)* Cecil, don't reject everything about the man. There are some good things, too.

CECIL. Name one.

MARIA. That letter. Once he found it, he was perfectly happy. Your father doesn't dwell on things, he lets go. And he lets you know how he feels.

CECIL. This is a plus?!

MARIA. Yes. Do you realize you never admit you're mad at me?

CECIL. I'm not.

MARIA. Honey, I'm good, but I'm not perfect!

CECIL. To me you are.

MARIA. Please, no burdens! *(Joining him on the bench:)* Why don't you talk to your father, Cecil? Tell him how you feel.

CECIL. What good would it do?

MARIA. Him, maybe none. But it might do you some.

CECIL. Oh, come on, Maria, the guy wants me to work in a pro shop. He hasn't got a clue who I am.

MARIA. So tell him.

CECIL. *(He crosses away:)* When my picture's in the paper holdin' a winner's trophy in one hand an' a big check in the other, I won't have to tell him.

MARIA. I hope that's the answer for you, honey, I really do.

(Beat.)

What's wrong?

CECIL. I don't know. I guess I wanted him to be more...enthusiastic about our announcement. Naturally, he just wanted to tell the story of how he proposed. He's wrong. *I* always pay.

(MARIA goes to CECIL.)

Thank God I've got you.

MARIA. And always will.

(They kiss.)

Summa cum laude!

(Thunder.)

Oh, goody!

(She begins to take his jacket off. He pulls back.)

CECIL. I'll be there in a minute.

MARIA. Don't be too long. We've only got an hour. And I love to make love in the rain.

(She gives him a final peck and exits. CECIL finds Daddy's letter. He looks at it, shaking his head as GRADY enters and the lights change to The Twelfth Green.)

Scene 3 **The Twelfth Green**

(GRADY brings on the pin, placing it in a corner of the stage for them to putt towards. Thunder throughout.)

GRADY. You kept it all these years, huh?

CECIL. Put it in my wallet an' just never took it out. Except once.

GRADY. An' how was your night in the rain with Maria?

CECIL. Dry.

GRADY. You mean you couldn't?...

CECIL. My damn daddy keep poppin' into my head.

GRADY. Oh, no! Maybe you were tryin' too hard. Remember: the desire to hit a golf ball properly is the chief impediment to hittin' it properly.

CECIL. Sex isn't golf.

GRADY. Everything's golf, if you look at it right. Take Hamlet.

CECIL. Hamlet?! Hamlet didn't play golf.

GRADY. An' it's a good thing, 'cause he'd-a been lousy. Too indecisive. "To be or not to be." How in the hell's he ever gonna decide what club to hit? An' once he did decide, he'd go nuts playin' this game.

CECIL. *(Addressing his putt while GRADY holds the pin:)* Thy exquisite reason.

GRADY. The man's hell-bent on revenge. Gonna kill his uncle for killin' Hamlet's father—huh-hunh! The golf course's a place for *forgiveness*.

(CECIL putts and misses, then taps in during the following.)

You don't forgive yourself for blowin' a two-foot putt, you gonna do a lot of sufferin' out here.

CECIL. How do you forgive yourself?

GRADY. Give yourself a hug.

CECIL. Do what?

(GRADY hands CECIL his putter and the pin, then, with his back towards CECIL, he wraps his arms around himself, caressing his body and moaning with pleasure. CECIL laughs.)

This is the craziest round. of golf I ever played.

GRADY. Good!

(GRADY lines up his putt from all over, eventually lying on the green to get his line.)

So, who do you think would have been. the best golfer ever?

CECIL. *(Thinks, then:)* Jesus Christ.

GRADY. That's usin' your ol' coconut! Mr. Forgiveness himself! If they could have irrigated the desert then like they do now, ol' J.C. woulda tore it up!

CECIL. I'm not sure. Jesus was playing' with St. Peter one day an' they were on a water hole. Jesus pulls out a seven-iron, hits, plop, in the water. Peter says, "Lord, you can't get there with a seven-iron, that's 200 yards." Jesus just swings harder, plop, in the drink. Throws down a third ball, really creams it...liquid-time! A guy standin' on the tee waitin' to hit says to Peter, "He'll never get there with a seven-iron, who's he think he is, Jesus Christ?" Peter says, "He *is* Jesus Christ, he thinks he's Arnold Palmer!"

GRADY. Ooo-eeee! That's good!

(He pats down the grass in front of the cup with his foot.)

CECIL. One of my Daddy's favorite jokes.

GRADY. You tell it well.

CECIL. Thanks.

GRADY. Take it out, this baby's goin' home.

(He putts and makes it.)

CECIL. Like it had eyes.

(He gets the ball out of the hole. Loud thunder and the beginning of rain.)

GRADY. Oh, no, I don't want no rain. I'm tearin' it up.

CECIL. It'll blow over. I'll meet you in that rain shack.

(Opening the golf umbrella and putting on a rain jacket, while GRADY gets the bag.)

GRADY. *(To God:)* Gimme blue skies, you hear me?

(A tremendous crack of thunder.)

All right, don't get pissed off!

(He exits with the bag. CECIL runs to the "car." MARIA enters and moves a bench into position, bringing up the back to make a car seat as the lights change to A Traffic Jam, summer, 1974)

Scene 4 **A Traffic Jam**

(MARIA, dressed in cutoffs, a shirt tied above her stomach, and a golf visor, reads from a book. CECIL closes the umbrella and jumps into the "front seat." He mimes holding the steering wheel. The sound of wipers, traffic, and rain throughout.)

CECIL. Dammit!

MARIA. It'll clear up soon.

CECIL. I've got to find a motel. I can't qualify for the U.S. Open on two hours sleep. *(Looks out the window)* There's another car using the emergency lane.

MARIA. *(Warningly:)* Cecil...

CECIL. We've been stuck here for half an hour.

MARIA. Like everybody else. Besides, I kind of like it. The rain. You sitting still for a change.

(Silence. CECIL drums his fingers.)

You ever heard of “couvade?”

CECIL. No.

MARIA. Listen to this: *(Reading from her book)* “In certain areas of the country, it is the custom for the father of the new-born child to lie in bed for several weeks, abstaining from work and the chase, while his wife, who has just given birth, carries on her usual occupations, tending the fields, making the meals.” I think that’s carrying “sympathetic response” a bit too far!

CECIL. How’s that tie in with your veterinary work?

MARIA. It doesn’t.

CECIL. *(Beat:)* Maria, we don’t have enough money for a baby.

MARIA. I could get a full-time job.

CECIL. I’d never see you.

MARIA. You would if you took a job in the local pro shop.

CECIL. Have you been talking to Daddy?

MARIA. I’m perfectly capable of having good ideas on my own.

CECIL. That’s a good idea?

MARIA. This is a better one? Following you around, making chit-chat with the other wives, you’re too tense half the time, too tired the rest.

CECIL. You go home to work in that animal hospital.

MARIA. For three weeks, max, then it’s, hit the road again.

CECIL. I play better when you’re here. I miss you.

MARIA. Well, I miss my life. If I can’t take care of animals, then I want to take care of a baby, but I’ve got to take care of more than you.

(Silence. CECIL looks out the window.)

CECIL. There goes another car down the side. Dammit, Maria, we cain't just sit here!

MARIA. We can if everybody else can.

CECIL. Everybody else isn't trying to get to the U.S. Open.

MARIA. They're all trying to get somewhere.

CECIL. Yeah, an' the smart ones are doing somethin' about it.

MARIA. The selfish ones are. Suppose an ambulance had to get through on that land and they couldn't because you were in the way?

CECIL. What are the odds of that?

MARIA. About the same as you winning the U.S. Open!

(Silence. MARIA takes his hand to "make up.")

CECIL. Maria, I've told you, I'm not sure I want to become a father. I didn't have a great model.

MARIA. Are you going to live your entire life as a reaction to him? Cecil, stop rejecting the whole because you don't like some of the parts.

CECIL. You like him so much, go marry him.

MARIA. Maybe I have

(Beat. CECIL begins humming "You've Lost That Loving Feeling.")

You're mad, aren't you?

CECIL. No, I'm not.

MARIA. Yes, you are.

CECIL. No, I'm not.

MARIA. You always sing that to yourself when you're mad at me. *(Sings)* "You've lost that loving feeling, oh-oh that loving feeling..."

CECIL. That is so ridiculous I cain't even respond to it.

MARIA. It was the song we danced to when we first met, remember? I always thought you'd feel good about it, but I think you got angry when I wouldn't let you feel me up that night.

CECIL. Ai-yi-yi! *(Suddenly opening his door)* Come on in, Mr. Freud, sit right here in the front seat with us, make Maria happy! *(Yelling out:)* Goddammit, somebody move!

(He slams the door, fuming.)

MARIA. Mr. Freud, meet Mr. I'm-Never-Mad.

CECIL. Okay, you win, I am mad. I'm mad at you. I'm mad at him. An' I'm mad at this fucking traffic jam! I'm goin' down the side.

MARIA. It's against the law.

CECIL. Thank you, "Daddy." What happened to the girl who snuck out of the Glee Club dance with me?

MARIA. That was an adolescent prank. Hopefully we've matured a little since then.

CECIL. If nobody went against the grain, society would stand still.

MARIA. Cecil Burton, the Rebel of I-95!

(CECIL gives her a long look, then puts it in gear and yanks hard on the wheel. A squeal of tires. They stare at each other, then MARIA exits one way, CECIL opens his umbrella and exits the other as the lights change to The Rain Shack.)

Scene 5 **The Rain Shack**

(GRADY enters with the bag. The rain has stopped.)

GRADY. Rain's let up.

(Beat. CECIL puts the umbrella and his jacket back in the bag.)

Should we keep goin'?

(CECIL sits on a bench.)

Least the lightnin' missed us. Hey, remember Lee Trevino's advice after he got hit by lightning on a course? Said he wasn't worried 'bout playin' in a thunderstorm again, "I'll just hold a two-iron over my head. Even God cain't hit a two-iron!"

(CECIL doesn't laugh. GRADY starts to exit with the bag.)

CECIL. It was a one-iron.

GRADY. Everybody's a critic!

(GRADY exits, leaving the bag in a corner. DADDY, MAMA, and MARIA enter as the lights change to the Wedding Anniversary, late March, 1975.)

Scene 6 **The Wedding Anniversary**

(DADDY comes on humming, tosses CECIL his blazer and gestures for him to move the "couch" into position. MAMA pushes on a tray with bourbon and wine. MARIA separates the other bench into two chairs, starts to move one but CECIL quickly takes it for her. They register a moment of tension before DADDY instructs MARIA where to put the other chair. He then seats MAMA on the couch and begins his routine.)

DADDY. O come an' see, the Tattooed Lady

Tattooed from head to knee,

Just as far as you can see.

All up an' down her spine

Is the King's own firing line.

An' all around her hips

Is a fleet of battleships.

An' over her liver

Is the Reedy River.

An' over her kidney

Is a view of Sidney.

But the part that I like best

Is the Tattooed Lady's chest:

Oh, take me back to those hills of Tennessee!

(Laughter and applause. DADDY hugs MAMA.)

Happy anniversary, honey.

MAMA. Can you believe he sang that at our wedding?

DADDY. In your honor. I love your Tennessee hills.

MAMA. Franklin!

CECIL. But Mama doesn't have any tattoos.

DADDY. How do you know?

MAMA. Franklin, really!

CECIL. Do you, Mama?!

MAMA. Let's change the subject.

(The doorbell rings.)

I'll get it.

(She exits.)

CECIL. You expectin' company?

DADDY. I asked Dale Morgan to drop by for a minute.

CECIL. I thought y'all weren't speakin' since he tried to sabotage your election.

DADDY. He still owed me a favor so I cashed it in.

(MAMA and MORGAN enter.)

MORGAN. Hello, there, Franklin.

DADDY. Dale.

(They shake.)

MAMA. Well, Cecil! Shouldn't my horse be out hittin' hooks? The Masters starts next week. I ain't backin' you for my health, boy.

MARIA. Cecil practices plenty.

CECIL. I don't believe you've ever met my wife, Maria.

MORGAN. It's a pleasure, darlin'. We don't get many I-talians down this way.

MAMA. I can't imagine why not.

MORGAN. Ship her back north, Cecil. You'll never concentrate on your game with a purty lil' thang like Maria 'roun'. Or I'll take her off your hands for the week.

CECIL. Won't you be down in Augusta?

MORGAN. Hell, no! Bunch of us are boycottin' on account of them lettin' that nigra play.

CECIL. I was hopin' you'd be there to back me.

MORGAN. You don't need me, boy, you'll have lots of fans there.

DADDY. (*Quickly:*) Carrie, get Dale a Bourbon.

MORGAN. No, thanks, Franklin. I got to get down to the Elks Club an' lighten a few wallets. (*Hands him an envelope:*) Here you go.

DADDY. Thank you, Dale. I'll see you out.

MORGAN. Nice seein' you again, Carrie.

DADDY. Cecil, come along, I want you to help me hunt somethin' up.

(They exit.)

MORGAN. (*To MARIA:*) Arrivederci, honey. How do you like my Italian?

MARIA. I thought you sneezed.

MORGAN. Oh, a little spice in your sauce, huh? I bet you're hotter'n' a billy goat in a pepper patch. *Ciao!*

(He exits.)

MAMA. Feel nauseous?

MARIA. How'd you guess?

MAMA. I've known Dale all my life.

MARIA. And he's really not such a bad egg after all?

MAMA. No, he's a rotten egg. That's why Franklin hated to call him up.

MARIA. Why did he?

MAMA. I'll let him tell you. Oh, Maria, Cecil's going to play in the Masters!

(A pause.)

MARIA. I want Cecil to quit the Tour, Carrie.

CARRIE. Now? Things are going so well.

MARIA. It's never enough. He keeps saying he's just got to win one tournament, then he'll consider it.

(She sits on a chair.)

MAMA. Is that so unreasonable?

(She sits on the couch.)

MARIA. Yes! Because he won't quit.

MAMA. Why should he? It's his dream.

MARIA. I'm beginning to hate that word. The truth is, when most of us get our dreams, we wonder what in hell all the fuss was about. They're usually not the Magic Answer we thought they'd be.

MAMA. An' what is?

MARIA. Enjoying where you are. Not always racing for where you will be, like Cecil, checking things off some sort of master list of life's accomplishments: Tournament won.

(She makes a check mark.)

Daddy proud.

(She makes another.)

Wife divorced.

(She makes another.)

MAMA. Maria?!

MARIA. I'm tired of playing second fiddle to a fairway. I want Cecil home while there's still hope of having one.

MAMA. *(A sudden outburst:)* Then make one for him! That's your job! An' if it's a good one, he'll come home to it every night!

(Beat.)

(More softly:) Did you ever play with dolls, Maria?

MARIA. Of course.

MAMA. When I played with my dolls, we'd wake up, have breakfast together, an' then the daddy doll would go off to "work." But what was "work?" I hadn't the foggiest, so I put the daddy doll in the corner an' he sat there, bored. Then Mama an' all the children would cook an' clean, make the house beautiful. We'd play games, read to each other, take walks, have talks—how we enjoyed each other! At five o'clock the daddy doll would come home from this mysterious "work" an' we'd tell him all about our excitin' day. He'd sit there, listenin' in our comfortable home, an' for the first time all day, he wasn't bored. He was jealous.

MARIA. Life's not a dollhouse, Carrie.

MAMA. I'm not unhappy, Maria.

MARIA. I know. But I'm not you.

(Beat. DADDY and CECIL enter, MARIA refreshes her drink. DADDY is carrying an old ticket envelope and an old photograph.)

DADDY. Found it at last! *(Teasing MAMA)* You must have had your hands on it!

MAMA. *(Going to him:)* Nothing in our house is ever lost for good, though, is it?

DADDY. Reckon not.

CECIL. *(Noticing MARIA is upset:)* So what is it?

DADDY. (*Withdraws an old ticket stub:*) My ticket stub from the 1935 Masters.

MARIA. The one where Gene Sarazen hit his second shot 250 yards into the hole? Got— What do you call it, Cecil?

CECIL. Double-eagle.

MARIA. Cecil says that'd. be like pitching a penny 100 feet into a shot glass.

DADDY. An' not spillin' any bourbon! An' I saw it, an' said to him on the next tee, "Incredible shot, Mr. Sarazen." An' he said in that Italian accent of his, "Yes. Gi' myself a trill!" (*Laughs:*) That's what I say whenever I hit a great shot. "Gi' myself a trill!" Here, son, to celebrate your first Masters. Maybe you'll give yourself a trill like Sarazen.

CECIL. Thanks, Daddy.

MARIA. Frank, that's really sweet!

DADDY. Yep. (*Withdraws Morgan's envelope:*) 'Cause I've got two more to the 1975 Masters.

MARIA. That's wonderful! Isn't that great, Cecil?

CECIL. (*Troubled:*) Yeah.

DADDY. You don't sound too excited,

CECIL. Sure, Daddy, it's terrific. You always love the Masters.

DADDY. Especially with my own son playin' in it! I don't know anybody in Greenville who can make that claim. Father an' son go to the Masters!

(*CECIL moves to the tray to get a drink.*)

Oh, Carrie, look what I found huntin' up that ticket stub. An old picture of Daddy.

MAMA. Franklin, how marvelous!

(*He shows her.*)

So handsome! Just like his son.

MARIA. (*Looking:*) What a distinguished mustache!

DADDY. He used to tickle the dickens out of me with that thing.

MARIA. Cecil, come look.

CECIL. I saw it.

DADDY. (*Throughout the following, he opens up emotionally:*) “No weevils in his wheat,” everybody said about him.

MARIA. What’s that mean?

DADDY. No dishonesty. He grew straight an’ tall. I remember bein’ held. How secure I felt in his arms, how loved. (*To MARIA:*) He died when I was five.

MARIA. Cecil’s told me.

DADDY. I wish he could have been around to see some of my triumphs.

MAMA. Like you’re doing for Cecil.

(DADDY smiles.)

MARIA. Is that a cigar in his hand?

DADDY. That’s right! I remember the smell of a cigar around him! Yes, sir, cigar smoke. An’ bein’ held.

MARIA. Make us a copy.

DADDY. Oh, Cecil doesn’t want this ol’ picture.

MARIA. I do.

DADDY. All right, I’ll make a copy for you.

MAMA. Come on, Franklin, this ol’ married woman is ready for bed.

DADDY. This ol’ married woman’s pretty well-preserved for a tattooed lady! Want me to drive you out to the practice tee in the mornin’, son?

CECIL. That’s all right, Daddy, I can manage.

DADDY. (*Disappointed:*) All right. But if you need my help gettin' ready for the Masters, let me know, all right?

CECIL. Sure, Daddy.

DADDY. Good night, Maria.

MARIA. Happy anniversary! Thirty years is quite an accomplishment.

DADDY. I'll let you in on a little secret: the first 29 are the hardest!

(He puts his arm around MAMA and leads her off. Beat.)

MARIA. Your father finally reaches out to you and you don't even notice.

DADDY. What do you want me to do? Draw him to my breast, say "Make me a copy of that musty ol' picture, Daddy, an' all is forgiven?!"

MARIA. He had to swallow a lot of pride to get those tickets from Morgan. He went to a great deal of trouble for you.

CECIL. For him! He's going to the Masters because his son is playin' in it. An' you can bet he'll be tellin' all his Greenville cronies not what happened to me at the Masters, but what happened to *him!*

MARIA. Aren't you even glad he's coming?

CECIL. No! I never play well when he's around. My whole game will fall apart. I might have known when I finally got my big break, ol' Daddy would be standin' in the way.

MARIA. (*With great force:*) Then tell him to step aside! Or go around him and get on with your life. Or plow right over him and bring on the consequences. Talk to the man! Maybe then you can articulate just exactly what he did that's so terrible!

CECIL. (*Full of anger and hurt:*) I can articulate it right now! He remembers bein' held. I don't!

(MARIA takes the tray to exit. She gives CECIL a last look, but he slams down the back of one of the chairs. She leaves as CECIL gets his driver as the lights change to The Fourteenth Tee.)

Scene 7
The Fourteenth Tee

(GRADY enters. CECIL silently tees up a ball, swings hard, sits down. GRADY, sensing CECIL's hurt, silently tees his ball up, starts to do his waggles, then stops and swings gently. Beat. GRADY lays his hand consolingly on CECIL's shoulder. CECIL quickly walks offstage, GRADY following as the lights change to The Motel Room, the night before the beginning of the Masters Golf Tournament, April, 1975.)

Scene 8
The Motel Room

(MARIA, humming, enters in a bathrobe, carrying high heels and drying her hair with a towel. CECIL is offstage humming "Tattooed Lady" happily.)

MARIA. Did you have fun tonight? You and your buddies were yucking it up like a couple of teenagers.

CECIL. Must have been the champagne.

MARIA. *(Putting on the heels:)* Will you quit qualifying everything? Just admit you had a good time and leave it at that.

CECIL. *(Yelling happily:)* All right, I had a good time! God, we'd better keep it down, these motel walls are paper thin.

MARIA. I make no promises about the noise factor.

(She tosses the towel aside and moves to regard herself in a "mirror.")

CECIL. You think Mama really has a tattoo? I don't remember one.

MARIA. When's the last time you saw her naked?

(She slowly lets the robe fall to the floor, revealing a sexy teddy.)

CECIL. When I was a little boy, I guess.

MARIA. Maybe she got one after you grew up.

CECIL. *(Entering without his shirt:)* Mama?! She's not the type—

(He freezes.)

MARIA. Who knows what uncontrollable urges lurk inside a woman's breast. Like it?

CECIL. Where'd you get it?

MARIA. At Linda's.

CECIL. You said that was a Tupperware party.

MARIA. Meet the Tupperware for today's modern woman! There was a man there selling...sexual aids, he called them. We bought him out!

(She gets a golf club.)

CECIL. What're you doin'?

MARIA. You're going to teach me the golf swing.

CECIL. In a motel room?

MARIA. Yep.

CECIL. It's complicated.

MARIA. I'm a graduated doctor, I think I can handle it. Come on, it's time I learned what makes you obsess about this game.

CECIL. *(Kneeling in front of her:)* Well, you grip the club like this. That's it, right hand on top. Now drag the club slowly—

MARIA. Wait a minute, I thought you had to get behind the person.

CECIL. That's only in the movies. Now drag it—

MARIA. I want the movies! Movies! Movies! Movies!

CECIL. All right!

(He gets behind her, reaches around and puts his hands on top of hers on the club.)

Flex your knees.

MARIA. Don't some people have a waggle? To help them relax?

CECIL. Yes.

MARIA. Like this?

(She waggles her rear sensuously against CECIL's groin.)

CECIL. Well, that's not exactly the way Arnold Palmer does it.

MARIA. *(Waggling:)* Did you know the word "to win" has its roots in the Hittite word meaning "to copulate?"

CECIL. I love it when you're intellectual.

MARIA. All right, that's enough work with the swing. Now you're going to show me how to putt—the Italian way! I'm going to lie down on the couch and pretend like I'm a nice soft green, with some flat places, and some undulations, and—

CECIL. Don't...

(CECIL puts the club back in the bag.)

MARIA. Oh, goody, are you brining out your "putter?"

CECIL. Let's go to bed.

MARIA. *(Getting on the floor:)* I kinda wanted to do it on the floor.

CECIL. Don't talk dirty like that. It's not you.

MARIA. You used to love it when I talked dirty.

CECIL. That was before.

MARIA. Before what?

CECIL. We got married.

MARIA. I don't believe it? Who had the glorious Penthouse collection?

CECIL. I threw out my Penthouse collection, remember?

MARIA. I didn't know you threw out your libido along with it.

CECIL. You're my wife now. The next morning I sit down with you an' have coffee, we discuss women's liberation an' lawnmowers an' what kind of Jell-o to buy. It's hard to reconcile the two.

MARIA. That Madonna and the Whore stuff comes with my religion, not yours.

CECIL. Maria, come on, tomorrow is the Masters, probably the biggest day of my life. We had a great time tonight, I'm feelin' really good—

MARIA. That's why I'm wearing this. *(Sits next to him:)* Cecil, honey, it's been so long. I'm trying to make this special.

CECIL. You don't have to. *(Trying to joke:)* Sam Snead says never have sex before a tournament. It's bad for your legs—

MARIA. Will you forget about golf for one fucking minute?!

(CECIL gets his putter.)

Oh, no, you're not running away to daffodil-land this time.

CECIL. Fuck off, Maria!

(He pushes her away.)

Just fuck off.

MARIA. See if you can tune this out, Cecil: You're lacking a certain crucial part of the anatomy, but unfortunately testicles do not spontaneously regenerate! *(Gets her robe and towel:)* I'm leaving, Cecil. It's beginning to boil a little too hot around here and this froggie is jumping out before she's cooked for good.

(She exits.)

CECIL. *(Beat. Then a cry of pain!)* Maria!!!

(CECIL exits. A CADDY enters as the lights change to the Fifteenth Fairway at the Masters Golf Tournament, April, 1975.)

Scene 9
The Fifteenth Fairway

(The sound of a crowd applauding as an ANNOUNCER speaks on tape. During the announcement the CADDY moves the benches back against the wall and begins pacing off yardage, consulting his scorecard.)

ANNOUNCER. I'm back of the 15th tee, Jack. Cecil Burton has just birdied another hole. If he can keep this up he has a chance of being the only professional to win the Masters his first time out.

(Quiet. The whack of a golf shot, then applause, cheers and a couple of cries of "Great shot!" and "Beauty!" CECIL enters with his driver, which he hands to the CADDY. DADDY and MAMA enter to one side, watching.)

CADDY. You busted that one, Mr. Burton.

CECIL. How far to the green?

CADDY. I make it 225 yards exactly.

(CECIL looks around, sees DADDY and MAMA, notes his position.)

CECIL. Wasn't Gene Sarazen's drive around here back in 1935?

CADDY. Yes, sir, jes' 'bout right here. This is your first Masters, how you know that?

CECIL. I heard about it a lot.

CADDY. 'Bout the greatest shot ever hit.

CECIL. Soon to be eclipsed. Gimme the four-wood.

CADDY. You goin' for the green?!

CECIL. Four-wood's what Sarazen hit, isn't it?

CADDY. But you got the wind dead in your face. An' that pond in front of the green's a lot bigger than it was in '35. Why don't you lay up short, you can still make birdie.

CECIL. I'm makin' double-eagle.

CADDY. Mr. Burton, you got a real good round goin'. My advice to you is—

CECIL. I don't want your advice, I want my four-wood.

CADDY. You're the professional.

(He gives CECIL the four-wood and exits.)

That's right, I'm the professional. *(Addresses the ball, talking to himself:)* An' he's the amateur. He cain't hit this shot but you can! One shot an' you're on your way to the winner's circle. Come on, Cecil. Give yourself a trill. Give everybody a trill!

(He swings. All watch the flight of the ball, urging it on.)

Come on, get legs! Hurry! Get up! Get up! No!!!

(The ball lands in the pond. CECIL throws his club. DADDY stares at him, then turns his back. MAMA looks sadly at CECIL as he returns the club to the bag and gets out his driver.)

(During the following, CECIL will hit various golf shots in tournaments he played. As he loses his ability to shut out the world, he attempts to concentrate harder. But the level of noise increases and increases, becoming especially loud whenever he addresses the ball. The characters who speak are inside his head. The whole sequence should build in a carefully orchestrated cacophony of sound, noises and dialogue overlapping and repeating to a climax. Taped dialogue from the sound system is so indicated.)

(CECIL addresses the ball with his driver. The sound of an airplane passing overhead. He registers the sound but swings anyway, hitting poorly. As he returns the driver to the bag and removes his five-iron, bird sounds begin. He addresses his five-iron shot and the bird sounds increase. He steps away from the ball, the sounds decreasing in volume. A cough causes CECIL to look sternly towards the gallery. He positions himself over the ball, the bird sounds increase, and a reverberating cough happens just at the top of his backswing, causing him to hit a terrible shot. He replaces the five-iron with a wedge and moves to his next shot. Red-light specials come on in a circle surrounding CECIL as MORGAN enters.)

MORGAN. (*Tape:*) I ain't backin' you for my health, boy. (*MORGAN and tape together*) I ain't backin' you for my health, boy.

DADDY. (*Tape; he turns into the light of his special:*) The higher a monkey climbs, the more he shows his ass. (*DADDY and tape together:*) The higher a monkey climbs, the more he shows his ass.

(*CECIL is addressing his shot.*)

MAMA. (*Tape; she turns into her light:*) Oh, your daddy was quite the romantic. (*MAMA and tape together:*) Oh, your daddy was quite the romantic.

YOUNG CECIL. (*Tape; entering into his light:*) How could a game seduce you? (*YOUNG CECIL and tape together:*) Seduce you? Seduce you? Seduce you?

(*CECIL swings. Another bad shot.*)

DADDY. Nobody conquers golf.

DADDY. (*Tape:*) Nobody. Nobody. Nobody.

(*CECIL gets out his putter as JULIUS enters.*)

JULIUS. (*Tape:*) Let me ask you something, Burton: were you trying to show me down South, or show somebody else up?! (*JULIUS and tape together:*) Somebody else up... Somebody else up... Somebody else up...

(*He repeats until his next line.*)

(*Dogs begin barking. As CECIL lines up his first putt, his attempts to concentrate are heard on tape. As the memories build, he will address the ball, then step away to attempt to collect himself, then re-address the ball and putt. Over and under this taped inner monologue are live lines from the stage and various taped lines and environmental sounds in random order. Actors repeat lines or phrases as indicated until their next turn to speak. Before they repeat, another character begins his/her line, the repeated line/phrase overlapping the new line. The jumble onstage and on tape should resemble the increasing jumble in Cecil's mind and should build to a shattering climax of noise.*)

CECIL. (*Tape:*) Bliss of solitude... Bliss of solitude... Bliss... Bliss...

(Also on CECIL's inner monologue, in random order and repeated as necessary, are the phrases:)

Daffodils... Daffodils... Dark brown eye... Dark brown eye... Inward eye...

MORGAN. Nary one of 'em could grow polebeans in a pile of horseshit. Horseshit... Horseshit...

(He repeats until his next line.)

YOUNG CECIL. *Penis erectium conscientum non habet...Penis erectium... Penis erectium...*

(He repeats until his next line.)

MARIA. *(Entering into her light:)* Oh, goody, are you bringing out your putter?... Your putter?... Your putter?...

(She repeats until her next line. CECIL backs away from his putt.)

DADDY. When I mean to do something, I do it!... I do it!... I do it!...

(He repeats until his next line. CECIL addresses the ball.)

MAMA. The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath...

(CECIL putts and misses, then shouts.)

CECIL. Words, Mama!

(As he lines up his next putt, YOUNG CECIL speaks.)

YOUNG CECIL. Ah-ah-ah! Self-control! Self-control! Self-control!

(He repeats until his next line.)

MAMA. He was here the last time I saw him... Last time I saw him... Last time I saw him...

(She repeats until her next line.)

MARIA. I want the movies!... Movies... Movies...

(She repeats until her next line.)

JULIUS. It was a dumb thing to do why ever you did it... Dumb thing... Dumb thing...

(He repeats until his next line.)

YOUNG CECIL. I think they call it sap-raisin' time... Sap-raisin' time... Sap-raisin' time...

(He repeats until his next line.)

MORGAN. You'll never concentrate on your game with a purty lil' thang like Maria around... Purty lil' thang... Purty lil' thang...

(He repeats until his next line.)

DADDY. Discipline your mind... Discipline... Discipline...

(He repeats until his next line.)

(CECIL putts and misses, then line up his next putt.)

MARIA. Summa cum laude... Summa cum laude... Summa cum laude...

(She repeats until her next line.)

MAMA. He protects the things he loves. Protects... Protects...

(She repeats until her next line.)

JULIUS. Any klutz can do it... Klutz... Klutz... Klutz...

(He repeats until his next line.)

YOUNG CECIL. I am an artist... Artist... Artist...

(He repeats until his next line.)

MORGAN. Golf ain't religion, Franklin. Ain't religion... Ain't religion...

(He repeats until his next line.)

DADDY. Full of the infinite possibilities of perfection... Perfection... Perfection...

(He repeats until his next line.)

(As CECIL lines up his next putt, trying intensely to concentrate, the characters speak the following entire speeches, songs, or poems

until they are “yipped” from the stage, i.e.: CECIL swings his putter at them in an increasingly violent manner, the last yip/swing spinning him around down to the floor.)

MARIA. You’ve lost that loving feeling, whoa-oh that loving feeling...

(She sings the entire first verse, repeating the word “Gone!” until she is yipped.)

MAMA. I wandered lonely as a cloud that floats on high o’er vales and hills...

(She speaks entire poem until yipped.)

DADDY. Oh, come an’ see the Tattooed Lady...

(He sings entire song until yipped.)

(At some point, CECIL addresses the ball, trying to concentrate. The noise is becoming deafening.)

MORGAN. Hell, no. Bunch of us are boycottin’ on account of them lettin’ that nigra play. You don’t need me, boy, you’ll have lots of fans there

(He repeats the word “fans!” until yipped.)

JULIUS. But we won’t be boys long. Tomorrow they give us the parchment and—presto-change-o!—instant manhood. Just like the motto of dear old. Phelps: you came here boys that you might be men!

(He repeats “Be men!” until yipped.)

YOUNG CECIL. Maybe I’m ready to do a few so-called “dumb” things for a change. Is there some God of brains handin’ out certificates? “This was dumb. This was smart.” Maybe it was smart because I did it, all by my lonesome, because I wanted to. When the final stroke is played, then we’ll know if it was dumb or smart. Till then, it’s just a round of golf...

(He repeats “Just a round of golf” until yipped.)

(During the above, CECIL has putted from various positions. He moves to center stage, surrounded by his nightmare memories, to at-

tempt one last putt. He misses it, then swings the putter at each character in turn, shouting the word "Yip!" The characters are "yipped" and leave the stage in the following order: MORGAN, JULIUS, YOUNG CECIL, MAMA, DADDY, MARIA. CECIL falls crumpled to the floor. As he lies there, DADDY's voice is heard on tape.)

DADDY. *(Tape:)* What a waste! *(The tape reverberates down to silence)*
Waste... Waste... Waste... Waste

(A long pause. Slowly CECIL rises to his feet and puts his putter away. GRADY enters.)

GRADY. The yips, huh?

CECIL. God's punishment for an uneasy soul, Daddy called 'em. I've had 'em for five years.

GRADY. Damn!

(GRADY begins to remove his shoes.)

Well, I've really enjoyed this, Cecil.

CECIL. What do you mean, we've got three holes to go.

GRADY. I always jump off here.

CECIL. Why?

GRADY. This is a private country club. *Members* only. I just sneak on before the course officially opens.

CECIL. You can play as my guest.

GRADY. You crazy?! They don't allow just *any* kind of guest here, you know.

CECIL. *(Desperately:)* They do now!

GRADY. That's all right.

CECIL. No, it's not all right!

GRADY. On the first tee you didn't want nothin' to do with me.

CECIL. I need to finish the round.

GRADY. (*Compassionately but firmly:*) Then finish it.

(*He reties his shoes.*)

CECIL. Last week I won the Heritage Classic.

GRADY. By dog, I knew I'd seen you before! Your picture in the paper. Said you'd won with a miracle shot on the last hole. Hit through a rock to get the ball on the green!

CECIL. Yeah.

(*Beat. Holds up a golf ball.*)

Don't you love a new golf ball? Pure, not a nick on it. When my game's on I can play a whole round an' hit every shot so sweet the ball's practically brand new at the end. Maybe a little grass stain, but you can wash that right off. It's the nicks you can't wash clean, the little mistakes that keep the ball from rollin' true.

(*Beat.*)

Let me repeat for you my miracle shot. (*He pulls out an iron and re-enacts the shot:*) I had to par the last hole to win it, an' I sliced my drive in the woods an' right up against a rock. Impossible shot. I took a two-iron, sent the official up ahead to clear the crowd out of the way, told my caddy to help him, I was gonna hit through the rock, by God, I was winning this tournament! Then I addressed the ball, got set, an'— (*He flicks his clubhead:*) flicked the rock out of the way. Quick swing, an' while everybody watched the ball, I banged my club on the rock.

(*He bangs the iron on the golf cart.*)

When I had parred the hole an' won the tournament, I showed everybody my banged-up two-iron. Nobody thought to look at the ball I had supposedly hit with a rock.

(*He flips the ball to GRADY, then gets the Heritage Winner's Jacket from the golf bag and puts it on.*)

GRADY. Not a nick on it.

(*He returns the ball to CECIL and exits. The sound of a crowd laughing as the lights change to The Awards Banquet at the Heritage Classic, June, 1980.*)

Scene 10
The Awards Banquet

(CECIL is in the middle of his acceptance speech. He is drunk.)

CECIL. ...that's always been one of my daddy's favorite jokes. Wow! I cain't believe I'm finally the guy standin' up here at the Awards Banquet. Long 'bout now I'm usually on some Interstate goin' over every missed shot, askin' myself why I ever took up this damn game. Golf seduces you. That's what happened to the Scots, see. God gave 'm golf, then he gave 'em Scotch to make up for it.

(He begins to wander in his train of thought.)

Seduction... An' sweet spots, that's what it's... Somethin' 'bout hope...an' possibilities... *(Trying to remember:)* Yeah! Hope that tomorrow you can connect with perfection, hit it in the sweet spot! Like I did in the woods today—bam! Right through that rock. Miracle shot, Daddy! Daddy... My daddy taught me golf. Helluva teacher! He's the reason I'm standin' here today... No, he's the reason I'm *not* standin' here... Wait a minute, 'course I'm standin' here, I'm a winner! Champeen golfer!

(He searches for the letter in his pants but instead finds the golf ball he won with.)

Let me read you somethin' my daddy wrote, he's got a great sense of humor, you'll really get a nick out of this— I mean a kick, you'll get a kick out of...

(He looks at the ball.)

This is the ball I won with today—

YOUNG CECIL. *(Offstage, but as if in CECIL's head:)* Cecil!

CECIL. Huh?

YOUNG CECIL. *(He enters with three putting flags which he sets up around the stage:)* I'll putt you for that ball.

CECIL. Go away!

YOUNG CECIL. I'm not gonna let you do it!

CECIL. Get the hell outta—

YOUNG CECIL. Get your putter.

CECIL. I said, get the hell—

(He stops, sensing the crowd staring at him. He bolts from the Awards Banquet room. YOUNG CECIL gets out his putter and CECIL's as the lights change to The Putting Green outside the Awards Banquet.)

What are you doin' here? I left you a long time ago.

YOUNG CECIL. Sure? Come on, if I win, you keep that trophy an' keep your trap shut. If you win, you can do it.

CECIL. Do what?

YOUNG CECIL. What you're thinkin' 'bout. That'd be pretty stupid, you know.

CECIL. Who cares?

YOUNG CECIL. *(Like DADDY:)* I care!

(He putts and makes it.)

Yes!

(CECIL putts and misses.)

I'm one up.

CECIL. Well, you've done some pretty stupid things yourself.

YOUNG CECIL. I know. Like goin' off to that dumb school.

(He lines up his next putt.)

CECIL. I liked it.

YOUNG CECIL. It cost us a lotta years. We'd have been a winner long before now if you'd stuck to your guns. But you let him push you around.

CECIL. That was *you* he was pushin' 'roun'.

YOUNG CECIL. It was both of us!

(He putts and makes it.)

Break!... Yes!

CECIL. (*Putting:*) Maybe he's not always wrong.

YOUNG CECIL. Oh, great, are you gonna start quotin' Maria to me?

(*CECIL misses.*)

Missed, I'm two up.

CECIL. I'm just tryin' to figure things out.

YOUNG CECIL. Next you'll be takin' his side.

CECIL. Why do there have to be sides?

YOUNG CECIL. Because he's the father an' we're the son! How many times have you said that?!

(*He putts and makes it.*)

Another ace!

CECIL. (*Putting and missing:*) You really like winning, don't you?

YOUNG CECIL. I love it! It's what this country's all about. "It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game." Words, man! bullshit platitudes from a bygone era. But the Eighties, that's gonna be the winner's decade. Our decade.

CECIL. We're not winners.

YOUNG CECIL. I am! An' you will be, too, if you stick with me.

CECIL. Stick with you?! You're seventeen years old! What do you know about anything?

(*He sits on the hillock.*)

YOUNG CECIL. I know if you tell you're gonna blow everything we've worked for all these years. Is it fair that you played your heart out for seventy-one holes, then one lousy drive ends up behind a rock? Is it fair that your wife left you because you wanted to win? You couldn't fix the wife, but you fixed the rock. Now let it stay fixed!

(*He kneels to CECIL.*)

Cec, it's just the beginning. The line of clothes, the corporations, the golf balls with our name on 'em. Everything we dreamed about.

CECIL. Then why do I feel so bad?

YOUNG CECIL. Because you haven't taken him that winner's trophy with your name engraved in silver. Say, "Here, Daddy, for you."

CECIL. You see everything in terms of him, don't you?

YOUNG CECIL. (*Putting and making another:*) That's what keeps us goin', you know that. That's what's gonna drive us way past him, too. An' when we turn around an' look back, he'll just be a little speck on our past.

(He gets his ball from the hole.)

CECIL. What happened to you?

YOUNG CECIL. I grew up.

CECIL. Did you?

(Beat.)

I'm stoppin'. It doesn't. make sense any more.

YOUNG CECIL. It makes more sense than tellin' the whole world you cheated. It doesn't matter, Cecil.

CECIL. It *does* matter! It *has* to!

YOUNG CECIL. No one saw it.

CECIL. I saw it!

YOUNG CECIL. What do you think he'll do? Say "I'm proud of you, son. There're no weevils in your wheat?"

CECIL. No, he'll be embarrassed, an' ashamed, an' angry. But maybe some day he'll see it's a gutsy thing to do. Maybe some day he'll see that this is my first step back on the road to recovery.

YOUNG CECIL. Recovering what?

CECIL. Myself!

YOUNG CECIL. (*Terribly hurt:*) He laughed at our dream! He turned his back on us when we needed him most!

CECIL. (*Putting his hands on YOUNG CECIL's shoulders, then touching YOUNG CECIL's forehead with his own:*) Yes, he did. An' that hurt. It hurt real bad. But what hurt worse is that I turned my back on myself.

(He starts to exit, but YOUNG CECIL cuts him off.)

YOUNG CECIL. (*Desperately:*) No you haven't! Not yet. You can still go to him an' watch him hit a puny drive, then you step up an' crank one out about 300 yards past his. Birdie six in a row, knock in putts from all over, set the course record! Then turn around an' laugh at him.

CECIL. I don't want to laugh at him. I want to love him.

YOUNG CECIL. He won't love you back.

CECIL. (*With inner peace at last:*) Don't you see, that's not why I'm doin' it.

YOUNG CECIL. It's a waste!

(CECIL gives him a firm look, then leaves.)

A waste!

(YOUNG CECIL, agitated, resumes putting. He strokes a putt, then says, surprised) Missed!

(He gathers up the putting flags and exits. DADDY enters as the lights change to The First Tee, two days later.)

Scene 11
The First Tee

(DADDY gets out balls, tees, and a glove. He takes a practice swing, stopping at the top because of a pain. He is obviously weaker than before, but he covers it well. As he lines up another shot, CECIL enters.)

CECIL. Hello, Daddy.

DADDY. Hello, son.

CECIL. It's been a long time.

DADDY. Too long, that's what your mother said. Told me it wasn't every day your son called you up to play golf, "Now, dammit, Franklin, get your fanny out to that golf course!" Since your mother hardly ever swears, I figured this time I'd better do what she said.

CECIL. *(Crossing to wash his ball:)* That's a change!

DADDY. Old age is making' me a little more tolerant, I reckon. Doctor says I've got to ride in a damn cart. Hope you don't mind.

CECIL. Not if you drive.

DADDY. I remember that time you 'bout. ran over Ashley Johnson, I told you not to—

CECIL. *(Cutting him off at the pass:)* That's why I'm lettin' you drive. No need to tell me a thing.

(He gestures for DADDY to give him his ball, which he washes.)

DADDY. Well, anyway, it won't be much of a match.

CECIL. Let's just hit it around an' talk.

DADDY. 'Bout what?

CECIL. 'Bout a decision I'd like to share with you.

DADDY. Not business is it?

DADDY / CECIL. "Man cannot serve golf an' mammon both."

(They laugh together. CECIL returns DADDY's ball.)

CECIL. It's personal.

DADDY. Well, long as it's not too personal I reckon I can handle it. Is it about Maria?

CECIL. In a way.

(He gets out his driver.)

DADDY. You two gonna get back together?

CECIL. We'll see.

DADDY. Let's tee it up. We keep yappin' we'll never get off the first tee.

CECIL. What do you want to play for?

DADDY. You mean, bet? You're a professional.

CECIL. I'll give you strokes. What's your handicap.

DADDY / CECIL. Women!

DADDY. Still remember that, huh?

CECIL. You'd be surprised what all I remember. I'll give you two strokes a hole.

DADDY. Make it one, I don't want your pity.

CECIL. Fine. If you win, name your poison. If I win, we're playin' in the annual Father/Son tournament this weekend.

DADDY. Don't you have your own tournament this weekend? Don't lose your momentum, Cecil. You just won the Heritage.

CECIL. But I want to play with you. I'd like a trophy with both our names on it. We almost won it once, remember? This time I might help you out a little more.

DADDY. I doubt it. You never did play worth a toot with me. Never did understand it.

CECIL. I think I finally do.

DADDY. Well, my advice is to—

CECIL. I know your advice! *(More calmly:)* You're entitled to your opinion, Daddy. An' I'm entitled to mine. we on?

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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