

useful and pack up our equipment, which, sadly, we didn't get to use! *(To the team.)* Okay, guys, that's it. Everybody goes home except you and you. Not you, you! *(MICHAEL starts packing the equipment—bats, balls, catcher's equipment, bases, helmets—into a duffel bag. He can't get it all in.)*

MICHAEL. Are you sure everything fits into this bag, Don?

DON. Well, let's see what did last year and the year before and the year before that...but maybe this year is different. *(Watches MICHAEL struggling with the equipment.)*

Mike, would you be available for a coaches' meeting?

MICHAEL. Sure. When?

DON. Right now.

MICHAEL. Okay.

DON. Mike, you're not a baseball man, are you?

MICHAEL. To tell you the truth, I'm a bit of a late-comer—

DON. You got that right—

MICHAEL. But we started to really enjoy the game.

DON. That's excellent. I have just one rule. You need to clear things through me before you're shouting them out willy-nilly to my ears.

MICHAEL. What do you mean?

DON. I mean you can't be standing there as my assistant coach saying that winning doesn't matter. You just can't do that. Because that's bullshit.

MICHAEL. But that's how I feel. Think at the big picture, Don. Do you honestly remember who won and lost the games you played as a kid?

**START** DON. When I was twelve I hit .456 with eighteen RBIs. We went 11 and 4 and we lost the championship game

10 to 9 when Billy Nathan got picked off third base with two outs in the bottom of the last inning. I still think about that, Mike. I think about it a lot. I was coming up to bat and if Billy hadn't wandered off the base in some kind of a goddamned dream state, I know for a fact I could have brought him home and we'd have gone on to win. I have replayed that scenario many times inside my head, I have orchestrated many possible outcomes, all of them overwhelmingly positive. But I never got the chance because Billy took the bat out of my hands. And when Billy Nathan ran for school board last year, I could not find it in my heart to vote for him, even though I have every reason to believe he is a good and honest man who happened to make a thoughtless mistake when he was eleven years old. So yes, I do remember. **END**

MICHAEL. You have a very good memory.

DON. A lot of men remember the things, Mike. 'Course it might be different in the world of curling.

MICHAEL. I just want to make sure everyone has a good experience this year. I mean the kids who wander off third base in a dream state. *(DON watches MICHAEL struggle to get the equipment in the bag.)*

DON. Can I give you just a little advice?

MICHAEL. Sure. I'm always looking for pointers.

DON. Try putting that catcher's mask in first. Then maybe everything will fit. Mike, your mask isn't going to keep getting in the way, is it?

MICHAEL. No. This was a rough week. A lot of things coming at me, all at once.

DON. What exactly do you mean?

MICHAEL. My company has a lot of government contracts. And those government awards keep you dancing