

your heart muscle sending crescendos of excitement to the top of your throat as you take your place. To start right, that is important. The first impression is everything, and your face shows nothing of the surges you feel or the anticipating tingle of your skin. To react in any way -- except as a ploy and then with subtlety -- is blasphemy to the game. Your partners in the coming power struggle, more intricate than the dirtiest politics, stand their backs to you. Who will they be? What will it take to unlock the strategies buried in their minds hidden from all but the most perceptive detective? You are that detective. To win you must find the key to their thoughts without giving a clue to your own plots and plans. Careful now. Here they come. Their faces are obscure in the dark room though there is something about them. But, can it be!?? In spite of your best efforts, the muscles on your face yield to the shock just delivered to the usually solid foundation of your spirit. Ignoring your own desperate mental instructions to yourself, you cannot resist speaking first -- a sin unmatched in your experience.

"Terry, Rick ...," you blurt out, kicking yourself as you do so, "Tom! What are you doing here? I never thought..."

"Hi! How are you?" offers Terry Laudereau, a