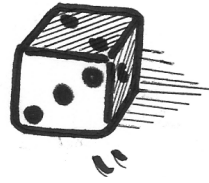


## AGAINST ALL ODDS- Sample Page

### Chapter



The new dealer wore a crisp white shirt with “Tom” displayed on the name tag pinned to his dealer apron. He gave a professional nod to the parting dealer, and adjusted his diamond-studded cuff links. Tom seemed confident that his appearance would achieve what the casino desired – **turn the tables** and reverse the blackjack gamblers’ streak of good luck. Lucy and each of the five gamblers at the table had amassed piles of blue, white and red chips, but **The House** was not about to **lose its shirt**.

The dealer smiled easily, as if he relished being on stage, in control, and the person who would literally deal out the fate that evening of the five players. When he turned his head toward Lucy, she gasped. She remembered that smile, and the slight cock of the head that accompanied it. She could hardly breathe, let alone place a bet.



**turn the tables** – v. reverse a situation so that it is now favorable to you. This expression alludes to the former practice of reversing the table or board in games, thereby switching the opponents' positions

- “Our competitor gained market share with a new line of house paint, but now we’ve **turned the tables** and introduced an entirely new paint product that will revolutionize the industry.”

**The House** – n. a term that refers to the casino or establishment that hosts gambling

**lose its shirt** – v. lose everything, suffer a noticeable loss

- “I bought a thousand radio pen sets and rented a kiosk in order to sell them, but they didn’t sell. I **lost my shirt** in that venture.”

**Continued...**

## AGAINST ALL ODDS- Sample Page

With a silent wink, Tom dealt the first **hand**. While Tom's thin fingers pulled cards for each player from the **dealer box**, Lucy's heart tightened, as if squeezed by a fist. She stared at Tom's left ring finger lopped off at the first knuckle. Instantly she saw clearly, as if in a vivid dream, the rice paddy near her village, and she recalled how daring and careless he had been that sunny day long ago when they skipped school to go fishing.

Lucy sat transfixed as Tom raked in the losers' chips from the first finished game.

"Would you like to place a bet," he urged in slightly accented English. He was professionally polite and distant. Lucy started; she had forgotten she was seated at the blackjack table, and that if she didn't **ante up**, she'd lose her seat to an onlooker eager to play. Yet she was incapable of concentrating on the game in front of her.

"**Against all odds**, Tuan, we have found each other," she said softly in Vietnamese, and spoke her own childhood name.

Startled, Tuan turned and really looked at her. Then he fumbled the chips he was stacking. They scattered across the green felt blackjack table.



**hand** – n. one round of play, based on holding a hand full of cards to start the game

- *"I don't like the merger arrangements, but it's the **hand** I was dealt, so I'll play it."*

**dealer box** – n. box holding cards from where the dealer pulls cards and distributes them to players, in order to ensure honest dealing



**ante up** – v. declare you are "in the game" by placing a determined amount of money/chips on the table

- *"We each have to **ante up** \$5000 in order to start the business."*

**Against all odds** – v. despite the seemingly insurmountable odds or unfavorable outlook

- *"**Against all odds**, our production line delivered the product in time for the holiday season."*