

HACKER

"If there is a paradise
On the face of the earth,
It is this,
Oh! it is this,
Oh! it is this."

Mogul innscription at Delhi 1640

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GOLDEN

"Speak silver, reply gold."

Swahili Proverb

Standing on the edge of a cliff, one hundred feet above the waves, rolling in from three thousand miles away, Hacker covered his eyes from the sun glint and looked out over an azure blue Pacific. He turned toward Golden, "Won't the waves undercut your cliffs?" Golden looked up from his architect's drawing and looked west. The tide was out. As four foot swells rolled in, kelp buds popped up above the waves like digitized messages on TGA tournament scoreboards.

Golden waived toward Highway One, "We'll have a fifty yard buffer on the landward side of the fairways and a one hundred yards of rough to the oceanside cliffs. When they collapse we'll still have plenty of room for our fairways and if we don't, we can carve out a new fairway from the rough to the inland side." "You said when instead if." "No way to stop it, but we have to plan for it." "How about Beasty's stadium concept?" "Fuck him and the horse he road in on." "You're speaking about our Pope. You built more than a few golf courses for him." "Not any more. I'm not proud of duplicating impact craters on the moon. Can't see building golf courses where the player can only see the world by looking up out of a depression. Stadium courses are like viewing nature from the inside of a beer can. Can't see much of interest looking out through a triangular hole. Has he approached you?" "No, but I'm not as big as you're company in the golf architect business." "Don't like to see competition, but you've helped more than a few of us out. The one in Tennessee isn't half bad." "I'd rather

spend my time playing corporate golf. Pay is good and the golf's free. Looks like you'll have a pretty fair layout here, but why did you build the hotel on the other side of the highway. And why didn't you build south of here? Plenty of ocean frontage and land is cheaper." "Coastal Commission was the main reason. I'll drive south before we head back to Santa Rosa and show you the other." Hacker was puzzled, "Coastal Commission?" "Can't build anything to the west of Highway One without their okay. Had to locate our hotel on the other side with the second eighteen." "How did you get permission?" "Bought the land from one of the commissioners." Hacker laughed, "Land and roads are the real mother's milk of politics."

Golden hopped into his four wheel drive Ford Bronco and motioned for Hacker to follow. They drove uphill over grass and shrubs reminiscent of the west coast of Scotland and turned south driving through Albion toward Point Arena. After crossing the Navarro River, Golden asked, "Notice anything different?" "Not many trees." "Look at the farm buildings." "They're behind Ironwood trees and sheltered." "And the Ironwoods are bent landward." "I gotcha. Too windy." "We're talking force nine gales. Lots of land, but most of it is only fit for sheep. We can talk on our flight back to Columbus. Can you spend an overnight at Aberdeen? I want to go over topography with you. Might have to put in a few more lakes to trap run off. With that and recycled outflow from our sewage treatment plant, we should be able to grow grass on concrete."

Hacker responded, "Marilyn is going to be upset. I've been away from home for two weeks. She was planning on a quiet evening in Washington Court House." "I'll have a limo pick her up and you can spend tonight with Brenda and me at Aberdeen." "None of that fish and fruit you eat. I get to cook steaks." "You'll wind up on a low fat diet." "Live fast, die young and leave a beautiful corpse." "You'll change your mind." "Don't you ever get tired of driving Fords." "I own a dealership and they own Jaguar. You should talk, with a discount store club line." "Not any more. My shirts were less than half the price of yours and wore just as long." "Those are fighting words. I watch our quality control." "And sweat shops overseas?" "I try to keep it under control, but..."

Golden turned east on California State Route #128 and followed the Navarro River up hill toward Boonville. He started to say something Hacker, but he was fast asleep. Hacker was ten years younger, but both had the same back trouble that all TGA golfers are blessed with after forty, "At least Hacker can make a full turn." Golden was starved, but decided to wait. Brenda's low fat lunch was waiting inside the Fridge of his jet at Santa Rosa airport, "Damn, Hacker even smiles in his sleep. Wonder what he's dreaming about. If it was me, it would be a full turn with my driver and a twenty six putt round." As he drove deeper into a dark cathedral of second growth redwoods, a deer edged toward the highway. Golden eased back on the throttle and turned on his headlights.

Hacker woke as Golden hit the brakes to avoid a deer that bounded out of the sky high redwood grove and ran across the highway, "What was that?" "Mule deer. Woods are full of them." The deer stopped and turned back, looking at Golden, Hacker and their Bronco as if they shouldn't be here. Hacker mumbled, "He seems less concerned than you do." "Hard to see them when they jump out from behind these huge trees." "It's like driving through an ancient cathedral." "Can't grow grass in woods this deep." "It's always like sundown in here."

Hacker drifted off to a recurring dream. He was napping on a bench in the late morning sun, behind the caddy shack at his home golf course in Washington Courthouse. He felt a tug, "Happy, wake up. Hooker wants you to carry. Keep your mouth shut and don't laugh at his swing." The caddie-master tugged on Hacker's arm. Hacker sat up, rubbing sleep from his eyes. "But he's the only hooker that hits a slice," Hacker said with a growing smile. "Be gone with you and your smart tongue. You'll be lucky to get a quarter tip."

Hacker retrieved Hooker's bag from club storage and walked to the first tee. He knew it would be a long day. The Washington Court House Golf Course was built for golfers that hit the ball from right to left. Trouble was on the right and that's where Hooker usually hit his slice. Hacker stood behind the golf bag and waited as Hooker walked toward the first tee ahead of his foursome.

"Keep a civil tongue about you, Happy. I've heard about your ability to steer a golf ball. That's why I've asked for you. I've had a dozen lessons from the Pro and my slice has only gotten worse. I want you to stand behind me and see if you can find out what I'm doing wrong. I'm getting tired of hitting it to the right. Half the balls on the practice range belong to me." Hacker asked, "Can I stop you before you take your club back." "If you think it's necessary." "Go ahead and set up for a drive. Take your stance and address the ball, but don't swing." Hacker knelt down behind Hooker and asked, "What are you aiming at?" "The tree on the left corner of the dogleg." "Hold it where you are until I place a three iron at your feet." Hacker retrieved a club from Hookers bag and lined it up on the toes of Hooker's shoes, "See where your feet are lined up?" "My God, I'm aiming fifty yards to the right." "That's only half of it. When you start your downswing, you'll try to correct with your arms, swinging toward the tree." "I see, from the outside and against my body." "Right and you'll cut across the ball giving it a slice spin. If you hit it now you'll wind up in the trees." "So I move my feet and aim at the tree?" "No, move to the left side of the tee and set up straight away, down the left side, aiming just to the right of the tree. You'll probably still hit a fade, but your ball should wind up in the middle of the fairway." "What about my pull?" "That happens when you hit it square with your old set up. You either cut across it and slice it right or hit it square and pull it to the left." As the rest of Hooker's foursome

approached he whispered, "Keep quiet about our lesson. Put my bag to the left of your feet if my set up is wrong. I feel a good round in my bones."

Hacker placed the bag to the left twice on the front side and three times on the back. As a result, Hooker spent all day down the middle of the fairway. After the round was over, he pulled Hacker aside, "I won every bet today. I won't forget your lesson." And he didn't. When Hacker decided to try the Tournament Golfers Association (TGA) Tour, Hooker was at his side offering financial support, his only backer. It was a pleasant memory, but Hacker's days as a caddie were short lived. Electric Golf Carts replaced him and the caddie-master. Hacker found work on weekends running the refreshment stand under the large elm between the fifth and sixth hole. He learned to fetch, carry and make change for one boring hour after another while waiting for golfers to walk by his stand. He passed the time practicing his golf swing and chipping golf balls, using the table legs as his target.

"Hacker, can't you hear me. Your setting up too far to the right." "I hear you, but I'm four up with six to go so I must be doing something right." He wanted to tell Coach that he was not allowed to give advice on the course, but thought better of it. Hacker flexed his shoulders and returned to addressing his golf ball. Coach had broken his concentration. Hacker closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He could still

hear Coach talking in the background. He had to block his voice out or he would hit his tee shot out of bounds to the right. Because he was only five foot ten, Hacker had taught himself to hit a low running hook to add more distance. He had to set up to the right and aim down the right side. Proper execution took all of his concentration. He backed off and had to smile. Coach didn't know much about golf. All he knew about it came from two phys ed classes at Ohio State. Coach's mind was on how to convert his football team from the double wing to split T. Hacker backed away and out of respect and replied, "I'll set up more to the left."

Hacker picked up his ball and tee and moved two feet further to the left. He let his breath out slowly and allowed his arms to swing freely, but his thoughts were wandering. Hacker took another deep breath and tried to calm down, but he still couldn't concentrate. He backed off again, picked up his ball and tee and moved to the far left side of the tee and set up for a Hooker fade. He belted a perfect shot, bending slightly left to right, landing in the middle of the fairway. He gave Coach a wink and a smile and whistled as he walked off the tee, chasing after his ball. Addressing his second shot, Hacker nailed a four iron five feet to the left of the pin and tapped in for a birdie three. His match was dormie. The fourteenth hole at Washington Court House is a short par three with a pond in front. The cup was set six paces from the front of the green. Hacker played safe, hitting his ball over the flag with an eight iron, landing

softly thirty feet past the pin. His opponent struck a soft nine, the ball landing on the bank in front of the green, rolling back into the pond. After his second shot spun back into the pond, he conceded the match. Hacker looked around for Coach, but could not find him.

"Hacker, wake up, we're in Boonville. It's your turn to drive." Happy stretched his arms and looked out at the Anderson Valley fair grounds. He saw a phone booth with a sign on it that said, Buckey Walters, "Is that the name of a baseball player on that phone booth?" Golden opened the door and got out to trade places, "Damned if I know." "I hope no one sees me behind the wheel of this damn Ford. You know I'm under contract with Cadillac." "You and Silver Fox. I won't tell on you. No one will recognize you and there isn't a golf course within fifty miles. And if phone booths are called Bucky Walters ..." "And all the pickup trucks have gun racks." "My kind of people." "I'll wake you when we reach 101." "Drive slow and sure. There are log trucks coming around every bend." "I remember from our drive over. Must have been one every mile." "Watch out for deer." "Do you want the wheel."

Hacker looked over at Golden Gorilla. Going bare headed in the sun was taking it's toll. Some of his freckles were turning into precancerous white spots. Hacker had the same problem. Maybe the youngsters on tour would learn to cover up. As he drove up hill, turning constantly on a dozen switch

backs, Hacker still couldn't believe that he was sitting next to the greatest golfer of all time. They were a decade apart, but then, Golden was a decade younger than Silver Fox. Golden would eat your lunch on the course, but off, there wasn't a more caring person this side of Columbus.

As soon as Hacker shifted into overdrive, Golden was in dreamland. Golden's subconscious drifted to the 1951 Caddie Charity tournament at the Columbus Country Club. It was a recurring dream. Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Jimmie Thompson, Perry Como, Ed Sullivan and the Clown Prince of trick shots, Paul Hahn were all there. He enjoyed watching Como and Sullivan play. They were really good sticks. Before the round began, Paul Hahn gave a trick shot exhibition. Golden could still see him hitting shot after shot with a garden hose driver, winding up by hitting a ball from a tee held in a woman's teeth, the shaft wrapped around his neck on the follow through. On the course, the Clown Prince hit a four wood from his knees to within two feet of the pin. Gorilla asked again, for the ten thousandth time, "Why aren't you on tour?" "Putts don't count in an exhibition. There is no pressure to make a check here." "Putts don't count," rolled over and over in Golden's mind. He usually woke up at this point, but not this time. He was practicing on the putting green. No matter how he stroked his ball, he either pulled it to the left or pushed it to the right. When he walked to where the hole should be, there was none, just the pin sticking out of the ground.

Golden looked up. Caddies, running away with Paul Hahn's golf clubs passed by him on the green. The scene changed. He was on the first tee. Jimmy Thompson was demonstrating how to drive a golf ball. He pointed at the green, 350 yards away, "I'm going to hit a hook toward that green." His ball flew in a hooking arc, soaring over the top of the pin and into the trees behind the green. "Now, I'm going to hit a slice." Thompson's ball sailed in a fading arc splitting the pin and curving right, over the green and into the trees. "This one will fly straight." The sound of wood striking the ball still rang in Golden's ears. Thompson's golf ball flew ten feet above the ground for one hundred yards and then overspin made it rise. It climbed toward the sky, flying over the pin, green and the trees behind. Thompson pulled the headcover over his driver, "When you hit three shots like that, it's time to quit." Golden couldn't get this thought out of his mind. When you've reached perfection, "It's time to quit." He asked, "Is it time to quit?" But Thompson didn't answer. Over and over Golden asked, "Is it time to quit?" But no one answered. His Pro appeared as he walked to the practice tee behind his house at Aberdeen. Golden asked, "Is it time to quit?" "Time to quit? What would you do if you didn't play tournament golf?" "Work at my business." "But your business is golf and you can't play part time and compete. You'll lose your tournament swing and nerves." "How often should I play?" "At least twice a month." But I don't have time." "Then it's time to quit." Golden heard a voice calling him. He wondered, "Who, where, why?"

"Wake up, oh great gift to God's favorite game. It's your turn to steer this four wheel on-road vehicle." "Where are we?" "The garden spot of the Russian River Valley. Pat Paulson's home town, Cloverdale, California." "How long have I been asleep?" "Since the British Open." "You're closer to the truth than you know. Wait until you're pushing sixty." "I'm getting there. What happens to me when I reach the magic fifty mark? Do my scores go up because of lost distance or does my putter get the yips?" Golden reached for the Thermos and poured a cup of coffee, "Believe it or not, neither. Losing distance and missing putts happen, but that's the symptom, not the disease." "Remember when Walrus was asked why he was using a new putter?" Missed that. What did he say?" "The old one didn't float." Golden laughed so hard he almost spilled his coffee, "Getting back to the subject, it's a number of things. The grind gets to you. You and I have chased this little white ball since we were tall enough to carry a golf bag. We also lose flexibility and strength as we get older, but I think I know the number one cause." "I'm all ears." "Pull over to the curb and we'll change seats. Some of your discount store friends may see you behind the wheel of a real four wheel drive." "Okay, I surrender. All kidding aside, it drives like a sofa. Damned comfortable for a Ford."

Golden waited until they were outside of town before answering Hacker, "Sorry, I didn't respond right away. Had to mull it over in my mind. I think what happens after forty

five is ...". "Whoa, forty five? I'm there now. I thought you we're talking fifty." "Look around at your fellow Pros." "Point well made, go ahead." "As I was saying, after forty five we have too long of an attention span." "Too long? Isn't it better to be able to concentrate over a longer period of time?" "I thought so, but experience has taught me differently." "Doesn't a longer attention span improve our game." "Does in business, but we don't hit a golf ball with our brains. When we're going well, our reflexes are on automatic pilot. Nothing enters our mind to distract us. The perfect golfer is one with a fifty year old body and a fourteen year old brain." "Never thought of it that way, but you're right. When I was younger, all I thought about was hit it and chase it and hit it again. Now I must have twenty business deals mulling around in my mind. Not counting the problems of my teen-agers at home." "When I was young I just hit it far and didn't pay attention to distance. Knowing how far to hit the ball and executing under pressure is the key to success." Hacker asked, "About our kids. Does it get any better as they grow older?" "You promise not to quote me?" "My lips are sealed." "No."

Hacker leaned back and nodded off. He slept all the way to Santa Rosa's Airport. Golden phoned ahead. His jet's entry door was open and engines running when they arrived. The local Ford Dealer had a valet standing by for his Bronco. He shook Happy, "We're here. Your turn to wake up, Happy. Hacker opened his eyes and grimaced, "You've been waiting all day to say that."

Golden didn't say a word, he just smiled at Hacker and whistled a happy tune as they boarded his jet.

After Happy strapped in, he mulled Golden's comments over and over in his mind. Attention span. Maybe that was it. He noticed that when he was in the lead, extraneous thoughts caromed around the inside of his skull like static electricity discharging off a sweater on a dry winter day. He looked over at Golden, "God, Golden, when I was a youngster out here, all I wanted was to get rid of my hangover. And when it did, I was so pleased I'd shoot lights out." "I remember seeing you in the locker room at the Hawaiian Open back in 1978. When I walked into the locker room and you were sitting on a bench with one cigarette in your lips, one on the bench and you were trying to light another one. When I asked you how you felt, you turned green and said, "'Get the license plate of that truck.'" "You also remember that I shot the low round." "I thought you were the new Walter Hagen." "I probably was a lot like Walter. Neither one of us drank all that much, but we both liked the good life. I don't do that anymore."

After they leveled off, Golden went aft to the galley, "Wonder what's left in the Fridge?" "Who fixed lunch?" "Brenda. Don't worry, she knows how to cook chicken. Hot or cold?" "Cold. Can't believe you're on a health food kick. You still smoke half a pack a day?" "Turned out to be more like one, but not on the course. I was able to control smoking, but not

my appetite. When it reversed, I quit." "The man has a will of iron. How about a beer." "I'll stick with juice. Aren't you on the wagon?" "Only for Bloody Marys and over indulgence. These days, I turn green every time I pass a glass of tomato juice. If I tried any of that nonsense today, I'd be lucky to break ninety and Marilyn would chop off my head. I do miss Hawaii, though. If we knew what we're doing, we'd never miss playing at the Hawaiian Open." "How so?" "I checked our past records. When we played at Wailai, we both won tournaments in the following months. When we didn't, we didn't do well." "You sure?" "You may have slipped up and won at Augusta." "Your right, it's my last win on tour." "I'm playing in Hawaii next year. Those ancient spirits look kindly on sore backs." "If what you're saying is true, I am too. I'm committed to the Senior Skins Game and Tournament of Champions. If playing at Wailai is all it takes to get on the winning track, I'll commit." "Do you have plans between now and January?" "No. I'm finishing up this job. After that, I'm going to work on my game in Florida. Mate Tucker is coming off bottom problems. He promised to give me a go. Want to join us?" "Wouldn't mind, these cold Ohio winters are killing my back. How is your Portuguese island?" "Sebastian? You'll love it. You and Marilyn can stay at my place." "I'll have to clear it with the boss."

Hacker stared out at the late fall, snow capped Sierras. For the first time in months, he had time to think. He hadn't

won on the TGA tour for quite awhile. He had come close three times and had consistently been in the top twenty. He had made over \$700,000 in purses, another \$2,000,000 in endorsements and close to a million in appearance money. He had marquee value, a personality with charisma and he still had fire in his belly to win. Golden did too, but wouldn't admit it. Hacker needed to get back into the zone, "Standing too long over the ball, that has to be it. I led a dozen times and faded on the last two days." Hacker recalled all of his disasters. He tilted his seat back and rolled his head toward the window and watched as the snow capped mountains of the Sierra faded into the brown brindle desert of Nevada. Hacker nodded off, drifting back in time.

"Have you made up your mind?" "About what?" "You know, which college?" Marilyn and he had been an item all spring. It would be hard to leave her, but she had decided against Ohio State. She was going to school in Delaware, Ohio. Hacker had applied, but Wesleyan didn't give out golf scholarships. The best he could do to be close to Marilyn was attend Ohio State. They offered room and tuition, but not board. He knew it wouldn't do any good, but he asked, anyway, "Why don't you attend at the same school I do?" Marilyn brushed his comment aside, "We've covered this subject a dozen times. My parents want me to attend a small private school." Happy had received offers from more than a dozen western and southern colleges. All offering a free ride and year round golf, but, "Maybe Ohio State.

I love playing the Scarlet course and Golden Gorilla sent me a letter plugging the coach, team and facilities." Marylin perked up, "Why don't you take their offer. We'll be within forty five minutes of each other. How soon do you have to decide?" "Within the next three weeks." "Why not now." "If I had the money to cover meals, I would have signed, but I don't. If I'm going to be on the course six months out of nine, I won't be able to work, go to school and be on the golf team." "Can't your parents help?" "Not while my sister and brother are still in college. They're tapped out."

Hacker strolled toward his dorm. The temperature was hovering at 106° and Tucson's desert sun was melting the sidewalk cement under his feet. He had never been so hot or lonely. Marylin's last letter didn't help. She wasn't going to write for awhile. She needed time to think about their relationship. Hacker decided not to respond because it wouldn't do any good. He and Marylin had been through this before. He liked Arizona when the sun set, but not during the day. It felt like he was sitting on a stove with the burner on high and his container cooked dry. He would just as soon be up north, but it was too late now. For his own piece of mind, he threw himself into golf and studies. With Marylin on hold, Happy's game improved and so did his grades. If the heat would only go away.

"Coach, when does it cool off?" "After Thanksgiving. You shouldn't complain. Your golf game has really improved.



Keep it up and you'll be my number one come spring." "Is the sun as hot then?" "You'll get used to it." "Only if I can find a Kahuna who will teach me to walk barefoot on red hot coals."

"Wake up Hacker. We land in ten minutes. You were really logging Z's. Marilyn will meet us at the airport." Happy checked his seat belt, "How did you do that?" "That's why I pay the big bucks for my telephone system. She wouldn't take a limo. Decided to drive up from Washington Court House and the airport is on her way. How are your kids?" "No collect phone calls, so they mute alright." Hacker didn't worry about his teen-age son, not anymore. He was in Indiana at a military academy getting discipline that Hacker was unable to provide on tour. His oldest son was in the Air Force flying F-16s and his daughter was at an eastern girl's college. He missed them, but it was time for them to learn to survive.

Hacker sprinted across the tarmac to Marilyn, "Did Golden talk to you about Florida?" "Yes. How was California?" "You might like it on the northern coast." "Too cold for me and the taxes?" "Too high. Looks a lot like Scotland with trees. Lots of fog and ocean cliffs. Golden is riding in our Cadillac?" "He'll have to wear a disguise. Here he comes. Ask him." Hacker couldn't resist giving a needle, "Windows are tinted. You may not be recognized. Sorry we didn't have a Lincoln, but you know the drill." "Hunch down in the back seat."

On there way north to Goblin, Hacker turned around and asked, "Think Marylin and I will like Sebastian?" "You'll love it. Gets pretty warm between May and October, though." "Like Arizona?" "No way. The humidity cuts out the suns intensity. When it's 122° in Phoenix, it's 90° in Fort Pierce. Don't worry. When it's that hot we'll be on tour or up here." "What's the number one reason we should move to Florida?" "No State income tax." "Number two?" "Ohio has beach, but no ocean." "Number three?" "It's the winter home for the circus." "Circus? Which one? Beasty's or the one with acrobats." "Both. With your sense of humor you would have done fine at Ohio State" "Lets see. I have my degree. How about you?" "You sure know how to cut to the quick."

Marylin turned north on River Road off the beltway, toward Goblin. Aberdeen was four miles north, located on the west side of the Scioto River. It was one of the first upscale golf course communities developed by Golden Gorilla enterprises. She turned west through a tunnel of elms to the guard gate at Aberdeen's entrance. The guard recognized them at once, "Good evening Mr. Gorilla, Mr. Hacker. Your wife left word that you were arriving. Place this pass on your dash." Hacker turned around and spoke to Golden, "Talk about security. Even you need a pass." "No favorites here. How do you like my new improvements." "They're subtle. Hard to notice them. You did an outstanding job on course setting. You didn't build a golf course with fairways winding through a condo canyon,

but the spectators can still see. A lot like Augusta. But what I like best is the condition. When I can practice putting on your fairways, you know I'm a fan." "I'll accept your endorsement." "Not a bad layout for a college drop out." "Talk about the pot calling the kettle black."

Brenda waved to them from the front porch as Marylin drove up the lane to the Gorilla mansion, "Are you ready to return to Sebastian?" "In a moments notice. The Hackers are going to visit with us. Trying to convince them to move down there. I'd have my own personal pigeon for the entire winter." Brenda smiled, "You'll love the ocean. Are you going to build?" Hacker looked to Marylin and she responded, "If we can find one that we like, we won't build. You don't mind if we stay for a week?" "Of course not, but only a week? You can use our guest house. It'll give you more freedom. Let's dine at the club. Our cook has already returned to Sebastian and I've been out shopping all day. Aberdeen has a new Chef who is supposed to have trained in New York and apprenticed in Paris."

Happy needled Golden, "Are you sure this Chef isn't a road kill chicken specialist." "Don't worry. Radiator imprints are guaranteed to make our Aberdeen chickens tender." "Are you sure it isn't the adrenalin created right before impact." "Pilots or chickens?" "The ones with feathers." "Pilots or chickens?" Hacker enjoyed dinner and the company and Marylin seemed in the best of spirits. He was relieved, "You seem happy."

Do you think you'll like Florida?" "My nest is now empty and I am ready to fly away. Besides, fixing up a new home will keep me busy. Remember, I like to look at ocean. Can we fly down next week?"

WASHINGTON COURTHOUSE

"Quarry mine,
Blessed am I
In the luck
Of the chase."

Navaho Hunting Song

Marylin was chattering away about looking for a house with an ocean view, but Happy's mind was elsewhere. As she drove toward Washington Courthouse and their golf course home, his thoughts were on his golf swing. "I needed to make a more compact weight shift and swing. I'm swaying into a lateral move with the hint of a reverse pivot. Prior to taking the club back, I'll visualize moving my feet up and down without lifting them. Slowly taking the club head back at the same time as my weight shifts to the right foot." Happy's weight had shifted forward to his left foot and he was completing his pivot when Marylin poked him in his ribs, "Happy, you're not listening to me." He smiled, sheepishly. I'm sorry. You know me, my mind's on my golf game. Think I have a new way to initiate my take away. Have a hint of a reverse pivot creeping into my swing." "More like old age creeping up on your golf game. Are we going to return to Washington Courthouse for Christmas or do you want to stay in Florida." "Whatever you prefer. If we're going to remain south, we'll have to make arrangements to fly the kids down. My airplane is scheduled to be down for maintenance the last of December." "In Columbus or at the factory?" "In Columbus." "Can you delay it?" "Only at our peril." "We can spend Christmas at home in Washington Courthouse, but I want to return to Florida as soon as the kids are back in school." "Shouldn't be a problem. After a test flight, our plane should be ready." "I need a date, for planning." "How about the day after New Years?" "Should be okay, but we'll see."

Hacker flipped the electronic switch opening the gate to their driveway. Marylin snailed her way through the gate and up the lane to the garage. Its door opened automatically as they approached. She asked, "Are you coming inside?" Marylin had the beginnings of a pout curling at the corner of her mouth. Hacker grimaced. After all these years, she could still read his mind. Hacker gave her a kiss, "I'm heading for the practice tee. I want to work on my weight shift idea." "Call if you're going to play eighteen. Otherwise, I'll meet you at the Club Grill for lunch." "What time?" "Noon."

Hacker unplugged the electrical recharging cord from his golf cart. His garage contained two cars, two golf carts and two empty spaces where his children's cars used to be. His cart had two oversized golf bags strapped to the back with more than double the legal limit of fourteen clubs in each one. He checked to make sure he had his tournament clubs and breathed a sigh of relief. Mike had placed his set in the bag behind the steering wheel. Clones were fine for practice, but he wanted old friends when money was on the line. No matter how hard golf club designers tried, no two clubs were alike. Hacker still used a twenty year old persimmon driver with the same metal shaft that came with the club. His designer and the manufacturer attempted to duplicate it a dozen times each year, without success. Three new attempts were on the back of his cart. Happy shook his head. He knew ahead of time, these three would go the way of the others. He made a mental note to tell

Mike to save them for charity auctions. Mike Cash was much more than Hacker's tour caddie. He was his Chief Executive Officer, personal teaching pro, best friend and allowed to make decisions for Happy in his absence.

Happy opened the back door and called inside to Marylin, "What about Mike Cash?" "Mike? Oh my God, you'll have to tell him today. Do you think they'll move down with us? Can we build a place for him? We had a dickens of a time trying to convince Joan to move here." "Call the office and see if Mike's in. If he is, I'll meet him on the practice tee." "You'll have to go to the pro shop for range balls. The shack on the tee is closed down for the winter. I'll let him know you're coming."

Happy whirled his golf cart out of the garage and into a brisk northwester. Mike had windshields installed for the winter on both carts, but the wind still whistled in. Like the Boy Scout motto, always prepared, Mike was waiting at the Pro Shop door, with a gigantic bucket containing several hundred range balls, "What's this rumor about you and Marylin moving south?" "You're a modern miracle, Mike. We've talked to Golden and Brenda about moving last night and already your rumor mill has the grist.", "Before you ask, Joan says yes." "We haven't established conditions." "And we won't. Don't have too. We've always operated on a handshake and in each others best interests." "Will Joan fly down with us to Orlando?" "Will

we have time to look at real estate?" "Yes." "She's packing as we speak. Do we take your tournament clubs or clones?" "One of each. How's your game?" "Good enough to beat you." "After lunch?" "You're on. What are you working on this morning?" "Weight shift." "Do you want video." "Not yet. Are you working on next year's schedule?" "Finished, but if we move south, we'll have to make adjustments. You need to look it over." "I'll stop by your office when I finish working out. Is Joan free? Marilyn is meeting me for lunch in the Grill. We can talk about our move." "We'll be there. What time?" "Noon."

Hacker beat out two hundred balls, triggering his take away with a weight shift to his right foot on each swing. After fifty or so shots, he was able to accomplish it without swaying. He wiped off his clubs with a smile, "One benefit of owning my own golf course is having a business office between the Pro Shop and the practice tee." Happy had caught a glint of binocular optics on several of his backswings. A swing critique from Mike would be the first order of business. He checked his tournament set. All of his old friends were there, "They've held up well. Should, I don't wear them out on the practice tee." He moved the clubs for charity into one bag and placed the clones he liked best in with his tournament clubs. As he drove his cart toward the office, he noticed another glint from the windows of Mike's office. He pulled up and parked at the front door.

Inside the front door, Happy pulled off his golf shoes, slipped into a pair of moccasins and placed his spikes in the shoe rack. Golf spikes and carpets were not compatible. He had installed carpet after carpet and spiked shoes destroyed them all. He looked down at the pile of grass clippings and made a mental note to have a vacuum cleaner placed next to the shoe rack. The bottom floor was rented out to accountants, financial advisors and insurance agents. Most were members of Hacker's club and didn't mind green grass trails, but a frown from a passing secretary triggered his resolve.

Mike was at his side as he reached the top of the stairs. "Come into my office." "Said the spider to the fly." "You've got me mixed up with Golden. Your secretary has a stack of things for you. Do you want to talk business now or later?" "First things first. How's my arc?" "You've discovered a way to lengthen it and your hook has become a draw. I video taped your practice." "How?" "While you were out west I set up a video-cam with a telescopic lens in the corner window. After you finish catching up, stop back. I'll have it edited and we can compare it with this season's tapes. Anything else?" "And I thought my swing was more compact." "Your flying right elbow was grounded, but your arc increased." "I want to see the video comparison. Before I forget, we should give the new test clubs to charity." "That bad?" "No, just not good for me and Marilyn is beginning to complain about our basement becoming a storage shed. How many editions have we given away?"

"Over a thousand. Has Marylin picked out a place for us to call home in Florida." "Golden is pushing a place called Sebastian, but we've never been there." "Want me to alert a real estate agent?" "Yes, you know the price range, but Golden may have something up his sleeve. How about you?" "Joan wants to buy her own place this time. So I don't have much input." "On the golf course?" "More like on the beach." "That's two of us. Marylin has been hinting about looking out at water. Best way to do that is with a condo." "With my kids, we'll need a house." "What have you got for me to look at?" "Your schedule for next year. It's on your desk."

Hacker checked the majors first and then the tour. He called Mike over intercom, "Nothing overseas?" "Hawaiian Open. Your only out of country tournaments are the Canadian and British Opens." "Why the cutback?" "We're not as young as we used to be. I'm working on the philosophy that you have only so many good tournament swings in you and we don't want to waste them on the practice tee, at too many tournaments or corporate outings." "The outings are our bread and butter." "I know, but you're no longer in your prime and we're not winning so I thought we'd try a new approach." "I'll try anything. We have an hour or so before lunch. I'll look over the schedule and catch up on correspondence."

Hacker thumbed through the stack of mail on his desk and moaned. He kicked back in his desk chair, put his feet up on

his desk and glanced at next year's schedule. He wasn't eligible for the Tournament of Champions so his first stop was at the Bob Hope in Palm Springs, a week off and then the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am followed by the Hawaiian Open. After two weeks off, the Los Angeles Open, Doral in Miami and another week off before Bay Hill in Orlando and the Players Championship in Jacksonville. Mike had built in a weeks practice at Augusta National before the Masters. After that, to South Carolina for the Heritage and his major sponsor's tournament, the Greater Greensboro for three straight weeks of tournaments. Then, two weeks off before the Byron Nelson in Dallas, a week off before the Kemper and Memorial, another week off before the U.S. Open at the NCR course in Dayton. Hacker called Mike on intercom, "Mike, why do we have a week off after the Open?" "The Western Open is in Chicago and you always treat it as if it was a major. You also need a week of practice in Scotland before the British Open at Saint Andrews and then I've given you a summer break, two weeks off before the PGA. "But no time off before the International and World Series. If this is a cut back..." "Compared to this year, you have ten more weeks off." "You're right, it's time to cut back." "I've plugged in a week off before the Canadian Open. Except for the Tour Championship, your commitments will be complete by October." "No corporate outings?" "If we plan on moving south, we have to cut back." "Do you have the list of my promises." "Yes, but only a dozen were firm." "We'll compromise. Work those into my schedule." Happy looked at his stack of letters and moaned again. He walked

back to Mike's office. "Let me see the tape." "How about your letters?" "When the sun doesn't shine." "After you approve your tournament schedule." "They're approved, let me see the tape."

Mike toggled the wall open with a switch and a forty inch TV appeared, "I've superimposed today's swing with one from each month over the past year." "But I'm restricted by a jacket." "Shouldn't be a problem. You were checking weight shift and lateral movement." "But I'm concerned about over swinging." "As long as the ball is straight down the middle and your swing repeats, don't worry." "Yeah, but under pressure the loops will still get to me." "Watch in slow motion. I like that weight shift. Your staying behind the ball without reversing. How about a swing trigger?" "Didn't use one. It's almost like rocking back and springing forward. The arms go with the motion, a no brainer." "How do you know when to pull the trigger?" "Don't. It just happens. What do you think?" "Even with a jacket on, your compact swing still goes a little past parallel. Pretty good arc and no loops. Your new weight shift looks good. How did the club head feel at impact?" "Solid. Cold weather makes the ball crack off the club head. It felt like I was hitting rocks." "I'd say you've stumbled onto a good set up and swing trigger." "The key is to get my body into and my brain out of gear." "Brain out of gear?" "The ideal golf swing is executed with a forty year old body and an eight year old mind." "Your a perfect match, you have both."

"Why do I feel like a straight man?" "All kidding aside. Where did you come up with that idea of a forty year old body and eight year old mind?" "Golden, who else?" "How about your follow through?" "No sweat. I can come inside for my hook, extend it on line for a straight ball and on the outside for a fade." "And under pressure you'll still play a running hook." "How does my swing compare?" "You've left the Adams family. You've gotten rid of your controlled lurch."

Marylin and Joan were in the Grill, happy as a pair of Meadow Larks, chatting about the upcoming move. Neither noticed Happy or Mike as they entered. Happy, smiling and exchanging jibes with club members, grimaced at Marylin's table selection. Instead of a quiet spot near the locker room door, she picked a window table overlooking the lake between number one and ten tees. Their brunch would be interrupted by members stopping by to chat.

As Happy pulled out a chair Marylin glanced up, "Are you and Mike playing golf this afternoon?" "Whoa, we thought you two were only interested in our move south." "Not true, but while we're on the subject, Joan and I have both decided not to sell our homes." "Good idea, we should be back in Ohio in late May for the spring flowers." "And we can stay here through September." Joan added, "We won't want to move furniture or clothing south." Hacker laughed, "Whats this got to do with Mike and me teeing it up this afternoon?" Marylin asked, "Are

you?" "Right after lunch." "But we're leaving in the morning for Orlando." "We can pack after dinner." "You two have your bags packed for any occasion. Moving to a new home is a big event for Joan and me." "Plan on two weeks and don't overpack." "Do the Goldens have room for Mike and Joan?" "Don't know, but I assume so. Why don't you give Brenda a call this afternoon and find out."

Before Marilyn could answer the waiter tapped Happy on the shoulder, "Sorry to interrupt, sir, but Mr. Gorilla is on the line." "Hello, Golden, what's up?" "Your pro shop says that you and Mike are teeing it up at one. Mind if I join you." "Come on ahead. We'll wait on you." "I'll be on time, I'm halfway there. Tell Mike I want strokes." "You'll have to talk to Mike." Happy handed the phone to Mike and whispered, "Golden's going to play with us and he wants strokes. That's what you get for beating him last time."

On any given day, Mike could beat either one of them. He was a terrific golfer with every tool except the emotional one. Under tournament pressure, his putting stroke would break down. A scratch golfer, Mike had won his fair share of amateur tournaments, but he was not a money player. Mike was much more than Hacker's tour caddy. He was Happy's teaching pro, agent, business manager and partner. Operating on 20% of gross and bonuses, Mike made well over half-a-million in lean years. Mike caddied only in the majors and when Happy needed a coach

on the course. Hacker's day to day business matters required almost all of his attention. Their association went back to college days in Arizona when they battled each other for the number one slot on the university golf team. Flogging golf balls together in Arizona's blistering heat had sealed a bond of friendship that stood the test of temperature, tension and time.

Mike handed the phone back to their waiter, "Happy, you're staring out the window. Our waiter is waiting for your order." "Eggs Benedict and whole wheat toast. Joan, are you sure you want to move south?" "In a New York minute. Remember, Mike and I are Southern Californians, not native Buckeyes. We'll gladly miss another winter full of gray Ohio days." "What about your kids?" "Boy, have you been wrapped up in your golf game. Our son is at the same military school as yours and our daughter is in Southern Cal." "Talk about being self centered, I've become a caricature of myself. I knew, I just wasn't paying attention. Mike, you need to let more air out of my balloon." "You've had a tough three years without a win. Maybe we've been taking this game too seriously." "I've never been accused of that before. Nonchalant was my label." "Tension comes from the inside where it can't be seen." "Your right. Will you come along for the first three tournaments?" "Only if I can find a good assistant to handle our business matters." "Damn, your right, we'll have to move our office with us." "Not at first, no one else wants to go. Finish your eggs. It's time

for me to give you and Golden a golf lesson." "Not fair, I left my game on the practice tee." "Even if you try limping you won't get any strokes from me and neither will the blonde bomber. Do you know why he's coming to our turf?" "I may be in left field, but my bet is that he wants to talk to you." "To me?" "You're the best teacher, agent and manager in the game." "Now you tell me." "Had to wait until our last contract was signed." "Right, another handshake."

Golden caused quite a stir in the pro shop when he asked to have his bag placed on Mike's cart, "Hope you don't mind, Happy. I want Mike to look at my swing." "Good, I can concentrate on my weight shift without a lot of chatter." "Weight shift? Thought you were working on your attention span." "What?" Happy watched Mike and Golden speed away to the first tee. He looked back at the club house. They were alone, no one was following. The Bengals and Steelers were on TV this afternoon and the division championship was up for grabs. They would be without gallery today. His Club members came from all fifty states and weren't impressed with a TGA legend.

Happy was the sole owner of The Club. He got the idea for the name from The Bus on Oahu. He designed it link style so that low ball hitters could roll the ball onto the greens. Sand bunkers were on the sides of each green. Short playable grass rewarded shots to the front and over the back of most greens. Hacker insisted that the fairways and greens remain

firm and the rough fair. A shot off line would role a long way in the direction it was hit. A ball hit on line would give a fair roll down the fairway. He wanted his members to be rewarded for good shots, not penalized. On most modern golf courses a 195 yard carry from a driver was rewarded with a five yards of roll. Happy's fairways rewarded a drive with a 55 yard roll allowing the ball to bounce out to 250 yards.

Golden was loosening up as Happy arrived at the tee, "Let me see your weight shift. Mike says your drilling the ball." "It may help you get your club back closer to parallel or put you in a better rhythm to start your downswing. Watch, it's a no brainer." "It would have to be." Happy shifted his weight back and forth on each foot. When his weight shifted the third time to his right foot, he swung the driver back with a smooth take away, pausing ever so slightly at the top and then pulling the club downward with a shoulder turn, arms and hands following. He shifted his weight to his left foot and at impact the ball flew on a Jimmie Thompson trajectory, thirty feet above the fairway, then rising as overspin kicked his golf ball skyward. It landed hard, 250 yards away and began rolling, coming to rest on the front edge of number one green, 375 yards from the tee. Happy laughed, "Take that Tiger Tracks." Golden whistled, "If Tiger was here he'd have flown your green. I've seen enough. Give me a short lesson while Mike tries to follow that nonsense. For the life of me, I didn't notice you shifting weight." "It's mental, feel not seen."

Mike backed away from his ball and looked over at Happy and Golden, "I hope my golf game is not interfering with your conversation. If you guys keep talking on my backswing, I'll start asking for a Mulligan on each tee." He then hit his shot over three hundred yards, straight down the middle with a slight fade. Happy needled back, "What are you complaining about, you hit that shot ten yards further than any I've ever seen you do on this hole." Mike walked toward his cart, spinning his club, "Ground must be hard as a rock. Same bet?" Golden looked up from his set-up, "\$50 Nassau. No more than one press and listen up, I'm going to eat both of your lunches." Happy laughed, "Maybe mine, but not Mike's."

Golden took time with his set up. Happy noticed that he was trying the weight shift they discussed. Golden shifted weight from his left foot to right foot without any perceptible motion. His club went past parallel on his backswing for the first time in over a year. Golden's power fade flew down the left side of the fairway, drifting back to the center. He whistled under his breath, "Holy cats, I got my weight through at impact without coming over the top and pulling the ball left." Golden looked over at Hacker, "Does it work in the fairway and on chips?" "We'll find out, but I'm not sure about the short game. Shouldn't move too much over the ball." "I'll give it a try, anyway." He placed his driver back in his bag and asked Mike, "Did you try Hacker's weight shift on your drive?" "Hate to admit it, but I did and with good results."

Golden stopped at Mike's ball. Mike had driven 310 yards off the tee and had only 105 yards left to the pin. Mike took out a six iron, placed his feet close together and played a half swing punch shot. It landed on the fringe and rolled to within six feet of the pin. Golden asked, "Did you use Happy's weight shift?" "Of course I did. Good thing I landed short of where I was aiming. I hit it too pure." Mike hopped into the cart, "Fun playing when the ground is dry and hard." Golden took out his sand wedge and hit a flop shot sixty yards, twenty feet short of the pin. It bounced like a super ball off concrete, coming to rest thirty feet past the pin. He needled Hacker, "Where's the damn windmill." "Windmill?" "Got to be one. Your greens are as hard as the concrete on a putt putt." "And you won how many times at Augusta? Pretend your at St. Andrews and hit the damn ball."

Happy positioned his golf ball behind his right toe and struck a downward blow with an eight iron. The ball flew eight feet and rolled seventy five feet striking the pin dead center, falling into the hole. Golden had a wry smile, "Are you going to play golf or screw around?" "You and Mike are one down." "Only to you." Golden rolled his putt dead center and gave Mike his putt with a shrug, "We both birdied and we're still one down to the Hacker. But, if his weight shift works, it'll be a cheap lesson. If I remember correctly, number two is a par five. Any trouble?" Mike shook his head and smiled back, "No. Happy wanted the first two holes to be wide open. It

helps to set a fast pace early in the round. You'll notice that our bunkers on the first two holes are grass. Hacker said you wanted me to help with your golf game. What is it that you want me to check?" "May not need it now. Happy may have cured my swing fault. Keep watching to see if I'm getting my club back and give me a diagnostic check on the rest of my game." "From what I've seen on the tube, your going left with anything over eight iron distance and your putting is atrocious." "What am doing to screw up my putting?" "You're like a Chinese duck, peeking. You've always had your eyes down the line. Now your looking up at the ball as it rolls." "Head position?" "Head position and maybe it's a mental look up. Your concentration must be breaking down when you strike the ball. I can see the breakdown on your follow through." "How about my last putt?" "Wasn't under tournament pressure. Your stroke didn't break-down and you didn't look up."

Number two fairway is as wide as any at Augusta National. What rough there is looked like the first cut of rough at Golden's Aberdeen. As Hacker teed his ball, Golden asked, "Can it be reached in two?" "Only if you can hit it over or under the trees on the corner." Happy split the fairway with a three iron, rolling to the center of the first dogleg. Mike used his five wood and Golden hit a two iron, both landing within ten yards of Hacker's ball, 230 yards from the tee. Golden was away, "What club?" Mike answered, "Four iron. Play it down the left side and fade to the center. You'll need at least

a 200 yard shot. It's another sharp dogleg, this time to the right. Length doesn't mean a thing on this hole." Using his best W.C. Fields imitation, Golden responded, "I'm looking for windmills."

All three shots made the opening, 120 yards from the green. Hacker hit a knock down eight iron, bouncing the ball thirty feet past the pin. Mike played another run up, stopping seven feet to the right and Golden lofted a wedge close enough for a gimmie. Hacker's putt hit the back of the cup and spun out. Mike rolled his in, dead center. After two holes, they were all even.

The third hole is a par three, 135 yards, with eighty feet of fall, downhill to a postage stamp green. Mike lead off with a punch eight iron, landing ten yards short of the green and rolling to the back, twenty five feet to the right and past the pin. Golden followed with a wedge, landing in the same spot, and bounced fifteen feet to the right and short. Hacker hit a full nine iron, landing on the front edge, rolling close enough to kick it in. He was able to birdie while the other two made pars. He was now one up.

In the cart, on the way two number four tee, Golden asked Mike, "Are you planning to move to Sebastian with Hacker?" "Joan and I are flying down to Orlando with Happy and Marylin tomorrow. We have a corporate outing scheduled Monday and we're

going to Sebastian afterwards." "Plenty of room at my place. I want you and Joan to stay with us, too. I knew I was getting a package deal. Would Happy be upset if you spent some time working with me as my professional?" "As long as it's open, above board and not on a full time basis. I prefer to do it as a professional courtesy. I don't need the money and one of these days I may decide to retire from management and teach full time. If I do, I'll ask for your endorsement. Golden shook his hand, "We have a deal. When you want too, you can put my name on your list." "Did you notice that we're all hitting the ball pure today. We both ought to hire Happy." Hacker answered back, "I heard. I'm a cheap date." Mike fired right back, "Not if you keep insisting that we buy you a second dress."

At the fourth hole, Hacker's shot split the fairway, rolling to a stop on the left edge, 320 yards off the tee and 100 yards from the pin. Mike's ball landed short of Hacker's, nestling down in a sprinkler head hole. He had hit another 300 yard automatic shot. Golden's ball flew past both of them, rolling to only 80 yards from the hole. He put his arm on Hacker's shoulders, "So far your lesson is working. I'm coming through the ball and I'm hitting the back of it like a young limber back." "We'll never catch up with the Tiger." "That kid can really play." "He hit a few knock downs when he won the Masters. If he keeps that up, we can only hope he finds true love and lets his golf game slide."

Hacker knew when to be quiet and show deference to the king of golf. He could tell that Golden wanted to change the subject, "I knew when I asked that you and Mike were a package deal. We have plenty of room for both of you and your families at our guest house in Sebastian. So, I asked Mike to stay at our place while both of you are looking for homes." "You saved me from asking. He's decided to move south, too." "I hope you don't mind if Mike looks at my swing once in a while, but if this weight shift of yours continues to work, I may be after you to hang it up and become my full time instructor." "No way, I can't compete with your gas station attendant, plumber and everyone else you meet in the street. I know Mike would love too help. Besides, my fix is nothing new. It comes from Bobby Jones' tapes. I extrapolated his idea on rhythm and combined it with a baseball batters step into the pitch and came up with a continual movement idea." "Bobby always said that a golf swing should never start from a full stop, but he called it a waggle." "Most pros thought that meant hands and rump. It's really feet and the rest comes along." "Will it hold up under pressure?" "I don't know about us, but Bobby did pretty well with it." "He didn't have Tiger Tracks crushing the ball fifty to one hundred yards past him." "And neither did we. It's Tiger's day in the sun."

Golden grimaced as he waited to hit his second shot from the fairway, "It will always be this way? Someone new always comes along to break records." "I finally broke the code."

You're after a permanent foursome; Mike, Mate Tucker and me."

"Damn, I thought you'd never catch on. Seriously, Mate did mention both of you and Silver Fox, Laddy and Tiger. We'll need more than four with our schedules. Mate's like Captain Ahab and Mike is his white whale." "But he keeps coming back for more." "Its been gnawing on his mind. Mate is still mumbling to himself after losing the last three matches to Mike. Building a mix and match golf double foursome is a bit like joining a fraternity. So I hope you don't mind a bit of mild hazing." "If Mike continues to win my wallet, you have my blessing for two lookouts a round. Marylin says that the game of golf is my mistress and a foursome is a common law wife with the same obligations." "Brenda said the same thing. Do you think this is their play and we're just actors?" "Wouldn't put it past them. It would be a sure way to keep us all at home." "Mike's ready to hit." "Don't want to upset my new teaching pro."

Mike punched an eight iron ten feet short of the hole and left himself with a dead straight uphill putt. Happy pulled his wedge twenty six feet to the left and Golden hit a pitching wedge so close it was within the leather. Happy's putt spun out, Mike drilled his to the back of the hole and they both gave Golden his. After four holes, both matches were dead even. Golden spoke to Mike as they rode to the fifth tee, "Have you picked up anything on my swing?" "You're swinging like you swung when you were Tiger's age." "Loop and all?" "Loop and

all for you, but Tiger doesn't have our faults. We're both three under after four. I'd say we owe Hacker a round at the bar." "Only if we win." "If he's straightened out your pull off the tee, you'll owe Happy more than money, you'll owe him your game." "So I'll have to save him from drowning to get rid of my debt?" "Or better yet, give him a hand with his mental approach."

Number five was alive with bunkers, water and trees. The number one handicap hole at The Club, it is 625 yards of self proclaimed monster with a fairway sloping to a meandering creek positioned to hinder the longer hitting pro, but not the amateur. Court Creek intersected the fairway 269 yards on the right, crossing at an angle away from the tee, exiting 350 yards on the left. Hacker hit a high three wood hook, downhill to the left landing area. Mike, using a 1 iron, drilled a straight ball down the middle. Golden hit his driver, fading over the left rough, bouncing into the left side of the fairway and rolling to the edge of the creek.

Small talk ceased as they rode to their shots. The game was on and no one wanted to lose. Court Creek recrossed the fairway seventy yards in front of the green. Mike hit a three wood fifty five yards short of the creek and Hacker hit a four iron for position, five yards past Mike. Golden chortled, "Lookie here. I'm sitting up on a gnome's gift to golf. Teed up on a tuft of grass. It's driver time folks." Golden's ball

landed over the run, rolling between the front traps guarding the green and stopped in the middle of the green, fifteen feet past the pin. As he whistled his way up the fairway, Happy shouted at Mike, "We don't need to place a windmill on the front of this green for Golden." "That was one hell of a shot. I think Golden has found the fountain of youth." "You bet your sweet bippy I have. If this keeps up I'm going to build a shrine to the Hacker."

Mike punched another eight iron, rolling his ball six feet to the left and short of the hole. Hacker hit a nine iron over the pin. Backspin drew the ball back into the pin with a thunk as it fell into the hole. Happy whistled as he walked to his cart. Five holes, six under par and still only one up, maybe. This was a tough group. Golden missed his eagle putt as his ball stopped an inch before the hole and rolled back, "Damn winter cups." He caught himself before he complained any further. The conditions were the same for all.

A freshening northwest wind blew across the cornfields, creating a whirlpool of leaves along Court Creek and the inward holes leading back to the club house. Six, seven and eight were halved with pars. Mike looked to the northwest, off the tee at nine. The sky was turning from dark blue to black. As black as the seat of a coal miner's pants. Hacker looked up as a cold drop of rain struck his face, "I'll accept a double press. It looks like we're going to be rained out after nine."

"Do you two give rain checks," Golden asked? Hacker couldn't resist giving Golden the needle, "No wonder they won't let you play at The Country Club in Columbus." "I hope that doesn't happen again. It was embarrassing." Mike asked, "Does Aberdeen still have a no guest rule?" "It's been modified. My members got carried away. Double press it is. How about you, Mike?" "No way. Hacker owns this hole. It's all dogleg left and grooved for his hook. He can birdie this one with his eyes closed."

Hacker performed as advertised, except that he kept his eyes open. Mike birdied and Golden missed a four foot putt as large cold drops of rain fell from the sky, "Damn, missed again. Let's drive these carts into the barn before the heavens open up. My only consolation is that Hacker has to buy." "Not with your money. We keep our winnings in a cigar box and give it to the Salvation Army at Christmas. Buys quite a few turkeys." Golden was pleased, "I'll add another thousand. The Salvation Army can use it to buy presents for children." Hacker asked, "How about a steam, hot shower and a glass of port at the bar?" "Good, it'll loosen up my back. Lets get a move on before it begins to snow,"

Steam rose off of rocks heated from below. Sweat poured from Hacker's forehead. He broke the silence, "Will Tiger accept your offer?" "I hope so. He'll need a place out of the sunshine of publicity. I didn't have it, but I was never hounded like

he is. Why did you ask?" "I don't know about Aberdeen, but I've had a dickens of a time getting black members to come here. The game is opening up and no one wants to join." Golden nodded, "Yes," but didn't say anything for a few minutes. "We've had the same problem, but we all have to bear the blame." Mike asked, "Explain?" "The game has been a closed shop for many years. Not only race, but money. Money is still a problem that isn't solvable. Private golf courses aren't cheap and they're not run on charity. We don't have that many black players with the money to join and those that have play tennis." Hacker spoke, "Tiger's success will change that mixture." Golden added, "I hope so. He sure has his head screwed on straight. He's learned the most important lesson on tour." Hacker knew, "The game needs attention. If he wants to stay at the top, he has to focus on it first." Mike chimed in, "As long as he stays single." Hacker added, "Or picks a saint for his wife. I'm done medium rare and I'm out of here."

SEBASTIAN

"Here we are on Tom Tiddler's ground
Picking up gold and silver."

Children's game Anonymous

Arriving in Orlando a little after midnight, Hacker was able to log less than five hours sleep before arriving at the charity Pro-Am. While the spectators crowded around Tiger Tracks, Hacker was able to concentrate on his game without distraction. Using his new weight shift to perfection and rolling in putts from left field, Hacker finished nine under par. He rolled in a thirty foot putt on eighteen to edge out Tiger for a one shot victory. Mike, a wizard at reading Bermuda greens, was the key. After Mike lined Hacker up, all he had to do was hit the ball on line with the right speed. He enjoyed playing with Silver Fox. Holding up the \$100,000 first place check, Hacker gave the TGA tour's shortest victory speech, "Not a bad day for someone older than dirt and five years away from the senior tour. Whenever Silver Fox holds a charity affair for his children's hospital, I'll be there as long as I can compete. Like the Shriners hospitals, children can go there for free treatment. This check goes to those children."

After rain changing to snow in Ohio, Orlando's weather was a pleasant change. A balmy, sunny, 80° day, with mild easterly winds. While Mike and Hacker were at Silver Fox's tournament, their wives spent the better part of the day shopping. Golden had given them the royal VIP treatment. He had a limo waiting for their use on arrival and Mate's helicopter waiting to fly them directly from Orlando to Sebastian after the tournament. Mate's helicopter was waiting on Silver Fox's helo pad.

Marylin tugged on Hacker's arm, "Where are we going to land?" "At Golden's estate." "I shouldn't ask, but we need a car to look for houses tomorrow?" "Mike has a broker dropping by." Mike shouted over the roar of the helicopter's engines, "One from the lifestyles of the rich and famous. Bring money." Marylin asked, "Is Sebastian Palm Beach?" Mike answered, "From what I've read, it thinks it's old Florida. Like someone said about York, we'll be living twenty miles away from a lemon." Hacker asked, "Where's Mate?" "Visiting relatives and playing a few tournaments in Australia."

Golden's main and guest house fronted the Indian River, better known to Yankees as the Intercoastal Waterway. The estate was heavily wooded for privacy. Hacker could only guess at its size. By Midwest standards, it didn't appear to be much, but for developed Florida waterfront property it looked like a plantation. As they descended, Golden's tennis court, driving range, putting green and oversized pool came into view. Hacker whispered to Marylin, "More than we can afford." Marylin smiled, "And you own a golf course. Brenda bought this place thirty years ago when it was a swamp. It looks great, but I want an ocean not a bay view." "As long as there is a golf course nearby." "You may have to build one." "Always wanted to put in an oceanfront links course, but "Environmentalists would eat our lunch." Mike nodded, "Yes. We can handle nitrogen and phosphate run-off with holding ponds and take care of scrub jays by planting palmeto scrub in the rough, but consultant

costs, state and federal permits could add up to \$3,000,000 to a sea side links project." Marilyn tapped Hacker's knee. Mate's helicopter hovered over Golden's helo pad. A Lincoln was parked nearby with keys inside. On the front seat were directions to Golden's guest house.

Golden's housekeeper opened the front door, "Welcome. Mr. Gorilla called, yesterday. I've set up two bedrooms on the second floor in the east wing. You both have a river view. Do you wish to dine at the main house or do you prefer to dine here? Your kitchen is well stocked, or if you wish, I'll send down meals." Marilyn asked, "Is anyone home?" "Mr. and Mrs. Gorilla will be here tomorrow morning." "If you don't mind, we will prepare our meals. Is Golden still on a mixed fruit diet?" "Don't worry, Mr. Gorilla sneaks out to this kitchen for snacks. It has everything you need, but only the east kitchen is stocked. Laddy Partner is visiting tomorrow. He'll be in the west wing." Joan asked, "Any don'ts?" "Stay on the paths. We have an occasional snake." "Poisonous?" "Mostly king snakes. We encourage them. They eat the others." Marilyn asked, "Others?" "Water moccasins, coral snakes and pygmy rattlers." "Alligators?" "River is really a salt water sound. Gators don't like salt water, but they swim it to cross over. If you want to grill steaks, there's a covered grill on the patio. Pool is heated to 85°. You can find the light switches at the control panel near the shallow end. If you have any questions, call me at the number listed next to the phone.

After 7:00 p.m., please call only if an axe murderer is breaking down your door or the guest house is on fire. "

After the housekeeper left, Marylin looked around, "Guest house? East wing? Is this a hotel or the Vanderbilt's mansion? Come with me, Joan, why don't you and I explore while the boys are unloading the car." "Only if Happy promises not to cook." Hacker answered, "I'm going to thaw out four steaks and see if Golden has soy sauce for a marinade before we haul in our stuff." Mike headed toward the kitchen, "I'll cut up greens for salad. By the time you two get back, all you'll have to do is set the table." Joan called back over her shoulder, "This is like the Boy Scouts. You two need adult supervision." Happy asked, "What does she mean?" Mike laughed, "Remember, Joan was an Army brat. It's that old joke about the difference between the Army and Boy Scouts."

Happy opened the left door of the side-by-side refrigerator, "We're in luck, the freezer is stocked with Omaha steaks. Do we want to cook frozen veggies?" Mike opened the other door, "No, Golden has enough fresh vegetables in here to start a salad bar. Do you want to bake potatoes on the grill with the steaks?" "Get them washed and ready. How about barbecue beans?" "Fine with me. If you're finished preparing the steaks, give me a hand with carrots and radishes." "Slice." "Them not you." "After I check the grill and start the fire." "Be careful, it's a gas one. Last time you singed your eyebrows."

Marylin and Joan were talking up a storm as they entered the kitchen from their tour of Golden's guest house. Joan groaned when she saw Mike's half finished bowl of salad, "Didn't you ever pay attention when I was in the kitchen. You must cut off dead parts and stems." "At least I cleaned the potatoes before I covered them with foil." "Foil? You and Happy can bring in our luggage. Just place it at the top of the stairs." Marylin asked, "Where is Happy?" "Starting the fire on the grill." Joan directed, "You can light a fire in the fireplace when you return." "After I open a bottle of wine." Marylin looked outside, "Should we dine out on the patio." Joan, busy repairing Mike's salad looked out, "Why not. Any mosquitoes?" Happy walked in, "None that I saw." Marylin wondered, "Did you check for snakes?" "Too late in the season for." "Help Mike with the luggage and check anyway."

Mike carried four wine glasses and Hacker, two bottles of Merlot, outside to the patio. As Hacker poured, Mike asked, "What's that coiled up on the grass at the end of the patio?" "Looks like one of Golden's king snakes." "He's a hummer. Must be four feet long." "Don't tell our ladies. They'll never come outside." "He doesn't seem to be afraid of us. There he goes." "Which way?" "Out toward the river." "Looks like he caught something. Talk about eating ones lunch. Our king has caught another snake and is coiling around it." "Remind you of Beasty?" "Sure does. He's strangling the stripes off that coral snake." "Hope he finishes before the ladies come

out." "It's almost gone. Must have been a snack." "Plenty of food around here for snakes. Look at all the lizards." "Geckos." "What?" "Last of the dinosaurs, geckos. They eat mosquitoes, ants, termites all kinds of bugs." "Thought they were only in Hawaii."

Happy cooked, Mike poured and the king snake slithered off toward Indian River. Mike checked the steaks, looking over Hacker's shoulder, "First extended vacation you've had in quite a while." "Not intentional. When we don't win, we don't get asked. Senior Tour will give us another shot at the brass ring. Wouldn't it be fun to win a few before we fade off the regular tour." "You're in the best physical shape you've been in since you were in College." "Yeah, my back doesn't hurt anymore. Need to get more endurance out of my legs, though." "How?" "Need to start a strength and walking program." "Don't mean to upset your apple cart, but what about putting?" "Putting? Going to try Golden's fix. Look down the line and hit it. Decrease my attention span." "Yes, but finding the line." "Finding a line is easy, but believing it's the right one." "That's the difference between a young pro and an old one who is full of doubts and indecision." "Steaks are done. Call the ladies while I place them on our plates." "How about the potatoes?" "I'll leave them on until we finish our salads." "Better put the steaks to the side of the grill to keep them warm, too." "Too late. Here comes our brides. Pour their wine and I'll help with the utensils."

Marylin took one bite and pointed her fork at Hacker. "You haven't lost your touch, this is delicious." "Golden gets the credit. It all starts with prime steaks." "Joan and I counted ten bedrooms on our trek and there's another kitchen on the northwest side." "Golden has a bunch of kids." "I'm impressed. Are we going to try to keep up with the Gorillas?" "I don't know about Mike and Joan, but he's in a league of his own. As far as I'm concerned, I'd just as soon live in an ocean front condo." Marylin dropped her fork, "Condo? You never mentioned condo before." "We can turn the key and come and go as we please." "Haven't thought about that, but I'm willing to look. Has to be on the ocean and it must have a fireplace. Condo, what do you think?" Joan shrugged and glanced at Mike, "I'm willing to look, but it'll take a lot of convincing. We still have kids coming home."

Marylin poked Happy, "What about Florida's hurricanes?" "I'm not a scientist, but I'd bet that the Gulf Stream moves most of the Atlantic ones north to Georgia and the Carolinas." "Isn't it smarter to have the barrier island and river between us and the ocean?" "Storm surge would be greater coming up river than over the ocean dunes. If you build behind the dunes, and the ground floor is at least twenty seven feet above sea level, shouldn't be a problem. On the river it's more like ten. In either case, you have to be prepared to sacrifice the ground floor." Mike gave Hacker a quizzical look, "Pretty good argument for a condo. When did you take time to learn about

storm surges?" "Don't you remember, I took a year of meteorology in Tucson while you and Joan were attending dry gulch parties." Mike spoke to Marylin, "Before you ask, rivers are dry in Arizona. Instead of watching submarine races like you do in Ohio, we partied along the dry river beds. Dangerous, though, sometimes we'd get dry gulched." "How so?" "Rain falls twenty miles away in the mountains and the run off comes whistling down dry creek beds at break neck speed. More than one person has been surprised by a wall of onrushing water and drowned in the desert. Desert Rats call that, dry gulched." "Now I have another worry, hurricanes and dry gulching." Hacker said, "Add in earthquakes and tornadoes and no place is safe." "You've convinced me to look on the beach. How about beach erosion?" Happy grimaced, "Global warming and rising oceans. What time is our Realtor dropping by?" Mike checked his book, "Nine a.m. Time to clean up and hit the sack." Hacker wondered, "Are you sure this real estate person is honest?" "Don't put out your lamp."

Happy was up at daybreak. He went through his daily regime of stretching exercises; sit ups and leg lifts to strengthen his stomach and back muscles and then a thirty minute walk along Golden's paths. An hour later, he was back at the guest house, over half of Golden's estate still unexplored. Mike met him with a cup of coffee in the kitchen, "You're serious about this walking program?" "I'm feeling muscles that haven't been used in awhile." "Wouldn't you think walking a golf course would

do the same thing?" "Not with five hour rounds. We've got to start penalizing the rookies. They give new meaning to miss it slow. Are we cooking breakfast?" "You do bacon in the microwave and I'll cook eggs." "You're on. I'll see if the ladies are awake. Our appointment is in an hour and a half." "Over easy, okay?" "Great with me, but hold up on the wives. Mine sticks with fruit in the morning."

Happy carried coffee upstairs to the bedrooms. Marilyn and Joan were both up and dressed. He asked, "Eggs and bacon on the patio in ten minutes. Is over easy okay?" Marylin stopped her make-up regime and frowned at Happy, "I'll be there under protest. Joan, can you here me? Happy wants us to eat breakfast in five minutes." "I heard. Tell Happy thanks for the coffee, but fruit instead of eggs and bacon." "Neither do I. He's nodding that he understands." "I won't be ready, but I'll be there. My God, we don't leave for an hour. What's got into our boys." "Mid-life crisis. We're beginning a new adventure and their clocks have gone haywire." "It is exciting. We get to build a new nest." "Only if Happy remembers that it's my job is to pick and arrange the straw." "Do you like the idea of living in a condo?" "If it's on the water and near a golf course and big enough for the kids when they come home. We'll need privacy. Don't know if I want to share an elevator." "This is exciting. We were getting into a rut in Washington Court House." "We'll have to be on a golf course. Happy and Mike live on their Washington Courthouse course."

Hacker popped four slices of bread into the toaster and placed a second batch of bacon into the microwave. Mike shoveled eight cloudy one eyed over easy eggs onto the platter and Hacker added bacon and toast. Marilyn, still brushing her hair as she and Joan walked into the kitchen, took one look and said, "Who's going to clean up this mess? Out, damned spot, and take your platter with you to the patio. Joan and I will finish up. Who squeezed juice?" Hacker looked surprised, "Forgot." "How could you. Golden has enough oranges and grapefruits laying around to start a juice bar."

Two cardinals warbled wolf whistles from the scrub oak tree while a brown and white squirrel, jumping from palm to palm, chattered at a movement in the grass below. Mike walked off the patio and down the path to the river to see what was going on. The king snake, still full of coral snake from last night, laid stretched out on the path, using the early morning sun to help digest last nights meal. He looked up at Mike, testing the air with his tongue. Mike took in a deep breath of pure salt air and strolled back to the patio, laughing at Hacker's effort to set the table, "Fork on the left, knife and spoon on the right. Our king snake is digesting his meal in the sun and the squirrels won't leave him alone. He showed me his forked tongue and you know what, he does look like Beasty. Tongue gave him away. Talk about Beasty, have you changed your mind? Are we going to play any tournaments between now and Christmas?" "Only the Carry Over Game. Remember, I'm filling

in for Mate." "Have Golden and Silver committed." "They backed out." "When did you find out." "From Fox yesterday in Orlando. Their games aren't at the regular tours competitive level and Fox thinks he'll have more fun with seniors at this stage of his life."

Hacker stepped back and admired his table, "You mean that Golden isn't going to compete on the regular tour?" "You've seen Golden's game. He doesn't want to compete in a high profile event like the Carry Over Game until he can hit it down the middle under pressure, but you know how I feel." "You think he has another tour win in him?" "More than one if he plays enough to get his tournament legs and nerves back." "Couldn't agree more. All he has to do is play tournament golf at least twice a month. He's been trying to live on a swing that hasn't been tempered under pressure and as a result, Golden has lost his tournament nerves." "Sad, but true. At his age there is no way he can play the tour part time and play to win. It was amazing enough that he was able to do that when he was in his prime. Tells you how great a golfer he was. I couldn't. If we don't keep testing our game under pressure, even the best of us are overcome by doubts and negative thoughts. Golden concentrated at only playing majors. It has to catch up after awhile." "And winning a few seniors on guts alone." "But he's coming over the top under pressure." "And he doesn't take a full turn." "That's because of hip problems, but he doesn't have to make a full turn. His swing is good enough to compensate

for that. However, If he doesn't play more golf under tournament pressure, Golden will spend more time in the left rough than Laddy Partner."

Mike pulled out a chair, "Lets eat. The girls are fixing fruit for their breakfast and our eggs are getting cold. Talk about left rough, have you been following Tiger Tracks?" "Who hasn't, he can get up and down from quicksand. Hope he doesn't burn out before he gets to my age. Kid's got charisma, talent and brains." "You could have done that." "Didn't want to give up my privacy. As it is I can't have a beer with the boys without a fellow pro giving me a twelve step pamphlet on the evils of drinking and when I stop to chat, the Evangelicals lecture me on their way to get to salvation. And I can't take a whiz without a reporter asking questions or a fan asking for an autograph. Tiger has a heavy burden to carry, but I'm glad he's around. He's fun to play with and with the press chasing him, maybe I can get a little peace."

Marylin carried a breakfast platter of fruit to the patio table, "Give up what privacy?" "What little we have left." "I have mixed emotions. Maybe if you didn't market your clubs through a discount store." "They're everywhere, they're everywhere." Mike worried, "Not for long. Not after the hostile takeover." "Can't turn back. Besides, someone has to sell clubs for under \$200 a set." "The ones you use look like they came from a garage sale." "You've been peeking in my bag."

I don't know of anyone on tour with a matched set. At least not a consistent winner." Mike looked at the platter and spoke to Joan, "Fruit looks pretty good. I cooked the eggs too long. They're hard." "Warm them up in the oven and use Ohio steak sauce." Hacker asked, "What's that?" Joan smiled, "Ketchup." And it's on the table." Hacker wondered, "No home fries?" Marylin poured orange juice, "We're in the land of grits." "You sure are testy this morning." "We're about to look for a new home. Picking a new nests is stressful."

The phone rang. Golden was on the other end, "Hacker? We flew in late last night. Decided to come down early. I have a few places I want you to see. Do you have a Realtor stopping by this morning?" "Mike says she's connected with the lifestyles of the rich and famous." "Stop by the main house before you head out. I'll have her drive you by our new golf course development." "On the ocean?" "And all by itself between conservation land. Mate and a few other friends have something that might strike your fancy out on the barrier island. You won't find it advertised. We screen all the applicants." "My kind of golf course?" "Made for you. A Brit style links course." "Beasty's canyons?" "No way. This one is for us. Open to the elements. The finishing five and clubhouse are on the ocean." "Houses?" "Mine's going up on the ocean next to our clubhouse. Have a luxury condo complex in the same area with two car and two cart garages. Interior of each penthouse is 7500 square feet. We'd love to have you and Mike as

neighbors. Mate said to let you and Mike in at cost plus 10%. We have 100 condo units under construction and lots for 200 houses. Membership comes with the condo or lot and is not transferable. It stays with the unit. We buy back or sell the unit at market for the owner." How about the architecture? Any restrictions?" "Wide open, but we look at the plans and if it's too ridiculous we talk." "Any ocean front left?" "Fifty lots. Fifty have been sold." "How about the club?" "Full service. Has a pool and tennis courts. You probably figured out that most of our 400 members won't be crowding the course and we won't have enough in residence to keep the dining room and bar open. We plan to operate them as a commercial enterprise and keep a cordon bleu staff paid and busy. Members will have priority." "Resort course?" "Private, no guest restrictions unless someone takes advantage of us. We split up the cost at the end of the year. You and Mike will be on our board. If you agree, that will make seven; Mate, Tiger Silver, Prince, you and Mike." "Does it have a name?" "Don't plan on giving it one. It will really be private. We may call our restaurant the Cork Club." "How much of it is finished?" "The inside will be complete at the end of this week. You sure are full of questions." "Our wives are along. Better me than them." "How about a game this afternoon." "At your new course?" "Won't be ready for a few months. At my local club down the road. It's more traditional. Our brides can meet us there for dinner this evening." "As long as we ride. My feet are killing me." "Can't walk, anyway. Rules. Laddy Partner is in town. He's

building a course near the Cape. He'll be our fourth." Hacker asked, "Is he building in your development?" "First one up after me." "How many pros do you have?" "We're very selective. Our idea wasn't to build an old pro's home, but to offer a life style that allows Mate and me to live as normal a family life as is possible." "I know what you mean. Being always on, we need a place to let our hair down." "Hope you like it. See you and Mike at the club for lunch at noon. I'll meet you in the grill." After Happy hung up, Mike asked, "Let our hair down?" "Golden finally came clean. He and Mate have a links course development out on the barrier island that is so exclusive it doesn't even have a name. Partner, Fox and Tiger are building new homes there. We've been offered a lot of condo and they each come with membership." "We have finally arrived." "We'll meet Golden and Laddy at his club for lunch at noon and golf at one. Brenda will bring our brides along for dinner at his country club." Marylin pushed her chair away from the table, "We have a lot to see and only several hours to do it in. I want to spend it at Golden's development."

Marylin liked the penthouse, but she wasn't convinced, "It's almost too big, but the view is spectacular. Tell me again about the garage below." Golden's developer explained, "It's thirty foot above mean sea level, but the building code says the ground floor must break away if it's struck by a tropical storm surge." "Won't the whole thing come down?" "No, it's built on reinforced concrete pillars. Only the cement

block walls break away. The top floors will remain intact. You've seen beach houses up on stilts. Storm surge is the reason why. That's why we put the garage on the ground floor. We have four floors above with two, two story penthouses using the top two floors. Each building has ten units and all have spectacular ocean views and the morning sunrise, facing east. The penthouses share one elevator and two elevators serve the other eight units." "Are all your buildings like this?" "Yes, but only four directly face the ocean. When it's finished, our condo complex will form an oval. The remaining six buildings will complete a half circle and all will have unobstructed ocean view. Each of the other condos have 3,500 square feet. We won't finish the inside until the buyer decides how they want to decorate. We can give you ideas." "Including the walls?" "You noticed the bare concrete. You can have dry wall, wood, plaster, even tile. We have a central vacuum for each building. That accounts for the plastic pipe you see along the wall. The cables are for electricity, cable TV and satellite dish. You can even set up your own private satellite communication system. The dishes are hidden under compartments on the roof. Protects them from weather, salt and sun."

Hacker broke in, "What's the price?" "Fully finished, we want each building to sell for at least eight million. I've been instructed by Mr. Gorilla to give you each a penthouse of your choice at cost plus ten percent. Finished out, each one would normally sell for \$2,000,000. If you don't go for

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Mike, Laddy and Hacker's third shots made a tight shotgun pattern, surrounding the pin for kick in birdies. Laddy chirped like a bird all the way to the green, "Damn you Gorilla, who's been tinkering with your game. You're trying to steal money out of my pocket." "I love to hear you chirp. You sound like the long lost cooing golf pigeon. Pick it up, even us old folks can't miss one that close. Your putts are good. Put them in your pocket and lets get on with it."

The second hole, a wide open par four, is narrow to the fairway traps and a mile wide afterwards. Hacker played to seven iron distance. Mike, Laddy and Golden, to pitching wedge. All wound up twenty to thirty feet short of the hole on a sharply pitched green and all two putted for pars. Laddy needled Golden, "What happened to your swing? You're not coming over the top and pulling the ball left." "Beats a South African quacker." Mike whispered to Happy. "What's a South African quacker?" "A wild duck hook with a sharp down under accent."

Number three is a moderately long left hand dogleg par four, 240 yards to the corner. Laddy hooked his drive around the dogleg as did Hacker. Mike and Golden faded their shots into the first cut of the right rough. Laddy hit his second shot into the trap, guarding the front of the green, not more than ten feet short of the pin. Hacker flew the pin, rolling twenty feet past, to the center of the green. Mike hit the pin with a six iron, his ball stopped on the front edge of the

cup, two inches from the hole. Golden hit a high soft fade that landed short of the pin, spinning five feet to the right. Laddy was beside himself, "Three holes and we're four down. Someone has been tinkering with your game. I expected Mike to carry you. Who is it and what did they do for you?" Golden winked at Happy, "Brenda caught a flaw in my take away. Your pull and push golf pigeon is now extinct." "If you expect me to believe that, I'll be looking for a rand under my pillow tonight from the golf fairy." Golden stuck the needle in, "You'll never get one." "Why not?" "Golf has no fairies." "No fairies?" "Golf has gnomes. Tennis is the game with fairies."

Number four, a mid-range par three, is a perfect set up for Laddy and Happy. The hole was cut twelve feet from the left edge, sixty feet back of the left trap and 183 yards from the tee markers. Happy hit a drawing five iron, moving right to left around the trap, ten feet short of the hole. Laddy's hooking four iron rolled past the pin into the short hair at the back of the green and Mike and Golden faded their shots, left to right, into the center of the green. Happy rolled his birdie putt to the back of the cup, his ball popping up in the air and falling back into the hole. He nudged Laddy, "Only two down with two to go."

Number five, an uphill straight-away par four, looked easy, but the fairway was crowned in the middle, sloping to trees

on the right and a canal on the left. Although they all putted for birdies, par was the best anyone could do. Laddy asked Hacker, "We're two down. What do you think? Should we press?" "Hell, it's only money." "We press!" Golden responded, "Notice the higher pitch in our South African quacker's quack when he says press. We accept! Sixth is going to be a tough par three for hookers. The pin is on the right."

Six had an elevated pro tee, 203 yards from the center of the green. Trapped left and right front, the green sloped sharply, back to front and left to right. An out of bounds fence guarded the left side and anything hit over the back of the green would roll into a small pine grove. Right, left or over is bogey country. Short of the green was par time and birdies were few. Hacker led off with a high hook over the right front trap, his ball skipping from right to left, came to rest ten feet below the hole. Laddy slapped Hacker's palm, "Way to go mate, these pigeons are ours!" Laddy's hook didn't, his ball floated straight, landing on the far right edge with an almost impossible right to left breaking putt. Mike faded a four iron to the front edge. Golden set up for a left to right fade. Laddy tugged Hacker's arm and whispered, "He's going to jerk it left, out of bounds." Golden's five iron circled from left to right, landing over the left trap, spinning across the green, softly striking the pin and dropping into the hole. Laddy looked up at the sky and shook Golden's hand. "Seeing is believing. How much does Brenda charge for a lesson?" "One

of your race horses." Laddy's putt rolled on a twelve foot right to left arc, stopping two feet below the hole. Mike's uphill putt went off in his hands, breaking right to left, skidding past the hole and into the frog hair. Mike, still away, burned the right side of the cup as his ball gathered speed on a down hill roll. It spun around the cup, centrifugal force spinning it to the left and rolling. It continued down hill, twenty feet past the hole. He was left with a breaking right to left putt and wound up two feet below the hole for a double bogey. He shrugged, "Sorry partner. One error compounded another." Hacker rolled his putt into the back of the hole for a birdie, halving the press, but still losing the Nassau. He needled Golden, "Bet that's the first time you made a hole in one and didn't win a press." "Mike left himself two impossible putts, but remember, we didn't lose the first bet. I'll spin the tee between you and Laddy and we'll see who's going to be my partner on the next six holes." It pointed toward Laddy, "Cart golf. Since your older, my South African friend, you can lead us off." "And wiser." "And richer." "Richer? You own enough real estate to declare yourself a sovereign country." "True, but you throw nickels around like they're manhole covers." "And I'm stronger, too." "Okay Partner, seven is a bear of a par four. If you want to hold it on the fairway, you'll have to draw your ball uphill around the left corner or hit it over the trees." Mike looked at the score card, "Seven isn't your number one handicap hole, but it should be. Fairway slopes to the right, into the pines."

Golden smiled, "It's tough, alright. Not only does it slope right, it's also uphill with the landing area further away on the right than on the left. A lay-up shot or a fade will kick right and roll deep into scrub pines. A pull will bury itself deep into another dark pine grove that has palmettos covering the forest floor. Not many golf balls are found there. Not with the snakes." Laddy hit a perfect hook drive around the left corner and caught, the downslope, his ball kept running until it stopped 100 yards short of the pin. Golden followed with a high fade three wood, floating it over the trees on the left, landing on the same downslope. His ball rolled to the middle of the fairway, 120 yards short of the pin. Hacker grimaced, "Get out the white flag, Mike. Those old folks are going to stomp us." "Not with your hook."

Hacker turned his hands over a fraction too much in his hook grip. His drive cleared the corner trees, but skidded under the trees guarding the left side of the fairway. Mike's three wood fade followed Golden's path, but hit a sprinkler head and bounded under the trees guarding the right side. He looked over at Hacker, "Your white towel or mine." "As Yogi said, 'It ain't over till it's over.'" Mike had an impossible second shot. A bushy one hundred year old scrub oak filled his approach to the narrow necked seventh green. If he tried to go under it, a sand bunker blocked his path and he wasn't back far enough to loft his shot over the top. Not enough room. Hacker looked the shot over and checked Mike's bag, "If I were

you, I'd hood a four iron and take a half swing at it. If you run it through the trap, it may stay on the green. If not, the back left trap will catch it." "And if I dump it short, the front trap will catch it. Either way I ought to have a chance of getting down in four."

Mike struck down on the ball, hitting a worm burner to the front of the trap. It bounced against the berm guarding the trap, popped up into the air over the sand and rolled to the middle of the green. Hacker waited for Mike to replace his club, "Way to go partner, now you can help me." As they stopped at Hacker's ball, he took one look at it and looked at the obstacles between him and the pin, "Mike I'm in jail. Can't get it up because of the tree and the berm is too high to run it through the trap." Mike looked the shot over, "You know what they say. Trees are ninety percent air. If you get through the leaves, you'll land on. If you don't, you're a good bunker player." Happy pulled a nine iron out of his bag and hooded it slightly. He took a quick waggle, used his weight shift properly and struck a descending blow. Even though he struck the ball first, the leaves took a little bit of forward momentum off and it landed in the frog hair over the left bunker and continued rolling, stopping one foot short of the pin. He whistled as he entered his cart and winked at Mike, "When we hit it wrong and it comes out right, the old folks are in trouble." Mike whispered, "Keep it down. We don't ever want to wake up the Gorilla."

Golden hit his wedge to the right side of the green, landing twenty feet past the pin and rolling another ten feet before coming to rest. Laddy hit a bump and run shot that landed five feet further than he planned. It struck the pin dead center and spun back fifteen feet to the left and short. Golden picked up Hacker's ball and gave him the putt. The other three two putted for pars. Laddy was beside himself, "I thought Golden was the only one Brenda gave lessons, too. Don't tell me she has a golf school. If she does, I want to sign up. We're two down with five to go."

The eighth hole is a long par four left hand dogleg with trees on the left and water on the right. A tree in the middle of the fairway added to a golfer's dilemma. The safe play is to hit a three wood to the right side of the fairway and anywhere between a four and six iron to the middle of the green. Hacker hooked his drive around the corner, past the tree. Mike and Golden played safely to the right side of the fairway, short and away from the tree. Laddy curved his patented hook just short of Hacker's ball. Laddy and Hacker hit wedges to within ten feet of the pin and made birdies. Mike and Golden, faced with longer second shots, two putted for pars.

Number nine, a medium length par five, was reachable if played on the left side of a fairway that carved left to right through a pine forest. Hacker pushed his tee into the ground and asked Golden, "Any problems?" "At home or on the golf

course?" "Down number nine fairway." "If you want to get home in two, stay on the left side." Hacker hit a low running draw into the first cut of the left rough, three hundred yards off the tee. Golden shook his head, "That's your last free lesson for today." Mike's fade landed on the right side of the fairway, rolling to the right edge. Hacker needled, "You're blocked out." "Not with my fade. Don't worry, I'll make the front edge in two." Golden's fade landed fifty yards past Mike's ball. Laddy hit a South African quacker, hooking his drive into the left woods. Unfazed, Laddy hit an incredible two iron under two pines and around a third, landing 150 yards short of the hole and rolling ninety yards from the front edge of the green. Golden jumped all over a three iron, clearing the right greenside bunker and bounding, just off the green on the right side. He was all smiles, "It feels good to hit a shot solid and not pull it left."

Mike hit a high fade to front edge and Happy, a low draw over the left corner of the right trap, rolling to the back of nine green, ten feet beyond the pin. He stored his four iron back in his bag and whistled a happy tune as he entered the cart from the passenger side. Laddy struck a three quarter slightly hooded nine iron to the back of the green. It drew back, past the hole, barely missing the pin, "Golden, you'd think we're playing in the Dunlop Match Play the way we're all striking the ball." "We would all be playing if we could still putt."

Mike hooded his eight iron, played the ball back in his stance off the right toe and hit a pitch and run shot into the grain, stopping ten feet short of the hole. Golden popped a 60° wedge straight up out of the deep fringe grass. His ball hit softly above and short of the hole, took two bounces to the left and dropped into the hole for an eagle. Laddy laughed as he shook Golden's hand, "Maybe there's life in us old folks, yet." "There will be after you knock your putt in."

Hacker lined up a down hill straight in putt, "Looks like it's running down a ridge line. All I can do is line it up, close my eyes and make a smooth stroke." He opened his eyes as the ball rattled in the cup for an eagle, "Yours is good, Laddy." Mike struck his ball firmly, rolling it to the back of the cup. It popped straight up in the air and fell back in, "After watching you three murder this hole, the governor has pardoned me." Hacker patted Mike on the back, "Great pressure putt. Doesn't it feel good to beat the best they can throw at us?" "Don't wake them up."

As they drove their carts to number ten tee, Golden shouted over, "If we can't take away your honors with an eagle and a birdie, we're in deep trouble. Lady and I may have to use our ultimate weapon." Hacker pulled to a stop at the championship tee markers, "What's that?" "I pay Laddy to run over you with our golf cart." Hacker looked out at a long par four left handed dogleg, "I don't see any trouble. Why is this such a tough

hole?" Golden pointed at the left rough, "Can't cut the corner because of the deep Bermuda rough. You get in there and you'll have to come out sideways and you'll be lucky if you don't tear a tendon doing it. Second shot is at best a four iron to an elevated narrow banana shaped green, trapped left and right. To be safe, you should hit your drive to the right, but that makes the hole play longer."

Hacker hung his tee shot out to the right side of number ten fairway. Mike followed with a fade in the same general direction. Laddy hooked his shot around the tree at the corner of the dogleg. Golden placed his tee shot on the same line as Mike's, but at least sixty, maybe seventy yards further. Hacker frowned. He was away. He drew his second shot into the left bunker with a five iron, "Damn, I overswung and pulled it left. Mike bounced his shot to the middle of the green with a five wood. Golden hit a high fade over the left bunker with a seven iron, his ball landing past the hole and drawing back, coming to rest, ten feet below the pin. Laddy hit a hard four iron draw, his ball landing twenty feet short of the green and rolled like a scalded rabbit to the back of the green. He hopped in the cart, "With Hacker in the trap, we ought to get at least one back." Golden hit the pedal, "If one of us can run one in, the match will be even."

Hacker walked into the trap, set his feet deep in the sand, took two waggles, drew back slowly and accelerated through the

sand. His ball flew past the pin and spun backwards, striking the pin and falling into the hole. Golden looked over at Hacker, "Are you going to play golf or screw around?" He looked at Laddy and shrugged, "Put it in the cup, we can still win one." Mike's putt missed the cup on the right and came to rest two feet from the cup. Golden hit the ball back to Mike, "Nice putt. You two youngsters are making this game, fun."

Laddy looked at his putt from both sides, "Damn, looks straight to me. What do you think?" "Left center and firm, even though it's downhill, you're into the grain." Laddy set up without a practice stroke and struck his putt firm. It rolled true, landing dead center in the bottom of the cup, "That matches the smiling ones birdie." Golden rolled his putt in, on top of Laddy's, "We're one down with two to go and both are par fours. We have a chance." Laddy shook his head, "Are you sure those two are human?" "No, but I can't tell if they're animal or mineral, either."

Eleven has a flat wide fairway. It is a straight away par four, but not as easy as it looks. The green is crowned like an Egyptian pyramid, sloping away from the center on all sides. Like most of the greens on Golden's course, two banana shaped bunkers guarded the right and left sides. All four tee shots split the center of the fairway and all four second shots landed safely on the green. Hacker was away. His putt broke with the grain, away from the hole. His comebacker caught the

lip, rolled around the cup and fell in. Mike, on the same line played more break, but his putt stopped short of the hole.

Both Golden and Laddy hit their first putts to within the leather and Hacker conceded them.

Twelve is a slight dogleg left, with an uneventful fairway. Its green made up for an otherwise pedestrian hole. It has a narrow hour glass shape with traps at the waist and steep drainage slopes all the way around. Fairway bunkers were well placed. None of them could hit a tee ball over either one. Hacker hit his tee shot into the left fairway bunker, Golden into the right one and Mike and Laddy's balls came to rest near the center of the fairway. Golden's four iron shot bounced on the left side of the green and followed the slope into the frog hair. Mike faded his five iron to the center of the green. Laddy hit another low running four iron that landed short of the green and rolled next to Mike's, ten feet short of the hourglass' neck and two condos away from the hole. Even though on the green, they were away and putted first. Both took two to get down. Hacker hit a soft wedge over the incline, landing on the plateau and rolling over the green into the first cut. Golden putted up the slope. His putt struck the pin and bounced out, "Should've left the pin out. Is this good?" Hacker nodded, "Yes, you can make it in your sleep. Is mine?" Golden laughed, "After it goes in." Hacker knew if he missed his putt, the match would be tied. He lined it up. The first ten feet was sharply uphill to a narrow plateau and then fifteen feet to

the hole. To compound his problem, his putt broke six inches to the left going uphill and then two feet to the right after it reached the plateau. He looked over at Mike, "Gonna' play it eighteen inches to the left, close my eyes and hit it firm." "Your guess is as good as mine." Everything went as planned, except that the ball rolled off line to the right as it came near the cup. A foot from the hole, Hacker's ball hit a spike mark and kicked left, rolling slowly toward the right edge. It hit the lip and rattled the bottom of the cup. Hacker whistled a graveyard lament as he retrieved his ball, "We dodged a bullet, partner. Old folks money is much better than working for wages. Golden, you and I have our work cut out for us on the last six." "Laddy is going to be mad enough to spit nails."

Laddy looked up in the air and back at Mike, "If you and I don't win, I'll be the only loser out here. So, don't worry about Hacker. If he fires you, I'll pick up the tab and increase your salary by twenty five percent. You'd be worth three strokes to me on the old folks tour." "Only if I don't have to play." Hacker looked out at a narrow tree lined fairway to a spoon shaped par three green and checked his distance, "211 yards to a handkerchief sized green. What's behind it?" No one answered, so he looked at his card and whistled, "Out of bounds and bunkered deep, right and left. Your architect must have an hour glass fetish." Golden whispered, "Land short and roll it on. Make your mistake short. Don't go right or left."

Hacker hooded his four iron and hit a low draw to the right front. His ball rolled one hundred feet to the back of the green, stopping in the frog hair thirty feet past the pin. Golden slapped Hacker's palm, "You listen well." Golden struck a high three iron fade, curving over the left trap and landing on another narrow hour glass middle. His ball skidded to a stop ten feet past the hole. Mike's ball followed Golden's trajectory, but carried to the back, rolling down a mound into thick Bermuda rough. Laddy hit the same low draw as Hacker, but his ball stopped well short of the hole. He muttered to Golden as he sat down in their cart, "I better start cooing. I'm playing lights out, but I still feel like a pigeon." "Now that you mention it, when you bob your head up and down as you talk, you do look like a big fat dove. One from South Africa."

Mike powered a sand wedge through the Bermuda rough. His ball landed just over the fringe and rolled downhill into the cup. Laddy followed with a jab stroke, rolling his ball dead center into the cup. Hacker put a ton of top spin on his putt and it fell in over the front edge. Golden cut his putt, but it caught the right side and spun in. All four had birdied the toughest par three on the course. Hacker was shaking his head as he walked off the green, "It'll be many a day before Golden will see another foursome sink four birdies on this hole. Where do we go next?" Golden pointed to the next tee, "Par five. Plays at 570 yards. It's a long dogleg right. About 260 yards to the corner of the pine forest on the left."

The sea breeze blows in from the east. Right in our face this time of day. After eleven in the morning, none of us can make it home in two. It's at least 300 yards to get home from the corner. You'll have to flirt with the pines on the right to put it in position A."

Hacker more than flirted. His ball caught the fairway side of the tall pine on the corner and kicked forward and left into the middle of the fairway. Golden hit his patented fade over the top of the same tree, cutting the corner. He pulled Happy aside, "Can't believe that I can set up for a fade again. I've been coming over the top so damn much that I began to play for a pull to the left." "Is that what happened on the second day of the Open this year." "Yes, and you know what happens to your confidence when you can't land it on a stamp under USGA conditions." "The blue coats destroyed a lot of good golf shots. Mate hit the ball perfectly and couldn't hold a one." "If he had square grooves, he would have." "Do you think the course was fair?" "Greens should have been watered with at least an inch of water on each of the last three days. Like playing to a billiard table at the end of each fairway. Too much luck and not enough science came into play. But compared to the last time we played on a USGA cow pasture, it could have been a fair test with a bit of rain." "It could have been. Look at Augusta. No one has to install windmills on a masterpiece. And you know what the conditions on the Open course did to my low running draw." "You must have had nightmares." "Not as

bad as the one I have where the press is pouring hot fried chicken grease all over my naked body. I have to watch my wit." "Your mouth does tend to operate independent of your mind. The news folks got after Tiger, too, when he made a few off the record remarks. He understands. We live in an overly sensitive world. That's why we're building our own course and the only restriction is no news folks. Has to be a place where we can let our hair down. Oops, Laddy's giving us a dirty look." Laddy backed away from his shot, "You'll have to worry about more than boiling chicken fat and postage stamp greens if you two won't keep quiet."

Laddy drew his tee shot to the middle of the fairway, barely clearing the corner and Mike hit a fade in the same location. Laddy hopped into the cart, "Overheard you and Hacker talking about the Open. After watching you two hack it around that cow pasture, I'm glad that I'm too old to play with the limber backs. Setup was ridiculous. Just because it lacked trees doesn't make it a links course. The greens weren't open for a run-up. Do you think you have another win in you?" "Not on an Open course, but maybe the British." "Your right, the Royal and Ancient doesn't play games on hallowed ground. Before you hung it up on the regular tour, your swing was living on borrowed time. Didn't play enough tournaments to execute it under pressure." "If we played under the same conditions as we did thirty years back, maybe I could win again." "Maybe, but we didn't face hundreds of good young limber backs."

Hacker pulled a three wood out of his bag, took two waggles and hit a low hook to the top of the swale. A wedge shot from the pin. Mike cut a three wood fade to nine iron distance and Laddy hit a shot that mimicked Hacker's. Golden took out his thirty year old three wood, set up for a hook and drew the ball thirty yards past Hacker's with a downhill lie to a postage stamp green.

Hacker asked Mike, "Did you overhear Golden's comments about the Open?" "Yes, but you can't talk about it, except among your fellow pros. Remember your remarks after the Masters. The USGA is hidebound and the blue coats can be vindictive." "What do you think?" "They set up another course that favors a straightway, short ball hitter. Any bend and bounce off the fairway meant an extra shot. Mate played against a stacked deck."

Mike hit a three quarter nine iron to the middle of the green. His ball bounced to the back, twenty feet to the right and past the pin. Laddy struck a seven iron pitch and run shot that bounced in the frog hair and rolled ten feet short of the pin. Hacker played a knock down wedge fifteen feet past the pin. Golden hit a low half wedge to the front, from a squirrely down hill lie. His ball bounced right and rolled thirty feet from the cup, "Squirted on me. I was lucky that it stayed on the green." Golden, Mike and Hacker two putted for pars. Laddy rolled in a birdie and chirped, "Mike, you and I are two up

on the rotund ones. Toughest match I've played in quite awhile." Fifteen followed the same pattern as previous par fours, a narrow 415 yard dogleg left around a grove of Florida pines to a banana shaped green, trapped on both sides. The right rough was thin and ground hard as a rock. The left was thick and impossible. Hacker needled Golden, "Now I know why you guys are building your own links course. Is it going to be open?" "All fairway and no deep rough, like Augusta. Bust too many tendons in deep Bermuda and I'm getting too old for golf elbow. My only instruction for you on this hole is; stay in the fairway." "Which side?" "Stay left, right is jail."

Laddy hit a South African quacker into the trees on the right. Mike cracked a hard fade into the left rough. Golden took a few practice waggles with his driver and reached into his bag for a three wood, "Straight down the middle." But his ball flew left and high, fading over the pines on the corner and landing like a scalded rabbit in the fairway, coming to rest fifty yards past the dogleg. Hacker followed with a three wood draw, landing in the right rough, bounding twenty yards past Golden, "Boy, did that take off." "We replaced the sand with topsoil." "And compacted it!"

Laddy hooked a closed punch three iron out of the trees onto the fairway, rolling to the front edge of the green. Mike hooded a five wood and blasted his ball high out of the right rough. It landed short with overspin and rolled to the middle

of the green. Golden punched an eight iron low to the front and grinned as his ball stopped inches away from the cup. Hacker lofted a sixty degree wedge out of a tight lie in the left rough past the pin, spinning his ball back within the leather. Laddy punched a seven iron pitch shot that struck the pin and came to rest five feet short. Golden kicked his ball back to him. "Good par from where you were. Is mine good?" Laddy grinned, "Even with your patented peek, you can make that putt. Pick it up." Mike watched as his putt rolled long, past the cup without breaking. He picked up Hacker's marker, "Can't remember this many birdies and eagles in a match. Do you realize that none of us has anything higher than par and this track isn't easy." "And as of now, our match is all square. Is that the next tee?" Golden nodded, "Yes."

Sixteen is a short 137 yard par three with yet another narrow green, bunkered right and left. Hacker asked Golden, "Where do I place it?" "Pins back right, so it'll play at 146. Anything right or long will kick into deep rough. And you want to stay away from the right trap." "Trouble?" "Florida road sand. Not consistent. If you can, hit a fade into the center and let gravity work the ball to the pin." "Easy for you to say." Golden placed his punch eight iron fade exactly where he told Hacker to hit his. The ball rolled to a stop ten feet short and left of the cup. Hacker's ball flew straight and landed twenty feet left of the pin, rolling toward the pin, hole high, stopping ten feet away. Laddy closed the face of

his five iron and punched a shot to the front of the green. It rolled from left to right, coming to rest five feet past the pin. Mike hit a high seven iron fade that moved more than he wanted, landing to the right of the pin and bounding off the back of the green toward deep Bermuda rough, "Damn, thought it was in the hole. I'll have to blast out of Golden's hay field."

When they arrived at the green, Mike found that his ball was in the second cut, but up against the Bermuda rough, almost too close to the pin for a successful shot. He looked it over, "Great, right where players walk off the green. Grass is laid over against the path of my swing." Laddy came over to offer advice, "Open up a nine iron or a pitching wedge and try to flop it out with a full swing. You need to cut through, not bounce off as you'll do with a sand wedge." "I have three choices. I can be short, long or in." "Take your time, Hacker's away."

Hacker drilled a twenty foot putt to the back of the hole. Mike bladed his flop shot, just missing Golden as it flew by at knee level, landing fifty yards over the green. He pitched back to within seven feet. Hacker picked it up, "First bogey of the day." Golden lipped out and took par. He picked up Laddy's marker, "You're one down." "With a birdie, this match is unreal." "The seventeenth is made for your hook." "Give up?" "No, Hacker's a happy hooker, too."

Hacker pulled his driver out of his bag, "You're up, Golden one." Golden faded a three wood over the corner of the dogleg. Happy hooked his driver around the same tree, rolling to a stop seventy yards from the front of the green. Laddy followed the path of Hacker's ball, but stopped twenty yards short of it. Mike followed Golden's three wood, like a set of twins. Hacker looked out at another banana shaped green as Mike addressed his ball, "Twelve out of the last seventeen look like they were shaped with a cookie cutter. Who designed this track?" Golden answered, "Another Ohio boy from your wife's school. Did a pretty good job with the flat lands."

Mike hit a seven iron past the pin, the ball snapped back like a yo-yo on a string, rolling fifteen feet below the pin. Golden pulled an eight iron into the left frog hair. Laddy asked, "Back to old habits?" "Yes, forgot to use Brenda's tip. Won't happen again." Laddy struck a pitching wedge with a downward blow, his ball landing short of the pin and spinning back off the green. Hacker punched an eight iron short of the green, rolling to within a foot of the cup for another gimmie birdie while the others made par.

Hacker asked Golden, "Is eighteen reachable in two?" "Piece of cake," Golden responded. Play to the middle of the fairway. Pines on the right can block out a second shot and those on the left come to the edge of the fairway. I don't hear a press and our pigeons are three down." Mike looked at Laddy, "What

do you say, partner?" "I hate to add to Golden's retirement fund, but ..." Golden chortled, "We accept your press."

Golden hit a high hard fade at the left trees. His ball floating to the middle of the fairway. Hacker hit a low running hook at the grove of trees on the right, drawing his ball back to the center of the fairway. Laddy followed suit and Mike hit a hard running fade down the left side of the fairway. All four players had open second shots at the green of a medium length par five. The eighteenth green was trapped front right and back left. Laddy's four wood shot bounced over the green and landed in the center of the left trap. Hacker hit a hard, low running three iron to the back of the green, thirty feet past the pin. Golden followed with a high hard four iron fade to the right front, rolling twenty five feet short of the pin. Mike hit a career five iron, landing fifteen short of the pin and rolling two feet away for a kick-in eagle. Laddy was ecstatic, "I thought I had pitched a shutout, partner. Hell of a shot. Are you going to play the senior tour? You should." "Maybe. Hacker ought to be old enough to fly solo by then and they have medicine for hives." "You still fighting those things?" "Only when I make the cut."

Laddy hit a sand shot that landed two feet in front of the pin, bounced forward, striking the pin three feet above the hole, falling in the cup for an eagle. Hacker followed with a putt that caught the back of the cup, bounced six inches

straight up in the air and fell into the cup, rattling the sides. Golden looked over his line, "Is mine good?" Laddy turned his back and Mike looked over at the palms. Golden struck a Bobbie Jones putt. It broke two feet right to left, rolling and rolling, trickling in over the front edge of the cup, "I'm going to frame this card. This has to be a record, four eagles on the final hole, but that isn't the whole of it. We pitched a shut out at Laddy. That has to be a first." "And I shot my best round in a year." Golden needled, "Sell one of your nags." "If they keep running out of the money I'll give them to Brenda for a lifetime supply of golf lessons." Mike added, "No wonder they don't win, they all run the wrong way." Hacker threw in his two cents, "And on grass."

Laddy shook hands all around, "Won't be able to join you for dinner, but I'll buy the first round with the money you took out of my pocket. Have to check on one of my courses north of here." Mike asked, "New Smyrna Beach?" "Just to the south." Golden asked, "How soon is the wife flying in?" "As soon as your builders finish our house." "Are you going to stay in South Africa?" "I'll keep the farm, but it's getting rough." "Government going to condemn it?" "No, bandits. They came with the new politics. I've got guards, but I don't like to travel armed." "Get the family out. You can all stay at my place until your house is ready." "Thanks for the offer, but it is still home." "Shower?" "Still have my locker?" "Of course. Do you have time for gin rummy?" "Good. Maybe I can

get my bloody money back." Golden asked Hacker, "Are you and Mike game for a few hands of gin?" "With Laddy? Who gets him as a partner?" "Why I do." "As long as Laddy's hands stay above the table."

SWAGMAN

"Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong,
Under the shade of a coolibah tree,
And he sang as he waited for his billy-boil,
'Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?'"

Andrew Barton (Banjo) Patterson undated

"Good on yer, Mate. You've been doing more than fishing for lobsters on your visit down under!" Mate smiled at his Aussie fan and tipped his plantation style hat toward the gallery, "She'll be apple!" Mate Tucker handed the driver to his caddie and tipped his plantation straw hat again to the Aussie in the gallery with the flipping mouth. One more hole to go and he had a two shot lead. A cautious par on eighteen should wrap up his fifth Australian Open victory. The problem was; Mate was never one to be cautious, but it would be his first as an American.

If it wasn't for taxes, Mate would have stayed Australian. No worries, he knew his soul would always speak strine. The only thing he didn't like about the TGA tour was drinking with flies. No one stayed around for a round at the bar afterwards, except Hacker and he was with Golden in Sebastian. Golden's message at the hotel was sweet and welcome. Mike and Hacker were joining the new links course and moving down after the first of the year. Golden had built a mix and match dream foursome. With Laddy, Nick, Elk and Tiger building homes, there would always be friends to pal around with.

Mate whistled as he walked down the fairway toward his ball. Another fan with a raw prawn mouth shouted out from the gallery, "Wizard, Yank." Mate doffed his hat, made a sweeping bow and passed the needle back, "Oz is a bonzer place!" And it would be paradise after he won a Masters. He knew he had

a chance to win, but the golf Gods were fickle. They were smiling on Tiger today. He thought, "Maybe next year. It's just a matter of time and a hot putter."

Mate looked over his shot to eighteen. He was 190 yards from the green. The ground was rock hard and wouldn't hold anything high, even if it had backspin. He hooded a four iron and hit a knock down three quarter shot, landing fifty yards short, bounding to the right side of the green, pin high, but away from trouble. He shook his head and told his caddie, "No way to have a go at this pin." Away, he walked the line of his putt and looked for break where there was none. He asked his caddie, "What do you see?" "Maybe a cup to the left with the grain." Mate decided to hit it at the middle, firm and take the break out of the putt, but his putter went off in his hands. Mate's golf ball galloped at twice the speed he intended and struck the middle of the cup. It stayed in. Mate looked up at the sky and laughed, "Too right!"

Afterwards, Mate stood a round at the billabong for his fellow competitors, "Bars open till you finish, mates. I've got to shoot through after the next round of drinks. Have a charity tournament to get back too in the States. When you come over, drop me a line. I'll have room for you at my new place on the beach. Make sure you write or call ahead. Shela doesn't care for surprises." Mate reached over the bar and filled his pint mug from the tap, raised it high and drained

it. Wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, Mate rushed out to a waiting limo, "Let's shoot through to the airport. We'll eat on the plane. Did you check us out of the hotel?" Mate's business agent nodded, "Yes." "Does our pilot know we're on the way?" He nodded, "Yes," again.

Mate leaned back and closed his eyes. It would be at least twenty four hours before they touched down in L.A. His head snapped forward as the limo braked beside his plane. It had long legs, but to make sure, they would refuel at Pago Pago in American Samoa and in Honolulu. As he opened the door he waved to his pilot who was completing the walk-around, "Is she ready?" "Topped off and ready to go." "Did you get the new life raft?" "We'll have to make do. Price is double what we have to pay in Sebastian." "How is our pantry?" "Packed with frozen meals from your favorite Sydney hang out. I stocked up on survival food. You can never tell. I called home to leave our itinerary. Your family is fine." "We'll take turns at the controls after we level off." "I'll take the first leg and you can bring her in to Pago Pago. Get as much sleep as possible. How was the golf?" "Good tournament. One more and I'll have a six pack." "The radio call in points are on the in-flight log and our map. If we didn't have GPS, I wouldn't want to fly this route." "You should have been with Amelia. Are those compass headings?" "Yes, but you'll have to update every hour and no barrel rolls while I'm in the sack." "But it's my plane." "To go from point A to point B, safely over

water, no acrobatics. You want to horse around, fly first class commercial, buy a biplane and sell your jet." Mate smiled as he sat down in the left seat. An older, safer pilot is why he had hired a professional. There were old pilots and bold pilots, but there were no old bold pilots.

Mate helped load luggage and golf clubs into the storage compartment and then followed his pilot into the cockpit, "I want to check on my beer and pour a cup of coffee. Would you care for one?" "Beer's tied down in the back of the plane and I made the coffee myself. Australia is full of tea drinkers that don't understand a good cup of coffee." "You've got to understand, if we can't boil it in a Billy over a campfire, we're not interested in it." Mate walked to the aft section. Cases of Australian beer were piled up to the ceiling on the port side. He checked the straps. They were tight in all four quadrants. He licked his lips, "Wonder if customs in American Samoa is going to give me a ration of crap?"

Mate checked the icebox and walked back to the cockpit and sat down in the right seat, "Any problem with customs on the beer?" "Maybe, there is a limit to how much we can bring in without an import license. Where did you get all those signs?" "My agent found them while I was on the course. Going to decorate the bar at our club with no name in Sebastian. How does she look?" "Batteries gave a spike when I turned the switch on, but they checked. Starting number one."

Mate woke up from another dream. He was at Augusta National and the sound of air rushing over his plane's extended flaps brought him back to life. Relieved to be out of the water in front of number twelve, he raised his seat back to the upright position and looked out at white mushroom cloud tops rising over the mountains of American Samoa. It was always the same dream. As he backed up to line up a birdie putt on the short par three over water, the bank gave way and he tumbled straight down into the pond. The weight of his golf shoes carried him downward into a black bottomless pit.

Mate shook the cobwebs out of his head, unstrapped and went forward to the cockpit. He sat down in the right seat and shouted over the noise of jet engines and air rushing over extended flaps, "How are we doing?" The pilot pulled his right earpiece down, "Great, weather's good here, but you'll have to sign a few autographs. You'd think the President was visiting." "Do you think we should lay over? I'm a bit nervous about flying this next leg at night." "No worries, it will be dawn before we're halfway there. We're losing an hour for every degree of arc." "I forgot that we're flying into yesterday." "Take the radio calls while I bring her in." Mate strapped in and donned his earphones, "Pago Pago, this is Shark One. Where do you want us to park?"

Mate rode a jeep to the terminal while the plane was being refueled. Airport employees, visitors and local Samoans were

waiting with pens and paper. He hopped out, "Let me make a pit stop and freshen up. Then I'll sign for all of you." With that said, he was escorted to the VIP lounge. No matter how many times he flew, he still had to adjust to walking after they touched down from a long flight. He turned on the cold water and splashed it over his face. After toweling off, he returned to the terminal and began to sign caps, tee shirts and autograph books.

When he returned to the airplane, the fuel truck was driving away. The pilot asked, "How many did you sign?" "Enough to cramp my writing hand. Any problems?" "Fuels almost half the price here. Everything looks fine. Ready to saddle up?" "Roger, I'll take over after we level off. You can catch up on your sleep. If we have an emergency, is there anywhere out there to land?" "An old Navy strip on Palmyra is our best bet." "Anyone live there?" "No. Just a few passing sail boats and some wild pigs." "My kind of place." "Starting number one." "I'll call tower for taxi clearance. Battery light is on. Do we have a problem?" "Hit reset and check the voltages." "Light went out, voltage is in the green. We're cleared for takeoff as soon as we get to the end of the runway. Let's do a rolling one."

After they leveled off Mate called to his business agent over the loudspeaker, "Roger, can you come forward?" Roger stood behind the pilots seat, "Never know whether you're calling

me or saying yes in airplane talk when I fly with you. Do you want me to wake the pilot?" "No. Would you throw one of our steak dinners in the oven for me and get me a cup of coffee?" "Will do. How far out are we?" "Halfway. Never can get used to the sun staying near the horizon and in my eyes as we fly east. Remind me to have a sun visor installed. Everything okay in the back?" Roger smiled as he answered, "Roger. Your beers riding well. Customs at American Samoa waved us through. Pays to be famous. I'll pop a steak in and bring your coffee right away."

Mate turned his head back to the cockpit. He noticed that the battery low voltage light was blinking. He reached over the copilots seat pushed the reset button. The light went out. He clicked the low voltage switch through each battery. The needle read lower than normal on each one. Roger returned, "Here's your coffee. You look a bit pale." Mate did not want to worry his agent, "I'm a bit tired. Wake up our pilot. Think I'll get some shut-eye after I have a snack." "Your steak should be ready in two minutes."

His pilot rubbed his eyes as he strapped in, "What's up?" "Houston, I think we have a problem." "Batteries?" "Low voltage and going down." "We've got a short somewhere. Our best bet is Palmyra. Turn right to 040. Gas isn't a problem, but if we don't get more juice, we'll be flying a rock. We'll have to turn everything off except what's needed to keep her going

if we're going to make it there. I'll take over and you can brief our passenger on emergency procedures. Good thing we stocked up on supplies and you remembered to bring along your fishing gear." "Last fishing trip cost me and Nick a bundle. Looks like this one is going to be free. Want me to call Honolulu?" "Wait till I look up electrical problems in the Tech Order. We don't want the engines to conk out doing anything foolish. Take over while I flip through the pages."

His pilot turned white, "Turn the radios off and lets take her up to max altitude. We may have to glide her in. We'll leave GPS on. Have too, or we'll miss Palmyra. Isn't more than a speck out here." "How much time do we have?" "Not enough." "What's our problem?" "Generator isn't charging, or if it is, not enough. We're a little under an hour out." "Anything else around here?" "If you see an Aircraft Carrier, let me know." "Are you Carrier qualified?" "I will be, if you can find one." "Gallows humor. I've only been a Yank for a little over a year and the Pacific is trying to take me back." "No worries, Mate. If we have too, we can ditch her on the ocean." "With a life raft that we're not sure of?" "It'll float, just don't know for how long." "That's like; anyone can walk on water, it's the duration. What was that?" "I think we've picked up the jet stream. Always a bit of turbulence around the edges. We might just make it before the fires go out." "At least the condemned man gets to eat a steak dinner. I'll rifle through our maps to see if we have one of Palmyra."

Is it overgrown?" "Navy keeps it passable for emergencies, but we won't have much runway. Might have to lower our gear by hand. If we do, your agent, Roger will be doing honest work for the first time in his life." Mate walked aft and briefed a wide-eyed Roger on how to crank down the landing gear.

When he returned, Mate asked, "Do you see it?" "Roger, off our right wing. I'm going to lower our flaps and try to bring her straight in." "You were right, Palmyra is a speck. Should I call Honolulu, now?" "Wait till we lower our landing gear." "Flaps took our voltage all the way down to zero." "Engines are still running, check again." "Whoa, came back up a tad." "Can you see the runway." "Barely. It has a lot of vegetation near it." "I'm going to try to flare out like the Space Shuttle and roll on our main gear. We'll put the nose down at the last moment. Have our passenger buckle in tight. I have no idea what condition the strip is in." "Aren't we a bit high?" "Roger, we'll overfly and come around, landing to the northeast." "No tractors or equipment on the runway." "Any boats in the harbor?" "No." "Have you read Robinson Crusoe." "Right, I'll look for footprints in the sand after we land, Friday." "Try the radio." Mate flipped the switch on, "Dead as a doornail." "Landing gear." "We'll have to crank." Mate got out of his seat and motioned for Roger to help crank. The pilot called back, "How are you doing?" Mate strapped back in the right seat, "Down and locked." "Hold on. Fires are out. We're flying a glider. Touchdown! Grab the

yoke and help me hold the nose up." Mate pulled back with all of his might, "Rough ride. Watch out for the large pot hole up ahead. Good thing we're riding on grass. Looks like the cement is past its warranty." "Okay, let go and I'll ease the nose gear down. Stay alert, we can still flip if we hit a hole or log." They came to a stop just short of the tree line. Mate whistled a Happy Hacker tune, "Good landing and better stop. Can we push her to the end of the runway." "Don't have too, we're already there. With three of us, we should be able to turn her around." "Looks like the jungle has reclaimed most of this airport. Let's pry Roger's hands off the armrests and have a walkabout." "Better check our supplies, first." "After we open the door and cockpit windows. It's hot enough to fry a wallabie in here."

The pilot opened both cockpit windows and dropped the entrance door, "There, that should give us some ventilation." "Not much. I count nine frozen dinners from my favorite Sydney restaurant. They won't last long in this heat. I recommend we cook half today and the rest in the morning. That's the bad news. The good news is; I bought 12 cases of my favorite beer. More bad news; it'll be warm." The pilot added, "I stocked up on survival food in Sydney. We have enough for two weeks." Roger asked, "Mutton?" "Are you kidding? Dried beef. If we can catch a fish or two, we can stretch our rations out for a month." Mate said, "To be safe, we'll sleep onboard. Off we go on our walkabout. Time for a bo-peep."

The three musketeers walked to the remnants of the naval station. Water was available for drinking and showers, but it had to be pumped and carried. The pilot checked several Quonset huts, the ones still intact, "Bad news, no fuel for the generator." "Can we use ours, from the plane?" "No, it's kerosene. Looks like we'll have to build a signal fire to attract attention. We can construct an SOS signal on the runway with an arrow pointing toward our plane." Mate said, "Let's check for anchorage and fishing. I didn't see any boats, but we should make sure."

Mate looked out on a pacific blue lagoon, "Not bad. Put a hotel up and we'd get a thousand visitors. Reef should keep the sharks out and the lagoon is loaded with fish. From the signs, I'd say there's been more than a few boats anchored here." Roger's stomach clock was going off, "We'll need lemon and pepper." Their pilot answered, "In the survival supplies. Enough for several months. He asked Mate, "Are you going to spear or cast?" "I'll teach you to do both. You know, all is not lost." Roger waded out, "What do you mean?" "I need to work on my sand shots and getting out of trouble." Their pilot grimaced, "Roger, our boss has a warped sense of humor." Mate asked, "Do you two know what long pig is?" "After we build a fire and SOS signal, you can enlighten us." "Let's get on with it. Do we have an emergency transmitter?" "We do. In the life raft, but it is limited to line of sight. I'll have it at the ready if a plane or boat happens by."

As they walked back towards the Quonset huts, Roger asked, "Do we have an ax?" Mate answered, "Two, with the survival gear and one strapped to the wall of the galley." Their pilot asked Mate, "Plans?" "We'll need firewood for a signal fire and to build a spit to hold long pig." "Oh no, you've read Lord of Flies." "We may have to fatten Roger up." "Don't know if we can eat agent without getting poisoned." Roger finally caught on, "Say what?" Mate laughed, "You and I are going to gather wood for a signal fire and to cook our dinner. We'll both have to retrieve an ax from the airplane. Lets make tracks before our stomachs shrink."

Later, Mate asked their pilot, "Do you want to light the fire now?" "Might as well. You and Roger chopped enough fire wood for a commercial barbecue and we should go ahead and cook dinner." "Any way to keep things cold?" "While you and Roger were out gathering I found a spring on the other side of the Quonsets, near the trees. I put a case of beer in. It'll cool the beer down to 60°, but it won't keep our frozen dinners from spoiling."

Roger and Mate hauled wood as the pilot tented tinder near what was the remains of the airfield tower, "We'll keep it small for cooking and add damp wood for smoke when we see a passing boat or plane. We're out of the shipping lanes, but ocean sailors drop by here throughout the year. That's why we have a jungle shower." "I'll build a spit. We don't want to throw

food on top of the fire. Roger, see if there is a piece of metal lying around already bent into shape of a spit that we can place over the fire to heat coffee and tea on." "Saw a metal grill at an old fire pit near the beach. Don't want to go around reinventing the wheel. I'll pick it up and scout around. When the navy left here, it looks like they didn't take anything with them. May be an old tea kettle or coffee pot lying around that we can use."

Mate waited until Roger was out of hearing, "What do you think of our chances of rescue?" "Good, but it could be tomorrow or in two months. Depends on what type of search is mounted. Our last radio contact was 300 miles southeast of here. We're overdue to Honolulu, so something must be happening." "How about our plane?" "I'm going to check the generators to see if I can find the problem. We can try a restart after I check it out. May be nothing more than a frayed wire and we may have enough juice to give her a go." "Radio?" "Only after we can fix her." "Do we have enough runway?" "Not fully loaded, but we've burnt off enough fuel. Why don't you pace it off and check for holes and FOD." "FOD?" "Foreign objects, such as bolts, tree limbs."

Mate returned to a cold beer and smell of dinner cooking over an open fire. "Two thousand yards and we'll have to repair a few holes. How about our airplane?" "I found two loose wires, it's fixable." "Good on yer!"

Hacker grimaced as he picked up his cards and looked over at Mike, "Laddy has won every nickel back." "And then some. Has to be more to it than luck." "It is lads. When you grow up poor, you learn to concentrate and remember every card. I have an appointment in an hour and as much as I like to beat your brains out at gin, building golf courses pays better." Golden placed his cards on the table and knocked with five points, "If you'd get rid of those nags, you could retire and learn to play golf." "True, but where would Britain get their glue? I'm doing a public service." Laddy laid his hand down, "Gin! Will you two be around this week? I can make arrangements to play another match. I have a course about an hour and a half north that is aging nicely." Hacker couldn't resist, "We won't be as easy the next time. Depends on what the ladies want to do. Tomorrow?" "Can't make it. How about Thursday?" Golden said, "I'll clear my calendar and bring them up in Mate's helicopter. Be ready at ten. I want to see your track. I've heard a lot of good things about it. Did you hear the news? Mate's won another Aussie Open over that tough track outside of Sydney. Virginia called Brenda to say that he's on his way back." "Good show for Mate. I'll let the course know that you'll be up. You can land his helicopter on the tenth fairway. Did Mate fly his two engine plane down under?" "He did. That crazy Aussie thinks he will live forever." "That's why he's so much fun. Don't you remember? Silver Fox flew his two engine jet around the world." "And he had half the world watching out for him. Did you tell Hacker that he'll have to wear a

coat for dinner?" "No. I was waiting till it was too late for him to back out. He won't have to wear a tie." "Good, I built my own club so I wouldn't have to wear one. Hate to have my neck constricted."

Brenda, Marylin and Joan were lost in deep conversation by the window in the mixed grill. Hacker waved and sat down at the closest table. As Marylin looked over he asked, "Did you decide to buy?" "Yes, Joan and I have decided on the top floor of the condo closest to the club, if you and Mike agree." "As long as I can have an office overlooking the ocean, I'll be happy. We can lock the door and go whenever we want to. If we want to entertain more than a hundred or so, we can use the club." Marylin wasn't listening, "We're going to design the interiors tomorrow." "Will you need Mike and me?" "If you want an office overlooking the ocean, you and Mike had better come along. Brenda is going to help."

Golden sat next to Hacker, "Don't count on me. I'm behind at my office. Make sure you take your clubs along. I want to walk the new course and we can hit shots to test it along the way." "Is it a true links?" "You'll think you're in Scotland. Our ladies are standing up. I think it is time for dinner." Golden lead the way to the dining room. Mike asked, "What is good and what should we stay away from?" Brenda answered, "Red meat and fried food." Hacker couldn't help it, "Those are my two basic food groups."

Hacker looked up from the architect's drawings and saw Golden driving a golf cart up the drive to their condo, "You and Mike finished designing your condos?" "Seven thousand square feet and I had input to only one room, my home office. Mike didn't fair any better." "Locker rooms are finished. I have your golf clothes and shoes in your new lockers. Our cook packed a picnic lunch. Are you ready? I need your input on the course." "As long as I can run it up the front of your greens, you'll have my vote." "You low ball hitters are all alike." "Fancy cart." "Holds four people and their golf bags." Golden asked Mike, "How did it go?" "Joan is ecstatic. What a great ocean view. Marylin and Brenda are going over plans with her this afternoon. Is that your phone?"

Golden picked up the receiver and answered, "Golden here." He listened quietly before responding, "Damn, is there anything we can do?" He shook his head and listened for what seemed to be an eternity, "Get Nick to fill in. I'll fly out tonight. I'll see if Happy will team up." He set the receiver down in its holder, "Mate's plane is overdue to Honolulu. He was flying from Pago Pago. Last radio transmission was southwest of an abandoned island called Palmyra." Hacker asked, "How long overdue is he?" "Four hours past an empty tank. Doesn't look good, but if I know Mate, he has a line in the water, someplace, hauling in fish." Mike wondered, "Is there anything that we can do to help?" "You two might have to fill in at Mate's golf tournament."

Golden turned the cart around and headed back toward Hacker's new condo to tell Brenda the bad news. The ladies were standing next to Brenda's Town Car out front. When she heard the news, Brenda turned ashen, "I'll drive over to Mate's house to comfort Virginia." Marilyn asked, "Do you want us to come along?" "Why don't you. We need to get her mind off of a dozen disaster thoughts. What are you men going to do?" Golden answered, "I'm flying out to LA. to help run Mate's charity affair. He is teamed with Elk. It starts tomorrow. Wait a second." Golden answered the phone, "He's in Africa?" "I'll see if Mike can fill in." He covered the mouth piece, "I want you two to fly out with me. Mike, can you take Mates place? And Happy, will you partner with me? Nick's in Africa. Pro-Am tomorrow and matches through the weekend." They both nodded, "Yes." Golden uncovered the mouthpiece, "All three of us will be on our way, tonight. Can you put us up?"

Golden drove to the clubhouse entrance, "We won't spend more than two hours out on the course. There is nothing we can do for Mate or Virginia now. My plane will be ready to go at four." Mike asked, "Should the tournament go on?" "Mate wouldn't have it any other way. His tournament raises millions for children's charity." "Should we take the wives and Virginia along?" "I'll call Brenda. She's on her way over to see Virginia. We'll let them decide." Hacker added, "We'll need an hour to shower and pack before we fly away." Golden nodded in the affirmative, "I'll have a limo ready at three."

Golden parked at the front door. Follow me to the locker room. I had the spikes removed from your shoes. To prevent wear and tear on the greens, no spikes, we use rubber or plastic cleats." Hacker nodded, "Worth a try. Hacker whistled under his breath, "What a layout. You said the clubhouse wasn't finished. Looks like it is to me." "Restaurant won't be ready till after New Years." Hacker followed Golden on a walkaround, "I like it. You even have a place for us to get our hair cut. Golden laughed, "I put it in at Brenda's request. Mostly for the ladies, but we can use it, too. We have an exercise room for our old bones and the locker rooms have a fancy sauna to get rid of aches and pains." Mike asked, "Pro shop?" "Salaried. No way anyone could sell our clientele anything. Our companies will stock it with clubs, clothes and golf balls." "Carts?" "We all have our own. Pro will have some for guests and those that don't want the bother. We'll work that out with him." "Bar?" "Restaurant will have one open to the public, but we have our own. Follow me to the locker room."

Hacker looked around. The bar area was just inside the entrance. Golden motioned for them to sit down, "Serve ourselves. Tables for cards, whatever. We can seat fifty here. Like a private Brit club, it's all contained in one cabinet." Golden pushed the wall button and sliding doors parted displaying a well stocked bar, "The refrigeration unit holds twenty cases of beer. Most of it is from Australia. Mate's bringing some of the local Aussie beer back with him to add a little spice.

Says that the stuff we have is brewed in Canada." Golden rolled his eyes upward, "Damn, I forgot. I hope he is stuck way out on some lonely atoll popping a few brews instead of feeding the fish. We need to get a move on if you're going to see your new home course. We eat as we ride. I brought a few clubs along for us to test some of the holes."

Golden drove up to the first tee, "What do you notice?" Mike looked down the fairway, "A wide open par four to a large low green." "Right. Straight-away with a pond out at 290 yards to keep Tiger from trying to drive it. We reward drives that don't travel too far. Pond is only twenty yards wide, so there is another seventy yards of fairway to the green from the white tees. Hit a driver and see how she plays. The green is big enough to be a double. Golden drove into a right to left crosswind coming off the Atlantic. They all rolled to a stop short of the pond. Golden pointed to a rolling green almost at fairway level, "Getting close will test your eyesight." Hacker noticed, "When the wind switches to the southeast or northeast, our pond will come into play." Golden agreed, "The average golfer will have a hundred yard carry to clear the pond so it shouldn't hold up play." Mike took notes as they rode around the next seventeen holes, "If I didn't know better, I'd say that you are building a links version of Augusta National." "The greens will give us a real test. Should play at ten on the meter when they grow in." Hacker smiled, "Looks like it's ready to play now." "No. Needs tender loving care."

Roger leaned back and placed the remains of his dinner next to the fire, "Not bad. The spring took Mate's beer temperature down to where it's drinkable. Sure hate to throw out the rest of the steak." Mate opened another beer, "Didn't waste my time in the outback for nothing. We won't have too. I'll cut the remaining six into strips and we'll hang them high over the fire. Smoked beef will keep. The taste of fish may get old after awhile." Roger turned white, "I almost forgot. Your charity tournament." "No worries, Virginia will have Golden fill in for me. I'm going to walk over and see how our pilot is doing. Don't throw away any of the scraps. A line and hook and we'll catch crabs for dinner." "I'll scout around for a pot to boil them in."

Mate sauntered out to his airplane, "How are you doing with the wiring?" "We're out of luck. Not enough juice to turn the engines over." "How about the radio?" "I'd say let her rest until Friday." "Why so long." "Batteries may gain a little power if we rest them. I think we can transmit out, but I'm not sure about receiving. There's a generator next to the Quonsets. I wonder if there is any gas stored around here for it?" "We've got an hour or so before dark. Let's scout around. We can begin a search at the tower and work outward. Do you plan on recharging the batteries?" "Yes, but I'll have to get the generator up and running and hook it up to airplane power to do it. Wonder where the navy would store gas for emergencies?" Mate pondered, "Well, if it was me, I'd

have it stored in a gravity tank in an attic of a locked tool shed." "We don't have to look far. At the bottom of the tower. Isn't that your tool shed." "I'll get the ax, we'll have to bust the lock to open her up."

As Mate was about to strike a blow at the hasp, his pilot stopped him, "Reach over the top of the door." "Just like home, a key." Mate opened her up, "I'll be damned, cables, gas and instructions for the generator." "Will they mate up with our electrical system?" "Don't know until we try. Airplanes have a universal hook up. We'll have to push our bird over here." "And patch up the runway." "Let's get Roger and see if we can move her this evening. We can crank up the generator and hook her up. If it works we can recharge batteries and make a radio call out of here. We can do the runway after we fix the bird."

"Push what? I just found a pot to boil crabs in and you say we're going to push the airplane to the tower? You've got to be kidding." Mate laughed, "Okay, you can pull, but drop that pot and get your ass over here. We're going to move her near the generator." "I saw a rope over by the Quonset." Roger pulled, Mate pushed and pilot steered, but it wouldn't move. "Need to find something to use as a lever. If we can get her rolling, maybe she'll move to our touch. Turn the wheels in the direction you want her to go and get down here with us common folks. We need your muscle." The pilot took a look "Maybe if we pull her straight ahead before we turn her toward the

tower it'll work." Mate needled, "Your all mouth and no hands. Turn the wheels and we'll all push." "Well, that didn't work. Are you sure you released the brake?" "Of course. I'll use the ax handle as a lever." Hacker walked to the front, "And I'll help Roger pull."

The wheels began to move and with Roger and Mate pulling, the airplane turned clockwise, facing down the runway. The pilot shouted, "Whoa, I need to go up to the cockpit and straighten the wheels, then I'll be down to help push." All three placed their shoulders to the wheels and the airplane rolled at a slow walk toward the tower and generator at the edge of the middle of the field. "Keep her rolling while I scramble inside, turn the wheels and aim her toward the tower." Mate called up, "Stay inside. We've got her rolling. We'll need to turn her toward the runway when we have her in position." Mate called out, "How close do you want to get?" "Do you remember how much power cord there is?" "Rough estimate is thirty feet." "I'm bringing her around. We should have twenty feet of clearance."

Mate sat down and then jumped up, "Time for a beer, Lads. We may fly out of here if we're lucky." The pilot stepped out of the airplane and accepted a brew, "Depends on what shape the runway is in. We have at least one huge chuckhole to fill. Don't want to suck up any trash in the engines or we'll all wind up on the other side of the reef." Mate asked, "Do you

want to fill her up with gas and crank her up to see if it works?" "Good idea. We can use the radio to let the world know that we're okay. I'll fill up the gas tank on the generator and you look over the manual." Roger asked , "What can I do?" He answered his own question, "I know. Get three more beers from the spring." The pilot, following Mate's instructions turned the crank on the generator. Smoke billowed out of the exhaust as she turned over, but didn't catch. Mate said, "Wait a minute. Plugs may be dirty and they might have drawn moisture." He wiped them clean and made sure the wiring was tight and connected. On the third crank, the generator sprang to life.

The pilot hooked up the cables while Mate climbed aboard and sat in the right seat. He stuck his head out of the cockpit window, shouting over the noise of the generator, "Ready to try it?" The pilot gave a thumbs up. Mate toggled the battery and external power switches. He looked out the window, "Still no power. Is it connected?" "Connectors fit like a glove. I'll come up and have a bo-peep." "You're learning to speak Strine!" The pilot checked all the switches, "Everything is set properly. Shut it down and start the sequence again." Mate followed his instructions, "Okay. Switch is off, standby, on. No luck. I'll try the radio." Mate turned the radio function switch from off, to standby, to on, "Deader than a doornail. What now?" "I connected the loose wires. It should work. I'll have to run another check. Might have been a power

surge. If it was, we're out of luck." Mate answered, "I'll hop out and turn off the generator. No use running out of gas. We may need it if you can fix the electronics. What do you think of our chances?" "Not good without proper test equipment." Roger handed them a cool beer, "Looks like we're down to signal fires and hand signals."

They returned to the fire, standing around, looking at the embers and said nothing for a few minutes. Mate smiled, "Look at the bright side. It'd cost us a fortune to rent a private island like this. Let's throw a line in the water and catch a fish or two. We've been operating under pressure all day. We need to back off and get a bit of rest. Getting on toward evening. Best time to fish the shallows. Navy or Coast Guard should have someone flying search." His pilot headed toward the spring to fetch three more beers, "I wouldn't count on it. We're not near a sea lane or an international flight route. Pacific gets rough in the winter, so we can't count on a sail boat dropping by."

When he returned, Mate tried to cheer him up, "Plenty of fish to eat. I have two full air tanks to dive for lobsters and if my calculations are correct, we can each drink nine beers a day for thirty two days. I'll worry when the beer runs out." Roger dusted himself off, "Mate's right. It'll get old if we don't stay busy." The pilot nodded, "We will. Have to keep the fire going." Mate said, "Reminds me, I'll move the tinder

over here while you button up." "Good idea. Get Roger to help."
"I'll get the fishing gear out. It's going to be darker than
midnight back of Bourke in an hour and a half, but we've got
a full moon rising at eight." "Glad you're with us. I need
a bit of Aussie optimism."

Roger said, "We've got a nice fire pit going. Will our
signal fire be visible?" Mate shrugged, "Should be from the
air, but we're too low for ships unless they're within
line-of-sight." "Do we have enough wood for this fire?" "For
tonight and maybe tomorrow. If we have too, we can borrow wood
from the signal fire and replace it tomorrow. We'll take turns
tending the fire. Why don't you get three more beers from the
spring?" "Bonzer, Boss."

When Roger returned with three more beers, Mate had three
fishing poles ready. The pilot asked, "What are we going to
use for bait?" Mate pointed at the steel basket on the end
of a stick, "Clams or large pacific sand fleas. Dig them up
where we see air bubbles along the tide line." Mate found ample
bait and helped the other two bait their hooks. He gave them
a short lesson on how to surf cast. As the sun began to set,
they returned to the fire with twenty fish to filet. Mate gave
instructions, "I'll filet these and cook them over the fire
while you two use the jungle shower. First rule of thumb in
the Tropics is to stay clean. Should have soap and shampoo
in our gear on board. I'll salt and pepper the fish. You

can add lemon after there cooked." "Roger looked at the stack of fish, "We can't eat more than three of those." "Like the steak, going to smoke them over the fire. Get three more beers before you take your turn in the shower. Relieve me of the cooking chores when you're done. I'm beginning to smell like a fishmonger."

RESURRECTION

"The report of my death was an exaggeration."

Mark Twain 1897

Mate walked back from the beach under an early morning full moon carrying a pail of lobsters, their claws tied shut so they couldn't harm each other. He saw the pilot working inside the battery compartment, "Any luck with the electronics?" "Getting there. Moon's as bright as day. Hard to get to sleep on a desert island under a full moon. Where did Roger go?" "Like any agent, he went down to the beach looking for talent." "Really?" "He took a spear along to see if he can catch a pompino. Didn't have the heart to tell him that butterflyfish aren't common in the Pacific." "Better tell the fish. Looks like he has three on his stringer."

Roger had a smile as wide as the morning moon, "Took me awhile to get the hang of it. They come right up to the surface. Are these edible?" Mate hoisted the stringer, "You caught three keepers. I'll help you scale and gut them. With a bit of lemon and pepper and lobsters we'll have a nice morning snack." "How is pilot doing with the electronics?" "Says he's getting there, whatever that Yank slang means." "Sure hope Golden fills in for you at your tournament in Palm Springs." "No worries. Golden and Hacker are probably on their way from Florida." "Hacker is in Florida with Golden?" "They're buying a condo at our new club in Sebastian. You know, I'm beginning to like this vacation." "How is your new place coming along?" "Virginia is dragging her feet." "I know what you mean." "Maybe we can arrange to stay here for another day. Even if we solve our electronics problems."

"If you two are finished talking business, I think I have our electronics fixed. Mate set the lobsters by the fire, "What went wrong?" "Corroded ground wire on the battery terminal." "Is the battery dead?" "Don't think so. Crank up the generator and lets see if we can get a charge." "Up and running. Are we in business?" "Roger, we are. HF radio is on and working. As soon as it warms up, I'll call Air Traffic Control in Honolulu."

The pilot called down, "You can shut the generator down. Honolulu knows we're alive." "What next?" "They are calling off the search. I told them that we may be able to fly out of here today. If not, we'll call back and the coasties will fly down and pick us up. We'll walk the runway after dawn and see if we can navigate through the potholes." "Is it long enough?" "Should be. We'll pace it off and get rid of the limbs and rocks as we go. You're the expert on yardage. After we get it clear, we'll crank her up and fly away." "Today?" "Roger that." Roger looked up from fileting his fish, "I know, get three beers from the spring. We're going to celebrate with a breakfast lobster bake." Mate placed the grill above the coals, "Sure wish I could have dived for more lobsters. Would have made a great meal to take back to the States." "You can. Right after we walk the runway and do what repairs are necessary." "Great! I can put a few in the ice box and take them with us." Roger handed out the beers, "No butter." Mate smiled, "No worries, plenty of lemon."

Mate, Roger and Pilot walked the runway, stooping to pick up limbs and rocks along the way. It took longer than the pilot expected, "The jungle is about to reclaim Palmyra's runway. More junk littering it than there should be. What is your estimate of its length?" Mate looked back toward the jungle at the other end, "A bit less than 2,000 yards. Is it long enough?" "I estimate our minimum at 5,000 feet. Trade winds are from the northeast. Should be up to twenty knots by this afternoon. It should do." Roger asked, "Do we have enough fuel to reach Honolulu?" "If we don't have any delays, we should have a twenty minute pad." "Conservative estimate?" "Yes. If you want to go after lobsters, I recommend that you get a move on. I want to have wheels in the well right after Roger and I fill in that huge pothole we dodged on landing." Mate saw Roger cringe, "Roger, do you want to go along?" "Was that pilot talk or were you asking me?" "You can wade out with me and collect the lobsters as I bring them up." "I'll do anything to keep from filling a pothole."

Mate picked up an air tank and net, "Carry the bucket and don't lose the six I have in there." "How do you plan to keep them under control?" "We'll tie their claws together and immobilize them in a bundle of wet seaweed." "I hope we stay inside the reef. I don't want to fight sharks." "Your talking about my mates. If you stay out of their way, they won't bother you. Watch your step. We don't want any coral cuts. Coral poisoning would be a disaster."

Roger followed Mate into the lagoon, "I'm about chest deep. That's as far as I want to go." "I'll be back in ten minutes or less. I'm going to swim out near the reef." Roger waited, his feet bobbing up off the bottom sand as swells rolled in breaking over the reef. Mate broke above the surface in front of Roger with eight lobsters in his net, "Let's go in. More down there than I can handle and I don't care to go back under." "That's a first. Why not?" "There are two skeletons chained to cement blocks next to the reef and they are fast becoming part of it." "Foul play?" "Must be. It would be one hell of a way to commit suicide." "What do you think we should do?" "I'm going to get my camera and take a few underwater snaps and turn them over to the authorities in Honolulu." "Who has jurisdiction?" "Probably the Federal Magistrate. Palmyra isn't part of the Hawaiian Islands and it looks like your navy isn't using it for anything except emergencies."

Roger tied the claws and covered the top of the lobster bucket with seaweed while waiting for Mate to return with his camera. Mate strapped his tank on, "I'll bring up more seaweed to cover each one of them on this dive." "Is the airplane ready to go?" "As soon as we finish here." Mate disappeared below the surface. He came back up with a handful of seaweed and his camera around his neck. Roger carried the seaweed as they walked back into shore. Mate unstrapped the air tank and began wrapping each lobster, "Smallest one is four pounds. Sure was spooky down there. Lets move on."

Mate's pilot hung his head out of the side cockpit window, "Crank up the generator and bring your gear on board. I want to light the fires, kick the tires and fly the hell out of here." Mate called up, "What did you do with our smoked fish?" "Wrapped and stacked in the ice box. How many lobsters?" "An even dozen, all above four pounds. I'll put them in with the fish until we take off. How about the beer in the spring?" "Leave it here for the next group of lost souls. I filled the Thermos with the rest of this morning's pot of coffee. We're as ready as can be. Get a move on. The Coasties want to send out a 130 if we can't make it off the ground."

Mate started the generator and the pilot gave him a thumbs up as he started number one. The fires lit and the jet engine noise brought a deafening roar to a once tranquil island. Mate unhooked the cables and returned them to storage. He locked the door and stowed the key above the sill where he found it. He hopped on board and closed the entrance door. His pilot was already taxiing as Mate buckled into the right seat, "You're in a bloody hurry this morning." "We have favorable winds for takeoff and I don't think you want to pay the Coast Guard's fee for retrieval. Give Honolulu a call and tell them we are taxiing. Let them know that we'll call again when airborne. We'll do a rolling takeoff." "I would have paid anything to be saved, yesterday and now I think I'll miss this place. What happens if we run into problems on takeoff?" "We won't call and Honolulu will send out someone to pick up the pieces."

Mate gave Honolulu a call and then looked back, "Roger, are you strapped in?" Roger gave Mate a thumbs up. Mate asked, "Emergency procedures?" "Three choices; we swim or walk away from the wreckage." "That's only two. What's the third?" The pilot applied full power as they turned on the runway and picked up speed, "Repeat after me; 'Our Father ...'"

Mate looked out of the copilots window and called distances to the end of the runway, "Two thousand feet remaining, one thousand ..." The pilot answered, "We're committed. Rotation ..." As the wheels came up, Mate's plane sailed over the reef and into the air, "That was a close one." "Must have been your damn lobsters. All that extra weight." "I'll give Honolulu a call and let them know we are on our way." "Get an altitude for us to climb, too." "Everything working?" "Like a charm. Get me an ETA to the high cone using four hundred and fifty knots ground speed." "Roger." Mate punched in ground speed and distance. Two hours and thirty minutes came up on the screen. He tapped the pilot on the arm, "Honolulu says to level off at two nine." "Roger, two nine." "I'm going back and check on my lobsters."

As Mate walked aft, he couldn't contain his laughter when he passed by Roger's seat, "You can let go of your armrests and open your eyes now. We made it off the ground. Going to check on my lobsters. Don't want them crawling all over the ice box. You want a cup of coffee?" "No, but I'll take one

of your Aussie beers to calm my nerves down. I could see coral beneath my feet." Mate walked aft and opened the ice box door. The lobsters were all immobile, wrapped and stacked. He took out a beer with Xs all over the label, closed the door and said to himself, "No beer for me until after we land." He twisted the cap off their Thermos and poured two cups of black coffee. Roger sniffed the air as Mate walked by, "I can still smell the smoke of our fire in your coffee." "It was fun." "It was an experience. Take me with you when you go fishing next time. I think I've found my niche in the sports world." Mate gave him a dig, "Can't get ten percent from a fish." "Roger fired right back, "Right about that. A fish would pay an honest twenty percent." "That's why I'm a shark. I eat fish for lunch. We'll be in Honolulu in a little over two hours."

After Mate strapped in, pilot asked, "What are your plans?" "Gas up and head for Palm Springs. I'm hosting a golf tournament tomorrow." "I want to have a professional check our electronics before we fly out of Honolulu." "Okay. I'll have to brief the press about our little adventure. Do you mind being a hero?" "Just as soon not. Lets give Roger all the credit for finding the battery problem." "Good on yer." "What were you shooting with the camera? A new hotel site?" "In all the excitement, I almost forgot. Saw two skeletons next to the reef when I dove for lobsters. Someone had tied them to a cement block and dumped them in the ocean." "I'll have the law standing by to take your statement." "And film."

Hacker woke up wondering where he was. He glanced over at Mike and Golden. Both were in dreamland. He checked his watch, nine p.m. Florida time, but he was in Golden's plane heading west. He said to himself, "We're scheduled to land at eight p.m., Pacific Time, in Palm Springs." Mate's wife, Virginia wouldn't leave Florida. She wanted to be near the phone if Mate called. Marylin and Joan stayed on, keeping Virginia busy by involving her in decorating schemes for the new condos. Brenda came along to take over Virginia's duties at the charity auction and banquets. Hacker stretched, "My stomach clock just rang."

Hacker pulled himself out of his chair and walked forward to the refrigerator. He opened the door and removed a can of Australian beer, "Mate must have stocked Golden's refrigerator." Brenda was at his side, "Can I fix you a sandwich?" "If you don't mind, but real meat." "We have chicken and tuna." "I'll try Charlie. You're up and about early." "I'm worried about Mate. His being lost at sea really strikes home. All of you spend so much time in the air, it could happen any time." "That's why we get the big bucks. I know Mate is okay. I can feel it in my bones. There are a couple of islands close to where they lost contact with his plane. He is probably drinking beer with his feet in the sand, watching the sun set over the palms, cooking fresh caught reef fish over an open fire and wondering where he'll fish in the morning." "You're probably right. Mustard or Mayo?" "Mustard."

Brenda handed Hacker a plate garnished with a pickle and chips, "Can't you sleep? I always thought you were the calm one." "I'm like that proverbial duck, calm on the surface, but paddling like a mad man, underneath." "All of you worry too much. Your work is really nothing more than a boy's game. It should be fun and stress free." "True, but it's modern man's version of the hunt. We strap spears on our back and go out to win supper. If we have the talent for it, we eat. If not, we gather." "Hunter, gatherer. Not bad for another college dropout." "I didn't sleep through anthropology." "I thought you majored in History." "Same thing. You know, before that slip of the tongue got the press all over me, I slept like a baby. When they get you down, they don't let up until there is nothing left, but shreds." "That's why it's better to say nothing right after a tournament ends. All of you are too engrossed with the contest to answer sanely." "Now you tell me. Sandwich really hits the spot. Lettuce is crisp, mustard is gray." "Poupon. Golden is stirring. See if he wants a sandwich."

"Brenda is fixing, if you're hungry." "Tuna will be fine. Are we about there?" "Should touch down in thirty minutes to an hour." "I need to make a phone call to make sure they saved us a room at the Inn." "No need too. Brenda checked. We have a limo waiting. Arrangements must have been made. Don't you have a home on the course. You designed and built it." "Must be overly tired or getting old. You and Mike will stay with

us at our place. We haven't been there in over a year." "I bet you don't know how many houses you own." "One on each course we designed." "How many?" "I don't for sure, but Brenda does. We've built over one hundred courses." "We have too many, but I can't get Golden to sell even one. He's like W.C. Fields with Bank accounts all over the land, but in our case it's houses." Hacker laughed, "Must be the nesting urge." Golden looked up from his plate, "Never thought of it that way. The members and owners want a warm fuzzy, a reassurance that their architect still lives next to his design." "That may be good or bad. You can get bothered." "Golf fans give us space." "If only the media did." "You do look like you've been scalded with fried chicken fat." "And I feel like it, too. Thirty years of getting along with everybody, regardless of religion or race has gone down the tubes." "I know where you're coming from. Brenda is on me all the time to keep my sardonic wit caged out in public and it isn't easy." "Has to be a Midwest thing. We grew up needling each other as a way of life. Hell, if you ever stopped, I'd be worried about our friendship." "The press has to make a buck." "Wish they would tell the truth." "Look at the bright side. You took the heat off Tiger for his comments in that magazine article. "Bright for him, but darkness and trouble for me. Your pilot is motioning from the cockpit and pointing down." "Better buckle up for landing." "Looks like we're heading directly into a mountain. Beautiful view down there in the desert with a full moon." "Windy. See the dust east of the interstate?"

Golden woke Hacker at daylight with the good news, "Mate's alive! He made an emergency landing on an old World War II airstrip on an abandoned island called Palmyra. They plan to fly out at daylight." "We still have to replace him at the Pro-Am." "No problem, Mike will team with Elk and you and I are the extras. Might as well compete while we are here. It's a fun format; alternate shots Friday, Florida Scramble Saturday and best ball on Sunday." "Do we have amateur partners?" "Didn't yesterday, but we do today. When the word got out that you and I were a team, they were knocking down the door. You're still the king of corporate outings. Half the CEOs on the west coast called in." "I imagine they wanted to be here for Mate. How in the world did you forget that you had this house? It looks like it was carved out of the desert." "Pretty nice, isn't it? Breakfast is ready when you are. Don't forget we have a charity auction tonight." "Brought along some clones of my actual tournament clubs." "You sure that you want to give away your keepers?" "Have a garage full and they all swing differently." "So much for modern science."

Hacker looked out on a panoramic view of palms, cactus, lakes and grass as he wound his way down Golden's circular staircase to breakfast. He sniffed the air for bacon, ham or sausage, "Hot bran?" Brenda answered, "And fruit with skim milk." "I'll collapse before we reach nine." Golden enjoyed the banter, "You know Brenda. She has us on a strict diet." "I need pancakes, eggs and bacon. I'll just have juice and

scoot on over to the clubhouse for breakfast. You have a cart available?" "In the garage. Mike has your clubs on it and your gear is in the locker room at the club. We tee off at ten. I'll meet you on the practice tee at nine fifteen. Take care of our amateurs until I get there." "If you'll call the Grill and have breakfast ready when I get there." "Pancakes, eggs over easy and bacon?" "You remembered." "Move over, I'm going with you. Brenda, wake Mike up in an hour." Brenda set the phone down, "Where are you two going?" Golden answered, "Taking Hacker over to the driving range to try a new swing key." "Don't give me that. You're going to the club for bacon. Hacker can drive himself. You get back in here and eat the breakfast I prepared for you. I sent your plane back to Florida to pick up Virginia, Marylin and Joan. They will be here in time for tonight's banquet and auction."

Hacker opened the garage door and looked in. Golden had two golf carts hooked up to electrical outlets. He selected the one with his clubs on the back and disconnected the power cord. He placed the lever in forward and pushed down on the pedal, cruising down a winding road to a magnificent clubhouse on the other side of a Mojave barranca "God awful beautiful place Golden's folks have built here." He turned west and drove uphill to an adobe Spanish style clubhouse. The guard at the entrance recognized him and waved him through. Hacker drove around the clubhouse to the locker room entrance, following the aroma of bacon.

"Kitchen open?" Hacker asked the locker room attendant. "Not for breakfast. Believe they're fixing lunch for the Pro-Am. Go on ahead and put on your golf shoes. I'll call and have Maria fix you something." "Bacon, eggs, pancakes and coffee?" "You must be staying with Mr. Gorilla. He called your order in. You can eat here in the locker room." Hacker opened the double wooden locker doors and pulled a new white shirt out of its plastic wrapper, checked for pins and found none. Mike had Hacker's golf shoe distributor send four pairs of new golf shoes on ahead by overnight delivery. He picked out a pair of brown and white saddle shoes. Soft cleats had been installed by Golden's people, like the shoemaker's elves in the night. As he laced up the shoes, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee and bacon drew him over to the game tables at the back of the locker room. He thanked the attendant and gave him a twenty dollar bill, "Maria stacked enough bacon on my plate to open an Ohio farmhouse restaurant." After a few bites and a slug of coffee, Hacker looked up with a grin, "That damn Gorilla is keeping this place a secret." The attendant looked up from cleaning golf shoes, "Doesn't want to lose Maria. I'll call the Pro Shop and let them know you're here. You and Mr. Gorilla tee off at ten. Your Amateur partners have arrived and will meet you on the putting green." "How many?" "Four." "My god, we're going to play a sixsome."

Hacker stopped by the Pro Shop and took time to meet with the Pro and talk to his assistants. After a few practice stokes

with an old wooden shafted blade putter he found in the used club grab bag barrel, he purchased it, "Where did this come from?" The Pro answered, "One of our members passed on and his wife brought down his collection of old putters. That one was made before 1930. Has quite a bit of loft to it." "It's a Bee Line. I had one just like it when I took up the game." "What happened to it?" Sold it to one of our members when I was in High School. Made putts from all over the place with it. He talked me out of it. Been looking for one ever since. Are our amateurs ready?" "Yes, we placed two in each cart. You and Mr. Gorilla will ride together." "Ride?" "Just for the Pro Am. Have you played here before?" "No." "This course is cut out of rambling desert canyons. There is quite a walk between most of the holes. When the tournament begins, we'll have transport standing by to carry the walking players from the green to the next tee, but only on those holes that are too steep or too long." "Golden must have carved this course out of the foothills." "He did." "If you don't mind, we have one of the regular TGA tour caddies on your bag. He works in the golf shop and runs the range when he isn't carrying a bag." "What's his name?" "Tote Smith." "He's a good one. Thought he was looking for a young limber back with potential." "He is, but if you can keep it in play and knock down a few putts, he may be willing." "We'll see. Will he move to Florida?" "That may be a problem, but it wouldn't hurt to ask." "If this putter works as good now as it did when I was young." "Why did you sell it?" "Needed money for the Prom."

Hacker sauntered toward the putting green, twirling his new found putter under his arm like a drum major's baton. Tote Smith glided up at Hacker's side with a bag of brand new practice balls in a gasoline powered cart, "Let me clean that wooden shafted putter of yours. The shaft needs furniture polish and the blade needs some wax. Only take a minute. I haven't seen one of these in twenty years." "We riding together?" "If you want too. Mr. Gorilla's caddy has his bag on another cart. Electric carts don't work very well on these hills. Do you want me to drive?" "Why don't you. Golden has this thing about rolling carts over his grass. We'll have to stay on the cart paths. What did you do with Gorilla's cart?" "It's hooked up to a charger in the shed." Tote handed Hacker his Bee Line putter, "Here you go. As good as new. Do you want me to check your alignment and stroke?" "Yes, but don't say anything until I've hit at least ten putts. I'll be adjusting my alignment and swing to Mr. Bee Line. Love the feel of this old fashioned leather grip."

Hacker set up with the ball six inches further out from his toes than normal and addressed the ball from the middle of his stance. He stroked a four foot putt into the back of the cup. Tote picked the ball out of the cup and threw it back. Hacker moved back to five feet and repeated his stroke with the same result. His tenth putt was from thirteen feet away. It also struck the back of the cup with the same result. Tote threw the ball back to him, "Are you ready to go to the practice

range?" "Yes. Did you catch anything?" "You just sank ten putts in a row on a green slicker than owl shit. I've got nothing to say that can improve on that. What do you want me to watch for on the practice tee?" "Watch the top of my swing. I have a tendency to cup my wrists at the top, trying to get more distance." "A lot of that going around lately with Tiger Tracks on the prowl. Have you been hitting the ground several inches behind?" "Yes, but just grazing it." "You've identified your own fault. I'll check your alignment, set up and impact. Dirt doesn't lie." Tote carried Hacker's clubs to the middle of the tee and excused himself as he walked over to the faucet to wet Hacker's towel. When he returned, Hacker was on his fourth five iron practice shot. Hacker stopped his backswing before his hands cupped and painted a right to left draw, bisecting the middle of his target line. Tote asked, "Distance?" "One hundred and seventy yards." "Have you lost any?" "No, I've gained. Hand me my three wood. I'll hit five of these and a couple of drives. After that, I'd like to test the sand, hit a few chip shots and then go back to the practice green. Still have a little indecision about my new putter. I need to get rid of doubts that may be floating around in my skull about Mr. Bee Line." Hacker hit his three wood shots on the same line as his five iron. He handed his club to Tote with a whistle, "That went twenty yards further." He nailed two drives and walked toward the sand trap, pitching his driver to Totes, "I feel like a youngster." "Keep that up and you'll have to pry your bag away from me."

Hacker spent more time in the sand trap than he had planned, "If it's the same on the course, they're going to be a bit firm." Tote asked, "Do you need another sand wedge?" "No, give me my pitching wedge and nine. I'll try to Bobby Jones the ball." "That's a new one to me." "Hit the ball first and chip it out, if the top of the trap is low enough." "If it isn't?" "Use my pitching wedge and cut under it." "Remind me not to get in your line. If you blade it, you'll wipe out the front half of the gallery." "Keep those negative thoughts to yourself. The secret is to stay still over the ball and have confidence." Hacker picked two balls off the sand with his nine iron and then blasted three shots out with his pitching wedge. All landed within three feet of his target. He handed the clubs to Tote, "That's enough of that. Give me an eight iron for chips. Better practice with both wedges, too. Might have a few short shots to navigate." Hacker took ten more shots than planned at the pin on the pitching green, testing the grass in the Bermuda rough and first cut, "This is not going to be easy. Never did like Bermuda rough. Ball comes out like a pitcher's knuckle ball." He handed his irons to Tote and pulled his putter out of the bag, "Lets go over to the practice green and meet our amateurs."

Hacker introduced himself to their amateur partners and exchanged pleasantries, "I'll need some time on the practice green. I'm trying out a new putter. Have you been to the practice tee?" When they shook their heads, "No," Hacker

admonished, "Better get over there and hit a few. One of the benefits of paying the big bucks is all the free practice balls you can hit. I'll meet you in the men's grill for coffee and brunch after you finish, but don't take longer than twenty minutes or you'll leave your game on the tee. We have an hour and a half before tee time. Golden doesn't like to show up earlier than thirty minutes before. We're a superstitious lot on the TGA tour." Tote threw four balls to Hacker, "Do it again." Hacker practiced right and left hand breaking putts for ten minutes. Satisfied, he handed his putter back to Tote, "Going to see a man about a horse. I'll see you on the first tee." As Hacker walked into the club house, Tote smiled to himself, "If he can take his game from the practice green to the course, I'll have a good payday."

Hacker stood up as the amateurs walked in to the grill, "Have a pot of coffee waiting here on the table and I'll pour. Maria has a buffet along the wall. Bacon is perfect. Load up and we'll talk." Hacker followed his amateurs to the buffet where he created an open faced ham, bacon and tomato sandwich, covered with thin sliced sharp white Cheddar cheese. As he sat down at the table he asked, "Any questions?" The short stocky one asked, "First time we've played with the 'A' Pros. Do you and Mr. Gorilla have any preferences?" "Only the normal ones. Don't move around or talk when we're playing the game. Golden doesn't say much. Likes to get into his zone. I chatter a lot, but don't copy me. It relaxes me. If it looks like

we have a shot at winning, we'll both help with club selection and lining up putts. If we don't, Golden and I will be working most of the day on our games and trying to gain course knowledge. This is our job and when we're on a tournament course we concentrate on doing as good as we can. Unless we see a swing fault that we can correct without screwing up your game, we'd just as soon let you work your own problems. If you're having trouble with putting, close your eyes at impact." The short stocky one asked, "What will you be working on." "Swing key, tempo and learning the pace of the greens."

Twenty minutes before their tee time, Hacker strolled out to the first tee. Tote met him with his glove, a new ball, a green repair tool and his three wood. Hacker asked, "Three wood? How long is the first hole?" "Short, but a sharp dogleg out at 275 yards." "Can I cut it?" "Only if you have a bulldozer." "Do we tee off first?" "Better. Your tees are so far back of the amateurs, you'll need a compass to find them. Otherwise you'll be hitting into them. Mr. Gorilla is arriving." Hacker looked at Golden's club, "Tote was right. He said it was a three wood." "Have you played here before?" "No." "Pretty much what you see." "Local knowledge?" "Not that I know of. I try to build a generic course." "For folks that fade the ball, yes." "You helped me with swing tips. I'll show you how to play here with a draw." They were interrupted by the starter, "On the tee, past U.S. Open and Masters champion. From Washington Court House, Ohio, Happy Hacker."

CHARITY

"Beauty, wit, high birth, vigor of bone,
Desert in service, Love, friendship, charity,
Are subjects all to envious and calumniating time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

Shakespeare 1602

Hacker drilled his three wood shot off the elevated first tee down the right side of the fairway, drawing his ball right to left. It landed in the middle and rolled through the fairway, coming to rest in the first cut of rough. He had an open shot to the pin on the right side of the green. Golden waited until his three minute introduction was finished and the applause died down. He walked over and placed his arm around Hacker, "Maybe it's better not to know where all the trouble is. You hit your three wood 260 yards. Almost forgot. We won't be a two man team for the next three days." Golden noticed Hacker's frown and laughed, "Don't worry. You're going to tee it up." "With who?" "Life is full of surprises. You'll like this one." Golden took the mike from the starter and faced the crowd, "Hacker is a dear friend of mine. He doesn't have a biased bone in his body, but even he will admit that sometimes he has more bone than brains in his head. So I'm not going to let him use this mike to put a foot in his mouth again. All kidding aside, I am pleased that Hacker accepted my invitation to help out at Mate's shindig. When he found out that Mate was lost on a Pacific island, he was the first to volunteer. If you haven't heard the news, Mate is safe and sound and on his way to Honolulu. Enough of this chitchat, we came here to win. Better get on with it."

Golden hit a three wood fade around the corner of the dogleg. His ball came to rest in the middle of the fairway, thirty yards closer to the green than Hacker's. As they walked

toward their carts, Hacker pulled Golden aside, "Thanks for your support and comments." "The way the press is raking you over the coals, you need all the help you can get. How are we scoring this mob today? Has Mate got a surprise up his sleeve?" "He sure does. Our amateurs play at half their handicaps. We add up two of their best balls net with our combined score on each hole." "We'll shoot two hundred and seventy." "We'll have to shoot lower than that if we want to win." "Mate hasn't lost his sense of humor." They parked their carts behind the amateurs at the lower tee and watched. All three made the corner. Golden smiled, "We have ourselves four horses for my courses. We just might do it. I'll post the primary net card and you can keep all of our gross scores. Let's see if our boys can shoot their handicaps." Golden led the way down a winding path through the desert to the first patch of fairway at the corner of the dogleg. Hacker whispered to Tote, "This will be a tough track for anyone who has to bounce the ball in. Golden has more desert than grass."

As they made the turn, Golden checked the scoring, "Hacker, we're fifteen under as a team and four back of the leaders." "And our amateurs are carrying us. We'll have to turn it up a notch." "I missed six short putts to the right." "Do what you told our amateurs to do, keep your head down until you hear the ball hit the bottom of the cup." "Am I peeking?" "Big time. Your head is coming up as you strike the ball." "Damn. Can't control it." "Your natural setup is a peek-a-boo. You

sure aren't lining it up to the right, just opening the blade as you come through." "Lets stop after we hole out at ten and you can check my storke and head position."

Playing in a six person group made for a slow five hour round. There was ample time to practice after they putted out. With Hackers suggestions, Golden began to sink putts from left field. It was half past three by the time Hacker and Golden signed their score cards and turned them over to the TGA officials. With two groups to go, they were leading by five shots in the clubhouse. Hacker volunteered to entertain their amateur partners while Golden strolled toward the press tent, "I'll handle the interview, Happy. Don't want you making any comments about how Germans eat schnitzel and drink beer." "Don't worry, I'm off food jokes for life. I grew up on fried chicken and I can't get enough schnitzel. That's why I need to take my stomach for a walk." "Tiger wouldn't have gotten mad at you if you had needled him about the food he grew up on." "What's that?" "Thai food" "Should have done my homework, love that hot stuff." "If you just happen to win the Masters again, what are you going to serve?" "Filet of shoe in mouth, garnished with shoelaces."

Hacker and Golden stood with their amateurs for photos as each received a new set of clubs and bag from Mate's company for winning the Pro-am. After all the scores were posted, their team had won by one shot. Hacker hammed it up, "We're gonna

give each one of our amateurs a saliva check. Thirty six under is almost impossible without chemical help. I want to see everyone of you folks at the banquet and auction tonight. Maria has a surprise prepared for the banquet dinner and we're gonna give away the store to raise money for Mate's kids. Pony up a few bucks for charity and join in. Good news. Mate will fly in late tonight, around midnight. He radioed ahead that his latest golf course is planned for Palmyra, where he made his emergency landing. It will really be a tough one, all sand and seawater." Golden took the mike away, "Don't dare let Hacker talk about food to the media again. Mate went diving for lobsters while he was goofing off on his desert island. Said there were so many fish, even his agent was able to catch a few. If he doesn't hurry back, we may just auction off his plane tonight. And if he does, Hacker and his partner or my mystery guest are going to whip him good out on the golf course, tomorrow."

Mike met Golden and Hacker at the side door of Golden's desert house, "Guess I'll be heading back. Mate will want to compete tomorrow." Golden smiled, "I have a surprise for you. You're going to play with me." Hacker laughed, "So that's your mystery guest. Okay, drop the other shoe." "Tiger Tracks flew in to help Mate out. He's your partner. That ought to stir up a few comments from the press. Tiger will be at the banquet this evening." "I can anticipate an evening of humor at my expense coming on." "Tiger did mention that he would like to

MC and he asked what you Ohio folks dine on." "I'm in deep trouble. It's fried chicken and mashed potatoes." "Don't worry, I told him that you dine on white bread, peanut butter and mayonnaise." Hacker's smile turned into a frown, "The world has gone to hell when we can't even kid each other about food. Remember when the only things taboo were religion and politics?" "Now, those are the only things that we can joke about." Mike spoke up, "Times-a-wastin'. You two need to get cleaned up and dressed for the banquet. What's the dress?" Golden answered, "Coat, tie is optional."

Tiger took the mike from Golden, "Hope you all enjoyed Maria's meal. Lets give the chef and all of the folks working here a hand of applause." After the applause died down, Tiger continued, "The first item up for sale is a pair of used shoes. They were worn only once by the Happy Hacker. You can tell by the teeth marks across the toes that we had to pry them out of Hacker's mouth. We'll start the bidding at one thousand dollars. I almost forgot. A complete set of golf clubs with a top of the discount line bag comes with the shoes. Hacker was able to get quite a few of these sets at cost after the discount mart canceled his contract. Seriously, these are identical to the set he uses in tournaments. So if you slice, I'll personally guarantee that you'll hook with these. Do I hear two thousand?" The bidding ended at five thousand dollars. Tiger called for Hacker to come up, "I want you folks to know that Hacker wasn't my only friend set up by the TV folks. They

also tried to set up my teaching Pro. The times they are a changing and the media has decided to create confrontation instead of just reporting it. However, if you want to fly to Las Vegas and lay a bet down, put your money on Hacker and me. We are going to be a lead pipe cinch to win Mate's tournament. Hacker, do you have anything to add?" Happy walked up to the mike with a wide grin, "With Tiger as my partner and every media outlet in the world watching, all I can say is; Yes Sir. No Sir. I'm away Sir. Which way Sir? How far and when Sir? Can you give me another driving lesson, Sir?"

The charity auction wound up at ten, the witching hour for spiked athletes on the TGA tour. Mate's kids came away five hundred thousand dollars richer. The highlight of the evening was an over the Pacific Ocean phone patch via HF radio from Mate's airplane to the auction. Mate was up for the occasion, "I have enough lobster in the Fridge and real Aussie beer for a cookout at my place after we finish the first round tomorrow afternoon. Hacker, you can bring the fried chicken and make sure you're wearing an apron. You're going to be my Chef. No worries, I'll teach you how to tell when the shrimp are done. I expect all of my fellow TGA Pros to be there. It's not often that we can watch Hacker eat a bit of bird. We're going to have lobsters and shrimp on the barbie at seven. Tiger, I don't want you running off after all the young ladies at the local disco. I expect all of my friends show up with bib and appetite for my tucker. I want to personally thank

each one of you for honoring my kids and helping me out while I spent my winter vacation on a deserted Pacific island with the crew of the Minnow. I'll see you all out on the practice tee in the morning, but not before ten."

Hacker was up at the break of dawn, driving one of Golden's carts down to the club to meet with Tiger Tracks for breakfast. He drove through a cool clear desert morning cloudless sky, breathing in fresh dry air. It reminded Hacker of his winter college mornings in the southern Arizona desert. Tiger was waiting in the locker room, pacing, "Been here for half an hour waiting on you. Have to eat here. They have both Grills and their dining room set up to serve the paying customers today. Maria has your favorite morning menu on the way." "Pancakes, bacon, and eggs over easy?" "You got it. I didn't ask to dine with you because I like your smiling face. I need some advice." "Shoot." "You know about my foundation and the clinics it sponsors?" "Right, do you need my help?" "It would be appreciated, but that's not why I wanted to talk with you." "What's the problem and what can I do?" "The clinics are doing well. Almost too well, but after we finish up and instill a desire to play golf in the kids, there isn't a place for them to hack it around, so they lose interest." "I'm beginning to see your drift. When I was a young boy growing up in Washington Courthouse, we built our own course in one of the city parks. Made holes in the ground and placed one pound coffee cans inside them. Cut a hole in the bottom for a stick. Used it as an

aiming point instead of a flag. Why don't you expand on that idea?" "I like what I hear. Continue." "Chi Chi built a course for kids in the Tampa area. Why not put up seed money for a series of par threes. Design them somewhere in-between the coffee can idea and Chi Chi's course. Kids will be happy to begin on concrete if there is a hole in the ground to putt the ball into. You could call them Tiger's Tracks." "You're on a roll. How do we go about doing it." "Get the cities to furnish the land and you'll furnish the design and construction funding. Make a contract with the city to charge a minimal fee to play, like a quarter. If it's free, the kids won't learn the value of money or respect the game. Build a driving range as part of the course." "For kids?" "Yes and no. They can use a small part of it. I was thinking about the range paying for course upkeep. Three quarters of it devoted to adult play. You can make your charity dollars go a long way if you do it right." "Wouldn't it be neat if we could talk each successful TGA pro into providing seed money for at least one of these courses and cover the country. What happens after the kids outgrow our par threes?" "That will create pressure to build more public courses." "From an acorn." "One word of caution. Just make it all grass. No sand, water or built up tees and greens. Keep it simple and only for beginners." "I like it, but since you came up with the idea, lets call them Happy Tiger Tracks. You get top billing." "Lets start with two in New York City. I'll fund one and you the other. We can work out the kinks before we add more." "Publicity?" "The mother's

milk of sport and with it we will create demand." "Why don't we start with the Bronx and Brooklyn?" "New York City here we come."

Maria sent in another pot of coffee and an egg and bacon sandwich for Tiger. Tiger poured while Happy polished off the rest of his pancakes, "Understand you've bought a condo in Golden's new golf community." "How about you? House or condo?" "I haven't decided yet, but it will probably be a condo. I don't want to leave my friends in Orlando. Sebastian? Not much night life." "I keep forgetting. You've been around us for so long, you seem as old as us, but you're still a youngster. I'd do the same thing. Still, I think you're wise to buy a condo near us old farts. With all the attention you're getting, a little peace and quiet might be nice. About your Tiger Tracks. Are your people going to run with the ball or do you want Mike Cash and me to give it a go?" "No offense, but I think that I have more leverage in today's market." "No offense taken, but keep me in the loop. I'll have my architects whip up a generic par three mock-up for you, free gratis. I'm excited about this concept. You and I may have found a positive way to give back to the game." "Shouldn't we add a few longer holes?" "If there is room. Why don't we do three mock-ups: One with seven par threes and two par fours. One with six par threes, two par fours and one par five. The third one would be all par threes. When there isn't enough land to build any more." "Good idea and we shouldn't limit it to a minimum of

nine holes. If there is only room for three, build three, but we should limit each course to a max of nine holes. We don't want our Tracks to be the final step." "Understand. We do the KISS approach." "KISS?" "Keep it simple, stupid." "There you go again, picking on the intelligent deprived." "God, how I hate this new politically correct world. I'm going over to the practice tee and work on my set-up. Shoulders have gotten too level on me and I'm overcorrecting on my downswing." "Taking too much sod?" "And behind the ball."

Tiger Tracks watched Hacker's set-up. Happy hit through the ball, making solid contact before taking sod. Tiger watched four shots and said, "Looks good to me. Your divots won't lie to you. I'm going to strike a few iron shots and practice chipping and putting. Meet you over at the putting green. Hacker watched as the crowd around them grew to over ten thousand, "Don't you ever have any peace?" "Not out here. I've learned to shut it out." Tiger struck five, six, seven and eight irons. Hacker stopped to watch, "You're hitting them low. Is that on purpose?" "Getting ready for the wind at Pebble next winter. Practicing my knock downs. How does it look?" "You're drawing them on purpose?" "Yes. Now I'll try a few fades and go back to my normal swing." Four shots drove low, tailing left to right, not more than ten yards. Tiger handed his club to his caddy, "Meet you at the putting green." Hacker shook his head, "I should have flown to Las Vegas and put my money down. You are crushing it."

After they were announced as a team on the first tee, Tiger walked over and placed his arm around Happy's shoulders, "Why don't you go first and give me an opportunity to take a few chances." "You're going to attempt to cut the dogleg?" "And reach the green." "What the hell, let's give the folks a thrill, but don't put me where I can't hit it." "Don't worry, if I miss my shot you should be able to find a few sidewinders that we can cook on Mate's grill tonight." "You sure know how to get even." Hacker had to back away from his ball as the enormous crowd surrounding the first tee still buzzed with laughter. He smiled at Tiger, "Maybe I should pick on you more often. I haven't seen an appreciative crowd like this since Mate and I duked it out at the Open." Tiger didn't let up, "Don't remember seeing that. I was just entering the first grade." "Touche'." Mate set up with his right shoulder at the appropriate angle and drilled a hook, hanging it out over the desert and bringing it back to the right side of the fairway, rolling through the dogleg to the far side of the fairway. He picked up his tee, "You shouldn't have more than a flip wedge to the pin." Tiger Tracks smiled before placing his game face on. As he stood behind his ball, Hacker whispered to Tote, "How far is it to the front of the green on a straight line." Tote whispered back, "Three hundred and forty yards, but he has to carry his ball two hundred and ninety to stay out of the wilderness." Tiger struck his shot with a whiplash blow, sending the ball over the desert in a high arc, landing just past the wilderness and bouncing onto and over the green. It

came to rest in the left sand trap. The crowd erupted in a roar of appreciation. Hacker feigned disgust, "You left me with a tricky down hill sand wedge to the pin." "Better you than me. When do we alternate?" "After the tee shot. After the second shot we have to pick one ball." "This should be a fun day." "Only if we can sink putts." "Put it close to the pin and we won't have to worry."

Hacker leaned on his bag as Tiger looked his shot over, "Do you need any help?" "Haven't played here before. Tell me about the green." "Slopes left to right and back to front, but it's pretty soft. How do you intend to play it?" "Think I'll have a go right at it. I have a tendency to pull my shots off line to the left. The errors should compensate." "Make it smooth." Tiger hit a sixty degree wedge toward the clouds. His ball came to rest ten feet past the pin spinning back to within the leather.

Hacker asked Tote, "What do you think, chip out of the sand or blast?" "Can you chip it from there?" "Lots of green and a low lip. It'll put backspin on the ball and I can carry it further on the green." "Not too far, you're down hill and left to right. I wouldn't carry it more than ten feet on the green. Give it about a ten foot break." "We agree. I want to get it close enough to make the youngster putt." Hacker pulled his sand wedge out of the bag, took a couple of practice swings above the sand and dug his feet deep into the sand for

balance. He nipped the ball precisely ten feet left of the line to the pin where backspin slowed its forward motion. It rolled in an arc picking up speed on a pace that would make it roll off the green, but the pin got in the way and Hacker's ball dropped into the hole for an eagle two. Tiger bent over and picked the ball out of the cup, "If you're going to make shots like that, I want to make sure your back doesn't go out on us. Don't tell me you planned it that way?" "Believe it or not, I did. Just didn't think it would roll that fast. Mate has really cut the greens down." "And they rolled them this morning. Lead the way to the next tee."

Number two was another par four with a dogleg to the right. Tiger shook his head, "Golden designed this one. Are all the holes doglegs left to right for a fade?" Hacker set his ball on the tee, "No. Some of them are straight away with a slight bend to the right. You gonna try to cut this one?" "Nope. Too far." Hacker remembered to set up properly before drawing his driver back. He struck his ball cleanly. It traveled on a right to left arc over the desert and back into the middle of the fairway. Tiger laughed, "This is going to get boring. I'm going to cut the dogleg with a three wood." He sent his ball away with another whiplash blow on a right to left ten yard draw. It flew over three traps on the right corner and landed in the right rough, bouncing into the fairway. He handed his club to his caddy, "Lets see if the Hacker has a good wedge shot left in him."

Hacker's ball was sixty yards behind Tiger's drive. Tiger asked, "How about this shot?" "Pins on the left front behind a deep trap with the green sloping away from you. Hit the same high draw. What club are you hitting?" "Have about one hundred and sixty. Think I'll throttle back on an eight iron and take a three quarter swing." Tiger hit it straight and high. His ball landed in the short grass over the trap and bounced forward rolling seven feet to the right of the pin. Hacker asked Tote, "Distance?" "With the angle, about one hundred on the nose. Draw?" "Might as well. Don't have to come in over the trap. Think I'll hit a wedge ten yards right and let nature take its course." Hacker lined up a little too much to the left. His ball landed in front of the pin and bounced, striking the pin six feet above the hole. It spun to the left stopping twelve feet away. Tiger walked along beside him, "You gonna' do this all day long?" "What?" "Knock down the pins." "Didn't mean too. I pulled it back at the hole." "Lot of that going around. Think you can make the putt?" "Wouldn't be out here if I didn't. Wait until we see which one has the better line. They're within five feet of each other." Hacker took one look, "I'll putt your ball. It's straight uphill." Tiger marked the ball and cleaned it, handing it back to Hacker. Hacker took a waggle, with his putter, stepped back to look at the line, stood over the ball and putted it dead center into the back of the hole, "This is a fun format." Tiger smiled, "Past is prologue. Tell me about number three." "Damn, a west coast Ivy leaguer. Par five." "With a dogleg right." "You got it."

Hacker hit his patented right to left draw two hundred and ninety yards into the middle of the fairway. Tiger hit a thundering shot, over the corner of the dogleg. His ball rolled to a stop less than two hundred yards away from the center of the green. Tiger walked to where Hacker's ball had come to rest and chided Happy, "You left me with a two hundred and eighty yard shot." "You only have to carry it two hundred and forty yards to clear Golden's waste area and the front of the green is open. Should be an easy three wood for you." "Pin?" "Attaboy, back middle. Give it a go." "There you go with that boy thing again." "Oops. I apologize. You know that it's just a phrase of praise." Tiger smiled, "No rest for you wicked rednecks."

Tiger lined up his shot and blasted Happy's ball over the waste area. It landed just short and rolled through the green, coming to rest in the first cut on the back. Hacker took a two minute walk to Tiger's ball and asked his caddy, "Tote, tell me how far and give me your club recommendation." "See you're carrying a five wood. You watched Tiger's ball roll through the green after it landed short. You should carry your ball high, one hundred and eighty yards, seventeen short of the pin." "I'll have to choke down." "And play it forward. Trouble is on the left and you've been pulling your shots back at the pin. I'd aim it ten, fifteen yards to the right." Hacker picked a spot ten yards in front of Tiger's ball and lined up. His ball, following a right to left high arcing trajectory,

impacted five feet left and fifteen yards short of the pin, then rolled left toward the pin until the speed began to drop off. When that happened, the slope took over and Happy's ball rolled to the right stopping ten feet below the hole. Hacker handed his five wood to Tote, "Lets see if the youngster can putt." "Wouldn't be here if he couldn't." "You sure are feisty today." Tiger Tracks lined up Hacker's ball and then backed away, "Happy, will you give me a hand here. Get behind me and see if I've lined it up correctly." Happy crouched down, "Where are you aiming?" "Center of the cup." "I read two inches outside the left lip." Tiger backed away and set up again, "How about now?" "Dead center." Tiger struck his putt and it rolled true, uphill into the center of the cup, "I've got a problem."

Tiger kicked a few stones as he walked uphill with Hacker to the next tee, the one hundred and thirty five yard par three fourth hole. He asked, "Will you check my line after I set my putter on each hole." "I'll go one step better. I'll check your setup on each shot after you tell me how you're going to play it. As far as I know, on a two man best ball that's allowed. Why haven't you been using your caddy?" "We're both myopic." "If what they say about ultraviolet harming our eyes is true, we should all be wearing tinted glasses out here for protection." "You already are." "I'm ahead of my time." "And blind as a bat." "I might just line you up six inches to the right of your target line." "And you're my partner. What should

I know about this par three?" "Pin's on the left, just over the trap. Add a club for uphill. I'm going to bring it in right to left." "So what else is new?" Happy teed his ball on the right side of the tee and struck a punch eight iron. His ball rolled within the leather. He twirled his club like a baton, "I'll line you up." Tiger teed his ball low in the center. Hacker asked, "Where are you aiming?" "Center." "You're on line." Tiger followed Hacker's punch eight iron shot with a three quarter pitching wedge. His ball landed on the back of the green and spun back to the center, twenty feet to the right. As they walked off the tee, Tiger laughed, "You can't line up distance." "No, but it is the same as that old saying. When a tourist in New York asked a Hippy, 'How do I get to Carnegie Hall.'" "What did he answer?" "Practice, man, practice."

Hacker struck Tiger's ball softly, sending it on a right to left breaking arc. It struck the back of the cup and spun out. Tiger shook his head, "Thought it was in. Now I'll have to putt. What happens if I go ahead and tap your ball in?" "We'd have a par and you'd have a putter stuck somewhere in your body where the sun doesn't shine." "Line me up before I putt. What do you see?" Hacker frowned, "Good thing it's less than five feet. Breaks left to right and all speed. Depends on how hard you hit it." "I'm always firm." "If it was me, I'd play three inches outside left and let it drift in. Firm, I'd keep it just outside the left edge." Tiger set

up, "Where am I aiming?" "Right center." "How about now?" "Firm outside the left edge." Tiger drilled it to the back of the cup. Happy set his ball back down in the same spot and took a practice putt, watching as it drifted three inches left to right into the cup, "You've got to learn to Bobbie Jones it once in awhile." "Masters and Open, but I can hold the line on these California greens. Next hole?" "Straightaway par four, four hundred and seventy five yards. You can use your thunder stick." "Trouble? Waste right of them waste to left of them, "Into the jaws of death rode the six hundred." "Tennyson? And from a Zonie at that." "You forget, they teach English Lit in Ohio."

Hacker watched Tracks with admiration as he stood behind his ball on the fifth tee. When he was Tiger's age, all he could think about was the young ladies and one in particular, Marylin. Golf was secondary. Tiger had the focus of a thirty year old married man with five children. Tiger poked Hacker, "Get your mind back on the game. I put you in the left waste area. You're supposed to help me line up." "Sorry. I was admiring your setup and my mind wandered to when I was a young boy about your age. Sure wish I had your focus then. Still do. Waste area isn't a bad place to be on this hole. I'll coax a draw driver to the middle. Too long for a three wood." Happy set up to the left and almost hit a snap hook. His ball rolled across the fairway into the first cut of the left rough, a full seventy yards behind Tiger Track's drive. He whistled

as he walked and handed Tote his driver, "Hit it three hundred and ten yards and I need a pair of binoculars to see Tiger's drive."

Hacker stood behind Tiger as he began his setup, "What are you going to do with it?" Tiger looked back over his shoulder, "Going to punch a seven to the front and roll it to the pin." "Set up ten yards to the right. You should pull it back on the pin. Okay, looks good to me." Tiger swung a half swing seven striking down and through the ball, pulling a low punch shot toward the pin. His ball landed ten yards on the green and checked, before continuing to roll ten feet, past the pin. He caught up with Hacker, "How did you know I'd pull it?" "We all hit that half or three quarter shots straight on the practice tee. Out here under pressure, we have a tendency to get a little quick on the down swing. Amateurs do the opposite. Their tendency is to slow down and push it to the right." "And we do when we over-correct." "Cost you the open. Have to learn to play for the moment." "How so, oh great and wise one?" "Hit the driver when you feel it instead of playing by the book." "Now you tell me. I know you're right. I became a slave to my preparation." "And you lost the edge you have in distance." "Should I have hit my driver more?" "Didn't have to. Your three wood is just as accurate as your two iron and seventy yards longer. You put too much pressure on your second shots. No one, not even you, can put it close all the time with those long irons, but you have to feel it, have

confidence." "I lacked it at Congressional." "So did I and almost all of the field."

Hacker looked over his shot in the waste area. He was on packed desert sand and his ball was sitting up, "Think I'll follow Tiger's lead and punch a nine iron, Tote." "You asking me or telling me?" "Asking. God, everyone out here is so damn sensitive." "Sorry, Boss. My stomach is still churning from the salsa on my Mexican breakfast. I'd swing an easy wedge, but I'm not the pro. Why the punch nine?" "Like I told Tracks, confidence and feel." Happy nipped his ball out of the sand on another low trajectory. It landed just short of the hole, bounced past and spun back striking the pin, coming to rest two inches above the cup. He smiled at Tiger, "Think you can handle that putt, youngster?" "I'm getting a golf lesson today. Did you set up to the right?" "No. Not off packed sand. I took it straight at the hole. Too easy to go right out of the waste."

Tiger tapped Hacker's ball into the cup, "We're seven under. What's our target?" "Twelve under was the best in this format several years back." "Must have made every putt they looked at. How about the next hole?" "Golden put number six in as a sop for you and me. It's a dogleg left par four, but he sloped the landing area for long hitters like you. If you go past the center of the fairway your ball will kick into an area where small boys wind up on milk cartons."

Tiger looked down on Golden's canyon hole from the back of the pro tee and chided Hacker, "You go first, but tell me. How you are going to play it?" "Well, it's two hundred and fifty seven to the center of the fairway at the dogleg. I'm going to hit a three wood hook and cut the corner." Hacker teed his ball high on the left side of the tee and drove his three wood shot into perfect position, hooking around the corner to the right side of the fairway, not more than wedge distance for Tiger second shot. Hacker stood behind Tiger and held up his hands, "Whoa, what are you doing aiming left with that thunder stick out of your bag? You'll drive it halfway up the canyon wall, unless you're playing a bank shot." Tiger took several waggles, "Lets give the folks a thrill. I'm going to aim ten yards off the right side of the green and hook it back on. I only have to carry it two hundred and ninety in the air." "True, but you have to hit it high over a small mountain." "Check my setup and alignment. Not sure where the green is." "Looks fine too me, but don't even think fade. Good thing we're the first ones off and out here alone." "Don't worry, we have at least ten thousand or so watching and a TGA official to keep us honest." Tiger backed off to regain his focus. He returned to his setup, took a waggle and swung an easy swing, for him. The ball flew high and hard above the desert rocks and disappeared over the rim of Golden's canyon. The roar from around the green told them of the result. He handed his driver to his caddy, "Hope I didn't bean one of the paying customers. That drive felt good."

Tiger stood behind Hacker's ball, "Either a full wedge or three quarter nine. What do you think?" "Lesson number two. You have a clear shot to the pin for any trajectory from a six on up. Hit the shot you have the most confidence in for the moment." "I can control my eight iron better today. I'll hit a pitch eight." "Remember, under pressure your tendency is to draw it to the left and long. Your alignment looks just right. I have you ten yards to the right of the stick." Tiger struck down and through with a quick swing. His ball flew in a low arc, landing ten feet on the green. It bounced forward another twenty feet and dug in, reverse English slowing its forward momentum. His ball stopped five feet left of the hole. He placed his arm around Hacker, "Where were you at the Open?" "Playing in a threesome behind you." "Oops. Looks like you've found a new straight man."

Tiger's drive landed on the left edge of the green in the second cut of rough and bounced to the right center. Hacker had a forty foot right to left uphill putt. He called for Tiger, "Your turn to help me line up. I read a good five feet of break." "Somewhere between four and six. Give it a rap. The other ball is makable." "If I don't make this, It'll be ten foot past." Hacker struck the ball with the toe of his putter. The ball rolled further right than he wanted, but when the speed came off, it drifted left, catching the right side of the cup and spinning all the way around the outside of the hole before rolling in. He looked up at Tiger with a sheepish grin, "I

miss-hit the damn thing." "Good thing you did. We're nine under after six. If this keeps up, they're going to give us a saliva check in the scorer's tent. Tell me about number seven." "Not much to it. It's a two hundred and ten yard down hill par three."

Tiger and Hacker climbed into a cart for the long ride up and over the canyon wall. When Tiger thought they were at the top, the path continued winding up a narrow mountain trail to the pro tee. Tiger climbed out and looked down on a par three without fairway, "Straightaway par three? Must be a hundred foot of fall to the green without anyplace to bailout. I haven't seen a trail this narrow since the Grand Canyon." Hacker laughed, "Not for the faint of heart. It's all carry. I'm going to hit a five wood. Take one more than you think you'll need. Once the speed comes off, it'll drop like a bomb." "I was thinking six iron, so I'll hit a five. What about the green?" "Slopes back to front with four ledges. Mate has it on the back terrace today. Should play easier." Hacker placed his ball on a peg and pushed it down into the turf, a quarter inch above the grass on the left side of the tee. He aimed at the right trap, intending to pull his five iron back to the center of the green. It stayed right, taking two bounces and coming to rest hole high in the first cut, "Won't be an easy putt for you." Tiger teed his ball on the right side of the tee, aiming on the greenside of the trap. It traveled in a left to right arc, stopping twenty feet left of the hole. He

tossed his club to his caddy, "Looks like we'll finally get a par." Hacker laughed, "Proves you're human after all. You're right. Both of our putts have at least ten feet of break."

As Hacker lined up a fifty foot putt, he asked Tote, "What do you think?" "Too long to have a go at it. I'd hit it fifteen feet to the right and let it drift in." "Right you are. It'll pick up speed if I play it tight and low. Hacker walked to his ball, aimed right and struck it with his putter, all in one motion. It rolled to within ten feet short and above and began drifting down toward the cup, stopping six feet below. He marked his ball, "Did you go to school?" "Sure did. I'm going to lag this one close. How far above did you aim?" "Fifteen feet." "And it broke twenty. I'll borrow five feet more." "Let it drift in." Tiger's ball rolled to a stop next to Hacker's putt, "No way to stop it. Remind me to keep it below the hole tomorrow. You want to putt?" "Should. Yours is straight in. The one I left you breaks left to right." Hacker took a quick look and made a smooth stroke, the ball hit the back of the cup and dropped in.

On their way to the next tee, Tiger smiled, "Don't tell me. Let me guess. A dogleg right." "You got it. Snakes to the left and waste area to the right." "How far to the corner?" "From here, two hundred and forty. You have another fifty yards before snakes come into play. Hate this hole. Can't hang it to the right or I'll be on the side of that hill if I miss.

I'm going to take a three wood over the waste area and try to put you in the middle." Hacker's ball hooked on cue, over the waste area and into the middle of the fairway. He presented Tiger with a one hundred and sixty five yard shot to the center of the green. Tiger took out a four iron, "I'll try a fade over the corner." And he did just that, leaving Hacker with a half wedge to a right cut pin. As they walked up the fairway, Hacker asked, "What are you thinking when you take it back and come through?" "Stay smooth and hit the damn thing." "Nothing else?" "Only when I detect that my swing is off line and then I adjust. What is on your mind?" "Nothing. I try to breathe out and swing through, but I don't think about anything. Might have a tune going on between my ears, but that's about it.

Everytime my mind gets cranked up my game goes in the toilet. Have to be in the present, not in the future or in the past." "What's that about a trained forty year old body and an eight year old mind?" "Absolutely. Get it grooved and think positive thoughts." "I'll let my mind go blank on this nine iron you left me. Green slopes left to right?" "And back to front for drainage." Tiger hit his shot one foot short of the hole. Hacker followed with a three quarter wedge that skipped above the pin and spun back into the hole, "We won't be playing by ourselves tomorrow." "We're eleven under after eight. That has to be a record." "Don't think they keep them for this kind of format." "Next hole?" "Straightaway par five. Five hundred and eighty eight yards. Drive and a four iron for you." "At this altitude, maybe."

Tiger whistled as he looked down at the results of Hacker's drive, "Drive and a four iron my foot. It's uphill to the clubhouse." "No worries, mate. The ground is hard and we're at altitude, remember." "You've been hanging around Mate Tucker, too long. Show me the way. Wait a minute. I've got to hit your ball. Looks like a lay-up for sure." "Not with the way you crush the ball. Bet you only have two fifty left. Pins in the middle. What club do you plan to use?" "Two iron." "With your length you may keep on bouncing right into the clubhouse." "What do you suggest?" "Five wood. Take it in high." "You're in luck. I'm carrying a five wood instead of a three iron. Wanted to try it under game conditions to see if it will keep me in play. Get rid of the lefts' and rights'." "Go left under pressure. Over-correct and go right?" "Right." "Give it a go." Tiger took several practice swings, "Bunker on the right?" "Doesn't come into play. Not for you, anyway. Easy swing should do it." Tiger took a waggle and swung hard. His ball landed on the front and rolled fifteen feet short of the pin. He frowned at Hacker, "I think you under-clubbed me." "Can't see it, but from the crowd's reaction, it must be close. So don't complain. Looks like I'll have a putt on grass instead of carpet."

Hacker grinned as he walked to Tiger's drive, "I can kick it home from here. Not more than a seven iron. Who was that idiot that said, 'Drive for show. Putt for dough.'" Totes sat his bag down, "Wasn't me and I'd hit a choke down five iron

if I was you. Quite a bit of grade." "You're the boss. How far is it to the pin?" "One hundred and sixty seven yards." Hacker struck down and through. As his shot disappeared over the crest, Hacker whistled, "Damn, it's much longer than it looks. Bet I haven't lost my turn." Tiger called down from the crest, "Great shot. Take your time. I'll go ahead and putt. You gave me a right to left, uphill, less than ten feet." Hacker came over the crest in time to see Tiger drain his putt, center cut. Tiger smiled, "Thirteen under after nine. Must be some kind of TGA record." "Should be. Need to stop by the locker room?" "I need a sandwich. Does Mate have a spread?" "Best in the west. Maria is a jewel. I'll join you after I see a man about a horse."

Tiger looked down on an open faced Maria burger as Hacker walked up to the buffet and took a handful of chips, "Take your time. No rush. Since we're playing by ourselves, we have at least three holes open behind us. The TV people want us to slow down or we'll finish before they go on the air." Hacker picked up a plate, "I'm going to indulge myself in a bacon lettuce and tomato masterpiece." Maria shook her head, "Not at my buffet, Mr. Hacker. You'll need melted white cheese over bacon, tomato and ham. I'll prepare an open faced sandwich for you. I picked up several ideas in Denmark last summer." "Did you go to cooking school there?" "No, but a good chef is never on vacation. I traded a few recipes." Tiger stood up, "I'll let our fans know that we're on a thirty minute lunch

break. Nothing worse than wondering what is going on." "Make sure the TGA folks know what we're doing. Wouldn't put it past those clowns to fine us or assess a stroke or two."

Hacker walked slowly to number ten tee, "I'm stuffed. How about you?" "Is Maria the chef for Mate's barbecue tonight?" "I hope so." "So do I. That lady can sure cook. Tell me about ten." "Downhill par three, one hundred and seventy eight yards, straightaway." "It's mowed fence-line to fence-line. What did Golden have in mind?" "Speed up play, but if you hit it anywhere near the edge of the green, your ball will roll off twenty yards into a collection area." "Doesn't take sand, water or long grass to make a hole tough and interesting. Want me to lead off?" "Keep it near the middle. I don't want to play over and back." "It's that tough?" "It is." Tiger took out his seven iron, "Going to practice my punch shot." He hit down and through with a half swing, "Waited on that one." His ball flew low and straight, landing on the front of the green, rolling to the center. He smiled at Hacker, "Just like the Dr. ordered, middle of the flat surface." "But you left me with a twenty foot putt." Hacker hit a three quarter six iron. His ball rolled to a stop five feet in front of Tiger's, "Take that, Mr. Tracks." "My, aren't we getting feisty with a seven shot lead." "Are we that far ahead?" "Don't you look at the scoreboard?" "Not with you as my partner. I know we'll be up there. All I have to do is putt." "What about me?" "I don't see you near the top." "Touche, again."

Hacker lined up Tiger's ball, "What do you think?" Totes crouched behind Hacker and looked down the line, "You're both in luck. Breaks right to left, about a cup and a half. Fast, though. If you go more than three feet past you'll roll down into a collection area." Hacker lined it up and smoothed his putt on a right to left arcing roll into the back of the cup. Tiger gave Happy a high five, "You really don't want me to putt, do you?" Hacker needled back, "You're only good from within three feet or outside of thirty." "Tell me about the next hole oh wise and ancient one." "Golden's monster. Uphill dogleg to the right par five. Two sixty to the corner and three forty five to the center of the green. Waste area and cactus to the left, boulders and snakes to the right." "Can I cut it?" "Only if you can carry your three wood or a high driver three hundred. I'll go first and play safe."

Hacker hung a high three wood at the corner. His ball rolled to a stop in the middle of the fairway, three hundred and twenty yards from the pin. He whistled, "Didn't mean to do that. Got away with a push. Are you going for it?" "Got to get my short hitter where he can reach. I'm going to fade a three wood at the corner. Can you get home from two hundred and ninety?" "All day long, son." Tiger swung from the heels, "Damn, let loose of that one. Keep an eye on it." Hacker pitched his three wood to Totes, "More like keep an ear on it. You're so far up in the rocks, we'll need a miner to find it. Tiger's ball landed wide right, impacting a boulder high up on

the hill. It bounded left and forward, landing in the middle of the fairway, seventy yards behind Hacker's ball. Hacker whistled as he walked, "Got to be snakes all over the hillside scared out of their skins by that impact. Don't have a three hundred and sixty yard uphill shot in my bag. How far back do you want to be?" "Get it as close as you can."

Hacker drilled a low running right to left three wood uphill toward the green. It came to rest seventy yards short. Tiger called over to Hacker, "Three or five wood?" "Hit your five. Can you draw it?" "With a pencil." Tiger drilled his five to the front, just short of the trap. Hacker and Tiger walked uphill together and looked over both shots. Hacker picked up Tiger's ball, "Hit your lob wedge over the trap. Without spin should land ten yards short. Don't try one of lefty's full body swings, keep it short and compact." "Your shot was closer." "Can't stop it anywhere near the hole and I'm a better putter. Don't catch me standing over it for an hour. Make up your mind and hit the damn thing. Like Long John?" "That's too fast, even for me. Get me close." Tiger looked over his shot, "Don't think I'll hit a lob. Going to spank a nine off the back foot." "You'll make a golfer out of yourself, yet." Tiger set up and hit a quarter swing chip seventy yards in the air. His ball landed ten feet short of the pin, bit into the turf and rolled seven feet further, leaving Hacker with a three foot putt. Tiger accepted Hacker's high five with, "Take that old and ancient one." "You should add wise." "Only if I can add ass."

Looks like a tricky three footer. Do you want me to read it for you?" "Oh, to be young again." "Whatever you do, don't backhand it." Hacker shook his head and grinned, "Make yourself useful and hold the pin. Watch, you're never to old, or in your case young, to learn." Hacker drilled their putt into the back of the cup, taking what little break there was out of play. He waited until Totes picked the ball out of the cup, "Fifteen under and seven holes to play." Tiger placed his arm over Hacker's shoulder, "Whats twelve look like." "Four hundred and thirty yard par four, downhill." "And left to right?" "Of course."

Tiger placed his ball and tee in the ground, "You want me to hit first?" "Only if you take out your thunder stick and cut the corner." "Trouble?" "Waste area to the right, but no boulders. Cut as much as you feel comfortable with." Tiger took the head cover off of his driver and aimed toward the green. Hacker shook his head, "You've got to be kidding me." Tiger gave the crowd one of his patented grins and let fly. This time he hit it on the screws. His ball flew dead straight, clearing cactus and rocks. It landed on hard pan seventy yards short of the green. The second bounce came off the cement cart path. His ball rolled onto the green between the two right sand bunkers. Hacker gave him a high five, "I know you made it. Listen to the noise our gallery is making. Where do you want my drive?" "Just put me in play, I'm on a roll." "After today, Golden is going to put up a wall and take

away your shortcut." "Enough of this chatter, show me a fade oh wise and ancient one." Hacker hit a fade that drifted around the corner, "We are hot today. I've hit a safe push and a fade." "The golf gods are with us. I tried to speed up my setup and take away. Seems to help, but only if I have my concentration going. How do you do it?" "Mex gave me a few tips. He grips and regrips with his right hand. I use my left and try to think about turning my back. Keeps my mind off the ball." "How about distance and club speed?" "I think about that when I stand behind it. When I visualize the shot. When I'm over it I put my swing on autopilot. I don't like to take practice swings or putts. Breaks my concentration. But, every rule is meant to be broken. When I don't feel right over the ball, I swing the club to get a feel. Don't let me screw up your game. Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear." "What did you say?" "Do your own thing."

Tiger took out an eight iron at a distance he would normally use a pitching wedge. Hacker watched with pride as Tiger hit a three quarter punch shot within seven feet of the hole, "Good swing and better results. You may have to putt on this hole. We have one more free shot." "I don't see the ball." One of the gallery walking along called out, "Albatross. Don't you know it's a hole in one?" Hacker looked over at Tracks, "We're eighteen under. The townsfolk will be coming after us with pitchforks and knives." "Tell me about thirteen." "Not a long par four and believe it or not, straightaway." "Whats the

catch?" "Water on both sides and about two hundred and ninety out there is more of the same. The pond there is forty yards across." "We lay-up."

Tiger hit a four iron and Hacker hit a three from the tee. Tiger tried a knock down half swing seven iron, keeping the ball low into a slight breeze. Hacker followed with a punch seven. The pin was located on the crest of a swale. Tiger putted first and lipped out. Hacker tried the same putt and didn't come close, "Only thing Mate didn't put here was a windmill to putt through. We're still eighteen under. We can par in and still be up by six shots." "Tell me about fourteen." "We'll make up ground. Severe uphill dogleg to the right par five. You can take it over the corner, but I can't." "How far to the corner?" "Three hundred and ten. Boulders before and waste area afterwards." "Golden loves those waste areas." "Don't have to water them and it keeps the environmentalists happy. You'll have to bone up if you're thinking about adding architecture to your business line." "Not yet. Later, when I'm an old fart like you."

"Let the old fart hit first. I'll get you in play." "Fade?" "No way. I've tempted the golf gods twice and that's enough for an old man." Hacker drilled his patented low running hook up the right side of the rough, arcing back into the middle of the fairway past the dogleg. Tiger asked, "What will I have left for my shot to the green?" "About two seventy five up

a steep slope." "I'm going to go at it about ninety percent." Tracks ball faded high, cutting the right corner of the dogleg. Only the slope kept it from rolling through the fairway into the cactus in the left waste area.

Tiger asked, "How far will this play?" Hacker checked his yardage book, "Subtract twenty for altitude and add fifteen for uphill. I'd say about two eighty one to the pin." "Five wood?" "For you. A three for me." "Trouble?" "Trapped in front and don't go right." "What is Golden's surprise." "A dry gulch eighty feet down full of animals that bite. Pins on the left today." Tracks drilled a five wood over the trap. His ball came to rest in the middle of the green, "Damn, thought it would draw." "Air's too thin. Ball doesn't work as well at altitude." Hacker looked over his shot, "Two ten uphill to the pin. Here comes the old folks five wood." He floated the ball right to left from the center of the green to the pin. Tracks was left with a twenty five foot uphill putt which he drained. He accepted Hacker's high five, "Twenty under and four to play." "If this keeps up, everyone else is going to be playing for second place."

Hacker talked as they walked, "Fifteen is very short, only three hundred and ninety yards and straightaway." "What's the catch?" "We tee off from a cliff over bunkers, to a narrow ribbon of fairway that ends two hundred and ninety out." "What's the obstacle?" "Gully two hundred feet across." "Can I play

out of it?" "Only if you fall in. There is no way to get down or back up. The exit is two miles away, downstream." "Five wood?" "Five wood." Tiger looked over the front edge of fifteen tee, "Don't look down." He smoothed a five wood to the center of the fairway, twenty yards short of the gulch. Hacker followed with a four wood to the left side of the fairway. His ball rolled almost to the edge of the gulch. He walked to Track's ball, "Now is when the fun begins. Green is mounded, as small as a postage stamp without any glue, so it is slick and firm. Going to float a high wedge at the center and let it roll right toward the pin." His ball landed right of center and rolled off the green into a collection area. Tiger followed with the same shot and the same result.

As they stood by the pin, Tiger asked, "You or me?" "In a few years, I'll say you. I'll putt it up close and you can finish it off. I watched your ball roll back into the trap in Scotland." "I read a five foot left to right break. I hate those putts." Hacker lined it up and rolled two feet short of the pin. Tracks lined it up, "Holy cow, I read at least a four inch break on a two foot putt. Take a look at it." "Hate to tell you this, but play it two inches outside and let it drift in. If you try to be firm we may be here all day." "I'll use your technique. Step right up and hit it." Track's putt broke, catching the right corner and spun around the edge before falling in, "We got away with that one. Like your technique. Hit it before doubts filter in."

It was now Tigers turn to whistle as they walked to the next tee, "I'm glad that hole is over. Tell me about sixteen." "Water all the way along the left side and canyon walls to the right. Other than that, not very long. Only four ten to the middle of the green." "Another dogleg right?" "Does a gorilla shit in the woods?" "I'll take that for a yes. Five wood to keep it in play?" "Roger that. Another one of Golden's ribbons." "Sure is warm down here at the bottom of Golden's canyon. Wouldn't want to play this course in the summer." "Members try to finish before ten. After that the Pro sends Desert Dan out to rescue them." Tracks waggled his five wood and blasted away, "Caught that one out on the toe." His ball rolled into the short rough, ten yards short of the dry river bed banks. "You left me with a post shot." "Post shot?" "From the one hundred and fifty yard marker. I'm going to whack a three wood." "Why so much club?" "I'm hitting it well and I have more confidence in it than any other club. That's a free lesson from Gene the machine. Hit to the distance that you're confident in getting it home from or use the club from the tee that you're swinging well." Hacker drilled a right to left shot, cutting the dogleg and rolling dead center, two ninety from the tee, "Think you can wedge it in from there?" "Does a gorilla shit in the woods?"

Hacker looked over at Totes, "Bunkers all around and green slopes left to right. What do you think?" "Bermuda rough isn't long, but it will probably make you turn your club over. Hit

a punch seven to the right side. Pins twenty yards in from there. You'll either pull it to the pin or to the left side. If you hit it straight you'll have an uphill putt." "Good advice. Hand me my seven." Hacker lined up just inside the right trap and swung crisply down and through. Right on schedule, he drew the ball ten feet to the left of the pin. It took two hops and rolled seven feet to the right and below the hole. Tiger, waiting in the middle of the fairway threw his fist in the air, "Atta Hacker!" He played a half nine iron off his right foot, keeping the trajectory low. His ball followed Hackers path, but it struck the pin and came to rest three feet above and left. Hacker shook his head and smiled, "Twenty one under. My oh my. Are we going to get razzed at Mate's barbecue tonight ."

Tracks held the pin as Hacker tapped the putt home, "You are putting well." "That's because you have been hitting it close." "Seventeen?" "Next two holes are uphill. Seventeen is a bear. Two hundred and thirty three to the middle, but no traps, just collection areas of waste and grass." Tiger pushed his tee in the ground, "Hitting that five wood so good, I'm going to give it another go." "You don't want me to hit first?" "I'm on a roll." "Show me the way." Tiger launched his ball into the clouds. When it came to rest it was twenty feet away, below the pin. Hacker shook his head, "Oh to be young again. Us old folks are going to swing from the heels with a choked down three wood." Hacker teed his ball on the

left side of the tee and lined up down the right side of the fairway. His ball rolled into a back left collection area, "This hole is designed like a Donald Ross designed his on Pinehurst Number Two. Only way to keep your ball on the green is to float it in high, just like your shot." Tiger walked alongside, up the hill, "I'm beginning to believe in my five wood. Your putt should be uphill and straight in." Hacker stood behind Tiger's ball, "Totes, what do you think?" "Like putting on the back of a turtle. Going to come right about a cup and a half." "I don't read that." "That's why you haven't been winning. And if you don't hit it firm, it'll break two and a half cups." Hacker shook his head, closed his eyes and hit it on Totes' line. His putt followed that line like a wheel on a string, breaking a full cup and a half, hitting the back of the hole and dropping in, "Twenty two under with a birdie on the number two handicap hole. My oh my, are we setting a record or what?" "One more to go. Tell me all I need to know about eighteen. Uphill to the club house and dogleg right. Fairway banks left to right with a dry creek bed on the right side. Series of deep sand bunkers on the left corner. You can cut it, but there is no way that you can reach. Too much grade."

Tiger cut the corner with a high driving three wood, leaving Hacker with an eight iron to the pin. Hacker followed with a low running hook to the middle of the dogleg opening. Tiger played first, hitting a three quarter six iron one hundred and

seventy yards uphill to a left side pin. His ball rolled to within seven feet. Hacker drilled a full eight draw to the left of the pin, almost dropping it in the hole. They signed their cards at twenty three under. A smooth forty nine. Tiger deadpanned to Hacker, "I think we're the leaders in the clubhouse." "Tell me about it. We have a sixteen shot lead and a bunch of irritated TV folks." "They caught the last four holes or at least I saw a lot of red lights on the cameras. They shouldn't be too mad." Hacker stretched his arms, "I'm going to take a practice nap. Where are you staying?" "Rented a member's house within walking distance of the clubhouse. Nice little twenty room cottage." "See you at Mate's barbecue. You're going to help me at the grill. I'll teach you how-to cook steak the Nebraska way." "And I'll teach you how-to grill lobsters the Thai way." "Gonna' be a hot time in this ol' town tonight!"

Hacker and Tracks won the three day tournament on the first day. They coasted in with a record forty under par, far outdistancing the rest of the field. Mate claimed it was Track's hot lobster sauce that did the field in, but it was noted that Mate had three helpings. As they parted at the airport, Tracks asked, "What are your plans between now and next year?" "Moving into a condo at Sebastian and working on my game." "Let my agent know where you'll be when you move into temporary digs in Florida. I want you to play a few rounds with my friends and me in Mouseville." "Only if you give me two aside and an

adjust after nine." "No way! Not in Match play. Think about what we talked about." "Joining your new company?" "Right. Let me work out the details and Mike, you, me and my folks can sit down and talk." "After negotiating with Totes, that should be easy." "Salary plus commission?" "How did you know?" "Mine, too, but a good one is worth every penny."

WINTER

"Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York."

Shakespeare 1592-1593