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## MAD ABOUT GOLF

Continued from page seven

out with him that first time to try and get him interested in me. He congratulated me last night on my technique. He hates me." She burst into tears again.

"I'll kill him," T. J. stormed. "I'll brain him with his own golf clubs. I'll —"

Jackie shook her head. "I don't blame him," she said. "It was a game at first. But I'm so in love with him now — and I'll never see him again. I just want to crawl in a hole and die."

At the office, that afternoon came to be known as Black Tuesday. But as it turned out, Chet Hallett hadn't left town. He'd moved from his rooming house into the country club, and daily he was out on the course. T. J. heard indirectly of his plans.

HALLETT was grimly training for an important tournament. "I'm going to win," he declared, "and turn pro. I'm through with business, and I'm through with women. Golf is the only thing in life a man can count on. There's no trickery or treachery in golf. A man's on his own, and the way he plays the game is all that matters. There aren't any angles."

T. J. went to the club and watched Hallett practice. Jackie went with him. Hallett smiled when he saw her — a smile like a slap in the face.

Jackie said tearfully, "Can he win the tournament, Pop?"

"The big bum," T. J. said. "I hope he gets his ears pinned back."

The tournament was for four days and seventy-two holes of medal play. The gallery that first day followed the big names. Chet Hallett, playing in a threesome with two unknown pros, had fifty-some spectators. On the fringe of the group were T. J. Butterwick and Jackie.

"He's pushing his tee shots," T. J. said glumly. "He can't do that in this company. But what a fighter! Look at him scramble."

Chet had hooked a two hundred and fifty-yard drive into deep rough. He waded in grimly, took an iron and blasted a long, low shot to the apron. He took a par four. The next hole was short and he caught a trap. His explosion shot came down for an easy putt and a par three. But it was a birdie hole for the topnotchers.

ON THE seventh, Hallett had a thirty-foot putt across an undulating green. He went over the line, painstakingly removing every bit of leaf and cut grass. Then, stepping up to his ball, he tapped it straight into the cup.

Jackie clapped her hands. Chet came walking toward them en route to the next tee.

"Wonderful, Chet," Jackie cried with glee. "That was marvelous."

Hallett gave her a hard grin. "Rooting for me, are you? I suppose that would be an added feather in your cap, to have your friends know you made a chump of a champion."

"Oh," Jackie said in a small hurt voice.

"Who do you think you are, anyway, Hallett?" cried T. J. His face was fiery. He aimed a right at Chet's jaw, but the other stepped quickly aside.

Just then a marshal, with an arm band denoting his status, stepped quickly forward and grasped T. J. by the shoulders. "None of that," he said angrily.

"Get your hands off me," T. J. shouted. The marshal called, and a

state trooper suddenly appeared. T. J. was propelled across the fairways. A few moments later his golf ticket had been taken away from him, his entrance fee given back and he was standing outside the exit gate, with Jackie beside him.

"I'll take that cop's gun and beat his brains out with it," T. J. yelled.

But Jackie shook her head. "Come on, Pop," she said. "We've done enough harm already."

SOME hours later, they learned of the day's scoring. The leader had a sixty-eight. Hallett was far off the pace, with a seventy-three.

T. J. and Jackie went back to the club next day, but the gate official turned them away. They had to depend on outside sources and the newspapers to get the results of the day's play. Hallett came in with a two under par seventy.

"Still in the running," T. J. said. "The bird with the sixty-eight blew up with a seventy-five today. Hallett's got a chance."

"If we could only see him!" Jackie wailed.

"Yeah," T. J. scratched his head, "I got an angle."

He'd observed a factory on the edge of the course. He made inquiries around town, and discovered that one of the club officials was a vice-president of the plant. It was a concern that for years had been trying vainly to edge in as supplier for the Butterwick Chemical Works.

T. J. GOT busy on the phone, and the next morning the V. P. was at the factory entrance to greet them. He led them inside, and an hour later, with two pairs of field glasses glued to their eyes, they were following the game. When the round was over, Hallett was tied for fourth place.

It began to appear that a two hundred and eighty total score might be good enough to win. T. J. did some hasty addition on the back of an envelope. "He shot a seventy today. He'll need a sixty-seven tomorrow for a two-eighty total." . . .

The next day, back in their factory lookout, they watched Chet looking drawn and pale, step up to his ball.

The first hole was a four hundred and forty par four. When Hallett stepped into his drive, T. J. could see him pressing. The ball went out beautifully, then hooked off the fairway, apparently in a ditch.

Jackie could stand it no longer. "Come on," she cried. She took her father's hand, dashed out of the factory and began running across

the course. They came to the little flag marking Chet's ball.

Jackie cried out when she saw it. The ditch was narrow, with perhaps six inches of water in it. But Chet was not in the ditch — the ball rested on the far bank. Chet broke through the crowd, ducked under the rope holding back the spectators, and studied the ball. A wry grin was on his face as he shook his head. He tried to stand on the opposite bank, but was unable to find purchase.

WHILE the crowd stood hushed, watching him, Jackie began to cry. Chet turned and saw her. T. J., red-faced, stood beside her. The spectators looked curiously at them. A marshal said, "Quiet, please."

"I'm sorry," Jackie whispered.

Chet seemed to have forgotten the match as he stared at her. "Why are you crying?" he said.

T. J. was unable to contain himself. "Because she's in love with you and eating her heart out, you mutt," he roared.

Chet continued looking at Jackie. Then a slow grin spread across his face, and his tension was gone. "There's nothing to cry about, baby," he said. "Don't you know that the test of a good golfer is how he recovers?"

HE SAT down on the grass and removed his shoes and socks. He stepped down into the brook in his bare feet, with his pants rolled up. He reached for an iron, sighted on the green, and blasted into the shot. The crowd roared. The ball hit on the apron and rolled to within ten feet of the cup.

There was a fair-sized gallery following the match at that point. But when word got around that Chet Hallett had hit the turn in thirty-three, the other matches were deserted.

They came ultimately to the eighteenth green. Jackie and her father fought the crowd to get a place on the apron. They watched Chet saunter up to a tricky six-foot putt as though he were playing a casual, friendly round. The crowd held its breath. Then the putter blade stroked the ball. Jackie closed her eyes; after another moment of agonizing stillness, the roar of the throng told her that he'd dropped it for a sixty-seven total.

Jackie held T. J.'s hand while they watched the presentation. Then she said, "That's all, let's run. He has everything he wants now, and I'm happy for him."

THEY ran for the parking lot and their car. There was a halloo behind them and Chet caught them as they crossed the driveway.

"Here," he said, and threw the cup at T. J., who held it while Chet kissed his daughter.

After a while T. J. said, "You sure you want to turn pro?"

Hallett stared at him without answering.

T. J. said, "I have an opening for a research chemist. The job pays three hundred a month to start. You can have leaves of absence without pay to play in the Amateur and the Open. Otherwise your golf will be restricted to week ends."

"I'll take it," Chet said, grinning.

They went into another clinch. T. J. said, "I'll give you a membership in the club as a wedding present. Only you got to remember, young fella, that golf is only a game."

But for once, the tycoon's words of wisdom fell on deaf ears.

The End



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