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## PREFACE

Golf is more than a sport, and far more than a pastime. It's a journey and an examination, a diversion and a trial, a romantic love affair and a heart-wrenching betrayal. It's a tidy little metaphor for being alive, rich in symbolism and even richer in sentiment. That's why I love writing about it.

More than five years ago, an editor colleague contacted me with an intriguing assignment. He'd been hired to overhaul *Sky*, the in-flight publication of Delta Air Lines. Somehow—demographic research? intuition?—this visionary editor got the idea that his millions of readers, weary from missed connections and time-zone changes, would find some joy in reading about the game of golf. Every issue.

"I'm thinking about having a regular golf column in the magazine," he explained. "I mean, every month. I know the average road warrior is going to love reading about top players and great courses. And I'd like them to look forward to our golf coverage every time they pick up a new issue."

Sounds great, I told him.

"I'm just concerned about one thing," he confessed. "Do you think it's possible to come up with twelve interesting stories a year, month after month?"

What was "in play," I wondered?

"Everything. Travel. Profiles. Human interest. Equipment. Competitions. Everything."

Give me a day or two, I told him.

Nice Shot, Mr. Nicklaus

The next morning I faxed him a list of three dozen story ideas.

"I think we may have something here," he said.

Indeed, we still do. The game of golf is like a magical well that never runs dry, even in the hottest months. There are always fascinating people to meet, faraway courses to visit, powerful lessons to learn. This collection of stories features some of my favorites. You'll find countless other tales in your weekend foursome, on a remote tee overlooking the sea, in your heart.

Golf gives and gives. I'm honored to share some of its treasures.

Michael Konik  
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