



AFTERGLOW

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Tony always loathed the long winter nights. "I really don't need to sleep all those dark hours," he explained to Clelia, "when it stays dark so late in the morning, I have a difficult time getting up and going."

"It sure would be nice if you helped a little more with Angelina," Clelia informed. "Seeing her smiling face, even on the darkest of mornings, brightens my day."

During the long winter nights, like the dog days of summer, Tony loses perspective. The cabin fever sets in, he has attended too many educational seminars, and he wants to grow grass so bad he can taste it.

He stops over to see Granny, who always seems to be able, "to shine some light" on a situation like this. "Just think," Granny reflected, "the buds will swell, the smells will thicken, Angelina will grow, and a tradition unlike any other will remind you that all is peaceful."

At that moment, Tony recalled the year past, and his visit to Augusta. A warm, bright feeling came over him as he reflected on the anticipation, the boasting, and the moment he stepped on the "sacred ground". "Boy Granny," Tony said in a peaceful tone, "I have so many memories of that one long day." He paused. "The azaleas, the close-cut ryegrass, the glistening white sand bunkers, the bright sunny day, and of course the well oiled golf course management staff were an inspiring site."

Tony wandered home as he always did at lunchtime to meet Clelia and Angelina. Except now in the dark depths of winter, he seemed to have a twinkle in his eye and a bounce in his step. He strode into the kitchen, whisked Angelina into his arms and proceeded to waltz.

"Tony, have you been to the Bar Angus this morning?" Clelia asked. Tony visited the local watering hole on occasion during the long winters, especially when he had ice on his greens or an early snow prohibited him from finishing his snow mold treatments.

"Clelia, can't I dance with my daughter without suspicion of my past errors in judgment?" Tony sarcastically questioned. He did remember the winter of '92-'93 when the ice was around for almost four months and he was more than a little punchy by mid-March. But today, he would have none of that. Today he was basking in the afterglow of his singular experience one year ago at Augusta.

The smile on his little girl's face touched him deeper than it had for many months. He leaned over to Clelia and said, "why don't you invite the family up for Sunday dinner." Americans of Italian descent regarded Sunday as family day, although it usually took Tony until sometime in May before he wanted a hectic household on a Sunday.

After a wonderful lunch of frittata, roasted peppers, fresh mozzarella cheese, crusty peasant bread, all followed by

an elegant cup of espresso with a drip of sambuca, Tony took Clelia over to the shop.

"*There's a cobbler down the street, fixing shoes for people's feet,*" Tony and Angelina sang in unison, "*with a bang and a bang and a bang, bang, bang.*" Angelina loved to sing this song on the way to the shop because Mario, the mechanic, was always banging something.

When they arrived at the shop, Mario immediately took Angelina to his office where he had a little tool set for his son, Pasqual. "Little bambina, let's go play with the tools," he joyfully prodded. "We can bang, bang, bang."

The excitement was too much for her and immediately looked to Tony and said, "pee-pee."

In a flash, Mario brought her to the bathroom, realizing she did not have a diaper on since she was one week into "big girl" panties and potty training.

From a distance, Tony heard "uh oh," and just like that a smile came to his face and a tear to his eye as he thought of the great joy he had in his life each day with

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Clelia, Angelina, Mario and Granny. Once again, his mind wandered and a stream of consciousness with links known only to Tony washed over him.....

Tony was standing off the fifth green at Augusta, watching a crew member mowing a surface that was so undulating that when the person was mowing the front of the green, he was not visible from less than 15 yards away. Tony noted the old Toro "thatch-master" 500 the guy was using—the hand mowing unit with the floating head. He had just spoken with Ole, the Toro salesman about purchasing a couple of the 500s.

"I just seeded two of my greens to the new Penn A-4," he informed Ole, "just like Augusta did on a few greens, and I heard from a fellow superintendent at the National in Vegas that the fixed-head mowers might dig and scalp these new tight bents on more undulating greens."

Angelina's cry brought Tony back to reality. He rushed into the office and found her in Mario's arms crying. "An-lina, go boom," she muttered.

"She was trying to climb onto the little toy mower," Mario explained. "She didn't expect it to start moving." "She might be a golf superintendent in the making, Tony," Mario noted. Once again, Tony's mind wandered away.....

Angelina Facebella, the first woman superintendent at Augusta National being interviewed by Pat Summerall during the television coverage. Tony continued down this stream of consciousness.....

Angelina was revered by her colleagues, male and female alike, because of her deep devotion for the land, the game, and her profession. Everyone around her marveled at her consistently positive attitude and how her enthusiasm for life was contagious. Her staff regularly commented how great she communicated her thoughts and noted the "glow" that came over her during the tournament.

Pat Summerall asked her how she was able to balance the pressures of the tournament, raising her two children, and maintaining such a positive attitude?

Almost immediately, a radiant smile came to her face. "When I was a kid, we lived in the Adirondacks," she explained. "My dad was a golf superintendent at the country club in town. Each winter he would struggle with the long nights and then right around the beginning of spring, he would tell me the story of his first trip to Augusta. He described the afterglow of his experience so vividly that I could actually feel it and see it in his eyes. I

simply followed that beam of light I saw from him and it took me to this place."

Summerall interrupted, "Do you see your dad much these days?"

"Not as much as I'd like to," she replied. "But from February through May, he and my mom live with my husband and me, spending time with their grandchildren. Which, of course, is part of the reason I am able to balance my life during tournament time."

Summerall concluded the interview, then stayed to chat more with Angelina.

She continued, "You know Pat, my dad doesn't mope as much in the winter anymore, now that he is retired. He misses growing the grass, but he has replaced his passion for grass with his beautiful wife and grandchildren. His glow of light beams through them now, all year long....."

Tony's eyes were all welled up with tears as he felt a tug on his pant leg drawing him back to today. He reached down, scooped up Angelina, said good-bye to the crew, and headed home.

The car ride home was filled with Angelina jibber-jabber. This time Tony's mind didn't wander away. He stayed right there basking in the glow of his daughter's life, his own hopes for her, and the thought that life, with its many challenges and mysteries provides regular opportunity to dream.....






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