

JAMES CULVERHOUSE

## **My Perfect Place Meets Death**

Deep breath, in and out.

I look over the expanse of a 200 metre par 3 hole while shielding my eyes from the sun. I think to myself; see the downhill lie leading to a deep sand bunker at the front left of a wide green. We don't want to go there, Bob. I visualise the right to left slope of the fairway. I aim slightly to the right of the wide green to follow the contours designed by nature over the small hills and gullies until we find the green. I observe the various wildlife grazing in the grass, oblivious to this custom built course designed to test a golfer's skill. The kangaroos are dozing off to the right, about one hundred and fifty metres away from the tee box.

Thinking now, I stand behind my ball and line up a spot on the ground one foot in front, in the exact line of sight of where I want my shot to go. Grip the club, not too tight but just enough, as if you are holding a small bird in your hands. Line the club face of your driver perpendicular to the spot on the ground one foot in front of the teed up ball. Turn your head to your left to take one final glance at the splendour and majesty of the hole. Trees lining either side of the fairway, that amazingly manicured green just waiting for your ball to land on.

Deep breath, in and out.

I am in my place of peace. The stress melts away. I start turning my shoulders away from the green, the club gracefully swinging in a wide arc as I start my backswing. A brief moment's hesitation before the pendulum of the swing sends the club into a forward arc, heading straight for Bob, my golf ball. It helps me to keep calm when I give the ball a name and personality.

That amazing sound halfway between a ping and a thwack that sends Bob on his journey to his home. He flies high, he flies true.

He flies a little to the right and with dawning horror I see Bob striking the head of a joey. It sways and drops to the ground while Bob is corrected towards his home and ricochets left, straight towards the hole. I feel elation as Bob falls in the hole and gives me my first hole in one but deep sadness

creeps over me as I notice the joey is not moving. They joey's mother hopping over to where it fell, licking the bleeding wound in his head. I sit down on the tee, and feel deeply saddened for the pain I have caused his family. The hole in one means nothing now. Death has come to my peaceful place.