

Hole 1

Scorecard Piper 1 Ladies 0

Piper O'Donnell had a very difficult decision to make. Should she wear her pink or aqua Lilly outfit for this morning's Ladies' Nine Hole match at the Woodlawn Golf & Country Club? Lord knows her only chance of being noticed lies solely upon her outfit selection since her handicap leaves a lot to be desired. Who said the score has to count anyway? Isn't the primary purpose of the Ladies' Nine Hole to catch up on the latest scandal rocking the tiny suburb of Woodlawn, Ohio?

As she pulls her black Mercedes 550 convertible into the tree-lined entrance, Piper takes the opportunity to check her make-up in the rearview mirror before she faces the day's drama. Her blonde hair is perfectly tucked behind the crisp, white visor and the collar of her pink Lilly shirt brings out the rosy color of her cheeks, just as she had planned. "What's not to like?" murmurs Piper as she dreamily stares at herself in the mirror while trying to find a parking spot in the shade. Dressed to kill, Piper heads to the

pro shop feeling confident and self-assured. “It’s amazing how the right outfit can lift your spirits,” thinks Piper. Not that she needs any help in that department!

As if it weren’t hard enough to actually be expected to play the full nine holes, Piper has no say in the selection of her partner for the match. Despite the witty repartée that she exchanges with the resident golf pro, Piper has a feeling he just isn’t too keen on her vivacious personality. In fact, she thinks he actually enjoys watching her squirm as she tries to play nice with the local ladies.

If only her husband hadn’t taken that supposedly “once in a lifetime job” would she be stuck in this godforsaken place trying to fit into a social set that thinks pashminas are a type of camel and Kate Spade is some sort of gardening expert. What she wouldn’t give for a mojito on the terrace of some posh New York City café while watching the latest fashions strut past on 5th Avenue! Too late now. Piper just has to make the best of an already awful set of circumstances.

Tossing her keys to the valet boy-toy, Piper does her best to adjust her Chanel sunglasses so that the barely seventeen year old doesn’t see her ogling him. It’s hard to find eye candy in a place that prides itself on farmland and good honest living. Where’s a crooked Wall Street stock broker embroiled in some insider trading scam when you need one? You never know what you’ll miss until you don’t have it anymore. “Isn’t that the truth?” thinks Piper to herself.

“Hello, Piper!” bellows Tanya Vance as she stumbles out of her Jeep Grand Cherokee. No valet parking for Tanya. A farm girl turned banker’s wife, Tanya is used to doing things for herself. Someone needs to show this woman what the good life is all about, muses Piper. No need to do things for yourself when there is someone willing and quite able to do it for you.

“Well, good morning to you, Tanya!” replies Piper. “Looks like the Fates are with us and the rain will hold off until lunchtime. Aren’t we lucky?” What Piper is really thinking is “Screw those Fates! Why not a little rain to cut short what is certain to be an agonizing morning?”

“Sure is a beautiful day!” announces Tanya. “I had Johnny polish my clubs last night so that they will look all nice and shiny when I accept my prize at the luncheon later on today.”

“What a grand idea, Tanya,” says Piper. “I have no doubt that you’ll win.” It’s not like Piper is vying for that honor. She’ll be lucky to fill out her scorecard correctly minus her creative adding system.

It would be so much easier to be mean and wicked to Tanya if she weren’t just sweet as honey. Tanya lives for these weekly outings whereas Piper views them as just another chore to check off completed in her dreadfully boring life. Maybe she’ll luck out and get paired with Tanya. At least it will make the morning fly by since Tanya prides

herself in playing each hole with the precision of a pro golfer. Even so, it doesn't hurt that Tanya has been known to turn a blind eye to Piper's not so proficient golf swing and let her fudge a little. Perhaps things won't be so bad after all.

“Hi, Piper,” purrs Carolyn De Witt. “I must say. I am quite surprised to see you back again after your disappointing attempt last week. You must be a glutton for punishment.”

As Carolyn slowly puts her claws back into her pink golf glove; Piper quite graciously decides to kill the bitch with kindness. “Oh, Carolyn! You are such the sweetheart putting up with my dismal golf game. How do you ever manage to play with the likes of me?”

Back peddling, Carolyn replies, “There you go again, Piper! You know I am just teasing! We all do love you playing with us ladies. It just wouldn't be the same without you.”

“Well, it sure wouldn't,” thinks Piper. Who else would show these women how the game should be played? Fashion first, swing later! The sole purpose of playing golf is to have an excuse for spending money on clothes that you really don't need but must have to keep up appearances. Isn't that the mantra of every housewife? Why else would you give up those fabulous Armani suits and Manolos to quit work and stay home? Please!

“Okay! Gather around ladies! It’s almost time to start and I need to get the foursomes set,” says the luscious golf pro, Jay. Young, unattached, and perhaps the only diversion in the town, he’s been known to cozy up with a lonely housewife or two. Luckily for him, he has yet to be caught. “Mrs. O’Donnell, Mrs. Vance, Mrs. DeWitt, and Mrs. Vanhorst. Please head out to the tenth tee.”

“Honest to goodness,” hisses Piper quietly, “how can this day get any worse?” Jockeying for position, Piper quickly slides herself into the cart beside Tanya. If she has to play with these three charmers at least she can ride with the one woman she can tolerate, in small doses that is. Is the beverage cart coming around anytime soon? Piper really could use a cocktail to get the morning going.

“Piper! Piper!” screeches Tanya, “We are playing together. Aren’t we the lucky ones? We get to spend at least three hours together with Carolyn and Janie. I knew it was going to be a great day! Are you ready to hit the greens?”

“Hit Neiman’s would be a much better option,” sneers Piper under her breath. As she tosses her hair back over her shoulder, she says pertly, “Why, sure, Tanya! We might as well get this over with as quickly as we can.”

“There you go again, Piper! If I didn’t know any better, I’d think you didn’t like playing golf,” says Tanya. “Ready or not, here we come. Hold on, Piper! I forgot my

glasses again so you may be in for a rocky ride. Maybe I should take a quick side trip to my jeep and see if I left them on my seat? Be a sweetheart and let me know when you see the “*Carts Scatter*” sign. Why on earth do they make them so small, I’ll never know? Keep your eyes peeled!”

As Tanya tries her darnedest to navigate the parking lot, Piper takes advantage of the peace and quiet to sum up the morning’s events. It isn’t quite 9 o’clock, and Piper could swear she has a migraine, which is quite peculiar since Piper hardly ever gets headaches. She is seated next to a woman who is blind as a bat without her glasses, and who Piper is counting on to save her petite and well-dressed derriere in this ridiculous game she is trying so very hard to convince herself is fun. Although math had never been Piper’s strongest subject in school, even she doesn’t think this is adding up right. Tennis anyone?

If nothing else could be said of Piper, she definitely knows how to work any situation to her advantage. Take, for instance, last Fourth of July. For some wacky reason, everyone in this quaint little town feels the need to be present for the celebratory parade. Now, rather than go out the night before and get tanked in preparation for the next day’s festivities, the townsfolk choose to line up their beach towels and chairs along the parade route to secure their prime seats for the event. So naturally when Piper, who was not privy to this custom, strolled onto Main Street ten minutes prior to the start of the parade was caught off guard when she realized all of the good spots had been taken. Little did she know the cutthroat mentality of the crowd. Surveying the area, she picked

the cutest old man she could bedazzle with her charms and wound up landing a seat right in front of the judges' table. There's something to be said for a woman who can work her magic on a farmer stuck out in the middle of nowhere!

As Tanya does her best to swerve out of harm's way and not personalize the golf cart with any noticeable scratches, Piper puts her plan into action. "Tanya," oozes Piper, "why don't I keep score today? Now before you say anything, I promise to actually pay attention and not spend the morning text-messaging my girlfriends in New York."

Tanya, who is on a mission to make it to her car, grab her glasses, and get back before they are due on the tee, thoughtfully scratches her head and says, "Well why not? There's always a first and quite frankly, I have too much on my mind today as it is. I plan on winning and having to keep score will just distract me. Thanks, Piper. That is so sweet of you. I don't care what all the other girls say; you're not self-centered, egotistical, and dumb after all."

"Well look who's calling the kettle black," mumbles Piper. Unbeknownst to anyone, Piper has cleverly connived her way into orchestrating what certainly will be a Ladies' Nine Hole match that these naïve country bumpkins will never forget. As the cart makes its way across the bridge to the tenth hole, Piper takes a moment to evaluate her morning's performance. Despite the scorching temperatures, her carefully applied make-up is still intact, there are no signs of perspiration on her new Lilly shirt, and as far as she can see, she did a great job shaving her legs in the dark this morning. So what if she is

stuck on the golf course for next few hours! Lunch is sure to be tasty and the prospect of some tantalizing scoop always puts her in the right frame of mind! “Off to the races we go!” says Piper.

“What are you mumbling about?” asks Tanya. “There are no horses here.”

“Don’t remind me.” snipes Piper. “You know, maybe we could plan a little excursion to the track tomorrow. I heard the mint juleps are to die for, and wouldn’t it be fun to pretend we’re at the Kentucky Derby and wear one of those gorgeous hats with lots of feathers? What do you think, Tanya? Are you in?”

“Piper, let’s just finish what we have started here before we move on to something else. Anyway, I don’t think we should be hanging out at the track. I would hate for anyone to get the wrong idea and think we aren’t good Christian women and loving, faithful wives. Don’t you agree?”

“Oh, yeah,” snickers Piper. “God forbid we have some fun!”

As the heat continues to rise, Piper finds comfort in knowing that her devilish plan of not counting every stroke might just set this little game of golf spinning out of control. Who ever said golf is a man’s game certainly never has met Piper O’Donnell.

As the foursome makes its way to the tee, Piper tries to get herself in the right frame of mind. The game of golf takes more than just skill. Somewhere along the way, Piper has heard that it's a game of concentration and she couldn't agree more. It's hard to eavesdrop on two different conversations while at the same time remember where you hit that damn white golf ball. Luckily, her hubby Charles did her a favor and bought her a box of light pink balls that are quite difficult to see on the greens. It makes it so much easier to deviously drop a ball on the cusp of the rough from the pocket of her skort without anyone noticing as her errant ball lazily flows down the stream.

“Tanya, I'm so glad you found your glasses. That'll certainly help our game. By the way, what's the format today,” asks Janie, “and I assume you're going to keep score?”

“We're playing best ball, Janie,” says Tanya, “and actually, Piper volunteered to keep score. Now before you say anything, she promised to pay attention and not cheat. Personally, I think she'll do a fine job. Whattdya say, girls? Should we let her take a stab at it?”

“Oh, my!” sighs Carolyn. “As if that's even an option!”

“C'mon, Carolyn!” pleads Tanya. “Have a little faith in Piper! She really wants to do it and if memory serves me, last time you kept score, you added wrong and got us

disqualified. We forgave you, didn't we? Why not give Piper a chance to prove there's more to her than meets the eye?"

"Hello! Remember me?" gripes Piper. "You all are talking as if I am not even here."

"If only that were true and we could make her disappear!" snickers Carolyn to Janie.

"That's enough, ladies," commands Tanya. "Since I am the team captain, what I say goes. Piper will keep score and that's final. Carolyn, you're up first. Take out your driver and warm up. I expect you to drive the ball at least 200 yards today. We do have a trophy to win."

"That a girl, Tanya!" beams Piper. "You show them who is boss."

"Don't push it, Piper!" warns Tanya. "Pay attention and start writing. The order will be Carolyn, you, Janie, and then me. That way I can check your adding before we move on to the next hole. Got it?"

"Clear as a bell, Tanya. I heard you the first time," answers Piper. "I'm not a bubblehead like Jessica Simpson, although we do look alike, don't you think? Everyone

is so quick to criticize anything she says or does, but you have to hand it to her. She sure has made a lot of money playing a ditzy broad.”

As the ladies try to digest the relevance of Piper’s soliloquy, they are distracted by a cart with two cackling girls whizzing by, barely missing knocking Tanya’s clubs right off the back of their cart.

“Oh, great! There go the twins!” says Janie. “I didn’t know they were playing today. Aren’t they on probation from that little altercation at the pool last Friday night?”

“Oh, didn’t you hear?” answers Piper. “It seems that they got to the disciplinary board chairmen before the Wadells did and miraculously they were cleared. Now if I had dumped a daiquiri on Mrs. Wadell’s head just because she made a snide comment about my attire or lack thereof, I am sure I would not be here to talk about it. There’s something to be said for being born and bred in a small town. There’s always some dirty little secret that needs covering up at quite the opportune time. If I didn’t know any better, I’d bet the twins have a plethora of ammunition just waiting to be fired. I’d be careful who you’re friends with. You never know when the tide will turn.”

“Okay. Thanks for the warning, Piper, but it’s best if you heed your own advice,” replies Carolyn. “You’d be surprised what circulates on this course. What’s said on the greens very rarely stays on the greens. We’re not in Vegas, you know.”

As Piper tries to figure out what Carolyn has just said, Tanya takes the opportunity to lighten things up and get the show on the road. At the rate they're going, they might miss lunch altogether. Why can't they just concentrate on the game instead of sticking their noses in everyone's business?

"All right, Carolyn," utters Tanya. "You're up. Keep your head down and follow through with your swing. Do you need me to tee you up? I don't mind bending over. You oughtta try it, though. It's good exercise."

"If you don't mind, Tanya" replies Carolyn. "I get enough exercise getting in and out of the car. Why in heaven's name there is no bus service at the private schools, I'll never know. It's not like we don't pay our fair share of taxes or anything. In fact, we need the bus service more than the public schools. It seems like I am never home because the day is spent running a damn taxi service with all of the boys' practices and what not. Maybe we should talk to Bob Huntington. Isn't he up for re-election? Maybe he could actually do something seeing how he's the mayor. With all the campaign donations we have fed him over the years, it's a wonder we're not running this town."

"Fine," answers Tanya. "A simple yes or no would have sufficed."

As Carolyn pulls out her driver and steps onto the greens, Piper meticulously evaluates Carolyn's choice of attire for today's outing, a Jones of New York navy and white polka dotted collared shirt with complementary navy capris. "Not her best

selection,” thinks Piper to herself, “but definitely not as atrocious as Tanya’s plain khaki shorts and white sleeveless JC Penney polo. Do these ladies actually look at themselves in the mirror before they leave the house or are their outfits just a crap shoot?”

“Piper, dear,” says Carolyn, “are we boring you already? You look as if you are thousands of miles away.”

“If only that were true,” answers Piper under her breath. “No, Carolyn! I’m just concentrating. That’s all! I’m trying to remember how to operate my electronic score keeper that Tanya gave me for Christmas last year. I stuck it in my bag this morning in hopes that I would be able to use it today. I just hate writing with those cheap little pencils Jay from the pro shop stuffs in our cart. I wind up getting the lead all over my skirt and Maria my housekeeper starts swearing in Spanish whenever I ask her to get the stains out. It’s not like I’m asking her to massage my feet or pluck my eyebrows. It’s just a silly little stain!”

“Don’t worry, Piper!” interrupts Tanya. “Let Carolyn get this show on the road and I will help you. It’s really quite simple once you get the hang of it.”

Pleased that Piper is finally occupied, Carolyn places her neon yellow ball on the tee and takes a practice swing. Despite Carolyn’s distaste for the game, she is a consistent team player with an impressive handicap of 10. Not one to boast, on the course that is, Carolyn lets her score speak for itself. She has the reputation of being able to hit

the ball at least 215 yards, which comes in handy especially on the fifth hole when faced with the dilemma of clearing the pond and landing the ball on the other side of the bridge. Carolyn sets up her shot and takes one last look at the flag. She bends her knees and takes the driver back. Smack! The ball goes flying into the air.

“Woo! Hoo! Carolyn!” wails Tanya. “That’s the way to get the party started. You must have hit it at least 200 yards. Now the pressure is off of the rest of us to hit a good shot. We can definitely use your ball. It landed plum in the middle of the greens. Great shot!”

“Ok. Enough patting Carolyn on the back!” utters Piper in a chastising voice. “Last time I checked, her head was big enough. It’s my turn. Tanya, sweetie, would you mind setting my pink ball up on the tee?”

“Is princess’s arm broken?” whispers Janie to Carolyn.

“Ladies, that’s enough. There is no need to start bickering so early in the game. We’re all in this together,” replies Tanya. “This is supposed to be fun. Remember that! Let’s concentrate on hitting the ball, not each other!”

Piper, satisfied that she has stirred the pot, approaches the tee box. The moment of truth has finally arrived. At last count, she has spent close to \$500.00 on lessons with Jay. Of course, tongues have been wagging with speculation that that’s not all they have been

practicing together; however, despite the negative implications, Piper enjoys being the center of attention. It makes her feel important, something she rarely experiences at home.

At least she knows her outfit looks good, which gives her more confidence as she lines up her shot. Hoping not to miss the blunder, her doubtful partners stop what they are doing and watch in amazement as she forcefully hits the ball. Surprisingly, Piper hits a decent shot and the ball lands to the left of the fairway at the edge of the rough. Pleased with herself, she actually leans over, picks up the tee, and hands it to Janie.

“Your turn, Janie,” says Piper as she resists the urge to brag about her shot.

Not quite sure what to say, Janie simply replies, “Thanks, Piper.”

An average player who despises being in the limelight when swinging a club, Janie deftly diverts the ladies’ attention from the tee to some delectable gossip. “Have you heard about the little mess Jack Conway has found himself in?”

“Oh, no! Janie” squeals Carolyn. “Do tell!”

“Well it seems Jack was spending a little too much time at the office after hours and his wife got suspicious. Let’s be honest! We all know Jack has never been mistaken

for an overachiever. The amount of time he spends on the course, he should have a hole named after him,” announces Janie.

“Ok, Janie. Get to the point. Brilliant shot, by the way! I think your ball landed near, but not in the sand trap. We may want to use your shot because it’s closer to the hole than mine,” says Carolyn.

Basking in the attention, Janie goes into Academy award actress mode as she delivers the punch line with glee. “The gist of the story is Jack was doing his secretary right on his desk when his wife made a surprise visit!”

“Ouch,” exclaims Tanya. “Why would anyone want to have sex on a desk? That’s got to be the most uncomfortable place imaginable. Whatever happened to just doing it in the backseat of a pick-up? At least they would have seen her coming.”

“I can’t even begin to dissect what’s wrong with what you just said, so let’s just leave it alone,” answers Carolyn. “I actually feel sorry for Jack.”

“And why, pray tell, is that?” asks Piper.

“I can’t believe you all have overlooked the obvious,” states Carolyn. “Kat Conway has to be the most high maintenance woman in all of Woodlawn. Although Piper, you would give her a run for her money.”

“Isn’t that the truth?” agrees Janie.

“Jack can kiss his membership at the club good-bye once Kat gets through with him,” comments Carolyn. “Why men think with their crotches and not with their brains is way beyond me. I can see it now. Jack will be driving a Honda Accord in no time.”

As the ladies take turns discussing the fate of the Conway’s, Piper quietly heads back to the cart and puts the head cover on her driver. “Come to think of it, Charles spent quite a bit of time after-hours at the office when we were back in New York,” recalls Piper, “but not here in Ohio. Isn’t this supposed to be his dream job? A huge promotion? Shouldn’t he be putting in more hours to impress his new boss?”

“Piper!” yells Tanya. “Are you keeping score or mumbling to yourself?”

“I was just putting my club away, Tanya,” replies Piper. “Here I come.” As Piper joins the ladies in their lively discussion of the juicy scandal du jour, she carefully tucks away what she has learned today. You never can be too careful or too secure in a relationship to let the obvious slide. Piper has no intention of becoming the ex-Mrs. Charles O’Donnell, not when there are clothes to buy and shoes to be worn. It’s best to learn from other’s mistakes instead of making them on your own. Perhaps Piper needs to be a little more cognizant of Charles’ comings and goings. A girl can never be too careful

when it comes to securing her future. There's nothing worse than ending up in a trailer park watching QVC for the rest of your life.

Hole 2

Piper 1 Ladies 1

Despite her initial negative reaction to the whole golf outing idea, Piper finds herself quite amused and entertained by her socially inept partners. With two holes remaining, Piper's mouth starts to water in anticipation of the scrumptious crab melt with a side of fruit salad awaiting her arrival. If Tanya can just speed up the process and get them to the last hole without too much fanfare, the morning will certainly be a huge success.

“Piper?” questions Tanya. “What is our score?”

“She has to ask,” mutters Piper. How Piper is going to explain to the group that the battery on her electronic scorekeeper died about four holes back without looking like a total moron is beyond even Piper's realm of possibilities. “Think!” whispers Piper.

“Piper? Did you hear me?” demands Tanya.

“Oh, she heard you alright!” muses Janie. “She’s just trying to get her feet back into her shoes after using her toes to add up the score. Isn’t that right, Piper, dear?”

Not one to miss a chance to make one of the hillbillies look foolish, Piper quips back, “Janie, if we didn’t have to take a two stroke penalty because you grounded your club in the hazard by drawing a line in the sand, which put us way behind schedule, we’d all be sitting on the veranda sipping a cold lemonade, but we’re not. Are we?”

Realizing that the ladies have had just enough togetherness for one day, Tanya jumps in and rescues poor Janie. “Okay, girls. Where were we?” asks Tanya.

“Piper was about to dazzle us with her math keeping skills and tell us our score,” replies Carolyn.

As all eyes stare at Piper, she does what any girl under the gun would do. “Well, with one hole to go, we have shot a seventy-six. The next hole is a par three, so if all goes well, we have a chance of finishing under eighty for the day,” proudly reports Piper.

“Excellent, ladies!” beams Tanya. “I can see our names glistening on that trophy for everyone to admire. Now concentrate! We don’t want to blow it on the last hole.”

“God forbid if we don’t get a trophy,” snickers Carolyn to Janie.

Tanya chooses to ignore Carolyn's snide comments and proceeds with the game. As the carts approach the tee box, she takes the opportunity to pat Piper on the back for doing such a spectacular job of keeping score. It's not every day that Piper actually succeeds in completing a task, let alone accomplishes it without an ounce of difficulty. Perhaps trusting Piper to keep score was the extra boost of confidence she needed to set her on her way. Despite the obvious abhorrence directed at Piper from the others, Tanya has a soft spot for her because they are from similar circumstances. Unfortunately, Tanya has never been openly accepted in social circles, especially by the snarky crew here at the club, and Piper, well, she just hasn't figured out the best way to blend in with a crowd. It's true what they say. Opposites do attract. Even fashion-challenged farm girls and swanky New York-model types have been known to become friends. Who would have thought?

After what seems like an eternity, Janie bends down to retrieve the ball from the hole while Carolyn firmly plants the flag back in place.

"Good game, ladies!" states Carolyn. "I'm pleasantly surprised we walked away with a score of seventy-nine. That's definitely something to be proud of especially since we had Barbie, I mean Piper, playing on our team this morning! I hate to admit it, but you did a great job keeping score, Piper! Thank you!"

It would be easier for Piper to accept Carolyn's humble words if she hadn't made up the score under pressure. For all practical purposes, Piper thinks the score is pretty accurate, but it certainly would be a shame if someone in the foursome kept score without telling her and planned on bursting her bubble in front of the group. Better to be gracious than ostentatious. Isn't that what Granny used to say?

"You are welcome! My pleasure!" responds Piper. "Now let's go eat!"

Piper quickly removes her pink glove and stuffs it into the side of her bag as the ladies all prepare for the bumpy ride back to the club house. All things considered, Piper is awfully proud of her behavior today. For once, she wasn't the center of attention, at least not in a negative way, and it seems like the ladies genuinely liked being with her. Well, maybe that's pushing it a little bit, but at least they refrained from their usual undermining subterfuge that almost always leaves Piper in a huff. Perhaps she's being a little too optimistic, but Piper feels as if she may have cracked the outer surface of their shells and be entering into their inner circle.

Interrupting Piper's reverie, Janie says, "Do we have to sit with each other at the luncheon?"

"Okay," sighs Piper to herself. "Perhaps I shouldn't be picking out Christmas gifts for them just yet."

“It would be nice, ladies, since we together shot an excellent score and hopefully we’ll be accepting a trophy as a team,” answers Tanya.

“Does that mean yes?” says Janie to Carolyn.

“I’m afraid so,” replies Carolyn. “Let’s make a quick stop at the bar. I’m going to need a drink or two if I am forced to eat lunch with Piper. I thought the drama would end with the last hole, but evidently, this ordeal is going to drag on.”

“I’m right behind you,” says Janie. “Just lead the way!”

Shrugging off the obvious slight, Piper proceeds to the restroom to fix what is left of this morning’s make-up. “It wouldn’t hurt the girls to take a peek at themselves in the mirror before entering the dining room,” says Piper to Tanya. “Perhaps they should be more concerned about their appearance than their bar tab.”

“Now, now, Piper,” soothes Tanya. “I’m surprised you’re letting them get to you. Go powder your nose and meet me back at the table. Would you like lemonade or an iced tea?”

“Lemonade would be nice. Thanks, Tanya,” replies Piper.

True to form, no one is in the restroom. “Typical!” utters Piper. “Not one person in this town is concerned how she looks. Why does that not surprise me?”

As Piper scoots into the stall and lazily locks the door behind her, the twins, unaware of Piper’s presence, come barreling into the restroom giggling about what can only be surmised as tantalizing scoop. “It’s my lucky day!” exclaims Piper to herself. Barely able to contain herself, Piper scurries onto the toilet seat awaiting what surely will be some delicious tidbit of information. Perhaps she’ll even hit the jackpot and get some dirt on her least two favorite golfing partners, Janie and Carolyn.

“She walks around this club like some prima donna! If only she knew that her hubby was caught with his pants down and that’s why she landed here! That would knock her down a peg or two!” snickers Anne.

“Hmm...” thinks Piper. “I wonder who they are talking about?”

“What I wouldn’t give to see the look on her face when he finally wises up and decides to unload his high maintenance ball and chain and run away with his mistress! Do you think he’ll let her keep the Mercedes?” asks Audrey.

“Depends on how badly he wants out. I actually feel sorry for the guy. Imagine coming home to such a bubblehead each night? You’ve got to wonder how he’s managed to stick around,” says Anne.

“To each his own. Have you seen her today? She looks like she just stepped out of a Lilly Pulitzer catalog,” says Audrey.

“No, I try to avoid her at all costs,” answers Anne. “Let’s go see what’s being served on the buffet.”

As the twins finish up their business, Piper starts pondering what she has just overheard. First of all, thank goodness someone else at the club has enough fashion sense to wear Lilly to a golf outing. “I’ll have to make a point of introducing myself,” thinks Piper. Also, this morsel of gossip is too good to be left dangling in the restroom. Finally, Piper has some inside scoop to share with the ladies. Perhaps this golden opportunity will be the key that finally unlocks the door and allows Piper to come in from the cold. “It sure pays to be in the right place at the right time,” muses Piper. She is so giddy with excitement that she winds up falling off the toilet seat and lands right on the cold bathroom floor. “Good thing no one was around to see that!” utters Piper. “Off to secure my place in the club,” sings Piper. If only that were true.

Hole 3

Piper 2 Ladies 1

Whistling a happy tune as she gracefully waltzes across the dining room floor, Piper inconspicuously tries to locate her foursome without looking too much like a fish out of water. Similar to a child in a toy store, Piper's excitement is very difficult for her to contain as she silently rehearses her show-stopping performance that will certainly wow her captive audience.

“Piper!” shouts Tanya. “Here we are.”

Relieved to have found her group in a minimal amount of time, Piper rushes over to the table and sits down in between Tanya and Janie.

“We tried our best to find a table close to the podium, but by the time we got back from the bar, all the good tables were taken,” explains Carolyn.

“I thought you said to get a table in the corner so no one would realize we were eating with Piper,” asks Janie.

Carolyn smirks. “Well, yeah. That, too.”

In ordinary circumstances, Piper would have jumped at the chance at a rebuttal with an acid remark of some sort or a salacious insult sure to send Carolyn whimpering, but being on the verge of divulging a major secret blurred Piper’s vision and enabled the comment to roll right off her back and remain suspended in the air.

“Ladies,” announces Jay into the microphone. “If everyone can kindly find a seat, we’ll begin the awards ceremony.”

“Oh! No!” quips Piper to herself. “There won’t be any time for me to smear my fellow club mate.”

Realizing it’s either sink or swim, Piper decides to go for it. “You’ll never believe what I overheard the twins saying in the restroom.”

“That’s a dangerous statement, Piper,” replies Carolyn. “Consider the source. The two of them put together fall short of one crazy human being.”

“Oh! Let her have her moment!” says Janie. “I’m actually quite interested in what venom the twins are spreading today. Go ahead, Piper. Let’s have it!”

Quite tickled that she has the ladies’ attention, Piper takes a deep breath and lets loose.

“Well, it appears that some naive dimwit’s husband was cheating on her with his secretary and wound up having to move here, of all places, to cover his tracks,” announces Piper.

“Oh...this can’t be happening,” moans Tanya.

“Is that so,” giggles Carolyn, egging Piper on.

“Yes! And it gets worse! He may even dump her, but according to the twins, they’re not so sure if she’ll get to keep her Mercedes when it’s all said and done. Isn’t that a shame? Do you have any idea who that can be? Oh! And one more thing! She wears Lilly. That shouldn’t be too hard to spot. Do you see anyone wearing Lilly today?”

As Carolyn and Janie do their best not to burst out laughing, Tanya quickly comes to Piper's aid. Never in a million years would she have imagined that damage control would fall under the heading for golf captain. When does it ever end?

"Piper, honey? Would you be a dear and pass me some butter," demands Tanya. "And I think that's enough gossip for today. Jay is about to announce the winners."

"Oh! You spoil sport, Tanya," whispers Carolyn. "You should have let her go on."

"Be nice, Carolyn!" growls Tanya. "You know, it could be your hide that they're skinning one day. Just drop it."

Realizing that the prize isn't worth the battle, Carolyn decides to use her better judgment and let it rest. Why be the one to upset the apple cart when it's much better to be a spectator standing on the sidelines watching the game as it slowly unfolds. If only Piper knew. Then again, it wouldn't be as much fun if she did.

"Ladies," announces Jay. "It has been my pleasure organizing this year's Ladies' Nine Hole Tournament."

“Well, I should say so!” remarks Janie. “How many holes in one do you think he scored with the bunch of desperate housewives, for lack of a better term, here at the club?”

“Sh!” says Tanya. ”Keep your dirty thoughts to yourself!”

As Janie and Carolyn giggle, Piper tries to be one of the girls by saying, “Yes and I bet he even scored with that lame bimbo the twins were talking about! Have you spotted her yet?”

“Not yet, Piper,” answers Janie, “but I am sure she’s around somewhere. It won’t be long until her secret will be out in the open for everyone to enjoy. Isn’t that right, Carolyn?”

Carolyn just nods and pretends to be listening to Jay as Tanya nervously picks at her salad. It may not matter to the rest of the group, but Tanya really wants to win.

“And the winners of the 2006 Woodlawn Country Club’s Ladies Nine Hole are Mrs. Johnny Vance, Mrs. Edward DeWitt, Mrs. Franklin VanHorst, and Mrs. Charles O’Donnell. Congratulations, ladies, for a job well done,” says Jay.

The rest of the morning is such a waste of what could have been valuable tanning time according to Piper. Each lady has the opportunity to address the members as she

graciously accepts her trophy. Tanya, of course, is all teary-eyed and practically thanks anyone that she has ever remotely met and rightfully so. If it weren't for her, the ladies wouldn't have won. Carolyn and Janie applaud their husbands for their insightful vision to arrange for their precious poopsies to take golf lessons that eventually led to this greatness. Quite ironically, the whole room seems to agree. And as for Piper, she is totally amazed at all of the whispering and stares she receives when she accepts her trophy, but chalks it up to her form-fitting, spectacular outfit. Piper is certain they have never seen such a glamorous wrinkle-free, botox-induced, thirty-two-year-old in their midst. Bless their souls! Finally! Piper has arrived.

After the obligatory air kisses and the phony "we must do this again" speeches, Piper climbs into her sleek Mercedes allowing the valet to look down her shirt as he slowly closes her door. Pleased that she has impressed the local school boy, Piper swiftly leaves the club and heads on her way. As she rummages through her purse in search of her cell phone, she takes a quick left and decides to make a stop before going home. Most likely, Charles will be held up on the interstate in traffic as usual so she might as well get a nice bottle of wine to celebrate her impressive victory while waiting for his arrival. Not to mention, she is secretly hoping that she'll find Rusty O'Brien, a thirty-five-year-old ex-bartender, working behind the counter.

Now Piper has been known to be self-centered, egotistical, and flat out shallow, but she definitely is not the type to sneak around on her devoted hubby, Charles. Piper knows on which side her bread is buttered and prefers to live the good life without taking

any unnecessary risks. As far as Piper is concerned, Rusty is just a safe diversion who typically strokes her bruised ego when needed. Blessed with hard as rock biceps and a tight ass that fits snugly in his torn blue jeans, the red headed hunk is the perfect addition to Piper's boring life. Not only is he easy on the eyes, but he has a heart of gold. A hot body with a near perfect smile, Rusty never disappoints Piper as he intently listens to whatever calamity she may be facing for the day. If only Charles would show a speck of sympathy as she continually struggles to acclimate herself to this backward town. Time and time again, Rusty has been filling in where Charles is leaving off. Unfortunately for her, it's becoming a bad habit that Piper just can't seem to break, not that she wants to anyway.

As she pulls into the first available parking spot, Piper does a quick check of her teeth in her review mirror. Having a piece of salad stuck between her teeth would definitely be a deal breaker when it comes to toying with the hired help. Yes, she surely has hit rock bottom when flirting with a lowly liquor store guy has become the highlight of her day. Oh! Pooh! Who cares? At least she's got someone interested in her. It's nice to know she still has got it.

As she gracefully pushes open the door and makes a grand entrance, everyone stops and looks her way. That's what Piper likes best about coming here. No one would expect the likes of her to be shopping in a place like this. Trying not to appear so obvious, Piper takes a stroll down the first aisle slowly examining the wine labels as she pretends to be debating which bottle to buy. In actuality, she's trying her darnedest to spot her

luscious hottie as she peers over the cases of wine. As Rusty remains hidden behind the rows of crates, Piper inadvertently knocks over a case of Merlot with her huge Michael Kors handbag.

“Oh! No!” shouts Piper.

“Well there goes a perfectly good case of Casa Lapostolle 2004 Merlot,” states Rusty. “If you didn’t like it, Piper, you just should have said so. No need to topple it over. Then again, are you sabotaging my supply? You and I both know that wine is what the locals prefer. Not everyone around here is a wine snob like you and me!”

“Oh, Rusty! What a nice surprise,” utters Piper trying to act coy. “I am so sorry about the mess. Feel free to add it to my tab. Dear old Charles won’t even notice it when that bill comes, that’s if he even reads it. Don’t you have someone in the storeroom that can help clean that up?”

“You’re looking at him, babe!” replies Rusty. “Just give me a minute and I’ll be right back. That’s just like you Piper. Always making a mess!”

As Rusty scoots into the rear to muster up a mop, Piper opens her purse and adds some of her new Lancôme juicy tubes swirl to her dry lips. The action is just getting started and Piper wants to look her best as she plays this game. Luckily for her, the store has cleared out and the two of them are all alone.

“I’m back!” bellows Rusty. “Did you miss me?”

“Of course, I did. Why else would I shop here if it weren’t for you, Rusty?” answers Piper.

“Well, Piper! Are you actually paying me a compliment? Let me check the calendar. Well, yes. Today is Tuesday, which means it’s your Ladies’ Nine Hole Day. Something good must have happened at the club to have put that glistening smile on your lips. Spill it! The story I mean. Not more wine!”

“Well, as a matter of fact, I won,” proudly announces Piper. “My foursome won the tournament. Can you believe it?”

“That’s great, Piper. Congratulations!” answers Rusty.

“Well, that’s not all, Rusty,” continues Piper. “The ladies actually seemed like they were having a good time with me. I think I have finally gotten under their skin, but in a good way. I even learned some hot gossip that I shared with the group. Isn’t that faboo?”

“Hold it right there, Sweet Pea!” says Rusty.

Piper loves when he calls her that. Charles never calls her anything remotely affectionate unless you consider Barbie a term of endearment.

“What’s the matter? I thought you’d be happy for me,” answers Piper looking disappointed.

“Don’t get me wrong, Sugar. That’s great you won. My hat’s off to you. Personally, I could never play golf because I don’t have the patience or the desire to rub elbows with the rich and famous. I’m quite happy staying put right here behind the counter and waiting on ravishing blondes like you,” says Rusty with a twinkle his eye.

“Don’t stop now, honey. You’re on a roll!” replies Piper.

“We both know those women do not have your best interests at heart. They’re a bunch of venomous snakes just waiting to spread their poison. Piper, please be careful what you tell them. I would hate for it all to blow up in your face,” says Rusty as he tries to mollify Piper.

Even though Rusty probably is right, Piper decides to brush it off and channel her energy instead on the amazing and perhaps even intimate tête-à-tête that she seems to be having with her hunk. For all intended purposes, she really does want a bottle of wine so perhaps she’d be better off keeping their conversation light. No need to get Rusty all worked up. Well then again....

“Piper?” asks Rusty.

“Yes,” answers Piper.

“Oh, I thought I lost you there for a minute. I’ll let it drop for now, but please think about what I said. Okay?” says Rusty.

“Will do, big man,” replies Piper. “How about some of that spicy Thelema 2003 Merlot from South Africa that I tried last week? It would be the perfect ending to what has been a most spectacular day,” proudly remarks Piper.

“Coming right up!” answers Rusty. “Some spicy wine for the spicy lady!”

“Rusty, it’s such a shame we didn’t meet in an earlier life,” comments Piper.
“What with your big muscles and my charm, intelligence, and beauty, we certainly could have, at the very least, made some beautiful children.”

“Hold it right there, Piper O’Donnell,” snaps Rusty. “Are you trying to seduce me in the hopes that I take a married woman to bed?”

“Of course not! Please! If I had wanted that, it would have happened a long time ago. Men find me irresistible and Rusty, my friend, you’re no different,” answers Piper with a smirk on her face.

As the two love-torn friends innocently banter back and forth, openly flirting and enjoying each other’s company, unbeknownst to them, Carolyn De Witt silently slips out of the shop and heads to her car. Piper’s not the only one who thought stopping at the liquor store for a bottle of wine would be an excellent idea after the exciting, yet tiring, day at the club. Little did Carolyn know that she would see first hand what everyone at the club’s been secretly talking about behind Piper’s back. Carolyn quickly pulls out her cell phone and dials Janie’s number. This kind of scoop is too good not to share. Proud of herself, Carolyn feels like the cat that swallowed the canary. It won’t be long before Little Miss Muffet is packing her tuffet and eating her curds and whey. “Ha!” laughs Carolyn.

“Piper?” asks Rusty. “Did someone just go out the door? I didn’t see anyone come in, although I was distracted by a certain someone, but I could have sworn I heard the bells ring.”

“Take my advice! You need to lay off the heavy liquor early in the morning, Big Man. There are no bells ringing. Although if that’s your way of suggesting that I lock the doors so we can be alone, that definitely can be arranged” says Piper as she throws a wink his way.

“Piper! You need to watch what you say. We both know you’re kidding, but one day someone may overhear one of our exchanges and actually take you seriously. I would not want to cause problems between you and Charles,” says Rusty.

“Oh, pipe down! How could anyone take us seriously! Look at you! You work in a liquor store, for goodness sakes. You can’t afford me! Although, you do know I mean that in the nicest way. Right, Rusty?” asks Piper.

“Good thing I have skin as tough as nails, Piper, or else I may have been insulted by what you just said,” replies Rusty. “And since we seem to be laying things out in the open, I really don’t know what you see in a man twenty years your senior. What were you thinking when you decided to marry Charles, or should I even ask?”

“Well, if you’re thinking dollar signs, don’t go there!” insists Piper. “I actually fell in love with the old goon despite what everyone in this town thinks. Although between you and me, the money sure made it a little easier to climb in bed with him. HA!! I’m just kidding, Rusty, and you know that.”

“Oh, Piper! I think we’ve done enough damage for one day. Would you like for me to take the wine out to your car or can you carry it?” inquires Rusty.

Like that’s even a question thinks Piper. A chance to ogle his behind! C’mon, you don’t have to ask her twice. “Here are the keys, Rusty. I’ll just follow you to the car.”

Trying not to be noticed by the folks in the parking lot, Rusty quickly puts the wine in her car and gives Piper a little wave as he jogs back into the store. Knowing that Piper is innocently toying with him doesn't deter Rusty from still flirting with the snooty Mrs. O'Donnell. All kidding aside, Rusty is actually quite fond of Piper and secretly wishes that she hadn't been so stupid and married such an old guy. Then again, Charles can't live forever and when that day comes, which it will, perhaps sooner rather than later, Rusty will surely be at Piper's side picking up the pieces and securing his place in her future. That you can definitely count on.