

A Father's Day Trip

by Rick Marcou

"Hey Dad, Happy Father's Day!"

"Hi Robbie. Come on in."

"OK, but we've got to go soon. Got a tee time awaiting."

"I know, you told me. 10:30 am sharp. I remember."

"I know you do Dad. Always sharp as a tack."

"I keep tellin' you that. No homes for me, not yet anyways. So, you wanna sit down a while, or do we have to go right away?"

"Why don't we just go, that way there's no rush when we get there."

"OK, you're the boss. Should I grab my clubs?"

"You don't need to, they have clubs there. But if you want you can bring 'em. I don't have a set, you know that, so I'll be using theirs."

"OK, I'll do that too. Haven't used mine in so long it's not like it's gonna matter. Clubs are probably better now anyway."

"I think they are. Hit farther, weigh less."

"Cost more."

"Probably true."

"Is this a new car?"

"Yes. Well, sort of. It's Marie's, she got it earlier this year, in January. She's driving my Highlander today because she has to take Hayley to a party, she's taking some of her friends too."

"What is this?"

"It's a Leaf. Nissan. It's fully electric. You're gonna be amazed how quiet it is."

"It's tiny."

"Yeah, it's kinda small. But it's the same size as a lot of other compact cars, still fits 4 people pretty easily. Get in, check it out."

"Do you need to plug it in or something? Got a long extension cord?"

"No, don't worry, the battery's fully charged. We can go pretty far. Probably another 100 miles before I need to charge it again."

"And then what. Stand around for 8 hours while it charges?"

"We usually do it overnight. But yeah, it takes that long, sometimes longer."

"Awesome. Great technology. Camels charge faster. 5 minutes of water and you're off. Does it at least go faster than a camel?"

"Yes Dad, much faster. Get in."

"See what I mean, how quiet it is? Amazing, right?"

"Yeah, it's quiet. But you're only going 25. Punch it, I wanna see what it can do."

"Dad, we're on a residential street, I'm not gonna *punch* it."

"C'mon, don't be a wuss. Step on it a little, I wanna see if it has any acceleration. I heard these electric cars can take off."

"That's probably the Tesla you were reading about. Those are also electric, but they're suped up. They fly. This one is way more modest."

"OK, well let me see anyway. Hit it."

"Fine. I can't believe I'm doing this. Hold on."

Robbie floored it, going from 25 up to 50 in a matter of seconds. Not exactly turbo-like

acceleration, but impressive nonetheless.

“Wow, that was surprising. I didn’t think this little bugger could do that.”

“I told you, these electric cars are pretty cool. Oh shit.”

The siren and lights shut them both up.

Robbie’s Dad pursed his lips and looked down. A faint “sorry” was uttered, quietly but loud enough to be heard. Robbie closed his eyes and shook his head.

“It’s OK. It’s my fault. Don’t worry.”

They walked into the pro shop and up to the counter, where a pleasant red-headed 20-something greeted them with a smile. “Hi there gentlemen. I’m Cassie. Tee time today, or just some pitch & putt?”

“Hi Cassie. Pitch and putt, thanks. 10:30 reservation. Robert Morgan.”

“Oh, let me see.” She checks the book. “Yes, I see someone wrote it in. We don’t usually take reservations for pitch & putt, it’s just a walk-up thing like miniature golf. But you’re good to go. I have pitching wedges and putters right over here in these buckets, just grab ones that are the right height, I can help if you haven’t played before.”

Robbie tried to hide his embarrassment from his Dad. He was never a golfer, didn’t exactly know what pitch & putt was, except that it didn’t require driving the ball hundreds of yards and walking 18 holes for 6 hours. His Dad was too old for that.

“Sounds great,” his Dad said. He walked over to the club buckets and grabbed an iron, put it up against his body and then took a short half swing, careful not to hit anything.

“This ones good for me. Robbie, come grab one. This is gonna be fun.” He then grabbed a putter, went through the same process, and then asked, point blank to Cassie, “Balls?” Robbie looked up, eyes wide and brows halfway up his forehead.

Cassie didn’t miss a beat. “I thought you’d never ask. Right here.” She handed them each a boxed sleeve of 3. “You get 3, but honestly you should only need 1. Not much place to lose a ball on the pitch & putt course.”

Robbie again looked embarrassed. His father played some of the best courses in the state when he was younger, this is an insult to him, he now realized.

“Well I’ll take that as a challenge, Cassie. I’ll return all 3 to you later.”

“That’s a deal. What’s your name sir?”

“I’m Gil Morgan, and this is my son Robbie.”

“Nice to meet you Mr. Morgan. And Happy Father’s Day to you.”

“To us both.”

“Then yes, Happy Father’s Day to you both!”

And hour and a half later they walked out of the pro shop.

“Thanks for this Robbie. Never played pitch & putt before. It was a ton of fun. Kinda nice not having to chase after balls in the woods every hole.”

“You sure? I didn’t realize it was going to be so lame.”

“Lame? What are you talking about, that was great.”

“You’re being nice. You’ve played great golf courses, full courses, this was child’s play compared to those. An insult to your experience.”

“Screw my experience. This was perfect for me. I’m not the same person who played those courses. It’d be wasted on me now, I can’t hit the ball 250 yards anymore, and I certainly don’t want to walk 18 holes either.”

“OK, if you say so.”

“Hey, you wanna grab a beer in the clubhouse before heading home? This round’s on me.”

“Sure, why not. I don’t have to be back right away, Marie’s got things covered.”

“That’s the spirit.”

“Cheers. Happy Father’s Day Robbie.”

“Happy Father’s Day to you too Dad. I’m sorry this day was kind of a shit show. What with the ticket, and then this kids golf.”

“Listen Robbie, Stop kicking yourself. I’m not kidding, I loved that. Most fun I’ve had in months.”

“I just wanted you to have a real golf experience like you used to. I feel like this was kind of a joke. I thought it would be a but more professional, like the actual course but without the driving. It looked more like an oversized mini golf thing.”

“Listen Robbie, you’ve got to understand something. I did play a lot of golf when I was younger. But I wasn’t a fanatic. I played mostly just to get out of the house once in a while on the weekends, spend a few hours with my buddies. Helped with work too, being able to hold my own on sales boondoggles. But that’s it. Doing this brought back what I used to feel out there, having fun and bullshitting with friends while acting like we knew what we were doing. You gave that to me today. Thank you Robbie. And as for the ticket, listen, I’m paying for that, I made you floor it.”

“No, I’ve got it, I’m a big boy, I made the decision to do it.”

“That your first ticket?”

“Yeah, it was. That obvious?”

“Yeah.”

“You need me to walk you to the door?”

“No, smart-ass, I’m good. I wouldn’t want you to have to restart this thing, the battery might finally die. The you’d be here all night.”

“That might be true.”

“Listen, Robbie, in all seriousness, thanks for a fantastic day. I mean it. I really enjoyed it. We had an adventure, we played some golf. But what you need to understand, it doesn’t matter what we did, we had fun doing it together. I know you tried to make the day perfect, but stop beating yourself up trying. I’m happy just hanging out with you, always have been. Getting the ticket, that was just icing on the cake.”

“Thank you for saying that Dad, it makes me feel better. I appreciate it. I just want you to be happy, you deserve it.”

“Always am, son, don’t worry about me. Happy Father’s Day Robbie. I love you son.”

“Love you too Dad, Happy Father’s Day.”