

Birds twitter in the pre-dawn light outside Zee's dusty window. Her curtains flutter as the wind finds a gap between the frame and the panes. A pesky fly settles on her nose. She lazily brushes it away and settles back comfortably into her pillow.

Fourteen-years-old, her knees knock with nerves as she stands on the 18th green on the North Course at Torrey Pines Golf course in San Diego, California. A strong Pacific wind ruffles the flags and she can taste the brine in the ocean breeze.

One last high pressure putt to go. A reassuring fiddle of the pink golf tee stuck in her braided hair, a deep, calming breath and she rattles her ball into the cup for a two-under-par eagle and victory.

It's done. A glorious roar erupts from the crowds.

Zee is the fiery little black girl from a lowly township in South Africa they all look at and think, "Shame! Her mother needs to feed her much more regularly." She now owns their hearts.

Her opponent, only fourteen years old herself but already the top woman golfer in the USA concedes defeat. She shakes Zee's hand and kisses her on both cheeks.

Zee takes her golf ball out of the hole and throws it high into the crowd. Funny, the girl who catches it looks just like her. Fellow golfers, caddies and officials throng around her. Rainbows of sparkling water, release with a pop from vigorously shaken bottles.

She hit the ball fifty-eight times today. The record of lowest ever score that Swedish golfing phenomenon, Anika Sorenstam set in 2001 with a 59 total for a round on the LPGA tour is now hers.

"Zee, well played!" Tiger Woods steps up. He has caddied for her over the last four days, carried her heavy bag of clubs and advised her on the best shots to play. He takes her putter from her shaking hands and shoots it back into the bag. They embrace and he kisses her on the cheek. Photographers jostle for the photo-opportunity they will sell around the world.

She blows kisses to the adoring gallery. They're in their colourful, fist-pumping thousands now. Her national anthem, 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica' - rings out from the multitude of fans waving South African flags. It's lyrics in Xhosa, Zulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans and English. 'Lord Bless Africa!'

The enormous trophy she struggles to hold high threatens to fall. Strong hands grip her shoulders and help brace her against the weight of the silverware.

The adoring, fired-up crowd chant her name, "Zee, Zee, Zee!"

"Zee, Zee, Zee! Wake up, time to go!"

Dad's warm breath whispers in her ear. His insistent shaking breaks the hold of her dream. There is something profound about dreaming, once at any level, to prevail. To be, for one fragile moment, the best. She sits, shakes her head and rubs the sleep from her eyes.

"Quietly now, girl, let's not wake mum." He softly creeps out of her room. Tiger Woods returns to the posters that plaster her walls. She blows him a kiss. He winks.

Still sleepy-eyed,, Zee slips out of bed and scrambles into her worn golf shirt and skirt. She sticks a pink golf-tee into her braided black hair.

Finally, she slips her feet into her worn, comfortable golf shoes. There's a hole in the leather where her sock clad big toe peeks through.

She draws back her curtains and peers out of the window. Here comes the sun but a few persistent stars still twinkle in the brightening sky.

Zuko stands in the kitchen. He plasters half a loaf of bread with margarine then stuffs some into her hands. "Build you up, my girl, there's not a pick on you."

Her dad is a handsome man, thick through the chest and shoulders. His white tee comes loose from his tight black curly hair and she fixes it back. They unlatch the door - a squeak from the rusty hinge.

Scrawny, jealous township dogs follow them down the road. Zee throws half her bread to a skinny pregnant pack member. It's way too much for Zee to eat. The dog hares off, wolfing it down before the yapping pack can catch up with her.

Sunday, so all is as quiet as it ever gets in the township. The V- shaped backs of stooped women sweep their yards and steps clean. The dust blows around and then finds somewhere else to settle.

At the Church of St. Mary the Catholic priest, Father Thomas, flings wide the doors. They bang back and forth in the gusting wind.

"Zuko, top of the mornin' to you." His thick Irish brogue has not softened over the years.

"You too Father."

"I see the golfing gods have still got you hooked?"

Zee hides behind her Dad as they pass. "And how is little Zee there?"

There's a twinge of guilt at missing the morning service with her mum.

"Morning Father. I'm fine!"

The sun is up now. It's not yet hot enough to break a sweat but the early chill is gone. Zee throws her head back and basks in the warm rays. They hurry out the township across the wide dual carriageway of Koeberg Road.

Leafy well-ordered roads now fringe the Milnerton lagoon. The houses are big, expensive cars in the driveways. Here dogs bark impotently from behind high, secure, razor-wired walls. Lucky escapees trot alongside leotard-clad residents., tongues lolling, tails wagging.

"Keep up, Petra, come on now!"

Zuko measures his long strides a little. He throws a wry smile at Zee

"Who's fooling who?"

Zee treks on alongside dad with a spring in her step. She looks up with a smile, her attention diverted away from her worn golf shoes. They'd sat on

the shelf at Cash Converters before her hands grabbed them, "Dad! Dad! Look, they're my size and everything!"

There was hell to pay when her mum, Esihle, heard he'd spent most of the week's grocery money on them. Luckily, the row passed like a summer storm leaving no damage. They've lasted well, they'll just have to last a bit longer.

A spit of lazy sand dunes and coastal grass shimmers for kilometres into the distance. The Milnerton Golf Links is in sight now.

It's an 18-hole coastal course 10 minutes north of the city of Cape Town. Nestling between the ever-crashing Atlantic Ocean and the silent Diep River, the uninterrupted view across the bay towards the Mother City is stunning.

Mist billows like bed sheets down Table Mountain. Seagulls dive into the white-capped waves of the ocean. Bright ships lie anchored offshore.

The lush, green grass of the golf course fairway and greens contrast with a bright clear blue sky. On most holes, the sound of the waves breaks on the shore metres away. Nature lovers thrill at the abundant birdlife on the bordering shore and river.

The strong south-easterly wind tugs at the collar of her shirt. The 'Cape Doctor' - called that because of a local belief that it clears Cape Town of pollution and 'pestilence'. Zee pulls her collar up snugly as the clubhouse flags snap and crackle around her.

It will be a tough morning but can a girl from the grimy, dusty township have a better playground? Honestly?