

# PRO AND CONNIE

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Mike Knew a Lot  
About Golf, and  
He Learned  
Later About  
Love

A PRO, Connie told Mike that jeweled money. "He wouldn't be teaching if he had the stuff tournament timber is made of!" she declared emphatically.

Mike Hess stared at her intently and it was only the dewy freshness of her apricot skin, the drenched pansy-beauty of her brown eyes that kept him from tying his No. 4 iron neatly around her neck, and finishing it off with a bowknot. It never failed to do this to him—Connie's fresh, blythe verbal shots that cleaved swiftly past his careful guard and landed raw on bruised quivering sore wounds. It never failed to fill him with a mute sort of wonder that he could take so much and pay off so little.

No other woman had ever troubled Mike Hess. Not even in his palmer tournament days when debutantes trounced after him, liting their ecstatic praises, and doting dowagers trailed along in his wake, subtly withholding their marriageable females until such time as he might be thoroughly razzled. But from the first, Connie Lang got in his hair.

HE TOLD himself first that he hated small women. And Connie was barely 5 feet 4! He assured his inner mind that red-headed wimmin were all right for the ice man, for cops and truck drivers, but he wouldn't have any of that kind of potatoes, thank you. The sand in spinach was much more, easily digested.

As for girls who played golf in brown check linen shorts and a halter, and tennis in a romper suit that was a mere wisp of pink linen or so—well, he had his own idea of them, and it was plenty, oh most assuredly—and definitely—sufficient. It didn't help matters any that she weighed barely 110 pounds, and that a figure like hers was a crime concealed, and a delight the further you adorned it with Nature's own sunshine.



one by one, the crowd crept gratefully under shade trees, watching the approaching thunder storm as limply as they watched the finish of the tournament.

Burgess Lang teed up, crouched a moment, figuring the lie. Mike stood back, aloofly silent. This was the test. This flung things whichever way they must go. Burgess grasped his iron, his short, thick fingers closing around the handle in the grip old Jock McWha had taught him so long ago in Scotland. The club swept up, came down in a sure, sweet arc and connected with the ball. The handful of gallery sighed. That settled it. Even Mike Hess, even the thrice-champion of champions could not touch that!

Mike squared off. He did no figuring. He took no time out to estimate distance or figure timing. He debated no instant over balls or club. He simply reached into the bag, picked up a club, dropped the ball to the ground and stepped back.

TEN seconds later the ball rolled to a slowing arc, up to the pin, paused dramatically at the edge and rolled in. The echoing roar of acclaim from the gallery was smothered in a splitting crash of thunder and drops as big as quarters began spattering. The tournament was over and Mike had won—won and lost. Won the game, but lost the girl of his heart by besting her father.

The last photographer was gone and the last reporter. Rain flirited against the windowpanes in the snug little cottage, and thunder muttered a disgruntled departure over a far-distant Berkshire crag. The tournament was over and Summer was ended. Mike yanked out his luggage kit and began throwing things into it. Victory had turned to salt and ashes in his mouth. Salt of regret and ashes of despair.

The door banged open and a rain-coated figure tugged at a huge sou-wester. Connie stood dripping on the best red rug the club board had ever given the pro's living room.

"Mike," she said in a still, small voice, "I came to . . . th-thank you. It was swell of you."

"It was nothing," Mike said gruffly, his fingers twisting and rolling a freshly laundered white shirt to the consistency of a floor mop. "glad to do it for you, Connie."

She was having difficulty with the clips fastening her raincoat, and he stepped forward to assist. The faint drift of perfume from her hair was torment, and he resisted the impulse to wipe away the raindrops jeweling her eyebrows with savage determination. What—not again. He'd fallen by that

umph. In fact, looking wan, tired and drawn, but staying in there.

Then Mrs. Cramer had a stroke and Mike knew it was all over. Howard came out in a frantic rush toward the end of the fourth and next to final day of the tournament, and Connie stopped playing and stepped back.

"I've no substitute, Howard," she said flatly. "I'll have to default."

Mike stepped forward. "I'll substitute for you, Connie," he offered quietly. There was a resentful murmur from the gallery, standing

"Listen, Connie," Mike exploded. He wanted more, to kiss her. To grab her and shake some of that cool, infuriatingly calm serenity out of her

that first breathless instant of astonishment. Desperately he tried to think of something to say, and no words came. Instead he pulled her back into his embrace again and was very still.

Very quiet, mute and humble, and a table bewildered and frightened as the full import of his discovery crashed across his senses. She loved him—Connie! They had been asking all Summer—ever!

"Shall I wear it only after 10 o'clock. Mike?" she challenged.

"Why wear it at all?" Mike said gruffly. "Leaves you naked as a nudist camper, almost!"

"If I can wear it for you I can wear it for others," Connie informed him sweetly, and Mike did not guess that she had learned something her heart had been asking all Summer—ever!

where the course rounds out to skirt the brook in a lazy fliriting swirl, Connie was locked tight with her first major casualty. She was in a sand trap and at the same time in a gorgeous fit of high soundings, explosive temperament that was something to watch, even if it wasn't anything you could listen to safely.

Mike whistled down hurricanes, to say nothing of tornadoes. He stepped down into the pit and calmly surveyed the small girl whose sun-fanned face was a dark, flushed angry tint, and whose brown eyes were snapping blue