

## Unfinished Business

**Brian Clary**

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*This is an uplifting and entertaining story that promotes second chances and never losing sight of your dreams.*

In Brian Clary's *Unfinished Business*, a salt-of-the-earth senior plays an unusual round of golf in pursuit of a once-in-a-lifetime feat. Beyond this game is an inspiring story about honor, friendship, community spirit, and the downfall of greed.

In the late fall of 1997, golf lover Benjamin Digby hopes to get in a final season round. Under declining weather conditions, he finishes the 17th hole with a score of seventy. A par on the 18th hole would garner a tally equivalent to his age, a rare accomplishment in the sport.

But when Mother Nature proves uncooperative, the seemingly missed opportunity suddenly turns into a major publicity event, orchestrated by a department store conglomerate. As a local banker makes a hefty wager against Digby, he reluctantly agrees to play out the final shot in the spring. A surprising turn of events brings about some unexpected consequences, as the final reveal emphasizes the importance of meeting challenges.

There is a timeless quality to this feel-good story. Clary captures nineties small town charm, and the characters' concerns easily translate to the present. The book creatively showcases issues like the casualty of Big Box store takeovers and disrespect for those defending the country. Of the unwanted press for his banner day, Digby unhappily discerns that "it's all about the almighty dollar."

Characters are interesting in their array. Their interactions and conversations, from the quiet nagging of Digby's wife to mocking from a feisty friend, move the plot forward at a steady pace. Fairway markers serve as chapter titles, increasing excitement and heightening anticipation as Digby works toward the long-awaited 18th hole.

Digby is a relatable character with heroic traits, as shown when he defends a veteran from disparaging remarks. The community theme is emphasized with details like the crumbling local Veterans of Foreign Wars building. Such details capture both the beauty and harshness of the community.

Humor weaves through the narrative, adding joyousness and buoyancy to the tale, as when Digby buys used golf balls: "These [were] probably once mine anyhow." At times, though, Digby's nostalgia is overemphasized. Typographical errors disrupt the otherwise smooth flow of the writing.

While sports enthusiasts will be drawn to the thrill of victory, agony of defeat elements of *Unfinished Business*, the human interest factor is more broadly enticing. This is an uplifting and entertaining story that promotes second chances and never losing sight of your dreams, striking literary par.

CAROL DAVALA

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