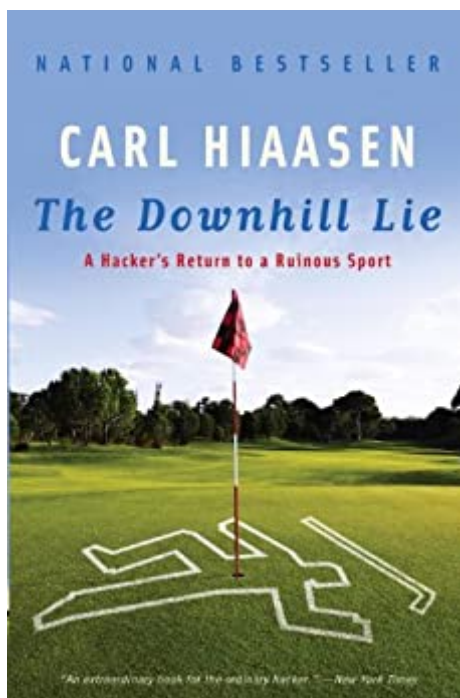


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# The Downhill Lie



## Synopsis

Originally drawn to the game by his father, Carl Hiaasen wisely quit golfing in 1973. But some ambitions refuse to die, and as the years and memories of shanked 7-irons faded, it dawned on Carl that there might be one thing in life he could do better in middle age than he could as a youth. So gradually he ventured back to the dreaded driving range, this time as the father of a five-year-old son and also as a grandfather. “What possesses a man to return in midlife to a game at which he’d never excelled in his prime, and which in fact had dealt him mostly failure, angst and exasperation? Here’s why I did it: I’m one sick bastard. And thus we have Carl’s foray into a world of baffling titanium technology, high-priced golf gurus, bizarre infomercial gimmicks and the mind-bending phenomenon of Tiger Woods; a maddening universe of hooks and slices where Carl ultimately and foolishly agrees to compete in a country-club tournament against players who can actually hit the ball. “That’s the secret of the sport’s infernal seduction,” he writes. “It surrenders just enough good shots to let you talk yourself out of quitting.” Hiaasen’s chronicle of his shaky return to this bedeviling pastime and the ensuing demolition of his self-esteem will culminate with the savage 45-hole tournament that will have you rolling with laughter. Yet the bittersweet memories of playing with his own father and the glow he feels when watching his own young son belt the ball down the fairway will also touch your heart. Forget Tiger, Phil and Ernie. If you want to understand the true lure of golf, turn to Carl Hiaasen, who offers an extraordinary audiobook for the ordinary hacker. BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from Carl Hiaasen’s *Bad Monkey*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A very enjoyable book to listen to especially since it is narrated by the author.

This is a journal of a disastrous year in which Carl Hiaasen returned to golf after a 30 year absence. While most people would simply get frustrated, swear loudly and throw their clubs in the water, Hiaasen gets frustrated, swears loudly (and ever more inventively), throws his clubs in the water, and then goes home and writes it all down. I was pretty much laughing nonstop throughout the entire book. Hiaasen may not be a great (or even very good) golfer, but he has the lingo down pat and it is fun to read. Don't let that stop you if you are not a golfer. I cued up a dictionary of golf terms on my iPad and toggled between the book and dictionary as I read. Perfect! Read this book. You will never look at golf the same way again. You will probably never take it up again, but that is another story . . .

Carl Hiaasen is one of the funniest writers ever. Given that both he and Dave Barry are South Floridians, one wonders if there's not something in the water that warped their DNA in a gut-splitting way. It's not possible to read "Lucky You" without constantly laughing, and marvelling at his ability to create weirder-than-life (or are they?) characters who parade through highly improbable (or are they?) sequences of events and relationships. He is also able to shift gears and write a masterpiece like "Hoot". Having thoroughly enjoyed each of these, and a few others of his works, and having taken up golf late in life, I bought "Downhill Lie" looking forward to seeing myself skewered in it and having some good laughs.....but that was not to be. This book is a dreary explication of a diary he kept, and has all the earmarks of something written to pay the rent. It's not an outright bad book, just deadly dull. His passionate concern over what is happening to Florida comes through loud and clear. His description of "The Villages", the place shown over and over again on the Golf Channel ads, brings home the reality of what a monstrous overdevelopment it is, and the dirty little secret

that "free golf for life" does NOT include the good courses at The Villages, only the ho-hum courses. RECOMMENDATION: Save it for when you've read every other book on your list. Read it at a library; buy it only if you are insistent on owning every book in the Hiaasen canon, and then only when it's on the books-for-a-buck remainder table.

Carl Hiaasen's wild and witty novels about Florida lowlifes have provided plenty of entertainment for both my wife and me over the years. I eagerly anticipated the arrival of "The Downhill Lie." I'm a lapsed golfer myself and thought that this story might rekindle interest in the sport. It didn't. As expected, Hiaasen provides some witty observations, but these are much too rare. This book is little more than the diary of a hacker over two years, and there is little entertainment value in that, unless one finds "I had three pars in the first five holes but then had three triples on the back nine and wound up shooting 97" to be engrossing reading. Hiaasen tries to build some tension as he describes the preparation for his first club tournament, but the redundant episodes that lead to this climax had me frequently checking how many pages I had left before I reached the end of the story. That's not a good sign: it's like checking your watch in the middle of a movie to see when your liberation will arrive. This book could easily have been written by a CPA ("True Adventures in Accounting?") and provide about the same amount of interest.

This is not one of Hiaasen's bazaar south Florida adventures. Instead, it chronicles his return to golf after a 30 year hiatus. For anyone familiar with the game, it is a painfully hilarious documentation of his hopes and disillusionments to be a good golfer as he makes his way around the 18 stages of hell. For those that don't pick up a flailing stick themselves, there are still a lot of life lessons, presented in a way that you don't realize because you're too busy chuckling. Some of it is more predictable and / or repetitive than any of his novels, but then, he's talking about his real life, on real golf course, in real distress; and it's pretty darn funny.

I kept waiting for something to happen - but all I got was several short stories about golf - Might have been OK if I were into golf, but disappointing when I was expecting another great Hiaasen novel -

I have to admit at the outset that I am a huge Hiaasen fan. I await each new book anxiously, and am rarely disappointed. As a golfer for over thirty years, I found Carl's new book to be a delightful read. I actually laughed out loud on several occasions, and certainly understood the struggles he had with

the ancient game. I would recommend this book to all golfers, and all Carl fans. If one is neither, then it is less likely to produce laughter or sympathy. I have returned to the game after two surgeries, and his struggles are my struggles. I was a strong 7 handicap at one time, but my game is now much like Carl's. The occasional glorious shot brings me back, even with the double bogies and struggles to break 90. Similarly, I can hardly wait for each new Hiassen book, only there are no double bogies: only enjoyable reading.

Mr. Hiassen is a very funny guy and there are some wonderful anecdotes to be found in this book. But many of the stories involve scenes unable to be appreciated by someone who's never been on the links. The author's countless reports of "shanking this or hooking that" eventually become tedious. Being a fan of Mr. Hiassen's fiction and newspaper columns and, also, an ex-golfer of over twenty years, I still had difficulty finishing the last twenty pages due to boredom. Reading about how he messed up on numerous plays during the climax of the book was like listening to a senile, old uncle prattle on about his golf games of yore. A quick read with a smidgen of Mr. Hiassen's trademark acerbic political commentary. Not as entertaining as his fiction books.

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