

## SIGNED, TIGER WOODS

Tiger Woods has a crush on me. I'm not making this up, so quit laughing. Once I explain, everything will make perfect sense and you'll have every right to envy me.

I snagged a free ticket to the final round of the U.S. Open, which, coincidentally, landed on my 43<sup>rd</sup> birthday. I woke up early that morning and went to the practice range where I watched the best golfers in the world arc ball after ball from the range tee onto the fairway making it all look oh-so-easy.

I'd never been to a professional golf tournament before unless you include the celebrity/ pro-am tournament played in Oklahoma City when I was a skinny 14 year old kid in an orange crushed-velvet bikini. Dripping wet, I walked up to Arnold Palmer, who was standing right next to Clint Eastwood, on whom I've had an unrequited crush since I was 12 and my father took me to see "Kelly's Heroes." I had just come from the Country Club swimming pool and all I could find to have autographed was a Styrofoam cup. I plucked it from the ground and timidly sidled up to Arnold who looked at me disdainfully and snarled, "I don't sign *cups*." I was so embarrassed that I lost my one ounce of courage to ask cool Clint, the real object of my affection, for his signature. (I *still* haven't forgiven Arnie.) It was at that precise moment that I swore I would never ask another person for their autograph.

But I digress. All morning among the Open crowd there was speculation as to when Tiger would show up. Suddenly, someone in the throng shouted, "There he is!" Everyone knew instantly who "he" was and responded like minnows in a pond. You know what I mean. The shimmering school swims along as one unit until something startles them, then *in unison* they dart in the opposite direction. The crowd immediately dashed in the direction of our shouting Paul Revere.

Sure enough, Tiger was teeing off. I followed the swollen gallery down the fairway to the green. The odd thing was that he never once looked into the crowd or in any way acknowledged anyone existed besides his caddy.

I had a front rope view as he putted out on number three and moved toward the fourth tee. He walked within arms reach of me. There I was standing right next to him with this big goofy grin on my face. He looked up for the first time all day, paused a second, then flashed a huge, sweet smile directly at *me*! I felt like a 15 year old who'd just stolen a glance from the cutest boy in class! Then he shouted, "Happy Birthday!" Not really. I'm making that part up, but the rest is true.

So when you read in the tabloids that he is leaving his blond bombshell girlfriend for me, you'll know the real story behind the headlines.

If you don't believe me, I have his autograph to prove it.