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10 o'clock

A group of families with children of similar ages moved into summer houses on the island at just about the same time. There was a softball field in the town, and the young men met there on Sunday mornings to play double-headers. They favored the ten o'clock pitching motion, so named because it compares the pitcher's arms to the hands on a clock. During his delivery, the pitcher can reach back and raise his arm no higher than ten o'clock. It was also called modified fast pitch softball. The men liked it because it was as close as they could get to actually playing baseball within the confines of the field.

They met summer after summer, and soon their boys wanted to join in the game. When the boys got a little older they also got bolder, and instead of playing alongside their fathers, they wanted to play against them -- sons against fathers.

The fathers were amused by this. They were proud that their sons had challenged them. They felt it was a step in the right direction.

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To give the boys a fighting chance, the men batted the opposite way. If a father was right-handed, he batted left-handed; if he was left-handed, he batted right-handed.

Suddenly, when the boys reached a certain age, they all seemed to decide independently that the place where they had spent so many memorable summers, with its balmy air and beautiful beaches, was no longer the place to be.

The boys disappeared from the island.

The men returned to their usual Sunday games against each other. They had become a little slower in the field. They joked about aches and pains, but none of them had lost the love of playing.

One by one, as they reached a certain age, the boys began to return to the island. They were handsome young men now, tall and strong.

When they had enough players to field a team, the sons challenged their fathers just as they had when they were young boys.

To give the old men a fighting chance, the sons batted the opposite way.

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