

What this chapter is mainly about

Chapter 4 tells the story of two legendary hackers at MIT:

- ◆ **Richard Greenblatt**
- ◆ **Bill Gosper**

They were not ordinary programmers.

They lived for computers — day and night — with **obsession, passion, and genius**.

They became **symbols of the pure hacker spirit**.

Richard Greenblatt — the unstoppable builder

Greenblatt was someone who:

- Wanted to **understand every detail of computers**
- Believed **computers exist to be explored, not to be restricted**
- Didn't care about money, status, or outside life
- Only cared about **building great programs**

He spent almost all his time in the AI lab working on projects — because for him, the computer was **life**.

Even socially, he was different — he cared more about logic and technology than about rules or politeness.

But he wasn't rude — he was simply **consumed by the machine**.

Bill Gosper — the master of mathematics

Gosper loved the computer for a different reason:

- He saw the machine as a tool for **deep mathematical puzzles**
- He was fascinated by patterns, logic, and clever challenges
- He enjoyed **problems that seemed impossible**

He didn't care about school grades or formal education — he cared about **pure thinking**.

Greenblatt used computers to **build** things.

Gosper used computers to **discover** things.

Together, they made a perfect combination.



Why these two matter in hacker history

Greenblatt and Gosper became leaders in the AI Lab not because someone appointed them — but because of **their unmatched skill and passion**.

People trusted their code.

People admired their dedication.

Their actions shaped the **AI Lab culture** into:

- Work because you love it
- Share knowledge freely
- Focus only on excellence
- Ignore unnecessary rules

They lived the **Hacker Ethic** completely.



A growing tension in the lab

As the AI lab grew, **new people entered who didn't think like true hackers**.

These outsiders cared about:

- Business
- Rules
- Ownership of programs
- Money
- Control

This created conflict.

Greenblatt and Gosper believed:

Computers should be open for everyone.

But new management wanted:

Restricting access, property rights, and formal control.

Chapter 4 shows the **beginning of the war between hacker ideals and commercial / institutional power.**



Bigger message of the chapter

Greenblatt and Gosper represent the **peak of pure hacking culture:**

- Total passion
- Total curiosity
- Total freedom
- Total dedication

But their story also shows that:

Pure idealism begins to clash with the real world.

This conflict continues even today — between:

- Open-source vs. closed-source
 - Freedom vs. control
 - Curiosity vs. business
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In one simple sentence

Chapter 4 is the story of two genius hackers whose passion shaped the AI Lab, pushed computers to their limits, and showed both the beauty — and the struggle — of living by the pure Hacker Ethic.