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# Fat City

By Leonard Gardner

Hey, kid.  
Want to spar?  
You a pro?  
I used to be.  
I'm a little out of shape now.  
Come on. I won't hit you hard.  
Maybe we can just fool around.  
I'll teach you a few things.  
You'd better put this on.  
You look good.  
Ready?  
Bong.  
You all right?  
Good.  
Hold it.  
- You all right?  
- Yeah, I pulled a muscle.  
You okay?  
I should have warmed up better.  
I haven't fought  
in a year and a half.  
What's your name?  
- Ernie Munger.  
- How many bouts you had?  
- None.  
- You've never been in the ring?  
No. I just came to the Y  
to fool around a little.  
- How old are you?  
- Eighteen.  
- You've never been in the ring?  
- No.  
Well...  
I think you've got it, kid.  
I ought to know  
what I'm talking about.  
I fought Efram Soto.  
There was a time  
when nobody could hit me.  
They'd try, but I wouldn't be there.  
- You ought to start fighting.  
- No, I just come to fool around.  
Listen...  
don't waste your good years.

You know, you ought to go over  
to the Lido Gym...  
and see my manager, Ruben Luna.  
Tell him I sent you... Billy Tully.

- I saw you fight once.

- Yeah?

- Did I win?

- No.

Don't you ever go home?

I just got here.

What's keeping him?

He can see we're sitting here.

- Can't you get him to serve us?

- Just take it easy. He'll be here.

You spineless son of a bitch.

You'd take anybody against me.

I want a cream sherry.

Earl and me got something  
very wonderful together.

I love that man more than  
any man's got a right to be loved.

If he left me, I couldn't make it.

I couldn't live without him.

Do you think he'd even raise his voice  
and get me a drink? No.

He'll just sit there  
and let them ignore us.

- Here he comes.

- Yeah, no thanks to you.

Two sherries.

I pulled a muscle.

I make up my mind  
to go back into training...  
I hardly get the gloves on...  
I pull a muscle.

Earl, this guy's a fighter.

- Oh, yeah?

- Aw, Christ.

Why did I even mention it?

What do you know about it anyway?

- Not much.

- That's what I mean.

Sorry to bother you.

Why'd I open my mouth?

I apologize.  
What do you want? I said I was sorry.  
What more can I say?  
- I hear you, baby.  
- Jesus, you sure don't act like it.  
I was sparring...  
with this young kid.  
He's a good prospect. He'd make a lot of  
money someday if he was handled right.  
A natural athlete.  
What's his name?  
You wouldn't know who he was  
if he did tell you.  
- Just asking.  
- He's got to know everything.  
Aw. Now he's mad.  
He's not gonna talk.  
He butts in, then he shuts up.  
- I want to hear this. Go ahead.  
- That's it.  
Nothing more to hear.  
That is all.  
The kid is a natural...  
and they come along  
about one in a million.  
He's so goddamned sour.  
I don't see why  
I can't have a little fun.  
I believe that everybody has  
a right to live his own life.  
So screw everybody.  
I want to say something.  
I want to make a toast here  
to this gentleman.  
I'll make it short...  
just a few words.  
Here's to your health.  
God bless you and keep you  
in all your battles.  
What is it?  
Oh, for Christ sakes.  
What do you want?  
- Can't I even talk to anybody?  
- I'm not stopping you.

No. No, you're not stopping me.  
You just sit with your face shut  
until the minute I start having fun.  
I'm sick of your bellyaching.  
Is it my fault you can't fit in?  
Why can't you mind  
your own business?  
And that goes for the rest of you.  
Oh, to hell with you.  
Want to fight, kid?  
- What's your weight?  
- 175.  
Yeah, you've got a very good reach.  
Looking for a manager?  
Yeah, I'm looking for Ruben Luna.  
Thanks.  
I'm Luna.  
You want to see me?  
I thought I'd work out a little bit.  
See what you think.  
- Billy Tully told me to come by.  
- You know Billy?  
You got your stuff in there?  
Get into your trunks.  
- What's Billy doing these days?  
- He didn't say.  
I only met him once, at the Y.  
Just sparred a little.  
How did you do with him? All right?  
You must have done all right.  
Is Tully getting in shape?  
Why was he at the Y instead of the Lido?  
I think he's afraid to show  
his face around here.  
He was in about a year ago.  
Said he wanted to start fighting again.  
Trained for three days, borrowed \$20,  
I haven't seen him since.  
Look what Felix Castillo done to me.  
You know how much money I gave that guy?  
I used to give him \$2, \$3  
nearly every damn day.  
It was movies, movies,  
every damn day.

Tully didn't know how to punch  
when he first came to me.  
I put him on his way to the top.  
He was the best fighter I ever handled.  
He was tough and had heart.  
But you can't watch a guy  
24 hours a day.  
He married some broad, and she undid  
all the good I did for him.  
And she destroyed his peace of mind.  
He started losing, so she ran off.  
- Come on, kid. You all set?  
- Time!  
I'm not rushing you.  
I don't want you to think that.  
I just want to get a good look at you.  
Wes.  
Sorry.  
Time!  
You're okay.  
Easy. It's okay.  
All, right, now...  
You step in with that jab, right?  
His head goes back.  
Hit him again.  
Okay, again.  
Hit him with the right!  
Okay. All right.  
That's it.  
Feint him.  
Make your openings.  
You make your openings,  
then bing, bing, bing!  
- Understand what I mean?  
- Yeah.  
Okay.  
There you go.  
A white kid came in today  
that might shape up into something.  
That's good.  
He's got a great reach  
and a good pair of legs.  
And he's white, you know?  
Real clean, good-looking kid.

I've got nothing against coloreds,  
there's just too many in the game.  
Anglos don't want to pay  
to see two colored guys fight.  
They want to see a white guy fight.  
This kid could develop.  
Oh, you ought to see the reach on him.  
And he's tall, you know?  
If he put on some weight, he could turn  
into a good-looking white heavyweight.  
Oh, he could draw crowds someday...  
if he ever learned how to fight.  
Well, maybe he can  
if he just listened to me...  
and let me put  
everything I know into him.  
Sweetheart, you awake?  
Who wants to go to work?  
Onion toppers, 20 cents a box.  
Tomatoes, 60 cents a box.  
Tomatoes, over here.  
Let's pick those cucumbers!  
Twenty cents a box!  
Who wants to go to work?  
Let's go pick those melons.  
Who wants to go to work?  
Onion toppers, 20 cents a sack.  
Melons. Come on,  
let's go pick those melons.  
Cucumbers, 20 cents a box!  
How much per sack?  
If a man wants to work,  
he could make \$15, \$20 a day.  
- How much per sack?  
- Twenty cents.  
Go on up.  
Onion toppers over here.  
Young feller like you  
ought to have a proper job.  
I had a job.  
I just got fired.  
What was it?  
Maybe I can get it.  
Fry cook.

Oh, I can't cook.  
I can't either.  
Worked my ass for eight bucks yesterday.  
Good God. Here I am in this bus again.  
You made eight bucks?  
Heck, you make more than I did.  
I worked like hell yesterday.  
After they made the deductions,  
I only had five bucks left.  
It's sure tough to make  
a buck these days.  
Now, keep that head moving.  
All the time, move it, move it.  
- I bought Ernie an amateur license.  
- Great. You'll be out five bucks.  
No, he won't quit.  
Guess what happened.  
The doctor wanted to test his blood,  
could hardly get the needle in.  
- Dull needle, huh?  
- No, he tried two needles.  
- Who, Ernie?  
- Yeah.  
- Doctor could hardly get the needle in.  
- Dull needle?  
The kid's got leather skin.  
That's very odd, Ruben.  
Never would have thought that,  
looking at him.  
Rudy Chavez had thick skin,  
but he was tough.  
You guys know that.  
They don't make 'em like him anymore.  
You haven't heard the half of it.  
He gets the needle in and blood out...  
and it's almost black.  
I had Chavez in  
against Chu Chu Montoya.  
In the first round, my boy gets butted  
over the eye. Blood starts coming down.  
So I said, "Well, there goes the fight."  
It wasn't his blood at all.  
It was Montoya's blood.  
Remember Estrada? I saw him open



a Coke bottle with his teeth.

- What are you saying...

- Will you listen, please?

You haven't heard the half of it.

He finally gets the blood out...

and it's black.

So he stares at it for a minute

and turns the tube upside-down...

and the blood don't run down,

it hangs up there.

It turned to gelatin.

Chavez had the clearest piss

of any fighter I ever saw.

He would take a specimen,

and the piss in that bottle...

would be just as clean and as pure...

as fresh drinking water.

Take the wheel.

No, easy! Slow and easy.

That's it.

Go easy! Go easy!

Don't spin the wheels!

- Hold it.

- What are you saying?

- I can't hear you. What?

- Will you hold it, Faye?

I'm gonna look for some boards

to put under the wheels.

Hold it!

Move over.

Don't touch me.

I'm all muddy.

I don't care if you're muddy or not.

Put your arm around me.

Not while I'm driving in the rain.

I'm glad.

About what?

You know.

Not being a virgin anymore.

What?

Not that I'd feel any different.

It's just that I thought

I'd see the world through new eyes.

But I don't.

- You've never done it before?  
- Certainly not.  
You've done it lots of times,  
I suppose.  
Well, I'm going on 19, after all.  
How was I compared to the other girls?  
All right.  
I mean, wonderful.  
You were wonderful.  
- Really?  
- Yeah, wonderful.  
I'll get better with practice.  
Anybody would have thought you had  
all the practice in the world.  
- Hope you're not implying anything.  
- No, I meant you were wonderful.  
Will you call me tomorrow?  
What for?  
No reason.  
Just want to hear  
the sound of your voice.  
Let's go, guys.  
Let's go, Babe!  
Monterey, here we come!  
We got the winners tonight, Babe.  
What do you think?  
- Yeah, I think we got the winners.  
- For sure winners.  
- You know what I'd like to do someday?  
- What?  
Take these guys to England.  
They really appreciate class over there.  
When we turn these boys pro,  
I'd really like to make that trip.  
Nice house today.  
Ernie, listen.  
This guy can't fight.  
You'll knock him out. How do you feel?  
- Hardly wait to get in?  
- I'll give it all I've got.  
You may have to go the full three,  
so don't punch yourself out.  
- Don't lose your head.  
- Pace myself.

Look, don't hang back.

It goes fast.

- Give it everything I got.

- Still you want to pace yourself.

Buford, your guy's been around.

Don't let him get a good shot at you.

He's a boozier. You know how these soldiers are. He won't go the limit.

I don't care who he is,

'cause ain't nobody getting past me.

I'm gonna be the world's champ

by the time I'm 18.

- Ain't he 18 now?

- Shit, he's only 15.

- Can you fight if you're 15?

- Would you be quiet about that?

Buford's Golden Gloves champion.

He don't fit the rules.

Hope I didn't leave

my fight in the bedroom.

Don't tell Ruben, but I was

getting a little last night.

- Hope I'm in shape.

- I was too.

But that don't make no difference.

It don't matter if you're dead drunk.

You got two hands. You can beat

this dude. I don't care who he is.

It's all in your mind.

I hope so.

Hoping never done nothing.

It's wanting to do it.

You got to want to win

so bad you can taste it.

If you want to win bad enough, you win.

No way in hell this dude will beat me.

He's too old. I'm too fast.

I'm gonna be all over him.

I'm gonna kick his ass so bad,  
every time he eats food tomorrow...

he'll think of me.

He's gonna know he's been in a fight,

'cause I'll hit him with everything.

I'm not just gonna beat that mother,

I'm gonna kill him.

- You know what makes a good fighter?

- What?

Believing in yourself, the will to win.

You want to kick ass, you kick ass.

- You're right.

- You don't want to kick ass.

You want to get

your own ass whupped.

I want to kick ass.

Don't worry.

You gotta want to kick ass so bad there ain't no manager or pill that can do it.

- I want to kick ass as bad as you do.

- Then go out there and kick ass!

- All right!

- First bout, Ernie Munger.

We got to go now.

Hey, did you get the towels?

- I didn't get to warm up.

- You're okay. You're ready.

- Just stay loose. Where's the bucket?

- In my hand.

- Where's the bottle.

- In the bucket.

- Is there water in it?

- I wouldn't bring an empty bottle.

I just don't want my kid out there without any water.

I told you I got the water.

Take it easy.

Let's go.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to tonight's star-studded program of amateur boxing.

Each bout will consist of three two-minute rounds...

in accordance with the California State Athletic Commission.

Your referee, from San Francisco, Ron Dixon.

This is the first bout of the night.

Introducing first, in the blue corner... weighing 170 pounds,

from Stockton...

Irish Ernie Munger.

I'm not Irish.

I just said it that way

so they'd know you're white.

It'll look great in the paper.

Wave to the crowd.

In the red corner,

weighing 172 pounds, from Salinas...

Manuel Rosales.

I want both you boys to be sure

to protect yourselves at all times.

Jab, baby! Jab!

Right jab! Yeah!

That's it, baby!

Move, move, move!

Jab, jab! Jab!

That's the stuff!

Terrific!

Right in there!

This guy's finished. Unload on him.

Move in there, Ernie. Use the hook.

- Work him in. Two punches...

- Keep your punches up.

- You can take him.

- Tear his head off.

- Jab, jab, hook.

- Seconds out.

Break.

The winner by technical knockout,

in the red corner, from Salinas...

Manuel Rosales.

Good fight.

Tilt your head back.

Breathe through your mouth.

- He was butting you.

- Sure we was butting. He can't punch.

I'm all right.

Next bout, Henry Reed.

Come on.

- You lose, huh?

- They shouldn't have stopped it.

You ought to get a note

from the doctor before you leave.

You can get that nose set  
and it won't cost you nothing.  
Get him out of those trunks.  
He was butted, Al.  
They should throw that kid  
out of the ring.  
- Get into your trunks.  
- He's all bloody.  
Don't worry about it.  
It's not your blood.  
Let me look at that.  
Easy. Don't touch it.  
Don't touch it!  
Don't touch it!  
Buford, you doing all right?  
How do you feel?  
Just pissed off, Ruben.  
You dropped your left.  
Don't sweat over it.  
You get him again,  
you'll knock him out next time.  
Ernie, you'll get that nose fixed  
good as new. Don't worry.  
Look at mine. Would you believe  
mine was ever busted?  
Yes.  
I don't know what deal we're getting  
tonight, but I've never seen its like.  
Stopping that fight  
when Ernie had that guy beat...  
That kid should have been  
disqualified.  
And Wes wasn't hurt either. Anyone  
can get tagged in the first round.  
And Bobby won every round.  
He did. That's a fact.  
That was robbery if I've ever seen it.  
You were hurting that boy.  
Hey, sweetheart.  
Sweetheart.  
Can we have more beer  
and pop for the boys?  
Glass of beer, please.  
Hi!

- How've you been keeping?

- Terrible.

Are you alone?

Mind if I sit down?

It's a free country.

Help yourself.

Where's your old man?

In jail.

What for?

Because they won't leave you alone  
in this world, that's why.

You don't know what you have  
to take when you're interracial.

Every bum on the street  
has to get a look at you.

Earl...

he's a peaceable man.

Even-tempered.

He did not hurt that guy.

It was a nick on the back of the neck.

He'd wouldn't any more try  
to assault somebody...

than you'd get on that stool  
and try to fly.

He's not made that way.

He's the sweetest-natured man  
in the world.

He'll get out.

He's so jealous.

I wouldn't put it past him  
to be out already...

spying on every move I make.

He's so possessive.

He won't let me talk to people.

He gets mad at me.

You remember the last time we talked?

Way back then, remember?

Do you know what he did  
to me afterwards?

He raped me.

- No shit?

- Yes.

He picked me up

and he threw me on that bed.

Don't look at me like that.  
I'm not ashamed to say it.  
I've never been ashamed  
of the act of love.  
I believe it's a part of life.  
Sure. Why not?  
You should.  
Of course,  
if people like each other...  
I'm not talking about free love.  
I have no use for that.  
You know, free  
depends what you mean "free."  
I mean...  
if it's not...  
free, can you call it love?  
I'm talking about love.  
Real love, not just sex.  
When you're really in love,  
you marry for life...  
and that is the only way it can be.  
I don't consider  
my second marriage sanctified.  
I should've stayed true to Frank.  
Frank?  
Who's Frank?  
Frank.  
That was my first husband.  
He's full-blooded Cherokee.  
You married an Indian?  
What's wrong with that?  
You think you're any better?  
- I'm not bagging on it.  
- You just watch what you say.  
I won't stand for any insults  
against Frank.  
I still wear his wedding ring.  
Where is he?  
I'm a widow.  
That's too bad.  
I'm sorry to hear that.  
What happened to him?  
He was shot.  
No kidding?



- Who did it?  
- He was a police officer.  
He was killed in the line of duty.  
That's terrible.  
I was married too.  
She ran out on me.  
We didn't even have time  
to have children.  
I married white the next time.  
All he was good for...  
was running us off an embankment.  
That and spending the insurance.  
Marrying him was the biggest  
mistake of my life.  
He had unnatural desires.  
He did?  
The white race is in its decline.  
It started downhill in 1492  
when Columbus discovered syphilis.  
- What did he want to do?  
- White men are animals.  
- We're not so bad.  
- White man is the vermin of the earth.  
- Not so loud.  
- Don't tell me what to do.  
I don't care who hears me. I know  
I'm making a nuisance of myself...  
to all these goddamn Mexicans  
sitting here.  
They don't know who  
their real friends are.  
- What are you going on about?  
- Take your hands off me!  
You are liable to get backhanded  
right off that stool.  
You see if I care one bit!  
That's all I need!  
You go ahead,  
if it'll make you feel so good!  
- I'm sorry.  
- Get it out of your system!  
Go on, if it'll make you feel good!  
Punch me in the face!  
- God Almighty.

- Take some teeth out while you're at it!  
I still got a few left. The others  
were nice enough to leave me.  
- I wouldn't hit you. I'm sorry.  
- It'll be a big lift for you.  
What are you waiting for?  
It's just the thing you need!  
Far be it from me  
to spoil anybody's fun!  
I'm sorry! Will you listen to me,  
goddamn it? I am sorry!  
So what?  
So you're sorry.  
Well, I feel like banging my head.  
Go ahead!  
I'm not gonna stop you.  
Feel like I could just bust my head...  
on that jukebox.  
Go ahead!  
What did you do that for?  
You told me to go ahead and do it,  
so I did it.  
You can count on me  
right down the line.  
You want to knock your brains out?  
You can count on me.  
Just don't bump your head anymore.  
Listen.  
Let me tell you something.  
You can count on me...  
right down the line.  
I thought you wanted to hit me.  
Oh, God.  
Will you forget that?  
I never hit a woman in my life.  
Let me buy you a drink.  
Could we have two  
cream sherries, please?  
Won't you believe me?  
Don't you think  
that you can count on me?  
Just don't bump your head anymore.  
Oh, come on.  
Will you forget that?

Hey, listen.  
I just asked you a question.  
Do you think I'd let you down?  
I don't know.  
Would you?  
Hey, I wouldn't.  
I wouldn't.  
Maybe you wouldn't.  
How would I know?  
You...  
can...  
count...  
on me.  
You can count on me.  
No, I'm the reliable type.  
Do you know who your friends are?  
Listen. Anytime...  
you need anything...  
you just come and see me.  
These others,  
I wouldn't ask the time of day.  
They wouldn't give it to you.  
Do you know something?  
You're the only son of a bitch  
worth a shit in this place.  
I appreciate that.  
Because...  
there is something  
I really like about you.  
I like you too.  
To us.  
Let's get out of this joint.  
Let's go somewhere else.  
Keep the change.  
Hey, you all right?  
- I don't know.  
- You gonna make it?  
I guess I'm drunk.  
Don't worry about anything.  
I'll get you home.  
You can count on me.  
- Going the right way?  
- Yep.  
What's the matter?

I love you so much.

Hey, come on.

Everything's gonna be okay now.

I feel it is.

It is.

- You can count on me.

- Right.

- And I can count on you.

- Yep.

I can count on you

And you can count on me

And we can count on each other

- White look all right on me?

- Perfect.

- You professional?

- Amateur.

Won his last three fights.

They couldn't touch him. Kid's fast.

- What do you think?

- It's just the right image for you.

When you come out in that,

you're gonna look like a champ.

Champion of the world.

One, two, three.

The winner by KO...

in 23 seconds of round one...

- Let's get him to his corner.

- Come on, baby. Come on.

Easy.

Take it easy.

What's your name? What's your name?

Where are you?

- Did I get knocked out?

- Tell me your name. Can you do that?

Ernie Munger.

What round is it?

How many fingers do you see?

Can you see my hand?

How many fingers?

- Five.

- He's okay.

You're okay, Ernie.

- What's the matter?

- Nothing.

Don't you feel good?

- I'm all right.

- Is anything wrong?

- I said "nothing."

- What are you mad about then?

Can't I be quiet if I feel like it  
without everybody getting all worked up?

- You're the only one getting worked up.

- Leave me alone then.

I have a right to my moods.

All right. I can take a hint.

Don't think I don't know what's wrong.

You're unfulfilled.

I know.

I'm fulfilled.

I'm perfectly fulfilled.

That's not what's bothering me.

You didn't get real fulfillment.

Don't worry about that.

I'm fulfilled.

That's not it at all.

You're mad about something.

I'm not mad.

Just a little worried, that's all.

About what?

You know what.

God, we've been pretty careful.

If I was careful, I never would have  
come out here in the first place.

You wouldn't marry me now.

I just know you wouldn't.

Men just don't

after the mystery's gone.

They do too. They do it all the time.

What are you talking about?

You wouldn't.

- I would too.

- When?

When it'd be right

for both of us.

We don't want to rush into a mess  
when we've got each other anyway.

But don't you want to be with me  
every night?

Sure.

Maybe I can get a day job.

Not what I meant.

We don't want to rush into something.

Look, don't think I'm proposing to you.

That's a thing I certainly  
would never do.

I wouldn't want anybody  
who didn't want me.

I want you.

Certainly wouldn't force myself  
on anyone.

It's just, I like to know  
where I stand, that's all.

Supposing you got drafted. Would you  
expect me to be here when you came back?

Yeah.

Then why should we wait?

I could quit school  
and get a job.

I want to be with you all the time.

I want to cook for you.

I don't know how you feel.

I wouldn't want you to marry me  
just because you thought you had to.

Huh? Oh, sure.

No one has to, I guess.

I mean, we could do something  
about it easy enough.

Yeah.

Sure we could.

But I wouldn't want to.

If I was, I'd want to have it.

Wouldn't you?

Wouldn't you feel anything?

Sure.

Maybe you'd better see a doctor.

Give me a cup of coffee.

- How's it going, Ruben?

- Well, lost another one.

- Ernie snuck off and got married.

- I might have known it.

What kind of pie you want?

Never mind. Give me what he's got.

Boy, she sure knows how  
to fill a skirt.  
Yeah, I talked to his mother  
on the phone. He got married.  
- What can you expect?  
- All that energy they waste.  
If they're not getting married, they're  
getting arrested or joining the navy...  
or killing themselves on motorcycles.  
You know why I think he did it?  
I think that beating discouraged him.  
If you don't have confidence in yourself  
you're never gonna get anywhere.  
I remember the first time  
I passed blood.  
That was one scared kid.  
Sure, when I got my jaw broken and had  
to suck liquids through a straw...  
I started wondering  
if it was all worthwhile.  
Tell you what bothered me.  
Getting my throat ruined.  
You didn't keep your chin down.  
How's your nose.  
Can you breathe?  
Yeah, can't you?  
Not on a wet day.  
- Hi, honey.  
- Hi.  
How'd it go?  
Well...  
canneries weren't hiring today.  
Did you try the box factory?  
I've already been fired  
from the box factory.  
You know...  
I guess I'm just gonna have to  
start fighting again.  
- Honey!  
- Yeah?  
- I wish you wouldn't do that.  
- Do what?  
Kick Earl's box.  
I didn't kick it.

I fell over it.  
I don't believe in  
kicking a man when he's down.  
Honey, it is not Earl in the box.  
It's just his clothes.  
Clothes make the man.  
You know something, honey? You ought to  
spruce yourself up a little.  
You are a good-looking man.  
You should put your best foot forward.  
I know how I look.  
I look like a bum.  
- A am a bum.  
- You're not a bum.  
If you took more pains in appearance,  
you could get a job you really liked.  
The job I really like  
hasn't been invented.  
You're handsome.  
You are.  
All you need  
is a little more flair.  
Flair?  
Come here.  
Try this on.  
- Oh, no.  
- Go on. Try this on.  
- I don't want to try that on.  
- Why not?  
I don't want to try it on.  
It belongs to Earl.  
Earl would understand.  
Come on, now. He's  
the kindest-hearted man in the world.  
For me?  
Honey?  
Get over there.  
What do you think?  
Have I got flair now?  
- What's the matter?  
- Poor bastard.  
- Who?  
- Earl.  
Eating his heart out



in the pokey.

Oh, boy.

I'm in worse shape

than I thought I was.

How long before a man

gets used to this?

I've been doing it for 25 years

and ain't got used to it yet.

All a man needs is a woman

with a good job.

I had that. She left.

I got one now

that won't work at all.

That's the easiest kind to get.

I had a good woman once,

but she divorced me.

- How come?

- Because of wine.

- Wine?

- Uh-huh.

My wife would go to work

and I'd sit home and drink wine.

There was this girl that lived

across the hall.

She was a friend of my wife.

My door would be open,

and I'd see her walk by.

I asked if she wanted a drink.

So we started drinking together...

and she looking better and better...

until I'm over there

as soon as my wife leaves...

and coming back

just before she gets home.

So my wife figures something's up...

'cause I'm all the time yawning

and fall asleep as soon as I get in bed.

So she goes across the hall

and sees this girl...

and a big bunch of roses

in a jar.

So she asks this girl,

"Where'd you get these roses?"

That girl, she say, "I don't know.

They just come."  
So my wife go down to the corner  
to the florist...  
and asked did I buy  
a big bunch of red roses.  
So he said, "Yes."  
That's how wine broke up my marriage.  
- Sounds like it was roses to me.  
- It was wine and roses.  
So now I'm out here  
chopping weeds.  
I'll tell you girls something.  
- Esteban here...  
- Can I have a match?  
Esteban here  
is one hell of a fighter.  
Could've made champ,  
except for his hands.  
Show them your hands. He hits  
too hard for the size of his hands.  
You know what happened to me?  
Mismanagement.  
Ruben.  
Remember my fight with Soto?  
To save a lousy  
couple of hundred bucks...  
he flew me down to Panama  
all by myself and blew my chance.  
- You know who Soto was then?  
- Number five. He was good boy.  
Good? I had that bum hanging on.  
I was knocking him silly for six rounds.  
So I'm back in my corner.  
I'm not paying attention  
to anything they're doing to me.  
I know I got him. The bell rings.  
I come out in the seventh.  
He pops me a couple of times, and  
suddenly the referee stops the fight.  
There's blood pouring down me.  
Can you believe that?  
Both of my eyes are cut.  
Everybody's happy.  
The audience is screaming

their heads off.

So they patch me up

and put me on a plane...

and they're all smiles.

I get back to Stockton. I go see Ruben.

He looks at the butterflies.

He takes them off.

He takes a peek at the cuts...

tells me they were done

with a razor.

- Were they?

- They sure were.

- How could he tell?

- By looking at them!

Then we went out of Sacramento and filed

a complaint with the commissioner.

- What happened?

- Nothing.

I'm gonna start doing some running.

If I get into shape,

I know I can still fight.

- Why don't you then?

- I'm gonna.

Yeah, sure.

I heard that one before.

- I am.

- Sure, sure.

- Screw you.

- Up yours, cowboy!

Onion choppers, over here.

Onion choppers, over here.

How the hell are you?

- What are you doing out here?

- Got a bum-paying job. Wife's pregnant.

I came down to pick up a few extra

bucks, and I run into a mob like this.

Come on.

I'll try to get you on.

- Beautiful.

- You like walnuts?

- Yeah, they're great.

- Did you go to the gym and see Ruben?

- Yeah. Fought for a while.

- Yeah? How'd you do?

- I won some, lost some.  
- That's good.  
Keep it up, man.  
You got the stuff.  
- Hey, I brought you a real hustler.  
- You go out yesterday?  
Yeah. I was a tree-beater.  
I'll wait and see if all of  
yesterday's crew comes back.  
You're making a big mistake  
if you pass this guy up.  
- I'll give you my personal voucher.  
- Get on, both of you.  
You must think I'm crazy working  
out here like this, wasting my time.  
It's almost as good as roadwork  
for getting back into shape...  
and you get paid for it.  
Another couple weeks  
I'm gonna look for a fight.  
I get the fight, I get the money,  
and I send for my wife.  
You know, Ernie...  
there are some women  
that love you for yourself...  
but that doesn't last long.  
- Take care of that wife of yours.  
- I'm trying.  
And listen, don't you let  
anybody knock marriage.  
No, man.  
It's got its compensations.  
That's a fact.  
That's absolutely right.  
It's got its compensations.  
That's it. That's absolutely it.  
It has got its compensations.  
That's right.  
Come here.  
Let me show you something.  
That's stacked.  
I gotta get myself together and get  
down to the gym and start working out.  
Hey, maybe we could go down

to the gym together.

- Sure, I'll go down there with you.

- I was in bad shape the last time.

I can do it.

I can get back into shape.

You should've seen

the things we had...

the new car and the house

and everything.

I am gonna be bad news

this time around.

Bad...

news!

Time. Time.

You're not jabbing right.

You gotta use your jab more.

Hey, fellas.

Hey, Gil.

How you doing?

Hey, Ruben, look who's here.

Well, will you look at this?

Glad to see you.

You're looking good.

Hey, Ruben, how's it going?

- Will you look at this?

- Hey, how are you?

- Long time, no see.

- How'd you guys find your way up here?

- What have you been doing?

- Picking nuts.

You don't care what kind of company

you keep, do you?

- I heard you got married.

- Yeah.

Wow! How do you like that?

Come on. Time.

Listen, I wanna pay you back

that \$20 I borrowed from you.

What?

I borrowed \$20 from you.

Remember?

- Yeah, but that was a long time ago.

- I know, but I want you to take it.

Yeah? You sure you can spare it?

Oh, yeah.

You come up to work out?

I wanna start fighting again.

You really gonna get into shape?

I am really gonna get in shape.

You can do it, baby.

You can do it.

You're really looking good.

You look great.

Get into your gym clothes.

Give me that.

Mac, how are you? How's business?

I got something hot for you.

Billy Tully's back in training.

I'll tell you what I'd like for him,  
a good tune-up fight.

- Who'd pay to see a tune-up fight?

- He looks terrific, Mac.

A couple of good wins,  
he's ready for anybody.

I don't mean match him with some bum.  
Somebody to give him a good workout.

- Tully won't draw.

- He's a good, clean athlete...  
with a fine record.

Maybe I could use him  
in a semi-windup.

A semi-windup.

No, I can't put him in a semi.

He's still got the old stuff.

He's got class.

- He won't draw.

- Look...

we can put a hometown boy  
in every bout.

I got a fine Irish kid  
that could turn pro for the opener.

How about Arcadio Lucero? I could  
use Tully in a main even with him.

No, Lucero... I don't know.

Lucero's a puncher.

What I meant was a good tune-up.

Why should I put him in with Lucero?

It might be different if he had

a couple of good tune-ups first.  
I think I can get you Lucero.  
Not that I think  
he could ever nail Tully.  
Well, I tell you,  
I think I can get Lucero.  
It would be a good win on his record.  
I could phone Mexico City  
and see if he's available.  
Supper's almost ready.  
Can I have a robe?  
What?  
Can I have a robe?  
How do you like your steak?  
I don't care.  
Is Earl out of the bucket?  
- His box is gone.  
- Earl's box?  
- Did Earl come over here today?  
- Yep.  
- Why didn't you tell me so?  
- I just woke up.  
I didn't have a chance  
to open my mouth.  
- Yeah.  
- He just picked up his stuff and left.  
Mm-hmm. After he found out  
he couldn't move back in, huh?  
He didn't mention moving in.  
- Then why'd he come over?  
- I told you, to get his clothes.  
He already knew  
that you and I were together.  
- How'd he know that?  
- What are all these questions?  
He came by the day he got out.  
- Why didn't you tell me?  
- I guess I forgot.  
- Yeah, that's a good one.  
- What?  
- Nothing.  
- I heard what you said.  
They why'd you ask?  
You don't trust me, do you?

Look, Oma, all I'm trying to do  
is cook our supper.  
Oh, aren't you wonderful?  
If I didn't cook it,  
we wouldn't eat.  
Nobody asked you  
to fix me any supper.  
Yeah, I know.  
You'd just as soon drink yours.  
If you don't wanna fix me any,  
than you don't have to.  
I'm making it for you.  
Then I won't eat it  
if you feel that way about it.  
I want you to eat it.  
I cooked it  
because I want you to eat!  
I didn't say anything,  
and you had to go and get mad.  
Jesus Christ, Oma. Come on.  
Eat your supper before it gets cold.  
I don't take orders from you.  
You need your protein.  
I'm not gonna eat with somebody  
that talks to me the way you do.  
You wanna starve to death?  
That'd solve everything  
for you, wouldn't it?  
Oma, I just asked you  
a simple question. Jesus.  
Come on.  
Eat your dinner before it gets cold.  
Maybe I don't wanna eat.  
All right. Forget it.  
Just forget it.  
Go on.  
Go hungry if you want to.  
I make you a good dinner.  
You don't even appreciate it.  
This is good food.  
Go ahead and starve to death.  
See if I care. Just forget about it.  
All right.  
I'll have a little.



- No, I don't want you to.
- No, I want it.
- I don't want you to eat.
- I wanna eat it.
- No, I don't want you to eat it.
- I want it!

I don't want you to eat it!

I don't want you to eat it!

Now you won't even

let me eat my dinner!

All right.

Eat.

Well?

- How do you like it?

- What?

- Nothing. Forget it.

- Oh, for Christ's sake.

Don't ask something

and then not say what you mean.

- Your supper.

- All right.

It's fine.

I thought you'd know what I meant since  
you're not having any trouble eating it.

Nobody can eat with you  
sitting across the table!

All right, Oma.

I give up.

All I've been trying to do  
is get you to eat your supper.

If you don't want my company,  
just say so. I'll let you alone.

- Where you going?

- Take a walk around the block.

- Can I go with you?

- No.

Let you eat in peace.

That's what you want.

You're going out for a drink  
and you're gonna leave me here?

I'm fighting in a week.

Do you think I'd take a drink?

Wait a minute.

Let me get my shoes.

Billy, wait...

Billy, wait, please!

- Hello.

- Is that you, Ruben?

- Who is this speaking?

- You know something?

You're not worried about me,  
and I don't give a damn about you.

You never will give a damn,  
so why should I?

You know, if you'd gone to Panama  
with me, everything would be different.

Listen, where are you?

What's the problem?

What do you mean, what is the problem?

What's your problem?

Just hold on. Where are you?

What's wrong?

Hi, Billy.

Hello, Ruben.

What are you doing

out on the town?

Hey, Ruben,

can I buy you a drink?

No, nothing, Billy. Nothing.

Hey, Ruben,

I'm really glad to see you.

I need somebody to talk to.

I need your good advice.

I am in a mess.

What's the trouble?

Oh, this woman of mine,  
she's just off her gourd.

I can't take it anymore. I need my  
peace of mind. I'm training for a fight.

- Is that so?

- Yeah.

I can't take it anymore, Ruben.

I can't even sleep

in the same bed with her.

Every time she opens her mouth

I think I'm gonna go crazy!

- She's a lush.

- Leave her. Stay at my place tonight.

I wish I could. It's not that easy.  
All my clothes are over there.  
I'll get you some clothes,  
and I'll give you an advance.  
But if you're really gonna leave her,  
you leave her right now.  
Right now!  
Right. You're dead right.  
- You're right. I know you're right.  
- Come on.  
Come on. I'll get you a room  
somewhere tomorrow.  
All right.  
She's just destroying me, Rube.  
Hey, listen to me.  
Wait a minute.  
I wanna tell you something.  
Ever since my wife left me...  
it has just been one mess  
after another.  
You know...  
the only time  
I was ever really happy, I...  
You know something, Rube?  
In four days, I'm gonna be 30.  
Come on, let's go.  
All right. Okay.  
Come on. Attaboy. All right.  
You need help?  
Okay, baby.  
Come on.  
You know,  
I really appreciate it, Rube.  
Lodi and Sacramento.  
The Lodi-Sacramento bus  
is now loading passengers.  
Please remain inside the terminal...  
until the driver picks up your ticket  
at door number four.  
Have a pleasant day.  
Billy, better start to warm up.  
- Hurry up. He's gotta warm up.  
- You're on right now.  
Don't get excited, Mac.

- How do you feel, Tully?  
- I feel okay.  
- Is he all clear from the doctor?  
- He's all set. He's gonna win big.  
- How's the crowd?  
- Fair.  
- You're on next, so good luck, Tully.  
- Thanks, Mac.

You all ready to go, Lucero?

Gonna give them another good show?

He feels good. He's ready.

- He seen the doctor yet?

- Yeah. He says he's in good shape.

You got some fans out there, Lucero.

Give them a good show.

I'd like to have you back here.

Ladies and gentlemen,  
your attention, please.

The main event.

Ten rounds.

Wearing the blue trunks...

weighing 175 pounds...

the pride of Stockton...

Billy Tully!

And from Mexico City...

Arcadio Lucero!

And the referee for the main event,  
Al Giovanni.

Come on, come on! Hit him in  
the head! The head! Hit him!

Break. Come on, boys.

Break. Break.

Go back to the corners.

Stay away from him. Move him around.

Don't slug with him.

- He's laying for you.

- He's weak downstairs.

- Don't trade with him.

- I hurt him downstairs.

Don't gamble.

- Seconds out.

- Get him up.

Seconds out.

Break. Step back. Step back.

- Stay down, Billy!  
- One, two, three...  
- Stay down, Billy!  
- four...  
five, six...  
- seven, eight...  
- Get up, Billy!  
Get up!  
Are you all right, kid?  
All right.  
Come on, let's go!  
Right here. Come on, kid.  
Let's go.  
Come on, sit down.  
- Is that eye all right?  
- Yeah, he's all right.  
- Make sure.  
- He's okay.  
Tully, stay away from him.  
Stay away from those rights.  
Tie him up.  
Stick him in the ribs, okay?  
- All right. Seconds out.  
- Seconds out.  
- All right. Seconds out.  
- Seconds out.  
Move! Move!  
Move, baby, move!  
Come on.  
Clean break. Clean break.  
Break. Come on, boys.  
Break. Break.  
Move. Move.  
Five, six, seven, eight...  
You all right, kid?  
Winner by technical knockout...

**time:**

of the third round...  
Billy Tully!  
- Did I get knocked out?  
- No, we won, we won.  
You won, baby! You won!  
Here he is!

There he is.  
- Congratulations.  
- Congratulations, Billy.  
Kiss him, honey. Kiss him.  
- Congratulations.  
- You put on a good fight.  
Good fight?  
This guy is sensational.  
He just pulled the upset of the year.  
This guy is great.  
I defy anybody to say  
this guy is not great.  
First fight in two years,  
he gets himself into perfect condition.  
He doesn't smoke, Mac. You know that?  
Never touches tobacco.  
He's ready for anybody.  
We got a real winner here.  
He's the most colorful attraction  
in Northern California.  
What'd you think of this kid?  
Wasn't he fantastic?  
First pro fight,  
he's cool as ice in there.  
Don't give it all  
to them baby doctors.  
If it's a boy, call him Babe.  
- How can he miss?  
- Real good. Real good.  
- Is he a lightweight or a heavyweight?  
- A heavyweight.  
- Good night, sweetheart.  
- Good night. I'll see you.  
- Good night, kids. Take care.  
- See you, Bill.  
Babe, take my missus home, will you?  
I'll drop Tully off.  
Come on.  
He looked good out there.  
That third round...  
We earned \$241.  
You've been off too long.  
Next time you'll draw  
three times that much.

- What's my cut come to?  
- I gave you all those advances.  
I gotta collect some of that.  
We got you on your feet now.  
In three or four weeks  
you'll be ready to go again.  
I'll tell you what. Why don't I  
just keep paying your room and board?  
- I'm not drinking anymore.  
- I know, Billy. I know.  
I'm not gonna blow any of it.  
Look, you take your cut and just  
let me pay my own bills, okay?  
Anything you say.  
Here you go.  
Only a hundred bucks?  
That's all my sweat and blood  
is worth, a lousy 100 bucks?  
That's hardly worth the trouble.  
I gave you those advances with the  
agreement they come out of your purse.  
I got four kids. Once we make  
another match, I'll stake you.  
- Oh, yeah.  
- Don't get out that door!  
You'll get run over!  
Get out this door!  
What'd you do that for?  
Why didn't you slide over?  
- What do you care?  
- You can get run into out there.  
You're just looking out for me  
every minute, aren't you?  
Huh? Except when  
it comes time to pay off!  
I'll talk to Mac. He'll put you  
on again in two or three weeks.  
- With this cut?  
- It'll heal.  
You know where I got this cut, Ruben?  
This is the same place they cut me  
with that razor blade...  
when you sent me down to Panama  
to fight Soto all by myself...

'cause you were too tight to  
come down and work in my corner.

That's not old scar tissue.

It's a new cut.

Yeah, that's what you'd say,  
all right.

Would you get out of  
the middle of the road there?

Yeah, yeah.

What you want?

- I just come to get my things.

- I live here, and I pay the rent.

- Yeah.

- Got your things in a box.

You're all ready to go.

Oh, Christ, Mary and Joseph,  
look who's here.

- Thanks.

- I'm wearing one of your T-shirts.

- I'll take it off for you.

- No, don't bother. I've got plenty.

I got my own.

Just wasn't none clean today.

What's yours is yours.

Oma wanted me

to throw your stuff out...

but I say a man's stuff

is his stuff.

When he shows up around here, I'm gonna  
send him off with what he come for.

- You can take that box and shove it!

- Hush now. He just come for his things.

- He's leaving.

- Don't you hush me, you bums!

- What do you know about it anyway?

- Don't listen to her.

- She's been drinking.

- Get that garbage out of here!

- We've been out on the town tonight.

- Take the shirt off a man's back.

If that isn't just so perfect!

If that isn't just like him!

She just likes to blow off steam.

Don't listen to her. We gets along.



How I handle her,  
I just don't pay her no mind.  
The thing you got to understand  
about her, she's a juice head.  
I know.  
She won't eat either.  
Yeah, that's on account of  
her unhappy life and all that shit.  
Nothing I can do about that.  
So I don't let it worry me none.  
Look like you had you a fight.  
How you come out?  
- I won.  
- Is that right?  
I seen you on the posters.  
I like to catch a good fight  
now and then.  
- Maybe I'll catch you some time.  
- Good.  
But I don't need you coming around  
here no more. She don't wanna see you.  
Oma, you wanna see this man?  
- Christ!  
- See how it is?  
You got your stuff.  
- You got a match?  
- I don't have one.  
- Hey, man.  
- Hey, how's it going?  
- All right. How you doing?  
- All right.  
- You look like you had a fight.  
- Yeah, I just one a decision in Reno.  
Is that right?  
Congratulations. Nice going.  
- Why don't we have a drink?  
- No, not for me.  
- How you been keeping, man?  
- Come on.  
No, I gotta get home  
to my wife and kid.  
What's the matter? You won't even  
have a drink with your old buddy.  
But I don't drink.

Yeah, I know.  
You only win decisions.  
Do you know how many KOs  
I had in a row?  
A whole long string.  
You mind if I say something personal?  
- No, go ahead.  
- Can I be frank?  
It's just my own opinion.  
You remember that first time  
that we met down at the YMCA?  
Yeah.  
I said to myself then...  
I said...  
"Now, there is a guy  
that is soft in the center."  
I don't know. Forget it.  
Great. Fine. Congratulations.  
Listen, you got everything  
going for you, you know that?  
You're young, and you got a wife,  
and you got a kid...  
- A little boy.  
- Yeah, and you got a good reach too.  
- Hey, no hard feelings, huh?  
- No, man. No hard feelings.  
You're right about that drink.  
Can I buy you a cup of coffee?  
Yeah, let's go get some coffee.  
So, why haven't you been training?  
Oh, I don't know.  
I've been thinking about it.  
- Coffee?  
- Coffee.  
Please.  
How'd you like to  
wake up in the morning...  
and be him?  
Jesus.  
The waste.  
Before you can get rolling...  
your life makes a beehive  
for the drain.  
- Thanks.

- Thank you.

Maybe he's happy.

Maybe we're all happy.

Right?

Do you think he was  
ever young once?

No.

Maybe he was.

Hey, buddy, I'm gonna take off.

Hey, stick around.

Talk a while.