

The Fight Game

A one act play

Owen Lewis

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The Fight Game

A one act play

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Dramatis Personae.

Andrew Collins.....A Boxer in his mid-twenties

Siobhan Elkers..... Andrew's Girlfriend

Ian Brown.....Andrew's manager mid-forties/early fifties (*age is not overly important.*)

Derek Black....Black's Promotions manager.

Voice of Radio Announcer M/F

Montage of Boxing match sound effects with the noise of the crowd: Any sounds that will suggest a boxing event. Don't allow this montage to give out any names of contemporary boxers . We know it is a modern day piece but it might be any decade from 1990 onwards. At the end of the montage fifteen seconds of a classic radio song plays. About two minutes in total.

During these two minutes the audience can see Andrew Collins in shorts and vest sitting on a chair centre stage. At his right his manager Ian Brown is stood in an open armed gesture. Hold this tableaux as the audience comes in. This tableaux is to suggest loss and comfort. Collins has lost a fight and Brown is comforting him. All this is illuminated in a solitary follow spot. As the voice starts the follow spot is slowly closed

Voice of Radio Announcer. (*Interrupts music*)

We interrupt this programme with breaking news. A female body has been found in Weatherington. Whether it is the body of the missing Estate Agent, Siobhan Elkers, police can yet not confirm. More at the top of the hour...

(*SFX ...Crowd at a boxing match , bell ring countdown*)

(*SFX...Ding ding. Lights up*)

Scene One

Ian

Son, you got to stop beating yourself up. The lad was younger and quicker.

Boxer

That's not the reason, there was no real difference.

Fight game/ojl/2013

Ian

Yes, Son there was.

Boxer

Oh, was there? Love to know what it was.

Ian

He had the hunger, that need that drives for success, the hunger. He was hungrier than you.

Boxer

Well, I got hunger too.

Ian

No son, you haven't. It's always the same story - it happens just as soon as the money starts rolling in, in my humble judgement and from my experience the story is the same one, money equals a change in lifestyle, the hunger to fight will naturally wane.

Boxer

Come off it Ian, I lose one fight on points and you are writing me off as done for.

Ian

No son, that's not what I'm saying.

Boxer

Well, what is it that you are saying to me?

Ian

I am trying to say that to lose is to become a loser. Losers get into a spiral of defeats and use their money to bring the happiness we all look for at some point. Only in a Boxer's life, that some point is the beginning of the end.

Boxer

Ha!

Ian

I am always honest with you son....come on what am I?

Boxer

What I am? A dick-head?

Fight game/ojl/2013

Ian

Come on man, what am I to you?

Boxer

(Reluctantly) My manager.

Ian

I am, son and managers are what with their clients?

Boxer

At the moment? Mysterious.

Ian

Mysterious...ha, no a manager is...

(Boxer interrupts)

Boxer

What? What are they? What are you even trying to say?

Ian

I am struggling to tell you that yours truly me, Ian Brown, is not only your manager but he is honest, my son. I won't hold back to spare your feelings. We got to look at things in Black and white and then we know where we all stand.

Boxer

I still don't get it; are you saying I am complacent?

Ian

Complacent? I don't even know what that means. Where did you get that big word?

Boxer

I read it in a book. You should try it.

Ian

There it is mate staring you in the face. Books, what the hell are you doing reading them my son? What you doing?

Boxer

I have a lot of time on my hands and I like to read,

Ian

See, what I am saying then? Do you see it?

Boxer

Do I See what?

Ian

That it's middle class activities like that that take the hunger?

Boxer

Bollocks.

Ian

Don't bollocks me. Show some respect.

Boxer

Don't bollocks me (*pause as though in thought*) don't bollocks me.... what the hell does that even mean? (*Reflective*) Don't bollocks... mmm?

Ian

Look at the greats, look at Foreman, look at Frazier, Ali, Bugner too; look at them son. Pick anyone of them, working class lads all. Can't imagine Ali refusing to go into the ring because he's reading a book he can't put down. Tyson spouting Shakespeare it's all wrong. If you can't see that son, it's time to climb out of the ring and hang 'em up.

Boxer

Hang 'em up? No I won't, Hang 'em up. Ha, you haven't even had the best of me yet.

Ian

Obviously not. (*Cynical laugh*) Today I saw the biggest mismatch in Boxing history, he being at the bottom of your weight group and you being at the top, he having five inches less reach, he was recovering from a nose injury and you weren't and yet you still lost. You lost.

Boxer

I know I lost, I know I did.

Ian

Why, is the obvious question, why?

Fight game/ojl/2013

Boxer

I don't know why.

Ian

Like I said son the hunger has gone, you lost it because you got it, you found what you were looking for and then lost interest.

Boxer

That's not fair,

Ian

I'll tell you what's not fair,

Boxer

Go on then tell, Battersea, that's not a fair anymore.

Ian

It's not *fair* the way you have backed off. The Andrew Collins I knew and proudly represented has lost his gift. That fight was embarrassing. I have money tied up in this too and if a purse doesn't come our way soon I am in Schtum.

Boxer

Where the hell is Schtum? Germany?

Ian

Schtum equals stuck, lost and broke, that's what Schtum is and that's where I am.

Boxer

I'm sorry for you.

Ian

Don't be sorry for me, be sorry for yourself. Three rounds, Andrew, three rounds.

Boxer

He had a lucky punch that's all.

Ian

All's fair in love, war and boxing, you make your own luck in this game son, you make your own luck.

Boxer

Heard, you the first time.

Ian

Ha, let's analyse, so he hit you on the head? That's the game.

Boxer

I know what the game is. Let me ask, what's your biggest risk? You know, doing your job? You might drop a telephone on your foot or not be able to park outside the arena. That's the dangers of your job. No one is going to smash you on the head are they?

Ian

Because I don't let them that's all. You don't understand how stressful it is with the tax and MOT due on the car, a girlfriend and wife to keep in clothes and perfume, a son in University and food to provide. And you lose. I get no money, I get no money.

Boxer

Ha. Do you know how much this game hurts? I stand there and take punch after punch, the pain and shame the horror of losing and the hopelessness of standing there taking it and not getting the chance to give it back. You would never cope with this in a thousand years Mr Brown.

Ian

Bollocks!

Boxer

Don't bollocks me!

(Ding Ding Lights down)

(Ding Ding Lights up)

Scene 2

(Andrew is shadow Boxing with each punch he exhales like a steam engine, he gets more and more frantic and more and more aggressive. He stops for breath and talks to the mirror, he is out of breath and panting in front of the mirror. He stands and watches himself regaining his normal breathing. This is to happen in natural time and the actor must estimate the right time to speak)

Boxer

Go on son, you look good, fit, who's going to take you on, who can beat you? I said, who can beat you son? No one, no one can. You are like steel, look at these arms look at them. These are champion's arms. Champions fists, go my son golet's have this purse. *(He is growing more aggressive)* I am the mighty crusher; go on my son , go on. *(He turns from the mirror and starts to shadow box again. He is exhaling like a steam kettle with each punch.)* I am Crusher Collins, I am Crusher Collins. Come on my son come on, a right *(exhale)* a left, *(same)* Who's the best?

(imitating a commentator) Crusher Collins is like a man of steel, he has never known defeat. This is a man of steel.*(shadow box again)* It's Collins with a right, left and a deadly upper cut, the punch that made him famous, Jarvis is begging for mercy but the Crusher is dead to his pleas

(As he is punching away Siobhan, his girlfriend enters)

Siobhan

You are looking good. Good morning.

Boxer

How long have you been standing there? I feel silly.

Siobhan

Well don't, you have to train. I understand.

Boxer

I've been talking to Mr Brown and he has told me that he needs to reinstate my hunger. Says I am complacent. I want to show him. I want to win a big one and just walk away. Imagine his face. I know I can.

Siobhan

Well you know I support you love?

Boxer

Yes you do.

Fight game/ojl/2013

Siobhan

Hang on, let me finish.

Boxer

Go on then?

Siobhan

You know I support you and you know I would never stop you doing this?

Boxer

I know you are an amazing part of all of this and I couldn't do it without you.

Siobhan

Thanks, but that's not my point. Come and sit down I need to talk to you.

Boxer

Talk to me eh?

Siobhan

It's all right don't panic come on sit down. I have been thinking, love.

(Andrew joins his girlfriend and sits)

Boxer

Come on then let's hear it then.

Siobhan

It's about what we talked about the other day.

Boxer

What was that then? We have talked about so much recently. Do you want to discuss what Tesco's are charging for potatoes again? Because I think it's shocking.

Siobhan

Oh come on be serious, just for a minute.

Boxer

Alright I will.

Fight game/ojl/2013

Siobhan

Good, well, like I said, I have been thinking about what you said the other day.

Boxer

Oh the dog has grown that other testicle?

Siobhan

Come on. stop it.

Boxer

I am all ears.

Siobhan

So is Dumbo

Boxer

Oi, watch it.

Siobhan

Alright I have been thinking about your proposal.

Boxer

Which proposal is that then?

Siobhan

Oh come on arse face..

Boxer

Here, who are you calling arse face?

Siobhan

You, you great numpty.

Boxer

Ow!

Siobhan

I have been thinking about the marrying thing you, you asked last week.

Boxer

I remember how underwhelmed you appeared to be, when I asked you.

Siobhan

Well it's like I have said before we have lived together for three years. Why do you want to marry me?

Boxer

It's about publicly announcing my love for you. You know letting the world know like.

Siobhan

Well, it's not as though the world will end if they didn't know.

Boxer

I know but are you prepared to risk it?

Siobhan

Are you really saying to me that the little piece of paper makes all the difference?

Boxer

Call me old fashioned but I really think marriage is the proper Christian thing to do, that's all.

Siobhan

Since when have you cared about Christianity?

Boxer

I do.

Siobhan

Alright, suddenly you're into religion? You know you hate religion, why a wedding and why a church?

Boxer

We'll talk later. I promise and you know, whatever happens I will always love you.

Siobhan

I wish this big fight was over.

Boxer

Probably do better if we could settle this issue though, babe. Don't you love me?

Siobhan

Sometimes I think you are mad. Me marrying you or not right now, has nothing to do with love at all.

Boxer

Interesting?

Siobhan

Andrew, I know you. You want a W.A.G. Something on your arm.

Boxer

Well? All the best sportsmen you can name, all have their famous other halves.

Siobhan

That's my point. I don't want to be a W.A.G. I want to be a real wife.

Boxer

Oh I see, you think I want a trophy wife.

Siobhan

Well at least you'd have one trophy.....Oh Andy sorry, that was too much, I am sorry.

Boxer

How dare you? How bloody dare you.

Siobhan

Don't you how dare you, me!

Boxer

There it is again....what the hell does, don't how dare you me, mean? What does it mean anyway?

(Ding Ding Lights down)

(Ding Ding Lights up)

Scene 3

Andrew is shadow boxing again punching and moving around the room he is to appear scary, aggressive and extremely alpha male.

Boxer

(As he paces around sending and dodging punches he is doing this monologue in a measured and commentator style.)

Collins is looking good this year he is trimmer meaner and far, far, hungrier than ever before. Jim what do you think? How is his shape looking for this, once in a lifetime crack at a world class title? Since his defeat six months ago he hadn't stopped training. He has been getting together, you know regrouping I believe the boy is a leaner, meaner, keener and greener fighting machine since he indeed as you say, marry the beautiful model, Siobhan Elkers.

(He is showing increasing signs of aggression and is getting angrier and angrier with his punches he then starts to windmill his arms screaming)

Boxer

Siobhan Bloody Elkers, Siobhan slag Elkers, who you gonna kill, boy? Who do you wanna nail son. Who you gonna maim, Siobhan Elkers. Who is it boy? Elkers, Siobhan Elkers.

(He falls and is punching the floor as Ian comes rushing to pick him up)

Ian

Come on son, what you doing?

(He kneels down beside Andrew and puts his arms beneath him to lift him up off his front so he is sitting with his knees up and taking deep breaths. There is an awkward almost embarrassing pause whilst Andrew gets his breath back.)

Boxer

Mr Brown, I just can't seem to get where I need to be right now.

Ian

Well son you ain't gonna be able to do what you want to do lying on the bloody floor, what I want you to do now is stand up, turn to face me and do what I bloody well tell you.

Boxer

Well that's just it Mr Brown, I can't bloody stand up!

Ian

Why what is wrong with you.

Boxer

I dunno, it's all the shit with Siobhan, since she's knocked me back Mr Brown, I just keep losing it.

Ian

That's alright my son that's what it's all about. If you channel that anger, that energy: Focus it, use it, then son, you will achieve. At the moment you're just throwing anger out there and it needs reigning in.

Boxer

Yea I know Mr Brown, I know, but I don't know what to do.

Ian

What you got to do son, just until your next one, is to think of nothing but ripping Tom Stone's head off. Never mind all this thing about Siobhan. At the moment, this son is about you. About you making the championships and becoming the champion I know you are son.

Boxer

I just want to hurt everyone and everything. I don't care if that bitch ain't gonna marry me, what more can I do? How am I gonna get into that ring? How do you expect me to stand up in that ring? Is it even worth it anymore? Why should I suffer? Just so you can have a champion? Just so you can say, "I look after the great Andrew Collins"? Well I don't think I can do this anymore!

Ian

Bloody hell where did that come from eh? Bit harsh, bit unfair? Bit of woman trouble and you throw away your chances.

Boxer

What bloody chances?

Ian

The chance Andrew, to be someone. The chance to be a champ, to do the best at something you like. That's what I want you to see it as, something *you like*. Every time you put the gloves on, it's something *you like*, every time you feel the right hook digging in, it's something *you like*. It's what you do; it's your job, son.

Boxer

Ah, my job? This is what I do? My entire bloody life is falling apart, the woman I love and who is supposed to love me won't marry me.

Ian

You had better re-focus if you are going to beat Stone - forget everything else just now... Can you do that for me? Now are you ready? (*Louder*) I said are you ready?!

Boxer

(*He is slowly standing up*) I don't know, Mr Brown.

Ian

Come on son, never mind 'I don't know, Mr Brown.' I tell you what, you win this fight against Stone and you'll never have to fight again. Do you remember that open top Mercedes

we saw in Blackpool? Do you remember telling me you wanted one? Win this purse and you can bloody well have four!

Boxer

Four?

Ian

Yes son four: Four Mercedes open top sport cars. Think about it ...now are you ready?

(He starts to gee him up) I said are you ready?

Boxer

I dunno. I just don't know if I am.

Ian

I'm not having that. Four Mercedes and a Spanish Villa, all for beating a man in a fight, let's face it; that's what you do best. Are you ready?

Boxer

Keep talking.

Ian

This is your chance to show Siobhan that you are your own man son. Think about it, women like that. She'll be begging you to marry her.

Boxer

Ha, yea she will won't she.

Ian

Course she will son. I can guarantee it. Tell me a bird who wouldn't want to have a piece of that. Eh...You with me?

Boxer

Four Mercedes?

Ian

Four Mercedes!

Boxer

All white.

Ian

In indigo and puke green if you want son, choice is yours. Come on what do you say? You ready?

Fight game/ojl/2013

Boxer

Yes, I think I am!

Ian

That's more like it! You want it! You want it bad! Tell me you want it; tell me you want it bad!

Boxer

I want it (*quietly*) I want it (*louder*) I want it, I want it, I want it (*aggressively*)

Ian

What do you want son?

Boxer

I want it bad, Mr Brown.

Ian

I'll ask you again: Son what do you want?

(Standing up with his arms held high)

Boxer

I want to rip his fucking head off

(Ding Ding Lights down)

(Ding Ding Lights up)

Scene 4

(Derek upstage left with Ian Brown)

Derek

Right Ian, I've heard what you said you want to avoid the preliminaries and you want to put your boy in against Stone, is that right.

Ian

Yea that's what I want to do.

Derek

Well its unprecedented, you can't just take a lad out the gutter and put him up against a top champ it doesn't work that way

Ian

Gutter? What? Look at it this way Derek, until that defeat he was the hottest boxer on the circuit we both know it. He did the preliminaries, years ago, he did it when *Derek Promotions* was a twinkle in your eye, he done them

Derek

Alright let's say he's done um then and I do put him against Stone, it's a bloody mismatch, Stone will walk all over him

Ian

Nah, you're wrong this time, you know I respect your judgment, but you are wrong, he's never been keener and never been readier.

Derek

Well all the training in the world won't change the fact that Tom Stone has a four inch greater reach and is at the very top of the weight range, your boy is at the bottom and is limited to south paw he's a one punch pony, if he don't get that punch in early he's going down in the first.

Ian

No Derek you're wrong mate, this isn't the Andrew Collins of old, this is a Andrew Collins meaner, hungrier, tougher then you have ever known, Stone won't know what's hit him. It's destiny.

Derek

Destiny? Don't talk to me about bloody destiny. We're talking about a boxing match, not a Shakespearian play.

Ian

Yea, all right Derek but whatever you say and however you say it, this fight is inevitable. The only question is, how big is the purse gonna be? You can dress this up big. It's got everything it's got a mismatch, *possibly*; it's got under dog tendency. It's got earning potential.

Derek

How so?

Ian

Think about it for just a min Derek, all that money coming in for the dead win on Stone Tickets at two hundred pounds each, You put them on sale at 5am and people will want to know what's happening. Then we'll only sell a thousand at first; wait a few hours, then we can say were down to our last 1000, and triple the price. They'll pay it.

Derek

Ha, quite the promoter aren't you?

Ian

I'm right though!

Derek

Yes you are right, the more I think about it like that the more interesting it becomes. I like it, I like it a lot and you reckon your boy can really hurt Tom Stone, you reckon he can?

Ian

Yes, he can really hurt him

Derek

Alright, Alright I can see this now, its brilliant, we'll put it on in the O2 Arena.

Ian

The O2?

Derek

(*Almost talking to himself getting more and more excited*) Yea the O2, we'll bloody fill it, (*To Ian*) deny the telly rights to the BBC, deny the telly rights to Granada and we'll sell to Sky sports, they'll pay us a fortune to cover the fight.

Ian

This is gonna be massive isn't it, this is bigger than I thought.

Derek

Yea, well if you want to do something do it big, make it count. Think, there's no point in fiddling about with silly bits of money when for a tiny bit more work you can make a fortune.

Ian

This is fantastic

Derek

Think about this right; topless woman, Think about the size of the crowd! Then at the side of the ring, pyrotechnics. *Bang*, four bloody massive fireworks firing out gold and silver ticker tape. Spraying all over. Oh yea, and you know that tune, that one written by that bloody queer, you know? Mercury, Yea, Freddy Mercury, *We Will Rock You*. Brilliant. So you got your bang bangs, your topless woman and Freddy bloody mercury, a million quid before the fight even starts.

Ian

Bloody hell, Derek.

Derek

Yea bloody hell indeed! Let's make some money!

(Ding ding lights down)

Scene 5

(Ding ding lights up)

(Ian and Andrew are in a bar leaning on the imaginary counter)

Ian

So that's it really Andrew/ That's the story we got Derek Black eating out of our hand the purse could be anything up to a million.

Boxer

(Aghast) A million quid?

Ian

Yea you heard me right, a million quid.

Boxer

How much you get for coming second?

Ian

I dunno son, but you ain't coming second

Boxer

Alright, supposing I do this right, what am I gonna do about his four inch reach?

Ian

Oh, no son, he can reach much further than that. *(false laugh.)*

Boxer

No I'm being serious for a minute he's bigger than me, he has a greater reach than me and I think he's a better fighter

Ian

That's rubbish and you know it is! He ain't a better fighter. I'll give you this, he's pretty nippy and knows how to hold a man on the ropes: all you got to do is look out for that and just beat him

Boxer

A million quid?

Ian

Yea I told you, a million quid and all you have to do is win a bloody fight, do you want it?

Boxer

Oh if only it was that easy, I'm not even up to my game, this bloody girl I asked to marry me has done my head in

Ian

I know mate, that's down to your personality. But that personality will also make you the winner you should be. The winner you want to be. Take this man out. This is the biggest fight of your life. Take the belt hold it high with pride above your head. The conqueror, then they give you the microphone and they say, "*Andrew Collins, World Welterweight Champion, what you wanna say?*" You can say, you've done it and then you can pick up your million pounds put it in your pocket and walk. Then if you want me to, I'll terminate your contract, I'm rich, you're rich and only then should you worry about women and their strange games.

(Unnoticed Siobhan has walked into the bar and hears the comment about women)

Siobhan

What's that about women Mr Brown? Worry about us when?

Ian

Oh ha Siobhan alright love

Siobhan

Yea.... I'm alright, but I don't wanna hear you talking about me like that.

Ian

Oh no love I didn't mean you, we were talking about a bigger picture I was using the word women to kind mean everything. Don't get me wrong love, I'm all for equal rights know what I mean, you got the vote and I'm all for that. So listen to me darling, honestly sweetheart, we weren't saying that women are the problem.

Siobhan

I know what I heard and what you said.

Ian

(Shouts out to imaginary barkeeper)

Get a snowball for the woman, Albert you there? Get a snowball for her.

Fight game/ojl/2013

(Turns to Siobhan)

There you are love, drink coming, wanna grab a table and we can finish our conversation?
We can join you in a min, but right now it men's stuff

(Siobhan is delighting in the situation watching Ian dig himself deeper in)

Siobhan

No thanks, I think I'll stay here and talk to you lads instead it looks like more fun.