FIGHTING BACK

H. C. WITWER

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The Universal-Jewel Series. *Fighting Back.*

SCENE FROM " GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS."

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FIGHTING BACK

A SEQUEL TO
"THE LEATHER PUSHERS"

BY

H. C. WITWER

AUTHOR OF
THE LEATHER PUSHERS,
FIGHTING BLOOD, ETC.

ILLUSTRATED WITH SCENES
FROM THE PHOTOPLAY
THE UNIVERSAL-JEWEL SERIES

GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

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DEDICATED TO

LOREN PALMER

A WISE COUNSELLOR AND A GOOD FRIEND

H. C. W.

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FIGHTING BACK

ROUND ONE

THE WANDERING TWO

"Fortune can take away riches, but not courage!"

This example of the use writin' implements can be put to was composed by Mr. Lucius A. Seneca, a Roman wisecracker which manipulated a terrific pen and ink in the year 0065. Eighteen hundred years after Seneca paid his respects to Lady Luck, as mentioned above, Kane Halliday made that his motto and proved it to be as true as it was when Luce first pulled it on his admirin' friends.

I guess Kane Halliday is better known to you as Kid Roberts, the name under which he win the world's heavyweight title, with me as his pilot. I got him from Dummy Carney for nothin'—won him on a bet, in fact—when the Kid was just a big, strong, willin' boy, a glutton for punishment and a spendthrift at handin' it out, but with no knowledge what the so ever about the fine points of the glove game. And boxin's *got* fine points, don't think it ain't! Well, *I* supplied that part of it and in somethin' like three years I made

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him a champion. Then Kid Roberts made the fatal mistake of tryin' to box two guys at once—Cupid and Knockout Pierce. The chubby little pinweight with the bow and arrow crashed him in love with Dolores Brewster, eye-soothin' daughter of Senator Brewster, a baby with a criminal bank roll, and a fifty-six degree fight fan. The Kid begin chasin' to dinners and dances, boundin' around nightly with the fair Dolores and doin' his trainin' by proxy. The result was that Knockout Pierce, a tomato the Kid would ordinarily of knocked for a loop in a round, smacked my boy friend from under his title. After that little incident Kid Roberts retired from the ring with plenty jack and wedded himself to Dolores Brewster.

Then the fun begin!

Instead of simply livin' happy ever after like they do in a novel, why, a series of experiences begin for the Kid which made his previous adventures look about as excitin' as the directions for making coffee!

To start with, I don't think we ever had a heavyweight champ which reached the ring by the via of the route Kid Roberts took, or that we've ever had a box fighter like him. He was the mock turtle's monocle and no mistake! He was one of the show spots at Yale when he stalled around the New Haven hideout —football star, trackteam mainstay, and this and that —till his father, J. A. Halliday, the big Wall Street speculator batted out of turn and got sent to the cleaners. The old man lost about everything but his initials, and when the smoke died away the Kid sent him to South America to think matters over, while he

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left Yale flat on its shoulder blades and set forth to put his male parent on the Big Time again.

Bein' built for the game, he turned to the ring, and if he missed goin' through college, why, that's about the only thing he *didn't* go through! We barred nobody, no weight, no distance, no color, no battle ground. Pretty soon we got nothin' but money and the Kid brings his old man back to the U. S. and sets him up in business again. A good son, what?

But the Wall Street bee was still buzzin' around old J. A. Halliday's bean and tryin' to get rid of it was like tryin' to get rid of diphtheria. Him and the Kid dives into the business end of the movie game for a while, but neither of them knew what it was all about, and they dropped plenty pennies in that. Then while the Kid and his fair young bride is takin' a breeze around the world to bust up a dull summer, old man Halliday breaks out with a ambition to corner the grain market. What they done to him was pitiful, no foolin'! This time they didn't even leave him his life, because the shock of this second failure broke him in half and he got a stroke and died. The heart-broken Kid, which had been nuts over his dad, scurries back from Europe to find his father had left him nothin' but debts, and the Kid spends his last solitary dime payin' off. Then he sends for *me*.

When I got his wire I come on the run, as I'd come from the grave if he wanted me. Me and Kid Roberts was never just manager and fighter, we was the greatest thing two men can be—pals! So when I trip up the marble steps of his Long Island palace, I'm runnin'

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over in my mind a dozen schemes to help him out of his jam. The funny thing is that the stunt the Kid actually did, and the one you'd imagine I'd think of first, didn't even enter my head. Kid Roberts had never liked fightin'—hated the game, in fact—and only laced on the gloves in the first place to put his old man on his feet, like I told you. When he lost his title to Knockout Pierce and married Dolores Brewster, he publicly announced that he was through with boxin' for all time, and I guess he meant it, but circumstances alter cases, as the Hindus says.

Anyways, this day the Kid took me into his beautiful library and we pulled up easy-chairs near the big French window overlookin' the lawn. I didn't start to tell him how sorry I was about his father which he had just buried. I just gripped his hand and held it —that told him all of it.

"Well, Joe," he says after a bit, with a kind of nervous grin, "I—I'm broke again!"

"That's where you're wrong," I remark pleasantly. "You got twenty-five grand!"

I had come prepared, and I flung a certified check on the table.

"Half my roll, Kid," I says. "I got fifty-odd grand; there'll be more when you need it!"

Kid Roberts sits forward in his chair and looks at me for a minute with a extremely odd expression on his face. Then he picks up my check and gazes at it kind of wonderin'ly, gulpin' a couple of times and fin'ly blowin' his nose with much violence. I busied myself watchin' the autos shootin' past the house on the

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Merrick Road till the Kid gets up and slaps me on the shoulder. He pushes my check back in my hand.

"I might have known you would do something just like that," he says. "Old fellow, you put new life in me! But that isn't why I sent for you, Joe. I'm not going to *borrow* any money, I'm going to *earn* it!"

"You got to have a stake to go in business, Kid," I come back at him. "I'm ready to tackle anything with you, but we'll need jack to play *any* game, won't we?"

"Not the one *I'm* going to play, Joe," says the Kid. "I'm going back to the ring!"

Wam! For a second I think my comely ears is lyin' to me. I'm dumfounded and tickled silly at one and the same time. Before I can make any remarks, the Kid goes on.

"Joe, I have given my rather desperate situation a great deal of serious consideration—lost a good many nights' sleep over it. I've taken stock of myself and my worldly possessions, and I've nothing I can realize a dollar on—except my fists!"

"How 'bout this trap here?" I ask, lookin' around a room which must of cost ten thousand bucks to furnish if it cost a dime.

"Mortgaged to the hilt!" answers the Kid briefly, and goes on: "I've had practically no business experience nor training in any of the arts or sciences, and my forced departure from Yale terminated my studies in engineering. On the other hand, I'm still under thirty and in splendid physical condition as a result of clean living and daily exercise. Also, Joe, the present contenders in the heavyweight division, apart from the

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champion, do not appear to me to be any more formidable than the ones I defeated when I held the title myself. What do *you* think?"

"Kid," I says, throwin' my arms around his shoulders, "you been out of the game and you ain't gettin' no younger, but *I* think you can do *anything*—that's somethin', you know!"

"Well, then, will you take charge of my affairs again?" asks the Kid.

"Absolutely!" I says, slappin' him on the back. "We'll start over the long roads to fame and fortune together, Kid, and I don't know no trip I'd rather take!"

"But it isn't at all necessary!" remarks a soft voice behind us, and we both swing around to face the Kid's wife, Dolores.

She sure was somethin' to think about as she stood there framed in the doorway. I must of saw Dolores Halliday several million times in the past five years, but I never yet been able to gaze at her without gettin' a thrill! The Kid looks at her, frownin', and I reach for my cap, preparin' to take the air. But Dolores stops me.

"Don't go, Joe," she says, smilin' pleasantly at me. "I may need your moral support." Then she turns to the Kid: "I wasn't eavesdropping, Kane," she says. "I just happened to be passing the room, and I couldn't help overhearing part of your conversation. Surely you are not seriously proposing to become a pugilist again?"

Her voice sounds horrified, and the Kid looks a bit uneasy. However, he pulls over a chair for her, and the three of us sits down by the window. It's bright

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and sunny outside, but I can feel there's a heavy storm brewin' right in that room!

"Dolores," says the Kid quietly, "boxing is the one thing at which I am proficient, and it offers the quickest route to financial independence for me. I can earn more with a few bouts than I could in a few *years* at anything else I might undertake. I'm not going back to the ring because I *like* it, but because it is the only alternative for me in this crisis!"

"I do not agree that the situation is as desperate as all that," says Dolores. "And I most certainly object to your becoming a prize fighter again under any circumstances whatever! You know that I have an income from father that—"

"That has nothing to do with me!" the Kid finishes for her, jumpin' up suddenly and beginnin' a nervous pacin' of the room.

Dolores reads the signs and tries another lead.

"Well, you might at least consider *me,* Kane," she says. "You might think of my—of our—social position and what will happen to it if you become a professional boxer again. Then there are my political aspirations—what of those? I threw myself into politics to please *you,* Kane—you needn't smile, I did! I didn't want to just live on your money. I wanted a career of my own, knowing how you detest parasites of either sex. Now, when it is almost certain that I will be nominated for State senator from our district, you are contemplating a step that will ruin everything!"

Kid Roberts stops his patrol of the room and looks down at her.

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"It will ruin your career if the fact becomes known that your husband is proceeding about the business of earning his living?" he asks her, with a grim smile.

Dolores grabs him, layin' her pretty head against his arm. "Oh, Kane, do give up this absurd idea!" she coaxes, and, believe me, she'd give a stone statue a kick! "Things are not nearly as bad as they seem to you. Why can't we—why can't we live on *my* money until something better presents itself!"

"A moment ago you expressed your contempt of parasites; now you would have *me* be one, eh?" says the Kid, pattin' her head. "No, Dolores, as Joe would say: 'That's out!' I have seen too many good men—that is originally they had character and ambition—ruined by that same arrangement; living on their wife's money. Surely it is more honorable for me to earn my living boxing than to exist on your bounty, isn't it?"

"There is nothing honorable about prize fighting!" snaps Dolores, lettin' go his arm. "I despise the whole low, sordid atmosphere that surrounds it. How can you even *think* of entering that beastly profession again?"

Kid Roberts looks like he had a hot comeback on the tip of his tongue, but at that critical minute Dolores's father, Senator Brewster, enters the room, and she greets him with a sigh of relief. Re-enforcements is comin' up, so to speak.

"Father!" says Dolores excitedly, "Kane wants to become a prize fighter again: what do you think of that?"

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"I think it's splendid!" booms the scrap-lovin' senator, shakin' the Kid's hand heartily, while Dolores lets forth a gasp.

"And I thought you would help me dissuade him!" she moans, and begins to weep.

Well, both the Kid and the senator rushes to soothe her, and I felt as out of place as a pair of white duck pants in a coal mine. While Dolores is enjoyin' a good, comfortin' cry, Kid Roberts explains to her father just why he has to say it with wallops again. The senator looks thoughtful, hems and haws a few, and then volunteers to place any sum, in or out of reason, to the Kid's credit at the bank. That made the third offer of important dough Kid Roberts had that day, and it was like offerin' a dress suit to a guy in prison for a minute later the Kid files his third refusal.

The senator acts somewhat put out, but I thought I seen a glint of admiration in the old boy's eyes as he shakes the Kid's hand again and turns his back to Dolores.

There is no admiration in *her* eyes, though, and that's certain! The more Kid Roberts talks about his plans to become a leather pusher again the more his charmin' spouse burns up, and pretty soon a red-hot argument is under way. It winds up by Dolores declarin' that if the Kid as much as laces on a pair of boxin gloves, she will go abroad till he "comes to his senses," as she puts it. Kid Roberts pleads with her to see America first, but he gets no further with Dolores than she gets with him in her attempt to keep him out of the ring.

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Both stubborn and high-spirited, there's no give to either of 'em, and the results is that a couple of weeks after this stormy session Dolores shove off for Europe with some of her playmates. So's that their friends and the newspapers won't get hep to the split, Kid Roberts goes to the dock with her, and they put on what has all the earmarks of a lovin' farewell. It might of fooled the innocent bystanders, but it didn't fool the Kid or Dolores. It's a cinch that both of 'em knew that this partin', their first, was what is known in Idaho as a crisis!

So Kid Roberts has not only to grab himself a bank roll, but he also faces the man's-size job of winnin' back his own wife.

I guess the beauteous Dolores was just about passin' Sandy Hook when Kid Roberts tells me to get him a scuffle at once.

"With who?" I ask amiably.

"Why, with the heavyweight champion, of course!" he answers promptly. "As an ex-champion, I should be given preference over any other challenger for the title, according to all traditions of the ring. A few weeks' training will have me in shape to put up the battle of my life."

I grinned at him.

"Listen, Kid," I says. "Not so fast. If we're goin' to start at all, we might as well start accordin' to Hoyle. In spite of the fact that you're built like a watch and are in wonderful condition, you'd prob'ly be a pushover right now for the worst boloney I could excavate for you, let alone the champ!"

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"But I can't afford to be idle long," says the Kid impatiently. "I must——"

"And you can't afford to have some tenth-rate banana knock you kickin' in your first start either!" I shut him off.

"I guess you're right, Joe," says Kid Roberts after a minute.

The matter of a contract between me and the Kid don't use up five minutes. We make the same deal we did when Kid Roberts was boxin' before—65-35 on the loot and no papers to be signed—a "gentlemen's agreement."

The next important subject is the best place for the Kid's trainin' to begin. Well, I pick a lumber camp as fillin' the bill in every way. I figure the hard work in the open fresh air will be the quickest way to toughen up the Kid's frame and work him into fightin' trim—or else convince the both of us that he can't come back. We also make up our minds that what the sport writers don't know about us won't hurt 'em, that is, till we find out for ourselves whether or no Kid Roberts can make the grade. So we get all dressed up like a couple of tramps and begin to wander from one employment agency to another, pesterin' 'em for a pair of jobs as lumberjacks.

We fin'ly get hired and shipped with a mob of fearful-lookin' rough and readies to a loggin' camp in Canada. We ain't been in it a hour when we get in a jam and Kid Roberts is forced to do his stuff. It come about like this: Me and the Kid goes down to St. Thérèse, the little slab which is as far as the rail-

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road brings you to the camp, to lay in a stock of clothes which our foreman says we'll need in order to hold our jobs.

Cravin' to shop, we go in the general store run by a French Canuck entitled Honoré Collet. As there has just been a pay day on the river, the joint is packed to the doors with lumberjacks wantin' to buy everything in sight.

There's only two people to wait on 'em, Mons. Honoré Collet and his daughter, Désirée, and believe me, Désirée was considerable female! I'd guess her age as seventeen, and as she packed a face and form which would create a disturbance on Broadway, why, you can imagine what a panic she must of been up in that little timber town, where a good-lookin' woman is about as common a sight as a six-headed cat.

Anyways, she's wrappin' up this and wrappin' up that, the while laughin' and kiddin' with the red-blooded and slightly stewed he-men from God's Country, as the authors calls it. The second she pegs Kid Roberts she immediately shows him all her pretty white teeth and starts right over to wait on us. I have yet to see the lady which didn't get pleasant the minute she seen Kid Roberts. However, I know that he's overboard over Dolores, so I don't get frightened, as even if Désirée Collet *has* fell for my boy friend, it takes two to make a romance the same as it does to make a quarrel.

Well, Désirée had been in the midst of waitin' on somebody else when she drops everything for the Kid. The deserted customer, a six-foot husky as drunk as a

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monkey, gets red-headed. He grabs the girl roughly by the arm and tries to pull her back. This don't fall in with her plans, and she lets forth a little scream, gettin' instant action!

Kid Roberts had started plowin' his way through the crowd when the souse started for Désirée, and he reaches her just as the anti-prohibitionist is puttin' a arm around her shapely waist. There was no time wasted on introductions. The Kid grabs the lumberjack by the back of the neck with one hand and by the bottom of his corduroy jacket with the other and shakes him till the buttons flew off. Then he arches his powerful back and throws Mr. Drunk through the door.

"Merci, monsieur," says Désirée to the Kid with a smile that amply repaid him for his trouble, or *should* of.

"Don't mention it—glad to be of service," says the Kid, grinnin' back and presentin' her with a bow which has goaled many's the drawin' room. "I would like to see a mackinaw, not too vivid in color and about forty-two chest, I believe."

Before Désirée can answer, somebody shoves in between us and snarls at the Kid: "Where d'ye get that stuff—tossin' people out of here, you big stiff?"

One glance and I see the panic is on!

The stranger looks to me like he just stepped out of some circus where he was makin' his livin' bitin' sledge hammers in half and havin' automobile races run off on his chest. Kid Roberts views him with interest, but Désirée is plainly scared stiff. She seems to know who

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this mug is, as does the rest of the gang which gathers round us with pleased grins on their pans.

Beyond that first curious glance, Kid Roberts pays no further attention to this baby, and, tryin' to smooth things over, Désirée nervously asks can she wait on him.

"No!" grunts the cave man. "I want this fellow here to wait on me!" With that he grabs hold of the Kid's shoulder and swings him around. "What's the matter—lose your tongue?" he sneers. "Or are you just plain yellow? You was brave enough when you throwed 'at poor helpless drunk out of here to show off before the girl, wasn't you? Well, I *ain't* drunk; le'ss see you throw *me* out!"

"Be yourself, you big scissor-billed dumbell!" I sneer, edgin' between 'em. "The first thing *you* know you'll get a proper smackin'. You get rosy with us and we'll lay you like linoleum!"

"Easy there, Joe!" warns the Kid, steppin' in front of me. "Don't get excited over nothing, old man," he tells this big hick, "and don't take my hot-headed friend seriously. I didn't intend to create any disturbance by ejecting that drunkard. He was annoying the young lady, and I only did what any other man would have done under the circumstances. There's nobody hurt, so let's forget about it."

"Forget nothin'!" growls the other guy, rollin' up his sleeves. "I'm goin' to give the both of you the lickin' of your lives, you dirty——"

Never mind what he called us—that was *his* hard luck! Désirée gets fiery red and backs away. The

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crowd laughs and moves closer. I snatched a very comfortin'-lookin' ax off the counter and was heftin' it, when the Kid come through. His face has went as red as Désirée's did, and then it gets fightin' white. He measures the big guy with his blazin' eye, then checks up that measurement with a straight left. The big fellow's lowered head come up with a jerk in time to keep a date with the right hook which had once made Kid Roberts a world's champion. Plock! Down goes Mister Big Boy with a crash which shook the store, and I guess if they hadn't swept him up he'd be lyin' there yet. When me and Kid Roberts walked out through a lane of dazed-lookin' lumberjacks five minutes later, the Kid's prey was still gettin' first aid from disgusted friends.

Well the next day we get routed out of the bunk house at the horrible hour of five in the mornin', and the camp boss sends us out in the woods with a crew. It was colder than Zero's home town, so it's a case of work snappy or turn into a icicle. Kid Roberts throws himself into the job of toughenin' up his long idle muscles with a gusto, but it was different *here!* After three or four hours of choppin' and sawin' I was satisfied that lumber-jackin' was all wrong.

When I moan to Kid Roberts he laughs at me, sayin' that he's takin' as much punishment as I am and likewise it was me which choosed the lumber camp in the first place. His advice to me is to take it and shut up. This fails to comfort me to any great extent and many's the time I wished we had picked a cream-puff factory or the like as trainin' quarters. Be-

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lieve me, I got all the lumber campin' I could tolerate, and every time I see a toothpick any more I get a pain in my back from thinkin' of that wood factory in dear old St. Thérèse!

When we come in for chow that night we got quite a shock. The hard work in the clear frosty air of the north woods has made our appetites like a boa constrictor's, and me and the Kid give the meal such a beatin' that the cook, known as Ptomaine Joe around the camp, comes into the mess hall to look us over. That's where we got the shock. The cook is no less than the big guy which Kid Roberts slapped for a turnip the day before in Honoré Collet's store!

Both me and Kid Roberts figure we're in for a brawl, and we jump from our stools, ready for action. But, after a puzzled look, Ptomaine Joe comes over to us with a broad smile on his homely pan and a hand like a ham outstretched to the Kid.

"Howdy!" he says. "Boy, you sure can sock, I'll tell the cross-eyed world! What did you have in your hand when you cuffed me?"

"I believe it was a right hook," smiles the Kid, shakin' his hand. "I'm sorry I—"

"Never be sorry for no clout like 'at," interrupts Ptomaine Joe. "'At was a peach! Say—is they any chance of you teachin' me 'at punch?"

"Why, I'd be glad to," says Kid Roberts. "You like to box, eh?"

"*Like* it?" snorts the fightin' cook. "Why, I'm a boxin' fool! I have made everybody on this man's

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river like it, and they won't be nobody in this outfit push you around whilst you're here, because when you took *me* you took the champeen of the camp. I don't mind tellin' you 'at I'm goin' to check out of this trap pretty soon and become a perfessional pug!"

Well, he was *big* enough, there's no question about that, but that glass jaw of his which the Kid had connected with killed off my interest. Still, I figure he might be developed into a good sparrin' partner or handler, so I egged him on.

"Gettin' tired of boxin' the old pots and pans, eh?" Kid Roberts asks him.

"You said it!" says Ptomaine Joe. "I'm goin' to step into the ring as soon as I finish my contract at this dump here. And if *you* don't take a flyer at the fight game with 'at right hook you got, you're a chump! Of course, you're kind of awkward and clumsy on your feet and you ain't got no class, but you could easy pick *'at* up with experience. In fact, *I* got a couple of punches I'll teach you myself, 'at's if I find out you're game and willin' to take a little punishment so's to learn how to handle yourself."

Ptomaine Joe tells this to a guy which was once heavyweight champion of the world!

Well, friend cook has been devotin' so much of his valuable time to me and Kid Roberts that the other parsnips sittin' around the chow table begins to bang their knives and forks together and howl for their food. Ptomaine Joe swings around on 'em swiftly and angrily.

"Stop that squawkin', you goofy-lookin' yokels!" he

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bellers. "I'll throw you your meat in good time. If I hear another peep out of any of you sapolios, I'll knock the lot of you for a trip!"

Them lumberjacks certainly must of thought Ptomaine Joe was *good,* because the results of that blast was instant silence!

After that things went along smoothly enough, though as a full-blooded New Yorker I never could get infatuated with attackin' them trees with a ax at six o'clock of a foggy, frosty mornin'. Me and manual labor has never been what you could call buddies. Who ever heard of a box fighter's manager workin'? On the other hand, Kid Roberts took to lumberin' like puss takes to cream. He actually seemed to like it, but then the Kid always was a pig for punishment. However, he was most positively doin' himself a world of good. His skin was commencin' to take on a healthy tan, his wind was improvin', his eyes was bright and clear and the soft fat around his belt was bein' replaced by muscles ridged like a washboard. So far I hadn't let him do no boxin' what the so ever; I wanted his *body* right first.

For a while I thought Désirée Collet was goin' to be quite a problem. Me and the Kid stopped in the store from time to time, buyin' gents' furnishin's and what not, and you didn't have to be no mind reader to see she was rapidly gettin' cuckoo over Kid Roberts. But in spite of their temporary bust-up, the Kid was more than in love with his wife, and even though she had went to Europe he played the game. He'd learned a lot about the interestin' adjoinin' sex before he got wed,

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and he knew how to keep from gettin' dizzy when a beautiful girl deliberately set out to make him.

Kid Roberts played around with more than a few, but he only fell in love once, and that was with Dolores. Ladies, that kind of boys seldom cheat, once you land 'em! So the Kid was pleasant with Désirée, but he never accepted the invitation constantly in her shinin' eyes. He treated her like a little sister—which, naturally enough, only made her more keen to make him fall. That's always the way, now ain't it?

Well, as pay day approaches we begin to notice a air of excitement about the camp which wasn't there before. Little groups of lumberjacks gets off in corners together and there is much argument and wavin' of arms about somethin'. Ptomaine Joe, all swelled up like a mump, is treated like he's Henry Ford or Dempsey and one mornin' I catch him punchin' a bag in back of the cook house, with a bunch of guys standin' around and watchin' him admirin'ly.

So we investigate the commotion, and we find there's a feelin' between our camp and another one farther down the river like the feelin' between Germany and France. On pay day Ptomaine Joe is to meet the best man in the other camp for the championship of the river. No wonder the lumberjacks is all excited, when you figure they rarely have any fun, buried up there for months in the cold, lonely north woods, and they have bet every dime they got in the world on the result of the comin' fight.

Ptomaine Joe gets the idea about then that this would be a good time for Kid Roberts to teach him that

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right to the button, so he asks the Kid to work out with him for a few days. You'd think he was doin' Kid Roberts a great favor by the way he puts his request, but the Kid is itchin' for the feel of padded leather on his hands again and he jumps at the chance before I can butt in and stop him. Ptomaine Joe had a kind of synthetic gym fixed up in the back of the cook house, his only trainin' apparatus bein' a well-worn punchin' bag and two sets of be-draggled and tore eight-ounce gloves.

The first time Kid Roberts and Ptomaine Joe put on the gloves I told the Kid to be mighty careful and not take no unnecessary chances with this big kitchen mechanic, which outweighed him a good fifty pounds and stood four inches taller. Kid Roberts is so crazy to get steppin' that I don't know whether he even heard me or not. But I'm a mighty anxious young man till Ptomaine Joe starts to perform and I see just what he's got. I loathe accidents!

Well, all Ptomaine Joe had was his trunks. He didn't know a straight left from a fryin' pan, and, big as he was, Kid Roberts could of assassinated him had he a mind to. But he didn't—the Kid never beat up no sparrin' partners and was always gentle with these hams which don't know what it's all about, rely'n on his dazzlin' footwork to keep him away from their clumsy but dangerous returns.

They boxed three two-minute rounds by my watch and in all that time I doubt if Ptomaine Joe laid a glove on Kid Roberts, whose speed and science bewildered him. After Josephus has fell sprawlin' on

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the floor three or four times earnestly tryin' to knock the Kid for a row of washtubs, the pugeylistic cook staggers over and pants for me to unlace his gloves.

"I got all the sparrin' I can take," he gasps. "Boxin' this baby is like boxin' a buzz saw and I don't wish no more of him. 'At ain't all—I ain't goin' to fight this guy from the other camp neither!"

"You mean they have barred you?" asks the Kid, with interest. "Who *is* going to box him?"

"*You* are!" grins Ptomaine Joe. "I have just got a rush of brains to the head and barred myself. The pay-day fracas is supposed to be between the two best men on the river, and if you ain't the best man in this outfit, then I'm old Mother Hubbard!"

"But—" begins both me and the Kid.

"You can but if you want to, because you're the goat!" goes on the cook. "Either you fight this mackerel from Beaver Camp or you'll have to take on every guy in *this* one—all at once! If I was you, I'd fight him. You got more percentage with only *one* man to stop."

With that Ptomaine Joe goes out to spread the news, leavin' me and Kid Roberts starin' at each other thoughtfully.

Well, of course Ptomaine Joe had no idea that the Kid was a ex-heavyweight champion of the world, as he's down on the books merely as Kane Halliday, his civilian name. So, dumfounded at the Kid's surprisin' ability to hit and get away, the cook advertises him around the camp till we're practically forced into agree-

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in' to box the bozo from the rival outfit for the championship of the river.

Feelin' that he's to meet a man of no ring experience, Kid Roberts refuses to take what he calls a unsportsmanlike advantage, so he tells Ptomaine Joe he'll accept the bout on one condition. The man he's goin' to meet must be told just who he's goin' to fight.

"I don't make you," says Ptomaine Joe, kind of puzzled. "What difference does it make *who* you are?"

"This difference," says the Kid, payin' no attention to my frantic nudges: "I happen to be a former world's heavyweight champion. My ring name was Kid Roberts—ever hear of me?"

Ptomaine Joe stares at the Kid like a man in a trance. His lower jaw drops till it nearly hits the floor, and his eyes pops out till you could of hung your hat on either of 'em. Then he rushes over and wrings the Kid's hand.

"Ever *hear* of you!" he hollers. "I'll say I heard of you! Well, well, well, Kid Roberts, hey? I thought your pan had a familiar look, but all I ever seen was your pictures and—say, no wonder you slapped me dead with a punch! No wonder I couldn't knock you off when we was sparrin' together! Imagine me tryin' to take a ex-champ, 'at's the mule's wings, ain't it? Well, I thought I was through when you made a monkey out of me, but I ain't so bad as I figured. Just because a ex-champ's got too much stuff for me is no sign 'at these jobbies around here can step with me. I think I'll go out now and deliberately knock a few of 'em cold, just to keep my respect for myself!"

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But I'm disgusted with the Kid for tellin' this egg who he was, because now I know the cook will broadcast the news all over camp. Ptomaine Joe keeps eagerly chatterin' away to the smilin' Kid and winds up by swearin' he's goin' to quit his job and join us when we leave St. Thérèse as a combination sparrin' partner and chef. He knows just what a fighter should eat, bein' one himself, he says modestly, and all he wants in return for his valuable services is boxin' lessons from Kid Roberts. He wouldn't let go till I promised him we'd file his application, and I was more than half in earnest when I done it. We could do lots crazier things than take this guy with us, at that, I figure.

The minute I can make Ptomaine Joe quit admirin' Kid Roberts out loud, I take the enthusiastic cook outside all by himself and talk turkey to him. I make him swear on his cook book he won't tell *nobody* that the big, good-lookin' lumberjack known as Kane Halliday is really Kid Roberts, ex-world's heavyweight champ. The reason I done that was as simple as Ptomaine Joe himself. For all *I* know, the champ of the rival outfit may be a scrapper of no little ability. If by some terrible luck Kid Roberts should be flattened himself, why advertise that fact to fistiana when the Kid's tryin' to make a comeback? Ptomaine Joe gets a miraculous flash of intelligence and agrees with me, so the information about who the Kid really is fails to get out.

Kid Roberts knows nothin' about what I've done and he starts down to the battle ground at St. Thérèse on pay day, thinkin' his comin' adversus knows who he is

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and admirin' the other guy for his gameness and confidence in goin' ahead with the bout against a ex-champ. He tells me he'll be as merciful as possible with the inexperienced logger he expects to face and will try hard for a swift, painless knockout. The ring is pitched in the open a short distance from the town, a twenty-four-foot square bein' roped off on a high, grassy hillock, so that standin' some dozen feet below there's a good chance for everybody to see the mill.

I examined this homemade ring with the greatest of care, and I found nothin' about it to comfort me. The slippery grass made a treacherous footin' at best and a knockdown on that hard turf, instead of a padded mat, was certainly not goin' to do the baby which hit it a bit of good. It sure was a reminder of the old bare-knuckle days, when the only rules was to keep on fightin'! Still, we was in there now and claimin' exemptions would of prob'ly cost us both our lives. I don't mind tellin' you I was good and nervous, but Kid Roberts was as cool as a winter wind, though his eyebrows did go up when he first flashed that ring.

"Snap into it, Joe!" he grins to me, when we get to our corner. "You look like a pall bearer. Don't worry, I'll win this bout in short order. If I can't get past this green lumberjack, I may as well give up all hope of returning to the ring. This afternoon my fate is on the knees of the gods!"

"Let's hope the gods don't stretch their legs, then!" I says, gloomily, and stared out over the ropes.

There was prob'ly only a thousand witnesses on hand, just the men from both camps and some sports

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from the little timber town, but what they lacked in numbers they made up in noise. Believe me, they was one tough-lookin' mob too, with their faded mackinaws and corduroy jackets buttoned around their necks, pants tucked into boots or leggins and so much matted hair on their faces they all looked like fur-bearin' animals to me. Plenty of vicious-lookin' long-bladed knives was stuck in belts, lots of 'em leaned on them murderous woodmen's axes, and here and there the butt of a gat showed in a hip pocket bulge. A ugly bunch, primed for anything and worked to fever heat by smuggled bootleg and the excitement of the comin' battle.

Kid Roberts gets up and smilin'ly bows, wavin' his gloved hands over his head in response to the roar of greetin' from our outfit, and another roar goes up from the other camp when their man is boosted into the ring on the far side. Then things move fast. The referee, who's telegraph operator and railroad agent at St. Thérèse, steps to the center of the ring and holds up his hands for silence. He got immediate service.

"Kane Halliday, champeen of St. Thérèse, weight one hundred and ninety-one and a half pounds," he bawls, very importantly, pointin' to the Kid. "On the other side, Steve Greenly, champeen of Beaver Camp, weight two hundred pounds, even. Three-minute rounds with one-minute rest between, the fight to go to a finish for the champeenship of the river. If there is any attempt to rush the ring by friends of either man, I'll stop the fight and call it no contest. Likewise, before any of you lads out there gets too abusive,

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don't forget I got a gun in each hip pocket and sixteen medals for knowin' how to use 'em. I thank you!"

While the mob's still howlin', he calls us to the middle of the ring for his instructions and for the first time me and Kid Roberts gets a good look at the guy we are goin' to fight. The Kid's face suddenly paled and I see his mouth twitch, but I let forth a beller of rage. Mister "Steve Greenly," the alleged lumberjack, is no less than *Tiger Enright,* a terrific puncher which the Kid once stopped when he was heavyweight champ!

Well, I'm fit to be tied, and tryin' to say too many things at once my tongue gets all twisted and I can't say nothin'. But my brain is simply reelin' around as I realize how them burglars from the other camp has framed us! Kid Roberts had insisted on fair play, wanted to tell the other outfit who he was, and they have went to work and imported a first-class boxer to meet what they figured would be Ptomaine Joe or some tramp like that. What a surprise them yeggs was due for!

But if me and the Kid is amazed and enraged, Tiger Enright is twelve feet past that state. He sees how the attempted double-cross has went blooey and instead of a set-up he's got a two-handed battle starin' him in his queerly workin' face. The referee, after a astonished glance from us to Enright, goes on with his instructions. They wasn't hard to remember, but I don't think Tiger Enright listened!

"Protect yourself at all times, hit on the breakaways or any time you want as long as you keep 'em up above

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the belt. No wrestlin' or trippin' allowed. Both you men understand all that?" finishes the referee.

"Sure—let's go!" I answers for the Kid, who's busy lookin' at Enright with everything but mercy in his cold gray eyes.

"Holy mackerel—*Kid Roberts!*" gasps Tiger Enright—his first remark—and the next thing is the bell.

Drove wild by the unexpected appearance of the Kid and the fear of what he will do to him, Tiger Enright dashed off his stool with a desperate rush, hopin' to beat the Kid down by the fury of his attack. He missed a straight left, connected with a torrid right to the heart and then immediately clinched, bangin' away with his free right hand at the Kid's mid-section. Enright was always a terrific body punisher which liked to bore in close and hammer away, and I yelled to Kid Roberts to keep him at long range.

The referee was slow in breakin' 'em, evidently lendin' a kind ear to the shrieks of Enright's friends to "let 'em alone!" On the break, Enright deliberately heeled Kid Roberts with the wrist of his glove, scrapin' some skin off his nose. At a fight club they'd of booed that big stiff for that dirty trick till they was hoarse, but *here* they cheered him!

Good and sore, Kid Roberts rocked Enright with a right and left to the head, easily duckin' his wild return. Enright then bulled his way in close again and took up his batterin' of the Kid's ribs where he left off before. Kid Roberts was takin' plenty punishment and couldn't seem to get away from it. Fin'ly the

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referee pushed in between 'em and they danced around, sizin' each other up for a openin'. Kid Roberts saw one first, but was short with a right chop to the jaw. He got a hard left and right hook to the body in return and was gaspin' against the ropes in Enright's corner when the bell rung. Enright's round.

Durin' the rest the bettin' odds around the ring shifted from eight to five to two to one on Enright. At that price Ptomaine Joe got down eight hundred bucks—the savin's of a lifetime—on Kid Roberts, and I grabbed two thousand of that Enright money myself.

Tiger Enright tore out of his corner once more in the second and swept Kid Roberts to the ropes with a volley of rights and lefts to the body. Fin'ly the Kid steadied himself, drove a wicked right to the jaw, and then sunk his left to the trade-mark on the glove in Enright's ribs. Enright's knees sagged and the mob went wild, surgin' around the ring and howlin' like wolves, only louder!

A bit tamed, the Tiger managed to dive into a clinch and again pound the Kid's rapidly reddenin' body. Warned by previous experiences, Kid Roberts tore himself loose and they both landed stiff rights on the break. Enright then shot a straight left to the mouth, bringin' first blood, and followed this with a sizzlin' uppercut to the jaw, but Kid Roberts only shook his head and tore in for more.

The Kid was now well warmed up and hittin' on all cylinders—but, then, so was Enright! Kid Roberts swung hard for head and body and Enright covered up, back-pedalin' around the ring till he felt the ropes

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against him. Right then and there Tiger Enright come fearfully close to winnin' by a knockout. He suddenly straightened up and shot a terrible left hook to the heart. The Kid's gasp could be heard in Tasmania, and, as he staggered back, Enright plunged after him, held the Kid's head with his left glove, and shot three barbarous rights to the jaw. Kid Roberts sagged on his feet and another right, catchin' him fair under the chin on the Adam's apple—a horrible place to get hit!—dropped him to his knees.

Chokin' for breath, he looked around to me for advice while the referee's countin' arm is risin' and fallin' and the crowd is goin' crazy. I signaled the Kid to take "nine," which he done, and as he rose unsteadily to his feet the bell rung. Another round for Enright, and the odds jump to three to one on him. The mob from our camp is sullen and quiet, whilst the other guys is ravin' maniacs with joy.

Kid Roberts quickly responded to some scientific treatment in his corner and went out for the third round determined to flatten Enright in that frame or get flattened himself. There was a deep gash under his right eye and the left was beginnin' to close. Beyond a set of badly puffed lips, Enright was unmarked.

The first punch in this round was a left to the head landed by Enright, and after that he must of thought he had walked into a cloudburst of boxin' gloves! Startin' his usual rush, he tore in with both hands swingin', to be met by a murderous right to the body that slowed him to a walk. Feintin' for Enright's quiverin' mid-section again, Kid Roberts hooked his

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right to the point of the jaw and Tiger Enright went down like he'd been hit over the head with a hammer!

Instantly there's a wild uproar around the ring, and the mob mills toward it. This was about the first time the guys from our camp had a chance to cheer and they put a dent in the sky! Enright stumbled to his feet between "nine" and "ten," but all the fight had been punched out of him. He was what you call wilted, what I mean.

I guess maybe that right hook brung back memories of a few years before when Kid Roberts was champion and had knocked him dead with the same clout. At any rate, the Tiger covered up as best he could and tried to work in close, but Kid Roberts had other plans for him. The Kid merely waited coolly till Enright quit swayin' and was a better target, before floorin' him again with a left to the wind and a right to the chin.

When Tiger Enright dizzily got up this time it was plain to the world that he'd shot his bolt and would never hear the bell ring for another round. The din around the ring was enough to bust your eardrums! Seein' their pay bein' swept to our camp by the terrible punches of our man which was beatin' their high-priced ringer, the boys from the other outfit commenced a free-for-all, and in a minute axes and knives was flashin' in the rapidly settin' sun.

Well, the riot stopped quicker than it started. It seemed to me that every guy in our camp had come to the fight with at least one gun, and the referee had two. In spite of the situation bein' exceedin'ly serious, I had to grin at the referee walkin' around inside the ring

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with a gun in each hand aimed at the crowd and tryin' to watch what Kid Roberts and Tiger Enright was doin' to each other at the same time. He was a hot sketch, no foolin'! The sudden display of artillery and a few wild shots calmed down the other side and the round was finished without no further rude interruptions from the audience. The gong found the battlers in a neutral corner with Tiger Enright hangin' on for his life. This was the Kid's round from here to Japan.

The clang of the bell for round four was still in the air when Kid Roberts jumped in with a left hook to the head that sent the weary Enright crashin' against the ropes. The Kid then turned to the referee and asked him to stop it, but whatever that baby said was drowned by the yells of "Finish him. Knock him out! You got to stop him to win, you big stiff; let it go!"

Kid Roberts shakes his head sorrowfully, looks at me, and, as he turned, Tiger Enright's knee come up swiftly, but missed the foul he intended. That trick made up the Kid's mind for him! I could see it in the sudden set of his chin, so I got his bathrobe ready. I knew what was comin'. The Kid jabbed Enright lightly with his left, ducked a wild right cross and then socked his own right flush on the jaw, sendin' the Tiger down and out!

They carried Kid Roberts back to the camp on their shoulders, and why wouldn't they? Everybody in our outfit had cashed in on him and some of them lumberjacks had win plenty. Ptomaine Joe, for instance, copped sixteen hundred bucks, and he's maniacally

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happy. You couldn't get him a inch away from the Kid with a crowbar!

There was some mail for us at the camp, among others things a New York newspaper. On the society page is a picture of Dolores, taken on the beach at a joint in France called Deauville. It says this underneath:

Mrs. Kane Halliday, who is summering abroad. Mr. Halliday is reported hunting big game in Africa.

"Hunting big game!" smiles the Kid.

"Absolutely!" I says, matchin' his grin. "Huntin' big game is right! We just killed a Tiger to-day, didn't we?"

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ROUND TWO

THE WIDOWER'S MITE

ONCE upon a time there was a comely young Eyetalian which rejoiced in the high-soundin' name of Juvenal and got himself no little notoriety as a poet among the boys and girls which capered around Rome in the good old days when Nero, the prominent fiddler, was doin' his stuff. I never met this Juvenal guy personally, but I'd of liked to, on the account he must of been a good skipper, from some of the wise cracks he pulled. As the dashin' manager of a gentleman box fighter, I have got to where I fit a dress suit like I'm poured in it, toy with a wicked cup of tea, dance like St. Vitus, and now and then plow through one of the classical books, so's if the subject comes up I won't think "She Stoops to Conquer" is a story about a scrub lady, for the example. That's how I come to trip over the followin' nifty, from the busy pen of Mr. Juvenal.

"There are few disputes in life which do not originate with a woman!"

Juvy wrote that on a piece of paper nearly two thousand years ago, prob'ly stealin' it from a chance remark of Adam's, and I must say that in *my* opinion condi-

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tions ain't changed much since their time. Don't run away with the idea that I am puttin' in a rap for the ladies, because, personally, I think the fair and warmer sex is the rat's rubbers, I do for a fact. But the crack of Juvenal's about the gals bein' at the bottom of most disturbances reminds me of the disturbance started by little Désirée Collet, alias "The Widower's Mite." In a attempt to win herself Kane Halliday she caused considerable dispute—in fact, a dispute for the heavyweight championship of the world.

When me and Kid Roberts bound back to New York after our trip to the loggin' camp, me and my comin' gold mine makes the rounds of the newspaper offices and lets the sport writers in on our modest plans to recapture the world's heavyweight championship, then held by Jim Oliver. We don't want the champion *yet.* Kid Roberts has been away from the ring too long to step with the title holder after merely knockin' off this Tiger Enright, even if the Bengal *was* a tough egg and nobody's fool as a leather pusher.

It was no cinch to make Kid Roberts see into this, and don't think it was. The Kid was rarin' to go. He wanted his jack, his title, and his wife back, and a boy like Roberts is not easy to hold when he craves *anything!* How the so ever, like usually, my judgment prevailed—till along come Désirée Collet. Then the panic was on!

The newspaper guys was simply great to us and we couldn't of got more publicity if we'd of been a couple of six-headed elephants flyin' up Broadway at noon. The big, clean-cut, good-lookin' Kid, especially at home

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in dress suit or ring togs, always had a million dollars' worth of personality and was a highly popular champion when *he* held the title, whilst Jim Oliver had as many friends as the flu. Then, again, everything connected with Kid Roberts made him what the sport writers calls "good copy." The swell family he come from, his partin' from his society-leader wife, his record when he was a milk-fed college boy at Yale, what he done for his old man, etc., all furnished stuff "Constant Reader" likes.

After readin' about us for a couple of days, the New York fight promoters got busy. Wild to cash in on the notoriety he was gettin', they want to stage a scuffle between Kid Roberts and Jim Oliver without further ado. But even though they offered us fifty thousand bucks for our end with the privilege of a percentage, I wouldn't let my boy go in there with the champion then, and that's all there was to it!

A few weeks later Kid Roberts is doin' road work through Central Park with Ptomaine Joe to keep in condition for a couple of brawls I'm linin' up, when, lo and behold, as they say in Pittsburgh, we crash right into Désirée Collet and her father at the lake. I knew that Désirée thought Kid Roberts was all the men in the wide, wide world, and that makes me plenty uneasy. Young and good-lookin' enough to bust up *anybody's* peace of mind, Désirée was about as harmless as dynamite, the way matters shapes up to me.

Anyways, this meetin' was a regular movin' picture. Désirée and her father is havin' a battle with a hard-boiled taxi driver when we arrive on the scene. Pto-

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maine Joe is the first to spot 'em. This tomato could pick out Désirée two miles away in a fog—he was cuckoo over her, that's the answer. Kid Roberts merely smiles pleasantly as he drags off his cap and bows, but Désirée is just quiverin' with joy.

"Bonjour, mon cher, comment allez-vous?" she says.

"Très bien, merci; et vous? Comment vous portez-vous donc ce matin?" says Kid Roberts, which would of made a monkey out of Napoleon when it comes to talkin' frog.

Then he shakes hands with Désirée's old man and looks from the smilin' girl to the scowlin' chauffeur.

"What's the trouble?" he asks her.

A epidemic of shoulder shakin' and hand wavin' begins.

"Thees *cochon,*" she says, pointin' a sneerin' finger at the frownin' chauffeur. "Thees *cochon* I engage for drive us to ze 'otel what you call Reetz. Name of a name! He drive us now for two hour around ze park and when I say where is zat 'otel, he tells me 'Nevaire you min', kit, what you care? I geeve you nize long ride!' "

"The old army game!" growls Ptomaine Joe, and swings at the scared taxi driver. "I'm goin' to rune him!"

Kid Roberts and me grabs Ptomaine, whilst the chauffeur backs away in a panic.

"Lay off me, boss!" he says. "I don't want no frolic with *you,* that's a cinch! I—I'll pay the fare out of me own pocket—I—I ain't lookin' for no muss, I——"

"That will do!" Kid Roberts cuts him off sternly.

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Then he turns to Désirée. "Where did you engage him?" he asks her.

"At ze Gran' Central," she says, with a bewitchin' smile.

Kid Roberts hands the chauffeur a dollar and tells him to take the air. That's somethin' this baby is only too glad to do, and it looks like there'll be no hats broke or nothin' like that, when, in a misguided attempt to be friendly, the unfortunate taxi pilot stares at the Kid and remarks: "Say—d'ye know you're a dead ringer for Kid Roberts?"

Me and Ptomaine Joe laughs, but the Kid keeps a straight face.

"Kid Roberts?" he says. "Who is Kid Roberts?"

"The big yellah tramp which run out of a fight with the champeen!" sneers the chauffeur.

Silence!

The Kid's face burns a angry red and I step forward with violence in mind, when Ptomaine Joe with a howl of rage fixes everything up. The man mountain grabs the amazed taxi driver by the shoulders, lifts him up, shakes him like puss does little mousie and then coolly drops him into the lake! There was only a couple of feet of water at the point where he was standin', but, then, who wants to be throwed into even a couple of inches of it? Kid Roberts, me, and Désirée's father is petrified, but Désirée claps her hands and shrieks with delight. Then we all beat it, as some park strollers hove in sight.

Well, Kid Roberts sent me and Ptomaine Joe back to our hotel, whilst he took the charmin' visitors to their

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hideout. Both the Kid and Désirée seems tickled silly to take up their friendship where they left off in St. Thèrése, but it's different here! I ain't afraid of nothin' the Kid will do; I'm busy worryin' about what Désirée, with that quick French temper of hers, is liable to pull when she gets herself convinced that the Kid's interest in her is simply brotherly and that he's savin' any heavier feelin's for his wife.

That afternoon when Kid Roberts come back whistlin' gayly from seein' the appetizin' Désirée home, I asked him point-blank what she's doin' in the bustlin' hamlet of New York.

"She came here to realize a lifelong ambition," says the Kid, carefully layin' out his shavin' weapons. "She wants to go on the stage or in the movies—preferably the latter."

"So she's cuckoo, hey?" I sneers.

Kid Roberts stops whistlin' and swings around, frownin' at me.

"That's out, Joe!" he says warnin'ly. "Miss Collet is a delightful girl, as unspoiled and naïve as a child. She has youth, beauty, and undeniable personality, and I don't blame her for rebelling against her living entombment in that little lumber town, barren of congenial companionships or amusements."

"Tomato sauce!" I says. "The kid's nutty over you, and you better check her out!"

"Don't be an idiot," grins Kid Roberts, busy with the lather.

That very night Kid Roberts panics me by throwin' a party for Désirée and her father. He takes 'em to

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dinner and the Follies and afterward to Jazzbo's, a dancery. Me and Ptomaine Joe was along with 'em as ballast, so there was plenty shaperoans; but still and all I couldn't help feelin' that the Kid was monkeyin' with nitroglycerine by playin' around with this fiery little damsel from dear old St. Thèrése.

The featured comedian of our gay little party was Mons. Ptomaine Joe. This mug was a riot, no foolin'! I don't think he'd ever had a good time in his life before and in a hired dress suit he's all swelled up like a human yeast cake, upstagin' one and all as if he was Duke of Pneumonia. The leased evenin' wear fits this two-hundred-pound giggle like the skin fits under a turkey's chin—in fact, about the only thing Joseph could ever get to fit him ready-made would be a scarf-pin. Kiddin' him on his weird appearance was a waste of witty remarks. Joe was more than well satisfied with himself, and when he's a sight to make a mummy guffaw, he looks *me* over carefully and then coolly remarks that people which lives in tin houses shouldn't throw can openers!

Well, Kid Roberts spends the next few days and quite a few pennies showin' Désirée and her father the sights of New York, and through a friend of his in the show business he likewise gets this charmer's name filed with a theatrical agency. Of course none of this makes Désirée sore at him, and me and poor broken-hearted Ptomaine Joe watch her gettin' further in love daily with feelin's of the greatest alarm. So far the only word the Kid has had from his wife was a cable so cold it could of been signed "Zero."

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About two weeks after Désirée hit Gotham she calls Kid Roberts up one day to tell him she's landed a job. She's all set with a vaudeville act, then playin' the Big Time theatres around New York. The act is no less than Jim Oliver's—the heavyweight champ carryin' a flock of bathin' beauties with him for what is known along Broadway as a "flash." Désirée is as happy and excited as a rookie copper making his first pinch, and she won't have it no other way, but that Kid Roberts has got to come to the theatre and watch her work. This is somethin' the Kid don't wish to do, on account of the heavyweight champion bein' with the act. After havin' refused to fight Oliver, Kid Roberts feels that if he shows up at the theatre where the champ is doin' his stuff it will simply look like a cheap attempt on his part to get publicity by annoyin' the title holder. He tries to stall Désirée and has no luck at all. What's the use of her bein' a actress if her hero won't come and see her act? She storms and pleads and fin'ly hangs up the phone, weepin'.

That done the trick, of course. Women has won victories with tears that a man couldn't win with a army at his back! Kid Roberts fusses and frets around the room for a couple of minutes and then calls up Désirée to tell her to dry her eyes, because he'll be at the theatre that night, come what may. As I had fondly hoped his refusal to go had got us shut of Désirée, I could of choked him!

At the Kid's request I went out and got three ducats for the show, because to job Ptomaine Joe out of seein' his loved one perform would of been nothin' short of

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cruelty to animals. So the three musketeers is in seats well up in front that evenin' when the curtain rolls up on the champ's act. Except for the girls, it was old stuff. The gasp-producin' bathin' beauties strutted across the stage, one of 'em tore off a song, and then there was a few remarks dropped about "our fearless champeen." A curtain in back of 'em goes up, and there's a gym. Some settin'-up exercises by the girls, which goaled the old boys down in front and murdered the young ones too, and then a guy in a Tuxedo steps out and threatens to introduce "The undefeated champeen heavyweight boxer of the civilized world, laaadeees and gen-tell-men, I present for your approval this evenin', Jim Oliver!"

All this, of course, is applesauce to us. What *we're* interested in is Désirée Collet, the undefeated champion *looker* of the civilized world. Well, we seen her, and I must say she was somethin' to look at, don't think she wasn't! This bathin'-girl costume, or what they was of it, was duck soup for Désirée, which had more curves than a scenic railway and was simply a opium fiend's dream as she scampered about that stage. I'm fairly girl-proof myself, but Désirée, give me a passin' thrill, and what she done to Ptomaine Joe was pitiful. This unfortunate clown just sit there on the edge of his seat with his mouth and eyes as wide open as a First Avenue crap game, and you could of cut off his leg and he'd never of knew a thing about it till he read it in the paper. If he was crazy about Désirée, before, why, he's triple insane about her now!

The effect on Kid Roberts of Désirée au naturel,

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though, was altogether different. The Kid's classical forehead is drawn together in a frown which ridges it like a washboard, and every now and then he shoots a angry glare at some bozo which is gettin' a close-up of the girl through opera glasses. In fact, his plain air of dislike for matters gets me puzzled.

"What's the big idea, Kid?" I whisper, nudgin' him. "Don't the young lady knock you over as a actress?"

"The costume that child has on is disgraceful!" says the Kid angrily. "Look at these leering beasts about us smacking their lips!"

"Well, she's a tasty number," I says soothingly. "If ——"

"If I'd had the faintest idea that Désirée would be engaged for any such spectacle as this," goes on Kid Roberts, ignorin' me, "I would never have had her name filed with that infernal theatrical agency. I feel the responsibility is mine, and I shall certainly endeavor to place her elsewhere. That abbreviated costume is so incongruous with her natural innocent naïveté—it is as if a baby's picture was on the label of a whisky bottle!"

Well, as long as we're there we settle back to watch the champion punch the bag, skip rope, box a couple of rounds with a sparrin' partner, and go through other routine trainin' exercises. The heavyweight king was in great shape, there was no gettin' away from that—looked to me to be no more than a month away from his best fighting form.

We're just about to leave, when there comes a startlin' interruption. Oliver's press agent has found out

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that Kid Roberts is in the audience, and he sees a great chance to get his man on the front page of the newspapers at our expense. This publicity trapper was a swift thinker, I'll say that for him! At a signal from behind the stage the champion suddenly stops workin' and out steps the announcer again. A attack of human curiosity makes us wait to see what it's all about. We should of kept on goin' out!

"Laaadeees and gent-tell-men!" bawls the announcer, raisin' his hand. "They has been some loose talk in the newspapers that Jim Oliver, undefeated heavyweight champeen of the civilized world, was tickled silly when Kid Roberts ab-so-*lutely* refused to box him for the title. Well, Kid Roberts is in the audience here this evenin' and if he's got the gu—eh—nerve, *the champeen will box him right here and now!*"

For a instant you could cut the silence with a knife, and then the theatre is in a uproar, cheers and hisses fillin' the air whilst everybody in the place tries to find out where we're sittin'. Nobody knows better than the champ's press agent that there ain't a chance in the wide, wide world of any bout between Kid Roberts and Jim Oliver comin' off on that stage—there's just two billion things to stop it—but many of the yokels out in front is bound to think the challenge is level, and I realize that the Kid's standin' rests on what he does in the next two minutes. I gaze around wildly, lookin' past the coldly smilin' and unruffled Kid Roberts at the excited faces turned towards us—some sneerin', some admirin'. In the mass I recognize a old pal, grim-faced

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Tim Wise, police captain of the district the theatre's in, and I immediately get a rush of brains to the head. First I tell Kid Roberts to start right for the stage, but take his time in gettin' there. The Kid looks puzzled, but, readin' my face, he does what I tell him, like usual.

The audience cheers wildly as Kid Roberts strolls down the aisle as cool as the Labrador coast, lookin' more like a movie star than a ex-champion heavyweight in his form-fittin' dress suit. I push my way over to Tim Wise and whisper frantically in his ear. Well, a word to *this* Wise was sufficient! He jumps up and hollers that if any box fight is attempted on that stage he will take great pleasure in pinchin' the house manager and both principals, as the theatre is not equipped with a boxin' license. Halfways across the footlights, Kid Roberts halts, gazes at the scowlin' champion and then shakes his head sorrowfully, like he feels that stoppin' the fracas was a tough break for *him*. As he starts back to his seat the thrilled audience shakes the roof with applause.

So this stunt, framed by the champ's press agent to make a bum out of Kid Roberts in public, has actually rebounded to my leather pusher's credit. If I'd of sit up all night I couldn't of personally doped a better way to bring Kid Roberts before a mixed metropolitan audience—ready to fight, handsome, polished, and dressed like a fashion plate. You can imagine how this baby stood out on the stage beside the glowerin' cave man which held the title. I bet the weaker sex present had sore hands for a month and the next

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mornin' the newspapers give us more than the best of the thing.

So that was that!

How the so ever, let us finish up the events of that night. We meet the peace-destroyin' Désirée back stage after the show and she's a mass of smiles.

"Whal, 'ow you like Désirée to-night, my fren's?" she wants to know.

"O. K.," I says. "You got past nicely."

"Kid," says Ptomaine Joe, dangerously ill of love, "you was a wow, I'll tell the pink-eyed world!"

"You were charming, Désirée," says Kid Roberts quietly, "but, frankly, I do not like your costume."

The bright smile leaves Désirée's beautiful face like magic and its place is taken immediately by a frown.

"Vraiment!" she snaps. "Ce n'est pas gentil ce que vous dites-la! But what ees ze mattaire wiz my costume?"

"It—it is too abbreviated," says Kid Roberts flushin' a bit, but evidently determined to go through with matters now that he's begun. "It is not only merely abbreviated, Désirée, it is—it is—well, you are too young and unspoiled to be exposed to the super-sophisticated atmosphere of that act. I am sincerely sorry that I was the means of your getting that engagement and—"

"Pardon, monsieur!" interrupts Désirée, with a odd light in her sparklin' eyes. "Why 'ave *you* thees alarm for me? What *you* care what I do? What ees *your* in-ter-est in Désirée?"

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That was puttin' it up to the Kid cold turkey, but it didn't seem to bother him.

"Merely friendship, Désirée," he says smilin'ly. "I want to protect you while we are both in New York—as much as I consistently can."

From the way the expression changed on Désirée's face, a baby could see that she had looked for a much warmer statement than that. Désirée had been fairly raised on guys makin' desperate love to her—she's prob'ly been goalin' the sturdy menfolk since she throwed away her rattle for a powder puff—and here was a fellow she thought was a clam's earrings, yet he don't give her a tumble. Believe me, boys and girls, Désirée was plenty steamed!

"So you onlee weesh to be my fren'?" she says, curlin' her cherry lip. "Whal, don' bozzer yourself wiz *me*. I do not 'ave use for one private gendarme. I 'ave mon père for zat!"

"As you wish," bows the Kid calmly.

"Why you no fight zis Monsieur Olivaire?" persists Désirée, determined to start somethin'. "You are afraid for him?"

Kid Roberts flushes and his eyes glint, but he keeps his head. "I can see our little actress is developing temperament," he smiles. "You are evidently in a quarrelsome mood this evening, Désirée, so perhaps we had better postpone this discussion indefinitely. I do not wish to air my views on Jim Oliver and—"

"He has ask me to go out wiz him," butts in Désirée. "He pick me out from all ze girls in ze act—what of zat?"

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The Kid quits smilin' and looks very serious. "If you *should* go out with Jim Oliver, Désirée, be sure his invitation includes your father," he says.

"I do as please me!" says Désirée, "Au revoir, monsieur!"

With that she flounces away, leavin' us flat. I come near givin' three rousin' cheers, because I think that's where Miss Désirée Collet exits from the life and adventures of Kid Roberts. Nothin' of the kind!

The remarkable young woman's next imitation is to phone the Kid a few days later with the information that she has quit the drama. This pleases Kid Roberts, but he wants to know just what made up Désirée's mind for her. Désirée don't mind tellin' him in the least. She claims she went out with Jim Oliver and the heavyweight champ insulted her to such a extent that she felt she could no longer stay with his act. Kid Roberts tells me all this with blazin' eyes and squared jaw, but *I* think Désirée's scenario is the bunk—more than likely another plant of some kind engineered by Oliver's press agent. The high-strung Kid is already boilin' over, and my views on the subject get him red-headed. He calls me a incurable sinnick, whatever *that* is, says I don't believe nobody or nothin' is level and that I must think the Revolutionary War was a frame-up. Whilst he's bawlin' me out he's gettin' into his hat and coat, and with mild curiosity I ask him where he's bound for.

"I am to blame for Désirée ever coming in contact with a beast like Oliver," he says bitterly. "And I'm

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going up to his hotel to thrash him within an inch of his life!"

Sweet Mamma—he talks about thrashin' the heavyweight champ like you'd talk about thrashin' wheat!

"You're dizzy!" I says. "Quit actin' like a schoolboy and be yourself. If—"

A slam of the door cuts me off and likewise leaves me alone!

Well, of course, there's nothin' left for me to do but bound after him, and I'm on his heels when he pulls up outside Oliver's suite at the Hotel Ephant. A ferocious drummin' on the door makes it open with Red Young, the champ's manager, at the knob, whilst I'm still frantically tryin' to cool the Kid off.

If Red didn't look surprised when he seen that me and Kid Roberts was his callers, then neither did Balboa look surprised when he seen the Pacific.

"Hey, you guys wants to be more careful," says Red in alarm, after his first amazed gasp, "if you want to do business with me and the champ, we got to be under cover, otherwise when we fight you the yokels will be hep that it's framed!"

"There'll be no frame about *this* fight!" says Kid Roberts grimly, shovin' Red aside. "Where's Oliver?"

Then the fun began!

The heavyweight champ come saunterin' in from another room where he'd been entertainin' the usual mob of yes men which hangs around a champion of—anything. Oliver looked astounded when he seen Kid Roberts glarin' at him, but he looked even more astounded when the Kid broke away from me and shot a

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straight left to his mouth, cuttin' it. With a oath, Oliver steadied himself and come back with a hard right to the head as the boys from the other room piled in. It took five minutes of the most earnest endeavor and the full ship's company to tear them two strugglin' giants apart, and in answer to a thousand hysterical questions Kid Roberts panted out what it was all about. When he accused Oliver of insultin' Désirée, the champ stared at him in such dumfounded astonishment that *I* believed him on the spot when he said he'd never spoke two words to the girl and couldn't even remember who she was. But it was different with the ragin' Kid Roberts. He waves Oliver's denials away and says he'll never be satisfied till he's pounded him to a jelly, in the ring or out of it! Red Young, which couldn't get rid of the idea that the Kid was a set-up for his champ, says that's a good thought and grins meanin'ly at some highly delighted sport writers which was among Oliver's guests. Then Red asks me when we'll be ready to sign articles. I says "Never!" and Kid Roberts shoves me away and says: "Right now!"

Two days later, in spite of the fact that I barked and meowed myself hoarse against it, Kid Roberts signed to fight Jim Oliver fifteen frames to a decision at Madison Square Garden. The newspapers described it as "For the world's heavyweight championship and—a girl!"

Applesauce!

In response to Ptomaine Joe's pitiful pleadin's, I got him the semifinal—ten rounds with a banana entitled One-Jab McGoldberg—for the boxin' cook's first ap-

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pearance in a ring. Whilst arrangin' this little incident, I mingle around with the sharpshooters and wise guys of Times Square and they tip me that there's no more chance of Kid Roberts winnin' the title than there is of me gettin' elected president of Harvard by acclamation. The champion is a three to one favorite and the "wise money" is on him. Try to take him, that's all! Naturally, this bothers me no little, but I says nothin' to the Kid, as his job is to do the fightin' and mine to do the worryin'. Kid Roberts is puttin' everything he's got into his trainin', makin' his weary sparrin' partners sick of the game, and I never seen him more cheerful. He's cabled his wife just how important the comin' mill is and what it may mean to them both, askin' for a word of cheer in return. Désirée has laid low since she told the Kid that Oliver had got out of line with her, a thing for which I am more than thankful.

Well, the big night fin'ly rolls around and the old Garden is jammed till the walls is bulgin' out as early as seven o'clock. Hundreds of wild-eyed fight bugs is turned away, and most of 'em hang around outside to annoy the coppers and wait for the returns of the big battle. The preliminaries was just excitin' enough to keep the packed house on edge and then out comes Ptomaine Joe in the semiwindup, his first professional fight. This scuffle was one for the book!

Ptomaine Joe's unreasonable size would of got him a laugh if he hadn't done nothin' at all, but when he falls through the ropes tryin' to enter the ring and pulls a few other bones which shows he don't know

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what it's all about, the 15,000 humorists in the crowd of 15,000 trains their heavy artillery on him. Between the sarcastical wise cracks of the customers, the blindin', unfamiliar lights over the ring, the referee's gruff instructions, and this and that, poor Joseph was just a bundle of drawn nerves. He was rarin' to go and couldn't go for rarin'! One-Jab McGoldberg, no dwarf himself, looked a bit pale when he gazed on the human mountain he was asked to knock off and he talked to his troubled handlers very seriously. Just before the gong Ptomaine Joe's nerves got the best of him.

"Hold everything!" he suddenly howls to the crowd in a high-pitched voice; "I'm gonna lay this tomato like a rug!"

The mob is still graspin' its sides when the bell rings and Ptomaine Joe bounds out of his corner like a piece of india-rubber. *His eyes is shut tight* and his long arms is swingin' like windmills. The panic-stricken referee takes one wild look and then starts to flee for his life, but he was a bit too slow. The first punch Josephus landed caught the referee under the ear and knocked him out of the ring into the press seats! The crowd goes crazy, and One-Jab McGoldberg, the only guy in the joint not hysterical, creeps up behind Ptomaine Joe, measures the back of his head, hauls off and knocks him as stiff as a waiter's collar. The dazed and enraged referee sticks his head under the bottom rope and counts Joey out from there. Then he picks up a chair and was goin' to brain the prostrate chef, but cooler heads prevail.

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But Ptomaine Joe ain't all done yet. He quickly revived under scientific treatment, as you couldn't kill him with arsenic. When he comes back as one of Kid Roberts's handlers in the main bout, the crowd pegs him and starts editorial comments on his past, present, and future. Their stuff was funny, but not to Joe! He stood the razzin' for about three minutes, then with a yell he picks up the water bucket and hurls it over the ropes at his tormentors. The next instant ninety-six coppers gives Joseph the air. Thus endeth the first lesson!

Well, there was nothin' but hearty laughs connected with the semifinal, but it was all different with the main bout, and don't think it wasn't. Before Kid Roberts and the champion had been steppin' along two minutes I found out what the wisenheimers meant by tellin' me the Kid couldn't win, and I seen we was in for a proper jobbin'!

From the very first tap of the gong Kid Roberts was fightin' two men—Jim Oliver and the referee. This fair-minded official kept up a steady snarlin' monologue in the pantin' Kid's ear:

"Hey, keep 'em *up,* 'at last one landed on his knee! Why don't you break when I tell you—what are you, a wrestler? Stop 'at buttin' or I'll disqualify you, get me? Go on, fight, or I'll stop it! Don't try to heel him, I'm watchin' you!" etc., etc., till he had the Kid's nerves and fin'ly half the crowd on edge.

Why, I tell you it was the rawest thing I ever seen in a ring and what *I* ain't seen just never was, that's all! A cleaner fighter than Kid Roberts has yet to rub

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a shoe in resin. He was *too* clean with most of the guys he fought—steppin' away with arms upraised out of the clinches and lettin' his man recover his balance from a chance stumble when even the customers was howlin' for him to knock the jobbie out. This bought referee's "warnin's" was just part of the frame to make the Kid lose, and I knew that as soon as the third man in the ring thought the time was ripe we'd be disqualified for "foulin'." Honest, as all this dawns on me I ain't fit to be at large!

Kid Roberts was cautious and slow to get started, Oliver takin' the first round by doin' most of the leadin'. A wicked and generally well-timed straight left kept the Kid's head bobbin' and soon had his face painted red. He followed my advice to keep in close after a bit and at infightin' he handled the champ like a baby, poundin' Oliver's ribs with short lefts and rights which didn't do the heavyweight king a bit of good. The honest referee soon noticed this, however, and rushin' nobly to Oliver's rescue, kept the men apart. Just after the bell Kid Roberts slipped halfways to the mat in breakin' from a clinch and Oliver uppercut him with a terrible right whilst he was still off balance. A storm of booes and hisses come from the crowd and the champ sneered as he walked to his corner, leavin' the Kid dazed against the ropes.

A few douses of cold water, some expert massagin' at the back of his neck and the old ammonia bottle under his nose brung Kid Roberts around and I sent him out for Round Two with instructions to mail everything to Oliver's head and jaw. I'm double cer-

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tain that the first punch within walkin' distance of the champ's belt will be the signal for the referee to stop the fight.

They met in mid-ring, Kid Roberts this time duckin' Oliver's automatic straight left and wakin' up the house by counterin' with a stiff right cross to the chin. The champ didn't like this and clinched, complainin' to the sympathetic referee when the Kid whaled away with both hands at his mid-section. The referee quickly broke 'em and was heartily razzed by the crowd. Oliver shot a right and left to the head and the Kid was short with a left to the face. They fiddled around, each lookin' for a openin' which would end it and the impatient mob whistled and stamped their feet, bellerin' for a little more speed.

Kid Roberts obliged with a left uppercut to the heart and a right to the ear. He got a torrid left to the wind in return and tried to clinch, but the champ suddenly woke up and drove him across the ring with a shower of lefts and rights to face and body. The house was in a uproar and the Kid looked to me for advice. "Mix it!" I hollered. "This banana never seen the day he could punch with *you!*"

With his back against the ropes in Oliver's corner, the Kid brung up his right in a vicious uppercut which sent Oliver's head back like it was hinged and shook the water out of his hair. They then stood shoulder to shoulder and slugged like a pair of enraged maniacs till outside the ropes it sounded like a race riot! Both quickly tired from the terrific pace and fell into a clinch, where Oliver hit Kid Roberts four times with

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the deadly and foul rabbit punch on the back of his neck. The referee paid no attention to the hisses and the Kid fin'ly shoved Oliver away by main strength. On the break, Oliver whose ugly pan looked like a raw steak, shot a left to the heart and the Kid's knees sagged. A terrible right to the jaw put him on one knee for the first knockdown, and the delighted referee had counted a speedy "three" when the bell rung. Kid Roberts was a very tired boy when he slumped heavily on his stool, and it was another round for Mr. Oliver —and the charmin' referee.

I must say the outlook was what you call dark when I commence workin' frantically on the Kid durin' the one minute rest and I could of knocked myself off for ever lettin' him go in against the champion with only one fight under his belt after his long lay off. It was the Kid's own fault, of course, but that was no time to tell him as he sprawled wearily on the stool, starin' with dull eyes at the ocean of excitedly workin' faces around the ring. The punch which floored him just before the gong had hurt plenty and as I smeared collodion on a nasty cut over his left eye I whispered to him to stall through the next round and use his dazzlin' footwork to keep away from the champion's right.

The Kid didn't seem to hear me at all, just mutterin' somethin' about the unfairness of the referee. I suddenly felt somebody pullin' at my pants leg and shoutin' my name. As I glance down with a appropriate remark, a newspaper guy passes up a envelope to me. It's a cablegram to Kid Roberts from Dolores, his wife; I see that when I rip it open and gaze at the signature

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first, a habit of mine. Aha, I think to myself, just what the Kid needs—the word from his wife that she's rootin' for him to go in and win! Like a book, what I mean, hey? I hold the message in front of the fast-recoverin' Kid's eyes. He shakes his head a couple of times to clear it, looks at me with a puzzled frown and then reads the cable. Slowly his teeth comes together with a click and his jaw sets hard. He scowls across the ring at Jim Oliver, and, suddenly pushin' me away, he jumps off the stool, though there's eight seconds before the bell, and stands there waitin' for it with the impatience of a prancin' two-year-old at the barrier. This eagerness to get at it from a guy which flopped on his stool apparently all but out at the end of the last round puts the crowd in a fresh frenzy and nobody heard the gong for the third frame but the fighters themselves!

This is the cheering cable which Dolores sent her hard-pressed hubby to show she was standin' by him and to hop him up to win:

DEAUVILLE, FRANCE.

News of your disgraceful affair with chorus girl has reached me wonder at your assurance in asking me for encouragement it is my earnest wish that you lose maybe that will prevent you from further embarrassing me by boxing again. DOLORES.

Hot scrapple! Should I only of read that thing first, Kid Roberts would never of cast a eye over it. Imagine sendin' that kind of a pannin' to a guy losin'

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a tough fight! I throwed up my hands and got the old towel ready to toss in if Kid Roberts got floored more than once, because I think between Jim Oliver, the referee, and that dizzy cable, why, it's all over except the count.

If what I don't know was grapes, I'd have more grapes than Mr. Concord himself! That cable seems to act on the Kid like a cold shower on a heavy sleeper. He met the highly confident Oliver before that baby was halfways out of his corner. Sidesteppin' a left lead, the Kid swung a right and left to the head that crashed the champ reelin' against the ropes and simply panicked the mob. Oliver was groggy and tried to clinch, but that didn't fit in with the Kid's idea of matters and a short left hook to the heart again staggered the champ, whilst a sizzlin' right to the mouth brought the blood in a stream. In Oliver's corner they are shoutin' enough advice to their man to solve Germany's problem! The punch-drunk champion managed to flounder into a clinch, but that was simply a bad case of out of the fryin' pan into the fire, because once in close Kid Roberts banged away at Oliver's ribs till they're as red as any blaze you ever seen.

Oliver throws the referee a glance which would of melted a iceberg, and that bozo, which had been actin' like he was hypnotized by the terrible execution Kid Roberts was doin', snapped out of it and shoved the men apart. He likewise "warns" Kid Roberts—for what I don't know. The champ slipped to his knees on the break and that was the tip-off on the shape he's in.

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Oh, the crowd—you should have heard 'em by this time! The Kid calmly waits till Oliver gets to his feet, ducked a wild right jab, and then sent Oliver down on all fours with a right swing. Oliver took "nine" and got up, a set-up for a tenth-rater. Kid Roberts was no tenth-rater! He carefully measured the reelin' champ with his left and I howled for him to keep the next one up, but how could he hear me with thousands of lunatics screechin' wildly: "Knock him dead! Knock him, Kid, knock him!"

Roberts then sunk his right to the laces under Oliver's heart and down goes Mr. Champion on his face. That punch was as clean as a hound's tooth, but bellers of "Foul! Foul!" comes immediately from Oliver's corner and the gamblers around the ring. This reaches the battered ears of the sick champion and he rolls over on his back, twistin' his face in a knot and pressin' both gloves against his stomach.

He's actin' his head off, the big boloney. If he was fouled, so was Cornwallis! But the framers keep up the cry and in a second half the crowd is yellin' "Foul!" and the other half is screamin' for the referee to go on with the count. The referee hesitates a instant, then waves Kid Roberts to his corner and awards the fight to the prostrate and fairly beaten "champion" on a foul!

Kid Roberts stares at the referee like he thinks that guy has went crazy, then he looks at me like he won't believe his own ears without a witness. But the maddened shrieks of the boys out in front which has bet on him convinces him that there's no question

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about him bein' gypped out of the title. For a minute I thought the enraged Kid Roberts would take a wallop at the white-faced referee and he did take a step toward him, but I jumped over the ropes and grabbed him. Some of the newspaper guys is at my heels and they're as burnt up as we are.

"That's positively the worst robbery I ever saw and I've been covering fights for fifteen years!" says the guy from the *Whirl*. "That's the kind of thing that kills boxing. Believe me, boys, I'll pan that decision every day in every way for the next six months!"

"You should be world's champion right now!" adds the *Sphere* sport editor to the boilin' Kid.

The boos and hisses outside the ropes drowns out whatever he might of answered. There's a young revolution goin' on and the coppers has got to escort Mr. Referee to safety. Two-thirds of the frothin' customers mills after us to the dressin' room, slappin' Kid Roberts on the back and assurin' us that we won from here to Liverpool. The Kid says nothin'. He's speechless with rage and disappointment.

When we get inside the room we're greeted by Ptomaine Joe, which had certainly put in one rough evenin' himself—knocked out by One-Jab McGoldberg and throwed out by the coppers. The battlin' chef looks the photograph of gloom, but he brightens a bit when he sees us.

"How did you make out?" he asks eagerly.

"Shut up!" I snarls. "I think you're a Jonah. I got a good mind to crate you back to that lumber camp, you big stiff! They tell us we lose on a foul!"

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"That's tough!" says Ptomaine Joe. "Very tough. But it's better than the way *I* lost, ain't it? What am I goin' to get for that brawl of mine?"

"Cut yourself a piece of cake!" I sneers. "You ought to be glad to get immunity—if you can fight, I can fly!" Then I turned to Kid Roberts. "I hope you're all cured of boxin' boys which insults girls!" I says bitterly. "If you had waited for Oliver till you was right, we——"

A soft rappin' interrupts me. Ptomaine Joe opens the door and falls back with a gasp. Our visitor is no less than the cause of all the trouble—Miss Désirée Collet! She seems to of been weepin', and why shouldn't she? I presented her with a scowl, and, greatly surprised, Kid Roberts reaches for his bath-robe.

"Oh, I am so sorry I lie to you!" she says. "Quelle honte!"

"What d'ye mean you lied?" I asks, as Kid Roberts appears dumb.

"J'en suis très fachée!" says Désirée.

"That's the cat's whiskers!" I says impatiently. "Speak my talk—does this look like Paris?"

"I tol' you Monsieur Olivaire insult me," explains Désirée to the frownin' Kid, snubbin' me and dabbin' at her eyes with a inch of lace. "Zat was wrong! He says *nozzing* to me. I leave zat act because mon père weel not let me wear zat costume zat you no like!"

There's plenty silence for a minute, except Désirée's sobs, and then the Kid speaks up. "Why did you lie

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to me at all?" he says coldly, but it seems to me his eyes is grinnin'.

"I weesh to see if you weel fight for Désirée!" says this remarkable young woman, hangin' her head.

You could of slapped me over with a telegraph pole. The little—eh—imp!

"Désirée," says Kid Roberts, pretendin' to be red-headed, but I know he's fakin' it. "I am angry and surprised at you. You should be taken home and—and spanked! If I promise not to have you punished as you so richly deserve, will you return to St. Thérèse with your father?"

"Mais oui!" says Désirée tearfully.

Kid Roberts looks greatly relieved, and I'm simply overboard with delight. The Kid turns to Ptomaine Joe, which ain't been able to unfasten his eyes from Désirée since she come in the room. "Joe," says the Kid sternly, "take this young lady to her hotel, explain matters to her father and arrange for their tickets so that they may leave to-morrow. I put her in your charge!"

Ptomaine Joe looks like somebody had just proved to him that he's the rightful heir to Yellowstone Park. He gulps and grabs the Kid's hand.

"Say!" he busts out. "They can't tell *me* you ever fouled anybody. C'mon, Désirée!"

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ROUND THREE

DON COYOTE

In days of old when knights was bold no nobby young blood's wardrobe was complete without a first-class motto. The Duke of Dorset's motto covers this episode in the life of Kid Roberts like charity covers sin. It was: *"Either never attempt or else accomplish!"* That's a good thought, what? In other words: "Don't start nothin' you can't finish!" If you don't think that's good advice, ask Don Miguel Espinosa—that's if that guy's snapped out of it yet. The last *I* seen him, he was sprawled on the floor of the Kid's dressin' room at the Jersey City A. C. as cold as a polar bear's nose!

After Kid Roberts smacked Jim Oliver, the heavyweight champ, as stiff as a top sergeant's back, but was robbed of the title by that yegg referee which called the punch foul, I had made up my mind to take my athlete around the sticks, fightin' him against second- and third-raters till he'd knocked off enough of these boloneys to demand a quarrel with the champion again. Désirée Collet had skipped back to St. Thérèse and her departure tickled everybody silly, with the slight exception of Ptomaine Joe.

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Whilst I'm stallin' around New York linin' up a busy campaign through the Middle West and tryin' to keep the railroad leaps down so's we can show a profit at the end of the jaunt, Jim Oliver, stung by the way the sport writers is pannin' him daily on his showin' with Kid Roberts, takes on Battlin' Miller for fifteen frames at the Garden. Well, Battlin' Miller took a proper pastin' for ten rounds, but he was tougher than chilled steel and Mr. Champ fought himself out tryin' to stop him. From then on the Battler cuffed the arm-weary and wind-blown title holder all over the ring, floorin' him in the last round for a short count. The judges handed Oliver the decision, drivin' the crowd crazy, but most of the newspapers took the angle that Battlin' Miller's work in the last five innin's had offset the champion's early lead and they give the Battler a draw. That little incident boosted Miller's wages from about $2,500 a fight to about $2,500 a round.

The sport writers then call for a brawl between Kid Roberts and Battlin' Miller, the winner to get another shot at Jim Oliver's crown, as both the boys had shown in their fights with him that they had a right to think they could take him. "Honest John" Keller, at that time promoter of the Jersey City A. C., signs Miller and then Johnny takes a runnin' jump to New York and propositions me. He offers us $15,000 flat for twelve rounds with the Battler at his club. I counter with a offer to let Kid Roberts display his wares for a *guarantee* of fifteen grand with the privilege of takin' 33 1-3 per cent of the gross, knowin' that Roberts and Miller would draw like a poultice. Johnny snapped me

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up so swift that I'm sorry to this day I didn't also insist on him takin' out a $100,000 life-insurance policy and makin' me the beneficiary!

Like all fight clubs, the Jersey City A. C.'s got a local drawin' card—a boy the matchmaker builds up with the fans by sendin' him against a set-up each week till he's got a string of K. O.'s after his name as long as a giraffe's neck. In the case of "Honest John" Keller's abattoir, the prima donna was a inexpensive heavy entitled Tornado Tate, and Johnny wanted his house packer on the bill with Roberts and Miller so's to insure a crowd which would jam his club to the mortgages. Well, Ptomaine Joe's workin' out every day with the Kid, and this tomato is rarin' to go again, in spite of the fact that he was a total loss in his first professional fight. So when Johnny Keller says he's only got one grand to squander on the semiwindup to the big fight and he's got to give Monsieur Tornado Tate $750 of that, I says I'll toss Ptomaine Joe into the ring with his man eater for the other $250. As Cain remarked to Abel, it's all fun!

In the meanwhile the society pages of the newspapers has been full of the Kid's wife's photos and her activities in this French slab, Deauville. These newspaper stories from across the boundin' main was gettin' my box fighter thoughtful, and don't think they wasn't. The particular item which ruined the Kid was a radio claimin' that a Spanish omelet by the high-soundin' title of Don Miguel Espinosa was payin' constant attention to Dolores. A dozen times a day Kid Roberts wanted to let fightin' run for the end book, pack a suit case

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and beat it for Europe to give Don Miguel the last lesson first and incidentally have a show-down with his wife. But I managed to cool him off, tellin' him *that* kind of antics would only make matters worse. My advice was to wait till Dolores come back to America and then stage the big conference. Well, Dolores come back all right and Don Miguel blew over on the next boat!

Kid Roberts was what is known as a one-woman man and he still thinks Dolores is the only female in the wide, wide world in spite of the fact that she canceled him when he went back to the ring to earn his livin'. The Kid's broodin' over his family troubles was keepin' him awake at nights and causin' him to neglect his trainin' for Battlin' Miller to such a extent that I begin to do a piece of worryin' myself. From the way Kid Roberts was performin' in the gym, he didn't look able to punch his way out of a paper bag and this Battlin' Miller from all accounts was nobody's fool. So I decide to pay Dolores a visit myself and see if I can't fix things up between her and the Kid before they get to the unfixable stage.

I piled into a taxi and got whisked out to the sultan's palace on Fifth Avenue where Dolores was stayin' with her father, Senator Brewster. The old boy had been a strong booster for Kid Roberts from the time he met him. So I figured on gettin' to ***him*** first and then havin' him come in with me when I started to work on Dolores.

As luck would have it, the Senator was in a place called elsewhere when I called and the haughty butler,

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after lookin' me over like I was a immigrant's trunk and he was a customs inspector, was goin' to give me the gate without further ado. I was seriously considerin' the proposition of smackin' him down, when Dolores happened to pass and hear my voice.

"Why, of all people!" she says. "Hello, Joe—I'm *so* glad to see you!" Then she turns to the butler, which knows he's batted out of turn and looks it. "Peters, show Mister Murphy to the drawin' room," she says. "I'll join you in a moment, Joe. Make yourself comfortable."

Now that he sees I mean somethin', this butler buttles his head off for my benefit.

Whilst I'm waitin' for Dolores, I hear her at the telephone in the hall. It seems she's givin' orders to her political lieutenants, and from her line of chatter you'd think she was a Tammany Hall boss. Short, crisp, man talk and right to the point.

Waitin' for her to hang up the phone and come into the drawin' room, I'm nervously rehearsin' in my mind the speech I'm goin' to make to her in behalf of Kid Roberts—her husband and our mutual friend. Tryin' to pour oil on the troubled waters of matrimony is what you call a delicate task and as a rule the best you can look for is the worst of it. In the middle of my thoughts along these lines, in comes Dolores, caparisoned in a negligée which would of drove Nero cuckoo.

"Dolor—eh—Mrs. Halliday," I begins. "You——"

"Not Mrs. Halliday, Joe," smiles Dolores, takin' a seat opposite me. *"Miss Brewster!"*

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That shot me out of my chair! "What?" I gasps. "Have you got unmarried to Kid Roberts?"

Dolores throws a blush which would of made a rose wince with envy and then she frowns.

"Joe, I must ask you not to repeat that vulgar sobriquet that Kane has adopted as a mask for his beastly pugilistic activities," she tells me. "I loathe it! Fancy—Mrs. Kid Roberts! Oh!"

"But there ain't nobody calls you Mrs. Kid Roberts," I says, in what I hope is a soothin' voice. "Everybody knows you as Mrs. Kane Halliday and *there's* a name with some stuff to it!"

"Well, they will know me hereafter as Dolores Brewster!" she snaps, comin' back and sittin' down again. "Possibly as *Senator Brewster!*"

"I—eh—well, for one thing," I says, tryin' to lighten the atmosphere, "it would look kind of funny to see in the paper, 'Dolores Brewster and Kane Halliday have taken a suite at the Ritz,' wouldn't it?"

Dolores laughs, but quickly gets serious again.

"You will never see anything like that, Joe," she says. "Kane and I have come to the parting of the ways. Why, I'm virtually an unmarried woman *now, am I* not? Do I ever see my husband?"

"Well," I says, "that ain't altogether the Kid's—eh—Kane's fault, now is it? I bet if you hadn't blowed to Europe he'd of been here long ago and everything would of been jake. Why, the boy's simply dyin' on his feet from the dread disease of love. He always was maniacal about you, is now and always will be!"

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"He has rather peculiar methods of showing his affection, then," remarks Dolores, but she looks pleased. "What about this Collet woman?"

"Newspaper bunk!" I snorts. "I'll give you the low-down about that on my word of honor, which like Astor has never been broke! Désirée Collet was just a nutty kid. She comes to New York with her feeble old father, and as they didn't even know a traffic cop between 'em, Kane just played big brother for her, that's all. You're a woman—well, do you think if Kane had fell for Désirée she'd of got so sore at him that she wanted him trimmed by the heavyweight champ? Take it from me, Mrs. Brewster-Halliday, Kane never give her a tumble. You can't believe nothin' you see in the papers these days. Why, for instance, me and Kane has been readin' for weeks about some Spanish sheik by the name of Don Miguel Espinosa followin' *you* all over Europe! Of course, *I* know that's the——"

I stop short, because Dolores has jumped up, her face blood red.

"Kane believes that?" she wants to know.

"Why, I should say not!" I says quickly. "But, at the same time, *thinkin'* about it ain't doin' him a bit of good!"

"Does he know you were coming to see me?" is the next question, after a pause.

"No," I tell her promptly. "He'd murder me if he thought I was tryin' to be a Mr. Fix-It in his private affairs. Maybe *you* think I'm out of line, too, comin' here without no invitation. I'd do anything for either

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of you and I hate to see Kane unhappy. If I'm out of order, I'm sorry and——"

But Dolores cuts me off with a quick little pat on the arm, tellin' me she understands perfectly and I got nothin' to apologize for, as my valuable friendship is somethin' she never intends to lose. We talked about this and we talked about that, with me easin' the name of Kid Roberts into the conversation at every chance, and as I got up to shove off it looked like one visit from the Kid himself would bring them together forever and a day. So, all in all, I felt pretty well pleased with my day's work.

How the so ever, as I go out the door I run into somethin' in the hall which makes matters more complicated. The somethin' is no less than Mr. Don Miguel Espinosa, and when I heard friend butler repeat his monicker I stood still and took a good long look at this foreign banana. He's got on a swallow-tail coat, uncuffed pants, white spats, some flowers in his buttonhole and some more in his hand, packs a gold-headed cane, a watch crystal over one eye, and a silk hat on his bean. A high hat in the daytime!

I give this big clown a stare which seems to panic him for a instant, because he kind of shivered before lookin' me up and down with his little beady eyes like I'm somethin' puss dragged in on a wild and stormy night. This steams me up, and I would of knocked him as cold as Nanook's nose only I didn't want to start nothin' in Dolores's house. So I let him live, figurin' I couldn't possibly be unlucky enough not to get another chance at this mug—and I wasn't!

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Well, when I got back to the inn where me and Kid Roberts is parkin' ourselves, I'm so highly pleased with the conference I had with Dolores that I boldly hauled off and told the Kid all about it. I didn't mention nothin' about this Don Miguel callin' whilst I was there, because my boy friend got so burnt up over me interferin' in his domestical affairs that discussin' *this* subject took up the worst part of a crowded hour and left us both hoarse. In fact, for a while it looked like the bust up of one of the greatest two-man combinations since Haig & Haig. How the so ever, when the smoke of battle died down, me and Kid Roberts is still playmates as of yore. The Kid recognizes that I had simply acted as a old friend of both combatants in tryin' to bring him and his bride together, and all is forgiven. I then drove home the point that, in my opinion, Dolores was now in the mood where if he'd shoot right up to her and do his stuff he could square things with ridiculous ease. This Don Miguel Espinosa had me bothered and I wanted Kid Roberts to come to bat with Dolores before that Spanish cake eater made himself solid with her.

At first the Kid couldn't see my angle with a spy-glass, and he kind of irritably makes the suggestion that we drop the subject for a while—say till 1969. When I went out to file some bushwah with the sport writers he was pacin' the room like a panther in the zoo, and he was just as tame. But I found a note from him at the desk when I come back:

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"May not return for dinner. I've decided to accept your suggestion, Joe, and have gone to visit Dolores!"

Kid Roberts blew in about nine o'clock that night with his jaw set hard and his hat pulled down, till it almost covered his flashin', steel-gray eyes. He slammed the door after him so hard that two pictures, the phone book, and a clock fell off the wall with a crash!

"What's the big idea, Kid?" I says in surprise. "Didn't you see Dolores?"

He swung around on me like a flash. "Under the circumstances, Joe, your curiosity is pardonable," he tells me. "But in the future the subject of Dolores is taboo—let that be understood!"

"O. K.," I says. "And now that we got *that* all settled, did you see her?"

Kid Roberts glares at me for a minute and then he surrenders. "Yes—I saw Dolores," he says, curlin' his lip. "For various reasons, I didn't inform Dolores of my intended visit, and when I arrived at her father's house I found she was engaged with—eh—with another caller. I wouldn't permit the butler to announce me, as I intended to give Dolores what I hoped would be a pleasant surprise. Well, she accompanied her departing visitor to the reception hall, and there I confronted them. Instead of appearing glad to see me, Dolores was frankly embarrassed—yes, by Heaven, *disconcerted* at seeing me there! Recovering herself she introduced her visitor. Joe, who do you think it was?"

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"I *know* who it was," I says, without thinkin', "Don Miguel Espinosa!"

The Kid grabs my arm in a iron grip and swings me around, starin' at me with glitterin' eyes. "How did you guess that?" he demanded. "Or, *was* it merely a guess?"

"That's all," I says. "Didn't we both read in the paper that this jobbie had arrived here only a few boat lengths behind your wife?"

I didn't say nothin' about the Don bein' on hand when *I* called on Dolores. The Kid had already apparently seen enough to get him red-headed, and why should I throw gasoline on a fire?

It seems Kid Roberts and Don Miguel looked each other over with all the friendliness of a couple of strange bull-dogs and, not likin' what he read in the Kid's blazin' eye, this toreador scurried away. But the damage had been done! The hot-tempered Kid Roberts forgot he had come to make up with his wife and let go with both barrels. He led with Don Miguel and landed hard, but Dolores come right back with Désirée Collet and shook the Kid up considerably. Then Kid Roberts claimed a wife's place was in the home and not in politics and Dolores says when she wants a opinion she'll go to the Supreme Court; likewise, if he thinks more of the prize ring than he does of his weddin' ring he can close the door from the outside.

It was a fast draw.

After he cools off a bit Kid Roberts tells me he's satisfied this Don Miguel is a false alarm and simply

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tryin' to gyp Dolores out of some heavy jack. But unless he gets somethin' on him, why, beatin' this bird up would only make matters worse between him and his wife and might even rebound in the Don's favor. So he decides to lay low for the time bein', trustin' to luck that this gil from Madrid will speak out of turn with Dolores or do somethin' which will show him up in his true colors. Personally he don't ever expect to lay a eye on the Don again and neither do I, for that matter, but we *did*—sweet spirits of niter, I'll say we did!

At the Hotel Escope, the trap where me and Kid Roberts is parked in New York, there's a telephone girl by the name of Beatrice Brown and she's a eye filler of the first water— Oh, a darb! She's made to order for the Follies, with the movies a set-up for her when she gets tired of the sport there. As usual, Ptomaine Joe can't sleep from thinkin' about her. Her switchboard just groaned under the load of confectionery and flowers which he loaded it with daily and all Bee did was to split amongst the other girls these costly sacrifices which Ptomaine laid at her altar and give Ptomaine a flock of wrong numbers in return.

But there was *one* member of our party which knocked Beatrice's heart for a trip, and that was Kid Roberts. Bee did eye work and all-around vampin' on the handsome Kid that had poor Ptomaine and the other males in the lobby gnashin' their teeth, but the Kid kept his head with her, bein' used to this kind of notice from the adjacent sex. In the worried state of mind the boy was in then, Beatrice, with her wise-

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crackin' chatter and open admiration, was just about the kind of bracer Kid Roberts needed. All pretty women is that way—a heady wine. Sip with caution and they're a tonic, but begin gulpin' down and —good night!

Well, to make a long story longer, I organize a party to go to the ball game one day to break up the monotony of the Kid's trainin' for the Battlin' Miller bout. Ptomaine Joe invites Beatrice Brown, which didn't want to have him around and didn't want to go till she heard Kid Roberts was goin', and then it was a case of try and keep her away! Our entrance to the ball park creates somethin' of a stir as the Kid is recognized and the news photographers aim their cameras at us, all of which tickles Beatrice silly. The way she snuggled up to Kid Roberts so's to be in the picture with him drove the love-lorn Ptomaine wild. Then one of the ball club officials sees us and makes a large fuss over Kid Roberts. He won't have it no other way but that the ex-heavyweight champion and party has a box on the house. As we crowd into it, Kid Roberts gasps and falls back against me, treadin' all over my feet. Followin' his glance, I do a piece of gaspin' myself, for amongst the party in the next box is no less than Dolores and Don Miguel Espinosa.

Swelterin' canine!

Lookin' around, they seen us right away, and Dolores turns a flamin' red, matchin' the crimson of the Kid's face. Kid Roberts merely bows coldly and sits down, apparently as unconcerned as if the adjoinin' box was vacant. Dolores immediately begins to read her

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program like she's determined to learn it by heart. Don Miguel failed to return the Kid's bow, but to our great surprise he tips his silk hat to Beatrice Brown, which give him a kind of scornful smile and a chilly "Good afternoon!"

"Where did *you* meet that guy?" I ask Beatrice, whilst Ptomaine and Kid Roberts is arrangin' the details of a bet on the game.

"Who—that John with the cab driver's hat in the next box?" says Beatrice airly. "Why, he stores himself at the hotel. He's a Cuban or one of them dizzy foreigners, and——"

"Don Miguel is a guest at *our* hotel?" butts in Kid Roberts in a low voice, overhearin' this tidbit.

"Don which?" says Beatrice surprised. "If you mean that egg next to us, he's down on the books as Juan Ybarra, and if he's a Don he's been holdin' out on me! He's been tryin' to make me for the past three weeks, but he's just a bum guesser, that's all. I don't go out with no fellows which looks you over like *he* does. I pick *my* boy friends!"

The Kid is now double convinced that this Spaniard is all wrong, and he tells Beatrice to find out all she can about him. Tickled to be of any use, Beatrice promises to have the low-down on this baby within a few days. Just leave matters to her, she says, and she'll make Mr. Don talk himself into all the grief in the world. That's somethin' she can do to any masculine, adds Bee, and after a long look at her I would of laid a hundred to one that she was statin' nothin' but facts!

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About the middle of this ball game there was a excitin' little coincident come to pass which must of made Dolores very thoughtful.

A ball is batted plumb into the box where Dolores and the Don is sittin', and in the scramble to get it the Don is lucky. He takes out a fountain pen, writes somethin' on the cover of the ball, and presents it to Dolores with a bow and a flourish. Watchin' out of the corner of his eye, Kid Roberts grits his teeth. A few minutes afterward a special copper comes up lookin' for the lost ball, like they always do. Ptomaine Joe, which has been mutterin' and glarin' at Don Miguel ever since the fair Beatrice cracked about the Don pesterin' her, grabs the cop's sleeve and points out the Don as the shoplifter. Mr. Cop taps him on the shoulder, and when the man from Spain turns around angrily he looks right into a Tenth Avenue scowl and a request for the baseball.

"Go away, creature!" frowns Don Miguel, excitedly brandishin' his shoulders. "I have not your property. I am a nobleman, and this is an insult! I will sue——"

The copper grabs the Don by the collar, and they commence strugglin' hithers and yon all over the box, whilst everybody within eyesight forgets about the ball game to watch what might be a two-handed scrap. Kid Roberts, at first enjoyin' the thing, sees that Dolores is on the brink of death from mortification, and he steps right into the breach.

"Just a moment, officer," says the Kid, layin' a hand on the copper's shoulder. Friend Cop swings around ready to take on all comers, but the second he

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lamps the Kid his face brightens, and he shoves out his hand with a smile.

"Hello, Kid!" he says, swellin' all up like a pump and beamin' on everybody as Kid Roberts shakes with him. "Gee—you look like a million!"

Instantly the innocent bystanders cuddles closer for a flash at the famous ex-champion which has been makin' such a marvelous comeback. The ball game is now runnin' for Sweeney. On all the sides you can hear whispers; "That's Kid Roberts!" "Say, the Kid looks great, don't he?" "Roberts'll knock this Battlin' Miller for a row of Zulu jelly molds." The grinnin' copper then says if the Don is a friend of Kid Roberts he can steal the ball club's franchise and it'll be O. K. with *him!* The crowd laughs cheerin' Kid Roberts loudly as he sits down again.

Dolores flashed the Kid one grateful look, but the Don don't even thank him. A good scout, this Andalusian banana, what?

The very next day Beatrice Brown commences workin' on Don Miguel in a attempt to get him to spill some inside information on himself. It took about four heavy dates with him, some high-class kiddin', and deep sighs properly placed to make him come through. Then Beatrice has so much to tell us that she busts right up to our room with it, pale and tremblin' and pantin' with rage.

This big double-crossin' four-flusher had offered Beatrice Brown one thousand bucks, even, if she'd help him dope Kid Roberts on the night of his fight with Battlin Miller!

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Dopin' a fighter has been done and will be done now and then as long as the game goes on. It ain't near as hard a trick as it sounds—and the very fact that the average person laughs at it, and don't believe the victim, is what makes it easier!

Don Miguel had slipped the horrified Beatrice a little bottle of some goo, which he tells her she must trick Kid Roberts into drinkin' before he enters his dressin' room at Jersey City the night of the quarrel. It'll work about three-quarters of a hour later, accordin' to this yellow hound, and it won't bump the Kid off by no means. In fact, it'll be a Godsend to him, says the Don, because Battlin' Miller is goin' to half kill Kid Roberts, anyways, and this potion of his will prevent the Kid from feelin' the pain. By this time Don Miguel thinks he's sitting pretty with Bee, so he likewise informs her that he expects to clean up on the fight and afterward him and her will go places. Bee says he wanted to kiss her to show his good faith, and the mere thought made her seasick. She stalled him off and says she'll think matters over and then she beat it to us.

When Beatrice stops, breathless—and she ain't no more breathless than *we* are—Kid Roberts pats her shoulder and tells her she's a good little girl and he won't soon forget her. The Kid takes the bottle of the Don's brew from her and sends Ptomaine Joe out with it to a chemist. Our instructions to Beatrice is brief— go right back and tell Don Miguel she has decided to accept his offer and Kid Roberts will enter the ring as goofy as all the idiots in the world!

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A introduction to the Kid, one of his signed photos, two ringside seats for the setto with Battlin' Miller, and, last but not least, a century note, induced the bell captain to sneak me into the parlor of Don Miguel's suite when the Don was out and help me plant a dictograph there. Then we had Beatrice go up and talk his scheme over with him, repeatin' all the details and makin' the Don answer with her pretty mouth and his ugly fly trap a couple feet from where we had Mr. Dictograph hid.

So that was that!

For two or three days before the fight, Beatrice reports the Don holdin' conferences in his rooms with nearly all the sharpshooters and sure-thing gamblers around New York, and the night of the battle this educated money has made Battlin' Miller a three to one favorite, as the results of what these master minds has heard from the Don. Me and everybody connected with the Kid's camp got down hook, line, and sinker on Kid Roberts at these juicy odds. Just before we filed into the dressin' room I bet five grand for the Kid himself. The talent is set for a hog killin', but we see no reason why the hog shouldn't turn and at least bite some of 'em!

When Ptomaine Joe crawled through the ropes for his second professional scrap—the semi-windup with Tornado Tate—the house was packed to the rafters with a noisy, fight-crazy mob. Two-thirds of the customers seems to remember Ptomaine's *first* start and they greet him accordin'ly, with the result that the inexperienced, excitable Ptomaine is pretty well licked

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by his nerves as he stands in his corner waitin' for the bell. Without a peer as a rough-and-tumble mauler, Ptomaine Joe was a fish out of water in a ring—with rules, bells, gloves, and a referee to prevent gougin' and knifin'. Once the gong rang, Ptomaine rushed wildly and landed the first blow, a glancin' left to the head, but took a terrible right uppercut in return as they come to close quarters. That's the punch which licked him! It shook Ptomaine from stem to stern, and the mob was quick to see he was in distress, rockin' the clubhouse with howls. Tornado Tate had found out all he wished to about his man and he started drivin' Ptomaine all over the ring. Another right uppercut sprawled the ex-chef on the floor, but he jumped up without waitin' for the count and gamely charged at Tate, only to go down again on all fours from a fearful right and left to the stomach. He was up again at "nine," swayin' dizzily and practically out on his feet. I reached for the sponge, but before I could toss it in Tate's carefully timed right caught Ptomaine flush on the chin. He went down like a log and was counted out, just one minute after the start of the battle. This made my glass-jawed fighter's record to date read: knocked out an even twice in exactly two starts. Not so good!

Now that the cheaper help had been quickly disposed of, the big crowd settled back comfortably to scan the twelve-round struggle between Kid Roberts and Battlin' Miller, either one a better man than the fadin' heavyweight champ in the firm opinion of half the mob at the ringside. Miller was first to enter the ring and

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drew a big hand, but the Kid's desperate attempt to come back and regain his title appealed to the crowd's emotions and Roberts got an ovation.

The weights was announced as 194 for Kid Roberts and 196½ for Miller, who likewise seemed to have a bit more height and reach than the Kid. The Battler's muscles bulged like a wrestler's and he was as hairy as a chimpanzee, one of his trainin' methods apparently bein' not gettin' shaved for a month before the mill. Against this cave man, the Kid's white, clean-cut body stood out under the glarin' lights over the ropes till it was plain to the worst roughneck in the crowd why the sport writers had christened him "the Adonis of the ring." Miller's handlers eyed the Kid sharply when they come over to examine his bandages, prob'ly lookin' to see if the dope had worked on him yet. I winked and grinned mysteriously at 'em, and they went back to their corner lookin' serious.

At the sound of the bell Kid Roberts was out of his corner like a flash, meetin' Miller before that baby was halfways to mid-ring. The Kid shot in two sizzlin' lefts to the face and then ripped a hard right to the body. Miller staggered, and the crowd cheered wildly. The Battler then shook his head and dove into a clinch, poundin' Roberts hard on the kidneys. He suddenly switched his attack to the head, and the Kid went back against the ropes with Miller on top of him, borin' in with both gloves workin' fast for the wind. The referee broke 'em and both missed rights to the jaw. Kid Roberts waded in again, hammerin' Miller about the body with rights and lefts. Miller appeared to be

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hurt by this treatment and his handlers roared for him to "Bring it up!" He did—a torrid right uppercut sendin' the Kid's head back and stoppin' his charge short, but Miller missed the follow-up—a left hook—and took four stiff jabs to the nose without a return. Roberts then hooked his right to the neck, Miller counterin' smartly with a hard smash to the head.

Kid Roberts fell back a few steps and as Miller rushed in with his head lowered he shot two hard rights to that part of the Battler's chassis, one of which cut the Battler's ear. They were clinched at the gong, poundin' away merrily at each other's ribs. A round of applause greeted the boys as they run to their corners and the referee leaned down over the ropes to remark to the sport writers: *"Here's* two that's tryin'!"

Over in Miller's corner his handlers is spendin' as much time lookin' at us as they are in workin' over their greatly surprised leather pusher. They can't seem to understand why Kid Roberts ain't commencin' to act silly. Well, I'm ready to have him act that way now!

Miller come out cautiously for the second frame, but Kid Roberts was even more cautious, walkin' slowly to the center of the ring, his eyelids lowered and his feet draggin' after him. After studyin' the Kid for a second, the Battler took heart and jabbed lightly with his left. The punch wouldn't of cracked a china cup, but Roberts swayed back against the ropes as though hit by a batterin' ram. It looks weird to the attendance, and they yell murder, but to the gang in Miller's corner it's the tip-off! They're now certain the Kid's

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on Queer Street and they shriek: *"Now!* Let him have it—give him everything, Miller!"

Then the fireworks started!

With a confident grin on his face, Miller again jabbed with his left, then crossed a wicked right to the jaw. The Kid broke the force of the punch by rollin' his head with it and countered with a weak right that missed by a foot. Miller nearly laughed out loud as he drove Roberts to a neutral corner, sprayin' him with lefts and rights to the head. With the ropes scrapin' against his back and the house in a uproar, Kid Roberts looked over Miller's shoulder to me, and I nodded.

Instantly Kid Roberts straightened up and took a lot of ambition out of Miller with a right hook that wobbled the Battler's knees. Amazed at this turn of affairs, Miller tried to clinch, but the Kid shook him off and dropped him to one knee with a murderous right over the heart. The din from the crowd drowned out the referee's count, but watchin' his risin' and fallin' arm, Miller was up at "eight," badly dazed and punch-drunk. Roberts rushed, ducked a wild right swing and sent Miller back on his heels with a straight left to the mouth. Another left to the same place crashed the Battler against the ropes to rebound into a right uppercut that almost tore his head off his shoulders. Kid Roberts stepped quickly away and Miller sank to the floor, through for the evenin'! His dumfounded handlers dragged the carcass to their corner, and, after shakin' his limp gloved hand, the Kid sprung lightly through the ropes whilst the crowd cracked the paint with cheers. Beyond a slightly puffed lip, Kid Roberts

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ain't got a mark on him, but it was ten minutes before Battlin' Miller was able to leave the ring.

When we bust through the millin' mob into our dressin' room, we're brought up short inside the door by a amazin' spectacle. Ptomaine Joe has got no less than Don Miguel Espinosa backed against the wall. Ptomaine is amusin' himself by takin' free swings at the frantic Spaniard, deliberately missin' him by the fraction of a inch each time.

"Hello, people!" grins Ptomaine pleasantly. "I was waitin' till you guys come in before beatin' this egg into a jelly! I——"

"What are *you* doing here, sir?" butts in Roberts sternly, lookin' dynamite at the unhappy Don.

"This—this animal brought me here by force!" chokes the Don, glarin' at Ptomaine. "I will have you all arrested! I——"

"Aw, shut up, you big mock orange!" I cut him off. "You won't have *nobody* pinched—what d'ye think of that? I got a good mind to let Ptomaine knock you off! Beatrice Brown is ready to testify that you wanted to dope Kid Roberts to-night, and if *that ain't* enough I had a dictograph planted in your room all the time you was talkin' to her and them gamblers. By the way, *them* birds thinks you deliberately double-crossed 'em, and they're out for your hide!"

Don Miguel is whiter than a dollar's worth of milk and seems to have a bad attack of the ague. Kid Roberts's grim face relaxes as he looks at him, and his lips curl in a sneer of contempt. Then he shrugs his

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shoulders and starts in to dress, payin' no further attention to the tremblin' Don.

"I—I—will leave the city at once and never return if you will open that door and let me go," he stammers. "I swear it! *Sapristi*—that terrible woman!"

Ptomaine Joe's eyes become slits. "Which terrible woman?" he asks carelessly.

"That Brown woman of the hotel!" says the Don. "May she—"

Sock!

Reachin' over my shoulder, Ptomaine knocked Mr. Don Miguel Espinosa as cold as a pawnbroker's smile. Then he coolly leans over and looks at his prey carefully.

"'At was a sweet punch," he remarks, in a well-satisfied voice. "A darb! This jobbie will be out for half a hour. Now, how the hell is it I can't do that in a ring?"

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ROUND FOUR

COLUMBIA THE GEM AND THE OCEAN

ASIDE from the fatal error of forgettin' he's wed when steppin' out in mixed company, one of the biggest mistakes a married man can make is to think the game is all over when him and his blushin' brand-new spouse trips gayly away from the altar. When the excitement of the honeymoon has died down you got to begin in earnest to make her, to pay serious attention to her various unreasonable wishes and court her with twice the enthusiasm you did before grabbin' her off, or Mr. Love leaves you flat on your shoulder blades!

Followin' the Kid's defeat of Battlin' Miller and Don Miguel Espinose, Dolores shoved off on a speech-makin' tour of the gals' political clubs. I can't see no good reason why the Kid's family troubles should interfere with business, so I sign articles to fight him against Bob Young, which was poisonin' the heavies all over the land, fifteen rounds or less to a decision at Syracuse, N. Y. But Kid Roberts, worryin' over Dolores, couldn't seem to get no thoughts of boxin' to enter his broodin' mind. He went around like a guy in a trance, with a far-away and long-ago look in his eyes and a muttered answer to every question.

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He trained with no more ambition than you'll find in a tribe of snails. The old pep was gone and amazed sparrin' partners punched him around to their hearts' content. I rode him night and day, but I might as well of bawled out a dead man. Less than three weeks before the quarrel he was as soft and flabby as a piece of liver and just about as dangerous to a sweet puncher like this Young, which I'd seen go and knew to be lots of scrapper. I can't do nothin' with the Kid and I'm set to cancel the fight to save him from enterin' the ring a set-up, when Lady Luck puts on the ice for the rest of the world and commences to flirt with *me*. As usual, with the ladies, I got the worst of it!

One day, as warm as the vestibule to Hades, me and Kid Roberts is walkin' down Broadway with Ptomaine Joe. We're broilin' in our own fat, what I mean, as we pound perspirin'ly along them sizzlin' pavements, sinkin' to our ankles in the asphalt at street crossin's, which is as hot as only Gotham asphalt can get in July. All of a sudden a big foreign automobile draws up to the curb and a hearty voice sings out:

"As I live and breathe, Kane Halliday!"

We stop short, and Kid Roberts swings around swiftly, starin' at a classy, swell-dressed young bozo which is at the wheel of this horseless carriage smilin' at him. At first the Kid looks puzzled, but a answerin' grin soon spreads across his handsome face. He steps over to the curb, and the two of 'em shakes each other's hands off, whilst me and Ptomaine imitates a background. We ain't got long to wait, though, because the Kid calls us over.

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"Devereaux," he says to the stranger, "shake hands with two of the best. Joe Murphy, my manager and guardian; Ptomaine Joe, my trainer. Boys, this is Devereaux Winston-Logan, a former classmate and a disgustingly wealthy friend of mine!"

Logan smiles and gives us each a grip. As usual, Ptomaine has got to speak out of turn.

"Howdy, Mister Logan," says this master mind, with a goofy grin on his homely pan, "how is all your little berries comin' along!"

Kid Roberts and Logan frowns for a instant. Then Logan slaps his hands together and chuckles. "Not bad!" he says to the Kid. "Logan berries, eh? Your man is quite a comedian, isn't he?"

"A second Chaplin," I butt in, sneerin' at Ptomaine. "You ought to see the witty falls this dizzy Boob can do once he puts the gloves on and gets in a ring! Don't mind him, Mister Logan, he don't know what it's all about."

"'At's what *you* think!" says Ptomaine. "I know what I'm doin' when I take them dives, and if you figure I don't you're crazy! If I stayed up, I'd get clouted, wouldn't I? Believe me, I'm usin' my head all the time—I'm a student, what I mean. I'd just as soon get knocked cold in Round One as I would in Round Twenty; it's less wearin' on a guy's face! C'mon, let's go places. I want to step down to some beach and do a piece of bathin'. Believe me, I swim a nasty ocean!"

"That's the proper place to be on a day like this," agrees Logan and turns to Kid Roberts. "What on

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earth are you doing in New York in this beastly heat?" he asks him. "You look frightfully peaked, Kane. What you need is a change of scene, and I'm the little white-haired boy who can furnish it. I had to run down here on business, and my nice, cool, comfortable yacht is out in the breezy Hudson. Hop aboard with me and laugh at Mr. Humidity!"

"That's a good thought!" pipes up Ptomaine. "Let's check out of this slab and go with your boy friend, Kid."

"Get back in line, Stupid!" I says. "Did anybody ask *you* to board any nice, cool, comfortable yachts?"

"But I *meant* to ask," smiles Logan, which seems to get quite a kick out of Ptomaine. "I have a little place on an island about twenty miles off the coast of Massachusetts, and, Kane, at this time of the year, it's a veritable paradise! You'll find a lot of people there you know, or who know you, and every comfort known to civilized man. The fishing and bathing are excellent, we have an eighteen-hole golf links, first-class tennis and handball courts and a beautiful dancing casino, where several times a week professional entertainers procured from a Boston vaudeville agency help kill any hours that have a tendency to drag. What say?"

"I'll say it's the weasel's waistcoat!" hollers Ptomaine, without nobody askin' him. "Try and keep me away!"

Logan is full of enthusiasm, and Kid Roberts looks up with a longin' gleam in his tired eyes.

"It certainly sounds attractive, old man," he says. "But, you see, I'm in training for a bout and—"

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"The very reason you should come up with me!" interrupts Logan. "That settles it! Why, man, there isn't another place in the world where you could condition yourself under such ideal surroundings. Bring your training apparatus and your merry men along and I'll put them all up. The fresh, pure air with the tang of salt in it, bathing in the bluest ocean you ever saw, and occasional social relaxation among your own class will have you in shape in no time to put up the battle of your life!"

He rattles on excitedly, findin' the Kid a good listener and Ptomaine a hungry one. The more Logan talked the more I warmed up to his proposition. In the worried frame of mind Kid Roberts was in then I figured it would work wonders with him if I could get him out of hot, sultry New York, away from rubbin' elbows in the smelly gyms with the various tenth-rate hams in trainin' there and take him where he could mix for a while with his own people. Besides that, from the way Logan described this island, it sounded like a perfect place to ready the Kid for Bob Young. I chimed in with Logan and added some arguments of my own till Kid Roberts, already crazy to go, though he tried not to show it, give in and we sailed away for the mysterious island at daybreak the next a. m.

Well, after a rough trip on the boundin' main which was spent by me and Ptomaine Joe in a noble but useless attempt to get unseasick, we tied up at Logan's island and Kid Roberts lost no time fittin' in smoothly to the life of the place. The island was all Logan

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claimed it to be, and the Kid hadn't been there a week when he was the same as a new man. The healthy color came back to his pale cheeks, his long missin' appetite joined him again and the deep dark hollows under his eyes disappeared like magic. But best of all was the way he snapped into his trainin'. I pitched our camp as near the beach as I could, with the ring practically right on it, where we'd get the best of the zippy breezes from the rollin' ocean. There Kid Roberts skipped rope, punched air and sand bags, pulled the weights, throwed the medicine ball, did his army settin'-up exercises, shadow boxed, wrestled and slammed his sparrin' partners around with all his old-time pep. In fact, the boy got to be such a glutton for work that I had to time him carefully and ease him up after a few days for fear he'd overdo matters and leave his fight in the gym.

The gang on the island treated Kid Roberts royally, they did for a fact. All of 'em had $9.85 for every wave which sloshed up on the sand there, and most of 'em knew the Kid's father and what his family had meant before the crash. The tired business men and Wall Street rajahs amongst the old boys couldn't do enough to make his stay there somethin' to remember with delight, whilst the male and female flappers looked on him like he was some kind of a god, no foolin'! The Kid managed to fit in a few tennis and golf games with his gym workouts, and whenever he hit the casino he was mobbed by the gals which figured him the greatest dancer since St. Vitus.

Well, they packed our trainin' quarters every day

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watchin' the Kid do his stuff, and, seein' a royal chance to pick up expenses, I wanted to put the bee on these babies for four bits a head, but Kid Roberts wouldn't let me charge 'em a dime. A sinful waste of a legitimate chance to grab off a couple of grand!

The presence of the famous Kid Roberts sold these guys the idea they was athaletes, and a flock of 'em had a hobby of turnin' out in their bathin' suits at six a. m. to join the Kid in his road work, a ten-mile gallop around the island—that is, Kid Roberts clicked off ten miles, but a *half* mile of the pace the Kid set was about all these other birds could stomach. We left these puffin', pantin', overfed, and underexercised millionaires stretched on the beach all along the route, gaspin' like freshly hooked fish. At their own request, I laid out a simple daily loosenin' up routine for 'em, makin' it light so's not to kill 'em, and they went through it each mornin' like it was against the law not to do it. Say, when we left that island I had everybody's card and if I ever promote a gym of my own I'll be sittin' pretty.

Nearly all the young fellows was crazy to box with Kid Roberts, if only to be able to brag around their clubs that they once had the gloves on with him. Always anxious to please, the Kid sparred with a few of 'em, handlin' 'em like he'd handle eggs and tryin' to teach 'em the kindergarten lessons of the game without changin' their profiles.

Well, it was this clownin' with the gloves which first started the trouble. Amongst Logan's friends which had a yen to box with Kid Roberts was a jobbie entitled

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Richmond Daniels, a husky six-footer which had knocked everybody dead as a amateur leather pusher and looked capable of givin' the best of the professionals a tough ten minutes. It was easy to see he was highly regarded as a puncher by all on the island, includin' himself, and till Kid Roberts stepped into the picture the rest of 'em had thought Daniels was the terrapin's telephone.

Bein' one of these four-flushin' loud-mouthed, upstage babies which hates themselves, Daniels liked this state of affairs the same way he liked arsenic. With a sneer on his pan as he stood around with the others watchin' Kid Roberts work out, he'd point out imaginary faults in the Kid's defence and criticize his condition till I got red-headed listenin' to him and only restrained myself from bawlin' him out by usin' control I copied from Job. A couple of times I overheard this boloney break down and confess that he'd of been heavyweight champ himself should he ever of had to fight for a livin'. The flock of yes-men which always surrounds these rich sapolios like flies surrounds a pie counter would agree with him, beggin' him to put on the gloves with Kid Roberts just to show him up.

Daniels was a trouble maker, and I don't crave trouble makers around a trainin' camp. I didn't want Kid Roberts to box him if there was any way to prevent it because I was afraid this Daniels might know just enough to force the Kid to stop him, and it was a cinch that a knockout of one of Logan's pals would make us as popular as smallpox. I give the Kid my

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views on the subject and suggested barrin' the public from the camp hereafter on the grounds that we was entitled to some secrecy whilst readyin' for a scrapper as good as Bob Young. In that way we wouldn't have to box Daniels, which I was satisfied was goin' to try and put over a fast one at his earliest convenience. Kid Roberts laughed me off. It's all fun, he says, and, besides, Daniels is a gentleman and gentlemen don't do that kind of stuff.

Applesauce!

Just two days after I warned Kid Roberts, Mr. Daniels made his bid. There was a unusually big mob packed around our ring on the beach with plenty of swell-lookin' Cuteys amongst 'em and very eye-fillin' they was as they stood there in their exceedin'ly scant bathin' suits just as they come from the ocean. Kid Roberts gives 'em a generous performance, windin' up a busy hour by light sparrin' with two or three young huskies which wanted to strut their stuff before their admirin' girl friends. He let 'em make a showin', takin' all kinds of chances with them big burlies in doin' it, and when the last guy left the ring mid the loud applause of his friends the Kid was a very tired boy and more than willin' to call it a day.

I see this Daniels push to the front of the crowd and take a long look at Kid Roberts, sprawled back on his stool with his head and shoulders restin' on the top ropes, his perspirin' chest risin' and fallin' like an exhausted runner's. Steppin' up to the ropes, Daniels tapped the Kid's arm to get his attention, just as I shoved my way over.

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"Care to box a round or so with me—eh—Roberts?" says Daniels, like he's speakin' to his valet.

Kid Roberts gazes around at him and hesitates, whilst the crowd gets much interested and moves up closer so's not to miss nothin'. In each face there's a "This is goin' to be good!" expression. So I stepped to the fore, motionin' the glarin' Ptomaine to keep quiet.

"To-morrow!" I says to Daniels, before the Kid can answer. "To-morrow, sonny, we'll be tickled to fill your order, but the store's closed up for to-day. Be sure to be on time, because you're one fellow I want to see waited on!"

"Now, Joe—" begins Kid Roberts, frownin' at me.

But Daniels laughs a nasty laugh, lookin' meanin'ly at the mob and then back at the Kid, which ain't answered him yet.

"Why the big silence?" he sneers. "I should think you'd welcome a chawnce to improve your speed by boxing one who knows at least the rudiments of the art, instead of this daily hippodrome with clumsy and unskilled sparring partners who are mere human punching bags!"

"Cut yourself a piece of cake!" yells Ptomaine, takin' this as a personal insult. "What d'ye mean I'm clumsy? You better not choose me, brother, or the best you'll get is a lot of grief. C'mon in here—I'll give you all the boxin' you can handle, you big mock orange!"

Some of the gals commences to move away a bit nervously, and there's quite a murmur from the crowd.

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The Kid's friend Logan looks worried and uncomfortable, but likewise sore at Daniels.

"Oh, I say, Daniels," he bursts out, "I think this is a bit unnecessary!"

"Think what you choose!" says this bozo, with a sarcastical smile. Then he glares from the Kid to Ptomaine. "Since the gentleman very plainly does not care to risk boxing me, I shall be pleased to administer a thorough thrashing to his insolent servant!"

"Jake with me!" says Ptomaine, gleefully. "Come right in, Dizzy, and I'll poke you loose from 'at bathin' suit!"

Daniels promptly puts his hands on the ropes and vaults over, all business. This looks bad, and the innocent bystanders is on the verge of perishin' from surprise and excitement. Whilst the other handlers is lacin' gloves on Ptomaine and Daniels, the amazed Kid Roberts and me is doin' some fast thinkin'. One thing is certain, and that is that we can't let *them* two babies step by no means! One or the other is as positive to go out cold as rain is positive to be wet. The Kid makes up his mind quickly and gets off the stool.

"Take those gloves off, Ptomaine!" he says sharply, and then turns to Daniels. "All right," he smiles pleasantly, speakin' to him for the first time, "I'll box you!"

The bloodthirsty Ptomaine looked so disappointed I thought he was goin' to bust out cryin', and I glanced quickly at Daniels to see how that bird was takin' this sudden change of program. To my great surprise, he looked highly pleased, but *I* didn't, as I

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sized him up standin' there tappin' his gloves together after one swift confident wink at the crowd. In the matter of height, weight, and reach there was little to choose between him and Kid Roberts. The Kid had a big edge in experience, of course, but he was tired and winded from his long workout whilst Daniels was fresh. He looked like he could take it, and he looked like he could hit!

"Be careful of your hands," I whispered to Kid Roberts. "Remember, that Young fight is less than ten days off now, and we don't want no accidents. Leave his jaw alone and go after him down below. You'll have to take this fellow sooner or later, so you might as well knock him off right now!"

"I'll do nothing of the sort," says the Kid. "I don't want to hurt him or make him ridiculous before his friends. I'll stall him off for a couple of rounds and then you stop it."

I stopped it just two minutes later!

The second I rang the bell, a duty I took on myself, Daniels shot across the ring and hit the Kid on the chin with a stiff straight left before Roberts could get his hands up. The crowd roared, and the Kid slowly backed away, Daniels followin' and sneerin'ly invitin' him to open up and fight. Kid Roberts kept his temper and ducked a couple of wild rights, counterin' with a light left jab. Daniels tore in with both hands workin' fast and cleverly. He put a right and left to the head that had lots of stuff behind 'em and they clinched. Kid Roberts had no trouble smotherin' this bird's attempts at infightin', a trick at which he could

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of ruined Daniels, as Roberts was a past master at *that* game!

Infuriated at his lack of success, Daniels brought the heel of his glove across the Kid's face as they broke from the clinch and some of the crowd hissed. Kid Roberts returned this foul with a short right hook under the heart that brung a gasp from Daniels, and he missed a right swing by a foot, leavin' himself wide open, but the Kid didn't want to stop him and backed away, still cool and smilin'.

Daniels steadied and drove another right to the jaw, which Kid Roberts blocked, clinchin' again to keep Daniels out of mischief. The millionaire scrapper tried to rough matters in the clinch and went right up in flames when he found the Kid could handle him like a baby. Daniels suddenly ducked his head and then snapped it up in a vicious butt that caught Kid Roberts flush on the right eyebrow and opened it to the bone ! The gore spurted out and blinded the Kid, coverin' both of 'em with a crimson shawl. Over the howls of the crowd come some shrieks from the fair sex, as I clanged the bell a half dozen frantic times.

At the first sound of the gong, the Kid dropped his hands, but the sight of blood seemed to drive Daniels crazy. He swung his right to the Kid's unprotected head and Roberts crashed into the ropes. Daniels was measurin' the badly dazed Roberts for another haymaker, when me and the cussin' Ptomaine leaped into the ring and grabbed him.

"Get out of here, you big tramp!" I bawled. "You come near this camp again and I'll cook you!"

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"By Gad, you butted him, Daniels!" comes the angry voice of Logan. I *saw* you! I thought you were more of a sportsman than—"

"But your grandmother!" laughs Daniels nastily, lookin' to the pop-eyed crowd for applause. "I hit him with a right-hand punch, as he well knows. But that's the traditional excuse of the prize fighter hurt in training—he was butted by an awkward sparring partner. Bah!"

"It's all right, old fellow," puts in Kid Roberts, whilst me and Ptomaine is cleanin' and bandagin' the cut. "I know it was an accident."

"Very well, if you choose to call it that," says Daniels coolly. "However, any time you'd like to continue our little bout, you'll find me ready!"

With that he climbs through the ropes and vanishes in the crowd, which melts away like fried ice. Kid Roberts looks after him thoughtfully.

"Joe," he says to me, "I think you were right about that chap. He's a bad egg!"

It took four stitches to close the Kid's eyebrow, and that removed boxin' from his trainin' program for the next week. He wanted to wear a head guard and keep on with his regular routine, but I was takin' no chances till the cut was full healed. I could of been sent to the gallows for what I was thinkin' about this Richmond Daniels and I would of went there with a smile could I of carried my thoughts about him into effect! If there's anything I loathe, next to fried parsnips, it's these big mugs which insists on workin' out with a first-class fighter when the latter's in trainin'. There's

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nothin' good connected with 'em! If the fighter lets go and smacks 'em down, why, the fighter's nothin' but a big bully which took advantage of a amateur. On the other hand, if they make any kind of showin' with the fighter, the fighter's a big overrated false alarm!

Anyways, this temporary let-up in the daily grind give us some time on our hands, so when Logan asks us over to the dancin' casino we're easily led. They got a tabloid revue on tap there which they have brung down from the land of Boston for the week to help these rich millionaires shoo away Mr. Dull Care. This frolic was one of them girl-and-music things and the feature is a give-me-your-kind-applause patriotic pageant in which Rita King, the only one of the troupe *I'll* ever remember, took off Columbia.

Miss Rita King was one of these blond disturbances, which would wreck the peace of a old men's home. She could do more with her eyes than Columbus could of done with airplanes at his disposal, and when she smiled it was just a case of hold everything, get me? She did the plurality of the dancin' and singin' in the show, and whilst her voice would never cause no panic in the Metropolitan Opera House, her dancin' would of delighted Nero. Her little feet just seemed to giggle, what I mean!

Well, after catchin' the show the first night, we formed the pleasant habit of droppin' in at the casino pretty regularly with Logan. It was harmless fun and kept the Kid's mind off broodin' too much about his family troubles and his comin' battle with Bob Young.

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Like usual, Ptomaine Joe went double cuckoo over Rita after his first dazed look, and the antics of that big sapolio in tryin' to make her would of forced a guffaw out of a mummy. The girl not being a lunatic, Ptomaine failed to click, and no more did our old pal Richmond Daniels, which did everything but kidnap her off that casino stage!

How the so ever, there was one baby on that island which seemed to make Rita thoughtful from the instant her marvelous eyes rolled in his direction, and that was Kid Roberts. She gets Logan to bring her over to our table and introduce her after the show one night, and after that it was a case of try and keep her away! I guess Rita had never met up with no box fighters before which looked like a collar ad, spoke with a Yale accent, and wore a tux after dark when not in the ring.

The behavior of the other two rivals for the charmin' Rita's attentions, when they seen her openly settin' sail for Kid Roberts, was decidedly different. Ptomaine took it out in mopin' and mutterin', but Daniels came right to a boil! He watched the Kid and Rita playin' around with the same identical expression on his pan that a lion wears whilst stalkin' a sheep, and a half dozen times when Rita would pass his table on the ways to ours after the revue, he'd stop her, and out of the corner of my eye I'd see them arguin' heavy. Practically the entire island, includin' the revue bunch, went bathin' together in the mornin's, and somehow Rita and the Kid always seemed to be paired off. It was the same when Logan or somebody else would

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throw a party, or in these tennis settos, or, in fact, anything at all. And all the time this Daniels watches—hard-faced and scowlin' and with a grim, dangerous, waitin' air about him which got on my nerves!

Well, I seen no percentage in the thing for Kid Roberts. I figured the more he's in Rita's company the harder it's goin' to be to just call it a summer flirtation and laugh this eye-soother off when the troupe leaves the island. I know darn well that the Kid's still in love with his wife, even if she has put on the ice for him and I don't want him to do nothin' he'll ever afterward regret. So as there never was or never will be no tact connected with me, I went right to the point —Rita!

"Miss King," I says to her one day when I get her alone on the beach, "I'm goin' to tell you somethin' which will no doubt win me a slap right in the face!" I don't let her swift look of alarmed surprise even slow me up, but stumble right on. "Kid Roberts is a married man and very much in love with his bride. He may think he ain't when he gazes on you, but nevers the less he *is*, get me? I know him better than you do—better than he knows himself. Now, listen, this is cold turkey! I think you're level, and I like you. *But*—this here flirtation which you're stagin' with my battler is causing him to neglect his trainin' for a tough fight, a fight he'll lose if he ain't *right* when he steps in that ring! It's causin' bad feelin' between Kid Roberts and this Daniels—in fact, them babies is at the point right now where a mere out-of-the-way glance from either of 'em would start the fireworks. If them guys battle

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over you, it's goin' to ruin your reputation and likewise the Kid's, on account of the odd angle of him bein' married. Now if—"

But, to my amazement, she has suddenly bust out cryin'!

A half hour later Rita has told me a strange story, and we have shook hands on a equally strange agreement.

It seems Rita knew Richmond Daniels long before she ever came down to the island with the show and this millionaire mug had been tryin' to sheik her for months. Rita claims she hates Daniels, but is afraid of him, and then she tells me why. Accordin' to her, she'd went to dinner in New York with him a short time before, and for dessert he slipped a nifty diamond ring on her finger. Naturally, there was a proposal went with this little gift, but it ain't a proposal of matrimony, so Rita indignantly refuses to take the gem. How the so ever, she can't get it off her finger in the restaurant and she has to wear it home. That night whilst usin' soapsuds to remove the ring, the darn thing slips off and disappears down the drain of the wash-bowl. There you are—that was Rita's story, and from the straightforward, level-eyed way she told it, somehow I believed her. As a matter of fact, I lost a ring that way once myself.

But the baffled Daniels tells Rita her statements with regards to the missin' ring is applesauce. The cheap squawker barked and meowed something scandalous, threatenin' this poor little pulse-quickener with the Bastile if she don't come across with his gem, five

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hundred bucks, or—herself! That was the top-off on this guy, eh? Rita ain't got the ring or the five hundred, and that's all of his proposition she has even considered. Meanwhile Daniels has told her if he don't get service he'll have her chased off the island and collared the minute she gets back to Boston.

Well, after givin' matters plenty of due consideration, I made Rita a proposition myself. I says, if she'll lay off Kid Roberts, which she has candidly admitted havin' a yen for, I'll fix everything up with Daniels so's that he won't bother her no more. With a tearful sigh, Rita promises, thereby sealin' my doom!

The next night whilst the Kid's dressin' to have dinner with Logan, I wrote out a check for half a grand and slipped away from the trainin' camp on a quiet hunt for Mr. Richmond Daniels. Halfways to the casino I almost fell over him and Rita standin' in a little clearin' under a tree. There's a red-hot argument under way, but it ain't half as red-hot as *I* am when I see that Daniels has the girl by the arm whilst she seems to be tryin' to get away. They're so interested in each other that they don't peg me till I walk right up to them and shove the check in Daniels's face.

"Take your hands off that girl, you big stiff!" I snarl. "Here's your money—you're paid off, now beat it! What a fine oil can *you* turned out to be! A woman scarer, hey? Well, if I ever catch you botherin' this little girl again, I'll tell everybody on the island just what you're tryin' to do, and if that don't stop you, why, I'll stop you myself!"

Both of 'em stares in amazement, and then Daniels

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looks me over with a sneer, whilst Rita backs away kind of frightened.

"Well, well, well!" says Daniels, after a strained second. "Another admirer, eh?" He takes my check, tears it up and throws it in my face. "Go away, you little rat!" he says, curlin' his lip. "I—"

Then I let him have it—a right swing, flush on the chin!

Daniels staggered back against the tree, and Rita give a faint scream. I had no chance with Daniels, and I knew I had no chance with him when I socked him. He'd already stood off Kid Roberts, and he was certainly too big and too good for *me* to cope with. I gambled everything on that first wallop stoppin' him. It didn't, and from then on I was just a catcher. He could of knocked me off at any time with a punch, but he didn't want to do *that*. Oh no—with a cold, sneerin' grin on his pan he just stood off and cut me to ribbons with slashin' hooks and jabs, carefully avoidin' landin' in a vital spot. In less than three minutes I'm bleedin' like a stuck pig, one eye is closed tight, and I'm flounderin' around like a drunk. I *was* drunk—with punishment! I don't know when Daniels got tired of the sport and put over the finisher, but I know I come to life flat on the ground and alone.

Well, there was murder in my heart when I stumbled into the camp a half hour later. After makin' sure Kid Roberts was nowheres in sight, my first act is to rout out Ptomaine Joe, the man mountain. Ptomaine was engaged in his favorite exercise, poundin' his ear, but one glance at me and he's plenty wide awake. I shut

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off his excited questions by swiftly tellin' him what had happened, gettin' some satisfaction from the roar of rage he let loose.

I reminded Ptomaine I had started him twice in a praiseworthy effort to make him a box fighter, and though he had been a fearful bust each time, he'd been well paid for his efforts. Now I wanted him to fight for *nothin'*. Fight at his own game—rough and tumble, longshoreman, back-room stuff, where everything goes and the man which happens to slip loses! At that kind of thing, without seconds, gloves, bell, or rules, Ptomaine Joe had no equal, and he licked his lips eagerly when I told him I expected him to take this Daniels or else go back to the lumber camp where I found him!

We're just startin' out when Kid Roberts comes along with his pal, Logan. They're bound for the casino, where everybody goes at night on this excitin' island. I tried to draw back in the shadows where he wouldn't see my dilapidated features, but he did.

"Good heavens, Joe!" he gasps. "Who—what happened to you?"

"I—eh—I fell off a cliff in the dark!" I mumbled, pinchin' Ptomaine's arm for silence.

I didn't want Kid Roberts to know Daniels had manhandled me, for a great many good reasons. I knew the hot-tempered Kid, which loved me like a brother, would of dashed right off and broke Daniels in half, and I didn't want that bird *killed*. I just wanted him half killed, which I figured Ptomaine, fightin' his own way, would do to the queen's taste. Then again, sore

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as I was, I didn't care to have Kid Roberts risk breakin' his hands on Daniels with a big fight only a short time off. I have never yet got so mad that I forgot business!

Well, of course, Kid Roberts believes I fell off a cliff the same way he believes in Santy Klaus, but he don't question me further, prob'ly figurin' I'll explain matters in a day or so. He wants to know can he do anything and I says no thanks and after another searchin' worried look at me he goes out and joins Logan. Then me and Ptomaine sets forth to mark Mr. Richmond Daniels "Paid!"

Takin' a short cut to the casino, we get there before Kid Roberts and Logan. I parked Ptomaine outside with instructions to say nothin' to nobody and to duck if he seen the Kid comin', whilst I went in to find our prey. I nailed Daniels leanin' against the rail of the porch, alone. He removes a cigarette from his mouth to greet me with a wicked grin, lookin' over my battered pan with satisfaction.

"Your face looks terrible!" he remarks, coolly. "It's an offence to the eye. You should remain indoors until it heals, my man."

"Inside of half a hour you'd be more than willin' to trade your own face for mine, Mister," I says, grimly, "because yours is goin' to be retreated immediately. There's a friend of mine a little nearer your size waitin' outside. Let's go!"

"Kid Roberts?" asks Daniels, eagerly. He straightens up and tosses away the cigarette.

"Be yourself!" I snort, scornfully. "The Kid would

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kill you! You'll have a *chance* with Ptomaine—for a second! Look at him, you big four flusher, don't he look tasty?"

I grabbed his arm and swung him halfways around so's he could see the impatient Ptomaine outside, loomin' up in the dusk like the rock of Gibraltar. Daniels gazed, frowned and throwed off my arm.

"If you think I have any intention of engaging in a brawl with a tenth-rate pugilist, you're crazy!" he says. "Stand aside!"

"Listen, Daniels," I says, plantin' myself in front of him as he tried to pass into the casino, "you had your fun with me, now it's *my* turn! Either you come down to the camp and fight Ptomaine or I'll bring him right up here on this porch. I——"

"Oh, come on then!" he butts in savagely. "After I've sent all of this alleged gentleman boxer's retainers back to him on a shutter, I'll do the same for him!"

With that he vaults the railin' and me after him.

It was a strange procession which started down to the camp on the beach in the dazzlin' moonlight. Daniels stridin' ahead of us and not a word spoken all the ways down till I asked Ptomaine if he told anybody outside the casino what we was goin' to do.

"Only Rita King," grins Ptomaine. "I told her I was goin' to knock her rich boy friend for a row of bath houses!"

"You dumb-bell!" I hissed. "She'll tell the world and the bunch from the casino will rush down and stop it!"

"Then we better start now!" says Ptomaine, "I'll begin by breakin' his nose!"

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He calls to Daniels. Daniels stops and Ptomaine walks up to him.

"You big yellah tramp," remarks Ptomaine, in a easy conversational tone, "I'm goin' to pound you into a jelly! You won't beat up no more guys half your size or hound no girls when——"

Sock!

With the speed of a strikin' rattlesnake, Daniels's right fist shot from his hip and caught Ptomaine square on the mouth. It was a terrible punch—unexpected, perfectly measured and with two hundred pounds of muscle and bone behind it. It would of rocked Dempsey. It dropped Ptomaine as if he'd been hit with a axe. There was no question about whether or not he was out, but there was some doubt as to whether or not he was dead!

"Next!" sneers Daniels, wipin' his skinned knuckles with a silk handkerchief.

"Here!" comes a familiar voice, choked with rage—and Kid Roberts steps suddenly into the moonlight, with the white-faced Logan at his heels.

"Ah!" says Daniels, his lip curlin' as usual, "I have thrashed the manager and the sparring partner and now I shall make a job of it by thrashing the prima donna of the troupe!"

"At your service!" pants the Kid, manslaughter in each eye. "I would have accommodated you much sooner had I known you were responsible for Joe Murphy's condition. Miss King has told me—everything. Daniels, you are a despicable cur!"

Fifteen minutes later, stripped to the waist and with

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four-ounce gloves laced on their hands, Kid Roberts and Richmond Daniels faced each other in the trainin' ring on the beach. There's no referee, no timekeeper, no handlers, no roarin', screamin' crowd of fight bugs to urge 'em on. There's nobody but me, a kind of scared Logan, a dazed and mutterin' Ptomaine Joe, a cold bright moon and a boomin' ocean. There was to be no rounds, both agreein' to go till one or the other went out stiff. Logan excitedly calls their attention to the fact that the tide is comin' in and that it rises with remarkable speed on this island. He says if they *must* fight, to wait till the ring can be moved up further on the beach. Neither of 'em paid him the slightest notice, though the waves was rollin' as far as their ankles when they stepped into the ring.

There was no bell—they just started to fight! Kid Roberts held out his glove to shake as they came to the center of the ring, but with a snarl like a animal, Daniels knocked it aside and shot a wicked straight left to the same eye he had cut in the trainin' bout. The stitches promptly opened and the blood came in a stream, puttin' the Kid at a serious disadvantage in the very beginnin', but he just grinned, rocked Daniels with two stiff rights to the head and the battle was on!

I have seen some spectacular box fights in my time—fights which drove hard-boiled fans crazy, that had the crowd as limp and wilted at the finish as the scrappers themselves, fights in which sensation was piled on sensation till the customers was positively hysterical, but I have yet to see one, which, takin' it from all angles, could match this one on that beach for pure

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thrill! Here are two guys, perfectly matched, each around two hundred pounds of Grade-A fightin' machinery and fightin' blood, each a terrific hitter and a good boxer, each with murder in his heart. Sock, bam, biff, crunch! And all the time them angry waves is comin' in—higher and higher. Inside of ten minutes, they're flounderin' around in foamin' salt water swirlin' at their knees, battered, pantin' and bloody, but neither can land a decisive blow and neither will quit! Driven back to higher ground by Mr. Ocean, me, Logan and Ptomaine yells for them to call it off before they get drowned. They don't give us a tumble. A half dozen times both slipped to their knees in a desperate clinch and rolled around in the sand to be buried from sight by a extra big wave which left 'em spittin' water and gaspin' for breath when they stumbled dizzily to their feet, but—still fightin'!

The end come about five minutes after I sent Ptomaine runnin' to the casino for help to go in and tear 'em apart before they got swept out to sea. The water is now comin' above their hips with each inrush of waves. The ring posts has been uprooted and with the ropes tangled around 'em swishin' back and forth in the water to one side. Kid Roberts can only see out of his left eye, which is cut and bleedin', the right bein' closed as tight as a drum. Daniels is a sight which only a hospital interne could appreciate. He would have to be introduced to his own mother, because his face would mean nothin' to her in the shape it was in now!

As the mob from the casino come streamin' over

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the sand dunes with Ptomaine Joe in the lead, a heavy wave swept both Daniels and the Kid off their feet. Their heads come up together, and, pawin' around, they drew themselves erect by usin' each other's body for support. They slowly backed till the water is only slappin' against their knees. Then Daniels braced himself and swung a overhand right which glanced off the Kid's head. Kid Roberts swayed and a recedin' wave throwed him forward. He punched hard as he was fallin' and Daniels staggered back from a straight right to the mouth. The ring posts is floatin' near him and he manages to get hold of one in both his gloves, wrenchin' it loose from the ropes. Crack! It comes down on the Kid's shoulder and the crowd on the beach starts yellin' and wadin' out, me and Ptomaine showin' the way. It was over before we could reach 'em! Kid Roberts ducked under another vicious swing, of the post and hooked Daniels on the button with a short inside right. Daniels staggered, dropped the post and disappeared under the waves!

Kid Roberts looks around dazed, weavin' back and forth on his feet like a drunken man. The gang from the casino mills about him, but he don't seem to see 'em. He's lookin' for Daniels. About twenty yards out in the swells under the moon, a head bobs up. The Kid shoves away the guys which wants to help him in, shakes his head to clear it, takes a deep breath and the next second he's gone, divin' under a wave. When he showed again he's treadin' water, with the limp and unconscious Daniels in his arms.

We got a life boat out to 'em, none too soon, and they

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laid on the bottom of it side by side on the ways in. Daniels opened his eyes and looked at the Kid, but not a word passed between 'em till we beached the boat and helped 'em out. One of Daniels's friends gives him a stiff drink of whiskey out of a silver flask, but Kid Roberts refuses the same, though I told him to go ahead and take it. We all gather 'round 'em, lookin' for handclasps, slaps on the shoulders, each tellin' the other what a great fighter he is. Nothin' of the kind! Daniels flexes his mighty arms and sneers at the fellow which has just rescued him from feedin' the fishes. Kid Roberts, the life saver, scowls back.

"A wave swept me off my feet—not *you!*" says Daniels. "Do you wish to continue?"

"With pleasure!" snarls the Kid.

Before any one half dreams they mean it, both land sizzlin' rights to the head and the amazed crowd scatters. Daniels put a left hook to the jaw and as he rushed to follow it up, the Kid shot a hard right to the heart and then brought the same glove up under the chin. Daniels fell to his knees, tried to get up, slipped back and lay flat on his stomach. Kid Roberts steps dizzily away.

"Ask him if he's had enough now!" he pants to Ptomaine.

Ptomaine kneels down and turns Daniels over like a sack of meal.

"He's stiff, Kid!" he says, "He——"

But Kid Roberts has slumped down in the sand a yard from Daniels, dead to the world!

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ROUND FIVE

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

LISTEN, if you ever go to dear old Mexico keep away from the famous hacienda of Pancho Nogales on the hoopskirts of Tia Juana. It's a swell-lookin' trap, inside and out, full of everything the most exactin' might ask for, what I mean. Likewise, Pancho will be tickled to see you and you'll get treated the same as a king. In spite of all that, keep away from the joint or you'll run into nothin' but grief!

It was whilst Kid Roberts was trainin' to fight Bob Young at Tia Juana that we had the bad luck to run across Mr. Pancho Nogales, and what that mackerel done to us was plenty! Kid Roberts had been matched to fight Young at Syracuse, but I wouldn't let him go against no killer like Young till the wound he got from bein' butted by that Daniels tamale had thoroughly healed. In the meanwhile Mr. Young hauls off and cops the heavyweight title by knockin' Jim Oliver for a loop. With the aid of the newspapers we called Young's attention to his postponed quarrel with us, and after the usual weeks of bickerin' over this and that he agreed to box us twenty-five rounds or less for the good of the sport and $150,000.

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The articles called for both men to finish their trainin' on the battle ground and we got our outfit set up in the suburbs of Tia Juana with Ptomaine Joe in charge of the handlers. Bob Young is workin' out at the other end of the slab. Both camps is drawin' big crowds daily and a couple of weeks before the fight Young was only a 6 to 5 favorite over Kid Roberts, in spite of the fact that Bob was champion.

The gils which was promotin' the big fracas had been havin' plenty trouble with the Mexican authorities. I suppose they neglected to sugar the right people or somethin'—anyways, a few days before the mill was due to take place somebody pitched a monkey wrench into the machinery and official sanction was absolutely refused. It looked like everything was goin' to be a terrible bust, but the frantic promoters still had hopes of comin' to terms with the authorities and insisted on the fighters continuin' trainin', as advertised.

Kid Roberts is out doin' road work early one mornin' with me and Ptomaine Joe, when all of a sudden a woman's shriek spears the hot, dusty air It come from the woods which fringed the side of the road and it was just packed with "S. O. S." The three of us stopped dead, looked at each other in amazement, and then tore into the woods, with Kid Roberts in the lead. The scene which met our eyes was so exceedin'ly movie that the first thing I done was to look around for a camera. The first thing Kid Roberts done was to snatch up a big piece of rock and let fly at a ugly-lookin' snake which was menacin' one of the prettiest members of the indispensable sex that ever

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distended a male eye. She was somethin' to think about, and don't think she wasn't, and her bein' scared stiff didn't make her no homelier either. Ptomaine Joe just stood there and stared with his lower jaw restin' on his oversize chest and his eyes a couple of admirin' saucers.

Well, a crack with a stick on Mr. Snake's head ruined him, so that was all settled and we turned our attention to the girl. She was the picture of gratitude and thanked the handsome, smilin' Kid so prettily that both me and Ptomaine wished a couple of more snakes would come along so's *we* could do our stuff too. Then the Kid introduced us to the charmin' maiden and that led up to the important discovery that she was entitled Maida Vane. Now that we had rescued the damsel in distress like first-class heroes, I was anxious to shove off and drag Kid Roberts away from the influence of her hypnotizin' smile, but the Kid was in no more hurry to get under way than a drugged snail.

When Maida coyly remarked that she lived near by, Kid Roberts said it would be a good thought for us to escort her to her domicile in case the dead snake's friends should come lookin' for revenge. Maida flung the Kid a languishin' glance and O. K.'d his suggestion, with the results that the four of us started through the woods—Maida and Kid Roberts leadin' the way. It was a cinch that our girl friend thought the good-lookin', college-bred Kid was the bat's waistcoat and also that the romantic way they met had just about goaled her.

Well, to dwarf a tall story, we fin'ly arrived at a

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clearin' in the woods, and lo and behold! there stands a great big swell-lookin' hacienda, surrounded by high walls and patrolled by a pair of sentries, ragged and armed. Honest to Kansas, these babies was the two toughest-lookin' gorillas I have ever had the pleasure to witness in my life. Ptomaine Joe got pale and let out a gasp.

"For cryin' out loud!" he says. "Look at them mugs! I'd hate to have the pair of 'em choose *me!*"

Just then one of these murderous-lookin' jazzboes heard him, I guess, because he swung around sharply and aimed his gun at us. But when he seen Maida he brought the gun back to his shoulder, saluted, and kept on walkin' his beat without another glance at us. Three deep sighs of relief come from three manly bosoms.

"Well," says Kid Roberts with a grin, "this is indeed an eventful day in an adventurous country. Who lives in that—er—garrison, Miss Vane? I presume you know, since the sentry recognized you."

"That is the residence of Pancho Nogales," says Maida, returnin' his smile.

"Who's he?" asks Ptomaine, wipin' his forehead nervously. "Where does *he* rate a joint like that?"

"The Government furnished it," says Maida with another choice smile. "Is it possible you never heard of Pancho Nogales, the once famous bandit and revolutionist?"

"*I* am somewhat conversant with the career of Pancho Nogales," speaks up Kid Roberts, prob'ly so's she wouldn't think we was *all* a total loss. "And I must confess to a sneaking admiration for the old fellow's

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spectacular exploits. So the government now supports him?"

"Yes," says Maida. "Some years ago the harried authorities made a bargain with the old rascal which included a grant of land and practically every luxury, in return for his laying down arms and disbanding his followers. This beautiful hacienda was part of the transaction."

"I see," says Kid Roberts politely. Then he looks sideways at Maida. "And you?" he asks.

Maida hesitates, but only for a instant. "Pancho's —eh—health has been failing of late," she answers. "I am employed here as a nurse."

"The lucky stiff!" busts out Ptomaine. "If *I* was him, I never *would* get well!"

Maida thanked him with a blush.

"Do you know, I'd be awfully glad to meet Nogales," says the Kid. "Do you think—"

"I'm sure Pancho would be more than delighted to meet the famous Kid Roberts," butts in Maida quickly. "Come, I shall arrange it at once!"

That was the most unfortunate invitation we ever accepted in our lives!

Well, we got by the sentries, which give everybody but Maida hungry looks and fingered their rifles regretfully when we filed into the patio. Then we had to pass inspection before a couple of highly suspicious secretaries, Maida doin' all the explainin', before we're fin'ly ushered into the presence of Pancho Nogales himself.

The bozo which was to play such a important and

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devilish part in our lives durin' the next few days was a short, stocky, dark-complexioned old gent with a grizzled beard and a fierce eye. He distributed a ferocious frown amongst the three of us till Maida introduced Kid Roberts and then it was different! Pancho grinned and shook the Kid's hand heartily, clapped his own hands and a couple of dirty little guys run in, all but buryin' their heads in the ground before Pancho. Some sharp commands in Mexican and they scurried away. He kicked each of 'em soundly as they was leavin' and *I* had to nearly kick Ptomaine Joe's ankle off to stop him from laughin'. Pretty soon the little guys come runnin' back with a jug and glasses.

Kid Roberts politely explained to Pancho that he couldn't touch nothin' more aggressive than water, as he was trainin' for a championship battle in a prize ring and only street fightin' can be well done on booze. I says that went for me too, as I was the Kid's pilot and had to be right or I might send him in there with a knife in his belt and we'd lose on a foul. Pancho looked hurt, but Ptomaine Joe quickly salved his feelin's. He drained his glass at a gulp, made a horrible face, choked, and then smiled from ear to ear. His ear to mine, for instance. Then he reached over and drank my drink and the Kid's. Pancho studied him thoughtfully for a minute and suddenly knocked all the glasses off the table to the floor, at the same time pushin' the jug over to Ptomaine with a invitin' wave of his hand.

"Thanks, Pankie!" says Ptomaine, grabbin' the jug

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with a leer. "This is the real McCoy, and I'm feelin' pretty low. Here's a go!"

Well, durin' the next couple of hours I thought Pancho Nogales about the most interestin' old guy I ever met in my life, I did for a fact. He spoke as good English as you or me, prob'ly better than me, told a mean story, and thoroughly enjoyed one. We was all surprised by the line he had on big sportin' events, till he explained that he had lived a great many years in the United States as a special agent of his government, before he got sick and tired of the wages and throwed a revolution. He'd seen a flock of championship box fights and was a sixty-fourth degree fan. He'd fully intended to have a ringside seat at the comin' fight between Kid Roberts and Bob Young if the local officials hadn't stepped in and gummed things up.

All durin' our talk, various ragged, dirty, and tough-lookin' cholos passed in and out, respectfully salutin' Pancho and givin' us nasty looks. After a while these babies got on my nerves, and I made bold to ask Pancho who they was. Pancho smiles and says they're just a few of his faithful right-hand men which the Government has allowed to serve him in his old age. He called some of 'em over and introduced 'em, tellin' us blood-curdlin' stories about the choice crimes they had committed whilst in his service, and we learned about villains from him!

Pretty soon Pancho got up and says he'll show us over the hacienda. I been in some swell dumps in my time and read about others, but I never seen or heard of nothin' to equal the class, wealth, or magnificence

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of the hacienda of Pancho Nogales! Hot bouillon! That was some bungalow, I'll tell the squint-eyed world! Rare paintin's, tapestries, books, statues, rugs, furniture, antiques or what have you, filled every nook and corner. All me and Ptomaine could do was stand pop-eyed, but Kid Roberts, which knows all about that kind of stuff, praised Pancho for his taste in this and his judgment in that till Pancho was all swelled up like a boil. The last thing we seen was a vault with all the bars in the world across the doors. Pancho made much to do about this, leadin' us there with great caution, and Ptomaine's face brightened. The big fellow smacked his lips, thinkin' he was prob'ly on the brinks of shakin' hands with some first-class champagne or the like. But Pancho dashed his fond hopes by explainin' that the vault contained a fortune in gold which the Government had allowed him to keep as part of the bargain which retired him from the pleasin' and profitable occupation of banditry. Pancho said we'd hear more about that gold later. We did— Leapin' Tuna, I'll say we did!

About this time Maida joined us and we sit down to a wow of a lunch, featured by the repeated regrets of Pancho that the authorities had stopped the championship fight between Kid Roberts and Bob Young, which he'd looked forward to seein' for months. No kiddin', from the way he moaned over it you'd think he was one of the promoters!

But it was after we had pushed back our chairs from the table that Pancho played his ace. Over some wonderful coffee and marvelous cigars, Maida and Kid

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Roberts the only ones not partakin' thereof, Pancho begged us to stay a few days at the hacienda. He's a old man, he says, practically shut off from the world and a educated guy like Kid Roberts comin' down there has been a godsend to him. He wants to talk about books, plays, the European situation, etc., and so forth, all stuff of which, I must say, he had a amazin' knowledge. He promised to send into town and have professional entertainers brought down to amuse us. He swore he'd speak to the right people in Tia Juana, people which was obligated to him for past favors, and the championship fight would be allowed to go on. In fact, he offered us everything but the Pacific Ocean and only stopped when his breath failed him.

Ptomaine Joe takes a long, lingerin' look at Maida, who's Alice-blue eyes is fastened pleadin'ly on Kid Roberts.

"Pankie," says Ptomaine, "what my boy friends is goin' to do I don't know, but what *I'm* goin' to do is park here till Niagara Falls runs backward!"

Pancho beams on this master mind and turns to a servant. "José," he bawls, "one jug for the señor, pronto!"

"Cheese!" says Ptomaine in a awed voice. "He's a mind reader too!"

"You will stay, then, señors?" asks Pancho eagerly.

Kid Roberts looked a question at me, and I shook my head "No!" I liked old Pancho Nogales, but a few days of my boxer stallin' around with the beauteous Maida, the temptation of them rare wines and cigars, the promised festivities and the prospects of Ptomaine

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bein' incessantly pie-eyed on our hands, failed to hit me as the proper caper for a guy tryin' to battle his way up to the heavyweight championship, as the Kid was.

"Thanks very much, Mister Nogales," I says. "But I'm afraid we'll all have to check out. If Kid Roberts ain't back at his trainin' camp by to-night, there'll be a fearful squawk from the promoters and——"

"Oh, bother the old promoters!" butts in Maida, with a tantalizin' smile at the waverin' Kid. "Please stay, Mister Roberts, won't you? I assure you you're being signally honored. General Nogales rarely pleads with a guest to stay—*I* never have before!"

With that Cutey for your lawyer you'd get off with a reprimand for blowin' up the White House!

The Kid turns to me. "Frankly, Joe," he says, "the general's invitation appeals to me. The bout with Bob Young has been practically postponed, and we may as well stay in these delightful surroundings a few days before returning to the United States. It will afford us all a much-needed rest, and I feel it would be extremely discourteous to refuse the general's hospitality."

With that, before I can say a word, he bows to Pancho and Maida. "We accept your invitation with pleasure," he says.

"Hot coffee!" bawls Ptomaine, halfways through his jug, "'at's what I call usin' your head for more than a barber's playground!"

"Gracia, señors, I am delighted!" says Pancho, slappin' his hands together and smilin' strangely.

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"I knew you'd stay," murmurs Maida to Kid Roberts, risin' from the table. "Come, let me show you our sunken gardens."

Kid Roberts squandered most of the day in the pleasant company of the fair Maida, whilst me and Ptomaine stuck around with Pancho at Pancho's urgent request. His system for makin' friends was costly, but perfect. For example, I remarked on a kind of odd and no doubt valuable ring Pancho was wearin', and he immediately gives it to me for a keepsake. Ptomaine raves over a bay mare in the stables, and, with a lordly wave of his hand, Pancho makes said bay mare the property of the open-mouthed Ptomaine. A bronze statuette caught the eye of Kid Roberts, and Pancho forces it on the astonished Kid as a remembrance of his visit. Pancho was *some* host, what?

We file into the big, oak-roofed dinin' room about seven p. m. To our large amazement six guys we haven't saw before is already seated at the table. These babies is no cholos—every one of 'em is dignified, well-dressed, and looks like he knew what it was all about and why. Class stuck out all over 'em. Pancho introduces us to them with great ceremony. But—he don't introduce *them* to *us!* Kid Roberts is no little embarrassed and plenty surprised when Pancho makes not the slightest mention of the gents' names, but the six newcomers seemed to take the kind of odd introduction as a matter of course.

All through the dinner the strange sextette never took their eyes off Pancho, watchin' his every move,

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but they paid absolutely no attention to us. One of the strangers was French, two was German, one a Englishman, one either Spanish or Italian, and the last a American. They talked strictly amongst themselves in low voices and mostly in foreign tongues. Maida appeared to have a healthy respect for them all. It was just the opposite with Pancho. Our aged and eccentric boy friend took no pains to hide the fact that he liked them the same way he liked sulphuric acid, and every now and then he'd look up over his plate to sneer at them, all of which mystified me and the Kid, but didn't bother Ptomaine. That mock-turtle was busy eatin'!

After dinner come another surprise in the shape of a swell entertainment in the patio, showin' that Pancho had kept his word about sendin' into Tia Juana for performers. Dancin' followed hard on the heels of the show. Kid Roberts was whirlin' about with Maida when Pancho suddenly appeared on the scene, whispered to 'em, and they stopped dancin' at once. The Kid frowned, but excused himself and started away with Pancho, signalin' me to follow him. Maida throwed Ptomaine a mischievously invitin' look, and this big stiff bounded over and finished the Kid's dance with her, missin' the conference which followed. That was just as well, as the only conference where Ptomaine would get any attention would be a conference of maniacs.

Pancho took me and the Kid to a room at the end of the hacienda, locked the doors and windows and otherwise throwed mystery around in a lavish way

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with precautions for secrecy. With these preliminaries, he announces that the six guys we met at dinner is his deadly enemies! I'll give you his story like he gives it to us.

It seems that when Pancho Nogales was in power in Sonora durin' his revolutionary days, these six jobbies, composin' a oil syndicate, had double-crossed him. He thought their word was as good as their bond. It was—but their bond was worthless. Accordin' to Pancho, they got some valuable concessions from him, gypped him out of the jack they was supposed to pay for them, and, not content with that deviltry, they went to work and led him into a trap so's the Government army could capture him. Well, it's a hobby of Pancho's not to let nobody give him a pushin' around like that and get away with it, even if he's no longer a dictator, and for years he's schemed and plotted for revenge. Fin'ly, says Pancho, Lady Luck smiled on him with the results that he got these six scissor-bills together at his hacienda, makin' 'em think he'd decided to let bygones be bygones. How he pulled off that seemin'ly impossible stunt and just how he's goin' to bear down on these birds, Pancho says he will explain fully the next day.

"You are going to *kill* them?" gasps Kid Roberts, in alarm.

"Ah, no, señor," smiles Pancho, rubbin' his hands together, "I have done with killings. I have passed my word to my Government, and I am a gentleman. Had I these dogs in my hands ten years ago—well, a firing squad in the patio and poof—it is done! No,

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señor, my revenge shall smack of the poetic. I shall thrust at their pocketbooks, where it will hurt most!"

Pancho was a peach of a talker—a hypnotist with language, what I mean! In no time at all he had me and the Kid all built up and ready to run them six yeggs ragged. When at last he pleaded with us to help him get even, swearin' he'd ask us to do nothin' illegal or dishonorable, we both unhesitatin'ly shook his hand and promised to be in his corner whenever he started. Down in that country the motto is "Mañana!" i. e., never do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow, so when we asked Pancho his plans he simply smiled and says we'll hear the whole works in the mornin'.

Well, me and Kid Roberts went back to the dance after hearin' Pancho's tale, and, of course, we now regarded the six strangers as villains of the first water. As we entered the patio, the American amongst Pancho's enemies stopped us. We give him a icy cold look. He'd saw us leave the place with Pancho and I suppose he figured Pancho had tipped us off about him and his gang.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," says the stranger, "but I want to tell you about our relation to Pancho Nogales. He—"

"That will do!" interrupts Kid Roberts sternly. "Pancho Nogales is your host, I believe, and, as a guest, I do not care to listen to any criticism of him while enjoying his hospitality!"

"Besides," I sneered, "we know all about it!"

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The stranger gives us a queer look. Then he bows. "Very well," he says. "If you know all about it, there is nothing further to be said. Good-night, gentlemen!"

If we had only listened to that guy!...

Pancho kept out of our sight all the next mornin'—in fact, he didn't even show up for lunch. About the middle of the afternoon me and the Kid is strollin' up and down the patio for exercise, when the Kid lets forth a strangled gasp and buries his finger nails in my shoulder. No wonder. Approachin' us, arm in arm, is Pancho Nogales and Bob Young, the heavyweight champion!

Recoverin' from the first shock of this astonishin' discovery, me and the Kid slipped round a corner and watched 'em. They seemed to be arguin' about somethin'—Young shakin' his head doubtfully and Pancho wavin' his arms with that appealin' look on his face which was there when he talked to us. Knowin' what a high-class pleader Pancho was when he got well under way, I was satisfied that Young would do whatever this egg wanted. I immediately figured there was some kind of a plot in the air to injure Kid Roberts, and the dumfounded Kid did'nt know what to figure! We ducked around to the house, found Maida and sent her scurryin' for Pancho. In a few minutes the ex-dictator strolls up, smilin' pleasantly and rubbin' his hands together like a well-pleased pawnbroker. Kid Roberts went right to the point and demanded a explanation of the heavyweight champion's presence at the hacienda where he was also a guest.

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"Ah!" says Pancho, still smilin', "that is how I will have revenge on those six devils who ruin me!"

Then whilst me and the Kid listen in open-mouthed amazement, Pancho tells us that he lured his six enemies to the hacienda with the promise that they would see Kid Roberts and Bob Young fight there for the heavyweight championship of the world! They had traveled thousands of miles to reach Tia Juana for the big battle, and when it was apparently called off there they eagerly accepted his invitation.

"I must confess that I don't see the point of all this," says Kid Roberts. "As I understand the situation, you have used Bob Young and myself as decoys to bring your enemies here. Well, what is next on your interesting program, and in what way do you think *we* could help you settle accounts?"

"You and Señor Young will fight for me!" says Pancho promptly.

"You mean thrash those men? Absurd!" says the Kid. "I told you I would do nothing that was—"

"A moment, señor!" butts in Pancho. "You misunderstand. It would indeed be absurd. as you say, for you and Señor Young to attack those scoundrels. You will fight each other!"

Me and Kid Roberts just stares at him, thunderstruck.

"What—*here?*" exclaims Kid Roberts. "You—why, you're joking!"

"I never jest, Señor Roberts!" says Pancho earnestly. "I have wagered those six devils half a million

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dollars that you will defeat Señor Young. Does that sound like a joke?"

"But, see here!" says the Kid excitedly, "you can't do a thing like this, you know. I—we—"

"You pledged me your word of honor that you would help me!" Pancho reminds him. "I am asking nothing dishonorable. I will pay both you and Señor Young handsomely for your services. I have a ring, gloves, and the other impedimenta at hand. I have planned this coup carefully for weeks. You, Señor Roberts, most opportunely appeared. Señor Young was brought here upon the pretence that he was to dine with high Government officials, with a view to straightening out the difficulty of holding the fight at Tia Juana. So you see—"

"Suppose I hadn't appeared and Young had refused to come?" butts in the Kid, half laughin'.

"Señor Roberts!" says Pancho pleasantly, "there are many who are still faithful to Pancho Nogales. I would have had both of you kidnapped. It is a thing I have been known to do well!"

"But how will my fighting Bob Young in any way affect your enemies?" persists the Kid.

"They will lose a half million dollars when you win!" hisses Pancho.

"I may lose," suggests Kid Roberts.

"The moon may be made of cheese, señor," answers Pancho, with a wink and a curl of his lip.

Somewhat to my alarm, Kid Roberts appears to be considerin' the thing seriously. He turns to me with knitted brow.

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"Well, what do *you* think of all this, Joe?" he asks.

"The whole business sounds crazy!" I says, findin' my voice at last, "Why, if—"

"I will pay Señor Roberts fifty thousand dollars!" Pancho cuts me off. "There is nothing crazy about fifty thousand dollars. To Señor Young, the champion, I give one hundred thousand dollars!"

"Yes, and you'll give *us* a hundred grand too, Pancho, or we won't turn a wheel!" I says, hopin' that would wind matters up.

"It shall be as you wish, señor," returned Pancho smoothly, with a low bow, "You shall have one hundred thousand dollars, and I shall have revenge. You will be ready, then, to-night?"

"You're dizzy!" I almost shouted, before Kid Roberts could answer. "I should say we *won't* be ready to-night! I don't even know if we'll do it at all. Anyways, we got to have time to think this cuckoo idea of yours over. There's a whole lot of things to be taken up and—"

"Then let us take up those things now!" Pancho butts in. "Further delay would be fatal to my plans—already those six fiends grow impatient, perhaps suspicious. Both Señor Roberts and Señor Young are trained to the minute and expected to fight at Tia Juana within a few days. Señor Young brings definite word that the bout has now been positively forbidden by the authorities. Then what is the objection to holding the contest here? As you say in your country: 'Eventually, why not now?' If not, you will go back to the United States empty-handed and out of pocket

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your training expenses. On the other hand, if you fight here to-night you will be well paid. Señor Young has accepted my offer. *You* have promised on the word of an American gentleman to assist me in bringing those six villains to book. I await your answer with confidence, señors!"

Ain't we got fun?

Well, as Kid Roberts told me afterward, Pancho's deadly seriousness, the novelty of his proposition and his cool nerve in making it, appealed to his sense of humor. The Kid had disliked the six strangers at first sight and the fact that they held him so cheap against Young that they was willin' to bet half a million he would lose aroused in him a strong desire to see them taken. But the winnin' argument was that hundred thousand Pancho was goin' to give us. Pancho's hundred thousand grand was important money to Kid Roberts. It meant a swift exit from the ring, a healthy stake to start a new trick with, and the return of the beautiful Dolores.

That's the way Pancho's stunt sized up to Kid Roberts, and in spite of my frenzied protests he accepted it. *O sole mia!*

The instant the Kid agreed, Pancho Nogales became the busiest guy in the land of Mexico. Trusted messengers was sent scamperin' to the trainin' camps of both Kid Roberts and Bob Young for their handlers. Others rode away to get Young's manager, the official timekeeper, and the referee. Pancho told his messengers that if one word leaked out to the authorities, they knew what to expect. From the way them cholos

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turned pale and shivered, I was double positive that this fracas was goin' to be more secret than Mr. Secret himself!

The first one to arrive on the battle ground was Toledo Eddie Hicks, Bob Young's manager, and he was fit to be tied! The champ's pilot carried on like a maniac, swearin' me and Kid Roberts had framed his visible means of support, and yellin' that he wouldn't let Young go on with the fight if he had to call out the United States army to get him away from the hacienda. Neither Pancho or us even answered him, and fin'ly Bob Young, which since he won the title had been filled with the idea that a manager was a waste of good money, told Toledo Eddie to shut up and go roll his hoop if he didn't like the way things was goin'. Young thought Kid Roberts a set-up and sneerin'ly offered to bet half his end of Pancho's purse that the Kid wouldn't last six rounds. The offer was refused with thanks. Bob Young was a tough boy—he was also champion, and we was takin' no reckless chances with that hundred thousand. It meant too much, get me? Kid Roberts was goin' in there to do his best. He hoped to win. He figured he prob'ly would win, but if he did get knocked off, why, he wasn't goin' to go back home broke. Smart boy, eh? I thought so too till—but wait!

It was exactly 9.20 that night when Kid Roberts and Bob Young climbed through the ropes in the ghostly glare of a score of lanterns Pancho had stretched over the ring. Pancho sat with Maida and his six enemies at the ringside. The ex-bandit was as excited as a Kid

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on Xmas Eve, but the six villains was as calm and collected as that many Supreme Court judges. What struck me funny at the time was that they paid much more attention to watchin' Pancho than they did to watchin' the fighters.

No wonder!

At 9.45 to the dot Harry Haines, which was to have been timekeeper at Tia Juana, pulled the bell, and the panic was on.

By agreement there was no hand-shakin', the men comin' out fightin'. Kid Roberts was nervous and looked worried, but Young was confidence itself. The champ landed the first blow, a light left to the head, and followed that with a terrific right uppercut that missed the Kid's jaw by inches and might of ended the fight had it landed. They clinched, and each was too busy tyin' the other up to get in any punishin' blows. On the word from the referee, they broke, and the Kid put a left and right to the wind which made Young grunt. Roberts then tried to feint Young into uncoverin' his jaw, but the champion laughed at him and hooked a hard right to the body. They was talkin' to each other, but what they was sayin' I don't know. Sorry! Kid Roberts shot two stiff lefts to the face. The Kid was now well warmed up, and a torrid right to the head rocked the champ and removed the smile from his pan. Young at once became all business, and they exchanged lefts and rights in mid ring till you could of heard them Mexicans yellin' in Montenegro, and Pancho much further than that! One of Young's swingin' rights caught the Kid high on the cheek bone

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and raised a big lump. A few seconds later another right to the same place sent him back against the ropes. I bellered for him to clinch, but instead he suddenly straightened up as Young closed in to finish him and shot his left to the champ's jaw. It was a terrible punch, and Young went back on his heels just as the bell rung, sendin' him to his corner a very tired and a very thoughtful scrapper.

Havin' the time of his life, Pancho shook his fist at his six boy friends and yelled encouragement to Kid Roberts in Mexican and English. The six didn't give him a tumble. The Kid was in great shape as he sat on his stool, and required little attention. Over in Young's corner they was just drownin' him with advice.

Evidently sore at the Kid's showin' in the openin' frame, the champ come out in the second with a rush that swept Kid Roberts to the ropes. Young jolted the Kid hard with rights and lefts, but instead of coverin' up and givin' ground, Roberts seemed more than anxious to trade punches, and stopped Young's rally with two hard rights over the heart. A clinch caused the perspirin' referee plenty trouble bustin' up and then Young sent the Mexicans wild by droppin' the Kid to to canvas with a short right hook to the chin. Roberts took "eight" and come up shakin' his head to clear away the cobwebs. He tried to work in close, but Young jabbed him away with a nearly perfect left that soon started the claret in a stream from the Kid's nose. At this point Maida got up and left the ringside, her hands over her eyes. Young drove Roberts around

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the ring with a shower of rights and lefts, fin'ly sendin' him down in a neutral corner. This time the Kid was hurt, but he was up at "nine," swayin' dizzily on his feet. Young carefully measured him with a straight left and sent him sprawlin' again with a clean right swing. The referee had just begun the count when the gong come to the rescue. Three knockdowns in that round. Not so good, but Kid Roberts wasn't out yet!

I had a very sick young man on my hands between the second and third rounds, whilst in Young's corner they were laughin' and jokin'. They figured the fight was in. I told Kid Roberts to stall out the next frame till he got a little stronger, and his answer, through lips puffed and bleedin' from Young's straight left, was that he was goin' to end it in the next frame! Pancho Nogales sat with his head in his hands sayin' nothin', and the six conspirators didn't look no more excited then they had from the start.

The third round of that quarrel was worth walkin' miles on your hands to see! Kid Roberts dashed from his corner and carried the fight to Young. He opened the ball with a sizzlin' left hook that rocked the champion from head to toe and brought a fresh outburst from the highly delighted Pancho. Young steadied himself and hooked his own left to the wind, but was short with a followin' right. Roberts missed a right swing, and then both forgot all they knew about science and slugged away like a couple of stevedores. A straight right connected with Young's jaw, and he dropped to one knee. Pancho went crazy and I wasn't far behind him.

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"Finish him now, Kid!" I roared, and Roberts nodded coolly, waitin' for the groggy champ to rise.

Young was up at "seven," unsteady on his feet, but still willin' to make a fight of it. The Kid missed a left hook through bein' overanxious, and Young fell into a clinch. Roberts fought himself free, but he was tired and winded from the effort and the terrific pace, which was showin' on both men. Roberts drove a right to the wind and a left to the face, takin' a stiff right to the heart in return. This exchange seemed to wake both of 'em up again, and the fun waxed fast and furious. In this rally the Kid used his vicious right uppercut with such good effect that he soon had Young staggerin' all over the ring, plainly in distress. The Kid was wild, however, and missed a half dozen punches that would of made him champion. Toward the end of the round he hung Young over the ropes with a left to the jaw, and the champion slipped to a half sittin' position as the bell rung.

Both Kid Roberts and Young was dead tired in the fourth and content to spar for wind. The champion, hurt and very careful, took no chances, and the Kid, sure he had his man well started on the road to defeat, was satisfied to rest and recover his strength rather than waste it in wild and misplaced blows. About the middle of the round Young managed to send in a hard right to the head that seemed to bother Kid Roberts, but a barrage of rights and lefts to the wind had Young hangin' on for his life at the bell.

The champion's handlers worked like beavers over their man durin' the rest, while all the Kid required

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was a light massage and half a orange jammed in his mouth. He himself stopped the jubilant Ptomaine from wavin' the towel, sayin' it chilled him. Pancho Nogales was screamin' his head off. His six victims might have been watchin' a checker tourney for all the emotion *they* displayed!

Young came out for the fifth round somewhat revived. He opened with two lefts to the face, and Kid Roberts closed in, hammerin'. Young seemed to wilt and hung on. The referee tore them apart, and on the break Roberts landed a left uppercut and a second later almost floored the champion with a right of the same brand.

Young was desperate now. He must of felt he was goin' to get it, and he clinched at every opportunity. Kid Roberts sent a half dozen clean jabs to the champ's face without a return. Young was bankin' everything on landin' one swing. A lucky punch was his only chance, and he knew it!

The Kid continued to shoot left jabs at Young's face, occasionally crossin' his right. With a dyin' flurry the champion staggered the too-eager Kid with a left swing to the neck, and, in attemptin' to follow with a right, Young fell to the floor. Kid Roberts helped him up, and the champ planted a right solidly in the ribs. The Kid rushed and drove Young before him with a volley of rights and lefts to head and body. The champ's defence was feeble, and the ropes against his back brought him up short in his own corner. He swung wildly with both hands, but the Kid had steadied now and blocked cleverly, keepin' the dazed Young off

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balance with a straight left. With fifty-five seconds to go, Kid Roberts planted a left hook under the jaw and the champ tottered. Another left to the chin sent Young to his knees. He arose unsteadily, just in time to beat the count, and both the referee and the Kid called to the champ's handlers to throw in the towel. Instead, Young's seconds bawled for him to clinch, as the bell would save him in about twenty seconds.

The champ was too far gone for advice, however. He grazed the Kid's face with a weak left, and an instant later crashed to the canvas face down from a right to the point of his jaw. The gong clanged just three seconds after the referee had counted Young out, but it was fifteen minutes later before he was able to leave his corner!

Well, while Kid Roberts was shakin' Young's limp glove and tellin' him the old stuff about what a game fighter he was, Pancho Nogales rushed about like a wild man, almost cryin' with joy. The six which had lost half a million on the Kid's victory arose and went into the house, seemin'ly not the least bit disturbed by their hard luck. I left the Kid in the capable hands of Ptomaine and the other handlers and rushed up to Pancho for our hundred thousand bucks. Pancho throwed his arms around me and kissed me on both cheeks.

"Ah, but that was magnificent!" he says. "A contest to thrill the gods. Come—you shall have your reward!"

I followed him down to the room with the heavily barred vault, and after openin' between 65 and 124 locks, he swings wide the door and tells me to dash in

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and help myself to the gold bars. I made one lunge past him and then let out a yell.

The vault was absolutely empty!

Kind of dazed, I turned to Pancho for a explanation, and he's nowheres in sight, but from the end of the hall comes sounds of scufflin'. I'm there as fast as a pair of tremblin' legs can take me, and my eyes pop out till you could of hung your hat on either of 'em when I see Pancho Nogales strugglin' in the grasp of his six enemies. One of them is sayin' soothin'ly:

"Come, Pancho, you have had enough excitement for one day. We shall put you to sleep for a while!"

Just then Maida blows in and walks up to this baby.

"Oh, Dr. Mazelli, shall I prepare a hypo?" she asks him.

I come out of my trance as a horrible suspicion begins to dawn on me!

"Doctor?" I holler. "What the—"

The American among the six whatnots looks at me curiously.

"I tried to explain to you, sir," he says coldly, "but you informed me that you knew all about it. Those were your very words. I naturally thought Mister Roberts and his friend Mister Young were conversant with General Nogales's condition and had put on that interesting boxing exhibition to humor the whim of a once great man. Nogales, of course, is as crazy as a bat—has been for years!"

Sweet Mamma!

"Then you guys ain't no oil syndicate which gypped him?" I managed to gasp.

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The doctor smiles like I was a child or a idiot.

"My friend," he says, "we, the general's personal physicians, have listened to that hallucination of his for months. We are always the six who have ruined him! It grows tiresome, but is quite harmless. I—"

"But the jack—the hundred grand for fightin' Young?" I howled, interruptin' him. "Where do we get *that?*"

"My dear sir," says the doctor, lookin' at me in alarm, "is it possible that you are also mentally deranged?"

"I would advise the gentleman to file a claim with the Government," butts in another of the doctors, "which pays for all the general's reasonable expenditures."

"D'ye think there's any chance of me collectin'?" I asked him wildly.

"About the same day!" murmurs the American doctor thoughtfully.

"What d'ye mean the same day?" I says, crazy with rage.

"The same day the Gulf of Mexico turns into malted milk!" says the doctor, and turns to a grinnin' servant: "Pedro, show the gentleman out!"

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ROUND SIX

BARNABY'S GRUDGE

A FEW thousand years ago Mr. Roscoe Q. Anonymous snatched a lead pencil from a passin' pedestrian and dashed off the followin' applesauce:

A little nonsense now and then
Is relished by the wisest men!

This guy Anonymous has wrote plenty wise cracks and ample stories, but most of his best stuff has only saw the light of day in smokin' rooms and what used to be known as saloons when cracked ice and seltzer had a real mission in life. Now and then one of his snappy little anecdotes about the travelin' salesman or the young honeymooners pops up, but they lack the tang they used to have when served with the old private stock. Or maybe they was just as uncomical then, but we thought them riots after a session with the cup that queers. Anyways, that statement about a occasional dose of nonsense bein' required by the best of us contains more than a few drops of truth. There's a touch of clown in us all, and I bet there's many a digni-

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fied Supreme Court judge who would just love to tear off a few little fancy steps on the way to the bench instead of his usual solemn tread. Sometimes givin' in to this silly streak in our natures acts as a useful safety valve to relieve the strain of our cares and worries. Other times it's exceedin'ly disastrous, like in the case of me, Kid Roberts, and Ptomaine Joe, for the example.

After Kid Roberts stopped Bob Young, the heavyweight champ, at the hacienda of Pancho Nogales, we fled that slab and come to New York, not one thin dime richer for our trouble. The thing's a laugh to me now—it wasn't then! How the so ever there was more grief en route for Kid Roberts. Happiness comes in thimbles, trouble in barrels! When we limped into New York, disgusted and all at sea financially, the first thing which greets the disheartened Kid is a legal invitation to attend a divorce trial staged by the charmin' Dolores. Whilst Kid Roberts is tryin' to see her and talk this little incident over, I commenced right in tendin' to business on the principle that whilst it's tough to lose out in love, it's even tougher to lose out on the coffee and cakes! I made the rounds of the sportin' editors, claimin' the world's heavyweight title for the Kid and tellin' 'em about that weird fracas in Mexico which resulted in the champion bein' knocked off by my athalete.

After I had furnished satisfactory proof to the grinnin' newspaper guys that I was by no means addicted to the habit-formin' drugs, they got in touch with Bob Young and Toledo Eddie Hicks. These couple of

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two-handed liars says I was somethin' to highly interest a young interne in a lunatic asylum, as they never heard tell of no Pancho Nogales in all their upright lives. As for Young bein' flattened by Kid Roberts in Mexico—how do we get that way?

Well, there I was up against a brick wall and without no trowel, what I mean. I hadn't the scantiest bit of evidence on hand to bear out my story of the fight, so the sport writers laughin'ly told me to roll my hoop and positively refused to serve me even a half portion of attention. Fit to be tied, I challenged Young mornin', noon, and night, but this mock turtle asked for so many impossible concessions on our part that it was plain he didn't wish for no more of the Kid's game. Fin'ly, I managed to corner the burglar which handled him in the lobby of his hotel one night, and after listenin' to my pleadin's for a couple or three minutes he offers me a bout with his synthetic champ if we'll personally slip him $150,000, besides what Young can shoplift from the promoters!

I had often heard that Toledo Eddie Hicks once did time for tryin' to steal the city hall at Nightmare, Ala., but I had never put much stock in the tale till he made me that yegg proposition. For a minute I was speechless—a rare thing with me—and then I hauled off and smacked him right in the nose. This kind of treatment seemed to get on Edward's nerves and he hollers that on account of me playin' that prank on him, Kid Roberts will die of old age before he'll ever climb into a ring with his champion. As he dashed wildly for the elevator, holdin' on to his beak like he heard

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somebody was goin' to take it off him, he swears he wouldn't even let Young meet the Kid at checkers, parcheesi, or marbles!

In the meanwhile Kid Roberts is standin' right on the brink of a nervous breakdown, because of the pushin' around he's gettin' on all sides. His wife won't give him a tumble, he's gettin' fearful answers to his appealin' letters to her, and now he's lost a chance at Young's title which would make him independent financially and let him step down from the ring. After watchin' him pacin' the floor at nights for the worst part of a week, duckin' the dinner gong and leapin' in the air like a Russian dancer at the mere openin' of a door, I dragged him off to a medico. The doc looks the boy over, stares at the ceilin', coughs a couple of times, and then orders a complete rest, recommendin' a trap called Hermit Inn, away up in Mrs. Catskill's Mountains. The pulseclocker says this place is so far from civilization that they still got their first postage stamp to see and it's just the place for Kid Roberts to hide out in and get right.

That was jake with me, but the Kid failed to cuddle up to the prescription. Life in the mountains and bein' busy doin' nothin' thrilled him like it thrills a goldfish to see a glass bowl. Furthermore, bein' a ex-champ, he's satisfied he'll be recognized and his vacation made too hard to take by the curious. At this critical point, Ptomaine Joe crashes into the breach with a typical maniacal scheme.

"C'mon, Kid," says Ptomaine, when we get back to our stalls at the hotel, "let's all shove off for them

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mountains. 'At doc was nice enough to put the bee on you for a hundred bucks, so the least we can do in return is to folley out his plans. Besides, I know how we can go up there without nobody findin' out who we really are. I just this minute got the idea!"

"If you can prove you ever had a idea in your life, Silly," I sneers, "I can prove I'm the rightful heir to the Siamese throne!"

"People which lives in tin houses shouldn't throw can openers," says Ptomaine. "I don't think you're no master mind yourself!"

Kid Roberts interferes to stop bloodshed and violence.

"What is your idea that will prevent us from being recognized, Ptomaine?" he smiles. For some unknown reason the Kid gets a great kick out of this dizzy banana.

"Why, we can all go up there disguised as somethin' else!" says Ptomaine. "For the example, you make out you're a—a—well, a pote; Joe Murphy can claim he writes, now, plays; and I'll be a artist, get me? There's three things as different from what we are as boardin'-house hash is different from food! We can all act up to these disguises and nobody will get hep 'at we even *seen* a box fight, let alone *been* in one. Ain't 'at a rip of a plant?"

Ptomaine has stopped so many right swings with his bullet head that it's made him a little goofy. He don't know what it's all about, what I mean.

"Get back in line, Stupid!" I says. "Where d'ye get that disguise stuff? So you'll pretend you're a

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artist, hey? Don't make me laugh! Go up there and tell 'em you're a professional idiot and they'll all believe you without question!"

Then I throwed the phone book at this clown, but unfortunately it missed him. In the ring, anybody can hit him with anything.

Kid Roberts laughs his head off for a minute, and then he looks at Ptomaine very thoughtful. "Ptomaine," he says, "your scheme is just crazy enough to attract me in the mood I'm in now. As Joe would say, I'm pretty low and anything that promises even momentary diversion—that will allow me to get my mind off myself and my worries—appeals to me. We shall go up to the Catskills in exactly the manner you suggest!"

And that's just what we done.

We was positively somethin' for the comic supplement when we checked into Hermit Inn a brace of days later. Should you of saw us you'd of laughed yourself into the hystericals, no foolin'! Kid Roberts, the "poet," packs a suit case full of limericks by bozos entitled Shelley, Keats, Burns, Browning, Kipling, and whatnot. He features a flowin' black tie, long hair, and tortoise-shell cheaters, and he acts so timid and shy that a rabbit would of reared up and smacked him in the pan, just to be nasty. Me and Ptomaine, "playwright" and "artist," is likewise dressed like a couple of cake eaters and we're all set to do some actin' which would of made Edwin Booth cut his throat!

We register as Launcelot Eversley (Kid Roberts),

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Percy Begay (me), and Chauncey Love (Ptomaine Joe). Laugh that off!

Well, speakin' of anchovies, at first peep Hermit Inn seemed to be the last word in what Kid Roberts called "isolation." Outside of the bewhiskered old gil which run the joint and a set of bell hops which looked like they was playin' hooky from a movie comedy, the place was as deserted as the top of Mt. Everest. We got a nice suite, the eats wasn't hard to take, the crisp mountain air put us all in the caperin' stage, and Kid Roberts was tickled silly with the whole layout. In fact, we was seriously considerin' castin' off our disguises and bein' ourselves as long as there was nobody around to kid, when—clunk! The amusement commenced!

We're sittin' at ease in the lonesome lobby one mornin' talkin' about this and speakin' about that, when a stagecoach dashes up to the inn. We had no fault to find with that part of it, but when a loudly chatterin' mob of people poured out of the coach and bounded into our 'boardin' house it was different! Old Father Time, our jovial host, and the trick attendants rushes out and fusses all over 'em. Caught in the jam, we're introduced to the noisy newcomers by them phony labels we registered under and they're introduced to us as a championship college football team, a flock of male and female students and their lovin' parents.

Well, we tried to duck, but it was like tryin' to duck your landlord. The handsome Kid's get-away was blocked by a flirtin'ly inclined young flapper which could of blocked most of Napoleon's plans, as he would

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of immediately made others once he seen her. Her name was Eva Littleton, she was about five foot two of thrill, and what she fin'ly done to Kid Roberts, the "poet," was plenty!

That same afternoon the crew of Hermit Inn and most of the newly arrived guests got busy and cleared out the biggest room in the place, waxin' the floor and decoratin' the walls with the colors of their kindergarten, which I think was blue, red, purple, green, brown, and black, with a dash of yellow. They broke out a dance that night after dinner and the fun waxed fast and furious. The beauteous Eva gave Kid Roberts no chance to escape and they killed the bulk of the evenin' together, discussin' the newest and oldest poetry when not glidin' around the floor, with little Eva lookin' up into the Kid's eyes like he was Uncle Tom.

A couple of tasty cuteys sees me and Ptomaine givin' lifelike imitations of wallflowers and they make up their sweet little minds to entertain us. Bein' much and contentedly wed to a damsel which would of kept Gulliver's mind off his travels, I would just as soon of bowed out, but Ptomaine greets the ladies with open delight. This big mug is crazier over the girlies than Henry the Eighth was!

We trip a small dance with the girls and then walk out on the pazzaza to talk matters over.

"Of course you will think me stupid," says the home breaker I'm with, "but I can't seem to recall what plays you have written, Mister Begay. Won't you refresh my memory?"

"Absolutely!" I says, without crackin' a grin. "I

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dashed off 'Lightnin',' 'Forty-Five Minutes from Broadway,' 'The Bat,' 'Zaza,' 'Camille,' 'Ben Hur,' 'The Follies,' and 'Ten Nights in a Barroom.' Then I likewise had a finger in composin' 'The College Widow,' 'Brown of—'"

"Why—why, Mister Begay!" interrupts my delightful adversary, "those plays were written by Frank Bacon, George M. Cohan, George Ade, Dumas, and—let's see—Mary Roberts Rinehart, and—"

"Aha!" I butt in with a wink, "that's what *you* think. Them's just the nicknames I use so's to hide my real name if my show's a flop, get me? A man in my position has got to be careful, what I mean. One failure would just about break my heart!"

She gives me a odd look.

"Have you ever used William Shakespeare as a non de plume, Mister Begay?" she asks me.

"Well, you're certainly the smartest girl I ever met in my life!" I says, admirin'ly. "I never thought *nobody* would find *that* out! Did you guess it, or was you tipped off?"

"I knew by your conversation," she says, with a innocent smile. "The plays signed William Shakespeare are in blank verse, as you of course know, and you're blank too, aren't you?"

"Pick up the marbles," I says. "You win!"

Ptomaine, the "artist," was the next witness.

"Are you at home in oils, Mister Love?" inquires his fair tête-à-tête.

"Where d'ye get that stuff?" says Ptomaine politely. "I'm a artist, not a sardine!"

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The Jane with me giggles, but the other one looks a bit embarrassed. She tries to get the conversation headed right.

"Don't you think, Mister Love, that Raphael was a far more vivid colorist than Rubens?" she says.

"Eh—well, 'at's what you call a matter of taste," says Ptomaine gamely. He don't know whether them guys was painters or plumbers! "Personally, I prefer Bud Fisher, or the guy which draws Barney Google."

This time his pretty opponent seems a bit steamed. She prob'ly thought she was bein' gave a run around, but Ptomaine was really doin' his best.

"Just what do *you* paint, Mister Love?" she asks.

"Me?" says Ptomaine, grinnin' like a hyena. "Oh, practically anything! Barns! signs, flagpoles, houses, automobiles, boats, trolley cars, chiffoniers—well, to be frankly with you, kid, they's no holdin' me once I get my hands on a paint pot and brush!"

At that minute a couple of these milk-fed college boys comes over and accuses the girls of havin' dancin' appointments with 'em. The young women couldn't get up quick enough.

Leavin' the cotillon-leadin' Ptomaine to search for fresh victims, I raced around hithers and yon, fin'ly windin' up in the midst of the football players. The very first morsel of conversation I caught glued me to the spot. What they're all enthusiastically talkin' about is the fact that Kid Roberts is daily expected to arrive at Hermit Inn!

At first I was afraid we'd all been recognized, but I

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fin'ly decided we hadn't when none of the brawny gridiron warriors give me a tumble. Then I remembered that I'd made the original reservations for us at Hermit Inn under our *real* names and had forgot to explain matters when we registered as poet, playwright, and artist. The ancient jazzbo which operated the resort had most doubtless told the students that the famous ex-champion was comin' to park at his deadfall and the college boys is all excited about the thing. I tried to horn in amongst 'em and get pally, but they immediately put on the ice for me. They was so sore at the supposed "poet" for capturin' Eva Littleton that the three of us was about as popular as gallopin' consumption.

One bird in particular kept glowerin' at the Kid and Eva and mutterin' under his breath in a way which soon got me plenty leary. This boloney was nothin' else than Jim Barnaby, captain and fullback of the football addicts. He was a whale of a man, there was no question about that—somethin' over six foot with his hair brushed back, high cheek-boned, thick-necked, and with shoulders on him like a bull. Oh, this entry was a tough baby, and when I heard that he was Eva's heavy boy friend and knew he hadn't recognized Kid Roberts, I seen nothin' ahead for us that was pleasant!

Well, durin' the next few days Eva Littleton didn't give the Kid a minute's peace. From the way she clung to the boy her name could of been Ivy instead of Eva! Kid Roberts would stroll about with these books of pomes under his arm, duckin' behind trees

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SCENE FROM "GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS."

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when he seen her, but she was a world beater at hide-an-go-seek and always managed to nail him. When Eva asked him what he thought about Kid Roberts, "a common prize fighter," comin' to the inn, the Kid merely smiled and says he ain't enthused, as he dislikes boxin' exceedin'ly much. This made a big hit with Eva, which seemed to look on leather pushers like she'd look on lepers. How the so ever, the college boys, not knowin' the reason for the "poet's" lack of interest in Kid Roberts's arrival, begin openly sneerin' at the alleged rimester and speakin' of him—one of the greatest scrappers which ever laced on a glove—as a mollycoddle. What a scream *that* was, hey? Jim Barnaby was nastier than the rest of 'em, behind the "poet's" back. That a apparent weak sister had accumulated his girl got the husky football star positively red-headed!

One mornin' after breakfast Kid Roberts and Ptomaine is playin' pinochle in the room and I'm readin' the paper—my favorite book—when a flock of wild cheers disturbs my well-shaped ears. I look out the window and right at the entrance to the inn is a tall, broad-shouldered stranger surrounded by the college girls and boys. The handsome city chap is grinnin' and doffin' his cap to a reception which would of wrung a smile from Cæsar, which they tell me was ravenous when it come to applause.

Well, I thought to myself that medico certainly put over a fast one on us when he sent us up to this hotel, sayin' it would be as empty as a political pledge. As a matter of fact, it was turnin' out to be

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busier than Forty-second and Broadway at 8 p. m. First a football team and their confederates arrive, then along comes this new sensation which is now downstairs bein' welcomed to death. If Hermit Inn was quiet, then so's a steam drill!

Anyways, as it's a hobby of mine to be curious, I went down and interviewed one of the jolly students.

"What's this guy's racket?" I asks, noddin' to the flurry-creatin' newcomer.

The young man stops hollering "Hurray!" long enough to gaze at me in simple amazement.

"D'ye mean to say you don't know who he is?" he asks me, like how I can be so ignorant and live.

"I can get affidavits to that effect," I says promptly.

"Well," says Mr. Student, "that's Kid Roberts!"

Hot towel!

I stare at the boy closely, but he don't seem to be clownin'—he means what he says, that's a cinch.

"Listen," I says. "What gives you the maniacal idea that this tomato is Kid Roberts? Did he claim he was the Kid?"

"Well—yes and no," says the college boy. "When he arrived, one of the fellows greeted him as Kid Roberts and he acknowledged the salutation—after a momentary embarrassment."

"I can easy understand the momentary embarrassment!" I says, curlin' my lip.

"So can I," says my young friend. "He probably hoped to pass unrecognized here, and our discovery of his identity annoyed him."

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"He's goin' to be annoyed some more, young-fellow-me-lad!" I says heartily. "And if you don't think so you're crazy!"

Leavin' the youth to gaze after me in puzzlement, I rushed upstairs and bust in on Kid Roberts and Ptomaine with the spectacular information that below decks we have a gent which is passin' himself off as the Kid. That ruined the pinochle game and Ptomaine says he'll go right down and slap the gay masquerader for a gondola. This procedure seemed to me to be about right, after which we could expose this baby to his new-found admirers. But Kid Roberts, which don't seem able to stop laughin', interferes with our plans. The strange situation appeared to vastly entertain the Kid and he says to leave the impostor alone for the time bein' and we'll get a lot of laughs out of watchin' his capers in tryin' to carry off the part of a ex-heavyweight champion.

There was a lot of laughs, all right, only *we* didn't get 'em!

When me, the Kid, and Ptomaine went down to lunch, this guy which is pretendin' to be Kid Roberts is carryin' on smartly—a island of self-satisfaction entirely surrounded by a sea of worshipin' faces. He's throwin' out a good-sized chest and puttin' on dog like a Ethiopian field hand with a new pair of yellow shoes. It made me and Ptomaine boil, but all it made Kid Roberts do was smile. As we try to shove past the millin' mob in the lobby, Mr. Liar is tellin' the boys and girls all about his "ring battles" with a gusto and makin' 'em like it! He's danc-

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in' around, throwin' rights and left at the air, whilst the crowd watches in awe.

Both me and Kid Roberts had to hold Ptomaine which immediately had violent designs on this fellow's health. Some of the college boys sees us and we're pushed in and introduced to "Kid Roberts," and it certainly must of been a peculiar sensation for the Kid to be made acquainted with a jobbie which was posin' as himself!

This big sapolio sneers when Jim Barnaby scornfully tells him we're poet, playwright, and artist. I thought, or rather *hoped,* he was goin' to choose one of us.

"The idea of a guy as big as you writin' poultry!" he grunts to Kid Roberts. "I suppose you do embroidery too, don't you?"

The college kiddies laughs and Ptomaine's neck muscles begin to swell, but Kid Roberts just smiles pleasantly.

"I *have* been proficient at lacing!" he says.

I'll say he was. He's laced 'em all!

Well, bein' convinced that this parsnip had no idea just who we really was, the three of us commenced to ask him questions about his alleged box fights, and it was a scream to watch his frantic attempts to keep from bein' trapped. The lunch gong was all that saved him!

For the next two or three days the atmosphere around Hermit Inn was the same as the atmosphere used to be in a front-line trench before the lieutenant looked at his wrist watch, tightened his tin hat, and

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said: "Well, let's go!" There was a highly nervous tension in the air, what I mean. This large blah which claimed to be Kid Roberts was lookin' the eye-fillin' Eva Littleton over with speculative eyes, Jim Barnaby was plainly double cuckoo over her, Ptomaine was tryin' to promote himself with great unsuccess as usual, whilst Eva was devotin' all her time and attention to the noncommittal Kid. It was certain with that layout that somethin' was goin' to break and, bein' certain, it did!

One day Kid Roberts is out strollin' in the woods around the inn with his pomes and Eva, when Ptomaine busts into my room as excited as a candidate at the ticker on election night. He demands to know where the Kid is, and when I tell him he grabs hold of my arm and insists that we go right after him.

"How come?" I says. "Kid Roberts is safe enough with Eva and if she *should* get fresh, why, he's a boy which can take care of himself anywheres."

"I ain't worryin' about *Eva,*" says Ptomaine. "Though she sure is a snappy number and I only wish she'd give *me* a play. It's them football guys which has got me upset. There's goin' to be dirty work at the crossroads, there is for a fact. Them rah-rah boys is framin' to put Kid Roberts over the jumps!"

"Which one of your spies reported that?" I asks, slightly interested. "Or have you been toyin' with that Long Island Scotch again?"

"Listen!" says Ptomaine. "I drop a dime through a crack in the porch and you *know* I ain't goin' to grin and bear 'at, so I'm down under the boards look-

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in' for it, get me? Well, a bunch of them football fiends comes out on the porch with this egg which is tellin' everybody he's Kid Roberts. They're right over me and I couldn't miss a word they're sayin' if listenin' called for a twenty-year rap at hard labor. This Jim Barnaby, which is overboard over Eva, is there and he's doped out a scheme to force the Kid to leave here in disgrace. They're goin' to pull it to-day and *we* got to stop 'em!"

"Stop 'em from what?" I says. "Did you find out what they figured on doin' to the Kid?"

Ptomaine looks sheepish. "To tell you the truth," he says, "just as they got to 'at part of it I thought I seen 'at dime I lost and of course—eh—well, my, now, interest kind of—"

"C'mon, you big dumb-bell!" I says, grabbin' my hat. "And if this turns out to be a false alarm I'll cook you. I'm gettin' sick and tired of lookin', at that funny pan of yours, anyways!"

"If I want to look homely, 'at's *my* business!" says Ptomaine indignantly. "As far as 'at goes, I ain't never seen nobody mistake *you* for no Follies beauty!"

Further discussion along these highly interestin' lines is interrupted by a frantic knockin' at the door. Ptomaine flung it open, and then steps back with a gasp of surprise. No wonder! There stands Eva Littleton, out of breath, weepin', and wringin' her hands.

"Oh you must come with me at once!" she pants out. "Your friend the poet—Mister Eversley—has been kidnapped!"

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"What did I just tell you?" says Ptomaine to me triumphantly. "I knew them guys would—"

"Shut up!" I cut him off harshly, and turn to Eva: "Tell me all about this and make it snappy!" I commands. "When did this happen?"

"Not ten minutes ago," says Eva tearfully. "We —Mister Eversley and me—were walking in the forest near the inn, when without warning a dozen or more men suddenly sprang out from behind the trees and attacked him. He had no chance at all to fight them off—there were too many for him, and he had been taken by surprise. They didn't harm *me*—in fact, they paid no attention to me at all—and when they overpowered poor Mister Eversley and carried him off I rushed right back here to tell you!"

"You done right!" I says, pattin' her back. Then I reached in the bureau drawer and took out my gat. It's a army .45 automatic, and you could blow up Boston with it!

"Who *was* these kidnappers, d'ye know?" I ask Eva, who shudders and covers her pretty face with her little white hands when she sees the gun.

"They were masked," she tells me. "But I—I think I recognized some of them."

"I think you did too!" growls Ptomaine, tightenin' up his belt and flexin' his mighty arms. "But don't let 'em worry you. When we get done with them guys their own lovin' parents won't be able to recognize 'em!"

"C'mon, let's go!" I says. "And all *you* got to do, Miss Littleton, is tell us exactly where this abduction

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took place. There's no need of you comin' along with us, because when we meet up with them boloneys it will be no place for a lady!"

"Oh!" she says, kind of frightened. "What are you going to do with that horrible looking revolver?"

"They tell me these woods is full of lions and tigers," I grins. "And I want to be able to cope with 'em."

Well, me and Ptomaine dashed madly out to the spot in the woods where Eva told us Kid Roberts had turned into Kid Napped. Outside of the chirpin' of some irresponsible birds and the swishin' of the wind in the trees, you couldn't hear a sound and I don't care how big your ears are. I took out my gun, seen it was ready to co-operate with me, and Ptomaine reached up and pulled off a limb of a handy tree for a club. We're all set to ruin them college guys, when —Gazunk! A couple of 200-pound huskies dives at my legs from behind and two more treats Ptomaine to a football tackle too! My cannon and Ptomaine's shillalah is wrenched from our hands by more reinforcements which comes up on the run, and the next thing we know that entire football team is usin' us as divans.

What a fine couple of rescuers *we* turned out to be!"

After sittin' on us to their hearts' content and payin' exactly no attention to my frantic squawks and Ptomaine's cruel and unusual oaths, the genial university inmates bind our arms behind us and orders us to march on ahead of 'em. Havin' little or no

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choice, we done like we was told till we come to a clearin' in the woods, and there a sight met our eyes which caused Ptomaine to let out a wild beller, and lowerin' his head, he butted the two cut-ups nearest him flat on their backs. With great presence of mind, I kicked the ones next to me right in the shins and their surprised howls was sweet music to my ears. The next minute them young fiends ties up our legs and rolls us to one side of the way.

What caused us to run amuck was Kid Roberts, blindfolded, gagged, and bound to a tree! He was likewise drippin' wet, and a pond nearby furnished the answer to that! Whilst me and Ptomaine rolls around helplessly on the ground, bustin' with rage but unable to do anything, the pleasin' subject of tarrin' and featherin' Kid Roberts is discussed by the students and fin'ly voted down. Had they ever done *that,* we would of bumped each and everyone of them babies off if we had to chase 'em all over the world!

From chance remarks I managed to pick up, I found out that this gang of half wits had presented Kid Roberts with what they call a "hazin'" in dear old college. Apparently, their antics had been more humiliatin' than injurious to anything but the Kid's temper. If you think it strange that they was able to manhandle a ex-heavyweight champ, don't forget they all scaled around two-hundred pounds, was built in proportion, in football condition, had took the Kid by surprise and was about twenty against one! Dempsey would of had to bow to *that* type of a mob!

After these educated ruffians had amused them-

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selves some more at the expense of Kid Roberts, they untied him from the tree, took off the gag and blindfold and led him to the middle of the clearin', still with his arms bound. I squirmed around on the ground to get a look at him, and, boys and girls, there was hot-blooded murder in each of his blazin', steel-gray eyes! Just to say he was burnt up would be a niggardly use of the descriptive. He was fit to enter a bitin' contest with a bear, no kiddin'!

In the clearing they'd rigged up a kind of ring with some of the manila left over from the tyin'-up party, and in it stood this fake Kid Roberts pullin' on a pair o' mitts.

Jim Barnaby looks the real Kid up and down and laughs sneerin'ly, tosses him a pair of gloves, and tells the supposed "poet" that as a climax to the day's sport he's got to fight the world-famous Kid Roberts or sign a confession that he's yellow which they'll show to Eva Littleton. On this cue the mock orange which has been masqueradin' as Kid Roberts steps forward, folds his arms on his chest, and glares at the Kid. I noticed, how the so ever, that this counterfeit seemed a bit nervous as he took in Kid Robert's mighty muscles and the look of the killer in his eyes.

Barnaby points out in the most insultin' language he could think of that the "poet" is every bit as big and burly as "Kid Roberts" and that nothin' in the world should prevent him from takin' a chance, unless he's willin' to admit that he's faint-hearted. One of these college boys told me later that they hadn't the slightest intention of allowin' such a scrap to take

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place, as they didn't want the "poet" killed. They figured he'd get right down on his knees and plead to be let go, bein' only too glad to flee from Hermit Inn immediately. They was in no way prepared for the stunnin' shock of what happened within the next few minutes, I'll tell the cross-eyed world that!

Ptomaine bellered to be allowed to fight this so-called "Kid Roberts" or any two of the football team, but nobody give him service. The real Kid Roberts was insane with anger at his kidnappin' and hazin' and he was also smokin' hot over his blank cartridge tradin' on his name and reputation at Hermit Inn. He pulled on the gloves and reached the guy claimin' his name in one leap. A swift feint with his lightnin' left, almost too fast for the eye to follow, then—sock! The right which once won him a world's championship crosses to the button and this impostor went down as if shot through the head. He couldn't of got up if he'd of been called to the presidency!

Whilst the dumfounded football players is gazin' in absolute amazement at the mighty "Kid Roberts" flattened by a single punch from the despised "poet," the ragin' Kid whirls around on 'em and invites the entire team to give him a battle, one at a time or all at once, he don't give a whoop which!

With one accord, the gang looks expectantly at big Jim Barnaby, just as Eva Littleton arrives on the scene to stare wide-eyed at the picture which met her frightened gaze. The alleged "Kid Roberts" prostrate on the ground as cold as a loan shark's heart, me and Ptomaine almost beside him and tied hand

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and foot to boot, her beloved "poet" wilder than his flowin' locks and rarin' to go as he glares homicide at the gay collegians, and Jim Barnaby's bein' pushed forward to do his stuff. Eva's a smart girl and she knows what's goin' to happen.

"Oh, they're going to fight!" she wails, turnin' to the others. "Won't somebody stop them?"

The football players looks uneasily away from her, but there was no answer. Eva was on a busy wire just then! Jim Barnaby glances at her and then at Kid Roberts. He smiles—a confident, sneerin' grin. His pals unloose the gloves from the prostrate mock orange, lace 'em on Barnaby, who's pulled off his sweater and is ready for business.

Without a instant's hesitation, Kid Roberts shot a hard left flush to the chin and Mr. Barnaby went down on his haunches. As his astonished friends gasped a surprised "Oh!" Eva hid behind a tree. His face a mass of amazement, Barnaby rose almost on the bounce and clinched, showin' by that and a few other things which come up later that the art of boxin' was no hidden mystery to *him!* Plenty heavier and younger than the Kid, in wonderful condition from his football trainin' and as stout-hearted as I've seen 'em, James was far from a set-up, as he soon proved.

On the break, Kid Roberts, mad and therefore wild, missed a right hook, and Barnaby promptly stepped in with a sizzlin' uppercut which drove the Kid's head back like it was hinged to his neck. The college guys howled, "How d'ye like him, Mister Poet?" and danced

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around with glee. From the ground I yelled to Kid Roberts to make Barnaby lead to him and then beat him to the punch.

Barnaby tried another uppercut, but it fell short as the Kid danced lightly away. They went into another clinch, durin' which Barnaby tried to use his heavier build to wrestle Kid Roberts to the ground. Some short, stiff chops to the wind, how the so ever, drove that idea out of Jamesy's head, and a terrible right to the heart made him break ground, open-mouthed and gaspin'.

"Let him fall, Kid!" roars Ptomaine, but Barnaby's back was innocent of yellow, I'll say *that* for him. He side-stepped a left and again uppercut hard with his right, bringin' Kid Roberts up on his toes and startin' the gore flowin' from the ex-champion's nose and mouth. At this stage, either through carelessness or luck, the Kid actually seemed to be a mark for Barnaby's right uppercut and the football star's team mates was crazy with joy.

After steppin' around each other carefully for a full minute, Kid Roberts woke up and jabbed Barnaby four times to the mouth without a return and then cut the collegian's eye with a straight right. A overhand left to the same spot closed the optic tight, and the maddened Barnaby rushed, only to be met with a storm of rights and lefts to the stomach that dropped him to his knees for the second knockdown.

Kid Roberts was cool now and timin' his blows carefully, whilst Barnaby, hurt and enraged by his inability to stop this remarkable "poet," had completely

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lost his head. James rose from the ground, and the Kid immediately clinched with him, askin' him did he want to call it a day before somebody got badly punished. Barnaby's answer was to grab Kid Roberts about the waist and rough him to the turf, where he fell on top of him, punchin' with both hands to the face as they struggled around there. "Tell 'at big tramp to fight fair, you bunch of yellah dogs!" screams Ptomaine, tuggin' frantically at his bonds. I was blue in the face with rage, but bein' tied hand and foot could do nothin' but yell murder!

The football players rushed over and helped both men up and Kid Roberts is so infuriated at Barnaby's foul fightin' that he ain't fit to be at large! His bare shoulder is cut and scraped from a rock he fell on, he's bleedin' freely from the mouth and blowin' like a porpoise, but if he don't want to fight, then neither does Harry Wills. I wouldn't of been Jim Barnaby right then for Rockefeller's last week's profits!

Barnaby rushed at the Kid, eager to knock him off whilst he's in the distress he so plainly showed. The air is full of advice from his team mates, who figure it's all over. James put a hard left to the Kid's sore mouth that wobbled his head, and the trusty right uppercut, catchin' Kid Roberts off his balance, floored him. He was up in a flash—was fightin' furiously again whilst the boys is still cheerin' Barnaby for the fluke knock-down. The Kid come in crouchin' this time and sent a fearful right and left to the stomach.

Barnaby began to back-pedal, but Kid Roberts followed him like fate! He sent a wicked right to Barna-

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by's heart, and, the gridiron performer tried to clinch, but the Kid beat him off with crushin' jabs to face and body. Barnaby's face was now a crimson smear and his knees was quiverin' in time with the twitchin' muscles of his broad back. He swung wildly with left and right, but Kid Roberts ducked these desperate efforts with ease, counterin' with straight lefts which was just remodelin' Barnaby's face, that's all! To me and Ptomaine it was only a question of how much Barnaby could take, for the Kid was playin' with him now like a baby plays with a rattle.

Fin'ly the bewildered Barnaby, urged on by his equally bewildered boy friends, started another rush and managed to land a right swing to the Kid's neck. It was a stiff punch, but Kid Roberts merely grinned, measured his man carefully and coolly, and shot a torrid left and right to the jaw. Barnaby staggered back on his heels fully ten feet before he brought up. "There he goes!" bawls Ptomaine—and there he went! Kid Roberts was on top of him with the speed of a frightened deer. One terrific right to the point of the jaw and Mr. James Barnaby fell flat on his face, a total loss. It was close to five minutes before the young man even opened his one good eye!

Kid Roberts pulls off his gloves, gently picks him up and props him carefully against a tree, tellin' the open-mouthed bunch to hustle some throwin' water from the pond and some drinkin' water from the creek. Eva's beaded bag produced much-needed smellin' salts. White-faced and tremblin', that young lady seemed to be speechless. The Kid workin' over Barnaby, re-

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marked that he was thoroughly ashamed of himself for what he called a "beastly display of temper!" Chili sauce—look what they done to *him!*

When Barnaby fin'ly comes to life, Kid Roberts tells him who he really is and just why he pretended to be a poet at Hermit Inn. He likewise adds that Barnaby's a good, game fighter, and the still dazed Barnaby weakly shakes his hand.

I now look for Eva to throw her arms around the handsome neck of the victorious Kid Roberts, and so would you, now wouldn't you? She was more than addicted to him when he was a despised "poet" and now that he's turned out to be a standard size 576, lot 749, 68-carat Hero, why, the clinch seems positive. We *all* expect it—it's on the cards!

Never again will I expect no women to run to the chart. They don't, and that's all there is to it! When little Eva heard that Kid Roberts was simply a prize fighter and not no composer of passionate pomes, she drew away from him like he had smallpox, runs to the dejected and muchly battered Jim Barnaby and—kisses him! Can you tie that?

The Kid views 'em and laughs, then he unties me and Ptomaine. We immediately look around for the false alarm which posed as Kid Roberts, but that gent has went away from there! We never saw him since, and who wants to?

Ptomaine stretches his cramped arms and watches Eva and Barnaby with a gloomy frown on his homely pan.

"Any of you guys feel like steppin'?" he snarls to

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the football players. "I don't figure you tramps has paid off yet for what you done to Kid Roberts, get me? I'll take you four at a time to make it a little even. C'mon, chums, let's go!"

"We've had enough fighting!" butts in Kid Roberts sternly. "I consider accounts settled, and that ends the incident. Let's get back to the inn and forget it!"

Kid Roberts is Ptomaine's god, and this big sap would jump off the city hall flagpole into a cigar box if the Kid asked him. I often wish he would! Anyways, Ptomaine is about to walk sullenly away, when he happens to see five or six of these college boys standin' in a line watchin' their fallen captain and still tryin' to figure out how it all happened. Ptomaine's face brightens.

"Hey, you guys!" he calls sharply.

They all wheeled around, and, seein' Ptomaine, give him a loud laugh.

Ptomaine glared. Then he suddenly drew back his gigantic right arm and let go at the fellow nearest him, landin' with a dull sock on his jaw. His prey went down, fallin' against the guy in back of him and the second victim stumbled against the next one in tryin' to hold his balance. That throwed a third guy off his feet and the whole bunch goes down like ninepins in a busy bowlin' alley. They couldn't of done it no funnier should they have rehearsed it for a week! Ptomaine looks down at 'em with a satisfied sneer.

"See can you laugh *that* off, you big stiffs!" he snarls, and walks away, happy.

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ROUND SEVEN

HE LOOPS TO CONQUER

Polo Grounds, N. Y.—Fighting one of the greatest battles of his career, Kid Roberts, challenger for the world's heavyweight championship, knocked out K. O. Ford here to-day in the seventh round of a scheduled fifteen-round contest. Both men took a lot of punishment, but Kid Roberts proved the hardest hitter. A terrible right uppercut to Ford's jaw one minute and twenty seconds after the start of the seventh round ended one of the most spectacular bouts in the annals of the game. It was a triumph of slugger over boxer.

TOMATO sauce—it was a triumph of a fightin' heart over a faint one! The rest of the above newspaper account of the Kid Roberts-Knockout Ford battle, I guess you've already perused. There was two or three columns about the thing in all the papers, with views of the fight-mad mob—35,000 filed through the dear old turnstiles—great photos of the knockdowns and other high lights of the quarrel, includin' the sensational knockout. It was a whale of a fight and the

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pop-eyed sport writers done it full justice, they did for a fact! Plenty breakfast ham and eggs growed cold and plenty wives growed hot the next mornin', whilst propped against the sugar bowl the sport page was hungrily devoured by friend husband.

But speakin' of alligator pears, there was a little coincident connected with that battle of the century which failed to appear in the interestin' reports of it. That's because the newspaper guys didn't know nothin' about it. I *do!* Like the color in a two-buck shirt, it's bound to come out eventually, so why not now?

After we come back to Gotham from the noted Catskill Mountains Kid Roberts goes into a serious conference with me and Ptomaine Joe. The Kid was all business and laughs was conspicuous by their absence! Without wastin' no time on preliminaries, Kid Roberts says he's just the opposite to satisfied with the headway he's been makin' toward the world's championship. His last three bouts has been fought on the exterior of fight clubs and all he's got out of 'em was the exercise. Not so good!

There was still much moan in the Kid's matrimoany, too. Dolores is tourin' the State, campaignin' for a seat in the Senate. She stubbornly refused to give Kid Roberts a tumble till he checked out of the fight racket. This is somethin' the Kid won't do till he's built up a important bank roll and since his attempted comeback he's barely clicked off expenses. In other words, the boy's tired of wearin' straw hats in the winter time. He's gettin' nowheres and *somethin'* must be done. That's the way the Kid put it up to me,

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addin' that unless I could show him some speed he'd haul off and try his hand at bein' his own manager!

The heavyweight crown still rested on the head of Mr. Bob Young. Bobbie was too proud to fight for less than $300,000 cash in advance, half the movin'-picture loot, the hot-dog concession at the arena, his own hand-picked referee, the bottlin' rights to the Pacific Ocean, or what have you? Young's argument was that he's entitled to these meager rewards, as he's the drawin' card, bein' champion. Accordin' to *that* figurin', the ex-Kaiser should be gave $10,000,000,000, as look at the mob *he* drawed to Europe a few years ago!

How the so ever, Bob Young didn't wish to swap smacks with *us* under *no* circumstances. Mr. Champion had already tasted the delights of goin' in there with Kid Roberts, and as the Kid had knocked him as stiff as a drum major's back, Bob wasn't exactly sold on the idea of takin' him on again.

At first the sport writers laughed off my account of that fracas in Mexico, but when I kept on bombardin' Young with challenges and Young kept on passin' us by for third-rate set-ups, them editors begin to get thoughtful. The clean-cut, handsome, hard-hittin' Kid's sensational career had always made him a great favorite with the best people in the world—the newspaper guys. Young's stallin' us off was makin' most of 'em figure that maybe there *was* a drop of truth in my claim that Kid Roberts had actually stopped the champion. Pretty soon they all printed my story—somethin' they had flatly refused to do before—and

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trained deadly sarcastical typewriters on Young and his manager, Toledo Eddie Hicks.

This kind of pressure done the trick. No champion can afford to high-hat the sport writers, unless he's ready to get his name in "Who's Through!" The sport editors is the babies which makes them enormous purses a fact instead of a wish. They smoke up interest in the fights, the principals, and the promoters. They make a champ's dizzy demands sound reasonable and the contender look to have a chance. They control the biggest asset one individual fight or the entire game has, a thing worth hundreds of thousands a year and you can get it for nothin' if you're a right guy—publicity!

So Mr. Barberi Youngkowsky, otherwise known as Bob Young, heavyweight champion of the civilized world, agreed to risk his title in a fight with Mr. Kane Halliday, otherwise known as Kid Roberts.

Before comin' out in the papers with it, Toledo Eddie Hicks sent for me, requestin' the boon of a private interview. The two of us got together in his room at the Hotel Epathy. This time our deliberations was a quiet affair, with no hair mussed or the like. Toledo Eddie greeted me with a glad smile and stood by, still grinnin' whilst I tried the doors, searched the closets, and looked beneath the bed for possible undercover spectators. Not that I suspected Edward was not to be trusted—I was *positive* of it! When I fin'ly convinced myself that we was really alone and this bozo wasn't tryin' to put over a fast one, I sit down, back to the wall. Eddie then broke out cigars

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and some New Jersey Scotch. I fell for the smokes, but passed the brew up, as it's a hobby of mine not to take embalmin' fluid till after I'm actually dead!

"Well, yegg," I says, "what's your racket? And, remember, I don't help you stick up no banks!"

"Why get rosey with *me?*" says Eddie in a pained voice. "Why can't me and you be friends?"

"Why can't a rat and a ferret be friends?" I sneer. "Eddie, you're as crooked as a ball player's thumb! You been wrong all your life and when you bump off you'll proposition the devil for the asbestos concession in Hades and then gyp him. They're holdin' mail for you now at Sing Sing! Why should *I* find you tasty?"

"For one thing," says Eddie, unmoved, as he pours himself a generous snifter, "I'm goin' to give you a fight with Young. Think *that* over!"

I leaped off the chair.

"If you're clowin' about this, I'll cook you!" I says. "Where's the phone? We'll get the sport writers here and——"

"Don't get so swift!" interrupts Eddie, holdin' up his hand. "We're champion and *we'll* call all plays, get me? You guys got to do what papa tells you. I says we'd fight you and we'll do that thing—the minute you knock Fred Fleming and Kayo Ford for a loop!"

I sunk back with a groan.

"You big stiff!" I hollered when I got my breath. "Some day they'll pinch you for tryin' to get a camel through the eye of a needle! We got to stop Ford and Fleming *first,* hey? That's like a guy havin' to

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dive off Brooklyn Bridge to prove he's able to step into a bathtub full of water!"

"If Kid Roberts thinks he can take the champ, why should a couple of pushovers like Ford and Fleming disturb him?" asks Eddie coolly.

"*Pushovers*, hey?" I howled. "Ford has win his last fifteen fights by knockouts and Fleming ain't never been slapped off his feet. Why, you mock orange, I think either of 'em could make that big tramp of *yours* love it and *you* think so, too!"

"Be yourself!" says Eddie scornfully. "Here's the layout—take it or leave it. Kid Roberts has went back so far that nobody gives him a chance with Bob Young. Put 'em in a ring to-morrow and the only attendance would be the handlers and the referee! The Kid's got to be built up with the fans. On the other hand, both Ford and Fleming has a big followin'. Lots of maniacs like you think either of 'em would extend Young and that both is entitled to a crack at the champ on their records. All right! Let Roberts go out and knock 'em kickin' and the public will think he's *good,* won't they? Sure, they will! *Then* we'll throw Young and Roberts in the ring and nine million nuts will claw each other to get through the gate! If Kid Roberts really feels that Young's got the skin he'd love to touch, that's the way it'll happen or we don't box you. Well, c'mon, what are you thinkin' about?"

"Honest to Boston, I could get deported for what I'm thinkin' about you, you scissor bill!" I says, glarin' at him.

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"See if *I* care!" grins Eddie, and I beat it, slammin' the door on his laughin': "Happy Arbor Day!"

That was the tip-off, of course, that Toledo Eddie hadn't the faintest intentions of lettin' Bob Young fight Kid Roberts if there was any way out of it. Both Knockout Ford and Fred Fleming was as tough as a year in jail. I'd seen 'em go and I knew what they had—and it was enough, don't think it wasn't! A month before, they'd stepped fifteen rounds to a gory enough draw to of satisfied Nero! Toledo Eddie figured he was sittin' pretty by makin' us meet 'em before fightin' his champ. This jazzbo thought it a cinch that one or the other would knock the Kid off and thus put him in the discard as a challenger. In any event, the time we'd spend in makin' and trainin' for these two matches would lay the angry sport writers off Young and further postpone a bout with Kid Roberts.

I was still burnt up when I dashed back to our hotel and give Kid Roberts the low-down on matters. The nervous Kid has been impatiently pacin' the room waitin' to hear the result of the interview, whilst the 200-pound Ptomaine Joe was writin' a burlesque on a letter to some cutey. Just as I come in, Ptomaine looks up with a goofy grin on his weird pan and craves to know how many "u's" they is in the word "love."

I throwed a chair cushion at Ptomaine and immediately laid Toledo Eddie's proposition before Kid Roberts, expectin' him to go right up in flames like *I* did. My idea was to turn Eddie down cold, ask the newspapers to call the public's attention to the way Young

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was duckin' a fight with the Kid and demand Young or nobody! I even thought of claimin' the world's championship, since Young refused to box us for it. Ptomaine Joe generously offered to fight Knockout Ford and Fred Fleming in the same ring, just to get 'em out of the Kid's way. The air is full of advice and wild schemes, when Kid Roberts cuts us both off short.

"Boys, perhaps Toledo Eddie is right!" he says. "Maybe the sporting public *would* like to see me dispose of Ford and Fleming before going against the champion. You know it's months since they've seen me with gloves on around here. I also think that a couple of stiff fights under my belt before meeting Young would be the greatest training I could possibly get and——"

"But why take a chance, Kid?" I butt in. "You rate a fight with Young right now and we all know that means the world's title and a million bucks for you. On the other hand, Ford and Fleming—well, you know how good *them* birds is! Suppose one of 'em should get lucky and bounce you? Even Young don't wish no part of *them* guys! It looks like a sucker play to me, Kid—let's hold out for the champ or nobody!"

But Kid Roberts shakes his head.

"Joe, that would only be delaying the inevitable," he says. "If I met and defeated Young now, I'd have to give either Ford or Fleming first chance at the championship, as they'd still be the outstanding contenders. I never got anywhere avoiding an issue and I'm not going to start *that* system now! Toledo Ed-

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die's ultimatum at least offers immediate action and that's what I want more than anything else. Also, I need the money! Get me Ford and Fleming on the best terms you can make. I'll be ready to fight in a month."

"I'll feel out Knockout Ford's manager, then," I says, with a sigh. "We'll take Ford first, because I think Fleming's the most poisonous of the two!"

"Get *me* Fleming, then!" bawls Ptomaine. "I'll be right in a month myself!"

"You big blah!" I sneer. "You couldn't lick Fleming's grandmother!"

"I would if she got giddy with me," says Ptomaine. "No foolin'!"

Well, it wasn't hard to sign Knockout Ford with Kid Roberts and just twice that easy to get a promoter to stage the combat. I gambled on 35 per cent of the gate and as it turned out we drew down for our bit $23,674.85. What the promoter give Ford I never did find out and I don't care. I only know what Kid Roberts give him, which was a-plenty!

I readied the Kid in Sapville, a slab up New York State, about fifty miles from Broadway. Besides Ptomaine, I brought along Jimmy de Long, the greatest trainer of fighters which ever went behind one! I also carried Jack Hill and Battlin' Vernon, a couple of good, beefy heavies which could take it, and Ollie Pierce, a fast welterweight, to develop the Kid's speed. With the prospects of a crack at the heavyweight crown starin' him in the face if he got past Knockout Ford, Kid Roberts took to his trainin' like a famished rabbit

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takes to a leaf of cabbage and soon had his weary handlers wishin' they had entered the ministry instead of the ring!

The daily routine at the camp run as smooth as a lawyer's tongue and the only annoyance was the burly Mr. Ptomaine Joe. The Kid says Ptomaine kept him from gettin' the blues, but to *me* he was just unnecessary overhead! He never could master the first rule of boxin', which is simply to keep yourself off the floor. His idea of conditionin' himself for a mill was to go out and get a shampoo and his face massaged and it was the same as impossible to keep him off the gin and on the gym.

The two unlucky bouts of Ptomaine's in which he run a poor second by no means killed off his interest in the manly art of breakin' noses. Day or night there wasn't a minute that he wasn't pesterin' me to get him a scrap with anyone, any weight, any color, over any distance, and at any price! Even the Kid kept urgin' me to give this tamale a chance, so to keep 'em both quiet and present myself with some rest, I signed Ptomaine to swap swings with Two-Punch McGazzati, heavyweight champion of Lake Erie, in a six-round preliminary to the Kid Roberts-Knockout Ford meelee.

"You think I'm a mug, hey?" says Ptomaine joyfully, when I told him he was scheduled for another fearful pastin'. "Well, you're due for the surprise of your life. I'll clout 'at mock turtle so cold 'at when he comes to his clothes won't fit him!"

"If you're able to answer the gong for round two, you'll surprise me to the swoonin' stage!" I says. "Still

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and all, maybe you can cope with Two-Punch McGazzati, at that. He ain't fought for a year, so he should be a spread for you."

"Why ain't he fought for a year?" asks Ptomaine.

"Oh, he's just been under suspension," I says carelessly. "He *killed* the last guy he boxed!"

"For cryin' out loud!" gasps Ptomaine. "You pick 'em soft for me, don't you? How much sugar do I get for executin' this murderer?"

"Ptomaine," I says seriously, "if by some mysterious miracle you smack this fellow down, your wages for the afternoon's work will be three hundred bucks. Should he stop *you*, somethin' that's certain, not only do you not get a nickel—but I'm goin' to fine you five hundred fish for wastin' my time in carryin' you along! If that's too rich for your blood, you can cancel the bout right now!"

Ptomaine tries the terrific feat of thinkin'.

"Get me that big false alarm," says this clown, after a minute. "I got three hundred iron men saved and like as not I can borrey the other two hundred from the Kid."

I have met some maniacs in this game, but that's the first one I run across yet which was dyin' to pay five hundred smackers for the privilege of bein' knocked for a Flemish bath-house!

Well, to make a short story long, about ten days before Kid Roberts is to fight Knockout Ford nothin' less than a movin-picture outfit arrives in the hamlet where we're camped. I had long ago closed our trainin' quarters to visitors, like I always do during the last

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few days' gruellin' workouts, even the open-mouthed hicks from the village bein' barred. One mornin' when I go down to the little post office for the mail, a jobbie comes up to me and accuses me of bein' Joe Murphy, world-famous manager of the world-famous Kid Roberts.

I broke down and pleaded guilty to the charge, and the stranger's next imitation was to identify himself. He's Mr. Hubert de Grasse, he brags, and he baffles the almshouse by directin' the movies of the unreasonably beautiful Myrtle Magnificent, of Earthquake, Cal., who I *must* of heard tell of. I never had and could prove it, but I yessed him, anyways. Hubert then testified that his company is there on location makin' some scenes of "Cuckoo Husbands," Myrtle's latest yokel-thriller, and they would like nothin' better than to see Kid Roberts train.

I told Mr. Director that I deeply sympathized with him, but his request was out, as Kid Roberts was on the brinks of a important fight and nobody could see him but his handlers, not even President Coolidge. Hubert de Grasse pleaded and coaxed, but I was so firm that alongside of me the Rock of Gibraltar would look like a jelly! Even when Hubert called over Myrtle Magnificent herself to help him, there was no give to me. That shows the world I'm strong-minded, as this iris-soothin' disturbance had more curves than a guy pitchin' a no-hit game and a smile which would distract attention from that kind of a contest! But I was Myrtle-proof, so I just says nothin' stirrin', give 'em a polite bow to split between 'em and danced off. I

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thought that was the end of 'em, but I couldn't think my way into a clean collar!

Gettin' exactly no service from *me*, this magic-lantern director turns his attentions to the half-wit of our party, Ptomaine Joe. Every time I sent the silly Ptomaine into town for somethin' we needed, Hubert and Myrtle promoted him unbeknownst to me. They fussed all over the big banana, let him watch 'em "shootin'" their idiotical movie from a place right beside the camera, introduced him to all the female members of the troupe, and told him it was a rotten shame he took up boxin' instead of pictures, as they could plainly see by viewin' him that a wonderful actor was lost to the public. You can imagine the effect all this hokum had on a guy like Ptomaine, which as usual had crashed wildly in love with Myrtle the first time he looked at this panic. Here he was bein' allowed the rare boon of seein' a movie bein' made from the inside, caperin' around with the beautiful bathin' girls durin' his spare moments and bein' heartily assured by one and all that he was the crocodile's watch fob! A few days of this thomas foolery and Ptomaine was walkin' on air. He didn't know what it was all about, but he's as happy as a girl with her first engagement ring and useless to me at our camp.

As a further bribe to Mr. Ptomaine—already sold, if they only knew it—Myrtle hung around this gil continuously, even goin' to the extent of posin' for publicity photos with him. In return, Ptomaine told her he was the greatest scrapper since Cain, had fought 386 battles, only lost one, and that with a heavily

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armed gorilla. But this mug surrendered completely when the director puts a uniform and make-up on him and lets him appear before the camera as a policeman in a brief scene with Myrtle. That scene was a wow!

Meanwhile, Ptomaine's trainin' for Two-Punch McGazzati was absolutely forgot, in spite of the fact that I constantly reminded him he'd get beat up for nothin' and have to pay a fine of $500 on top of that if he lost.

"Stop squawkin'!" he tells me. "Myrtle's goin' to watch 'at fight and with *her* lookin' on out of them hypnotizin' navy-blues eyes of hers, I'll lay 'at blank cartridge like a rug!"

No kiddin', them movie birds should of been jailed for cruelty to animals for the run-around they give that baby!

As the results of all this, Ptomaine managed to prevail on Kid Roberts to secretly meet his admirers, which was all they was after from the start. When I fin'ly bump Ptomaine off, I'll go before any jury in the world and tell 'em only a tenth of my reasons for croakin' the big dumb-bell and they'll not only let me go; they'll give me a lovin' cup!

Ptomaine frames the meetin' to take place whilst him and the Kid is supposed to be out doin' road work one day. The instant they shook hands, the fascinatin' Myrtle Magnificent begins doin' her stuff and she put everything she had—plenty!—on the ball. Her open admiration and the combined pleadin's of the rest of her gang wins the good-natured Kid Roberts over in no time at all, and although I yelled murder, he let's 'em

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come out to see him wind up his trainin' for Knockout Ford. That was one of the most fatal invitations he ever extended in his life and showed me that courtesy was no virtue, but a vice!

Not content with bein' a privileged spectator in the trainin' camp, Hubert de Grasse wants to set up a camera and take some movies of Kid Roberts and his sparrin' partners. But even the Kid balked at that, whilst I told this director that if I had his nerve I'd bottle the Hudson River and sell it for orangeade! How the so ever, the busy Myrtle went to work on Kid Roberts, assisted by the love-lorn Ptomaine, and once again they score a win! The director swears on the hotel register that the pictures won't be showed till long after the Kid has fought Knockout Ford and then would only be used as "atmosphere" in "Cuckoo Husbands," the film they're makin'. He points out the publicity it would mean for Kid Roberts and how other fighters, equally as famous, had not scorned to appear before the humble camera. Honest, that guy talked steady for a hour and then Myrtle relieved him.

She started her summin' up by statin' that "Cuckoo Husbands" would make or break her with the public and the world knew how anxious she is to have everything double perfect. Thus, fight scenes made at a real fighter's camp would naturally have it all over anything faked at a movie studio, etc. In jumps Mons. de Grasse at this critical point to add that of course they was willin' to *pay* for the honor. Seein' that Kid Roberts was goin' to let 'em have their will with him,

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anyways, that last crack of the director's appealed to me. I quoted him a price which I figured would knock him insensible, but he calmly says my figure is jake with him and writes me a check. I got it yet—try and cash it!

But it was really Myrtle Magnificent which made the Kid consent to bein' filmed. That very mornin' she had captured his unqualified admiration by doin' some blood-curdlin' feats of recklessness in a plane flown by a stunt flyer and supposedly the big thrill of the picture. Courage is the one thing Kid Roberts is crazy about and has more of himself than anybody I ever played around with. So he tells me that if this charmin' girl is willin' to risk that schoolgirl complexion and her young life by cuttin' capers on the wing of a airplane slicin' the breeze at a hundred miles the hour, *he's* willin' to risk breakin' a rule by lettin' her camera him for her movie.

Accordin'ly a battery of cameras and these fearful Kleig lights is set up around the trainin' ring and every move of Kid Roberts photographed from every possible angle. The director was particularly keen on what he calls "close-ups" and took a flock of these, especially of the Kid's most effective punches, many of which we had just invented for this highly important setto with Knockout Ford.

Three days of this stuff and I chased the movie company out of the camp on the run! Only for Kid Roberts I would of murdered 'em all in hot blood, for I'm red-headed with rage. The Kid's got to step in the ring with Kayo Ford in less than forty-eight hours

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and he *can't see a foot in front of him* out of two redly swollen and highly inflamed eyes!

It had seemed to me from the first that them blindin' lights had been placed much too close to the trainin' ring and likewise there appeared to be entirely too many of 'em. The director, how the so ever, had soothin'ly explained to me that all this was necessary to get the best results. He said a tongueful!

The day of the big fight, Kid Roberts wakes up with his eyes still in bad shape, though some of the inflammation has went down. Myrtle Magnificent talked her way past the guards I had outside the camp and give the Kid a lotion to put on his bum glims. She tells the Kid that she's worse than terrible sorry for bein' nothin' but grief to him, but she adds that he's merely got a slight touch of "Kleig eyes," which they all fall prey to in the movies. It's nothin' to worry about, says Myrtle, and will quickly pass away once he plasters 'em with the goo she give him. She's another one which should of been gave the last lesson first!

Well, as if the trouble with the Kid's eyes ain't enough to poison us that day a hitch comes up at the last minute over the referee. The promoter has me on long-distance nearly all mornin', fin'ly insistin' that I come right down to New York and help straighten matters out personally. I grabbed Ptomaine and went ahead, leavin' Kid Roberts to shove off later by auto with the other handlers, so's he'd attract as little attention as possible. The Kid always hated display in anything from clothes to humans.

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As Ptomaine's pettin' party with Two-Punch McGazzati was scheduled to go at 8 p. m.—bein' the first preliminary—I sent him out to the abattoir, whilst I started over to the promoter's office to tend to the squawk about the third man in the ring. I didn't care *who* Knockout Ford's choice was—all me and the Kid wanted was a guy which could count up to ten!

I'm millin' through Times Square, tossed this way and that by the excited mob which is pourin' into the subway en route to the fight, when somebody grabs at my coat. Holdin' on to my watch and roll, I swung around, but it wasn't no dip had me. It was "Honest-Dollar" Reilly, one of the biggest gamblers which ever was ready to lay eight to five it would rain or eight to five it wouldn't. I still held on to my valuables. Reilly had a flock of hooch under his belt—in fact, his tongue should of been plastered with revenue stamps!

"Well, well, well!" he chortles. "See who we have here! You better watch your step, Mister Sap, or some of these city slickers will sell you Grant's Tomb! How d'ye like the movies?"

"What movies?" I ask him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" bust out Reilly. *"What* movies, hey! Well, what a Patsy they made out of you!"

"How come, Reilly?" I snapped out, grabbin' his arm. Did you ever have a feelin' that somethin' tough was goin' to happen? I had it plenty right then!

"I'll tell you how come and then you'll take arsenic!" grins Reilly. "You and your box fighter has fell for one of the rawest frames ever pulled off in this man's

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town! That movie company you entertained up-State was the bunk, the so-called Myrtle Magnificent don't know a lens from a ice-cream freezer and the alleged director was only sprung from the Big House two weeks ago. The rest of the gang was his mob and they're *good*, I'll say they're good!"

I'm dumfounded!

"But, look here, what was the big idea?" I gasp, in a panic-stricken voice. "Why should they clown with us?"

"Clown your grandmother!" says Reilly. "Them birds don't never clown—they did a first-class job! They've just about made Kid Roberts a set-up for Knockout Ford, that's all. The Kid's a nine-to-five favorite now, which means somebody will cut a juicy melon when your boy goes out! The near-movie gang was hired by the big operators——and, listen, I had nothin' to do with it. I don't mind stripes in a suit, but I don't want to wear that suit for no ten years, get me?"

"But what—" I began wildly.

"Gimme a chance to talk, will you?" Reilly cuts me off. "Every night the movies of the Kid's daily workouts was rushed to New York, where every punch was carefully studied by Knockout Ford and his pilot. That's just *one* angle. They put a lot of dazzlin' lights around the ring up in your camp, didn't they? Sure, they did! Well, how's the Kid's eyes to-day? I'll lay eight to five he couldn't see the East River from Brooklyn Bridge!"

"But that—that woman gave him a lotion," I pants.

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almost speechless as the whole double-cross dawns on me. "She says—"

"I told you them birds was good!" butts in Reilly, half admirin'ly. "They overlook nothin'! That lotion was a great touch. I can figure what was in it—*it'll about blind him!*"

I waited to hear no more! I didn't even think to ask "Honest-Dollar" Reilly where he got all this dope. I'm dashin' away to phone the camp, when Reilly stops me.

"You can't do nothin' now," he says. "Not a thing! Remember that aviator which flew Myrtle around up there?"

I nod my head dizzily, wonderin' what *else* was comin'!

"Well," says Reilly, "unless somethin' slipped up, Kid Roberts is on his way here now in a plane with Mister Stunt Flyer at the helm. And wait—just wait till your battler gets out of that airplane!"

I phoned the camp—and got: "They don't answer!"

At the gate of the arena I got to identify myself to forty guys to even get inside, and the first one to greet me is Ptomaine Joe. He's on his way back to the dressin' room, *his* bout bein' all over. Honest, he looks like a catastrophe on its way to occur somewheres! The only place on him which ain't cut and bruised is under his arms. I stopped him.

"How did you make out?" I ask.

Ptomaine gloomily sticks his hand into a pocket of his bathrobe and drags out a greasy roll of bills "There's your five hundred!" he muttered. "Two-

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Punch McGazzati let 'em both go at once. A fool and his money is soon parted!"

And, with bowed head, the battered Ptomaine stumbled on amidst the razzin' of the jeerin' mob.

At 10 p. m.—the hour set for the principals in the big fight to enter the ring—there was no sign of Kid Roberts, but Knockout Ford comes down the aisle with his handlers and climbs through the ropes, hailed with a wild storm of cheers. Sun-darkened face heavily vaselined to avoid as may cuts as possible, brawny body cocoa-buttered over the rollin' bulgin' muscles, he looked *ready*—and that word covers it all! The referee and the announcer comes in and talks matters over with the timekeepers. Ptomaine turns up, his swollen pan a mass of court plaster, to go in Kid Roberts's corner. I killed a little time by walkin' over and carefully examinin' the bandages on Ford's hands and inspectin' the brand-new gloves layin' in their box at the middle of the ring. Still no sign of Kid Roberts and, believe me, I'm pretty low! Almost as worried and nervous as I am as he looks over the sea of excited faces, the promoter paces up and down outside the ring. He'd never phoned me about the referee at all! The newspaper guys, busy beside their clickin' telegraph instruments sendin' in the preliminary stuff, are askin' me what's the matter with the Kid? Where is he? The crowd takes that important question up with a continuous howl and stampin' of 35,000 pairs of impatient feet.

Suddenly the loud buzzin' of a propeller rises above the noise of the mob and a airplane circles over the

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arena. At first, only me and a small part of the attendance looked up. There was nothin' unusual in the sight and what *they* craved to see was Kid Roberts. Well, they seen him!

To the amazement of the crowd, the plane begins a series of absolutely maniacal stunts right over the ring. Loop-the-loops, fallin' leafs, barrel rolls, nose dives, tail spins, flyin' upside down and dizzy side slips that soon had a steady roar of "Oh's!" and "Ah's!" comin' from the crowd, every face of which was now turned upward. Knockout Ford's handlers stared gapin'ly into the sky, but Ford and his manager was grinnin' from ear to ear into my horrified face, because they knew who was the passenger in that plane and so did I!

At last the plane swoops down and comes to a landin' in a clear space over by the dressin' rooms, me and Ptomaine reachin' it whilst the propeller was still whirlin' to a stop. Ptomaine bellers like a angry bull when he sees Kid Roberts, chalk-faced and limp, strapped to the passenger's seat, but I was past bellerin' as I rushed to the Kid's side and begin to unstrap him. The aviator, a burly giant, starts to climb out with a sneerin' grin which instantly left his face like magic. Ptomaine's iron fist, with two hundred pounds of ragin' bone and muscle behind it, caught him flush on the chin and he crashed against the side of his machine to drop to the turf as if struck by lightnin'! For that, I reached in my pocket and crammed Ptomaine's five-hundred-buck "fine" back in his willin' hands. We half lifted the dazed Kid Roberts out of his seat and

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got him through a swiftly growin' astonished mob into his dressin' room, where he fell on the rubbin' table and panted for breath like a freshly hooked trout.

"Go out and tell the promoter and the newspaper guys to come in here right away!" I say to Ptomaine. "We got to postpone this fight! We can't—"

"Nonsense—I'm all right!" butts in the Kid, gaspin'ly. "That flyer must have gone crazy. Joe! He——"

I shut him off to tell him quickly all "Honest-Dollar" Reilly had spilled in my ears and you never in your life seen a guy do a snap-in like Kid Roberts done when I got through! The newspapers panned me to a fare-thee-well for lettin' the Kid go in there in the shape he was in, but I simply couldn't stop the boy. He was a ravin' maniac which wanted Knockout Ford's heart, what I mean!

The thunderin' cheer which greeted Kid Roberts as he reached the ring a half hour later immediately give way to a groan as he staggered and almost fell tryin' to climb through the ropes. His eyes was red-rimmed and smartin' from them Kleig lights and Myrtle Magnificent's "lotion," he's still sick and sufferin' from that wild ride through the clouds, but his jaw is set hard, his head up, and his gamester's heart pumpin' fightin' blood through his powerful body! When they come together for the referee's instructions in the middle of the ring, Knockout Ford sized the shaky Kid up and licked his lips expectantly. The big crowd, lookin' for a quick, spectacular finish, sat quiet and tense. I had the towel ready to toss in early, seein' our champion-

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ship hopes gone glimmerin'. It was a wake in our corner, no foolin'!

At the bell, Knockout Ford was across the ring like a streak, catchin' Kid Roberts in his own corner with a straight left which rocked the Kid's head and brung the first of a cloudburst of yells from the mob. Again Ford said it with a left and the Kid missed a right cross by a foot. Ford, boxin' confidently and prettily, countered hard with his monotonous left, makin' the Kid look like a sucker for that punch. They clinched and on the break the Kid caught Ford on the ear with a right and followed that with a right and left to the wind, but the blows seemed to lack the old steam. No wonder! Ford felt the Kid's weakness and commenced walkin' in wide open with crushin' lefts and rights to the head and body. He drove Kid Roberts against the ropes and the screamin' mob to its feet with two terrible uppercuts. The Kid fell into a clinch and the fans hissed Ford for landin' a backhander on the break-away. Ford continued rushin', but Kid Roberts saved himself by clinchin' repeatedly, showin' that the old bean was workin.' They was in a fond embrace in mid-ring at the gong. Ford's round.

Ford continued to force the fightin' in the second, pilin' up points with his long, accurate left to the face and stiff right swings to the body. For a full minute in this round he hit the groggy Kid at will and the crowd razzed him for bein' unable to stop a apparently punch-drunk man. Kid Roberts woke up toward the end of the round and staggered Ford with a right to

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the chin, but the effort used up all he had and he was takin' it plenty when the bell rung. Ford's round.

At the beginnin' of the third frame, Ford cut the Kid's eye with a right and the gore spattered both of 'em when Kid Roberts desperately clinched. The referee cautioned Ford for some unnecessary rough stuff and Ford held out a apparently apologetic glove to shake the Kid's hand. As Roberts reached out his own glove for it, Ford suddenly hooked his left viciously to the Kid's unprotected jaw, sendin' him to his knees.

The mob yelled murder and so did I, but before the hesitatin' referee could act, the Kid's up without waitin' for a count, tearin' into Ford with lunatical fury. Ford kept his head, though, and held the Kid off with jarrin' lefts to his damaged eye. That optic was soon closed tight, givin' a further advantage to Ford which already had all the advantage in the world! Kid Roberts took a steady beatin' for the remainder of the round and Ford went to his corner lookin' amazed that he couldn't finish him. The Kid's gameness has broke more than one fighter's heart! Ford's round.

Kid Roberts was out on his feet when he fell on his stool. Ptomaine asked him if he knew what round it was.

"Sure!" says the Kid. "It's the eleventh!"

The fourth round opened with a long clinch, both landin' punishin' blows in close. When the referee got 'em apart, Ford begin jabbin' the Kid's bum glim where he left off before and he didn't seem able to miss it! Kid Roberts, fightin' on his heart alone,

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swung wildly and often, once fallin' full length to the canvas when he overreached himself in tryin' to land a haymaker. Ford was now makin' a choppin' block out of him! A right to the ribs made the Kid wince and Ford followed that with two smashes to the head that had Kid Roberts reelin' around the ring like a drunk and some of the crowd hollerin': "Stop it!" The Kid must of heard that, because he looked over Ford's shoulder at me and shook his head vigorously: "No!" He would of croaked me had I ever throwed in that towel for him whilst he was a boxer! Ford floored the Kid with a straight left just before the end of this round and Roberts was takin' a count when the bell rung. Ford's round.

Knockout Ford looked worried when he come out for the fifth. He'd hit Kid Roberts with all he had in stock, punched him from pillar to post and twice dropped him—yet there was the Kid still on his feet and tryin'! Not so good! The crowd was now with Kid Roberts almost to a man, as they always are with a gamester, win or lose! For the first time Ford begin missin' with his deadly straight left and seemed uncertain on his plan of battle, whilst the Kid was gettin' stronger every minute. He clipped Ford with a long overhand right to the head and sunk both gloves wrist-deep to the wind as Ford tried to clinch. Ford begin back pedalin' and the crowd yelled for him to fight. The Kid shot a hard left and right to his face, the right openin' a deep gash in Ford's cheek and Mr. Ford covered up and waited. "Go on, lead, you big tramp!" howls the crowd at him, and a newspaper guy says

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to me disgustedly: "I got fifty bucks on Ford, but I hope Kid Roberts murders the big yellow hound. If he had half the Kid's heart, we'd been home long ago!"

Spurred on by the jeers of the mob, Ford half-heartedly led with his left, but the Kid wasn't there. He feinted with his right and Kid Roberts smashed him on the mouth with a left and then down below with a right. Oh, that crowd—I can hear 'em yet! It was Ford which was now clinchin' for his life at every chance, and when he staggered to his corner at the end of the round his face was a red blur. The house never let up hollerin' durin' the rest and for the first time since the thing started, Kid Roberts is grinnin' at me and Ptomaine. Kid Roberts's round.

"Boys," he pants, "this fellow doesn't like it!"

"I'll give him four more rounds and 'at's all!" says Ptomaine gleefully, massagin' the Kid's heavin' stomach.

"I'll give him three!" says Jimmy de Long, workin' on the Kid's neck.

"I'll give him two!" I chimes in, with the ammonia under my boy's nose.

"And I'll give him *one!*" says the Kid, his one good eye glitterin'. A fightin' fool, what?

Both come up fairly fresh for the sixth. Ford tried his old reliable left again, but was short when the Kid rolled his head with the punch and Ford took a right cross to the jaw in return that staggered him. He got inside the Kid's next lead and clinched, wrestlin' Rob-

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erts all over the ring, till the Kid shook him off and plastered him with rights and lefts to the jaw that put the attendance insane! Ford rallied and shot a left hook to the heart and the Kid laughed a bloody chuckle at him. Then they stood shoulder to shoulder and tossed terrific rights and lefts into each other's mid-section, till Ford give ground with a appealin' look at his corner. The Kid ducked a left and right and countered with two of the same that didn't do Ford a bit of good. A short clinch followed, broke up by the gong. Kid Roberts's round.

As it stood now, Ford had took four rounds to the Kid's two, but the Kid was gettin' fresher, whilst Ford seemed to of shot his bolt and was arm-weary and disheartened. His seconds worked frantically over him in his corner and his manager poured a stream of advice in his ringin' ears. Around the ring the odds shifted to 13 to 5 on Roberts and I thought of them sure-thing gamblers and laughed out loud.

The end arrived with startlin' suddenness. Both came out kind of weary for Round Seven. They danced cautionsly about each other till the crowd got loudly impatient and bawled for action. They certainly got service! Ford led a straight left. Kid Roberts ducked the blow and countered wickedly to Ford's head. Ford again tried his left, landin' heavily on the Kid's neck, but almost at the same instant the Kid shot a right to the chin. That punch licked Knockout Ford. It dazed him badly and before he could cover up, Kid Roberts whipped a torrid right uppercut to his jaw. Ford reeled for a split second and then

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fell like a log to the canvas, where he was counted out without the flicker of a muscle!

Thus endeth the seventh lesson and only Fred Fleming and Bob Young stood between us and the heavyweight championship of the world!

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ROUND EIGHT

GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS

ONCE upon a time there was a dashin' young English playwright which rejoiced in the high-soundin' name of Sir Samuel Tuke; and among the many high-class girl and music shows which this master mind tore off before departin' for parts unknown, was a wow entitled "The Adventures of Five Hours." In the last act of this frolic, or else it wasn't, one of the characters turns to such of the audience as stuck the thing out, hauls off and cracks the followin' nifty:

> He is a fool who thinks by force or skill
> To turn the current of a woman's will!

That's a good thought. The best way to cope with a member of the female race is to act like you don't give a artichoke *what* they do. Then they usually do what you want 'em to do. Why? I ain't got the slightest of slight ideas. They can't even tell you themselves. As the noted Eve remarked when charged with makin' the Garden of Eden a lot of applesauce: "Girls will be girls!"

In thirty-four fiscal years of racin' around and tryin'

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to find out what it's all about, I've met a couple or three milk-fed cuteys which stood out from the mob like a giraffe would stand out in a convention of worms. One of this type was Diana Pearson. I'll tell you about her and Kid Roberts.

After Kid Roberts made Knockout Ford kiss the canvas I practically instantly matched him with Fred Fleming, the other obstacle in the way of a fight with Bob Young, the champion, for fifteen rounds or less at the port of New York. So we shoved off for the little fishin' village in the land of Maine which I'd picked out for the Kid to train in for Fleming. Frederick was as tough as a life sentence, was nobody's fool as a boxer and a murderous hitter with either hand. I'd saw this baby go and I knew he was *good!*

As we started for dear old Maine our party was made up of myself, Kid Roberts, and Ptomaine Joe. I'd ordered Jimmy de Long, Midnight Johnson, One-Round Evans, and Joe Reed to report direct to the camp. Jimmy de Long was the greatest conditioner of box fighters which ever held smellin' salts under a broken nose, Midnight Johnson knew no equal as a robber, whilst Messrs. Evans and Reed was a couple of professional choppin' blocks which lived on cruel and unusual punishment. They'd do to limber Kid Roberts up till two or three weeks before he met Fleming. Then I'd have the best heavies which money could buy to extend the Kid to his limit. It's a hobby of mine never to do nothin' by halves, and when I say nothin' I mean *nothin'!*"

A couple of friendly papers and the neutral news

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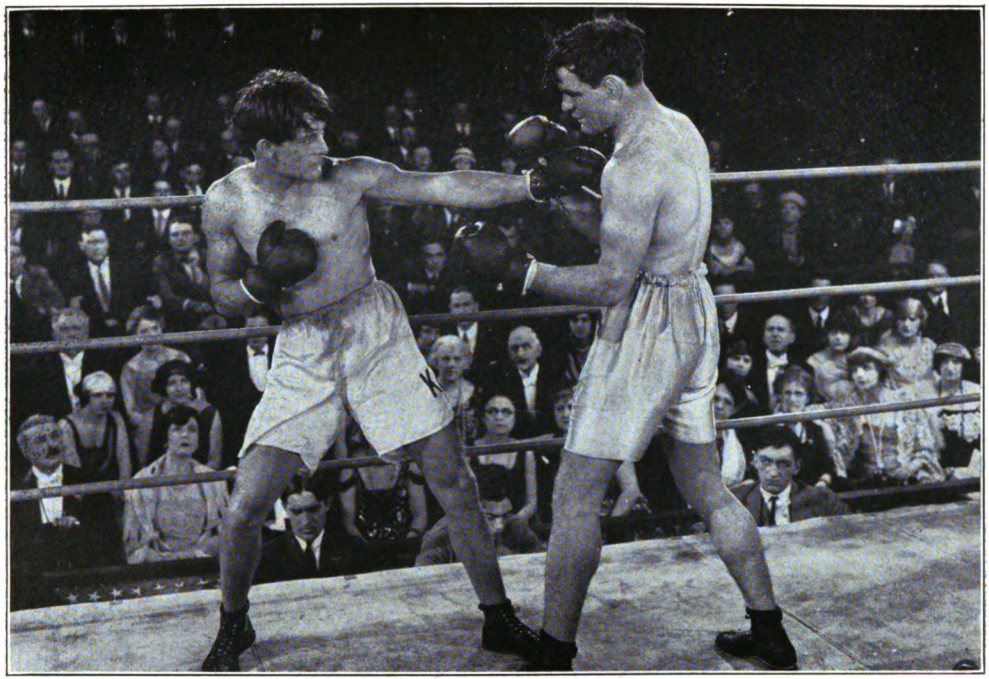

The Universal-Jewel Series.

SCENE FROM "GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS."

Fighting Back.

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reels took pictures of us at the station and quite a little gatherin' seen us off with cheers. The Kid's grim struggle back over the long, tough road to regain his title, and all which went with it, had made a million friends, not only in the sportin' world, but everywhere they love gameness. Plenty pretty girls called "Good luck!" to him as he smilin'ly pushed his big shoulders through the admirin' mob to the train. That boy was *always* a panic with the ladies. Inside the gate he bumps into one of 'em—a little, young blond disturbance with a figure which would annoy Venus. Ptomaine Joe stared at her with gapin' mouth.

"I *beg* your pardon!" says Kid Roberts to this breath-taker, hat in hand. I'm awfully sorry I jostled you. I was looking at the car numbers and——"

"And I—I was looking at you!" she interrupts shyly.

"C'mon, Kid, we'll miss the rattler!" I butt in, alarmed at her eye work.

As the choo-choo pulls out of the station, Miss Good Lookin's seat turns out to be right across from us. She's got a snappy young fellow with her which looks like a collar ad and is dressed the same as one to boot. They made a very optic-refreshin' pair—in fact, these kids looked a bit like each other. They whispered to each other for a minute, castin' quick side glances at us, to the amusement of the Kid. Then the young fellow squares his shoulders like he's suddenly made up his mind, steps over and coughs kind of nervously.

"Eh—excuse me, but aren't you Kid Roberts?" he wants to know.

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All set to promote the girl, Ptomaine is off him because he thinks he's her heavy boy friend.

"No!" says Ptomaine, before the Kid can answer. "He ain't Kid Roberts, he's Norma Talmadge!"

The lad flushes and looks a trifle embarrassed, but the girl laughs.

"I love that!" she says, sarcastically viewin' Ptomaine like he's a Airedale cat or the like. "I suppose you're one of the Gish sisters, aren't you?"

"I'm *both* of 'em!" says Ptomaine with a typical goofy grin.

She smiles at that, but her boy friend is getting burnt up at the pushin' around we're given 'em. He glares at Ptomaine, and Kid Roberts closes his magazine, rises and bows.

"Yes, I am Kid Roberts," he says pleasantly. "May I introduce Joe Murphy, my manager, and Ptomaine Joe, my trainer?"

The boy's face relaxes and he shakes hands heartily with the Kid, lookin' as tickled as if he's mittin' Pres. Coolidge. He didn't do no gushin' over me and Ptomaine.

"I'm certainly *delighted* to meet you, Mister Roberts," he babbles. "And I hope you'll excuse my thrusting myself upon you in this way, but I've been an admirer of yours for—eh—oh, I'm Richard Pearson, and this is my sister."

"For cryin' out loud!" bawls Ptomaine, jumpin' up. "Why didn't you say before you was just a *brother?*"

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"What an odd name—Ptomaine Joe!" says Diana, when she reaches in the handshakes.

"I'm a odd *fellow!*" whinnies this big clown and shows her a lodge button.

This thomasfoolery cracked the ice and in no time at all the bunch of us is chattin' away like little pals. Richard admitted bein' a freshman at Yale and his female relation says her name in even figures is Diana. She was all girl and not only a scientific talker, but she was class from hat to shoe, what I mean! They says they're goin' to join their old man in Boston and then spend their vacation somewheres in Maine. When Ptomaine heard they was bound for the same place we was, this mock turtle stole away to the wash room and puts a pair of military brushes through a drill on his hair. He likewise oiled his mane heavy, changed his collar and come back struttin' his stuff, hopin' to knock Diana dead. With Ptomaine's nerve and my ability, I'd have Astor looking like a public charge!

Well, this was one acquaintance which ripened with break-neck speed, no foolin'. Diana liked Kid Roberts and didn't care who knew it, whilst the Kid wasn't exactly seekin' police protection from *her*. They slipped out to the diner together whilst I was dozin' over the paper and Ptomaine was tryin' to build himself up with Diana's brother by matchin' half dollars with him and deliberately losin'.

After dinner young Richard, which seemed to have a bad attack of gamblin', says let's play cards to assassinate the dull hours of travelin'. That was K. O. with Diana and us, so we sent the dingo porter for a

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table and cards. Richard calls him back. "Bring poker chips, too, Gus!" he says, with a elaborate attempt at bein' careless about it.

Diana looks a bit annoyed at friend brother, and *I* gazed at him thoughtfully. I had a faint idea that this was the tip-off on the whole event of us meetin' him and his pretty sister bein' simply a old-fashioned rib-up to take us down the line. But, then, both of 'em was such nice, clean-cut kids, what I mean, that it really didn't seem possible they could be wrong. When the porter comes back with the cards, Richard riffles 'em eagerly, but kind of clumsy. I was watchin' his shuffle with a eagle eye and I decided that the boy was either a very good actor or a very bum card player!

"Well, what will we play for?" asks Richard, lookin' around. "How about five-dollar limit?"

"Five-dollar limit is a rather stiff game to play—eh—just for pastime, don't you think, old man?" smiles Kid Roberts.

The boy looks disappointed, but shrugs his shoulders. "As you like," he says. "Shall we make it a dollar, then?"

This time Diana steps to the fore, shootin' us a glance which plainly says to let her do it.

"Dick," she says to her impatient brother, "why should we play for money at all? You know I detest gambling, and I don't think Mister Roberts and his friends are keen about it either. Let's just play for fun—euchre or hearts or—or—" She smiles at us, "How is your bridge?" she asks.

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"Fine—but I didn't think nobody could notice it!" says Ptomaine, puttin' a hamlike hand to his mouth and draggin' out a plate with six teeth in it. "'At dentist done a good job at that, hey? Some people claims they can't stand a bridge in their mouth, but—"

Richard and his sister is roarin' with laughter, and I glared at this mug.

"Park them tusks back in your pan and be yourself, Stupid!" I says. "Your manners and a pig's is the same! Bridge is a game of cards and nobody but intelligent people can learn it."

"Then what will *you* do whilst we're playin' it?" asks Ptomaine.

To avoid the approachin' violence which he seen in my eye, the grinnin' Richard suggested dealin' each of us a card and whoever was high would name the game. Diana got a ace and selected some harmless pastime which five could play and which at this minute I don't even remember. That's simply a little detail and the big things which happened within the hour drove all little details out of my mind!

It was very plain that this betless card playin' thrilled Mr. Richard Pearson about as much as a shower bath would thrill Noah. You could see he was good and sore at his fair sister for stoppin' the poker tourney he had so fondly desired, but bein' a gentleman he said nothin' and made a praiseworthy pretence of gettin' interested in the kindergarten pastime we was engaged at. Already double cuckoo over Diana, Ptomaine made the game even less excitin' by deliberately misplayin' time and time again in order to help her

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win, hopin' in that way to attract her favorable attention to himself. But the poor scissor bill got no service at all. On the contrary, he seemed to get the fair Diana's goat, and she told him sharply to play cards and not *her!* Fin'ly, after a particularly bone-headed miscue by Ptomaine, Richard throwed his hand down in disgust, claimed exemption, and left the car, sayin' he'd see us all of a sudden and mutterin' somethin' about lookin' for "a little action."

With a highly attractive embarrassed smile, the beautiful Diana apologized for her brother and seemed plenty worried at his walkin' out on us that way. When a hour slid by and no sign of the boy, Diana nervously dropped her cards. She was now genuinely alarmed about him, and, realizin' it, Kid Roberts says he'll take a stroll through the train and see if he can dig him up anywheres. I went with the Kid, leavin' Ptomaine with Diana for company and laughs—which tickled that love-sick banana silly!

In the club car we found a excited mob gathered about a poker game. We elbowed our ways to the first row of spectators, and, sure enough, there's young Pearson sittin' gloomily behind a small pile of chips. He lost practically all of 'em on a call just as we come up and he looked like he felt pretty low. The other players, cold-eyed, tight-lipped, and hard-faced, lacked only the green eyeshade and shirt sleeves to look like house dealers in some palace of chance, and that's what a couple of 'em was by trade. At least one of the others I was satisfied worked the big liners durin' the heavy tourist season. Diana's kid brother had

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the same chance with them burglars as a one-legged guy would have to outrun a frightened deer, and from Richard's pale, desperate face they was givin' him a fearful trimmin' and makin' him love it!

When Richard got his next five cards he happened to look up and see us. He nodded and then glanced at his hand. Instantly he's afire with excitement. He beckons for us to come closer and when Kid Roberts bends down our young friend in a hoarse whisper puts the bee on him for a two-hundred-buck loan. I frowned, not bein' in favor of puttin' anything out to strangers, whether they had luscious sisters or not, and the Kid stalls by askin' Richard if he didn't think he ought to call it a day and quit playin'. Impatiently the boy says no and guardedly allows us to see his hand. It was the panther's pajamas —*four aces!*

Well, it certainly looked like our boy scout was equipped for a hog killin' and Kid Roberts slipped him the two hundred under the table. Tryin' to appear at ease but makin' a dismal failure of it, young Richard tossed the bills to the banker. Me and Kid Roberts gasps and looks at each other queerly when the banker calmly flips back just *four white chips* for Richard's two hundred fish. We're both convinced that this is considerable game of poker when white chips is priced at fifty smackers a copy!

Pearson managed to put over a stiff raise before the draw, but either guessin' or *knowin'* the strength of his hand, the rest of these big-hearted gamblers done what the movies calls a fade-out when he waved the dealer

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away and said he'd play the cards he already held, as is. The result was that Richard's four bullets was about as much use to him as a tuxedo would be to a life convict. With no players, he won only a few chips over the ante, but he acted as happy as puss with a ball of catnip. The others made a great show of congratulatin' him and tellin' him his luck had turned. No foolin', it was so raw it was pitiful!

At this minute Diana enters the club car, with Ptomaine trailin' after her. One glance and she spots Richard in the poker game and the next instant she's frantically beggin' Kid Roberts to get her brother out of it.

"He'll lose every penny he has with him and then sign I. O. U.'s for hundreds more—he always does!" she wails, clingin' to his arm. "Gambling is Dick's besetting sin, and he *never* wins! Father will be furious and blame me for allowing him to play. Oh, please stop him, Mister Roberts. He'll listen to *you* —he thinks you're wonderful and—and I'll *know* you are if you help me!"

The card sharks was castin' wicked glances at Diana and Kid Roberts, like they guessed what she was sayin', though he was too far away from them to actually hear her. That meant the strong possibility of a jam if Kid Roberts interfered, and a jam meant somebody was goin' to get smacked! All of which would undoubtlessly reach the shapely ears of the Kid's already angry wife, and with Diana's name mixed up in it—well, you know how them things get twisted by the time they reach print. Prob'ly thinkin' of all this,

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Kid Roberts hesitated and I shook my head vigorously and whispered "Lay off!" to him, over Diana's shoulder.

He glanced from me to her bewitchin'ly appealin' face and just then a guy standin' near us remarks to his friend that he seen young Pearson lose twenty-five hundred bucks on a single hand and he thinks the cards is "readers." Among crooked gamblers, boys and girls, "readers" is playin' cards with little dots or other marks here and there in the scroll work on the backs of 'em. Sometimes these marks simply looks like errors in the engravin', and the average guy wouldn't notice 'em in a million years, or think anything about 'em if he did. But the educated player can look at the backs of a deck of "readers" and read the cards face down like he'd read his newspaper!

When it dawned on Kid Roberts that these yeggs was deliberately cleanin' Diana's brother, all thoughts of caution fled from his mind. With flashin' eye and grim face he started for the card table to bear down on the gamblers, but I frantically managed to get him to speak to the conductor before doin' anything himself. Mr. Conductor, which didn't seem exactly wild to butt in, told the Kid he couldn't bust up no sociable session of cards unless somebody was caught cheatin'. Get some positive evidence that the game's crooked, he says, and he'll make 'em quit.

Throwin' a highly disgusted look at the faint-hearted ticket puncher, Kid Roberts quickly pushes his way in beside the card players, calmly reaches over to the deck and picks up a handful of cards. Young Pear-

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son looks at him in amazement and the others jump up with a chorus of choice oaths which drove Diana to the car vestibule, her face flamin' and her little fingers over her equally little ears.

"Pearson, you've been cheated—these cards are marked!" says Kid Roberts, after a quick examination of 'em.

"Get back in line, you big stiff!" snarls one of the gamblers, grabbin' for the deck. "The first thing you know you'll get a clout on the ear!"

Smilin' quietly at the idea of this big punk choosin' him, the Kid passed the deck over to Pearson, motionin' him to look at the backs of the cards. But after one long stare into the angry faces of the exposed crooks, the boy was satisfied. He leaped to his feet, a ragin' furnace, what I mean!

"Give me back my money, you robbers!" he yells.

"Aw, shut up, you cheap squawker!" sneers the dealer, and takes a punch at him. One of the others sprang at the Kid, and Ptomaine, which loves a free-for-all like a mother loves her first baby, shed his coat, licked his lips and with a howlin' "Let's go!" sailed in.

Kid Roberts socked the fellow which hit young Pearson, and that jazzbo went out like a match in a storm. Diana's gamblin' brother proved to be no cake eater himself and caught another one of these tomatoes on the nose with a lovely right swing. Richard's victim staggered back against Ptomaine and Ptomaine affectionately caressed him with a uppercut which nearly tore his head off. Diana had run for all

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the conductors, brakemen, and porters on the rattler, but they was slow in arrivin'. In the meelee, I bumped into a husky, wild-eyed combatant, which was just settin' himself for another rush.

"Who's that big, good-lookin' bird which is slappin' 'em all silly?" pants this guy. "I think I'll just tie in there and smack him down for luck!"

"You'll have lots of luck, all right," I says. "But it'll be all bad. That's Kid Roberts!"

"Like Kelly is!" howls my viz-a-viz. "Creepin' mackerel, I don't wish no part of *that* boy! I better get out of traffic here—thanks for the tip!"

With that, he flops right down flat on the floor and lays there!

Well, no kiddin', the whole train's in a uproar when it pulls into some slab and the gamblers collect themselves from the floor, rush for the doors, and force the scared porter to open 'em before we come to a full stop. As they still got young Pearson's jack, Kid Roberts tears after 'em and me after him. Ptomaine couldn't come, as he was busy strugglin' with most of the burly train crew which was tryin' to quell this pogrom and had picked him as the goat.

Me and the Kid lost our prey in the crowd at the station, and though we searched waitin' room, ticket office, baggage room, and the near-by streets high and low, there was no sign of 'em. When we run back breathlessly to the train I let out a beller which alarmed the depot help, whilst Kid Roberts, which would laugh away a broken leg, sits down on a trunk and chuckles his head off.

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Mr. Train has went away from there, takin' with it our suit cases, tickets, Ptomaine, and whatnot!

As the next train of interest to us wasn't due till the followin' a. m., we sent a long night letter to Ptomaine, on the chance that he'd have brains enough to take care of our baggage and go on to our trainin' camp to wait for us. Turnin' in that night in the trap which passed for a hotel, I thought there was one consolation out of our missin' that choo-choo and that was that we'd saw the last of Miss Diana Pearson and her trouble-causin' brother, Richard. She was a snappy number and he was nice people, but they both was poison to *us!*

How the so ever, Ptomaine dashed my fond hopes when he met us in the little fishin' village the next day. He had our baggage and likewise the two hundred young Pearson had borreyed from Kid Roberts on the train. Then he says Diana had begged him for the address of our camp, because she wanted to thank the Kid personally for his efforts in behalf of her brother. Ptomaine didn't have the heart to refuse her request.

"You big sapolio!" I hollered, fit to be tied. "Now she'll come here and gum everything! Ain't she caused us enough trouble already?"

"Oh, you mean 'at little hubbub on the train?" says Ptomaine. "Why, 'at wasn't no trouble to *me!* I kind of like a little fracas now and again—it's all fun and it keeps a man from gettin' rusty. Besides, it's a pleasure to get a punch in the nose for a girl like Diana Pearson!"

"Then you won't mind *croakin'* for her!" I says

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grimly. "Because if she shows up at this camp on account of you tellin' her where it is, you silly-lookin' dumb-bell, I'll just about cook you!"

Well, my worst fears was realized when Diana blew into the burg a few days later with her brother and father. Her and Richard lost no time hot-footin' to our camp and gushin' all over Kid Roberts for rescuin' the boy from the gamblers.

Diana tells us that she and her two relatives by marriage, viz., her father and brother, is goin' to spend a few weeks in our midst, and nothin' will do but Kid Roberts has got to meet dad. Although we found out that the old boy had four bucks for every egg in a shad roe, he didn't put on no dog with us. On the other hand, he cuddled right up to the Kid. The Kid begin breakin' up the dreary monotony of the trainin' grind by goin' fishin', swimmin', golfin', rowin', and playin' tennis with Diana and Richard, whilst they retaliated by havin' him to dinner at their place a couple of times a week. Me and Ptomaine took no part in this mad social whirl, for a good reason. Nobody asked us to.

I'm viewin' with the greatest of alarm the plain and growin' fondness of Diana for Kid Roberts, knowin' he just looked on her as a nice little girl and was still hopin' to win back his wife, when somethin' else happened which took my mind off the Pearsons. Mr. Toledo Eddie Hicks, the heavyweight champ's pilot, appears on the scene! This got me red-headed, and the first thing I wanted to do was run him out of the town, bein' satisfied he was there for no good reason.

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I certainly had no idea of lettin' him see Kid Roberts work out and study the Kid's style, when we're goin' to fight his man if the Kid stops Fleming. But Kid Roberts didn't seem to care whether Eddie seen him do his stuff or not and the results was that this jobbie sits around watchin' the Kid train and tryin' to get rid of him was like tryin' to get rid of asthma. Well, this stuff got on my nerves, what I mean, and one day I nailed Edward when he's startin' into the gym.

"Outside!" I commands, barrin' the way. "I can't let you in here no more on account of the Kid's health. He's liable to catch somethin' from you!"

"You better make him shorten that right hook of his and time his straight left, or what he'll catch from Mister Fred Fleming will be pitiful!" sneers Toledo Eddie. "I come up here to look at a world beater and all I see is a good preliminary boy!"

"You got a coke peddler's nerve comin' up here at all!" I says. "Ain't you got no more brains than to visit this camp openly? If the sport writers ever gets wind of you bein' here, they'll swear we're fixin' to make the Kid Roberts-Bob Young fight one of them things!"

"Hold everything!" says Eddie. "That's a bout we'll take up later. What I'm interested in *now* is the Kid Roberts-Fred Fleming quarrel. Come on down to the beach where there's nobody around but dumb little fishes and the close-mouthed clams. I want to proposition you. Don't get rosy—let me speak my piece and you can take it or leave it. I got to make the noon

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train out of here to-day and I'll accept a plain yes or no!"

His proposal was nothin' less than to have Kid Roberts "carry" red Fleming in their comin' scrap and take a draw decision. Eddie's world's champion, Bob Young, would then fight Fleming for a big purse before takin' on Kid Roberts, a thing he couldn't do if the Kid knocked Fleming for a mock orange. Both Young and his manager figured Fleming a pushover, and they was anxious to box him ahead of the Kid, which they knew would be tougher to stop. Toledo Eddie likewise points out to me that if Kid Roberts holds Fleming up in this mill it will give us another battle and another juicy purse with him, whether we knocked off the champion or not. If we're business men enough to do this paltry little favor for the champ, why, Eddie stands ready to present us with a certified check for $25,000 as a slight token of his esteem.

Well, I liked this double-crossin' second-story man the same way I liked sulphuric acid, not only because of the many obstacles he had continually put in the path of me gettin' the champ into a ring with Kid Roberts, but for other good and sufficient reasons. This looked like a lifetime chance to hand him the run around he justly deserved, so instead of tellin' him he was all wet I pretended to give the matter lots of due consideration. Fin'ly I told Eddie O. K. and slipped his check for twenty-five grand in my pocket. I had no intentions of cashin' it. Toledo Eddie then gayly blows back to New York to rehearse Fleming and oil his manager. I says nothin' what the so ever about the

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transaction to Kid Roberts, which I fondly hoped and positively thought would knock Mons. Fleming as cold as a Eskimo's nose!

The date for the muss with Fleming was about ten days off, when all of a sudden Diana Pearson begin treatin' Kid Roberts with a coolness which was as noticeable as it was puzzlin'. Greatly surprised by her upstage actions, the Kid was at a loss for a explanation. The dinner invitations, swimmin' engagements, and tennis appointments was out, and as far as we was concerned Diana could of vanished from the village. I didn't know the cause of her Ritzin' us and I didn't care! I was too tickled that we was clear of female entanglements to bother about the reason.

I only wish I had, no foolin'!

Kid Roberts put Diana's strange actions down to the usual uncertain ways of the ladies, which has been known to go from one extreme to the other before. Besides, he had more serious things to think about, with one of the most important fights of his career only a few days off. On the mornin' of the day we was to break camp and go down to Gotham for the battle, who shows up but Diana. Her distant, cold manner is somewheres else—she's just one sweet, fascinatin' smile. She's dressed in some filmy somethin' which greatly assisted her many attractions and I immediately got thoughtful, because *my* experience has been that women is most dangerous when they're apparently goin' out of their charmin' way to be nice!

After fussin' around for a few minutes, Diana coyly asks Kid Roberts to go for a ride with her in her

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father's fast motor boat, and to my great surprise she includes *me* in the invitation. Ptomaine was away gettin' our stuff packed and down to the station, or I guess she'd of asked him too. Anyways, I thanked Diana for her kindness to a pair of lonely and temporary grass he-widows, but I says we've got to pass the thing up. Our train leaves at noon, and if Kid Roberts should miss it, he'd likewise miss a heavy date he's got with Mr. Frederick Fleming at a smackin' party. Diana pouts and pleads. It will be our last day together, etc., etc., etc. If you'd ever seen this girl, why, you'd know what happened without me tellin' you! Glad that Diana had got over her peeve and tickled to part with her in a friendly manner, Kid Roberts accepts her invitation and drags me along unwillin' and suspicious.

When we climbed aboard old man Pearson's swell speed scow, I warned Diana not to go too far, as a hour at most was all we had to spend on the briny. She simply tosses her head, flips the wheel, and we're off, putt-putt-puttin' in a shower of spray across the bluest water I ever seen in my life outside of a paintin'. If me and the Kid hadn't had the fight on our minds, we'd of highly enjoyed this thrillin' dash over the waves in the bracin', clear salt air. We had a beautiful mornin', a beautiful boat, and a beautiful ocean and a beautiful girl. Perfect!

Lulled half asleep by the steady hum of the high-powered motor, I'm thinkin' these pleasant thoughts when—clunk! Mr. Boat stops dead!

With a little nervous laugh, Diana says it's nothin'

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at all and she'll fix it in a jiffy. But she didn't fix it in no jiffy, and when twenty minutes has slipped by, me and Kid Roberts took a hand. What I know about motor boats could be wrote in capital letters on the head of a pin, and what the Kid knows would fit there likewise and still leave plenty room! We tugged at the fly wheel, but she wouldn't turn over, we tinkered and messed with pliers and screwdrivers and switches and whatnot, but all we got was full of grease. There's no way of stoppin' time from flyin' on the water any more than there is on dry land, and when we're still driftin' idly away from the shore at the end of a hour I'm so mad I ain't fit to be at large, and even Kid Roberts is worried. The beach is just a dim outline in the distance, the motor will not move. and we got a ten-thousand-dollar appearance forfeit up with the promoter of the Fleming meelee in New York. What I was thinkin' about Diana right there would never make her stuck on herself, no kiddin'!

Boilin' over as I was, I couldn't keep still, and before I could stop 'em a couple of cusses slipped out. They was at least *clean* ones, but nevers the less I begged Diana's pardon when the Kid whirled on me angrily.

"Oh, don't bother to apologize," says Diana scornfully. "I'm not surprised at anything *either* of you do! I happened to overhear your agreement with the champion's manager to make the bout with this Fleming crooked. You see, I was behind the rock that day!" She turns to the astonished Kid Roberts,

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whilst I'm still gaspin', "And you were my ideal!" she tells him, reproachfully.

"I haven't the slightest idea what you are talking about, Miss Pearson," says the Kid in amazement. He gives my flustered face a stern look. "What does this mean, Joe?" he asks harshly.

Well, I'm caught with the goods! There's no out for me, so I told the gradually burnin' up Kid Roberts all about the talk I had with Toledo Eddie Hicks that fatal day on the beach. I tried to show the Kid where I was right, but he sharply cut me off with a cold request for the $25,000 check I got from Eddie. I meekly handed over the scrap of paper and the Kid viciously tore it to shreds before Diana's wonderin' eyes. Then he proceeded to give me as two-handed a bawlin' out as I've had in my life and I'm a A-1 judge of bawlin' outs, bein' a married man. With that all settled, Kid Roberts, still flamin', tells Diana his fight with Fleming will be on the level, the same as *all* his battles is and if she don't believe him now, maybe she will when he knocks Fleming stiff!

"Oh, Mister Roberts, you can't whip Fleming *now* —you—you must not defeat him!" cries Diana.

"*Must* not!" frowns the Kid, bewilderedly. Things is all comin' too fast for him.

"*Must* not!" repeats Diana. "After overhearing that conversation between Mister Murphy and that horrible Toledo Eddie, I told my brother you had arranged to have the bout result in a draw and—and Richard has bet seven thousand dollars that way! Wait—that isn't all. He took the money from

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father's safe, and when father misses it—oh, it will be terrible! Father has a fearful temper—you do not know him—he may even send Richard to jail! But if you *don't* whip Fleming, Richard will win his bet and he can replace the money without any one ever being the wiser. Oh, please, Mister Roberts—I—I—"

Diana breaks off in a fit of sobbin', and Kid Roberts gives me a look which made my hair stand up! Then he stares at the weepin' Diana and from her to the shore, which is gettin' further and further away. That last look woke him up with a start! He tells Diana he's very much upset over the situation—a thing for which he's in no way to blame—but her brother should of come to him for his O. K. before bettin' his old man's sugar on her unsupported story of a framed fight. Richard rates little sympathy and Kid Roberts can do nothin' now. The Kid positively ain't goin' to turn crooked and fake it with Fleming to save her brother or anybody's brother. He wouldn't even do it for his *own* brother!

Diana suddenly jumps up, and with blazin' eyes tells Kid Roberts that if he won't save Richard, then there'll be no fight. The real reason the motor boat won't perform is because we're out of gas, and as there's no fillin' stations on the ocean let him try and get ashore!

A nice girl, what?

Starin' his watch out of countenance, Kid Roberts grinds his teeth, and, I bet, wishes Diana was a great big husky man for about three minutes instead of a naughty little girl. She sits back coolly in the rich cushions of the boat and smiles defiantly at him, seem-

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in'ly enjoyin' his inward convulsions of rage. The Kid measures the distance to the beach with a speculative eye. With a snap, his watch closes and goes in his sweater pocket. The sweater comes flyin' off over his head and lands in my face. He bends down, swiftly sheds his shoes and socks, runs to the bow of the boat, and before either me or Diana can rise he's overboard in a graceful dive which barely made a splash!

Well, it was a good three miles against a brisk wind in a choppy sea to the shore, and Kid Roberts was not clothed for no endurance swim. He hadn't gone half the distance when Diana, watchin' him through marine glasses, lets forth a little cry, and I snatched the glasses from her tremblin' hands. Peerin' through 'em, it was a minute or more before I could locate the Kid's bobbin' head in the high-runnin', whitecapped waves, and when I did I yelled murder. Kid Roberts, either seized with cramps or exhausted from the tough goin', was fightin' for his life!

Sick with fear and horror, I turned on Diana, and what I told that young woman I bet she'll often recall without pleasure. She wilted under my tongue lashin', but quickly recovered and dashed into the cabin of the boat. When she come out she's draggin' along a container of gasoline. Whilst I frantically poured it in the tank, wonderin' why my temper didn't explode it, she tearfully explained that she'd disabled the boat purposely to keep Kid Roberts from showin' up at the fight in case he decided to disregard my agreement with Toledo Eddie Hicks, which is just what he done. She'd found it hard to believe that Kid

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Roberts was crooked, but she was leavin' nothin' to chance. I merely snapped at her that if the Kid drowned before we got to him, I'd toss her overboard after him as sure as she was a foot high!

Kid Roberts was all in when we reached him, and I pulled him out, assisted by Diana, which was scared stiff till we got him aboard. Then she perked up, told the gaspin' Kid she saved his life and the least he could do in return was to save her brother's money. If I had her nerve, I'd start across the Sara Desert with a line of gondolas and talk all the sheiks into tradin' their camels for 'em!

Soakin' wet, chilled to the bone, and sore at all of us, Kid Roberts simply glared at Diana and refused to answer her one way or the other. In silence we sped to the shore, hopped from the boat and a frightened Diana, and dashed to the railroad station, where the frantic Ptomaine Joe bundled us into our compartment.

The less said about that trip to New York the better!

Kid Roberts was still enraged at one and all when he climbed through the ropes before a howlin' mob of fight-mad fans to tangle with Fred Fleming, and cheers which rocked the clubhouse only wrung a curl of the lip from him. Talk about rarin' to go—the Kid shot from his corner at the first bell like a wounded tiger and chased the amazed and indignant Fleming all over the ring! Fleming thought it was all fixed to go the full distance to a draw, and he just couldn't understand the Kid's bein' so rough and boisterous at the start. He clinched and cautioned Kid Roberts, re-

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questin' a little less speed, and the Kid snarled for him to stop talkin' and fight, because this fracas was goin' to be level. "You dirty double-crosser!" hisses Fleming and butts the Kid viciously with his head.

"I'm no double-crosser; I didn't agree to anything!" answers Kid Roberts and slammed Fleming with a fearful right uppercut. After that conversation kind of lagged.

Kid Roberts hit Fleming with everything but the timekeeper's watch in that first frame and twice dropped him for short counts, but the Kid was too mad to measure his man and finish him with a punch to a vital spot. His timin' was away off and his judgment was back in the dressin' room. That's all saved Mr. Frederick Fleming from a trip to dreamland in the first two minutes, and at that Freddie took one terrible pastin'! He was on Queer Street from the first minute on and didn't land a clean punch durin' the entire round on the human batterin' ram which danced around him. Gorged with thrills, the crowd had to find room for another one at the bell. With the sound of the gong, Kid Roberts dropped his busy gloves. Sock! Quick as a flash, Fleming shot a left to the wind, and the Kid sprawled flat on his back! A instant of stunned silence, then the house was in a wild uproar. I jumped into the ring and screamin'ly claimed the fight on a foul, whilst Ptomaine and the other handlers dragged the limp Kid Roberts to his corner. Fleming and his seconds protested that he didn't hear the bell—old stuff!—whilst half the mob bawled for the scrap to go on and the other half shrieked "Roberts

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wins!" The referee hesitated, and whilst he's hesitatin', the timekeeper bangs the old cowbell for the second round.

"Get out of the ring, Joe!" pants Kid Roberts, pushin' past me. "This is one I don't want to win on a foul. I want to *stop* this fellow, and I've got enough left to do it—let's go!"

And they went. Not havin' fully recovered from the effects of that foul blow at the end of the first round, Kid Roberts was lucky to last out the second. He done it by continual clinchin', coverin' up, doggin' it, and kiddin' the suspicious Fleming out of rushin' him with a flurry of punches which might of ended it. Fleming had the greatest respect in the world for the Kid's right, and he was afraid Roberts was only pretendin' to be hurt to fool him into leavin' a openin'.

The result was a slow round which had the crowd whistlin' and stampin' their feet. Both men got the royal razzberry from the indignant throng when they trotted to their corners at the gong.

Kid Roberts took the third round by a good margin, usin' a straight left and a short right uppercut in close, under my instructions. His timin' had vastly improved and he cut Fleming's eye in this innin', makin' Fred look like a chump with a wicked jab which never stopped peckin' at the sore glim. When the Kid come to his corner, he complained that Fleming was so heavily greased with some oily substance that it was impossible to do anything with him in a clinch. I called the referee's attention to it, and, that guy, anx-

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ious to please after ignorin' Fleming's glarin' foul in the first, talked turkey to the boys in Fleming's corner during the rest.

Fleming come out full of ambition for round four and it was a pretty even session, both takin' plenty punishment to the jovial crowd's delight. After a clinch, the Kid again protested to the referee about the goo on Fleming's body and the official stops the fight, gets a towel from one of Ford's angry handlers and wipes off Fleming's glistenin' body. Some of the mob liked that and some of 'em didn't.

The fifth and sixth rounds was likewise even up and not to the crowd's likin's, bein' a bit slow. Kid Roberts kept dancin' around, cuttin' Fleming to pieces with straight lefts and right hooks, whilst Fleming, givin' up the idea of *boxin'* with the Kid, would let go a murderous swing every now and then with all his hopes pinned to it. When the Kid didn't block or duck these wild blows they did plenty damage and the blood spattered on his silk trunks wasn't all Fleming's by a long shot!

At the beginnin' of the seventh round Kid Roberts feinted Fleming into a openin' with his left and then shot across his right for a clean knockdown. Fleming took "eight," the popeyed crowd countin' aloud with the referee, and when Fred got up, Roberts stumbled as he rushed in eagerly to finish him. The slip threw the Kid off balance and Fleming swung a desperate right which caught Roberts in the pit of the stomach with a plunk which could be heard in China! Fleming's admirers screamed themselves blue in the

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face as the Kid sank to the floor. It didn't seem like *nobody* could get up after a sock like that one, but the Kid's ability to take it is only one of the things which twice made him a world's champion! He got to his feet at "nine" and throwed me a comfortin' look before divin' into a clinch, where he held on till his wounded tummy behaved. Roberts finished the round in good shape, but he took no further chances with Fleming's right swing to the body.

That frame presented Fleming's friends with their last chance to cheer. In the eighth, ninth, and tenth Kid Roberts simply give Fleming a boxin' lesson and punched him from pillar to post. Tired and puffin' from missin' haymakers and the steady beatin' the Kid was handin' him, Fleming was a sorry sight as he slumped on his stool at the end of the tenth round. It must of been plain to his wildest admirer that Frederick was through!

I sent Kid Roberts out to finish Fleming in the eleventh, and the Kid folleyed orders to the letter. He sprayed Fleming with hooks and jabs whilst Fred was vainly tryin' to find him with a right swing. Suddenly Kid Roberts stopped his pretty boxin' exhibition and tore in with a terrific right and left to the body. Fleming missed a straight left ordered by his corner, but got home with a right to the face. Kid Roberts was short with a right uppercut and took a hard left hook to the head in return. That punch stung him and he shot back a right to the jaw which forced the tough Fleming to clinch. Fleming hit Roberts low on the break and the crowd hissed, then cheered wildly

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as the Kid sent Fleming to his haunches with a overhand right to the mouth.

Fleming was in distress when he arose without waitin' for a count, and, always a great finisher, Kid Roberts took his time, ducked a couple of swings to the head and set himself. Fleming poked him twice with his left and then started a right. Kid Roberts let fly his own right at the same instant and was a flash quicker in landin' on Fleming's jaw. It was a beautiful punch! "A-a-a-ah!" yells the crowd, jumpin' on the seats. Fleming swayed for a instant, dropped like a felled tree—and it was all over!

The very first person to rush into the dressin' room and hysterically shake the Kid's hand was Mr. Richard Pearson. Richard is crazy with excitement and so thrilled by bein' in the presence of the mighty Kid Roberts that he's speechless, though his sparklin' eyes is talkin' plenty! The Kid frowns angrily at him at first and then relents, seein' the worship in the boy's eyes. After lecturin' him severely for takin' his father's seven thousand bucks and losin' it, Kid Roberts says he'll loan Richard the money to make it good if he gives him his word he'll quit gamblin' forever.

The boy gives him a blank look.

"Why—why *I* haven't lost anything!" he says.

It's the Kid's turn to be astounded.

"But Diana—your sister said she told you the fight was arranged to result in a draw and that you had bet that way!" he tells him.

Young Pearson looks puzzled for a instant and then he busts out laughin'.

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"That's rich!" he says. "I remember now, Di did tell me something about overhearing a conversation between Mister Murphy and the heavyweight champion's manager, but then girls get everything wrong! I merely told her I was going to bet on the fight, and I suppose she took it for granted that I'd place my wager according to her report of a frame-up. How ridiculous! I—why, I *knew* you couldn't be crooked, Mister Roberts, so I bet on you to win by a knockout and I won almost fifteen thousand dollars!"

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ROUND NINE

MACK'S BETH

A sport writer named Plautus which used to cover the fights in the good old days of 254 B. C., or about the time Harry Wills first begin challengin' Jack Dempsey, once made the followin' remark:

"The bell never rings of itself; unless some one handles it or moves it it is dumb!"

From that radical statement it's no trouble to see that our hero never heard of the automatic timer, with which many prize rings in this popular year is equipped. In spite of its intricate soundin' name, gentle reader, the automatic timer is nothin' more than a simple electric gadget attached to the bell, which without human interference rings Mr. Bell at the end of the regulation three minutes of assault and battery and also at the end of the one minute's merciful rest allowed the victim. The main charms of this kind of a gong is that it never varies a split second in announcin' the beginnin' and end of each round—a attraction sometimes found lackin' in human timekeep-

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ers either through excitement, inexperience, bum watches or the deliberate intent to favor one or the other of the boxers.

The heavyweight championship of the world once hung in the balance on the ringin' of the bell slightly before it was due. Sounds interestin', hey? Well, it is! Listen:

As Kid Roberts had now mowed down all the other contenders and the public was clamorin' for Bob Young to do his stuff, there was nothin' for the champ to do but give Kid Roberts a chance. That's what he done—a big-hearted act that baby will regret to his dyin' day.

Whilst I'm busy with the signin' of the articles and exchangin' daily horrible insults with Toledo Eddie Hicks, Kid Roberts was makin' a game attempt to win a fight of far more importance to him than the comin' brawl with Bob Young. This bout was carded to be fought in the dear old divorce courts and his opponent was no less than his beautiful but kind of infrequent wife, Dolores. The Kid was tryin' to get her to quit divorcin' him till he had his chance to make good. She'd dove head first into politics when they split and had only just hauled off and won the nomination for state senator.

Well, the night before Kid Roberts was to start conditionin' for Mons. Young, we bound to a theatre for a few much needed laughs previous to takin' up the dull, monotonous trainin' grind. My idea was that a snappy show would push the Kid's mind off his muddled domestical affairs, but that thought turned out

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to be a fearful flop! We no more than park in our seats after makin' life-long enemies of the customers which had to get up to let us pass, when Kid Roberts pegs his wife in a box with some friends of all sexes. At about the same minute, she seen *him.* The glance which passed between 'em only lasted a undersized moment, but it told 'em both as much as a hour's conversation would. It told *me* somethin', too—to the viz, that in spite of the fact they was separated, there was still a flock of love left on both sides. That odd coincidence highly alarmed me and don't think it didn't! It wasn't that I wished to keep distance between Kid Roberts and his lovely bride, but I was afraid that if they went to work and treated themselves to a tête-à-tête right then it might result in the heart-sick Kid postponin' or even callin' off his fight with Young. I was almost positive that was what Dolores would ask for and I was by no means certain that this time Kid Roberts wouldn't give her service. He hadn't seen her for quite the while, he was maniacal about her and lately he had showed more signs than usual of the fearful strain he was under at the thoughts of losin' her forever and a day. Dolores was a pulse-quickener of the first water and Kid Roberts was human—for once he might do anything she asked him, with few blamin' him.

I figured my worst fears was realized when Dolores sends the Kid a note durin' intermission, to the effects that if he had any curiosity to view her at close range he could appease that curiosity after the show. Well, Kid Roberts would willin'ly of shot all the actors if

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that little prank would of brought this frolic to a quick close and he fidgeted in his seat like a inmate of a kindergarten. He couldn't of enjoyed the play no less had it been in the Siamese language and the start of the last act was the signal for him to blow to the back of the theatre so's to be the first one to hit the great outdoors when the curtain come down.

The next time I seen him was three in the a. m. at our inn and he wasn't fit to be at large, no foolin'! No unexperienced young wife ever sit up anxiously waitin' for a wanderin' bitter-half like I was waitin' for the return of Kid Roberts and his set, white face was just a mirror of what had happened. It was no different than a baker's dozen times before—peace conferences between the Kid and Dolores was about as successful as they'd be between puss and little mousie. At first he was as untalkative as our mutual friend, Mr. Oyster, but he had to get matters off his chest to somebody and as I'm by all means somebody, why, he soon give me a punch-by-punch account of the battle.

Kid Roberts had dashed madly up to the big marble temple on Fifth Avenue where his wife was gamely tryin' to make the best of a million-dollar income with her father. The Kid's first imitation was a attempt to fold her in his manly arms, but the fair Dolores had different plans and cleverly ducked the clinch. Before anything as refreshin' as *that* could happen, Kid Roberts had to pass a few simple tests of husbandly devotion. The Kid was willin', but test number one ruined everything! Like I'd figured, Dolores demand-

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ed that Kid Roberts keep his gloves off Bob Young, forget about the world's championship and quit the ring immediately. In return for his slight accommodation on the Kid's part she'd cancel her divorce suit and take up the exactin' duties of bein' his wife where she left off before. Otherwise, no game!

This terrific swing to the heart from the only one which could ever hurt him there staggered the Kid, but for awhile he kept his head. For the 8954th time, he carefully explained that he couldn't quit till he'd won the title, now practically within his grasp, and then defended it for a huge purse which would put him on his feet financially. That's what he went back tc the game for, why resign when he's on the verge of winnin' the heights? All this was so much applesauce to Dolores. What she called the Kid's "stubborness" burnt her up and she wouldn't listen to reason. The hot-headed Kid then took a turn at bein' sore himself. He credits her with bein' selfish and tells her the only reason she wants him outside the ropes is because she's afraid his bein' a scrapper will hurt her chances of winnin' a seat in the state senate. Dolores calls that a wonderful guess on his part and their farewell was as long drawn out and clingin' as the farewell of a bullet to the barrel of a gun!

And I took the Kid to the theatre that night to get his wife off his mind. For cryin' out loud!

Well, anyways, the followin' day the Kid's headquarters is removed to the gym where my athalete is to do most of his trainin' for the rumpus with Bob Young. Amongst the bevy of nose-bustin' talent whose

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pleasant duties was to lead their chins to the Kid's mighty right till Dame Nature balked 'em from takin' any more punishment, was Ptomaine Joe. In three starts under my disgusted management, Ptomaine had been smacked for a loop exactly three times, but if you think that in any way disturbed this monkey's peace of mind you're crazy. Bein' knocked out thrice in a trio of bouts would of made even a half-wit a bit tired of boxin', but it only seemed to increase Ptomaine's weird longin' for the game. He never let up pesterin' me to get him another quarrel till one day in the gym I throwed four iron dumb-bells at him in pure desperation. I missed him each time, a feat nobody else had ever been able to do in a ring with him.

"Careful, Joe!" says Kid Roberts to me, frownin'. "If you'd struck him with one of those you'd have done a lot of damage!"

"I know I would," I says, "but I'd of paid for them dumb-bells with a smile, if I'd been lucky enough to of hit that big banana with 'em!"

Not the faintest particle upset over the narrow escape he'd just had from makin' me a murderer, Ptomaine picks up the dumb-bells and grins at me pleasantly.

"Better luck next time!" says this typical case of insanity. "You got to get a certain grip on these babies to throw 'em properly. At that, I figured you'd hit me with *one* of 'em! You should of steadied and took aim, what I mean. Listen—when do I fight again?"

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"The minute the next draft comes along!" I says, promptly.

"I don't crave the army," says Ptomaine, "I wish to fuss around in a ring."

"You got a swell chance, clown!" I says. "They wouldn't let you in a fight club no more if you was on the boxin' commission. Why, the sport writers is callin' you the Divin' Venus!"

"'At ain't goin' to make *me* break out in tears," says Ptomaine, scornfully. "Them guys is just sore, at's all!"

"Sore at what?" I ask him, turnin' on a sneer.

"Sore at my habit of fallin' on top of 'em when I get knocked through the ropes," says Ptomaine. "As if a man can be choosey about spots to land in at a time like 'at!"

By this time, the other inmates of the gym which has been standin' around listenin' is in convulsions. Even Kid Roberts' worry-lined face has relaxed a bit, provin' that as a entertainer Ptomaine had few equals and prob'ly was worth carryin' with the camp for that reason alone, like the Kid claims. But this mackerel wasn't satisfied with just bein' a circus around the gym—you couldn't keep him out of the ring with a injunction.

A few days later, Ptomaine comes to me with a brand new argument. He's as serious as a four-alarm fire in Wall Street.

"Listen here," he says, "I been studyin' things over and I'm fin'ly convinced 'at I got no more chance of bein' a champion than I got of bein' Queen of China

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—even less! As the matter of fact, I got quite the few doubts as to whether I'll ever win a fight in a ring in my life!"

"That's the first intelligent remark you ever made in your entire career!" I says, heartily, "And there's nobody more tickled than me to hear that you're through with the glove racket for all eternity!"

"Who says anything about bein' through with the glove racket?" he asks, indignantly, "Don't be silly! I'll be in there tryin' as long as I can dig up another guy to go in there with me. What I mean is I'm through with the idea 'at I'm a world beater. I know I'm never goin' to set the lake ablaze with the way I *win* fights, but what I'm going to do *now* is dumfound Europe with the way I *lose* 'em!"

"What the Kansas City are you talkin' about?" I ask him, as astonished as you are.

"You're just like a baby" he says, "Even the simplest things has got to be carefully explained to you! I'm goin' out and get myself a reputation as the gamest *loser* which ever laid blinkin' up at a countin' referee. I'm goin' to be known as a boy which can take more beatin' than any other scrapper in the wide, wide world! I won't quit, not even if the timekeeper steps in and hits me over the head with the bell. They won't be *nothin'* can stop me till I'm just a gory wreck and even then it'll take the militia to end the bout. Now go and get me some good, tough, murderous puncher which can bring out my hidden gameness and I'll show you the way a fight should be *lost!*"

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There's *my entry* for the cuckoo championship of the globe!

As usual, I give in to Ptomaine's pleadin's after a week of it had me a set-up for the delirium tremens ward. I got him Cyclone McEinstein for one of the preliminaries to the Kid Roberts-Bob Young championship battle. I'll tell you later what Ptomaine done with this lifetime chance. There's some important matters to be discussed right now.

The gym where Kid Roberts was trainin' in was operated by a gent named Charley Mack which was the proud owner of a cauliflower ear and a daughter called Elizabeth, or Beth for short. This young representative of a sex I predict a great success for was as pretty to look at as the Kid's straight left and she was likewise a inveterate boxin' fan. Beth come by her regard for fisticuffs honestly, as her dear old father was a very tasty middleweight in his day and was said to have once got a draw with Bob Fitzsimmons—at checkers. Well, Beth spent a great deal of her time around the gym watchin' the various leather pushers readyin' themselves to get their lips puffed and after Kid Roberts arrived on the scene, why, she was as much of a daily visitor as sunset. She seemed to know all about the struggles of the handsome, college-bred Kid and anybody which couldn't read admiration for him in her eyes couldn't read the mornin' paper, either. I don't think Kid Roberts knew whether Beth was hangin' around the gym or hangin' around Japan. His mind was on two things only—the world's championship and his balky wife! So with his lack

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of interest in the girl and the fact that her old man told me she was the same as engaged to Frankie Nolan, one of the Kid's sparrin' partners, I didn't figure her no menace. And she wasn't—no more than a epidemic of smallpox is!

Ptomaine Joe tumbled right in love with Beth the instant he seen her, but as usual with the girls this mistake favors with his kind attentions, Beth wouldn't even take the trouble to insult him. In a frantic effort to get some notice from her, Ptomaine went through the pork and beaners in the trainin' quarters like a bullet goes through a cigar box! In fact, the only two boys he didn't have on the floor at one time or another was Frankie Nolan and Kid Roberts himself. Havin' saw Ptomaine do that kind of unofficial damage before and then go into a ring and have his ears beat off, this failed to get me unduly excited. As for Beth, well, if she was thrilled at this cave man's ferocity she was certainly a marvel at the art of hidin' your emotions!

How the so ever, our young charmer soon appeared steamed at her failure to panic Kid Roberts, when all the other males in the gym was struttin' their stuff for her. Naturally, the Kid's indifference only got Beth the more interested, and, another thing, Kid Roberts was what you might call big game for *any* girl to bag. So throwin' all pretence to the winds, this damsel sets about the woman's-sized task of bringin' Kid Roberts to her feet. Beth had plenty tricks and she tried 'em all, but this time the Kid was girl-proof! Far from bein' delighted with attentions which would of drove the average guy hysterical with joy, Kid

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Roberts was much annoyed by the everlastin' presence of Beth around the gym and he simply ruined her when he point-blankly asked her one day to take the air. The Kid gently told the furious Beth that a prize fighter's trainin' quarters was no place for a lady, even if her old man did run the joint. Kid Roberts was triple polite about this delicate matter, selectin' his words like a veteran housewife selects chops, but the look the flamin'-faced Beth give him sent a slight chill up my spine.

"The great big stiff!" says Beth to me, courteously, as the Kid walked away. "He hates himself, don't he? I hope Bob Young beats the life out of him. I think Frankie Nolan could do it right now!"

"You do, hey?" I says, curlin' my lip, "Well, Frankie better not get thinkin' that way or the Kid will sure bruise him!"

"He won't do any such thing!" she says, scornfully waggin' her little head. "Frankie could whip Kid Roberts any time he wanted to—he's been holdin' back in the trainin' bouts here!"

"Did Frankie tell you he wasn't tryin' against the Kid?" I ask her, grinnin'.

"No," she says, after a minute, "but I've seen Frankie fight lots of times and he doesn't fight in the ring the way he does here!"

"I noticed that myself," I says, still grinnin', "There *is* quite a difference in the way Frankie boxes in the ring and the way he boxes in a gym. In a gym, for the example, he manages to keep off the floor, whilst in the *ring*——"

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But Beth was gone, flingin' me a enraged remark which she never picked up in no young ladies' finishin' school. I wish I had let her alone, I do for a fact! I should never of kidded her about Frankie Nolan. She liked Frankie and she sure made me pay for my laugh!

Well, Beth went right to her father and demanded that she be allowed to come and go in the gym whenever she wanted to, but Charley Mack was gettin' well paid for helpin' condition Kid Roberts and if the Kid won back the title Charles figured he had a chance to become a regular member of our staff. Charles listened patiently to Beth's angry chatter and then coldly told his little daughter to take the air.

The followin' day, Kid Roberts notes with pleasure that Beth is numbered amongst the missin'.

"I didn't want to be rude to the girl," he says to me, "but, honestly, her presence around here simply threw me off my stride. I don't mind posing in ring togs for the lady reporters, but to walk around half-naked all day before a woman—well—eh—I'm certainly glad she's gone!"

"I wish you wasn't so bashful," I says, gloomily. "That Jane is good and sore because you put her out. She'll frame somethin' on you as sure as you're a foot high. You know the old sayin', 'Hell has no fury like a woman scorned'!"

Kid Roberts smiles and slaps me on the back.

"You've been going to the movies too often, Joe," he says. "What on earth could that girl possibly do to harm *me?*"

"I don't know," I admit. "But she'll do *somethin'*,

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that's a cinch! And as far as the movies is concerned, I've heard of things happenin' in everyday life which would make a movie thriller look like Sunday on the farm!"

"For instance?" asks the Kid.

"Them trips which Sinbad the Sailor took," I says, "or that little voyage of Robinson Crusoe, or——"

"Why, you idiot," butts in the Kid, "those things never actually happened! They are merely imaginative——"

"Listen," I says. "Don't try to kid me. I got the best proof in the world that them things happened!"

"Well, that's certainly interesting indeed!" says the Kid, tryin' to be sarcastical. "What proof have you?"

"I can show you the books!" I says. "Good enough?"

"Ample!" says Kid Roberts, laughin'. "And just as convincing as your belief that Miss Mack has designs on my health, which, of course, is all bosh!"

With that he begins to punch the bag and leaves me to my own resources.

Speakin' of bosh, I'll show you how much bosh my hunch was. Beth Mack done just two little things to Kid Roberts. Each of 'em nearly cost him the title. Allow me to present number one.

Frankie Nolan, Beth's heavy boy friend, was simply a good, tough heavy of no particular class, but a pip of a sparrin' partner mainly through his ability to take it. Frankie was no master boxer, but he'd proved a stumblin' block for many a ambitious comer who'd punch his own heart out tryin' to stop Frankie only to quit tryin' the impossible and take one on the chin.

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He was no different than a hundred others which has as much chance to be champion as I got to be president, yet can go in there and give a good account of themselves, clickin' off a occasional knockout, till years of repeated batterin' sends 'em to the ash can—generally cuckoo from the punchin' about the head.

Well, a guy of Frankie's type, stolid and colorless, seldom gets mad in the ring or out of it. Fightin' to him is a business and he goes about it with no more heat than a carpenter measures off a plank of wood. After twenty rounds, maybe, of gorey fightin' durin' which both him and his opponent has been many times on the verge of a knockout, he'd just as soon sit down to dinner with the other jobbie after the brawl. What I mean is that it takes a lot to stir *them* babies up—but then to Frankie Nolan, Beth Mack was a lot!

The first tip-off I got that Beth had built up Frankie to go after Kid Roberts was when he changed practically overnight from a good-natured, willin' boy to a surly, mumblin', scowlin' gorilla. Then he commenced gettin' off to one side of the gym and shadow boxin', skippin' rope, roughin' around the heavy sand bag and workin' the pulley weights. You'd think *this* guy was trainin' for a scrap instead of Kid Roberts and everybody around the place got hep and made some crack about it. When Frankie went into the trainin' ring with the Kid he was no longer just a choppin' block. He sparred carefully, that is carefully for a big chump like *he* was, and when he let one go he put all he had on it. He'd start sudden flurries and rush the surprised Kid Roberts all over the ring, swingin' viciously

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with both gloves. As a matter of fact, in a couple of days the bouts between Kid Roberts and Frankie Nolan had developed into real fights whilst I let 'em last. Mr. Frankie was tryin' nobly all the time and I knew it when I cut the rounds short a minute or more to prevent the Kid from maybe gettin' butted over the eye by this big, flounderin' hulk which was grimly bent on knockin' him cold!

Instead of gettin' Kid Roberts peeved, this sudden dangerous change in Frankie Nolan actually pleased him. After each setto, he'd slap the glowerin' Francis heartily on the back, tellin' him he was improvin' daily and givin' him the best workouts of anybody in the camp. Why shouldn't Frankie be givin' Kid Roberts the best workouts, when Frankie was tryin' his darndest to put the Kid away?

Four days before Kid stepped into the ring with Bob Young for the world's heavyweight championship, it happened! The Kid had boxed two fast rounds each with Ptomaine Joe, Bud Johnson, a big dinge, and K. O. Stone, a good welterweight we used to put a edge on the Kid's speed. Frankie Nolan was saved for last as usual—always the stiffest workout of the day. I looked around for Frankie impatiently, not wantin' the Kid to cool off between these bouts, and there's Frankie industriously workin' the pulley weights against the wall on the other side of the gym. I run over to him.

"C'mon, c'mon, Big Boy!" I says, "Get in there with the Kid and do your stuff. What's the idea of the physical culture?"

"If you don't like it, pay me off!" snarls Frankie,

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droppin' the pulleys, "*I* don't have to jump when you snap your fingers. Talk that way to them bums around here—not to *me!*"

I let that pass.

"Readyin' for a fight yourself?" I asks, whilst I'm lacin' on his gloves.

"None of your damned business!" says Frankie, lookin' up murderously at Kid Roberts, which is skippin' rope in the ring to keep warm. I tied the laces on the gloves and pulled out my watch.

"Don't get too giddy in there today, Frankie," I says quietly in his ear, "I'm wise to you and so's Kid Roberts. I'm only tryin' to save you a lot of grief! The Kid's been under wraps with you and you know it. He ain't never yet let you have it—that's why you been thinkin' you're good. You start any punches lower than the belt and you'll go out of here with a broken jaw!"

Frankie's answer is to kick over the stool and walk out to the center of the ring, waitin' for the bell. I rung it.

"Hello, Frankie!" says Kid Roberts, pleasantly, and stuck out his glove to shake.

That was the end of all conversation till a minute and a half later, at which point Kid Roberts made his next remark. It was a pantin', "Do you suppose he suddenly went insane?"

I suppose Frankie did, only not *suddenly*—this big mock turtle had been that way for days! Ignorin' the Kid's proffered handshake, Frankie let a left go from somewheres near his ankle, aimin' it for the Kid's

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jaw. Had it been delivered to where it was addressed it would undoubtlessly have put Kid Roberts under ether, for Francis could hit! But somethin' in this guy's eye must have warned the Kid, and though he was caught with his hands down he partially ducked the blow, takin' it high on the side of his head instead of the chin. The force of the punch throwed Kid Roberts into the ropes and whilst the startled gang in the gym is still yellin', Frankie drove a fearful right to the face, cuttin' a nasty gash over the Kid's eye. And in four days Kid Roberts was to step into a ring with the world's champion!

Well, I don't think there will ever be another time in my life when I'll wish for a shotgun like I did right then. Should I of had one about me, I would positively of let Frankie Nolan have both barrels! The blood is streamin' down Kid Roberts' face and Frankie is swingin' wildly at his head with both gloves. Though badly dazed, the Kid is ring general enough to cover up and back pedal till he finds out what it's all about. I want to get to work on the Kid's damaged eye as quick as possible and I yell my head off hollerin' "Time!" Frankie paid me the same attention I'd get from a English butler. Still flailin' madly away with both hands, he shifts his attack to the Kid's body and then Kid Roberts come out of it! He shook his head and the gore from his eye spattered the awe-stricken bunch around the ring. I told 'em to get ready to climb inside the ropes with me when I give the word and these orders is barely out of my mouth when Kid Roberts smashes Frankie with a short left hook which

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sent Frankie sprawlin' to his knees. As tough as a rhino, Frankie jumps up to be met with a left and right which put him down again on all fours. I screamed to the excited handlers to climb in with me and we're scramblin' through the ropes when Francis arises again. He looked to be out on his feet and Kid Roberts stood hesitatin', evidently not wantin' to smack him no more. One of the handlers grabbed at Frankie and Frank give him a shove which sent him half ways across the ring. Then Frankie suddenly leaped towards the Kid, swingin' hard and low with his left as he jumped. A dozen guys rushed him, but they was too late. The punch took Kid Roberts squarely below the belt—a deliberate, nasty, vicious foul which Frankie hoped would cripple him! The Kid's face went grey and twisted with agony, but he didn't even give Frankie the satisfaction of goin' down writhin', like nine out of nine would of done from *that* kind of a sock. Instead, Kid Roberts stepped forward and uppercut this dumfounded hound with a right which nearly tore Frankie's useless head off his shoulders and lifted him inches from the floor. When Francis dropped, he fell like they do with heart failure! He was out for fifteen minutes and come to in a alley back of the gym, where the enraged Ptomaine Joe throwed him on his way to a doctor for the Kid.

Well, youth, health and determination is a hard combination to beat! In spite of the gash over the eye and Frankie Nolan's foul punch, which didn't turn out as bad as we expected, Kid Roberts was ready to put up the fight of his life when the night of the world's

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championship battle with Bob Young rolled around. Somehow or other, the story of that fracas in the gym had leaked out as them things will and the newspapers printed the interestin' fact that Kid Roberts was goin' into the mill with one eye badly cut in trainin'. None of the papers knew which eye it was and to keep Bob Young from makin' the sore optic a continual target, I doped out a scheme to befuddle him. I carefully went over the Kid's injured eye with theatrical grease paint, coverin' up the stitches and the bluish tinge of the skin. Then I taped a plaster over the *good* eye and we fooled the world!

The paid attendance figures for the Kid Roberts-Bob Young fight is on the books as 65,854, but when I gazed at the ocean of faces under the arc lights as we milled our way into the arena with the aid of some husky coppers, I would of swore it was 65,000,000! We got to pass the bleachers on the ways to the dressin' rooms and the eager mob quickly spots Kid Roberts, swingin' briskly along and towerin' over all of us but Ptomaine Joe. Boy, what a yell went up! Plenty shrilly excited female voices joined in the "Good luck, Kid!" "Knock him stiff, Roberts!" "To-night's the night, Big Fellow!", etc., etc. Kid Roberts grinned like a schoolboy and waved his hands to 'em. That tickled 'em silly and they stood up and cheered wildly till we passed out of sight into the dressin' rooms.

Twenty times that afternoon Kid Roberts had tried to get his wife on the phone, hopin' that maybe at the last minute she'd realize what this brawl meant to him

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—to them *both,* for that matter—and at least wish him good luck. The best he got was central's favorite, "They don't answer!" He seemed to be broodin' heavy over that whilst he laid on the table and got his final rub and oilin'. Ptomaine Joe, dated up with Cyclone McEinstein, is all set to start for the abattoir and already showin' his usual symptoms of stage fright. The roar of the crowd outside watchin' one of the preliminaries was comin' to us like the steady drone of a cloudburst on a tin roof and Ptomaine shivered like that's what it was and he had to go out in it nude!

Although I argued myself black in the pan against leavin' him, Kid Roberts insisted on me goin' behind Ptomaine for his bout. I had competent handlers to send out with this baby, but the Kid, which wanted to see Ptomaine win a fight, says my moral support and coachin' might help him make the grade for once. Ptomaine added his own frantic entreaties and I fin'ly give in. I guess I must of had a soft spot in my heart for this brainless wonder at that!

When we stepped into the ring, the crowd give me a mild hand as Kid Roberts' manager. Ptomaine thinks the applause is for him and solemnly takes a bow, which causes the laughin' customers to give him the razzberry. That helped his nerves a lot, as he immediately proved by puttin' his foot in the bucket and upsettin' it when he sit down on his stool. More loud howls from the mob. I turned the serious Ptomaine over to his seconds and spent the next five minutes closely inspectin' the ring in which Kid Roberts would soon be fightin' for the world's championship, financial independence, and,

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with that, his wife! I tested the padded canvas with experienced feet and it seemed O. K. Leanin' against the ropes, I thought 'em a bit too slack and mentioned it to one of the club officials standin' next to me in the ring. He promised it would be right for the championship bout—and then forgot all about it. Bob Young, though, will *never* forget them slack ropes!

It was whilst I'm tryin' the ropes that I first peg three people I'm somethin' more than slightly acquainted with. Two of 'em I'd of rather saw any place in the world than in ringside seats that night! They was Charley Mack, his dangerous daughter Beth and Frankie Nolan—parked perfect in the second row, right behind the timekeeper. Automatic bells ain't universally in use even now and in them days I doubt if there was a pair of 'em in the country. In this case, the bell was clamped to a post about ten feet above the timekeeper's head with a long rope hangin' down in easy reach for him to pull. You'll see plenty of them kind of gongs in fight clubs around the country today. They're all wrong! Automatic timers should be installed in every fight club in the world. When you finish this you'll know why!

Well, Charley Mack waves a friendly hand to me and Frankie Nolan gives me a kind of sheepish, ashamed look. He half rose in his seat and made as if to speak to me, but the glare I give him tied his tongue! I will say, though, that Frankie seemed thoroughly tamed and sorry for what he'd tried to do to Kid Roberts. But the one which interests *me* is Mack's Beth. If she was burnt up before when the Kid

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wouldn't give her a tumble and chased her out of the trainin' quarters, what must she be *now* when on top of that Kid Roberts had slapped her sweetie, Frankie Nolan, for a gondola? For pure venom, rage, wickedness and hate I still got to see anything to equal the look that girl give me when I stared down into her eyes. I turned away quick, much chilled!

Whilst Ptomaine Joe and Cyclone McEinstein are listenin' to the referee's instructions, I'm worryin' myself sick. My fears ain't for Ptomaine—I *knew* he was goin' to get it—I was troubled about Kid Roberts. But then I think what can Beth *possibly* try to pull with that crowd watchin' every move? She ain't sittin' near enough to a corner to switch water bottles on the Kid or anything like that. She wouldn't dare have a gun, as this is real life and not no movie. She can't monkey with the lights—what the Omaha *could* she do? I figured the answer was *nothin'* and impatiently cleared my mind of her. She fooled me by doin' the one thing I never thought of!

There's no use presentin' here a round by round description of the Ptomaine Joe-Cyclone McEinstein catastrophe, stopped by the charitable referee in the fifth round to save Mons. McEinstein from goin' to the chair for murder. The details would be as tasty as the details of a day's work at the slaughter house. Up to the time the referee called a halt, McEinstein had hit Ptomaine with everything but the club's licence and hit him everywhere but in the instep: The Cyclone was all his name declared him to be—a aimless swinger whose wild blows often put the referee in serious dan-

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ger, but no knocker-out. Ptomaine was also as wild as a citizen of Borneo, so I'll just let you imagine what a pair like that would look like in the ring. McEinstein knew nothin' at all about boxin', or just twice as much as Ptomaine did, and this superior knowledge of the game enabled the Cyclone to put Ptomaine on the floor either twenty-six or fifty-four times. But he couldn't put him out! Ptomaine was in there to *stay* and that's what he done till the referee, tired of runnin' for his life every time either of these tramps let go, pushed Ptomaine to his corner bleedin' like a cut artery and raised McEinstein's glove. The mob heartily booed the Cyclone for bein' unable to stop Ptomaine and cheered Ptomaine lustily for his gameness.

When Ptomaine realized that he'd been deprived of a chance to get punished some more he acted like a maniac.

"What's the idea of stoppin' the fight?" he pants through swollen lips, "I ain't hurt no more than you are—this guy can't hit!"

"Outside!" says the referee. "This boy would of broke your neck in another round! He already done everything else to you. You're all full of blood and I'm sick of lookin' at you!"

"Can you beat 'at?" says Ptomaine to me as I ease him onto his stool. "What a break *I* got. They give me a referee which is too faint-hearted to stand the sight of a little blood and on account of 'at he stops the fracas just when I'm takin' a interest in matters!"

As we start up the aisle. the crowd gives Ptomaine

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another cheer, the first time he ever heard that leavin' a ring in his life.

"Listen 'at 'em babies!" he says to me, grinnin' proudly. "'At's what you call a *real* send-off. I told you I had the right dope. To hell with tryin' to *stop* these guys, 'at's something I can't do—but don't I *lose* like nothing' you ever seen before?"

How would you like a guy like that around you all day?

Well, with the cheaper help through for the night, the great throng sits forward on the chairs in a fever of excitement, awaitin' the battle many of 'em had come hundreds of miles to see. In what bettin' there was around the ring, the champ and Kid Roberts was held at even money and take your pick—a bit unusual in a title fight—but in sentiment the big crowd was overwhelmin'ly for Kid Roberts. Perhaps every thrilled man and woman packed in that arena was familiar with the Kid's history and his sensational comeback in the ring and now when he stood at the threshold of winnin' the world's championship they was pullin' for him heart and soul! Even the boys which figured Young would surely take him cheered the Kid madly when we climbed through the ropes, ten minutes before the champ and his handlers come down the aisle to a thunderous roar of applause. The weights was announced as Kid Roberts 194½, Bob Young 197, and for once they was right.

There was a long delay before the fight got under way, caused by Toledo Eddie Hicks findin' fault with this and protestin' about that. Eddie objected to every-

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thing but the purse he was gettin' for Young, $250,000 —win, lose, draw or what have you? He made me re-tape the Kid's hands, lower his belt and about everything else he could think of to try and upset the Kid's nerves with the fussin' and waitin'. The officials come to my assistance and chased the grinnin' Eddie to the other corner about the time that the crowd, crazy with impatience, was all ready to rush the ring and lynch Edward. The men posed for the newspaper photographers, then got the referee's brief orders about breakin' from clinches, forbidden blows and the usual stuff which nobody pays the faintest attention to. The ring is cleared of everybody but Roberts and Young—the mob howls madly—the bell!

Followin' my instructions to the letter, Kid Roberts shot across the ring and clipped Young twice with a terrific left hook to the body before the champ was well out of his corner. The second punch landed flush on the heart and had enough behind it to make the champ buckle at the knees and dive into a clinch. Nobody outside the ropes in that howlin' bedlam was sittin' down now! Comin' out of the clinch, Young steadied and began pickin' at the Kid's plastered eye with a long left. His aim was good so he soon knocked the plaster off and I laughed myself silly at the puzzled look on the champ's face when the eye didn't bleed. My trick to protect the Kid's other glim, cut by Frankie Nolan, was workin' perfect! Kid Roberts was tryin' for a one-round knockout and kept carryin' the battle to Young. He rushed the champ repeatedly, landin' often with that wicked left hook to the body and fol-

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lowin' it up with a right uppercut to the face. Young didn't care for this treatment at all and clinched at every chance, roughin' the Kid along the ropes till the crowd booed him to the echo. In one of these clinches, Young butted Kid Roberts and to show you what luck is, this time his head hits the Kid's sore eye and reopens the cut! The referee warned the champ if he lead with his head again he'd lose his title. Under a stream of orders from his corner, Young then changed his tactics and began to fight somethin' like a champion for a change. He jabbed his left hard to the Kid's fast closin' eye, but missed a right to the body. A second later he caught Kid Roberts squarely on the chin with a right hook and the Kid went back on his heels. He looked to be in a bad way and advice come from Young's handlers in a steady howl!

With victory in either glove, Young didn't seem to know what to do. He measured the reelin' Kid with a light left, whilst *I* prayed for the bell! Kid Roberts' fightin' instinct made him return the left with one of his own, which was short by a foot. "Clinch, Kid, get in there and hold on to him!" bawls the Kid's friends frantically. That was *my* request to him, too. Right at this point, Kid Roberts, badly hurt, called into play somethin' Bob Young didn't have—*brains!* He clinched and when Young roughed him off, Roberts begins to kid the champ about his hittin' powers and his inability to finish a man in distress. Young seemed to fear a trick of some kind and danced around hesitatin'ly. His admirers in the attendance bawled for him to finish it and finish it he could have at this minute with

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one well-placed blow, for Kid Roberts was on Queer Street! Young's uncertainty cost him a one-round win —it allowed the Kid to recover and the champ's golden opportunity was gone. In half a minute Kid Roberts was borin' in again and just before the bell he shook Young up with two stiff rights to the wind. The champ walked to his corner lookin' very serious, whilst the Kid run over to me, laughin'.

Where ever fight fans get together you'll still find 'em talkin' about the second round of this fight. Thrill piled on thrill with a climax which must have removed ten years from the lives of the ones with weak hearts! With the sound of the gong still in the air, the men came together in mid-ring, each bent on makin' this frame the last. Young connected first with a left to the nose and cleverly blocked the Kid's counter for the body. The champ then landed hard to the face with a left and drove a terrible right to the stomach which upset Kid Roberts and also the mob. The Kid signalled to me that he was O. K., took a count of six, rose, shook his head to clear it and tore in with both gloves. A right and left to the wind made the champ give ground and lose some of his sudden confidence. Young tried two lefts for the face and both were blocked. He then swung his right hard to the stomach, but Kid Roberts partially blocked the blow and returned a left and right to the chin that bounced the champion off the ropes. The Kid avoided a clinch and cut the champ's lips with three left jabs. Young rushed like a maddened bull and from then on they fought like stevedores on a dock! After takin' four

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straight rights to the head, Kid Roberts reached Young with a fearful right uppercut and then waded in intent on a knockout. He drove the champion across the ring with a furious barrage of rights and lefts which Young seemed unable to get away from. One of these punches dropped Young to his knees and brought the crowd up on their toes once more, a shriekin' like Indians. Without waitin' for a count, the champ arose groggily and found the ropes at his back. With thirty seconds to go, 65,000 people are cravin' for a knockout and they beseech Kid Roberts to deliver. Roberts had the goods! He smacked Young with a right to the jaw and Young went over backwards through them slack ropes, down on the hastily arisin' newspaper guys and telegraph operators!

I got my watch in my hand and my gaze is fastened on the timekeeper. The referee is at the ropes, leanin' over and countin' Young out. The champion is layin' across two upset chairs, just where he fell, dead to the world! The noise around the ring is deafenin' "One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight—" At that point, the bell suddenly cuts off the referee's dronin' count and cheats Kid Roberts out of a two-round knockout.

I say *cheats,* because that round still had twelve seconds to go! Watchin' the timekeeper, I had saw what happened. Beth Mack, sittin' behind the official, had jumped up, grabbed the rope over the timekeeper's head *and pulled the bell before anybody could stop her.* I had forgot about her, but she hadn't forgot about *us!*

Well, the place is in a uproar and everybody seemed to lose their heads, the thing was so unexpected and

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dumfoundin'. Beth's old man Charley looked for a minute like he was goin' to strike his daughter—Frankie Nolan seemed petrified with astonishment. A flock of cops rush down the aisle and whilst some of 'em hustles the now thoroughly scared Beth outside, the others keep back the crowd from climbin' into the ring. In the champion's corner they're workin' over him frantically. I'm in the ring with twenty other guys, hoarsely claimin' a foul. Kid Roberts is leanin' against the ropes bewilderedly, with Ptomaine Joe mechanically spongin' him off. The timekeeper is tryin' to explain matters, agreein' with me that the round was cut short twelve seconds and Young should of been counted out. Toledo Eddie Hicks insists that the fight go on, as the referee only counted up to eight on the champion. The newspaper guys mix in it—some with us and some with Young. The referee asks Kid Roberts if he wants to continue and the Kid says he does, tellin' me to shut up. The crowd, only a few of 'em knowin' what actually happened, hollers for action of *some* kind. Everybody's talkin' at once and we're gettin' nowheres, till the cool-headed promoter of the bout quickly takes charge. He sends the timekeeper back to his post, has the coppers clear the ring and orders the bell for round three.

It lasted just eighteen seconds and those of the patrons which was scurryin' to their seats with their backs to the ring didn't even see it! At the gong, Kid Roberts rushed from his corner like a express train and caught the unsteady Young with a sledge-hammer left to the wind. Young bent almost double

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and a right hook spilled him over backwards like the roof had fell on him. The count was a waste of time! At "seven" the champ's eyes opened and he blinked up at the blindin' lights goofily. "Eight!" roars the referee, his arm risin' and fallin' and Young got to one knee, slipped back again and laid prostrate on his stomach where he was at the fatal *"ten!"* Many thought Young didn't *wish* to get up. Well, who would, after bein' knocked cold twice in one night!

Forty-five minutes later we managed to shake off the ravin' fans in and about the ring and got to the dressin' rooms. Inside is two coppers and a little, red-headed, freckle-faced messenger boy. The admirin' cops rush to open the door, one of 'em gettin' so excited he took off his hat to the Kid. The messenger boy runs over and grabs at the Kid's bandaged hands.

"I knew you'd take 'at big stiff!" he hollers. "I win three bucks on you, Mister Roberts. I—Oh, hey, I got a letter for you. I been here a hour. I was supposed to slip it to you before you went in the ring tonight."

"Well, why didn't you?" asks the Kid, rippin' open the envelope. I seen he knew the handwritin' from the way his good eye sparkled.

The messenger glares at the coppers, which looks a bit sheepish.

"These fat-headed bulls wouldn't let me in!" he says. "They thought I was tryin' to crash the gate to see the fight!"

"Well, you delivered—beat it!" growls one of the coppers.

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The kid turns to Roberts, which is readin' the letter.

"Hey, Mister Roberts, can't I stay here and go out when *you* do?" he begs. "They'll be a million guys outside to watch you come out and——and they'll all see *me* with you and—"

Kid Roberts smiles and tells the boy to sit down on a stool.

"Laugh *that* off, you big boloneys!" says the messenger to the glowerin' coppers, "And—pay me!"

The bulls look at each other and dig, each tossin' a buck to the grinnin' messenger, which sticks his tongue out at 'em.

"Can you beat that little divvle?" says one of the cops. "He bet us both a dollar Kid Roberts would let him stay!"

Whilst Ptomaine's helpin' the Kid dress, I read the note which he handed over to me, after tearin' part of it off and puttin' that part carefully in his wallet. It was from his wife and what he showed me went somethin' like this:

"This should reach you before you enter the ring. You said if you lost this bout it would be your last. I want it to be your last, of course, but I cannot desire you to lose. I hope you win and having attained your goal, the championship, you will do as I wish and retire. . . . It is so absurd, your boxing, when I have a million. . . ."

I handed it back to him.

"That shows she's still for you," I says. "What will you do?"

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"Get a million of my own!" he says, bangin' the table with his fist, "I'm world's champion again now —that's one objective gained. The next is money—"

"I can let you have the five bucks I win on you!" suddenly pipes up the messenger. "You can slip me out of your next fight. *I'll* take a chance on you, Champ!"

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ROUND TEN

HAIL TO THE CHEF!

"We may live without friends; we may live without books;
But civilized man cannot live without cooks!"

THIS amusin' discovery was made by no less than Lord Lytton—undoubtlessly after his jovial and talented lordship had tried to compose a oyster souffle or the like, all by himself. Lord Lytton become the plot of a tombstone, pro'bly as the result of indigestion, in the annum of 1891. By a odd coincidence, he was a poet by trade and where a poet gets a chance to learn anything about eatin' and cooks is past *me!* How the so ever, the statement that chefs is born life-savers is as true as a dairy-maid's heart—in a movie—and with your kind permission, I'll endeavor to prove it, if I can only keep you awake.

The chef I have selected for this typical exhibition of what can be done with a typewriter in the wrong hands, is Monsieur Ptomaine Joe. By a timely demonstration of the science of cookin', Ptomaine prob'ly saved the lives of me, Kid Roberts, the exceedin'ly pretty Angela Yerkes, and the exceedin'ly ugly skipper of the good ship *Scofflaw*. There's all the ingredients

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of a good story, hey? Well, hold everything and I'll see what I can do with 'em. Don't expect *too* much.

By knockin' Bob Young for a goal, Kid Roberts made good one of his ambitions, the heavyweight championship of the globe. The Kid's other modest desires; financial independence and the return of his balky bride Dolores, was still to be realized, but winnin' the title had brung him within eyesight of both. Bein' the Kid's pilot, I'm busy mappin' out a campaign and dickerin' for some quarrels which we figured would place him on Comfortable Boulevard within the year. Then my athalete was goin' to throw his gloves right into the ashcan and call it a day, as he'd faithfully promised his lovely wife. Dolores was all girl and *any* male would promise her *anything,* they would for a positive fact!

Well, speakin' of avocados, I found it far from child's play to line up for my champion a immediate bout which would bring home the bacon in box cars. I couldn't just send him out to fight in the streets, on the account that the quicker he got monetarily carefree, the quicker he could claim exemption from the hooks and jabs and talk his wife out of the divorce thing. He wanted to lose her like you want to lose your left lung and he gave me no peace, day or night! You see, on our ways up to the heavyweight crown—our second trip, as you might remember—we was so wild to get the title that we didn't haggle over pennies. The results was that some of our brawls paid little more than trainin' expenses and our cash on hand would certainly never cause Wall Street to tremble in

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fear. Now, though, as rajah of the heavies, the Kid's in a position to write his own ticket for his next setto and bein' nobody's fool I set $250,000 as the lowest sum at which Kid Roberts would climb through the ropes and defend his championship. Bob Young got two hundred and fifty grand for losin' it to the Kid, but with *us* it was try and get it! I'll tell you why.

In gazin' over the mass of mugs which made up the heavyweight division at the time, neither the milk-fed sport writers or the hard-boiled promoters could see any one which figured to give Kid Roberts even a stiff workout, what I mean. The public knew that none of these boloneys belonged in the same ring with the champion and the fans certainly wasn't ripe to pay no famine prices for ringside seats to see him carry some ham for a boxin' lesson or knock him off with a punch. In his rush to the title, Kid Roberts had already disposed of the most promisin' contenders and as matters stood the boy had just about fought himself out of a job! Bob Young, the ex-champ, was keepin' people from sleepin' at nights howlin' for a return bout and we was wild with eagerness to give it to him, dut the Kid's three-round knockout of Mr. Young spoiled the former title-holder's chances of gettin' serious attention. As for the newer crop of heavies, they needed more experience before tacklin' Kid Roberts—in the unasked opinion of the self-confessed experts. I could of been deported for what I thought of them scissor-bills—they figured they was doin' us a favor by boostin' the Kid to the skies, but what they was really doin' was keepin' us broke!

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So in that way the time dragged along with Kid Roberts a world's champion, but unable to do his stuff through lack of competition. As far as business was concerned, he was just like a salesman with a line of celluloid cuffs travellin' through Hades! A brace of weeks in vaudeville, a movie and two or three exhibition bouts brung in a few much needed thousands and then we found months of enforced idleness starin' us in the pan. No foolin', the panic was on!

One mornin', haggard and worn from a night full of everything but sleep, I bust into the Kid's room at the Broadway drum we're floppin' at. Ptomaine Joe's already there, givin' the champ his mornin' rub, which come right after the cold shower. Kid Roberts was feelin' pretty low. His handsome face is gloomy and broodin' and he greets me with a paltry nod. Bein' too high calibre to notice them things—which is why I remember it—I returned a brilliant smile.

"Kid," I says, "I've just had a rush of ideas to the brain, with the results that I got a wow of a scheme for us to click off heavy money, without even riskin' the title!"

"Perfect!" busts out Ptomaine, before Kid Roberts can answer, "I always *did* want to get into the bootleggin' game and——"

"Be yourself, you ignorant monkey and don't talk out of turn!" I cut him off, with a touch of old world politeness. "Every time you open your mouth, a first-class idiot speaks!"

"Except the times," remarks Ptomaine, pensively.

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"What d'ye mean except the times?" I asked him. "What times?"

"The times *you're* talkin', you imbecilical mackerel!" says Ptomaine.

Kid Roberts steps between us just in the nick of time to stave off a homicide.

"You two seem to be the only ones who are doing any fighting in this outfit!" says the Kid to me, kind of irritably. "Stop this nonsense and tell me your plan. Here I am, champion of the world, and the title isn't worth a dollar to me! If I don't make some money within the next——"

"Just a minute, don't get all worked up, Kid," I butt in hurriedly, as Kid Roberts starts to nervously pace the floor, "I know just how you feel and I been breakin' my neck lookin' for a bout. Well, I got one! There's no one of us figurin' on a scrap any more this year—*you* know that. We got to wait till some new heavy looms up with enough stuff to make the sport writers build up a bout. In the meanwhile, what's to prevent us tourin' the country, takin' on all comers like John L. Sullivan and them guys used to do? Let's check out of this expensive slab and go places! We can carry three or four vaudeville acts and a jazz band. We'll offer five hundred bucks to any of these local gils which can stay four rounds with you. They'll fall over each other tryin' to get that dough and—Oh, I just know this is goin' to get over, I got a hunch. C'mon, Kid, let's pack up and start boundin' around a bit! Eventually, why not now?"

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"'At's a great idea and jake with *me*, except we don't *need* no jazz band!" says Ptomaine. "I squeeze a vicious accordeon and if I can't learn *you* to operate a mouth organ in two weeks, then you're even sillier than you look! 'At takes care of the musical end of matters. Now, before we shove off, I got a few schemes of my own which is well nigh perfect! Number one calls for——"

Kid Roberts is commencin' to get red-headed, prob'ly thinkin' the two of us is givin' him a run-around. He wheels angrily on this big, dizzy bozo and I managed to sell Ptomaine the idea of leavin' the room by the simple device of throwin' a chair at him. Then I soothed the Kid to the point of sittin' down on the bed and we talked over my proposition.

At first Kid Roberts brushed aside my praiseworthy suggestion like it was a annoyin' fly. He absotively refused to go around the highways and byways, exhibitin' himself "like a trained seal!" as he peevishly called it. But when I pointed out to him that we'd done this act once before and cleaned up, and that at least it was better to try it again than sit around busy doin' nothin', meetin' money only by hearsay, why, he give in. It took me a couple of weeks to round up a band which didn't want two hundred percent of our gate receipts and three vaudeville acts which didn't modestly desire the same. How the so ever, at last I got the outfit together and we set sail.

The show lined up somethin' like this; first the big band concert, then a snappy song and dance act, next a experienced monologist, followed by a speedy acro-

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batic turn, then more music. At this point, Kid Roberts, resplendent in a costly dress suit and lookin' like the Duke of Typhoid, is introduced to the cheerin' multitude. The Kid tells a couple of fight stories and then switches to ring togs, whilst Mr. Band works some more. After runnin' through a few light trainin' exercises, includin' bag punchin' and a couple of fast rounds with Ptomaine Joe, the announcement is made that five hundred fish will be handed over with a smile to the man, woman or child which can stay four rounds with the world's heavyweight champion. The yokels would scramble up and try, Kid Roberts would mercifully give 'em the last lesson first, and, hoopla—we're on our ways to the next trap, prob'ly five or six grand to the good!

What could be sweeter?

Well, we hit the Coast without nobody havin' collected the five-hundred-buck reward, though a two-hundred and twenty-five pounder entitled "Carbolic Acid" McSapp lasted three of the four rounds before a short inside right to the button changed all his plans and give him some much needed sleep. Barrin' nobody on earth, the Kid had stopped eighteen tomatoes in from one to two rounds—tough, willin' huskies, eager for the mere reputation of havin' boxed the world famous Kid Roberts and not at all sickened by the chance to grab off that five hundred. First-class, scientific publicity by your boy friend, aided by sympathetic and admirin' sport writers and the fact that Kid Roberts was a popular idol, drawed overflow crowds all along the trip which was somethin' more

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than a decided financial success. Outside of the laughs me and Ptomaine got watchin' some of these chumps tryin' to smack Kid Roberts down, the voyage was highly uneventful till we blew into Frisco with the fog one mornin'.

Then it was all different!

At the very first show, the front rows is filled with a fearful mob of rough and tough lookin' sailors. These guys wasn't the clean-cut, clean-livin', upstandin', square-shootin' gobs of the U. S.Navy— I only wished they *had* been! Wherever we run into *them* boys, we got along with 'em great, because Kid Roberts had boxed manys the exhibition for 'em and they thought the champ was the leopard's toothbrush. No—the hardy seafarers which awaited the Kid's appearance with noisy impatience that day was a lot of roughnecks off some tramp steamer, scum from the ends of the earth, what I mean!

Full of ferocious water-front hooch, they kept up a steady racket all durin' the vaudeville show. They kidded the acrobats, throwed pennies at the song and dance team and give the monologist the royal razzberry—only the nervous band managed to drown 'em out. To say I was worried is puttin' it much too mild; I seen nothin' ahead for us but a flock of grief!

When Kid Roberts is introduced, this choice collection of murderers out in front split the hearty applause of the rest of the audience with a volley of hoots and jeers.

"G'wan, ya big false alarm, you couldn't lick *nobody!*" "Yer a cheese champeen!" "I could whip

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that blarsted Yank meself!" etc., etc., etc. That's only a few of the loud remarks in various dialects from these babies which went down to the sea in ships. There was much other comment I'd willin'ly tell you about—if I could only get somebody to print it! Kid Roberts, used to tight corners, smiled coolly and made no answer, but Ptomaine Joe leaped to his side. Steamed up at the insults to his god, Ptomaine leaned his huge bulk down over the footlights and shook a fist like a ham into the faces of the howlin' sailors.

"Shut up, you bunch of yellah bums!" he roars, his homely pan red with rage. "I'll hop down there in a minute and knock the lot of you stiff!"

And he *meant* it, no foolin'!

This was right to the likin' of these gents and they greeted Ptomaine accordin'ly. The rest of the audience is standin' up to see what it's all about, with the ladies gettin' heavily alarmed. Along the aisles on the run comes the house attendants.

"All of youse come down!" bawls the sailors up to us on the stage.

"*One* of us'll do!" bellows Ptomaine back and before we can stop him he's gone over the top.

Take it from me, the fun waxed fast and furious for the next few minutes and there was quite some excitement before the special cops helped us pull Ptomaine from the middle of the strugglin' mass of arms and legs in the orchestra pit. Ptomaine come out of it with a bleedin' ear and a busted thumb, but as three insensible sailors which had choosed him

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could testify, he give a perfect account of himself whilst he was in action.

The theatre crew told the sailors to take the air and what the sailors told the theatre crew I'm forced to leave to your imagination. The peace-lovin' landsmen looked the jolly tars over and decided there was no use arguin' over a little matter like that and went back to their posts. Well, these able seamen had me good and leary. Honest to Turkey, I felt as weak as a moonshiner's alibi! Whilst our unhappy band's tryin' to appease 'em with "Rocked In The Cradle of The Deep", I called Kid Roberts aside.

"Kid," I whisper, "let's forget about the offer to meet all comers, for if we don't, all comers is exactly what you'll *have* to meet, you will for a fact ! Them mock-turtles out there will prob'ly rush the stage the minute I make the announcement and——"

"No, Joe!" interrupted the Kid, firmly. "We'll omit no part of the act. The way to meet these issues is head on! Besides, those fellows are in a mood now to tear down the house if *anything* advertised is cut out. Undoubtedly, the only reason they are here at all is to see me box and if I don't, we're in for trouble!"

We was in for trouble anyways!

My offer of five hundred smackers to any human bein' which can keep erect for four rounds with the world's champion is no more than out of my shapely mouth, when there's a thunderin' roar from our little pals, the sailors. The Kid was right—that's what them guys had been waitin' for! A great big mass

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of bone and muscle rears up from their midst and is swiftly boosted on the stage by his cheerin' mates. He was the burliest thing I ever seen in my life—broken-nosed, pock-marked, cabbage-eared, and a bath and shave was only two of the many things he needed badly. I asked him what his name was so's I could announce it and he snarlin'ly told me to go to Hades! Then, after a sneerin' look at the calmly smilin' Kid Roberts, the giant from the sea follows the glowerin' Ptomaine to the dressin' rooms.

I shivered—and it wasn't a bit cold.

"Get this fellow quick, Kid!" I says, very serious.

Kid Roberts answers nothin', but he sure looked thoughtful.

The house was in a uproar when Mr. Sailor come out in ring togs, revealin' the hairy and bulgin'-muscled body of a gorilla—somethin' he greatly looked like to *me*. A half minute after the bell for the first round was long enough to disclose that the sailor's fightin' methods likewise resembled a gorilla's! Whilst his shipmates kept up a incessant din of bawlin' encouragement for their man and jeers for Kid Roberts, this bucko flailed away madly with both hands, drivin' the nimbly duckin' Kid before him. Science, rules and fair play was evidently things unknown to the seafarer, which apparently didn't wish the five hundred bucks as much as he wished to assassinate the grinnin' champion. Our challenger must of committed a million glarin' fouls—hittin' plenty low, tryin' to trip the Kid, to wrestle him to the floor, buttin' him with his bullet head and heelin' with

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the back of his glove. The place was a bedlam as the bell ended the third round with the sailor still on his feet. Kid Roberts, bleedin' slightly from a cut on the head where this baboon had butted him, was glad to hear the gong. The champion made just one comment as we worriedly sponged him off: "This fellow's a tough man. He hits hard. I'll be sorry to stop him, but—here he goes!"

Up to date, Kid Roberts had devoted the bulk of his time to avoidin' the sailor's murderous rushes, blockin' his terrible wallops and occasionally counterin' with light lefts and rights. The champ, of course, had forgot more about boxin' than this ham would ever know and could of made a gory wreck of him, but Kid Roberts never punished a man unnecessarily. How the so ever, with the bell for the fourth and last frame, the Kid went out to finish this foul-fightin' ape and punched him all over the ring. Two right uppercuts in succession drove the sailor against the ropes and a third sent him to his knees a total loss. He got up without waitin' for the count and floundered drunkenly around, whilst his pals howled for him to tie in and our admirers screamed for the Kid to bounce him. Kid Roberts measured his man carefully, then shot over a perfectly-timed left and a terrible right to the jaw. Down goes Mons. Seaman like a broken ceilin'. He was staggerin' dazedly to his feet at "nine", when the bell rings, savin' him from a knockout, to the insane delight of his shipmates!

"Give 'im the five hundred—he stayed the four

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rounds!" squawks the sailors, dancin' wildly and wavin' their arms like maniacs. Ptomaine glares down at 'em longin'ly, but I grabbed him and says if he left that stage I'd leave him flat in Frisco for good and all! He believes me and contents himself with exchangin' choice compliments with these monkeys. Meanwhile, the big anchovy the Kid fought has fully recovered and comes over to us, lookin' as fresh and as full of fight as when he climbed into the ring.

"Gimme the dough!" he grunts, shovin' his ugly pan within a touch of my own. "I was on me feet at the end of the fight!"

"I'll give you *nothin'*, you big tramp!" I says, hotly. "You'd of been counted out in another second and——"

"That will do, Joe!" butts in Kid Roberts. "Pay him the money—he's earned it and we aren't welshers!" He turns to the big sailor, whilst I'm grumblin'ly countin' out the gelt, "You made a fine showing and had me bothered for awhile, old man," says the Kid, pleasantly, and holds out his hand. "Shake?"

This gentleman of the old school snatches the five hundred from me and brushes the Kid's outstretched hand aside with a oath.

"You bet I made a fine showin'!" he snarls. "I'd of licked you in five more minutes. I could ruin a guy like you every day in the week and twice on Sunday. C'mon down to the foc'sle of my ship and finish it, if you ain't too yellah!"

Kid Roberts grins at him good-naturedly and moves

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away. Then a rush of the excited, curious mob millin' around us separates him from me and Ptomaine.

When they fin'ly get the place cleared, there's no sign of Kid Roberts and on top of that I can't locate him in the dressin' rooms. Ptomaine figures the Kid lost us in the crowd and wantin' to make a quick getaway to duck both his admirers and them extremely unadmirin' sailors, he's dashed on ahead to our inn. Well, I kind of unwillin'ly give up the search and hurried with Ptomaine to the hotel we was honorin' with our presence.

In the lobby, a cutey whose face and form would of aroused Nero's curiosity, gets up from a chair and starts towards us. Ptomaine Joe immediately brushes back his hair and straightens his tie.

"Wam—what a disturbance *this* snapper is!" says Ptomaine. "She's headin' right for us, too. I only hope she's mistook me for a old college chum of hers. Watch me promote—I bet I take her to supper!"

"She don't *look* like no lunatic," I says, sarcastically.

At this minute, the fair damsel reaches us and uncorks a smile which scrambled the tenth-ounce of brain in Ptomaine's possession.

"Pardon me," she says, "which of you two gentlemen is the manager of Kid Roberts?"

"There's only *one* gentleman here," I says. *"I'm* the Kid's pilot."

"Oh—then you must be Mister Murphy—I've heard *so* much about you!" gushes our opponent, "I'm Angela Yerkes, of the *Morning Shriek*. I want to interview the champion from a woman's viewpoint and

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I've been waiting patiently for two hours to see him!"

"He isn't in his room yet?" I ask, in quick alarm.

Angela shakes her pretty head.

"I'll go right up and investigate matters, Angel—eh—Miss Yerkes," butts in Ptomaine, with a silly grin. "They ain't nobody got around to introducin' *me* yet, so I'll do it myself. I'm no less than Ptomaine Joe and if you ain't heard about *me,* then you ain't heard about the Statue of Liberty, either!"

"Indeed I *have* heard about you," smiles Angela, "and I'm awfully glad to meet you personally."

"Me and you both!" says this boy scout, "I'm one of them he-men, from the big, open spaces—a cyclone amongst men, but as gentle as a lamb with women. What are you goin' to do this evenin'?"

"Get upstairs and see if the Kid's there, Stupid!" I hollers, worried sick, and sent this tamale scurryin'.

In a few minutes, Ptomaine plunges out of the elevator, breathless and wild-eyed. Kid Roberts wasn't in his room and a hasty interview with the interested clerk on duty brung out the fact that he hadn't showed up or even phoned a message to us. Well, as the Kid had no intimate friends in Frisco, was a stickler for early retirin' hours with strict trainin' discipline at all times and had been a trifle used up from his battle with that big sailor, I now begin to get genuinely scared. Ptomaine helped my peace of mind a lot by suggestin' that maybe the sailor boy's friends had ganged the Kid in revenge for him beatin' up their pal—a thing I feared myself! Angela,

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greatly excited, is all eager questions and Ptomaine tells her about the four-round bout in the hall, whilst I sent a bellhop for a taxi. I happened to remember that earlier in the evenin' a special cop had told me the name of the ship them merry sailors come off and also the pier it was parked at. I should of dashed to some police station and brung a slew of coppers with me and before the night was over I sure wished I had done so. But I was too worked up right then to think of that, or to think of *anything* but gettin' to the Kid at my earliest possible convenience!

When Angela gets hep to the situation, she claims this is a really *big* story and one which would make her contemplated interview with Kid Roberts about as thrillin' as a hired girl's obituary. She *must* go with us, she says with sparklin' eyes and is inside the cab before I knew she was in earnest! I tried to argue her out of goin' along, tellin' her there would prob'ly be dirty work at the cross-roads and plenty hats broken before we got through. Angela's answer to this was a delighted, "I certainly hope there *is*!" What could you do with a girl like that?

"Let the little lady stay," says Ptomaine, throwin' out a 50-inch chest, "if the worst comes to worst, *I'll* take care of her!"

Angela favors him with a faint smile.

"Be still!" she says, "and let's hurry. If the worst comes to worst, *I'll* take care of you both!"

And out of her handbag she takes a cute, but satisfactory-lookin' gun and a reporter's police lines badge.

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I throwed up my hands and told the taxi driver where to go. The *weaker* sex, hey ? Tomato sauce!

Well, we reached the dock and found our ship to be a dirty, disreputable-lookin' tramp steamer. At the gangplank is lollin' a sailor, which both me and Ptomaine instantly pegged as bein' one of the bunch in the hall where we give our show that night. This guy presents us with a evil grin when he recognizes us in turn, as Ptomaine comes right to the point, beatin' me to it.

"Hey, Dizzy!" growls Ptomaine, "we want to know what happened to Kid Roberts after he beat up 'at buddy of yours tonight. The champ's disappeared and——"

"Ptu!" interrupts our charmin' vis-a-vis, foulin' the bay with tobacco juice, "and what should *I* know about yer faint-hearted friend? He's prob'ly skipped town, the big yellah bum, he was afraid the mate would lay for him to break his pretty face! I think I could do it meself!"

"What's your thoughts regardin' *this?*" snarls Ptomaine—and sent him sprawlin' on his back with a right-hander.

Then we run down the gangplank, peerin' about the dark and littered deck. There was a scuffle of feet behind us and I suddenly remembered we'd left Miss Angela Yerkes up on the dock. I turned to look and Wam—somethin' crashed on my head and I went out like a candle in a hurricane.

So that was that!

When I next come to life, I'm flat on my back in the forecastle of the ship—which is movin'—and I'm

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bound hand and foot. Beside me is Ptomaine Joe, in the same unpleasant predicament. Nearby is Kid Roberts, sittin' against a bulkhead, but his arms is also tied behind his back. Laugh that off! The oversize sailor which had stayed four rounds with the Kid is standin' over him, bawlin' him out in terms which introduced somethin' new in the way of two-handed cussin' and highly tickled the assembled deckhands. Durin' the next few minutes, we learned that the fightin' sailor was mate of the ship we're aboard and evidently one of the old-time "buckos," from the way the other help seemed to fear him. Angela is nowheres in sight, for which I'm more than thankful, though that don't stop me from worryin' plenty over what happened to her amidst a crew of rats like these! Anyways, after turnin' his free-swingin' tongue on me and Ptomaine, the mate chased all but two guys out and himself left the forecastle.

Well, we swap experiences with Kid Roberts, whilst our two guards watches us suspiciously. The fact that he'd been Shanghied didn't seem to particularly annoy the Kid, which appeared to view the whole affair as a interestin' adventure. He even laughed at me and Ptomaine for bein' burnt up at his account of how he was overpowered and kidnapped by the sailors, after the bout in the hall.

"But what's the big idea?" I says. "What does these guys *want* with us?" I asked him.

"With you and Ptomaine, I'm sure I don't know," smiles Kid Roberts, "unless they've brought you along as mascots. As for *me*—well, I've been told I've got

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to meet our sanguinary friend, the mate, in a finish fight as soon as we lose sight of land!"

"'At mate sure loves to get bruised, don't he?" remarks Ptomaine, wonderin'ly. "Well, he's just a two-puncho kayo for either you or me, Kid! 'At's the least of it. What happens after you put him away?"

Kid Roberts simply shrugs his big shoulders.

"I must refer you to our hosts," he says, noddin' to our two scowlin' wardens.

Ptomaine glowers at 'em.

"Hey—where's this scow headed for?" he asks one.

"China!" is the grunted answer. "Keep yer mouth shut!"

Speechless with rage, I could only start a one-man discussion of their ancestors, whilst with a low moan, Ptomaine fell back on the floor again. Kid Roberts looks at us and laughs his head off!

Threats of the law had the same effect on our guards as they would on a couple of mummies. They just grinned and regaled us with stories about the mate's fluency as a fighter—he was more than a fighter, he was a *killer,* accordin' to them. Well, the Kid's right uppercut has took the ambition out of manys the killer—in the ring and out of it—so none of us fainted with fear of what the mate would do to *him.* What we all *was* worried about, though, was Angela Yerkes. Questions about her brung nothin', but blank looks and Kid Roberts whispered to us to keep quiet, as maybe the girl had managed to hide herself somewheres aboard and they mightn't even know she was there yet.

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After awhile, the Chinese cook comes down with a tray of chow. Ugh—I can close my eyes now, think of that goo and get seasick! The very sight and smell of it, added to the musty air of the forecastle and the rollin' of the ship, knocked us over and we shooed Mr. Cook away. That was one thing us and our guards agreed on. They chased the Chinaman out of the place with a storm of rare oaths, windin' up by throwin' their own platters of eats after him in disgust.

Ptomaine Joe was just a chump as a box fighter, but in a kitchen I have yet to see his equal, no kiddin'! Children, what that big goof could do with a skillet would make the Fitz-Charlton chef take cyanide! Ptomaine knew more about cookin' than Bryan does about ridicule and he immediately begins discoursin' on some of the delicious poultices he'd served up to Kid Roberts on various occasions. The man-mountain's pain-stakin' descriptions of these ravishin' dishes is so appetizin' that the two sailors' mouths soon begins to water and after questionin' Ptomaine till they satisfied themselves he really was a Grade-A cook, they got more friendly. One of 'em tells us the ship ain't bound for China or no place else, but is simply sailin' out in the bay where the fight between the mate and Kid Roberts is to be staged. He adds that the captain give his permission for the fracas to take place on board the lugger to please the crew, which is on the brinks of mutiny on the account of the horrible cookin' of the Chinese chef. At this interestin' point, Kid Roberts butts in to ask angrily if the captain

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The Universal-Jewel Series. SCENE FROM "THE TOUGH TENDERFOOT." *Fighting Back.*

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also gave his permission to have him kidnapped. The sailors grins and says no—that clever little detail was their own idea!

Actin' on the orders of Kid Roberts, Ptomaine switched the conversation back to food and kept it there, till fin'ly the hungry sailors has a whispered conference. Then they proposition us. If we'll give our words to act like gents and not start nothin' rash, they'll untie us—provided Ptomaine Joe goes to the galley and makes good his boasted ability as a cookin' fool! It took us about fifteen seconds to agree to that and it took Ptomaine about fifteen minutes to compose from odds and ends in the ship's kitchen a steamin' stew which seemed to go past the two seamen's wildest dreams! They tied into it like they'd been told it was their last meal that year, stuffin' themselves to the ears, whilst the Chinese cook stood by, mutterin' laundry tickets under his breath. He looked longin'ly at a big cleaver and then at Ptomaine, but that's as far as the Chink went with his thoughts!

The nourishment is no more than out of the way, when down comes the blood-thirsty mate and orders us up on deck. He frowned at our two scared watchmen when he seen we was untied, but said nothin'. Ptomaine wanted to rush the mate right then and there and lay him like a pavement, but Kid Roberts held him back, gently remindin' him that there was enough roughnecks aboard to get us sooner or later and besides this was *his* quarrel, not Ptomaine's.

Once on deck we're led to the stern where a large space had been cleared and is lined with sailors, eager

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for bloodshed and violence. The howl they set up when we hove in view must of disturbed the little fishes and frightened the timid barnacles to death! On the top of a hatch sits the captain, which seemed to be a nice, jovial old man. Beside him, crazy with excitement—is Miss Angela Yerkes! Whilst I'm takin' all this in and Ptomaine rushes over to Angela to find out how come and the etc., Kid Roberts, cool and unruffled, turns to the swaggerin' mate.

"I say, old man," he says, "this is all rather silly, don't you think? Why should *we* fight—I mean, just what is the issue at stake? Absurd, isn't it? Suppose we forget about it and I'll forget about the manner in which my friends and myself were detained aboard here. I——"

"I knew you'd crawl, you white-livered quitter!" the mate cuts him off with a sneer. "You'll fight me or I'll break you in half—get that?"

"Very well, you infernal idiot!" snaps the Kid, white and hard-eyed. "You're spoiling for a beating, and, by Gad, *I'm* spoiling now to give it to you!"

The sudden, new tone in the Kid's voice caused a slightly uneasy look to flash in the mate's eyes for a second, but he shrugged his shoulders and went ahead with the preparations for the battle. In the meanwhile, Ptomaine come back from his interview with Angela Yerkes and tells us the results. There was nothin' at all pleasant connected with Ptomaine's report! Angela told him she hadn't been harmed by the sailors, which took her to the captain when she waved her reporter's police badge at 'em. She begged

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the skipper to let her stay and see the fight and fin'ly vamped herself into a ringside seat—not a unusual feat for a good looker. Angela's kind can talk themselves in or out of *anything,* you know that. But the kick in Angela's budget of news was that the sailors has bet the captain a month's wages that the mate will knock Kid Roberts out! She gleefully anticipated a riot if the Kid wins and thinks it's all "perfectly thrilling!" Well, *we* didn't think it was perfectly thrillin'—we *knew* it was!

One of the sailors come over and gruffly told us the rules. They were all built to order for the mate—protect yourself at all times, no blows of any nature barred, hit on the breaks and break on the captain's orders from where he was perched on the hatch, three-minute rounds, one-minute rest between each frame, the muss to last till either Kid Roberts or the mate couldn't come up for any more pastin'. It might go one round or it might go a hundred, but in any event it was to go to a finish!

The bell was a tin dishpan which a sailor smacked with a belayin pin. Another tar was timekeeper and when I says either me or Ptomaine should be one of the officials, they laughed me away. By this time, the ship was well out in the bay and rockin' like a cradle—tricky footin' that the mate was used to, but a fearful handicap to Kid Roberts! Just before the start of this strange bout, the boat dipped heavily and Kid Roberts was thrown to his knees. The sailors yelled with delight at this mishap, in joyful anticipation of what was to come. Both Angela and the

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captain looked worried, whilst me and Ptomaine felt low enough to walk under a worm with high hats on!

The minute the sailor hit the dishpan for round one, the mate lowers his head and bores into the Kid, which was busy tryin' to keep his balance on the deck. The champion easily blocked a wild right swing, but slipped on the rollin' deck in duckin' a left to the jaw. Kid Roberts fell on his back, his head strikin' with a sickenin' thump! The sailors danced around, bellerin' like savages for the captain to count the Kid out, but the skipper refused, on the grounds that the mate had nothin' what the so ever to do with Kid Roberts goin' down. The captain was a good egg, at that. Although badly stunned, Kid Roberts had the born fighter's instinct to try and get up till knocked dead! The champion struggled to his feet, swayin' dizzily and at sea in more ways than one. With his shipmates howlin' for a knockout, the mate rushed the groggy and almost defenceless Kid, sprayin' him with terrible lefts and rights. Kid Roberts, bleedin' from nose and mouth, tried a left to the wind. The lead was short and another lurch of the vessel again sent him to his knees. The Kid grabbed the mate around the waist and pulled himself up, then stepped back and threw a hard right at the mate's jaw. Still dazed by his first fall, he missed by a foot and the mate dropped him with a poisonous right, flush to the chin.

Kid Roberts lay on his side with closed eyes, whilst the captain begin to count with a serious face. You couldn't hear him over the shrieks of the sailors, but you could hear me and Ptomaine screamin' that

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the whole thing was as foul as the air in a sewer—knocked almost unconscious by that bump he got on the head when he slipped to the deck at the start, what kind of a chance did the Kid have? The skipper reached "five!" without a move from Kid Roberts, beyond the quiverin' of his muscles and the openin' of his eyes which stared up glassily at the sky. I looked wildly round and seen a fire bucket next to the white-faced, speechless Angela Yerkes—as out of place there as a tuxedo in Sing Sing. "Seven!" roars the captain. "The water—the water!" I yelled at Angela, pointin' to the bucket. That girl was no Dumb Dora! She got me like a flash and grabbin' up the fire bucket, drenched the prostrate champion with the water. The Kid blinked, was on one knee at "nine!" and clinched with the angrily protestin' mate before "ten!" left the captain's mouth. That ended round one, Allah be praised!

Led by the mate, the sailors rushed to the captain and claimed the fight on the account of Angela throwin' the water on Kid Roberts. The skipper heard 'em for a minute in cold silence. Then he pulled out a gun and Angela produced hers from her trusty handbag. Before that imposin' array of artillery and the skipper's stern promise that he'd perforate the lot of 'em if they didn't get back in line inside of a minute, these bullies quailed and the clangin' of the dishpan for round two sent 'em scurryin' back to the fight. In the confusion, Ptomaine Joe disappears somewheres and leaves me all alone.

The second and last round was worth a hundred

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bucks of anybody's money for a ringside seat and all it cost the sailors was a month's work. As they came together, Kid Roberts floored the mate with a stiff left hook to the jaw. The sailor took a count of four and when he got up he fell again without' bein' hit. He rose quickly and missed a right swing but connected with a wicked left which sent Kid Roberts staggerin' back against the ring of tars which formed the ropes. Rushin' over to finish him, the mate run into a torrid right uppercut which flopped him to the deck once more. He was still on one knee at "ten!", but was in there fightin' again before the captain could make his shouts heard that the fight was over! Another left hook and the mate kissed the boards again. This time for "six". When he got on his feet he rushed Kid Roberts, stingin' the champ with two fearful rights to the ribs. They clinched. On the break, both missed lefts and the Kid slipped to his hands and knees as the result of the miss-spent effort and a roll of the ship. The mate clipped him on the top of the head with a right as he was gettin' up, but a foul in *that* fight was just a small incident!

They stepped warily around each other for a couple of seconds and then the Kid whipped over a right to the jaw that upset the mate for the fifth time. That baby was as tough as a life sentence and a punishment addict if there ever was one! After a count of "seven" he got to his feet and went down for the sixth time when Kid Roberts reached him with a left to the side of the head. Once again this baby—both the dirtiest and gamest fighter I ever seen—got up, but even his

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cheerin' crew could see he was weary. Tired from his own efforts to stop this guy, sick from the crack he got on the head from the hard deck boards and almost punched out, Kid Roberts attempted to clinch. With a dyin' spurt, the mate pushed him off and swung his right to the jaw. The Kid was a fraction of a second too late in blockin' the blow and it crashed him down on all fours, with the mate nearly fallin' on top of him as the force of his own punch carried him forward. What a fight—seven knockdowns in one round and that round not over yet!

Kid Roberts took the full count of nine before arisin' and when he did, the mate, encouraged by this sudden turn of the tide, rushed and hit him with a right chop to the jaw which dazed the champion. Both was practically out on their feet! Kid Roberts shook his head to clear it and missed a left, but ducked a whizzin' right in return. The mate was short with a left hook and Kid Roberts shot over a right cross which put him flat on his shoulder-blades for his seventh trip to the boards. The mate was punch-drunk when he slowly stood erect after a count of eight and the Kid stepped in with a sizzlin' left which shook him from head to heels. Before the reelin' mate knew what it was all about, Kid Roberts then set himself and tossed a terrific right to the point of the jaw and it was all over!

At "ten" there ain't the suspicion of movement in the mate's carcass and actin' on the captain's orders, the crew drenched him with water like Angela had drenched Kid Roberts. But Niagara Falls wouldn't

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of brung the sailor back to life! He was *through,* as even his disappointed shipmates was forced to admit. The skipper then informed 'em that as their charmin' mate had been knocked out they had to work a month for nothin', or else go to jail for kidnappin' us. They milled around, angrily talkin' things over and some of 'em was for lockin' the captain in his cabin and takin' charge themselves. At that minute, Ptomaine returned to the scene and the looks *we* got from the crew was homicidal!

Somebody knocked the captain's gun out of his hand and matters was rapidly reachin' the critical stage. Kid Roberts had enjoyed plenty fightin' for *that* evenin', the captain was a old man and Angela a girl. That left only me and Ptomaine to give them roughnecks any kind of a argument and what a swell chance *we* had, unarmed, against twenty or thirty plug uglies. Good night!

It was right here that Ptomaine come to the front and saved the day—likewise, all our skins. Suddenly sniffin' the air, he broke away from the mob and dashed below decks. I knew that guy well enough to be certain he wasn't leavin' us to our fate, but what I *didn't* know was the ace he had in the hole. In a few minutes, Ptomaine returns and with a broad grin he mounts the hatch beside the captain and invites the crew, which surrounded the grim-faced skipper, to step down to the forecastle. The appetizin' odor of well-cooked food is already competin' successfully with the salt tang in the air! The two guys Ptomaine had previously fed was hep right away and rushed below,

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with the other hungry sailors at their heels. We followed the crowd and reached the forecastle in time to see Ptomaine pointin' with pride to the mess table. groanin' under the weight of eats he'd cooked up whilst the fight was goin' on. The Chinese cook is tied to a post, fifteen stilettos on each glance he give us!

Well, one look and one smell was enough for the starved sailors and forgettin' their rage they dove in with glad yells, fairly wolfin' down the food. We left 'em gorgin' and come up on deck for air, everybody congratulatin' the highly pleased Ptomaine on havin' cooked our way out of a extremely ticklish situation. The much relieved captain headed the ship back for the dock and Ptomaine begins writin' out recipes for chafin' dish specialties for Angela Yerkes, at her urgent request.

When Angela fin'ly went in the captain's cabin to concoct her sensational story for the *"Morning Shriek"* and Kid Roberts was himself again, we're leanin' over the rail, watchin' the lights of Frisco loom up on the water. Each is busy with his own thoughts and I broke the silence.

"Phew—what a night!" I says, "Well, anyways, we leave this burg tomorrow, thank—"

"Where d'ye get that *we* stuff?" butts in Ptomaine, "You mean *you* leave! Tomorrow I'm goin' to show Angela how to cook chicken à la king at her apartment and after that we're goin' to a seven-reel picture, so I may *never* leave here. I talk a mean movie and I can do myself a lot of good in seven reels!"

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ROUND ELEVEN

BIG BOY BLUE

MR. COLLEY CIBBER, a wise-crackin' English actor which tore off his last nifty about a hundred and sixty years ago, was once overheard to make the followin' bald statement:

"Oh, how many torments lie in the small circle of a wedding ring!"

"Well, boys and girls, I never had the pleasure of seein' Colley act, as in 1764 A.D. I was far too young to be allowed in a theatre, but the above remark convinces me that Hon. Cibber knew what it was all about! Bein' a manager of box fighters, rings is my speciality and I'm satisfied there's twice and a half as many battles fought in the ever popular weddin' ring as there is in the prize ring in a given year. Ask the man who owns one! Don't get the idea that I'm against the matrimonial racket, because that would be doin' me a injustice and I hate to be done a injustice, don't you? In the contrary, I'm a full-blooded groom myself and even if me and my cute little sparrin' partner *does* disturb the neighbors now and then, I'm

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one of wedlock's most inveterate fans and I don't hesitate to predict a great success for it!

However, there's no gettin' away from the fact that the muffled "I do!" drags difficulties into a man's life which he never had before. The course of true love is no Lincoln Highway and if you think it is you're crazy! You can't expect little wifie to "Yes" you forever and a day—I wouldn't give two counterfeit marks for one which *did*. But there comes a time in every bride's life when she should stand by her hubby, no matter whether the dizzy old ball and chain is right or not! She should put her own feelin's in her beaded bag for the moment and throw in with the boy for better or worse, as per her contract. Most of 'em *do*—wives is a great race of people—but some of 'em *don't* and it's one of these I'm goin' to tell you about, as it's too late to go anywheres now.

A few months after we come back to Gotham from that exhibition-bout tour of the country, I signed Kid Roberts to defend his crown against Guardsman Blue, the European title-holder. This English heavy was somethin' entirely different from the average champ which comes over here from the old country to display his wares. The jolly old Guardsman had one trick alone which made him a first-class curiosity amongst the foreign title-holders—he had conquered the dread habit of kissin' the canvas, with which the bulk of them babies is afflicted. In his first start over here, Monsieur Blue dumfounded the skeptical sport writers by stoppin' Bob Young, the ex-champion, in six rounds. Two months later he rocked Battlin' Miller to sleep in

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four hectic frames, and, Miller, which had been picked as the next logical opponent for Kid Roberts, was nobody's fool!

In both these pettin' parties, the Guardsman showed enough stuff to make the experts sit erect and pay flatterin' attention. Two of the said experts was me and Kid Roberts, which viewed the Briton's melee with Battlin' Miller. In that brawl, Guardsman Blue showed everything! He was a sweet puncher, a pretty boxer and as tough as a epidemic of smallpox. The clout which put a end to Battlin' Miller's championship hopes was a murderous right uppercut to the chin which crashed through the unfortunate Battler's guard and etherized him for a good ten minutes! Both me and the Kid was very thankful when we filed out of the abattoir *that* excitin' night. We knew positively that we had the scrap of our lives starin' us in the pan and that Kid Roberts would have to be *right* when he climbed through the ropes to defend his title against Guardsman Blue! The Kid begin trainin' like he never had before in his career, we accumulated the best sparrin' partners, handlers, trainers and advisers which money could buy and with many of the boxin' sharps givin' Blue better than a even chance with the champion, public interest in the comin' International glove contest was at the well known fever heat.

A couple of weeks after Kid Roberts started in on the old conditionin' grind, I got a rather peculiar message at the camp which was pitched only a stone's throw—for David—from New York City. The

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mornin' mail brung me the followin', marked "Personal!" and wrote on heavy, monogrammed paper, which smelled like the inside of a overstocked florist's:

MY DEAR JOE:

It is of the utmost importance that I see you at once and confidentially on a matter of mutual interest. I will be at home tomorrow at three and will expect you. Please don't fail me!

Sincerely,

DOLORES HALLIDAY.

Well, here was somethin' which couldn't be laughed off, much as I would of loved to of done so. I knew what that young lady wanted to see *me* about, as well as if she'd of come right out with it in her note!

Election Day happened to fall on the same date as the Kid Roberts-Guardsman Blue entertainment and Dolores was satisfied that this odd coincidence would bring her nothin' but grief at the polls. She was bankin' heavy on the votes of her high society friends to return her a winner and she figured that the notoriety of the Kid's pugilistic endeavors would annoy them babies and cause 'em to leave the day's ballotin' in the hands of the workin' man, where it belongs. Dolores had long ago counted the votes of the rough and raucous precincts as somethin' *she'd* never get, thinkin' that them jazzbos was greatly against the speaker sex in politics. That was a good thought,

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they *was,* until—but I'll get around to that later, as the guy on the carousel says.

Personally, Kid Roberts hoped and prayed that his kind of balky helpmeet wouldn't click at the polls and thus dispense with her political ambitions which had widened the gap between 'em. It was the Kid's firm intention to throw away his boxin' gloves and call it a day after the Guardsman Blue muss and one other we had scheduled should he manage to slap down the hard-hittin' Englishman. These two bouts figured to net Kid Roberts more than half a million and with five hundred grand in his kick he'd certainly be sittin' pretty to start life anew with Dolores.

Well, anyways, I dashed into Manhattan the day after I got that note from Dolores and taxied to her glitterin' palace on Fifth Avenue, arrivin' there promptly at three. I hadn't cracked nothin' to Kid Roberts about this conference, on the account his spouse had ordered secrecy, but I don't mind tellin' you that I didn't enjoy my position! A friend of 'em both, the best I could look for was the worst of it, like anybody else which steps into a family quarrel either by request or on their own hook. It's a hobby of mine to lay off them affairs, for a man which gets himself mixed up in somebody else's domestical troubles is a lunatic of the first water!

As usual, Dolores looks more like a million dollars than four $250,000 bills when a frozen-faced butler buttles me in to her in the parlor. Although she's a face card in the society deck, she's never high-hatted *me.* She tells me I'm lookin' well. I admit the charge

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and accuse her of shapin' up a bit keen herself. Then she says:

"How is Kane?"

"Perfect!" I says, truthfully. "He was out studyin' fishin' when I left him and he's in the condition of his life. He'll knock off Mister Guardsman Blue in a couple of rounds! That gil's name will be Black & Blue after——"

"Joe—I want you to do me a favor," interrupted Dolores, seriously.

A slight chill capered up my spine and it was a warm day!

"Eh—sure!" I says, lifelessly. "What is it?"

"I want you to postpone Kane's bout with the English champion until after Election Day!" she says, still unsmilin'.

Frigid cat! What a modest little request—like askin' for the loan of my right lung!

"Why—why, honest to Coolidge, Mrs. Halliday, I couldn't do *that* if I wanted to and I can't say I want to and tell the truth!" I stammers. "You might as well ask me for the bottlin' rights to Niagara Falls. You know there's *nothin'* I wouldn't do for the Kid or yourself, but *that's* out! Just what's the big idea?"

"The big idea, Joe, is that if Kane engages in a prize fight on Election Day, I will be defeated for the senate!" says Dolores. "I have worked day and night —sometimes *all* night—campaigned the state in all kinds of weather for months, as you know, given up everything, spent thousands of dollars and even neglected my health to win this election. You know what

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it means to me and so does Kane. Do you want to be responsible for my having done all that for nothing?"

I ain't a particle comfortable, that's a fact, but I can't cuddle up to the idea of a woman—especially a young good looker—mixin' in politics. Maybe I'm all wrong, but I think it's too rotten a game for 'em to cope with, what I mean!

"Eh—well, that's a kind of tough way to put it," I says, stallin' for time. "I—I'll toss *my* vote in for you, if that'll help any, but——"

"What difference can it possibly make if the contest is held Election Day or the day after?" butts in Dolores, impatiently.

"Plenty difference!" I says, promptly, now on a subject which I could talk about freely. "This fight's had a million dollars worth of advertisin' for that date, I got a twenty-five-thousand-buck appearance forfeit posted, over fifty thousand tickets has been sold and New York is already crammed with train loads of wild-eyed out-of-town fans. Some of them eggs has come from as far as California and Cuba to see this scrap and there'd be a race riot if it was called off *now*—Say, you'd hear 'em squawkin' in Russia! I know you put a lot into tryin' to make the state senate, Mrs. Halliday, but think what the *Kid* has at stake. He's battled his way to the top again in the toughest pastime in the wide, wide world! He's had to take set-backs and discouragements which would of licked anybody else long ago, but bein' Kid Roberts —or Kane Halliday, if you like that better—why, he

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won through. This fight means as much to him as them votes does to you, if not more! Let me ask you your own question—do *you* want to be responsible for the Kid havin' done all he's done for nothin'?"

That was cold turkey for your life and Dolores' answer is silence, as she paces the floor, nervously bitin' her pretty lips. I would of gave a bootlegger's ransom to of been back in the camp and away from there. Two things I practically loathe is creamed carrots and arguments with women!

"As the matter of fact, I don't think the fight will make any difference, as far as the election's concerned," I says, fin'ly, in a soothin' voice. "In the first place ——"

Dolores started and looked at me like she'd been in a trance. Then she held up a lily white hand and on goes the Ritz.

"Very well, Joe," she says with a fixed smile and icicles dangled from each word, "I'm sorry to have bothered you. I suppose you are anxious to get back to your—er—headquarters, aren't you? I have nothing further to say about the matter!"

Seein' I was about as popular as scarlet fever just then, I took the air like a seagull. But she *did* have somethin' more to say about the matter, don't think she didn't! She sent for Kid Roberts and begged him to call the setto off till they locked up the ballot boxes. Whilst tickled silly to view his lovely, but kind of unreasonable wife again, the Kid says he can do nothin' of the kind. He gently but firmly presents her with my own arguments and a few he'd cooked

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up himself, with the results that in a very few minutes they are at it hot and heavy. When he fin'ly tore himself away, they was on the same kind of terms as Germany and France and Kid Roberts come back gloomy, nervous and highly unstrung. This not only burnt me up, but it worried me sick, as I'm afraid it will affect the Kid's work when he steps in the ring with Guardsman Blue.

Well, when I returned to the camp the day I seen Dolores, my ears is annoyed by the followin' ballad, sang in a voice which would be a decided asset to a train-caller:

"Oh, if the ocean was whiskey and I was a mallard, I said mallard, I mean duck. If the ocean was whiskey and I was a mallard duck. I'd dive to the bottom and I never would come up!"

That, ladies and gentlemen, for no good reason was issuin' from the boisterous throat of Mr. Ptomaine Joe, who was carded to swap wallops with a gent who made a clean breast of bein' "Rough House" Williams, colored heavyweight champion of Mt. McKinley, in the semi-windup to the Kid Roberts-Guardsman Blue affray. When I come up to him, Ptomaine's got both his ham-like hands buried to the hilt in the brine bucket, toughenin' 'em up for his comin' hippodrome. This little incident kind of startled me, as all the trainin' I ever saw Ptomaine do for a fight before was to get his neck shaved.

"Howdy!" he greets me. "Hey, listen—they's a

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guy over in the village which sells hooch at three bucks the quart. Lay off it! I knocked over a vial of it this mornin' and from now on I'm aboard the sprinkler. Warm puppy! Talk about bein' potent—'at stuff eat all the gold fillin's out of my fangs!"

"See if *I* care!" I growls. "I don't want to hear nothin' about your adventures, Tomato, but if you bring any more moon into this camp I'll run you ragged and make you love it! Where's the Kid?"

"Oh, he's acin' around somewheres," answers this scofflaw, carelessly. "He claimed he was goin' fishin', but I think he must be teachin' some of them young trouts how to swim. I ain't cast a eye on him since daybreak!"

"Get in that kitchen and ham and egg me!" I says, and added, "make that two!" as Kid Roberts breezed into sight.

But Kid Roberts had a million rainbows on the end of his string and the ham and eggs was out. Wam! Them fishes went down elegant with slices of crisp bacon on top of 'em—which only goes to show that the fish is a very useful animal, indeed.

The very next day, Jack Haines, a good boy and one of the Kid's ablest sparrin' partners, accidentally butted Kid Roberts and reopened a old cut over the eye which had caused us trouble for years. So I took him to a medico in town. Ptomaine went with us, as he'll never let Kid Roberts out of his sight.

In the doctor's office, Ptomaine met his Fate again for the three thousandth time. This panic was a big blonde—a easy to witness, strappin', Swedish nurse

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which passed me and Kid Roberts up and after a good gaze at Ptomaine's huge bulk, throwed that ape a long, lingerin' smile. She got immediate action—give Ptomaine a inch and you're crazy!

"Good mornin', Good-lookin'!" says Ptomaine, returnin' her smile with a grin which would of terrorized a kindergarten. "Is the quack in?"

"The doctor's busy just now," says Miss Nurse, still smilin'. Me and Kid Roberts could of been in Afghanistan, for all the attention *we* drawed. "Have you an appointment?" she adds.

"No," says Ptomaine, "I got a cold in the head, but the champ here wants some hem-stitchin' done on his glim. What time do *you* knock off for the day?"

That's speed, hey?

"Why—why I leave at five o'clock," says this large heart-breaker, blushin' coyly. It was one o'clock then.

"Good!" says Ptomaine, floppin' in a chair, "I'll wait!"

Kid Roberts breaks out a healthy laugh and the nurse looks at him curiously.

"Are you really the heavyweight champion?" she asks him.

Nobody else can talk when Ptomaine's present!

"You tell 'em!" butts in this boy scout, before the Kid can answer. "There stands the champeen of champeens—the greatest puncher since Cain! And what d'ye think *keeps* him in the pink of condition? What gives him the stren'th to knock 'em all for a loop?"

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"Oh!" says friend nurse, lookin' fearfully disappointed. "You don't mean to say you're selling a patent medicine, do you?"

"Be yourself—I'm laughin' from you!" snorts Ptomaine. Me and the Kid is in convulsions, no foolin'! "The only thing I'm sellin' is myself. *I'll* tell you what put Kid Roberts over—my *cookin'!*"

"You're a cook?" asks the nurse, not sure whether she's bein' kidded or not.

That's like askin' Babe Ruth has he ever saw a ball game!

"Not *a* cook—Cook himself!" whinnies Ptomaine, loudly, "I was born in a kitchen and dragged up in Table de Hôte, France. When I was a young infant I played with fryin' pans instead of rattles! I never *seen* no milk when *I* was a baby, they raised me on batter and grease. I studied at restaurants instead of at school and I fin'ly graduated with the rare degree of G. C. O. E.—Greatest Chef on Earth! I'm good and I *know* it. Believe me, Sweetness, I broil a cruel steak!"

Nursie wipes her Alice-blue eyes.

"I'll have to try one of your steaks sometime," she says.

"Do that!" says Ptomaine, lookin' at her like a castaway would look at the *Leviathan.* "I'm a son-of-a-gun on wheels with a skillet!"

Then we went in to the doctor. Intermission.

Well, as the oil driller remarks, that was the start of Ptomaine's weekly romance. The nurse's name turned out to be Hilda Dahlstrom and she seemed to

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be sold on this cuckoo, though she give no other evidences of insanity. She was also a boxin' fan and Ptomaine used that weakness to build her up, which he done to the Queen's taste! There was scarcely a night when they wasn't steppin' out somewheres, and, Ptomaine, now the heavy boy friend, was in hock to everybody in the camp from takin' his sweetie to theatres, dinners, cabarets and whatnot. He spent the few hours he was absent from Hilda's side concoctin' warm love letters to her in penmanship which would of befuddled all the handwritin' experts in the world. You could take one of Ptomaine's letters to a Chinese laundry and get a package of collars with it, any time! In a maniacal outburst of generosity, he also give her a couple of ringside seats for the big fight, assurin' her he would take the greatest of pleasure in assassinatin' Rough House Williams for her amusement.

In the meanwhile, Election Day and the championship battle was swiftly drawin' near. Dolores was makin' a whirlwind stump-speakin' tour of New York in a last-minute appeal for votes and one day Kid Roberts startled me by announcin' his intentions of goin' into town to hear one of his wife's speeches. He says it was somethin' more than mere curiosity which interested him and arguments against it proved useless. With the Guardsman Blue pogrom only a week off, I most certainly didn't want to take no risks with my champion and I was afraid a accident might happen if he left the guarded confines of our camp. Kid Roberts laughed at my childish fears, but a accident *did* happen, nevers the less!

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Me and Ptomaine escorted Kid Roberts into the city and we took up positions on the outskirts of a mob which was listenin' to Dolores do her stuff from a big auto at Tenth Avenue and Forty-Eighth Streets. Besides bein' as attractive as sin, Dolores was plenty talker—she could do with the English language what Willie Hoppe can do with a billiard ball, what I mean! Everything was runnin' along smooth and even me and Ptomaine was interested in her chatter, when some guerillas in the audience begin to heckle the girl. In one minute flat, Kid Roberts gets red-headed and in two minutes we're mixed up in one of the snappiest free-for-alls I ever been in in my life and I been in more than several! For awhile, it was a better fight than the one at Verdun from the spectators' standpoint. None of these guys was cake-eaters by no means and it soon became a typical case of nothin' barred and the man which goes down loses! In the excitement, Dolores sped away in her car and I don't know if she even seen us or knew we was in there tryin.' Anyways, when the reserves come to our assistance—not that we particularly needed them bulls—we throwed a bevy of brickbats at the last few runners and checked up on our casualties. I had a set of skinned kunckles, my nose was inclined to be a bit gory and the majority of Ptomaine's bulky ears had been badly cut by a iron hoop which one of our charmin' tête-à-têtes skillfully wielded. But the worst break we got happened to Kid Roberts. His right hand—the money paw—was a ugly, inflamed red and all swelled up like a new judge!

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Well, on account of the prominence of Kid Roberts and Dolores, the newspapers played up that scrimmage and what caused it like it was a airplane wreck in the subway. It was splashed all over the front pages with their photos and this simply poisoned Dolores, which was satisfied how she'd get trimmed at the polls on the account of the incessant couplin' of her name with the heavyweight champion's. As if that ain't enough, Kid Roberts accepts a invitation to speak over the radio about his comin' brawl with Guardsman Blue. We ain't no more than stepped into the broadcastin' room, when we bump right into Dolores, which was there to spill a campaign talk!

"Eh—how do you do!" stammers Kid Roberts.

All he got was a cold little bow.

That was apparently embarrassin' enough for Dolores, but the Kid made it more so by forgettin' all about his speech on the fight and launchin' into a long and enthusiastic appeal for votes for his wife! That made more newspaper stories the followin' day and further infuriated the already maddened Dolores. Broilin' canine, but she was sore!

The Kid's right hand, injured in that untoward gang fight, was keepin' me from oversleepin' durin' the next few nights. It was terrible slow in respondin' to scientific treatment and as tender as a schoolgirl's heart —grammar school. I went to all the extremes to keep this fact a dark secret from the public and the newspaper guys, but somehow or other it got out and the odds shifted to six to five, with Guardsman Blue the favorite. At this tasty price, Kid Roberts, Ptomaine,

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myself and the Kid's entire camp went down hook, line and sinker on the champion to win by a knock-out. In the case of Ptomaine and the handlers, they bet all the sugar they got for helpin' Kid Roberts train, figurin' the Guardsman a spread for the champ, bum hand or not!

Election Day, the day of the combat, dawned bright and clear, forecastin' the record crowd which was to see one of the greatest glove contests ever fought for a world's championship. Even the most calloused, case-hardened fan was breathless, hoarse and tremblin' when he milled his way out of the arena *that* afternoon, I'll inform the globe!

As usual, Ptomaine tried his best to gum matters up and nearly succeeded. Early in the mornin' he vanished from the camp and the next I heard from him was by the via of a phone call around noon. The call come from a police station. I rushed down and found this half-wit in a cell, battered and gloomy. He looked like a total loss!

"How come?" I asked him angrily.

"Creepin' mackerel, what a break *I* got!" says Ptomaine, gingerly feelin' a bump on his bean, "I had a heavy date with Hilda this mornin' and wishin' to put on a little dog I took her for a taxi ride. 'At went over fine, but when the fatal time to pay off comes rollin' around, I find I ain't got a thin dime on me—I left my dough in my other coat, get me? Well, I asked Hilda to stake me to twenty bucks; the bill was nineteen ninety and I naturally wished to tip the chauffeur—a fool and his money is soon parted!

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But Hilda ain't puttin' nothin' out. She tells me to cut myself a piece of cake and immediately takes the air! A nice girl what?"

"How did you get into this jam?" I hollers, angrily. "Never mind your love affairs!"

"A dose of patience would do you the world of good," says Ptomaine. "Well, the chauffeur starts gettin' rosey with me and I get steamed myself when in the midst of his barkin' and meowin' he claims I'm a big bum! They ain't nobody goin' to push *me* around like 'at, which I told him. The big false alarm goes crazy and chooses me and then the fun began! I'm sprayin' him with left hooks and givin' him a proper cuffin', when a couple of coppers comes poundin' up. I told 'em I was Ptomaine Joe, the heavyweight sensation, and they told *me* I was both a liar and pinched! Well, I'm cop-proof. I knocked them two bulls and the taxi yegg stiff, but then all the cops in the world held a reunion over my body. They was too frequent for me and here I am. Check me out of this trap, will you? I want to go places!"

How would you like to be pilot for a jobbie like that?

Disgusted, I went out to the desk sergeant and asked him to let me lamp what the blotter had to state about Mons. Ptomaine Joe.

"There you are!" snarls the sarg, pushin' the blotter towards me. "Read it and weep!"

As near as I can remember, the blotter read like thus:

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Ptomaine Joe, prize fighter; assault and battery, disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace, suspicion of larceny, attempted homicide, resisting arrest, assaulting an officer, vagrancy. Arresting officers: McCue, Cohen, Ruzzatti, Olson, Brown, Schmidt, Johnson, Le Fevre.

"For cryin' out loud!" I says, when I had read that novel. "This guy'll go to the chair, won't he?"

"They'll probably *start* with that!" growls the sergeant.

But it turned out that me and the desk sergeant was lodge members and his name happened to be Murphy, the same as mine is. So I fin'ly managed to bail Ptomaine out and take him to a medico, which treated this cop-killer's again badly damaged ears and stuffed 'em with cotton packs. The doctor remarks that after what Ptomaine had just been through he's crazy to enter a prize ring that afternoon and Ptomaine says he's commencin' to think he's crazy to enter a prize ring *any* afternoon!

Well we come down from the camp right after lunch so's we could cast our votes for the beautiful Dolores, before enterin' the arena. The lady herself happens to be in the pollin' place when we blowed in and the delighted crowd outside quickly recognized both her and Kid Roberts. Dolores drawed a polite cheer, but the Kid, which was to defend his championship within a few hours, got a ovation which brung hundreds on the run! A newspaper photographer wouldn't have it no other way but that they pose for a picture together and as in front of that mob of hero-

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worshippers there was no escape, Dolores gave a resigned sign and consented. She forced a pleasant smile and a lovin' expression, but she was double furious at what she thought was the final blow to her political hopes.

The scene then shifted to the ring, where Ptomaine Joe was all set to go on with Rough House Williams in the semi-final bout. As his elephant's ears is stuffed with cotton, Ptomaine couldn't hear a earthquake, let alone the bell, and he's arranged with his goofy handlers to raise their arms as a signal when the gong rings, so's he'll know when it's the end of a round and stop fightin'. He's goin' to watch his seconds for this highly important signal at every opportunity durin' the quarrel.

Whilst awaitin' the word to start this gymkana, Ptomaine peers eagerly through the haze of tobacco smoke for a glimpse of the fair Hilda Dahlstrom, the nurse which had given him the run-around. Suddenly, he releases a oath which would of made a army mule skinner blush and look askance—I ain't got the faintest idea what askance means, but it's a high class word, now ain't it? I followed Ptomaine's infuriated gaze and then I laughed myself ill! Jammed right up against the ropes in the costly seats Ptomaine had to pay for, is Hilda Dahlstrom and some big Swede which give Ptomaine a silly grin. Then the bell rung!

The enraged Ptomaine shot off his stool like somebody had lit a fire under it and smacked Rough House Williams on the button with a ruinous right before the burly colored boy knew what it was all about.

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The crowd yelled as Rough House sagged a bit at the knees and another horrible right to the jaw sent the dark-skinned gent crashin' into the ropes. The customers madly beseeched Ptomaine to finish his man and Ptomaine tried hard to fill their order. Rough House, who'd been busy doin' nothin', rallied and managed to land a weak left to the pan, but the barrage of rights and lefts from the heart-broken Ptomaine soon had the Ethiopian in a bad way.

Well, it looked like a miracle was about to happen before our eyes—Ptomaine Joe was goin' to leave a ring under his own power and leave it a winner to boot! Our dare-devil cook seemed to realize this himself and he steadied, timin' his punches nicely. Fearful of losin' on a foul what seemed a certain win, he even remembered to keep watchin' his corner for the upraised arms of his handlers—the signal that the bell had clanged, endin' the first frame. In response to the mob's howl for more speed, Ptomaine stepped on it and wowed 'em by floorin' Rough House with a beautiful right to the body. The dazed colored boy staggered to his feet, beatin' the count by a eyelash and Ptomaine eagerly rushed in to finish him. The house was in a uproar and so was Williams, when to the stunned amazement of the crowd and the wonderin' joy of Rough House, *Ptomaine drops his gloves!* He'd glanced hastily at his corner and seein' a forest of upraised arms, he thought the bell had rung.

Mr. Rough House Williams squandered a paltry second on a dumfounded stare at the defenceless Ptomaine. Then he let go a wide grin and a right swing

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from the regions of his heel. The crowd groans in unison, but Ptomaine didn't—that punch caught him under the chin and sprawled him on the canvas, as cold as a step-mother's caress!

As our noble athalete's frenzied seconds drag his limp carcass to his corner and the attendance is behavin' like mental defectives, *the bell rings!*

What had happened was this; 64-Round McHook and the other brainless wonders handlin' Ptomaine hadn't signalled him at all, or at least, they hadn't meant to. In the general confusion they'd forgot *all* about the agreed upon signal and that Ptomaine couldn't hear with that cotton in his ears. So in their amazement at seein' him winnin' a fight, they'd throwed up their arms in delight! Ptomaine seen nothin' but arms in the air when he looked at 'em and thought the round was over. Well, it *was,* as far as *he* was concerned!

With the comedy part of the bill out of the way, the nervous, impatient crowd buzzed like the drone of two million bees with excitement over the dramatic part of the program—Kid Roberts of the United States vs. Guardsman Blue of the United Kingdom, for the heavyweight championship of the world! And what a two-man Gettysburg that was, with the result in doubt almost till the last punch!

The election returns was bein' announced from the ring between rounds and the very first thing we heard was that Dolores was bein' snowed under in the blue-blooded districts by votes for the bozo she was runnin' against. A reporter motions for me to bend down

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over the ropes and when I do he tells me that the Kid's wife has arranged to get the fight returns at her home, along with the results of the ballotin'. Well, up till the third round, Dolores was hearin' of her hubby receivin' as steady a beatin' in the ring as she was gettin' at the polls. That sore right hand proved a decided handicap, and, takin' a desperate chance with it in the second round, the Kid broke it, renderin' it practically useless from then on!

The first round went to the cool and clever Guardsman by a good margin. Kid Roberts was nervous and cold. He couldn't seem to untrack himself, whilst the Englishman piled up points with a stiff straight left which didn't seem able to miss the Kid's face. The champion tried sayin' it with left hooks, but Guardsman Blue smothered his efforts with apparent ease, frequently crossin' his own right with damagin' effect. Blue was a pretty boxer and no mistake! Towards the end of the round, the Guardsman hit Kid Roberts on the back of the neck with a rabbit punch in a clinch. The crowd hissed and the referee warned Blue, which politely touched gloves in apology with the Kid, causin' the feverish crowd to cheer him. Crowds is funny, what?

The bell found the men sparrin' cautiously in mid-ring and the patrons of the manly art bellerin' for a little more manslaughter and a little less dancin'. The Kid run to his corner breathin' as regular as a sleepin' baby, but he hadn't landed four clean blows on the shifty Englishman. I give him a light spongin' and told him to keep in close, as it was a cinch even that

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early in the tussle that Kid Roberts had no chance outboxin' Mons. Blue at long range.

The Briton come out for round two a photograph of confidence. He tore in with that deadly left and connected four times without a return. Then the Kid tried his own left, but was short, immediately clinchin' and poundin' the Guardsman about the body with his only good hand—the left. On the break, each missed lefts, but Blue then jabbed the champion hard to the face and head. Still cool and calculatin,' the Guardsman continued to hook and jab Kid Roberts, till in desperation the Kid decided to obey the irritated crowd's squawk to "Take a chance!"

The champ rushed the Englishman to the ropes and landed a straight left to the head. It was a stiff punch and shook the Guardsman up so much that he was unable to block another one to the same place. Kid Roberts then set his teeth and hooked the sore right hand to the jaw. The blow had plenty behind it and caught Blue on the side of the head as he frantically ducked. Instantly, the Kid's face twisted in pain, and, clinchin', he looked at me over the Guardsman's shoulder and shook his head. The referee broke 'em and Blue woke the crowd up by connectin' several times with hard drives to the head and body. A hot left hook to the Kid's jaw slowed him to a walk and he missed a left uppercut at the bell.

A hasty examination of the champion's right hand when he slumped on his stool showed it was busted, as I feared. Whilst the announcer is megaphonin' the election returns to the mob durin' the rest, I

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The Universal-Jewel Series. *Fighting Back.*

SCENE FROM "SWINGBAD THE SAILOR."

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shoved half a orange in the Kid's mouth and showered instructions on him with the water. The votin' disclosed that Dolores was makin' a trifle better showin' and this seemed to interest the Kid more than the fact that he was now defendin' his world's championship with one hand!

"Pay attention to me, now, Kid!" I whisper in his ear. "Keep in close and pound this mug's heart with your left. I don't think he *likes* 'em down below! Are you listenin'?" I adds, slappin' him sharply on the shoulder.

He starts like he'd been asleep.

"By Gad!" he mutters, dreamily, "I think she'll be elected, after all!"

Then he skipped out for the third round.

Up to this innin', the showin' of Kid Roberts had been a severe disappointment to his admirers, which knew nothin' about his cracked right hand. The speedy Englishman seemed to be hittin' the champ at will and the Kid's famous right hook, or "Iron Mike", as the sport writers had christened it, could of been checked at the box office for all the use it was to him. They screamed at him to start somethin' as he met Blue in the center of the ring and start somethin' he did!

Guardsman Blue had evidently got the word from his seconds to throw caution to the winds and cut loose with everything he had in a try for a knockout. The Britisher's handlers was hep to the Kid's broken right hand and they joyfully figured they had the new world's champion in their corner. The

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Guardsman charged and swung a heavy right to the Kid's head which was cleverly blocked to his great surprise and half the roarin' mob's delight. Kid Roberts then stung Blue with two lightnin' lefts to the mouth and drove the same glove flush to the heart. These three clean wallops made the Guardsman pensive and he worked into a clinch to think matters over. The referee warned him for holdin' and fin'ly had to tear him away from the Kid. Both then prettily blocked each other's leads and the champion suddenly set himself and shot his right to the jaw. The blow caught Blue off balance and he plunged to his knees for the first knockdown, bringin' the crowd to its feet with a mighty cheer. Blue took a count of five, slyly rubbin' his gloves in the rosin as he did so. *I* seen that, but I guess the busy referee didn't. When Blue arose, he proceeded to rub them gloves against the Kid's face at every opportunity, the caked rosin soon makin' the champ's face raw. The gong found 'em clinched in Blue's corner, with the Kid sinkin' his left to the wrist in the pantin' Englishman's stomach, again and again and again!

Durin' the one-minute intermission, I maraged to get the referee to wipe the rosin off Blue's gloves and then come the fourth and last frame—the thriller of thrillers!

Kid Roberts grimly walked right into the Guardsman in spite of a volley of left jabs and right hooks which drove the house crazy. The champion clipped Blue on the chin with a wicked left and then started the gore in a stream with another one to the nose.

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Blue covered up and wanted to clinch, but the Kid boxed him off, left-handin' him all over the ring and usin' the broken right for defensive purposes only. Blue managed to slip over a couple of body punches, but he looked tired and the blows seemed to lack force. On the other hand, Kid Roberts was as strong as a bull. Actin' on the hysterical advice from his corner, the Englishman bored in and found the champion more than willin' to mix. Nobody sat down as they stood up to each other and exchanged lefts and rights to head and body. A savage right uppercut got past the champion's guard and he dropped to the canvas. By this time, the roar of the mob would of drowned out a broadside from a dreadnaught! Kid Roberts got to one knee and signalled me he wasn't hurt, but he took the full count to get his bearin's, nevers the less. When he arose as the referee bawls "Nine!", he was all business!

The eager Guardsman missed a left lead and the champ promptly crossed his right to the jaw, quickly followin' with a sizzlin' left to the stomach which seemed to cave the British boxer in. Swift as a flash of light, Kid Roberts stepped in and hooked his right to the jaw again and Blue fell in a heap, the claret gushin' freely from his nose and mouth. The Kid was usin' that swollen and agonizin' right like there was nothin' the matter with it at all, but I winced with him every time he landed it! The Guardsman was down for a count of seven. He tried to dance away when he got up, but the Kid was now too fast for him. He drove a crashin' left to Blue's ribs and the

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punch made the Briton change feet and look anxiously to his corner for counsel. They yelled to him to clinch, but the champion pushed him away and shot both right and left to the stomach as Blue weakly pawed at him. The Guardsman sank to his knees, complainin' to the referee that he'd been fouled. That was the tip-off that Mr. Blue was through! His squawk was ridiculous—Kid Roberts never fouled anybody in his life, in the ring or out of it. The referee shook his head at Blue and counted to eight, at which point Blue scrambled to his feet in a daze. About all he had left was his trunks and Kid Roberts made a choppin' block out of him with his left. The delirious crowd begged for a knockout and the Kid waded in, intent on doin' just that!

A right hand uppercut to the tip of the chin floored Blue for the third knockdown and when he got up a terrific left to the stomach sent him sprawlin' again. How he ever regained his footin' after *that* blow is a mystery, but he did, swayin' on his feet like a souse and soused he was from punishment. The referee looked meanin'ly at the Englishman's corner and there was some yells of "Stop it!" With victory a certainty, Kid Roberts stalled, a troubled look in his eyes. He was afraid another hard punch might be fatal to the groggy Guardsman—licked to a fare-thee-well, but game as they make 'em! Whilst the champion hesitates and the crowd's in a frenzy, a bloody towel comes hurtlin' into the ring from Blue's corner, followed by the old sponge. At the same minute, Blue sank to the floor without bein' hit and it was all over!

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Unmindful of the thunderous applause, Kid Roberts collapsed in his corner from the agony of that busted hand, whisperin' to me that his career in the ring was about ended, in spite of the fact that he was still champion. There was plenty young huskies comin' up, whilst the years was beginnin' to punish the Kid severely. The Guardsman had hit him hard and often, even floored him, before goin' out cold. His hands was commencin' to get brittle, his timin' and judgment was poor—old Mother Nature was startin' the count over him, what I mean!

Well, whilst we're all rejoicin' in the dressin' room over the result of the battle and the Kid's hand is bein' set by a openly admirin' sawbones, the sensational news comes that Dolores has been elected to the state senate! It seems that a landslide of votes at the last minute from the *rough and tough neighborhoods* had swung the tide in her favor. There's no question but that these citizens was for Dolores simply because she was the wife of their idol—Kid Roberts. The voters which put her over was mostly fighters, seconds, promoters, managers, boxin' fans and the etc. So the very thing which made Dolores leave the Kid and which she feared would defeat her ambitions, was responsible for her victory at the end!

But I guess in the first flush of winnin', Dolores didn't realize all that. Back in our hotel that night, with the mountainous Ptomaine outside the door to keep away the mobs which wanted to see the champion, I'm lookin' over a pile of newspaper extras filled with accounts of the big fight and likewise the election

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returns. All at once I let out a howl and handed a paper to the questionin' Kid.

"It was nothin' in the world but the leatherpushers and their friends which put your wife in the senate and *now* look what she does!" I groaned.

Kid Roberts gazes at the newspaper, gasps—and then bursts out in hysterical laughter. On the first page was this, in big black type:

KID ROBERTS STOPS BLUE IN FOURTH!

Right next to *that* is *this*:

HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION'S WIFE
ELECTED TO SENATE TO URGE
ANTI-BOXING LEGISLATION!

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ROUND TWELVE

LOVE AND LET LOVE

ABOUT thirty-six hundred months ago, Mr. W. Shakespeare which refused time and time again to appear in the movies, ride in a airplane, operate a typewriter, attend Ziegfeld Follies or speak over the radio, fin'ly bowed to public demand and consented to write the followin':

That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,
If with his tongue he cannot win a woman!

Well, that's all right as far as it goes, but like a bookkeeper's wages it don't go far enough, what I mean. For one thing, there's much more girls prowlin' gracefully around now than there was in the noted year of 1600 A.D.—which, as the initials shows, was All Different. Maybe in *them* days you could *talk* your ways into the tender hearts of what few ladies hadn't made other arrangements, but in the current year mere conversation will get you nowheres with the skin you love to touch!

By a odd coincidence, the modern damsel's motto is that actions talk much more vociferous than re-

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marks. She craves to hear "I love you!" every bit as well as Eve did, but she demands some *proofs* of that highly popular method of gettin' her kind attention. In the olden times, a well-placed kiss would satisfy the little woman that you was maniacal about her and you could get away with murder. But that's all damp to-day. Instead of bein' the golden band which shows the world you're her lord and master, the weddin' ring is a platinum hoop through which hubby has got to jump when wifie says so, or she absolutely won't play!

After punchin' Guardsman Blue incoherent the Kid made up our minds that he was ripe to quit the boxin' racket forever and a day. The young man wished to devote his entire time and attentions to the difficult feat of winnin' back the comely Dolores, still A. W. O. L. from the dear old family hearth. But whilst havin' important money, Kid Roberts was now more than willin' to leave the ring flat, the idea of his delicious helpmeet bein' in politics was just as unappetizin' to him as him being a box fighter was to her. But all set to do his wife a favor and swear off breakin' noses, he felt the least she could do in return was to meet him half ways by throwin' up her job in the senate. Kid Roberts figured she'd have to do it eventually, so why not now?

How the so ever, the confident Kid reckoned without his hostess. Hurt by his previous refusals to forget about the manly art of self-defence for her sake and all hopped up over her win at the polls, which she expected like she expected to become Queen of Siam,

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Dolores was the exact opposite of anxious to give up her brand new honors at what she considered a mere wave of the hand from her formerly indifferent husband. Woman-like, she thought Kid Roberts had a little more punishment comin' to him and that she rated much coaxin' and plenty pettin' before she'd kiss and make up. Well, even though they're full of the best intentions in the world, there's *some* masculines which just ain't got a hobby of goin' down on their knees whilst beggin' your pardon.

Kid Roberts was one of 'em.

As I'd handled the Kid in as many battles with his wife as I'd went behind him in his brawls in the ring, he requested the slight boon of my presence at the big pow wow with Dolores. There was nothin' phenomenal in that—I was well known to 'em both. As usual, Mr. Conference started off beautiful and wound up pitiful!

"Why—why, *Kane!*" breathes Dolores, as she lamps her former fireside companion.

Kid Roberts stares at his charmin' opponent like she was Eve and he was Adam. Neither of 'em give *me* a tumble.

"Dolores!" he says, a bit dreamily.

So far, everything is jake. Then the fun began!

"Sweetheart, I've thrown away my boxing gloves forever!" says the Kid.

They clinch and no referee in the world would of had the heart to break 'em, no kiddin'!

"That's the best news I've heard since my election to the senate!" says Dolores, the photograph of hap-

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piness. "I'll send Jimpson right over to your hotel for your things and—" she stops, blushin'. I started to the street myself, but the Kid stops me by flickin' a eyebrow, a old signal between us.

"Of course, dear, this means that you'll resign from the senate at once, doesn't it?" asks Kid Roberts, like he's merely statin' a fact they both take for granted.

The prettiest face I ever seen loses the joyful smile with the speed of radio or light—whichever's the fastest. Dolores kind of squares her lovely shoulders and emits a frown.

"Why, Kane," she says softly to her sparrin' partner, "I cannot see why my career in politics should be interrupted or—or how it might jeopardize our happiness in any way. Many professional women are happily married and——"

"And you expect me to discard my title of world's champion to be known merely as the husband of the —er—famous Dolores Halliday, state senator," butts in the Kid, two miles above the height of sarcasm.

"I do not expect you to do *anything* you do not want to do, Kane—you never have, you know!" says Dolores, coldly.

That got the desired results and the panic was on!

Steamed by his frow's catty remark, Kid Roberts hotly accused her of knifin' the voters whose ballots elected her, by introducin' bills against boxin'. Dolores come back with equally heavy artillery and the fun waxed fast and furious, comin' to a raucous close with a ton of grief for both as of yore. Dolores was

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weepin' and the Kid gnashin' his pearly teeth when they parted, with nothin' further between 'em than a heartily banged door!

In the meanwhile, a new and sensational heavyweight has flashed across the boxin' horizon in what I'll call a spectacular fashion. This big blah was known far and wide as the "Fightin' Sheik", for the main reasons that he's supposed to be a full-blooded Arabian of important birth. The name his admirin' parents made him a present of was somethin' no announcer could cope with, so he's slappin' 'em stiff under the tasty cognomen of "Jack Thomas." Hon Thomas, which stood six foot seven inches with his wavy hair brushed back and weighed two hundred and forty-five pounds after a shave, has dumfounded Europe and South America by a uninterrupted series of one-round knockouts of the foreign heavies. As we all know, knockin' out foreign heavies is only givin' 'em what they've learned to expect. Still, turnin' the trick in one frame ain't exactly a common practice, at that—most of 'em don't last *that* long, what I mean.

Well, to the New York fight promoters, always willin' to take the best of it, this Samson of the desert looks like a ham bone looks to a Airedale. Mr. Jack Thomas is the find of the century! As far as the nude eye can see, there ain't nobody in the good old U. S. A. which is capable of givin' the world's champion, Kid Roberts, as much as a good, stiff workout and the promoters reason rightly that regardless of whether or not Thomas is a bum, he'll certainly do till one comes along. They figure that the Inter-

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national flavor of a bout between the Arab and Kid Roberts would pack even Central Park to its furthest shrubbery—picture the publicity value of a properly built up fightin' sheik!

A cloudburst of cables descends on Thomas and his manager, which is boundin' around sweet old England, flattenin' the divin' Joe Becketts and the like as fast as they come along. It's triple easy to sell the battlin' and money lovin' Arabian the idea that he should see America first, particularly when a guarantee of $100,000 for a setto with Kid Roberts is served up pipin' hot with the courteous invitation. Then the boys which loves to keep the manly art—and their bank accounts—alive, comes cuddlin' up to me and Kid Roberts. For the paltry favor of pushin' this Jack Thomas loose from his reputed equilibrium we could have anything our little hearts desired—try and get it!

Should they of sit up all night plannin' ways and means, the fight promoters couldn't of approached the champion at a better time to do business. The Kid was as hot as a saxophone player and no mistake! The refusal of his wife to forget about politics had him fit to be chained to a post and the sport writers' printed remarks about him bein' a "burnt out, battle-scarred veteran" turned him red-headed. All his resolutions went by the board and in less than a week the fumin' Kid Roberts signs to cuff Jack Thomas for $300,000 —win, lose, draw or what have you?

About this time the boxin' game was gave one of the biggest boosts it ever got since David stopped

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Goliath with a punch. Said boost was the complete retirement from the ring of Ptomaine Joe which left a record for the boys to shoot at for some time to come. A perfect percentage—not a single win in a entire career in the ring. Hot puppy!

This parsnip seeks me out in the trainin' camp one day.

"Hold everything!" he says, "and get set for a shock!"

"On your way, Ignorant," I answers, the height of courtesy, "I wouldn't loan you a nickel if I had two more than there is in the mint!"

"And I wouldn't ask you for one if I knowed where I could buy a steam yacht with it!" says Ptomaine. "You'd think you was payin' teller durin' your spare time—always talkin' about money. If——"

"Come to the point and be done with it, will you?" I butt in harshly.

"You don't give me the opportunity," complains Ptomaine. "It's a wonder you ain't on the board of pardons—you never let nobody finish a sentence!"

"That wins!" I says, throwin' up my hands. "Do your stuff and make it snappy!"

"Well," says Ptomaine, "what I wished to state was 'at the fight industry will have to crawl along without *my* valuable services from now on. I'll never pull on another boxin' glove as long as I'm allowed to breathe! If Kid Roberts was wise, he'd quit the game too and let this Arabian punk content himself with shadow boxin'. Old Father Time is startin' to tell on the champ, just like it is on me. We're pretty much alike."

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"Under the arms!" I says. "Y'know, Ptomaine, you always been a puzzle to me at that. You seem to be poison in a rough and tumble, I've saw you baffle a dozen guys in free-for-alls. How is it that *one* man seems to be just one too many for you?"

"They ain't nothin' mysterious about 'at," says Ptomaine. "One man was just one too many for Abel, too!"

Well, before another couple of weeks had visited us and departed, Ptomaine Joe hands us shock number two and this one was more astoundin' than his welcome resignation from the prize ring. Kid Roberts sends him up to his wife's home with a note one day and that day was either the luckiest or the unluckiest in Ptomaine's life! Whilst deliverin' the message, he crossed the path of Dolores' pretty French maid Yvonne and a tasty number she was, too, like the ones you see in the plays and movies—and nowheres else. Our unhandsome hero run right to past performances and fell for Yvonne like Antony crashed for the noted Cleo. In fact, when Ptomaine staggered back to the trainin' camp he was "drunk with love!", as he put it himself. Assisted by what Frog he picked up in Paris as the results of the draft and his wild cravin' for Yvonne, he then starts in a busy campaign for that damsel's heart.

Well, boys and girls, *this* time Ptomaine got service! He strutted in on the open-mouthed camp one afternoon with his chest out three lineal feet and the shyly blushin' Yvonne on his arm.

"Meet the wife—don't laugh!" says Ptomaine.

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Frankie Finn and One-Round Fay, two of the Kid's sparrin' partners, looked from the eye-widenin' Yvonne to Ptomaine's fearful features and then turned away, shakin' their bullet-heads in silent wonderment. When Kid Roberts recovers from this typical case of unexpectedness, he smiles and bows to Yvonne, crackin' somethin' in her own tongue which makes the gal flush with pleasure. Then he shakes Ptomaine's hand heartily and wished him the thing the grinnin' Ptomaine was goin' to need most—luck!

"Well, Ptomaine," I says with a sigh of deep relief, as Kid Roberts walks away, "I'm certainly fearful delighted that you're now off *my* hands and in charge of somebody else for life! You couldn't of done nothin' which would please me better than gettin' wed. Eh —what are you and Yvonne goin' to use for money?"

"I ain't annoyed about money, you sarcastical monkey," grows Ptomaine. "And besides, Yvonne ain't exactly no pauper and she's got a good job to boot. We're sittin' pretty, and in due time, after I've rested up from the rush and bustle of the honeymoon, I can win myself a job as a chef anywheres. I ain't one of them stuck-up husbands which is too proud to work after they're married!"

Payin' not the slightest of slight attention to the loud guffaws of the Kid's handlers, Ptomaine then proudly relates how he made Yvonne see her ways clear into committin' the lunatical act of marryin' him.

"Needless delays and a faint heart is what beat me with the women in the dim past," he says, "so first I

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learned enough Frog to ask Yvonne this simple little question, to viz, 'Will you wed me, Kid?' Well bein' a smart girl, Yvonne immediately hung her comely head and murmured soft and low, *'Mais oui!'*—'at's Paris for 'Absolutely!' This gets me a bit delirious, but I says, 'Thanks very much!' and rushed her off to a minister before she knowed what it was all about. Yvonne's one of the main reasons I left the ring, because she didn't wish to be married to no prize fighter, which I'm glad to say I ain't any more!"

"When *was* you one?" I asks.

"C'mon, Yvonne, let's leave these roughnecks," says Ptomaine. "We've did enough slummin' for to-day!"

It took half the trainin' camp to hold me and the big stiff got away.

In due course of time, Jack Thomas, the Arabian Goliath, unboated himself at the United States and is met at the dock by an army of sport writers and photographers. From the reception this gil got he might of been one of them foreign lecturers which loathes our manners, but loves our dollars—the difference bein' that there was a chance that the Arab really had somethin' to deliver. The mammoth Thomas at least *looked* like a killer and for days afterwards the sport pages is full of his sensational history and the stark terror he'd created in the ring. Lady writers interviewed him from the female points of view, he was photographed almost hourly and generally gave the freedom of the city by New York, which is much freer with that than with anything else.

Well, Thomas at once goes into secret trainin' for

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a quickly arranged bout with Bill McCann, a fearful set-up hand-picked by the careful promoters of the Arabian's fight with Kid Roberts. The reason for this preliminary showin' of the dizzy sheik's wares, was that the hard-boiled sport writers insisted on the rights of the fans to see a sample of how Mr. Thomas conducted himself in a prize ring before payin' famine prices to witness his collision with the world's champion. Both me and Kid Roberts was muchly pleased when we hear that the Arab is trainin' behind locked doors and won't even let the newspaper guys in to see him workout. That kind of stuff is usually the tip-off that a fighter's got somethin' either him or the promoters wishes to hide from the boxin' sharps—in other words, that he's not so good.

The Jack Thomas-Bill McCann hippodrome lasted just fifty-nine seconds, the Arab knockin' the badly scared McCann dead with a punch. In fact, the "fight" was over so swiftly that nobody had a chance to get the faintest line on the Arabian scrapper's ability to box or take punishment. There seemed to be no doubt that the foreign importation could *hit,* but what he would do against a seasoned ring general and master boxer like Kid Roberts, which would be steppin' around him and exchangin' blow for blow, was somethin' else again.

I'll tell you what he done!

There was only a few which recalled that Bill McCann was a twenty-eighth rater, but thousands remembered that the Arab had stopped him with a single right to the jaw. Therefore, the overflow

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crowd hoped for by the promoters turned out for the Kid Roberts-Jack Thomas battle, with the world's heavyweight championship at stake. Kid Roberts, the first to enter the ring, got his regular five-minute ovation—a clean liver, square fighter and murderous hitter, the Kid was always a popular champ. The dusky Thomas tramped down the aisle a few minutes later, loomin' up like the Woolworth Buildin' with a bathrobe on. The Arabian, too, got a thunderous cheer; after all, the mob was there to see bloodshed and violence and plenty of both—deep in the fight fan's heart he knows when his yell splits the roof he's not applaudin' one combatant or the other as much as the game itself!

Kid Roberts grinned like a boy at his warm reception and waved his gloved hands at the boisterous crowd. The Arab bowed very solemnly to one and all, then sat unsmilin'ly on his stool, as dignified as a rajah. At this point, Ptomaine Joe makes the unpleasant discovery that Thomas' seconds is Rough House Williams and Two-Punch McGazzatti—both of which gents has had the extreme pleasure of flattenin' Ptomaine in the ring. Some suitable backroom repartee follows which delights the ringsiders, quick to recognize Ptomaine as one of the greatest dry tank divers which ever laced on a boxin' glove. Don't blame me for not repeatin' here the above-mentioned repartee. I try to be a gentleman at all times if it's in any way possible, and besides, there's laws about what kind of words you can print.

Well, the fightin' sheik looked very impressive durin'

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the introductions, the posin' for the newspaper photographers, the instructions from the referee and the general thrillin' bustle of this and that which always comes before the first bell in a big fight. As he stood in his corner, facin' the noisy crowd and awaitin' the openin' gong, Mr. Jack Thomas from far off Arabia certainly seemed able to prevent himself from bein' picked on. "Get him quick!" was all the instructions I felt called upon to give Kid Roberts, before I grabbed the stool and ducked down under the ropes.

I've had some surprises in my life and I take it for granted I'm due for some more before the embalmer looks me over with a professional eye and quotes a price for the job. But the league-leader to date is the surprise I got a few seconds after this Arabian world-beater turned to face Kid Roberts at the bell. Honest to Baltimore, Thomas was a *terrible* joke—he was simply horrible! He seemed to know nothin' what the so ever about the scientific end of the game and his clumsy swings missed the smilin', nimble-footed champion by a city block! The desert warrior's left hand seemed to be more in his way than anything else and he soon let it hang useless at his side. Clumpin' around the ring like a bull elephant, the snortin' Thomas clubbed at Kid Roberts with his aimless right. Whilst any one of these terrible clouts would of ruined the Kid had they landed, there was no more chance of them landin' than there's a chance of me bein' favorably mentioned in Rockfeller's will! Twice the Arabian giant fell flat on his pan as the result of missin' wild haymakers and Kid Roberts

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danced around him cuttin' him to ribbons, but apparently unable to put him away on account of his uncalled for size.

At first the crowd was thunderstruck by the Arab's clownish exhibition, then enraged and fin'ly convulsed with laughter at his weird antics. As matters went along, the sheik got better—as an entertainer. Every time one of the Kid's busy gloves thudded home into some part of his rapidly reddenin' body, Thomas would wow the customers by howlin' a wild Arabian oath and gallopin' madly around the ring, the while makin' horrible faces at the Kid. Even repeated warnin's from the almost hysterical referee failed to improve Mr. Arab's style, though it did make him look longin'ly at that official, like he would love to smack him down.

But the real thrills of the evenin' was yet to come! The mob had paid fancy prices to see a fight and not no circus. They soon got tired laughin' and begin a bedlam of groans, jeers and squawks for their money back. Cushions, programs, pop bottles and similar confetti begin hurtlin' into the ring and the place was in a uproar. Ptomaine loudly beseeched me to let him through the ropes and take just one punch at the Arab, as here at last is a guy he *knows* he can knock off!

The referee disgustedly leans down over the ropes and tells the merrily guffawin' reporters that he's about made up his mind to stop this farce and call it "no contest," when the Arabian nightmare takes matters into his own hands. Infuriated at his inability to connect solidly with the grinnin' Kid Roberts, Thomas

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suddenly rushes blindly into a clinch and durin' the mix-up which follows, *he deliberately sinks his flashin' teeth in the Kid's left ear!*

Leapin' Tuna! You should of heard that crowd!

When the startled referee recovered his senses, he immediately stopped proceedin's and raised Kid Roberts' gloved hand, awardin' the champion the fight on a foul amidst the wildest confusion. That was O. K.—the referee couldn't do nothin' else—but it wasn't enough for Ptomaine Joe! This gent prob'ly thought the already overfed patrons hadn't yet had enough amusement for their money and he decided to personally remedy the shortage.

Enraged by the cannibal tactics of the Arab in tryin' to graze from the Kid's ear, Ptomaine broke away from me and jumped into the ring. His face is as grim as a death sentence as he starts for the bitin' sheik's corner—he looks *business,* what I mean! The foreigner's handlers, Rough House Williams and Two-Punch McGazzatti, rush forward to protect their man, but the thoroughly burnt up Ptomaine was in no mood for nonsense. Had them babies tackled Ptomaine one at a time they might of stopped him, but they tried to gang him and that was their hard luck! Ptomaine whinnied, "Come on, *like* it!" with pure delight and tied into them. When the smoke of battle cleared away, both of Ptomaine's former conquerors was stretched flat on the canvas as cold as a loan shark's heart! All Ptomaine got out of it was two or three deep breaths.

The coppers swarm into the ring as Thomas, with

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a angry bellow, gets off his stool to come to the rescue of his seconds. That was what you might call a ill-advised move! Ptomaine curls his lip at the Arabian, then, apropos of nothin', he puts the entire weight of his two hundred odd muscular pounds behind a right swing which clipped his tête-à-tête right on the button. The Arab hit the floor like he fell off the city hall roof and he couldn't of got up had he been called by Gabriel! Cheers which quivered the buildin's foundations greeted Ptomaine's three knockouts and then the attendance stumbled and milled hurriedly to the exits as the blood-thirsty chef leans over the ropes and howls for more victims. The admirin' coppers looked at him and become ungruff as they politely asked him to leave the ring and finish his killin's elsewhere.

"Well, boys—that was the last one!" says Kid Roberts to the sport writers in his dressin' room, whilst Ptomaine is impatiently tryin' to be interviewed. "Regardless of what the future may hold for me, I'm through with the ring forever! I'm retiring an undefeated champion, but I don't want the title. Let the others fight it out for——"

"It makes great copy, Kid!" butts in one of the younger reporters, excitedly. "Your wife at the ringside during your last fight—plenty of human interest and color there, eh?"

"What on earth are you talking about?" asks the Kid, turnin' pale. "My wife is at Albany!"

"Your wife was in a box, four rows back of me!" says the reporter. "D'ye mean to say you didn't know she was here?"

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But Kid Roberts has dashed out the door!

When I got to our hotel with Ptomaine later, I found a note from the Kid in my box to the effects that if I expected to see him before the next mornin' I was crazy. How the so ever, if anything come up that I *had* to get hold of him I could reach him at Rhinelander 87449. In the telephone novel, that number's listed as the home of my athalete's wife!

Well, the next day Kid Roberts showed up at our inn about noon. He's gaily whistlin' a tune and looks ten years younger than he did the night before in the ring, what I mean. Honest, he capers about the room like a schoolboy, without no explanation of what's detained him, why, and what the Indianapolis is the matter with him. How the so ever, at last my peevish questions gets startlin' results. The Kid stops his whistlin' selection long enough to inform me that Dolores really was among those present at the "battle" the night before. Without givin' me time to recover from *that* bit of unlooked for news, he adds happily that him and Dolores has kissed and made up and she's goin' to leave the state senate flat on its vertebræ!

"You see, Joe," says Kid Roberts, "Dolores had to attend the fight last night in her official capacity as a senator, through her being on a committee investigating the alleged brutality of boxing contests in New York."

"I get you," I says. "Well, the only thing brutal about *that* bout was the prices they charged the fans for viewin' it!"

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"Exactly!" frowns the Kid. Then he brightens up again. "However, Dolores realizes that it was the admirers of boxing who put her in the senate and she doesn't wish to betray them by voting to suppress the sport. At the same time, she personally still believes pugilism brutal and degrading and her conscience won't allow her to vote in favor of its continuance. So she has agreed with me that the best way out of her dilemma is to resign. Besides, Dolores is about fed up on politics, as sordid to her now as my—eh—former profession. She thinks she can be a much more useful citizen in her home with her husband than in the state senate, Joe."

"What a talk you must of released last night to sell her all that!" I says, in honest admiration.

"We're going on a round-the-world trip for a second honeymoon," smiles Kid Roberts. "Sail in a couple of weeks." He suddenly turns to Ptomaine Joe, which has been glumly listenin' to all this interestin' conversation—silent for the first time in his life! "How about you, Ptomaine?" the Kid asks him. "You're a married man, now, you know, and have serious responsibilities. What are *you* going to do?"

Heartbroken at this approachin' separation from his god, Ptomaine blinks a few times, clears his throat and mumbles that he don't know what he'll actually do, but what he *feels* like doin' is jumpin' off the dock!

Kid Roberts laughs and pats him on the back.

"You're just a big, overgrown kid, Ptomaine," he says, affectionately. "How do you like *this* proposition? Yvonne will of course accompany Mrs. Halli-

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day—would you care to go along with your wife as —as—well, bodyguard and valet until we return, and then, why—by Gad, I have it, you can practise your culinary arts in my kitchen!"

"Hot towel!" bellers Ptomaine, knockin' me half ways across the room with a joyful slap on the shoulders. "See what *I* got by bein' the cat's spats with a skillet!"

We left him and walked into the next room. Not just manager and fighter, but pals through the best and the worst of it for manys the year. The lump in my throat wasn't no tonsillitis and the moisture in the Kid's eyes didn't come from no cold in the head, either!

"Why not go with us, Joe?" says Kid Roberts, after a minute's embarrassin' silence.

I figured I'd bust out weepin' if I didn't take the air right away. Believe me, I felt plenty low!

"I—I can't spare the time now, Kid," I says, grippin' his hand and forcin' a smile. "I'll see you when you get back. I been tipped on a middleweight in Atlanta which they claim is the next champ. I'm goin' to dash down and look the boy over, just for fun—I looked *you* over just for fun once, remember?"

Now *you* tell one!

THE END

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