

## THE REMATCH

By

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### Dramatis Personae:

Joe Louis: A twenty-four year old heavyweight black boxer. Also known as “The Brown Bomber,” or “our Joe.” He had suffered an embarrassing defeat at the hands of Max Schmelling two years prior. After much training and discipline, he enters the ring again for a rematch.

### ACT I, Scene 1

*(Setting: June 22, 1938, the morning before the rematch. JOE LOUIS’s training room, complete with a speed bag and a heavy bag. A bright light shines down on him, making him sweat somewhat.)*

JOE LOUIS

*(JOE LOUIS walks into the training room, and stops at the heavy bag.)*

I let myself down,

*(He gets into position and gives the heavy bag a savage punch)*

I let a whole race of people down, because I thought I was some kind of hot shit! And Max Schmelling

*(Gives the bag another punch)*

Actually was hot shit! Nazis ate that shit Schmelling boxer for breakfast! I’ll bet they got him on cereal boxes across the pond!

*(Gives the bag two punches exhaling sharply through his nose with each)*

Can’t help but wonder what people would think of him if he lost. Me?

*(Gives the bag another punch)*

I probably’d be sittin’ easy, woulda kept boxing for a few years,

*(Punches the bag again)*

Maybe retired at 30, started a family with Marva.

*(Catches the bag and holds it)*

Nah. I lost, he won, and we’ve got a rematch in twelve hours. No changing that now.

*(Joe Louis walks over to the speed bag and starts punching it lightly, but rapidly and rhythmically, all throughout his monologue)*

JOE LOUIS

People used to call me Superman before my first fight with Schmelling, but he never lost! Naw, I’m not Superman, just an athlete who wants his title back.

*(Continues to box with one hand while he wipes his brow with the back of his other glove)*

Kinda funny what losing does to people. Lose one fight in the U.S., and suddenly people like you! And now,

*(Resumes boxing with both hands) ole'*

Average Joe, the Joe of the people, has the U.S. on his shoulders, and freedom in his fists. FDR himself told me "we need those muscles for America."

*(Chuckles, and gives the speed bag a good, hard punch)*

America needs my muscles!

*(Walks over to where the speed bag landed, picks it up, and puts it back in place)*

The Nazis just need Schmelling's face!

*(Joe Louis returns to the heavy bag for another round. He starts it off with a good punch that causes it to bend sharply in the middle)*

#### JOE LOUIS

That's the thing with boxing nowadays. Sure,

*(Punches the heavy bag again)*

It looks like two guys alone in a ring, but there's a whole damn

*(Punches the bag again)*

Audience around you! And then there's the sons of bitches

*(Punches the bag again)*

Listening on the radios, and the

*(Another punch)*

Newsstands with their

*(Another punch)*

Newsboys! That was my mistake then; I thought it was

*(Another punch)*

Just me versus Max. Every black man,

*(Another punch)*

Every black family,

*(Another punch)*

Lost that day, and I am

*(Another punch)*

Not gonna see them fall again!

*(JOE LOUIS catches the bag and stops temporarily to catch his breath, and recite the next line)*

#### JOE LOUIS

Oh, today in this favored land the sun is shining bright; The band is playing loudly, and black hearts are all alight. And somewhere men are laughing, and their children play and shout; But there'll be no joy in Germany, 'cause we're gonna beat yo' ass! Whoo!

*(Joe Louis swings his arm triumphantly in the air, then goes back to hitting the heavy bag, more vigorously and rapidly than before if possible the bag swinging away a good 30 degrees from each blow only to return a second later to the same fate. After a few seconds more of this brutal assault, the lights fade out. End Scene, Act, and Play.)*