

Chapter 1

SAM STUBENER ran through his mail carelessly and rapidly. As became a manager of prize-fighters, he was accustomed to a various and bizarre correspondence. Every crank, sport, near sport, and reformer seemed to have ideas to impart to him. From dire threats, such as pushing in the front of his face, from rabbit-foot fetishes to lucky horseshoes, from dinky jerkwater bids to the quarter-of-a-million-dollar offers of irresponsible nobodies, he knew the whole run of the surprise portion of his mail.

In his time having received a razor-strop made from the skin of a lynched Negro, and a finger, withered and sun-dried, cur from the body of a white man found in Death Valley, he was of the opinion that never again would the postman bring him anything that could startle him. But this morning he opened a letter that he read a second time, put away in his pocket, and took out for a third reading. It was postmarked from some unheard-of post office in Siskiyou County, and it ran:

Dear Sam:

You don't know me, except my reputation. You come after my time, and I've been out of the game a long time. But take it from me I ain't been asleep. I've followed you, from the time Kal Aufman knocked you out to your last handling of Nat Belson, and I take it you're the niftiest thing in the line of managers that ever came down the pike.

I got a proposition for you. I got the greatest unknown that ever happened. This ain't con. It's the straight goods. What do you think of a husky that tips the scales at two hundred and twenty pounds fighting weight, is twenty-two years old, and can hit a kick twice as hard as my best ever? That's him, my boy, Young Pat Glendon, that's the name he'll fight under. I've planned it all out. Now the best thing you can do is hit the first train and come up here.

I bred him and trained him. All that I ever had in my head I've hammered into his. And maybe you won't believe it, but he's added to it. He's a born fighter. He's a wonder at time and distance. He just knows to the second and the inch, and he don't need to think about it at all. His six-inch jolt is more the real sleep medicine than the full-arm swing of most geezers.

Talk about the hope of the white race. This is him. Come and take a peep. When you was managing Jeffries you was crazy about hunting. Come along and I'll give you some real hunting and fishing that will make your movie picture winnings look like thirty cents. I'll send Young Pat out with you. I ain't able to get around. That's why I'm sending for you. I was going to manage him myself. But it ain't no use. I'm all in and likely to pass out any time. So get a move on. I want you to manage him. There's a fortune in it for both of you, but I want to draw up the contract.

Yours truly,

PAT GLENDON

Stubener was puzzled. It seemed, on the face of it, a joke—the men in the fighting game were notorious jokers—and he tried to discern the fine hand of Corbett or the big friendly paw of Fitzsimmons in the screed before him. But if it were genuine, he knew it was worth looking into. Pat Glendon was before his time, though, as a cub, he had once seen Old Pat spar at the benefit for Jack Dempsey. Even then he was called "Old" Pat, and had been out of the ring for years. He had antedated Sullivan, in the old London Prize Ring Rules, though his last fading battles had been put up under the incoming Marquis of Queensbury Rules.

What ring-follower did not know of Pat Glendon?—though few were alive who had seen him in his prime, and there were not many more who had seen him at all. Yet his name had come down in the history of the ring, and no sporting writer's lexicon was complete without it. His fame was paradoxical. No man was honored higher, and yet he had never attained championship honors. He had been unfortunate, and had been known as the unlucky fighter.

Four times he all but won the heavyweight championship, and each time he had deserved to win it. There was the time on the barge, in San Francisco Bay, when at the moment he had the champion going, he snapped his own forearm; and on the island in the Thames, sloshing about in six inches of rising tide, he broke a leg at a similar stage in a winning fight; in Texas, too, there was the never-to-be-forgotten day

when the police broke in just as he had his man going in all certainty. And finally, there was the fight in the Mechanics' Pavilion in San Francisco, when he was secretly jobbed from the first by a gun-fighting bad man of a referee backed by a small syndicate of bettors. Pat Glendon had had no accidents in that fight, but when he had knocked his man cold with a right to the jaw and a left to the solar plexus, the referee calmly disqualified him for fouling. Every ringside witness, every sporting expert, and the whole sporting world, knew there had been no foul. Yet, like all fighters, Pat Glendon had agreed to abide by the decision of the referee. Pat abided, and accepted it as in keeping with the rest of his bad luck.

This was Pat Glendon. What bothered Stubener was whether or not Pat had written the letter. He carried it down town with him. What's become of Pat Glendon? Such was his greeting to all the sports that morning. Nobody seemed to know. Some thought he must be dead, but none knew positively. The fight editor of a morning daily looked up the records and was able to state that his death had not been noted. It was from Tim Donovan, that he got a clue.

"Sure an' he ain't dead," said Donovan. "How could that be?—a man of his make that never boozed or blew himself? He made money, and what's more, he saved it and invested it. Did n't he have three saloons at the time? An' wasn't he makin' slathers of money with them when he sold out? Now that I'm thinkin', that was the last time I laid eyes on him—when he sold them out. 'T was all of twenty years and more ago. His wife had just died. I met him headin' for the Ferry. 'Where away, old sport?' says I. 'It's me for the woods,' says he. 'I've quit. Good-by, Tim, me boy.' And I've never seen him from that day to this. Of course he ain't dead."

"You say when his wife died—did he have any children?" Stubener queried.

"One, a little baby. He eas luggin' it in his arms that very day."

"Was it a boy?"

"How should I be knowin'?"

It was then that Sam Stubener reached a decision, and that night found him in a Pullman speeding toward the wilds of Northern California.

Chapter 2

Stubener was dropped off the overland at Deer Lick in the early morning, and he kicked his heels for an hour before the one saloon opened its doors. No, the saloonkeeper didn't know anything about Pat Glendon, had never heard of him, and if he was in that part of the country he must be out beyond somewhere. Neither had the one hanger-on ever heard of Pat Glendon. At the hotel the same ignorance obtained, and it was not until the storekeeper and postmaster opened up that Stubener struck the trail. Oh, yes, Pat Glendon lived out beyond. You took the stage at Alpine, which was forty miles and which was a logging camp. From Alpine, on horseback, you rode up Antelope Valley and crossed the divide to Bear Creek. Pat Glendon lived somewhere beyond that. The people of Alpine would know. Yes, there was a young Pat. The storekeeper had seen him. He had been in to Deer Lick two years back. Old Pat had not put in an appearance for five years. He bought his supplies at the store, and always paid by check, and he was a white-haired, strange old man. That was all the storekeeper knew, but the folks at Alpine could give him final directions.

It looked good to Stubener. Beyond doubt there was a young Pat Glendon, as well as an old, living out beyond. That night the manager spent at the logging camp of Alpine, and early the following morning he rode a mountain cayuse up Antelope Valley. He rode over the divide and down Bear Creek. He rode all day, through the wildest, roughest country he had ever seen, and at sunset turned up Pinto Valley on a trail so stiff and narrow that more than once he elected to get off and walk.

It was eleven o'clock when he dismounted before a log cabin and was greeted by the baying of two huge deerhounds. Then Pat Glendon opened the door, fell on his neck, and took him in.

"I knew ye'd come, Sam, me boy," said Pat, the while he limped about, building a fire, boiling coffee, and frying a big bear-steak. "The young un ain't home the night. We was gettin' short of meat, and he went out about sundown to pick up a deer. But I'll say no more. Wait till ye see

him. He'll be home in the morn, and then you can try him out. There's the gloves. But wait till ye see him.

"As for me, I'm finished. Eighty-one come next January, an' pretty good for an ex-bruiser. But I never wasted meself, Sam, nor kept late hours an' burned the candle at all ends. I had a damned good candle, an' made the most of it, as you'll grant at lookin' at me. And I've taught the same to the young un. What do you think of a lad of twenty-two that's never had a drink in his life nor tasted tobacco? That's him. He's a giant, and he's lived natural all his days. Wait till he takes you out after deer. He'll break your travelin' light, him a carryin' the outfit and a big buck deer belike. He's a child of the open air, an' winter nor summer has he slept under a roof. The open for him, as I taught him. The one thing that worries me is how he'll take to sleepin' in houses, an' how he'll stand the tobacco smoke in the ring. 'Tis a terrible thing, that smoke, when you're fighting hard an' gaspin' for air. But no more, Sam, me boy. You 're tired an' sure should be sleepin'. Wait till you see him, that's all. Wait till you see him.

But the garrulousness of age was on old Pat, and it was long before he permitted Stubener's eyes to close.

"He can run a deer down with his own legs, that young un," he broke out again. "'Tis the dandy trainin' for the lungs, the hunter's life. He don't know much of else, though he's read a few books at times an' poetry stuff. He's just plain pure natural, as you'll see when you clap eyes on him. He's got the old Irish strong in him. Sometimes, the way he moons about, it's thinkin' strong I am that he believes in the fairies and such-like. He's a nature lover if ever there was one, an' he's afeard of cities. He's read about them, but the biggest he was ever in was Deer Lick. He misliked the many people, and his report was that they'd stand weedin' out. That was two years agone—the first and the last time he's seen a locomotive and a train of cars.

'Sometimes it's wrong I'm thinkin' I am, bringin' him up a natural. It's given him wind and stamina and the strength o' wild bulls. No city-grown man can have a look-in against him. I'm willin' to grant that Jeffries at his best could 'a' worried the young un a bit, but only a bit. The young un could 'a' broke him like a straw. An' he don't look it. That's the everlasting wonder of it. He's only a fine-seeming young husky; but it's the quality of his muscle that's different. But wait till ye see him, that's all.

"A strange liking the boy has for posies, an' little meadows, a bit of pine with the moon beyond, windy sunsets, or the sun o' morns from the

top of old Baldy. An' he has a hankerin' for the drawin' o' pitchers of things, an' of spouting about 'Lucifer or night' from the poetry books he got from the red-headed school teacher. But 'tis only his youngness. He'll settle down to the game once we get him started, but watch out for grouches when it first comes to livin' in a city for him.

"A good thing; he's woman-shy. They'll not bother him for years. He can't bring himself to understand the creatures, an' damn few of them has he seen at that. 'Twas the school teacher over at Samson's Flat that put the poetry stuff in his head. She was clean daffy over the young un, an' he never a-knowin'. A warm-haired girl she was—not a mountain girl, but from down in the flatlands—an' as time went by she was fair desperate, an' the way she went after him was shameless. An' what d'ye think the boy did when he tumbled to it? He was scared as a jackrabbit. He took blankets an' ammunition an' hiked for tall timber. Not for a month did I lay eyes on him, an' then he sneaked in after dark and was gone in the morn. Nor would he as much as peep at her letters. 'Burn 'em,' he said. An' burn 'em I did. Twice she rode over on a cayuse all the way from Samson's Flat, an' I was sorry for the young creature. She was fair hungry for the boy, and she looked it in her face. An' at the end of three months she gave up school an' went back to her own country, an' then it was that the boy came home to the shack to live again.

"Women ha' ben the ruination of many a good fighter, but they won't be of him. He blushes like a girl if anything young in skirts looks at him a second time or too long the first one. An' they all look at him. But when he fights, when he fights!—God! it's the old savage Irish that flares in him, an' drives the fists of him. Not that he goes off his base. Don't walk away with that. At my best I was never as cool as he. I misdoubt 'twas the wrath of me that brought the accidents. But he's an iceberg. He's hot an' cold at the one time, a live wire in an ice-chest."

Stubener was dozing, when the old man's mumble aroused him. He listened drowsily.

"I made a man o' him, by God! I made a man o' him, with the two fists of him, an' the upstanding legs of him, an' the straight-seein' eyes. And I know the game in my head, an' I've kept up with the times and the modern changes. The crouch? Sure, he knows all the styles an' economies. He never moves two inches when an inch and a half will do the turn. And when he wants he can spring like a buck kangaroo. In-fightin'? Wait till you see. Better than his out-fightin', and he could sure 'a' sparred with Peter Jackson an' outfooted Corbett in his best, I tell you, I've taught 'm it all, to the last trick, and he's improved on the teachin'. He's a fair genius

at the game. An' he's had plenty of husky mountain men to try out on. I gave him the fancy work and they gave him the sloggin'. Nothing shy or delicate about them. Roarin' bulls an' big grizzly bears, that's what they are, when it comes to huggin' in a clinch or swingin' rough-like in the rushes. An' he plays with 'em. Man, d'ye hear me?—he plays with them, like you an' me would play with little puppy-dogs."

Another time Stubener awoke, to hear the old man mumbling:

"'Tis the funny think he don't take fightin' seriously. It's that easy to him he thinks it play. But wait till he's tapped a swift one. That's all, wait. An' you'll see'm throw on the juice in that cold storage plant of his an' turn loose the prettiest scientific wallop in that ever you laid eyes on."

In the shivery gray of mountain dawn, Stubener was routed from his blankets by old Pat.

"He's comin' up the trail now," was the hoarse whisper. "Out with ye an' take your first peep at the biggest fightin' man the ring has ever seen, or will ever see in a thousand years again."

The manager peered through the open door, rubbing the sleep from his heavy eyes, and saw a young giant walk into the clearing. In one hand was a rifle, across his shoulders a heavy deer under which he moved as if it were weightless. He was dressed roughly in blue overalls and woolen shirt open at the throat. Coat he had none, and on his feet, instead of brogans, were moccasins. Stubener noted that his walk was smooth and catlike, without suggestion of his two hundred and twenty pounds of weight to which that of the deer was added. The fight manager was impressed from the first glimpse. Formidable the young fellow certainly was, but the manager sensed the strangeness and unusualness of him. He was a new type, something different from the run fighters. He seemed a creature of the wild, more a night-roaming figure from some old fairy story or folk tale than a twentieth-century youth.

A thing Stubener quickly discovered was that young Pat was not much of a talker. He acknowledged old Pat's introduction with a grip of the hand but without speech, and silently set to work at building the fire and getting breakfast. To his father's direct questions he answered in monosyllables, as, for instance, when asked where he had picked up the deer.

"South Fork," was all he vouchsafed.

"Eleven miles across the mountains," the old man exposted pridefully to Stubener, "an' a trail that'd break your heart."

Breakfast consisted of black coffee, sourdough bread, and an immense quantity of bear-meat broiled over the coals. Of this the young fellow ate

ravenously, and Stubener divined that both the Glendons were accustomed to an almost straight meat diet. Old Pat did all the talking, though it was not till the meal was ended that he broached the subject he had at heart.

"Pat, boy," he began, "you know who the gentleman is?"

Young Pat nodded, and cast a quick, comprehensive glance at the manager.

"Well, he'll be takin' you away with him and down to San Francisco."

"I'd sooner stay here, dad," was the answer.

Stubener felt a prick of disappointment. It was a wild goose chase after all. This was no fighter, eager and fretting to be at it. His huge brawn counted for nothing. It was nothing new. It was the big fellows that usually had the streak of fat.

But old Pat's Celtic wrath flared up, and his voice was harsh with command.

"You'll go down to the cities an' fight, me boy. That's what I've trained you for, an' you'll do it."

"All right," was the unexpected response, rumbled apathetically from the deep chest.

"And fight like hell," the old man added.

Again Stubener felt disappointment at the absence of flash and fire in the young man's eyes as he answered:

"All right. When do we start?"

"Oh, Sam, here, he'll be wantin' a little huntin' and to fish a bit, as well as to try you out with the gloves." He looked at Sam, who nodded. "Suppose you strip and give'm a taste of your quality."

An hour later, Sam Stubener had his eyes opened. An ex-fighter himself, a heavyweight at that, he was even a better judge of fighters, and never had he seen one strip to like advantage.

"See the softness of him," old Pat chanted. "'Tis the true stuff. Look at the slope of the shoulders, an' the lungs of him. Clean, all clean, to the last drop an' ounce of him. You're lookin' at a man, Sam, the like of which was never seen before. Not a muscle of him bound. No weight-lifter or Sandow exercise artist there. See the fat snakes of muscle a-crawlin' soft an' lazy-like. Wait till you see them flashin' like a strikin' rattler. He's good for forty rounds this blessed instant, or a hundred. Go to it! Time!

They went to it, for three-minute rounds with a minute rests, and Sam Stubener was immediately undeceived. Here was no streak of fat, no apathy, only a lazy, good-natured play of gloves and tricks, with a brusque

stiffness and harsh sharpness in the contacts that he knew belonged only to the trained and instinctive fighting man.

"Easy, now, easy," old Pat warned. "Sam's not the man he used to be."

This nettled Sam, as it was intended to do, and he played his most famous trick and favorite punch—a feint for a clinch and a right rip to the stomach. But, quickly as it was delivered, Young Pat saw it, and, though it landed, his body was going away. The next time, his body did not go away. As the rip started, he moved forward and twisted his left hip to meet it. It was only a matter of several inches, yet it blocked the blow. And thereafter, try as he would, Stubener's glove got no farther than that hip.

Stubener had roughed it with big men in his time, and, in exhibition bouts, had creditably held his own. But there was no holding his own here. Young Pat played with him, and in the clinches made him feel as powerful as a baby, landing on him seemingly at will, locking and blocking masterful accuracy, and scarcely noticing or acknowledging his existence. Half the time young Pat seemed to spend in gazing off and out at the landscape in a dreamy sort of way. And right here Stubener made another mistake. He took it for a trick of old Pat's training, tried to sneak in a short-arm jolt, found his arm in a lightning lock, and had both his ears cuffed for his pains.

"The instinct for a blow," the old man chortled. "'Tis not put on, I'm tellin' you. He is a wiz. He knows a blow without the lookin', when it starts an' where, the speed, an' space, an' niceness of it. An' 'tis nothing I ever showed him. 'Tis inspiration. He was so born."

Once, in a clinch, the fight manager heeled his glove on young Pat's mouth, and there was just a hint of viciousness in the manner of doing it. A moment later, in the next clinch, Sam received the heel of the other's glove on his own mouth. There was nothing snappy about it, but the pressure, stolidly lazy as it was, put his head back till the joints cracked and for a moment he thought his neck was broken. He slacked his body and dropped his arms in token that the bout was over, felt the instant release, and staggered clear.

"He'll—he'll do," he gasped, looking the admiration he lacked the breath to utter.

Old Pat's eyes were brightly moist with pride and triumph.

"An' what will you be thinkin' to happen when some of the gay an' ugly ones tries to rough it on him?" he asked.

"He'll kill them, sure," was Stubener's verdict.

"No; he's too cool for that. But he'll just hurt them some for their dirtiness."

"Let's draw up the contract," said the manager.

"Wait till you know the whole worth of him!" Old Pat answered. "'Tis strong terms I'll be makin' you come to. Go for a deer-hunt with the boy over the hills an' learn the lungs and the legs of him. Then we'll sign up iron-clad and regular.

Stubener was gone two days on that hunt, and he learned all and more than old Pat had promised, and came back a weary and very humble man. The young fellow's innocence of the world had been startling to the case-hardened manager, but he had found him nobody's fool/ Virgin though his mind was, untouched by all save a narrow mountain experience, nevertheless he had proved possession of a natural keenness and shrewdness far beyond the average. In a way he was a mystery to Sam, who could not understand terrible equanimity of temper. Nothing ruffled him or worried him, and his patience was of an enduring primitiveness. He never swore, not even the futile and emasculated cussing words of sissy-boys.

"I'd swear all right if I wanted to," he had explained, when challenged by his companion. "But I guess I've never come to needing it. When I do, I'll swear I suppose."

Old Pat, resolutely adhering to his decision, said good-by at the cabin.

"It won't be long, Pat, boy, when I'll be readin' about you in the papers. I'd like to go along, but I'm afeard it's me for the mountains till the end."

And then, drawing the manager aside, the old man turned loose on him almost savagely.

"Remember what I've ben tellin' ye over an' over. The boy's clean an' he's honest. He knows nothing of the rottenness of the game. I kept it all away from him, I tell you. He don't know the meanin' of fake. He knows only the bravery, an' romance an' glory of fightin', and I've filled him up with tales of the old ring heroes, though little enough, God knows, it's set him afire. Man, man, I'm tellin' you that I clipped the fight columns from the newspapers to keep it 'way from him—him a-thinkin' I was wantin' them for me scrap book. He don't know a man ever lay down or threw a fight. So don't turn the boy's stomach. That's why I put in the null and void clause. The first rottenness and the contract's broke of itself. No snide division of stake-money; no secret arrangements with the movin' pitcher men for guaranteed distance. There's slathers o' money for the both of you. But play it square or you lose. Understand?

"And whatever you'll be doin' watch out for the women," was old Pat's parting admonishment, young Pat astride his horse and reining in dutifully to hear. "Women is death an' damnation, remember that. But when you do find the one, the only one, hang on to her. She'll be worth more than glory an' money. But first be sure, an' when you're sure, don't let her slip through your fingers. Grab her with the two hands of you and hang on. Hang on if all the world goes to smash an' smithereens. Pat, boy, a good woman is ... a good woman. 'Tis the first word and last."

Chapter 3

Once in San Francisco, Sam Stubener's troubles began. Not that young Pat had a nasty temper, or was grouchy as his father had feared. On the contrary, he was phenomenally sweet and mild. But he was homesick for his beloved mountains. Also, he was secretly appalled by the city, though he trod its roaring streets imperturbable as a red Indian.

"I came down here to fight," he announced, at the end of the first week.

"Where's Jim Hanford?"

Stubener whistled.

"A big champion like him wouldn't look at you," was his answer. "'Go and get a reputation,' is what he'd say."

"I can lick him."

"But the public doesn't know that.

If you licked him you'd be champion of the world, and no champion ever became so with his first fight."

"I can."

"But the public doesn't know it, Pat. It wouldn't come to see you fight. And it's the crowd that brings the money and the big purses. That's why Jim Hanford wouldn't consider you for a second. There'd be nothing in it for him. Besides, he's getting three thousand a week right now in vaudeville, with a contract for twenty-five weeks. Do you think he'd chuck that for a go with a man no one ever heard of? You've got to do something first, make a record. You've got to begin on the little local dubs that nobody ever heard of—guys like Chub Collins, Rough-House Kelly, and the Flying Dutchman. When you've put them away, you're only started on the first round of the ladder. But after that you'll go up like a balloon."

"I'll meet those three named in the same ring one after the other," was Pat's decision. "Make the arrangements accordingly."

Stubener laughed.

"What's wrong? Don't you think I can put them away?"

"I know you can," Stubener assured him. "But it can't be arranged that way. You've got to take them one at a time. Besides, remember, I know

the game and I'm managing you. This proposition has to be worked up, and I'm the boy that knows how. "If we're lucky, you may get to the top in a couple of years and be the champion with a mint of money."

Pat sighed at the prospect, then brightened up.

"And after that I can retire and go back home to the old man," he said.

Stubener was about to reply, but checked himself. Strange as was this championship material, he felt confident that when the top was reached it would prove very similar to that of all the others who had gone before. Besides, two years was a long way off, and there was much to be done in the meantime.

When Pat fell to moping around his quarters, reading endless poetry books and novels drawn from the public library, Stubener sent him off to live on a Contra Costa ranch across the Bay, under the watchful eye of Spider Walsh. At the end of a week Spider whispered that the job was a cinch. His charge was away and over the hills from dawn till dark, whipping the streams for trout, shooting quail and rabbits, and pursuing the one lone and crafty buck famous for having survived a decade of hunters. It was the Spider who waxed lazy and fat, while his charge kept himself in condition.

As Stubener expected, his unknown was laughed at by the fight club managers. Were not the woods full of unknowns who were always breaking out with championship rashes? A preliminary, say of four rounds—yes, they would grant him that. But the main event—never. Stubener was resolved that young Pat should make his *début* in nothing less than a main event, and, by the prestige of his own name he at last managed it. With much misgiving, the Mission Club agreed that Pat Glendon could go fifteen rounds with Rough-House Kelly for a purse of one hundred dollars. It was the custom of young fighters to assume the names of old ring heroes, so no one suspected that he was the son of the great Pat Glendon, while Stubener held his peace. It was a good press surprise package to spring later.

Came the night of the fight, after a month of waiting. Stubener's anxiety was keen. His professional reputation was staked that his man would make a showing, and he was astounded to see Pat, seated in his corner a bare five minutes, lose the healthy color from his cheeks, which turned a sickly yellow.

"Cheer up, boy," Stubener said, slapping him on the shoulder. "The first time in the ring is always strange, and Kelly has a way of letting his opponent wait for him on the chance of getting stage-fright."

"It isn't that," Pat answered. "It's the tobacco smoke. I'm not used to it, and it's making me fair sick."

His manager experienced the quick shock of relief. A man who turned sick from mental causes, even if he were a Samson, could never win to place in the prize ring. As for tobacco smoke, the youngster would have to get used to it, that was all.

Young Pat's entrance into the ring had been met with silence, but when Rough-House Kelly crawled through the ropes his greeting was uproarious. He did not belie his name. he was a ferocious-looking man, black and hairy, with huge, knotty muscles, weighing a full two hundred pounds. Pat looked across at him curiously, and received a savage scowl. After both had been introduced to the audience, they shook hands. And even as their gloves gripped, Kelly ground his teeth, convulsed his face with an expression of rage, and muttered:

"You've got yer nerve wid yeh." He flung Pat's hand roughly from his, and hissed, "I'll eat yeh up, ye pup!"

The audience laughed at the action, and it guessed hilariously at what Kelly must have said.

Back in his corner, and waiting the gong, Pat turned to Stubener.

"Why is he angry with me?" he asked.

He ain't," Stubener answered. That's his way, trying to scare you. It's just mouth-fighting."

"It isn't boxing," was Pat's comment; and Stubener, with a quick glance, noted that his eyes were as mildly blue as ever.

"Be careful," the manager warned, as the gong for the first round sounded and Pat stood up. "He's liable to come at you like a man-eater."

And like a man-eater Kelly did come at him, rushing across the ring in wild fury. Pat, who in his easy way had advanced only a couple of paces, gauged the other's momentum, side-stepped, and brought his stiff-arched right across to the jaw. Then he stood and looked on with a great curiosity. The fight was over. Kelly had fallen like a stricken bullock to the floor, and there he lay without movement while the referee, bending over him, shouted the ten seconds in his unheeding ear. When Kelly's seconds came to lift him, Pat was before them. Gathering the huge, inert bulk of the man in his arms, he carried him to his corner and deposited him on the stool and in the arms of his seconds.

Half a minute later, Kelly's head lifted and his eyes wavered open. He looked about him stupidly and then to one of his seconds.

"What happened?" he queried hoarsely. "Did the roof fall on me?"

Chapter 4

As a result of his fight with Kelly, though the general opinion was that he had won by a fluke, Pat was matched with Rufe Mason. This took place three weeks later, and the Sierra Club audience at Dreamland Rink failed to see what happened. Rufe Mason was a heavyweight, noted locally for his cleverness. When the gong for the first round sounded, both men met in the center of the ring. Neither rushed. Nor did they strike a blow. They felt around each other, their arms bent, their gloves so close together that they almost touched. This lasted for perhaps five seconds. Then it happened, and so quickly that not one in a hundred of the audience saw. Rufe Mason made a feint with his right. It was obviously not a real feint, but a feeler, a mere tentative threatening of a possible blow. It was at this instant that Pat lost his punch. So close together were they that the distance the blow traveled was a scant eight inches. It was a short-arm left jolt, and it was accomplished by a twist of the left forearm and a thrust of the shoulder. It landed flush on the point of the chin and the astounded audience saw Rufe Mason's legs crumple under him as his body sank to the floor. But the referee had seen, and he promptly proceeded to count him out. Again Pat carried his opponent to his corner, and it was ten minutes before Rufe Mason, supported by his seconds, with sagging knees and rolling, glassy eyes, was able to move down the aisle through the stupified and incredulous audience on the way to his dressing room.

"No wonder," he told a reporter, "that Rough-House Kelly thought the roof hit him."

After Chub Collins had been put out in the twelfth second of the first round of a fifteen-round contest, Stubener felt compelled to speak to Pat.

"Do you know what they're calling you now?" he asked.

Pat shook his head.

"One punch Glendon."

Pat smiled politely. He was little interested in what he was called. He had certain work cut out which he must do ere he could win back his mountains, and he was phlegmatically doing it, that was all.

"It won't do," his manager continued, with an ominous shake of the head. "You can't go on putting your men out so quickly. You must give them more time."

"I'm here to fight, ain't I?" Pat demanded in surprise.

Again Stubener shook his head.

"It's this way, Pat. You've got to be big and generous in the fighting game. Don't get all the other fighters sore. And it's not fair to the audience. They want a run for their money. Besides, no one will fight you. They'll all be scared out. And you can't draw crowds with ten-second fights. I leave it to you. Would you pay a dollar, or five, to see a ten-second fight?"

Pat was convinced, and he promised to give the audiences the requisite run for their money, though he stated that, personally, he preferred going fishing to witnessing a hundred rounds of fighting.

And still, Pat had got practically nowhere in the game. The local sports laughed when his name was mentioned. It called to mind funny fights and Rough-House Kelly's remark about the roof. Nobody knew how Pat could fight. They had never seen him. Where was his wind, his stamina, his ability to mix it with rough customers through long grueling contests? He had demonstrated nothing but the possession of a lucky punch and a depressing proclivity for flukes.

So it was that his fourth match was arranged with Pete Sosso, a Portuguese fighter from Butchertown, known only for the amazing tricks he played in the ring. Pat did not train for the fight. Instead he made a flying and sorrowful trip to the mountains to bury his father. Old Pat had known well the condition of his heart, and it had stopped suddenly on him.

Young Pat arrived back in San Francisco with so close a margin of time that he changed into his fighting togs directly from his traveling suit, and even then the audience was kept waiting ten minutes.

"Remember, give him a chance," Stubener cautioned him as he climbed through the ropes. "Play with him, but do it seriously. Let him go ten or twelve rounds, then get him,"

Pat obeyed instructions, and, thought it would have been easy enough to put Sosso out, so tricky was he that to stand up to him and not put him out kept his hands full. It was a pretty exhibition, and the audience was delighted. Sosso's whirlwind attacks, wild feints, retreats, and rushes, required all Pat's science to protect himself, and even then he did not escape unscathed.

Stubener praised him in the minute-rests, and all would have been well, had not Sosso, in the fourth round, played one of his most spectacular tricks. Pat, in a mix-up, had landed a hook to Sosso's jaw, when to his amazement, the latter dropped his hands and reeled backward, eyes rolling, legs bending and giving, in a high state of grogginess. Pat could not understand. It had not been a knock-out blow, and yet there was his man all ready to fall to the mat. Pat dropped his own hands and wonderingly watched his reeling opponent. Sosso staggered away, almost fell, recovered, and staggered obliquely and blindly forward again.

For the first and the last time in his fighting career, Pat was caught off his guard. He actually stepped aside to let the reeling man go by. Still reeling, Sosso suddenly loosed his right. Pat received it full on his jaw with an impact that rattled his teeth. A great roar of delight went up from the audience. But Pat did not hear. He saw only Sosso before him, grinning and defiant, and not the least bit groggy. Pat was hurt by the blow, but vastly more outraged by the trick. All the wrath that his father ever had surged up in him. He shook his head as if to get rid of the shock of the blow and steadied himself before his man. It all occurred in the next second. With a feint that drew his opponent, Pat fetched his left to the solar plexus, almost at the same instant whipping his right across to the jaw. The latter blow landed on Sosso's mouth ere his falling body struck the floor. The club doctors worked half an hour to bring him to. After that they put eleven stitches in his mouth and packed him off in an ambulance.

"I'm sorry," Pat told his manager, "I'm afraid I lost my temper. I'll never do it again in the ring. Dad always cautioned me about it. He said it had made him lose more than one battle. I didn't know I could lose my temper that way, but now that I know I'll keep it in control."

And Stubener believed him. He was coming to the stage where he could believe anything about his young charge.

"You don't need to get angry," he said, "you're so thoroughly the master of your man at any stage."

"At any inch or second of the fight," Pat affirmed.

"And you can put them out any time you want."

"Sure I can. I don't want to boast. But I just seem to possess the ability. My eyes show me the opening that my skill knows how to make, and time and distance are second nature to me. Dad called it a gift, but I thought he was blarneying me. Now that I've been up against these men, I guess he was right. He said I had the mind and muscle correlation."

"At any inch or second of the fight," Stubener repeated musingly.

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