

The First Bout

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

A dimly lit rundown room. Paint peeling off the walls, dirty showers. The floor is stained. A man sits in the middle of the room in a FOLDING CHAIR. This is HUNTER BELL (23, a young, attractive guy. His head buzzed, clean shaven.) Hunter is a boxer. His hands are TAPED. He's holding BLACK BOXING GLOVES. He has on BOXING SHOES, RED AND BLACK TRUNKS, and a SLEEVELESS HOODIE. A tattoo of a falcon perched on a branch on his left shoulder. He bounces his leg anxiously, staring at floor.

A door opens. Entering is CLAUDE JACKSON (57, bald, deep forehead wrinkles. A graying, scruffy beard. He has a strong southern accent). He has on a BLACK HOODIE and SWEATPANTS. He holds a tub of VASELINE, a TOWEL over his shoulder.

CLAUDE
How you feeling?

HUNTER
Ready.

CLAUDE
Remember, stay calm. Don't forgot the basics. I don't want to see your ass sprawled out face down on the canvas, cause you dropped your guard swinging crazy going for the kill shot.

Hunter stays looking down, locked in.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
This ain't no redneck backyard fight like your used too. This guy is going to want to knock your fucking head off. I hope you know that. I hope you understand that when you step in that ring, you are entering a goddamn battlefield.

Claude checks his WRISTWATCH.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Alright...it's time.

Claude holds the door open. Hunter rises and walks through.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Faint CHEERS and YELLING is heard. The closer he gets to the end, the louder the CHEERS. Hunter walks urgently, confidently. The hallway is fairly empty other than an old, beat-up VENDING MACHINE. Hunter stops at the double doors. He bounces up and down. Moves his head side to side. Claude comes up behind Hunter and smacks Hunter on the top of his shoulders. He begins to rub them, trying to relax Hunter. An ANNOUNCER begins speaking.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a good one tonight. Up first, making his Club Ringside debut...Hunter "The Falcon" Bell!

The doors are pulled open from the outside revealing a huge CROWD OF PEOPLE surrounding a RING. Spectators look at Hunter, eager to see the bloody clash that will soon take place. Hunter takes it in. He takes a deep breath and enters.

INT. VENUE - CONTINUOUS

Hunter makes his way to the ring. The crowd has moved, creating a walkway. They YELL and SCREAM at Hunter. He is clearly not the favorite. He walks up the STEPS and enters the battlefield. The ring clearly has history. The ropes are aged. The posts are a bit rusted. The canvas is stained with blood. A real safety hazard. Hunter stands in his corner. Pumped full of adrenaline. He takes his sleeveless hoodie off. Claude enters. He begins putting the Vaseline on Hunter's face. Hunter begins putting his gloves on.

CLAUDE

Whatever happens, stay true to your training. Remember there are three, three minute rounds. First round, focus on defense, figure him out. Get him tired. Alright, let's meet this guy.

Claude exits. The announcer walks to the middle of the ring.

ANNOUNCER

Now, you all know this next guy real well. He has an impressive record of sixteen wins, zero losses.

Hunter looks up. He's thrown off by this.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

I give you..."The Rattlesnake"
Tariq Baker!

The crowd ERUPTS. They love him. TARIQ BAKER (28, built like Hercules. Very intimidating). Tariq is ready. His GOLD BOXING GLOVES already on, GOLD AND BLACK TRUNKS, and GOLD BOOTS. This guy thinks highly of himself. Claude walks up the steps onto the apron. Hunter turns to him.

HUNTER

This isn't who I was scheduled to fight. What happened to Anderson?

CLAUDE

I don't know.

Claude signals for the announcer. The announcer makes his way to their corner.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Where's Anderson?

ANNOUNCER

Anderson came down with something last minute.

CLAUDE

And you couldn't have let us know.

ANNOUNCER

It doesn't matter. You wouldn't be allowed to back out anyway. It's in your contract.

CLAUDE

It would've been nice to at least know it was coming. Your sending my man in fucking blind. You know that isn't right.

ANNOUNCER

(grinning)
Sorry, but the show must go on.

The announcer walks away. Claude places his hand on Hunter's shoulder. He has a bad feeling about this.

CLAUDE

This is bullshit! We can leave if you want, I don't care about a fucking contract-

HUNTER

No, I want to do this.

Claude gives an unsure nod. He doesn't want this for Hunter. The REFEREE (50) motions to the two fighters. The fighters walk to the middle.

REFEREE

Let's keep this clean and above the belt. The fight is three, three minute rounds. If you go down, you have ten seconds to get up. If one of you goes down four times, the fight is over. You guys got that.

The two fighters nod.

REFEREE (CONT'D)

Alright, touch gloves if you like.

Hunter puts his arms straight out, ready to touch. Tariq walks to his corner. Pure disrespect. Hunter takes this personally. His face turns red. At Hunter's corner is Claude, a MOUTHPIECE in his hand. Hunter walks over, Claude slips the mouthpiece in Hunter's mouth.

CLAUDE

Fight smart. Don't let him get in your head. You got this.

Hunter nods, but he's not listening. He bounces up and down. Tariq eyes Hunter. Like a lion stalking it's prey. The ref signals for the bell and it RINGS. Here we go!

The two circle the ring. Hunter stays on his toes. Tariq analyzes Hunter. Hunter wants to win. He wants the knockout. Tariq slightly drops his gloves. Hunter sees the opening. He acts quick and goes for the kill. Tariq dodges and responds with a killer blow and we...

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.