

Dexter Hastings

FEAR NO FOE



PARENTAL
DISCRETION
ADVISED

FEAR NO FOE

DEXTER HASTINGS



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dexter Hastings was born in Birmingham, England and is a proud father to four wonderful children, Deanna, Conor, Shay and Charlie-Ann. Dexter has been an avid Boxing fan from a young age whose love of the sport has seen him box and win 6 titles including the Celtic Boxing Union's Birmingham & West Midlands Cruiserweight and Heavyweight titles, he also fought for the CBU Supreme and the Light Heavy Weight title of Birmingham & West Midlands. Dexter is one of the main trainers at Paddy's gym in Birmingham, England he has trained both men and women, helping others pursue their ambitions of learning the noble art.

Fear no Foe is the second book from Dexter Hastings his first being *Dexter, Have I Told You Yet*. Both books are available to purchase from: www.lulu.com

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This book is dedicated to my Mom Christine Hastings
I think of you every day and wish you were still with us, R.I.P Mom

Hope I Made You Proud.

DISCLAIMER

This is a fictional book; none of the characters in the book are based on anyone alive or dead.

Some of the story in the book are based on true events, but has been changed to fit the story so cannot be taken as actual fact.

All Characters in this publication are fictitious and any resemblance to real persons, living or dead is purely coincidental.

Dexter Hastings

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Introduction



You may find when reading Fear No Foe that the characters are not described in the greatest of detail. I have purposely written the book like this so that you the reader have to use you own imagination to form what you think the characters would look like. This may not be the most conventional way of writing, but in my eyes it will draw you more into the book as you form the characters in your own mind.

Fear No Foe is a fictional story, but I have taken stories from my own life and friends lives and mixed them into the fictional story of Shay Dempsey's quest to become world champion.

All of the amateur fights in the book are based on true events to give them realism but have been changed to fit in to the story line of the book and cannot be taken as actual fact.

I hope you enjoy the book

Dexter Hastings

FEAR NO FOE

CHAPTER 1



You could hear the crowd roar the name of England's favorite boxing Son, "Britain, Britain, Britain" from the capacity crowd of 105000 at the new Wembley Stadium London.

London born Gary "Great" Britain was defending his World Super Middleweight title for the 3rd time against Birmingham born and number 1 contender Shay Dempsey.

Gary, unbeaten in 25 professional fights is the golden boy of British and World boxing. He has been made to take this fight as Shay is the mandatory I.B.F contender and to finally avenge the 1 big defeat he endured in his amateur career to the then very talented Shay Dempsey in an A.B.A British championship final.

Kenny Case, Shay's long time trainer, coach and manager from since he was an amateur is taping Shay's hands up in the changing room.

Shay's hands were shacking with nerves, Kenny can see this and asks "You o.k. Son"?

Shay pauses for a second then says "Well if I'm not, I'm fucked ain't I". The whole room fills with laughter and the tension was lifted.

The story really starts 18 years earlier when Mickey Dempsey, Shays Dad brought him to Case's Gym.

Kenny Case the owner and main trainer at the gym took Shay under his wing from the start; Kenny could see this scrawny 11 year old had something special. Kenny was an ex professional boxer, he had done quite well in his career but never got that big chance to fight for any major titles and injury had cut his career short.

Case's Gym was a proper old school gym, 2 full size rings and an assortment of punch bags. The décor at the gym was distressed to say the least; old boxing posters put over where the plaster was coming off the walls and that distinct smell of leather and sweat in the air. After only 6 months of training at the gym Shay got his amateur License. Kenny got him his first fight straight away, which he won easily with a first round knockout. Shay had 20 fights in his first 3 years as an amateur boxer and won them all by stoppage. Shay had not had the chance to fight for any titles at this time as he suffered a re-occurring hand injury that had kept him out of some of the big fights. Shay was already getting a big reputation for himself and was already nick named 'The Hammer'.

Shay was an only child, his Dad was a builder and worked hard to put food on the table, but his Dad also liked a drink and to gamble on the horses where he nearly always lost. Money was always tight, Shay's mother, Brenda was a housewife. Shay's Dad wouldn't let her work as he was old school and wanted to provide for his family. Shay's Mom was very house proud and always kept their home immaculate even if they didn't have much money.

His parents were both Irish and very proud of the fact, Shay's Dad used to tell him about his great grandfather Paddy Dempsey, being the best bare knuckle fighter in all of Ireland. His Dad also tried to tell Shay he was related to one of the world's greatest champions Jack Dempsey, but Shay never really believed this. His Dad loved that Shay was doing so well in the boxing and liked nothing more than telling anyone who would listen how his Son would one day be world champion. Shay's Mom wasn't as keen on Shay boxing, she didn't want to have her only child hurt and never went to see him box.

Mickey and Brenda Dempsey moved to the newly built estate right next to the city centre of Birmingham when they got married in the early 70's.

Newtown had a lot of promise, close to the city centre, lots of work available and its own shopping centre. It was the place to live when they moved in; they felt very lucky to have got it. They ended up buying the house under the Thatcher Scheme in the mid 80's, but as the years went by Newtown as an area went right down, as the recession and the lack of jobs took its toll on the area. By the time

Shay was 14 it was classed as one of the roughest areas in Birmingham.

Drugs, mugging and burglary were rife in the area which was now a mixing pot of English, Irish, Jamaican and Asian families. Shay was never bothered about what colour people were and the lads he hung round with were a mix of all cultures. Apart from the boxing Shay was just a normal kid, he loved playing football with his mates and used to get into all kinds of trouble at school. Shay just wasn't interested in learning and used to play truant more times than actually going to school. Shay wasn't thick; he was quite a cleaver lad, but just hated going to school.

One of Shays closest friends was a girl called Kelly Carey; she had lived next door to Shay since they were babies. Kelly was a very cleaver girl. Grade "A" student. She loved to learn and tried so hard to get Shay to come to school, but to no avail.

As Shay got more and more of a reputation for himself, he and Kelly saw less and less of each other, as he started to hang out with a bad lot of lads from his area. The lads he was hanging around with now were all older than him, they were all between 16 and 18 and Shay was only 14 at this time. They all lived around the top of Newtown near where Shay lived and were known as the T.S.F (Top Side Firm).

There were quite a few gangs in Newtown and the T.S.F were one of the smallest gangs around, but were notorious for being game to fight anyone, especially with Shay in their firm.

They would go to different areas looking to fight that areas gang. The T.S.F's party trick was to get Shay to take on the others gangs top boys in a 1 on 1. Shay would destroy them with great ease, which would be quite embarrassing for the lad he was fighting as Shay was always at least 2 years younger than them.

One of Newtown's main rivals was an area called Kingstanding, Newtown as a whole had always had a problem with them and there had been many a fight between the areas over the years.

One of the T.S.F lads had been caught up Kingstanding coming home from visiting his girlfriend by about 10 of the Kingstanding firm.

They gave him a right kicking; he had been beaten so bad they had put him in hospital with a broken jaw and 4 broken ribs. Shay and his mates went to see him in hospital and he told them that their top boy

“Chav” had told him to give Shay a message just before they battered him.

He said “Tell that little fucker Shay that he ain’t shit and I would have him anytime”.

Chav was 20 years old and the top boy of the Kingstanding Firm, he was a proper horrible cunt, and he robbed and bullied all the younger lads. Chav hated the fact that Shay had already got this reputation by the age of 14. He had been heard saying to his mates “Boxer or no boxer, he’s 14 I’d kick the shit out of him”.

Shay asked his mates to get all the boys together as he wanted to go up to the pub in Kingstanding where Chav and his boys drank to sort him out.

The Topside firm were only 30 strong at best and a lot of the lads thought going up there was a suicide mission. A lot of Shays so called mates didn’t turn up at the meeting place, it ended up that only 7 of them including Shay got on the 33 bus up to Kingstanding.

The bus ride up there was quiet, none of them were talking. They were all focused and ready for the biggest fight of their lives. Shay had an intense look on his face, a look like he was just about to get into the ring which was bad news for Chav.

They stepped off the bus in Kingstanding just across the road from the pub. Chav was standing outside with a pint and a cigarette in his hand with a few of his boys. The Newtown lads had got lucky; there were only about 12 of the Kingstanding firm in the pub, it could have been a lot worse for them. Shay and his mates walked across the road straight up to the pub. Chav saw them and told one of his lads standing outside with him to get the rest of them out of the pub.

Chav cocky as ever started walking towards Shay and the 6 other boys from the T.S.F shouting loudly

“You want some Shay? Come on Newtown!”

Shay just walked straight up to Chav and smashed him in the face with a wicked straight right. Chav hit the floor, his nose bust and bleeding. Shay then grabbed him and picked him up back on to his feet and said

“Come on then Chav, you’re the big man! Let’s see if you can knock out a kid”.

Chav threw a half hearted punch at Shay which he slipped out of the way and hit Chav with 2 devastating body shots which put Chav down again.

The Kingstanding lot came steaming out the pub and the other 6 Newtown boys went for them. Chav screamed at Shay that he had, had enough, but Shay was on one and stood Chav back to his feet and hit him with a wicked right hook which knocked Chav spark out.

Shay was in a complete rage and went to help the rest of the Topside Firm with the rest of the Kingstanding mob. Shay went through them like a knife through butter; knocking 4 of them spark out before the rest of them had it on their toes and ran off. Shay and the other 6 Newtown boys had done it; they had gone up to Kingstanding and took them on outside their own pub. As the Newtown lads were shouting after the Kingstanding boys who had ran off, Shay felt an all too familiar feeling in his hand. Shay knew the pain oh so well, he had broken his hand yet again.

He wrapped his coat around his hand to support it, Shay and the rest of the Newtown lads made their way back home on the bus.

The trip home on the bus was completely different to the one going there, all the lads were chatting and laughing saying things like “Did you see me do this” and “What about when I done that”. The only one who wasn’t laughing and chatting was Shay, he knew that he had broken his hand again and he would be out of the championships again. He was pissed off about this himself, but was more worried about what his Dad and Kenny would say when they found out.

Shay didn’t bother going home he went straight to the hospital; they contacted Shays parents who came straight up. The X-ray showed that Shay had indeed broken his right hand in 2 places; he was going to be out of boxing for at least a year.

When his parents got to the hospital they asked him how he had done it, Shay made up some story about being jumped by a gang of lads and had hurt it defending himself. His Mom believed him and was like “Ahh my poor boy”.

As for his Dad, he knew there was more to it than that, as Shay didn’t have a scratch on him. His Dad didn’t say anything to his Mom about it, but just gave Shay a look to say he knew he was lying.

The news of what Shay and his 6 mates from the Topside firm had done in Kingstanding spread like wild fire, a 14 year old kid had knocked out the top boy of the Kingstanding firm. When the story was told they were known as the magnificent 7 and everyone got to hear about it.

The one person Shay really didn't want to know about it was Kenny, as he knew he would not approve of what he had done. Shay went to the gym a few days later to see Kenny. As he walked into the gym the whole gym seemed to stop. A couple of the lads from the gym came up to Shay and said they had heard what he had done.

Shay was like "Keep it down man; I don't want Kenny to find out". One of them said to him "It's too late mate he already knows".

The look on Shays face was one of a scared little boy.

He turned round to the lads and said "I got to go" as he went to walk out he heard Kenny bellow across the packed gym

"Shay get your fucking arse in my office now!"

Shay walked slowly to the office, he knocked on the door which had the gyms motto over it '*Fear No Foe*'!

He heard Kenny shout "Get in here"!

Shay came through the door and the onslaught started. "What the fuck do you think you're doing, you stupid little fucker. You are going to fuck your whole boxing career up with shit like this, look at you how long did they say you would be out for?"

Shay said with his head bowed low "9 months to a year".

Kenny screamed at him "You were already for the A.B.A Championships and now you have gone and fucked it up". Kenny continued "So what the fuck you got to say for yourself?"

Shay replied "Kenny I'm sorry but him and his lads battered one of my mates, what was I supposed to do?"

Kenny said "I understand what you are saying Son, but you have got to think of your future, you have a God given gift, why not use it to better your own life, do you really want to live round here for the rest of your life? You have the chance to be one of the great boxers and you keep just fucking it up".

Shay could not answer him.

Kenny put his hand on Shays shoulder and said "Look Son, go home think about what I have said, when your hand is better come back to

the gym, but if you come back you leave all this gang shit behind you o.k.”

Shay looked at Kenny and said “O.k. Ken I will, I promise I’ll make you proud”.

Kenny just replied “Don’t do it to make me proud Son, do it to make yourself proud”.

Shay went home and thought about what Kenny had said to him, and knew that Kenny was right, he had a gift and could make his and his family’s lives so much better if he started to focus on what he needed to do.

Kelly came round to see Shay and told him the same thing, Kelly had never seen Shay box, she didn’t really like the sport, but from what she had been told she knew Shay had a talent for it.

Kelly asked him “What’s your dream? What do you want to be when you are older?” Shay replied straight away “Champion of the World, or even just a professional boxer”.

Kelly said to him “Well you are the only one who can make that happen Shay, you have the support of a lot of people, but you have to believe you can do it, start to concentrate on getting where you want to go and I know you can do it”.

This seemed to really inspire Shay, and when his Mom and Dad sat him down and talked to him he knew what he had to do.

His Dad said that “If you want it, it’s there for you. You have the chance to do something great”.

Shay’s Mom said to him “Son, you know I don’t like you boxing, but I know you, if you put your all into it you can be the best in the world, but you have got to focus on it”.

Shay took all this in and knew what he had to do, he told his mates in the T.S.F that he was done with it, he couldn’t be street fighting anymore, and he just wanted to concentrate on his boxing. Now this could have gone either way they really could have made Shays life hard for him, but these were proper mates and they respected his decision and would support him all the way.

Shay’s hand healed pretty quickly, after 6 months and now at the age of 15 he was back in the gym training. Kenny had never seen him so focused. The problem was no one wanted to fight Shay, his record was just too good. The only amateur boxer with a better record in his

weight and age division was Gary Britain the current A.B.A British champ and 'Golden Boy' of amateur boxing. It did seem like they were deliberately being kept apart by the A.B.A board which Gary's Dad was the chairman of.

Shay did get quite a few bye's in the area and district rounds and became champion of Birmingham and the Midlands with great ease only fighting 4 times to win both titles.

Shay had another 2 fights to get to the semi finals of the British championships; he was going to take on Ronnie Docker from Manchester. Ronnie was from a big boxing family; his Dad had been an A.B.A British champ and went on to win the British title as a professional so there were big expectations for Ronnie.

The fight was to be held in Manchester and the finals were just 2 weeks after.

Gary Britain had already got through to the finals by destroying James Thompson from Southampton in just one round a week before.

Shay went up to Manchester with his Dad and his trainer Kenny. Shay had a few of his mates making the trip up from Birmingham to support him, but was fighting one of the top amateur boxers in their home town so he knew he was up against it. Shay got to the show for the weigh in nice and early. The weigh in went well, he came in bang on the weight.

Ronnie Docker weighed in as well bang on the 10 stone weight so the fight was on, no problems.

Shay's fight was 4th on a big amateur fight night, Ronnie Dockers gym had put the show on so there was big, big support for him.

Kenny could see Shay was nervous and asked him if he was ok.

Shay said "Yeah I'm fine Ken; Just don't want to let you or my Dad down".

Kenny smiled and said "Shay, you go out there Son just do your best and you won't let anyone down".

Shay replied "I will try my best Ken, just hope its good enough".

Kenny warmed Shay up with some light pad work so Shays body was ready for the job in hand. The call came for Shay to come out, he walked out to a warm round of applause apart from the cheers of his Dad and the 20 odd Newtown boys that had made the trip to support him. Shay entered the ring looking really focused. Ronnie Docker

came out soon after to a massive roar and cheers from a home crowd of more than 500 people. Shay knew he was up against it.

Kenny turned to him and said “You’ve got to knock him out Son, there’s no way you are getting a decision here”.

Shay and Ronnie were called to the centre of the ring by the Ref to give them their final instructions. The crowd was still cheering; it was hard for both boxers to hear the Ref. They both just nodded like they could hear him and went back to their corners.

Shay came out like a man possessed, trying to make every punch count, he hit Docker with some brutal body shots which pushed Docker to the ropes. Shay kept on with his body attack, but Docker tied him up well and the Ref came in and broke them up.

Docker got some distance between them and started pumping out a hard jab, and some, one, twos. Shay got his hands up and blocked most of them. There was 30 seconds to go in the first round and Shay knew he had to make every shot count. Shay got his own jab going and started to out box Docker pushing him back to the ropes yet again. With Docker on the ropes Shay came out with the combo Kenny Case teaches every boxer at his gym, left hook to the body then a left hook to the head followed by a straight right hand. Shay dispatched the shots like a seasoned pro catching him with everyone. Docker dropped to his knee to stop the onslaught and the Ref started to count, Shay went to a neutral corner and stood there. The arena went quite; only Shays Dad and friends could be heard cheering. Docker got back to his feet after the count got to 6, the Ref continued to count until he got to 8, checked Docker was o.k. and told them to box on. The bell went a second later to finish the first round.

Shay sat down in his corner,

Kenny said “Well done Son that was excellent, keep it going he won’t be able to take another round like that”.

All Shay said was “He has got a wicked jab Ken; It’s hard to get passed”.

Kenny replied as he gave Shay some water “Well you have got passed it and you have put him down Son, he is going to be more worried about this round than you”.

Shay nodded and got up for the second round.

The 2 boxers met in the centre of the ring, Docker seemed to have recovered well from the knockdown and started pumping out the jab again. Shay was trying to slip passed Dockers jab, but for the first minute of the round Docker was to slick for him. Docker was moving really well and was controlling this round. Shay did get his own jab working and again got some good body shots in, but by the end of the round Docker seemed to be in control.

Shay sat down in the corner and Ken said “What the fuck are you doing Shay? You have let him back in this fight!”

Shay replied “I just couldn’t get passed his jab Ken”

Kenny said in a calm voice “Double jab then the right hand Shay, and when you get inside make it count, trust me you aint going to get a decision here, so knock the fucker out”.

Shay looked Kenny straight in the eye and said “I’ll try Ken I’ll Try”.

The crowd was roaring again after the last round, the noise was deafening in there. Shay got up and walked to the centre of the ring for the final round, he touched gloves with Docker who did seem to look pretty tiered. Shay came out straight away with the a double jab, straight right and caught Docker with all of them, Shay then hit him with 2 sickening body shots, a left and a right which really seemed to hurt Docker.

Docker tied Shay up in a clinch to catch a breath. Shay was relentless coming forward sensing the knockout was there if he could land the right shot. Docker moved back still on the jab and still catching Shay with good shots, but Shay caught him with another right hook to the body, this time doubling it up, which left Docker trying to grab Shay to buy some time. The bell went to end the round and the fight luckily for Docker.

Shay walked back to his corner mouthing the words “Sorry Ken”.

Kenny just said “I think you pissed it Shay, but it’s up to the judges now”.

Docker and Shay went to the centre of the ring for the result; Docker was holding the right side of his body obviously in pain. The Master of Ceremonies came into the ring to announce the winner, the crowd applauded as the M.C asked for their appreciation for the 2 young boxers before he read out the result.

The M.C was ready to make the announcement, “Your winner and going though on a majority decision, Ronnie Docker”.

Shay bowed his head as his opponents hand was raised, Docker looked in real pain as his arm was lifted by the Ref and pulled away in agony still feeling the effects of Shays body shots.

Kenny put his arm round Shay as he came back to the corner and said “Shay you were excellent, you got nothing to be sorry about, I’m proud of you”.

Shay walked back to the changing room, lots of people patted him on the back and said they thought he had won. Shay just smiled at them and said “Thanks”.

Shay was a gracious loser, even though it hadn’t happened to him many times in the past.

When Shay and Kenny got back to the dressing room, one of the A.B.A chairmen came in to talk to them.

Kenny didn’t let him get a word in, Kenny went straight up to him and said “There is no fucking way Shay lost that fight, it’s because we are in Manchester fighting a Manchester boxer, that’s why you gave it him, it’s a fucking travesty”.

The A.B.A chairman was stunned and when he did get to speak he said “All I came in here to say was that Ronnie has been taken to hospital with suspected broken ribs. He might not be able to fight in the finals in 2 weeks time”.

Shay said “So what does that mean?”

Kenny smiled and said “If the kid can’t fight in the finals, you get the shot. That’s right isn’t it?”

The chairman just smiled and said “Just try and stay in weight, you never know”.

Shay’s face turn from looking completely gutted to a face of pure joy. When he got back to Birmingham Shay kept himself fit. Kenny kept calling Ronnie Dockers gym to see how he was doing.

Docker’s trainer told Ken “Your boys done a real number on Ronnie, he has got 3 broken ribs and there’s no way he can fight in the final”.

Kenny said “I’m really sorry to hear that” with one big smile on his face.

Docker’s trainer replied “Yeah I bet you are! Tell Shay good luck o.k.”

Kenny said he would and put the phone down.

Kenny went out of his office into the gym; Shay was on the heavy bag working hard. Kenny just Shouted “Shay keep Saturday free, we are going to London” and walked back into his office.

Shay stopped pounding the bag and asked one of the lads what Kenny had said, the lad said “You’re going to the finals Shay”. Shay just said “yes” he had a big smile on his face, but then got straight back on the heavy bag as he knew he was going to be fighting the number 1 boxer in his age and weight division Gary Britain.

CHAPTER 2



Shay rushed home after the gym to tell his Mom and Dad the news.

Shays Dad was nearly in tears with pride and joy, he said “Son this is your chance to be great, go make us proud”.

His Mom just looked up from the magazine she was reading and said “Well I suppose I’ll have to come to this one seems it’s the final” and went back to reading her magazine.

There was a week to go before the fight and the whole of Newtown was buzzing, all the lads from the gym wanted to go to the show. All the Topside firm were going down to support him and everyone from the pubs that his Dad drank at were going to make the trip down to London for the finals.

The Birmingham Mail, the local newspaper in the city did a really good piece on Shay and his quest for the British Amateur Title. Shay had become a mini celebrity around his area; Case’s gym started to attract new lads from outside of the area, and also started to get some big sponsors backing it. With Shay’s new found fame came something that could well distract him, “Girls”. In fact 1 girl in particular, Emma Winehouse was a girl from Shay’s area. she was the same age as Shay 15, but with the body of a 21 year old and stunning looks to match. Shay had fancied her for a while, but had never had the guts to talk to her before. Shay’s only real contact with girls was Kelly his friend and next door neighbor, but they were best friends and nothing like that had ever crossed either of their minds. Shay didn’t have to find the guts to talk to girls anymore, the girls wanted to talk to him.

Two days before the big title fight, Shay had gone for a quick run after school when someone called out to him from across the road. Shay stopped to see who was calling him, it was Emma, and she called him over. Shay walked across the road nervously and said “Hello”. Emma asked him about his fight and did he think he was going to win.

Shay smiled and said “Yeah I’m pretty sure I can do it, but the lad I’m fighting has won it for the last 2 years, so he is really good”.

Emma just smiled and moved towards him and said “Well if you do win, maybe you could take me out, when you get back, you could take me to the pictures or something”.

Shay very nervously said “Yeah that sounds good to me”.

Emma gave him a kiss on the cheek and said “Well, come and see me after you win”.

Shay continued his run with a really big smile on his face.

Shay was going down to London early in the morning the day of the fight with Kenny and his Mom and Dad. Shay spent the night before the fight with his friend Kelly; all Shay kept going on about was what Emma had said to him and how much he liked her.

Kelly just told him to concentrate on the fight and forget about Emma until after the fight. Kelly knew Emma well, they went to the same school, but you wouldn't call them friends. Emma was one of them girls who were good looking and knew it, if you didn't have anything to benefit her she didn't want to know you. Kelly was worried that Emma only wanted Shay for what he could do for her, but she couldn't say anything to him as she could see Shay was really keen on her.

Shay was up bright and early the day of the fight; Kenny was picking him and his Mom and Dad up at 10 o'clock. The Newtown lads were going down on the train and there was 3 coaches going from the local pub his Dad drank at. Shay, Kenny and his Mom and Dad got to London at about half 12 and went straight to where the show was being held for the weigh in. It was being held at the famous York Hall, Bethnal Green, '*The Home of Champions*'. They were expecting a capacity crowd of 1,200 for this show as it was the biggest night in the British Amateur boxing calendar.

Shay weighed in and was bang on the weigh as usual; Gary Britain had weighed in earlier and was in weight as well. The doctor had gave them the once over to make sure they were fit enough to fight, both of them passed so the fight was on.

As Shay was walking into the main room to have a look around, he heard someone call his name out.

It was his opponent Gary Britain.

Gary came up to him looked him up and down and said "So you're Shay then?"

Shay replied "Yeah I'm Shay, you must be Gary", trying to make out he didn't know who Gary was.

Gary then said "Well I hope you take it all in Shay, I heard how you got here, you're just a replacement and I've beaten Ronnie Docker 3 times before easily, so I don't think you will be any trouble".

Shay stared at him just trying to keep his temper as he knew chinning him here wouldn't be a good idea.

Shay Smiled and replied “Well Gary I may be the replacement, but the reason Ronnie aint here is because I broke 3 of his ribs in the semi-finals, so you want to watch out”.

Gary looked right back at Shay and in a very cocky voice said “Look I have won this British title for 2 years running and I don’t intend to lose it to some northern monkey like you”.

Shay replied “Northern monkey? I’m from the centre of England you idiot”.

Gary jumped back in with “It doesn’t matter where you’re from; you’re going down mate end of”!

Shay and Gary started to square up to each other, but Shays Mom came just before anything happened and said “Is everything o.k. Son?”

Before Shay could reply, Gary jumped in again. He said to Shays Mom “Hello, you must be Shays Mom, I’m Gary Britain, I was just wishing you Son good luck for tonight, I’m sure it will be a great fight”.

Shays Mom replied “Well nice to meet you Gary and I’m sure the best boy will win”.

Gary smiled and in a very sarcastic voice said “I’m sure he will, it was really nice to meet you Miss Dempsey, good luck tonight Shay”.

Gary walked away with a very smug grin on his face. Shays Mom then said “What a nice boy that Gary Britain is”.

Shay replied “Yeah Mom he’s great” in a very annoyed voice.

Shays Mom then said “It’s a shame”.

Shay asked his Mom inquisitively “What’s a shame Mom?” Shays Mom replied “It’s a shame that Gary Britain is such a handsome boy and you’re going to smash him up”,

Shay looked shocked at what his Mom had just said and asked “Mom I thought you were against all this?”

His Mom replied “Well if you’re going to do it, you best do it right Son”.

Shay hugged his Mom and said “I’ll try Mom. I’ll try”.

Shay, Kenny and his Mom and Dad went off to have something to eat and see the sights of London, Shay had been to London a few times to box, but had never got to see the sights as Kenny used to just turn up at his house after school and say “You fancy fighting tonight”?

Shay would always say “Yes” and off he would go, he sometimes wouldn’t get back till the early hours of the morning.

They went to see the main sights London had to offer, Big Ben, Buckingham palace and London Bridge. They had a real nice meal and Shay seemed well relaxed. They got back to the York Hall, Bethnal Green at about 6 o’clock in the evening, the show didn’t start untill 7, but the doors had already opened. Shay and Kenny went to the changing room to get ready. Shay was on 3rd on the card, so would be on about 8 o’clock. Shay was well relaxed and when Kenny took him on the pads to warm him up he looked sharper than ever.

Kenny said “You’re up for this aint you Shay”?

Shay replied “To right Ken, he thinks he’s it! Giving me the big un earlier, I’m going to knock the cocky Cockney fucker out”.

Kenny laughed and just said “That’s what I wanted to hear”.

Shay was warmed up and was ready to go; he got the call to come out and walked into the main room. By now the Hall was nearly full, there was a massive roar as Shay walked to the ring, over 200 people had made the trip down from Birmingham to support Shay and were letting the rest of the crowd know who they had come to support.

Shay acknowledged his supporters and stood in his corner waiting for Britain to come out.

Gary came out to a massive cheer from the crowd, he walked up to the ring looking really confident, and he slipped though the ropes and danced around the ring.

Shay just looked at Kenny and said “What a prat”.

Kenny laughed and said” Just focus Shay”.

The Ref brought them to the centre of the ring; he gave them their final instructions Britain was smiling at Shay saying “You’re going down, you’re going down”.

Shay just stared at Britain and though his gum shield said “Fuck you, you Cockney cunt”!

The Ref told them to “Shut up” and they went back to their corners.

Shay came out for the first round with a double jab, Britain just parried the 1st jab slipped the 2nd jab, and hit Shay with a sweet 1, 2. Shay kept coming forward, but Britain just kept on his jab and showed his class.

Shay stayed with it and when Britain went on the attack, Shay slipped under his jab and went to work with some hurtful body shots. Britain reeled back in pain, but stayed on his jab, Shay moved in with a sharp double jab then a straight right to the body. This put Britain onto the ropes, so Shay went for the Case's gym special, left to the body, then head and a straight right to finish. Shay caught him with the body shot and the left hook to the head, but Britain had done his homework and knew what was coming next and just slipped off the ropes making Shay miss, and caught him with a thunderous right hand counter. Shay was caught clean on the side of the jaw, just under his head guard, but somehow managed to keep it together, luckily for Shay the bell went to end the 1st round.

Shay went back to his corner still dazed; Kenny sat him down and sprayed water in his face.

Kenny said "Right he caught you good at the end of that round, but the rest of it was close. Just keep it together and you'll get him".

Shay replied "He hits hard, the bloke's pure class".

Ken just said "But so are you Shay, so are you, so go out there and prove it, out class him".

Shay got up for the 2nd round still a bit groggy. Shay came out a bit slower than the 1st round; Britain was just circling him looking as fresh as a daisy. Britain was being a bit too cocky and stayed on his jab trying to look good. Shay just kept his distance which gave him time to clear his head. Britain was looking in control and his confidence got the better of him, he stepped in with a 1, 2, but Shay slipped the jab, parried the right and caught Britain with an uppercut from hell. How Britain stayed on his feet was a miracle, Britain moved back and Shay moved in with some hard hooks to the body and head.

Britain grabbed on for dear life and tied Shay up in a clinch; the Ref stepped in and broke them up. Shay was now in control and really took it to Britain for the rest of the round. When the bell went to end the 2nd round, Shay went back to his corner and sat down.

Shay said to Kenny "Was that any better Ken?"

Kenny just smiled and said "That was great kid, but it was still a close round as he controlled the start of it. Just keep it going Shay you can do it this".

Shay nodded and got up for the 3rd and final round, the Ref called them to the centre of the ring and Shay and Britain touched gloves. Britain didn't look as fresh as he did for the last round; he got his jab working and was just trying to control the centre of the ring. Shay came in with a very sharp double jab and straight right that nearly took Britain's head off. Blood poured from above Britain's right eye, Shay had cut him. Shay got him on the ropes and pounded away at his body; the Ref jumped in and told them to stop boxing. Shay walked to a neutral corner and thought that the Ref would stop the fight, he didn't. He called the doctor over to have a look at the cut; the Ref, doctor and Britain's trainer were looking at Gary's cut eye.

Kenny shouted over to Shay and said "Shay if they let him carry on there going to give it to him. Knock the fucker out"!

The doctor had a good look at Britain's cut, chatted to the Ref for a second and said he could box on. There was only 30 seconds of the round to go, Britain had caught his breath and got back on his jab, Shay just went for it. He knew if it went to the end he'd lose, so moved in fast and sharp with a jab and another straight right catching Britain clean again.

Britain fell back on to the ropes, but Shay wasn't going to leave it to the Ref to step in and stop it. Shay landed a right hook to Britain's body and then one to the head. Britain crumbled to the floor in agony from the body shot; the Ref didn't even bother counting and waved Britain out.

The place went mental, all the people who had come down were cheering and screaming with joy. Shay had done it; he was Junior Welterweight Champion of Britain. Kenny jumped into the ring to congratulate Shay.

Kenny hugged Shay and said "Well done kid, I'm proud of you".

Shay replied "Thanks Ken, but I think I've broken my hand again".

Ken said "Come on Son, let's get you out of here".

Kenny kept the celebrations in the ring short as he could, and got Shay to the nearest hospital as soon as he could.

The x-ray confirmed that Shay had broken his hand again in the same places that he had broken it before. They put it in a cast and Shay, Kenny and his Mom and Dad made the long trip back to Birmingham. Shay was still in high spirits; he had just won the British title and

beaten the number 1 boxer in his age and weight division. It didn't really bother Shay that he had broken his hand, as he had done it so many times before; it was second nature to him. He was turning 16 next week and his Dad had planned a big party for him, and now it would be a double celebration. The day after they got back from the fight, Shay was woken up by his Mom calling him down stairs. The local newspaper wanted to do a piece on him and take some pictures of him at Case's gym. They interviewed him at his home and then they all went down to the gym, waiting outside was Shays new number 1 fan, Emma. She had heard that the press were coming to the gym and wanted to be a part of it.

Shay went up to her and said "Hi what you doing here?"

Emma said "Oh I just came to show you some support".

Before Shay could say anything else, the reporter asked "So Shay who's this then is it your girlfriend?"

With that Emma put her arms around Shays neck gave him a kiss and said "Yes I'm his girlfriend and I'm so proud of him".

Shay looked a bit shocked, but as he fancied the hell out of Emma he just went along with it.

They all went into the gym; the reporter interviewed Kenny and took loads of pictures of Shay. 90 percent of the pictures Emma managed to get into, the story was in the next edition of the paper, right on the back page of the sports section.

It read '*Dempsey "Hammers" Britain*'

The story took the whole of the back page with a big picture with Shay and Emma in it with the caption; *Champion Shay with his proud girlfriend Emma Winehouse.*

Emma had even got a quote in the piece saying "I always knew Shay could do it I'm so proud of him".

CHAPTER 3



The week before his 16th birthday Shay was pretty busy, his home phone never stopped ringing with people congratulating him and wanting him to appear at local events. Even the Lord Mayor of Birmingham wanted Shay to attend an event at the Town Hall to show off his newly acquired British vest to all the dignitary's. Shay did go to the Town Hall as it was such an honor, he went with Kenny and his Mom and Dad, and he had his picture taken with the Lord Mayor and some local business men. He even got a piece in a national newspaper as one of England's hopes for the future and could well be a future Olympic Gold Medalist. The Olympics weren't for another 3 years, so that wasn't Shays main objective, Emma his new girlfriend was a bit annoyed that she didn't get an invite to the Town Hall with him, but she made up for it at his 16th birthday party. Emma never left his side and made everyone especially any girls that came near him know that he was with her. Emma even warned off his best friend Kelly as she saw her as the main fret to her.

Shay had a great time at his party and enjoyed all the attention he was getting, but his world was just about to come crashing down around him. He had an appointment at the hospital to see how long he would be out of boxing. He went along with his Mom and the news wasn't good, the Doctor explained to Shay and his Mom that because he had broken his hand so many times it had started to weaken the bones in his hand. The Doctor told them Shay

would need to keep the cast on for 2 months minimum and would need a lot of physio after to get back all the normal movement in it.

Shay asked the question "So how long before I can box again?"

The Doctor replied "Well with the physio it may take up to a year before you can get full movement in your hand and then you will need to give the bones chance to heal".

Shay said "Oh o.k. I'll be out for a year, that's not too bad then".

The Doctor butted in and said "No Shay, that's how long it will probably take to get full movement in your hand. I would advise you don't box again, but if you want to it could be up to 2 years before you would be able to compete".

With this news Shay bowed his head and put his hands over his face mumbling the words "2 years, 2years".

His Mom put her arm round him and tried to console him "Come on son it will be o.k." She looked up at the Doctor and said "So there's no way he could fight, before 2 years?"

The Doctor shook his head and replied "Shay's hand has been really badly damaged by all the times it has been broken, he needs to give his hand time to heal and the bones to get stronger before he even thinks about competing again. I'm sorry".

Shays Mom thanked the Doctor and led Shay out of the room and took him home. When they got home Shay went straight to his room, he was inconsolable he felt like his whole life had ended.

Kelly came round to see how he had got on at the hospital, she knocked Shays front door and his Mom answered. Kelly could see his Mom was upset; Shays Mom might not have ever liked the fact that Shay boxed, but knew how much of his life it was.

Kelly asked his Mom "Is Shay back? Is everything alright Miss Dempsey?"

Shays Mom just asked Kelly to come in and said "Go up and see Shay, he's had a bit of bad news and he could really do with a friend right now".

Kelly went up the stairs and knocked on Shays door, Shay called her in and she entered. Kelly could see how upset Shay was and asked him what had happened, Shay looked at her with tears in

his eyes and said "2 years, Fucking 2 years out, what the fuck am I going to do?" Kelly replied "Years out of what? What's happened?" Kelly sat down next to Shay and put her arm round him, Shay began to tell her what the Doctor had said about his hand and the 2 year layoff he would have to take to make sure his hand recovered properly.

Kelly replied "Ahh Shay I'm really sorry to hear that I know how much boxing means to you, it's your life".

Shay looked down at the floor and said "I just don't know what I'm going to do with myself now, I can't box, I can't even get a job with my Dad because of my hand, so what am I going to do, I left school with no qualifications and now I might not even get a chance to be a professional boxer if my hand doesn't recover".

Kelly took this chance to try and make Shay see it's not all over, Kelly said "Shay look you're out of boxing for 2 years, but you can still keep yourself fit and still be a professional boxer when you turn 18, why don't you go to college and take your exams again, get your qualifications just in case. I know you're not stupid and if you put your mind to it you could be or do anything you wanted to".

Shay replied with "But I hated school"

Kelly then said "Its College not school, you only go on the days when you have got classes, it would give you something to focus on".

Shay said he would think about it and gave Kelly a hug to say thank you. As Shay was hugging Kelly, Emma walked into his room; she saw the 2 friends in an embrace and just went off her head.

She said "What the hell is going on here, I always knew you were more than just friends. Get your hands off him you slag, he is my man!"

Shay jumped up and replied "It's not what it looks like; I was just giving Kelly a hug to say thanks for her support".

Emma reply was "Yeah yeah whatever, I knew she was trying to get with you".

Kelly then stood up looked at Shay and said "I'm going to go; I'll talk to you soon".

Shay looked at Kelly and said "Sorry", but Emma butted in and said "Don't say sorry to her and if I have anything to do with it you won't be seeing him again".

Kelly left and then Emma asked Shay what the hell was going on. Shay started to tell her about what the Doctor had said and that it could be up to 2 years before he could fight again. Emma's reply was "What you can't fight for 2 years? So what are you going to do?" Shay started to explain that he was thinking of going to college to retake his exams, as he was saying this Shays Mom was coming into his room to see what all the noise was about, she heard what Shay had said about going to college and before Emma could say anymore his Mom said "You going to do your exams at college, that's a great idea Son". Emma paused for second before agreeing with his Mom, but by the look on Emma's face you could see she wasn't happy about it.

Shays Mom left the room and Emma and Shay had a very Frank talk, Emma started by saying "So what was she doing in your room?"

Shay replied Kelly's my friend and she just came to give me some support. I've known her since I was a kid; we are just friends, that's all"

Emma replied with "Well I don't like it, if I had a boy as a best friend you wouldn't like it if you saw me hugging him in my bedroom would you?"

Shay replied "Well no I suppose not".

Emma continued "So you can understand what I'm saying, if you want me as your girlfriend you need to keep your distance from Kelly".

Shay looked disheartened and said "But she is my friend".

Emma replied with "Yes she is your friend, but I'm your girlfriend and I don't like her hanging round all the time".

Shay just shook his head and said "What can I do I have known her for years and we have always been close".

Emma looked at Shay in a very serious way and said "Well it's either me or her, your choice".

Emma left Shays house so he could think about what she had said. His mind was going all over the place, and he had so much to

think about. When Shay's Dad came home from work and heard the news off his wife, he went straight up to see his Son. Shays Dad was gutted for him, he knew Shay lived for boxing, but did agree with his Mom that going to college was a good idea. Shays Dad told him that he should go to Case's gym and talk to Kenny about what to do with the boxing; his Dad just couldn't find any encouraging words to say about his 2 year layoff.

Shay went down to the gym, all the lads were working away, the place was buzzing with the sound of leather on leather as the punch bags were being smashed about.

Kenny saw Shay and shouted "Hey champ, how you doing?"

Shay went over to Kenny asked him if he could have a word in the office. They went in and Shay started to tell Kenny about what the Doctor had said about his hand. Kenny listened and could see how upset Shay was. Kenny put his arm around Shay and told him in a fatherly voice "Look son I know it seems like the end of the world for you, but it aint, its 2 years. What you got to do is keep yourself fit, do all the circuit training that don't include hitting anything, make sure you keep your running up, you could even do some shadow boxing, and when you get the all clear in 2 years time you will be fit as fuck and a Senior Amateur and we can make our aim getting you ready for the Senior Championships and then maybe the Olympics".

Shay looked at Kenny in a bit of a shocked way and said "Do you really think I can get back and even make the Olympic team?"

Kenny smiled and said "Why not, you got a God given talent, just give the hand time to heal and keep yourself fit. I have no doubts you will be back".

Shay thanked Kenny for his words of wisdom and went home; he was in a lot better mood and had something to focus on. Emma came round to his house to see what he had decided, Shay told her about what Kenny had said about the Olympics and this seemed to make her a little less annoyed.

Shay also said to her "Look I'm going to go to college and re-sit my exams, I still want you as my girlfriend, but I cannot say I won't talk to Kelly anymore, she lives next door to me and has always

been a good friend, but I will make sure I give you all the attention I can, but I really need your support”.

Emma had kind of calmed down now and started to think about the big picture about what it would do for her and Shay if he got to the Olympic Games and maybe won a medal. Emma put her arms round Shay and gave him a very loving kiss then said “O.k. I will give you whatever support you need and I understand about Kelly, but you can’t be having her in your room and stuff like that, it’s just not on”. Shay agreed with her and told her he wouldn’t anymore.

Emma then said to Shay “Alright then, but I just hope you know how lucky you are to have me”.

Shay replied “Yeah I do Em; I’m a very lucky man”.

Shay started his training the very next day, he was going on 5 to 7 miles runs one day and doing specially worked out circuits at Case’s Gym the next day. Shay was training at least 5 days a week and was focused on being in tip top shape. After the summer holidays he enrolled in college to retake his exams, he was retaking English, Math’s and Science and was actually enjoying it. When he wasn’t training or at college he spent most of his time with Emma, he hardly got chance to see Kelly anymore or any of his other friends.

After 2 months they took Shays cast off his hand. Shay could feel it was still tender and kept to his non boxing programme. Every month the Physiotherapist was seeing an improvement in his hand, they were sure that if he stuck with it his hand would be completely repaired. As the 1st year of physio was coming to an end he was reading his ‘Boxing Monthly’, a magazine he read like it was the Bible every month. They had a piece all about the British Amateur Finals and how Gary (now with ‘Great’ in-between his names) Britain had destroyed his opponent in the finals of the Junior Welter Weight Title fight.

The *Boxing Monthly* were tipping Gary to bring home a gold medal from the Olympics in 2 years time. This really pissed Shay off; he showed the piece to Emma who encouraged him with the words “Well you have beaten him before and its 2 years away so who knows what could happen”.

Shay smiled as he felt that Emma had faith in him, but then Emma said "But I got to say that Gary Britain is one fit looking lad, his gorgeous".

Shay just gave her a look but said nothing.

The next time he was at the gym, he talked to Kenny about it.

Kenny just laughed and said "Son they can say what they like, you win the British Senior Title the year of Olympics they will have to pick you". This put Shay's mind at ease and as the months went by Shay's hand got stronger and stronger. Shay also managed to pass all his exams at college so things were starting to come together for him at last. He even enrolled in a Business Management course for his second year there.

It was about 6 months after his 17th birthday that the Doctor said he could start doing some light pad work, if he thought his hand was up to it. Kenny took him on the pads the next time he was down the gym, just nice and light for a 1 minute round to see how his hand fared. It was like Shay hadn't had any time out, his timing was perfect, and he looked sharper than ever. Kenny was well impressed and told him if he could keep that up he would be a dead cert for the Olympics. As Shay got older he also got bigger and taller.

Kenny weighed him the one night and said "Shay you're no longer a Welter Weight, you are now a Middle Weight".

Shay smiled and said "Well I feel a lot better with the extra weight". Kenny replied "You look a lot better; all that training has paid off Son, now we just got to ease your hand back into it."

Kenny registered Shay for his last year as a Junior Amateur, but didn't really expect him to fight as they were really being careful about his hand. Case's Gym had had a pretty successful season; they had got 3 boxers who had managed to win the Birmingham and the Seven County's title's, but didn't progress any further in the Championships.

Kenny had organized a show against a boxing club from Ireland as their final show of the season.

It was to be held at the Irish Centre, Digbeth, Birmingham and the main event was Case's Gym Seven County's Junior Middle Weight champ John Martin against the newly crowned Junior Middle

Weight Champ of Ireland Danny O'Dyer. It was a real event for Case's Gym as they never usually put their own shows on, Kenny always used to get the lads on other gyms shows. But with their new sponsors they had for the gym, Kenny had decided to see if he could put one on himself. The gym's main sponsor Brumsdale: a Birmingham based clothing company, who had kitted out all of the gym's boxers with Brumsdale shorts and vests and new gloves, they also contributed to paying for the event to take place. The owner Gary Southan was at the show and if it all went well there would be more money for the gym.

The night of the show Kenny had been given a real big problem, John Martin had been suffering with a cold for the week before the fight and it had now turned into full blown flu. Kenny was trying to explain to the Irish champ's coaches that he couldn't fight, the Irish coaches were going mad; they reckoned John was just scared to box their champ. Shay had been round to John's house before he came to the show. John could barely move he was really ill. John had a note off the Doctors to prove he wasn't faking it and Shay said he would bring it to Kenny. As Kenny was trying to calm the Irish champ's coaches down, Shay came walking in to give Kenny John's sick note. Kenny showed O'Dyer's coaches the note; he wasn't too impressed, but had to accept the lad was ill. Danny's coach said in his very broad Dublin accent "You have got loads of Irish people here that have just come to see Danny fight, can't you find anyone else for him to fight?"

Kenny replied "No we haven't got anyone else", before the Irish coach could reply; Shay jumped in and said "I'll fight him Ken". Kenny just looked at Shay and said "No son you're not ready". The Irish coach looked Shay up and down and said "You a Boxer then Son?" Shay smiled at him and replied "Yeah I've had a few fights". Kenny then butted in and said "But he hasn't fought in 2 years", Danny's coach then said "Well he looks fit enough, has he got his license?"

Kenny replied "Yeah he has".

Then the Irish coach said "Well then he's fit enough to fight then". Shay looked at Kenny and in a very enthusiastic voice said "Come on Ken let me fight, you know the hand is o.k. now, please Ken".

Kenny nodded his head and told Shay he could fight.

Shay smiled and thanked Kenny and said "I won't let you down".

Danny's coach had a big smile on his face and said to Shay "Don't worry Son we'll tell him to take it easy on you".

Shay looked at the Irish coach with a look of contempt and replied "Don't do me any favors mate".

Danny's coach looked at Shay smiled and said "Well o.k. Son, but you do know you're going up against the Irish champ, who do you think you are? Gary Britain".

Shay looked at Kenny and they both cracked up laughing, O'Dyers coaches just looked at them and mumbled something under his breath as he left the room.

After Shay and Kenny stopped laughing, Ken looked Shay straight in the eyes and said "You do know that this other kid is the really deal?"

Shay replied "Well he's a Champ, so he must be Ken".

Kenny then started to explain just how good the kid was, he told Shay that Danny had, had over 150 fights and won most of them and he's only the same age as him. Kenny continued by telling Shay that Danny had been brought up to fight so to be real careful out there. Shay said to Kenny "I will Ken, but if I can do 3 rounds with him and hold my own; it will be good for me next season won't it?"

Ken replied "Yes Shay it would, but just make sure you stay away from that left hand, he's a Southpaw so remember lots of right hands o.k. now get to the changing room and get ready".

Shay hadn't fared well against Southpaws in the past, they had messed him about and he had lost more than he had won against them, but was just happy to be back in the ring.

Kenny went down to the main room and met the A.B.A judges that were going to be judging the show. There was Ben Meadings, Noel O'Sulavland and Pat Byson, they were all on the Birmingham A.B.A board and were very impressed with how Case's Gym and the show were being run. Kenny sat down with them and lapped up the praise about the Gym and the show, then heard something that really shocked him.

Ben Meadings said to him "Your club is doing well and we can see now you can put a good show on, if you contribute a bit more money to the Birmingham A.B.A maybe we could give some of your lads the nod in close fights, a couple of other clubs do it. You would have more champions in no time at all".

Kenny looked at him in disbelief of how blatant he was about it; Ken always knew things like this went on, he just couldn't believe he was being asked to join in.

Kenny's reply to Ben was sharp and to the point he said "Are you fucking joking? This is an amateur sport and you lot are supposed to be taking care of it. You're just a bunch of corrupted bastards and my lads don't need any favors from you". Kenny got up to walk away, Ben grabbed his arm and said "You might regret that Ken".

Kenny replied "No I don't think I will and you best make sure you call the fights fair tonight or you will have me to deal with".

Kenny pulled away from Ben and went to the changing rooms to sort his lads out.

There were 7 fights on the show, all junior and school boy fights; the Irish had brought a very strong line to Birmingham. A lot of people were coming just to see the young Irish Champion Danny O'Dyer box; he was from a big travelling family and load of Irish people from around Birmingham wanted to see just how good Danny really was. Shay's Dad Mickey and all his pals from the pub were going to the show to show support for the gym, but also to see the Irish champ O'Dyer.

Kenny called all his boxers around him in the changing room, He said "Look you ain't going to get any favors from these judges tonight, so don't mess about make it convincing".

The lads were all pumped up and ready to box their hearts out.

Shay was all changed and ready for his fight. He was on last so he went down to watch some of his mates fight.

When he got down there he saw Emma, she was shocked to see that he was in his boxing gear and asked him what he was doing? He told her the story of how John had pulled out and he had stepped in, she asked him if he thought he was ready?

Shay replied "Yeah I'm ready Em, but he is really good, just be good to get back in the ring".

Emma looked him straight in the eye and said "Well you better not embarrass me, all my friends have come to the show, so you better win".

Shay shook his head and said "For fuck sake Em".

Emma could see Shay was annoyed and said "I'm only joking just do your best".

Shay replied "O.k." gave Emma a hug then walked away still annoyed at her.

Shay saw his Dad and he went over to say "Hello".

When his Dad saw him he asked what was going on, Shay told him the same thing he told Emma, Shay's Dad paused for a second looked at Shay and said "Good luck son that O'Dyer is a good boxer, but you are a Dempsey and I know you can do it".

Shay just replied "It will be good to see how well I can do against him".

His Dad gave him a hug and said "Well whatever happens Son, I'm proud of you".

Shay watched the first 4 fights of the show before being called back to the changing rooms to warm up. They had all been hard contests and the score was Case's Gym 2 the Irish 2. By the end of the sixth contest it was still all square 3 wins each.

Kenny looked at Shay and said "You ready Son? Look don't worry about winning; just protect that right hand o.k."

Shay just smiled and said "Ken I ain't going out there to lose, the hand is fine, just let me do what I do".

The Irish Centre was packed out to see this fight, word had got around and Shay's Newtown pals had turned up to support him. Shay was the home boxer so Danny O'Dyer was the first into the ring, he had a lot of support from the Irish contingent that lived in Birmingham and got a real warm welcome. Shay entered the ring to a mass of cheering and applause. He slipped through the ropes and looked really focused, but relaxed at the same time.

Danny O'Dyers coach, who was in the ring, laughed at how confident he was, said to the Referee "Who does this kid think he is? He hasn't fought in 2 years"

The Ref turned to Danny's coach and whispered in his ear "Yeah, his last fight was 2 years ago, but it was against Gary Britain for the British title and he knocked him out".

This whipped the smile of the coach's face. He turned to Danny and said "Don't take any chances Dan, Knock this little bollocks out".

The Ref called them to the centre of the ring and gave them their final instructions and they went back to their corners.

They met in the centre of the ring at the start of the first round and O'Dyer showed his class with a sharp right hand jab. Shay was moving nice and kept his guard up to protect himself, Shay's timing was well off and every time he got his shots off O'Dyer could see them coming. Danny just moved out of the way and countered Shay. For the first minute and a half of the first round Shay was getting a boxing lesson. But near the end of the round, Shay did get some joy with his jab and his timing seemed to be getting better, but it had come too late to save the first round.

The bell went and Shay went back to his corner. Kenny sat him down and gave him a drink of water.

Kenny said "Your timing was all off, but you looked better at the end of the round so just keep it going".

Shay replied "Ken it's that Southpaw stance, it's hard to get any shots to land proper".

Kenny just said "Look Son you got to let the right hand go, southpaws are suckers for right hands".

Kenny then said "Have you noticed when you come in with your jab he dips to his left?"

Shay replied "Yeah, but he just ties me up when he does".

Kenny then said "Well throw a double jab, but faint the second and when he dips let the right go, he won't be able to grab you then". Shay nodded his head and got up for the second round.

Shay came out a bit sharper with his jab this time, but the very experienced O'Dyer blocked them well. They moved round the ring trading blows like 2 old pros. Shay saw his chance and threw the double jab, he fainted the second like Kenny told him to and Danny dipped his head exactly how Kenny said he would. Shay let his right hand go with a ferocious straight right, his timing was

perfect and caught the Irish Champ clean on the side of his head guard and knocked him to the ground. The crowd roared and Shay walked to a neutral corner, the Ref started to count and O'Dyer tried to stand up straight away. This was a bad decision as his legs were still wobbly and the Ref stopped the fight.

Shay put his hands up in victory and walked over to Kenny and said "Well the right hand is working o.k. Ken".

Ken just laughed and said "Well done Shay, well done".

As the announcements were being made Kenny looked down at Ben Meadings and his cronies and gave them a look that basically said "Fuck you".

Ben and the rest of the A.B.A officials applauded, but you could see they weren't happy about it. Gary Southan the owner of Brumsdale came up to the dressing room to congratulate the lads on a great night of boxing against a very strong Irish squad. He couldn't believe how well Shay had boxed and was ready to put more money into the gym, Ken told Gary that he reckoned that Shay would be fighting in the Olympics next year if everything went to plan. Mr Southan was well pleased to hear that and was even more pleased when he read the write ups the following day in the *Birmingham Post* and the *Harp Newspaper*. They both reported that it was a great night of boxing and both had pictures of Shay kitted out in a Brumsdale vest and shorts knocking O'Dyer down. Jason Lowe the Harp's sports writer went even fervor, tipping Shay for team GB at the Olympics.

It was also reported about Shay's win in his favorite magazine *The Boxing Monthly*, it was a small peace as the same week of Case's gyms show, Gary Britain had won the British Amateur Junior Middleweight title and they were tipping him for the Olympics place for the team GB when he became a senior next season.

Shay wasn't too bothered about the Gary Britain story he was just chuffed to be mentioned in his favorite magazine, needless to say Emma was just as happy and lapped it up every chance she could to tell people what the papers had said and that her man was going to the Olympics. The more time Shay spent with Emma the less he saw of his mates and especially Kelly.

Kelly was going away to university at the end of the summer, she came round to let Shay know, he was gutted that one of his best friends wasn't going to be around. Kelly told him she would keep in touch and was looking forward to seeing him in the Olympics next year; Kelly had every faith in him doing it.

Shay had passed his Business Management course, his Mom and Dad were so proud of him. Shay didn't really have a plan about what he was going to do with it, but it was a great achievement for him as he hated school when he was younger.

For Shay's 18th birthday he had sorted out a week away aboard for him and Emma, they had a great time away, but when he got back, Shay knew he had to start training hard for the season ahead.

Shay's first fight of his senior season was going to be a box off between him and John Martin the other Middleweight at Case's Gym. Neither of them wanted to fight each other, but if they wanted to progress in the Championships they had to. John was no match for Shay and Shay beat him over the 3 rounds easy, but never even tried to knock his boxing buddy out. Shay steamrollered though everyone they put up against him, winning the Birmingham and then the Midlands County's titles easily with 2 great 1st round knockouts. Shay never left it to the judges this season knocking out every opponent they put up against him, nearly all the boxers that he fought were 2 to 3 years older than him as he was now classed as an adult. In the semi finals of the British Championships Shay dispatched the very highly rated Andy Andrews, when Andy couldn't come out for the final round of the fight.

Gary Britain had breezed though as well beating some hard opponents on the way, but he also got a lot of buys through the early rounds of the championships. The stage was set for another big night of amateur boxing at the York Hall, Bethnal Green, London. There were 2 weeks to go before the finals when the A.B.A contacted Kenny to tell him that the fight against Gary Britain for the British title would also be a box off for the Olympic place that summer. Kenny called Shay's home to let him know the

news; Shay was buzzing all he had heard all season was about Gary Britain, Britain's big hope for the gold medal at the Olympics. Gary Britain had been the England's team number 1 for the last 2 years and had fought in many competitions in the English colors. Shay on the other hand had only fought twice for England and that was over 2 years ago, so Shay wasn't going to be the official choice for the Olympic spot.

Kenny had also been told that Britain's coach and England team coach had complained about the box off, but the A.B.A's for once had stood by the decision, as that is the way the Olympic committee wanted it done.

Shay said to Kenny "Thanks Ken, I'm not going to let you down I promise".

Kenny just replied "You couldn't let me down son whatever happens we are all proud of you".

CHAPTER 4



After Shay had put down the phone, he went and told his Mom and Dad, they were so pleased for him.

Shay's Dad said "Son we are so proud of you, whatever happens in 2 weeks time".

Shay just replied "Dad what do you mean whatever happens, I'm going to beat him".

His Dad just replied "I know you will son, just don't want to tempt faith".

Shay's Mom didn't say much she told him that she was proud of him and gave him a big hug. Shay went straight round to Emma's house to tell her the news, she seemed quite pleased for him, but seemed to want to asked him something.

Shay asked her what was wrong, and then said "I thought you would have been pleased".

Emma looked at Shay and said "I am pleased for you Shay, but I was just wondering when you will start getting paid for fighting, we got to start thinking of the future".

Shay looked at Emma, smiled and said "Em if I win this fight and I do well at the Olympics I will be making loads of money".

Emma smiled at this, but then said "there are a lot of ifs, what happens if you don't win?"

Shay paused for a second and replied "I haven't thought about not winning, but if I don't win then I'll just turn pro and take it from there".

Emma gave him a kiss and said "Well you better win then, I love you, but I don't want to be skint all my life".

Shay replied "look I love you too and I'm going to win, but if somehow I don't we will be far from skint, trust me".

Emma smiled and said "Oh, Well just make sure you win".

He left her house and went straight to Case's Gym to see Kenny.

Kenny had got his hands on some of Gary Britain's fights and he wanted to watch them through with Shay. They started looking through Britain's fights and they could both see how much Britain had improved from the time Shay had beaten him 3 years before.

Kenny pointed out a lot of his strengths but couldn't find many weaknesses; Kenny reckoned the Middleweight division suited Britain well.

Shay just looked at Kenny and said "So I'm fucked then Ken, I've got no chance".

Kenny stood up looked Shay straight in the eye and said "I never, never want to hear you say that again, you have come way too far to think like that, yes Britain has improved, but so have you. You have grown in to a man and you have been hitting like one since you were 14".

Shay replied "But look how good he is, he's pure class".

Kenny said with a stern voice "Yeah he is Shay, but so are you, the final is over 4, 2 minute rounds, hand on heart Shay I don't think he can cope with you for that long and I know he ain't going to knock you out". Kenny put his hands on both sides of the chair Shay was sitting on and leant down to Shay and said in a calm voice "You can do this son, I got no doubts".

Shay thanked Kenny, but before he could say anything else there was a loud knock at the gyms doors. Ken told Shay to go see who it is and tell them they were closed. Shay opened the front doors, there was a smartly dressed man in his 50's with a big cigar in his mouth, Shay looked at him and said "Alright mate, were closed". The man smiled and replied in a cockney accent "Do I look like I have come here to train son, I'm here to see Kenny Case the owner". Shay asked him "Who shall I say wants him?"

Shay recognized the man from somewhere but just couldn't put his finger on where.

The man replied "Tell Kenny that Frank Goldsten wants a word with him", as soon as Shay heard his name he knew who he was.

Frank Goldsten is the top boxing promoter in Britain and a very big influence in world boxing as well. His company had produced loads of British and even World Champions and at this time had 3 British Champions and 1 world Champion in its stable. Frank had put on some of the biggest events in England and around the world promoting his Light Welterweight Champion and one of Shay's boxing hero's Richie Hatter.

Shay apologized for keeping him at the door and called him in, Shay called Kenny to come out of his office.

Kenny came out saying "I told you to tell them we were closed". Kenny stopped in his tracks as he saw who was standing there and said "Fuck me Frank Goldsten".

Frank replied "How you doing Ken, it's been a long time".

Kenny walked over to Frank and said "not fucking long enough Frank, what the fuck do you what".

Frank looked a bit stunned at how hostile Kenny was and replied "Come on Ken there's no need to be like that, I'm here to offer your lad Shay a pro contract, win or lose at the finals".

Kenny laughed and said "Have you ever seen Shay box?"

Frank replied "No, but I have had some of my people look at him and they have told me he is top draw".

Kenny said "Well why don't you talk to him then he's standing next to you".

Frank just smiled at Kenny and said "I know this is Shay, come on Ken what kind of mug do you think I am".

Frank turned to Shay and said "You alright Shay how you doing, is there some where we can talk".

Before Shay could reply to Frank, Kenny shouted "You 2, my office now". Shay looked at Frank and said "Kenny's office would be good".

They walked into Kenny's office, Kenny was sitting behind his desk and said to Frank "O.k. sit down Frank and tell me and Shay what you're offering".

Frank sat down and started his offer "What am I offering is a dream ticket out of this place and straight to the big time. If Shay wins the finals and goes to the Olympics and does well I can guarantee Shay a 50 grand signing on fee with Goldsten

Promotions and 250 grand for his first 10 fights and if he wins his first ten fights I'll get him a crack at the British title".

Shay was just sitting there gob smacked, he could not believe the money Frank was talking about.

Kenny went to say something, but before he could Frank jumped in and continued "I know what you're going to say Ken, what if he wins a medal or even gold, well if Shay does that it will be the same deal with 10 fights but 100 grand signing on fee and a guaranteed 500 grand for his first 10 fights. I can't say fairer than that can I"

Kenny lent back in his chair in deep thought then replied "So what happens if Shay loses the finals, what you going to offer him then?" Frank smiled a coy smile and replied "You're a shrude man Ken, very shrude man, if Shay signs before the finals and god forbid somehow loses, I am prepared to offer Shay a 20 grand signing on fee and a 10 fight contract at 5 grand a fight and if he wins them all a title fight". Kenny pondered for a second and said "So what have you offered the '*Golden Boy*' Britain then?"

Frank replied exactly the same Ken, you see I'm not bothered which lad wins as I know I can make both of them money".

Frank turned to Shay who had just been sitting quietly and said "You do like money don't you Shay?"

Shay still in a state of shock just said "Yes".

Frank then said "Well sign with me and you'll have more money than you could ever dream of".

You could see in Shay's eyes he wanted to say yes straight away, but Kenny butted in and told Shay to go home and talk to his Mom and Dad about it. Frank agreed with Kenny, but said he needed an answer as soon as he could. Shay promised to let him know by tomorrow, Frank gave Shay his card and said "I'll look forward to your call" Frank left the gym knowing in his mind that he had already got Shay.

After Frank had left Shay asked Kenny what he thought, Kenny told him "It's a good offer Son, it's a good offer".

Shay could tell there was a but coming and asked Kenny what it was. Kenny looked at the floor then lifted his head and looked

Shay straight in the eye and said "The bloke can't be trusted; I know that for sure, just be careful if you do sign with him".

Shay smiled at Kenny and said "I will be Ken and you will be with me mate, I want you to be my manager".

Kenny laughed and said "Frank will want his own people looking after you, so this will be as far as we go, sorry Son".

Shay then told Kenny "Well Ken if he won't have you then he won't get me, we have both worked hard to get me this far and you're the only person I want instructing me in my corner. I need you Ken more than ever".

Kenny looked at Shay shook his head in disbelief at what Shay was saying and said "You would, wouldn't you Son, you'd walk away from the deal if I don't agree".

Shay's reply was swift "To right Ken, I need you in my corner mate". Kenny replied with "O.k. o.k. Son, I'll do it if you can get Frank to agree, now get yourself home and talk to your Mom and Dad about it".

Shay left the gym and went straight home and told his Mom and Dad, they were overjoyed for him; he was going to live his dream of being a professional boxer. They were even happier when they knew Kenny was going to be managing him. Shay had almost made his mind up to sign, so he call Emma to tell her to come round, he had some great news to tell her. Emma told Shay she would be round later as she had something to do first.

Shay told her it was really important to which her reply was "Well tell me on the phone then".

Shay said "No Em this is something I have to tell you to you face" Emma could hear his Mom and Dad in the background sounding really excited so she told Shay she would be round straight away.

The next person he called was Kelly; she was already at her accommodations on the university's campus and was chuffed to bits for him.

Kelly said "I'll look out for you on telly in the Olympics".

Their conversation was cut short by Emma's arrival, he didn't tell her who he was on the phone to, Shay just didn't need the hassle. When he told Emma what he had been offered, she screamed and hugged him. Shay was definitely back in Emma's good books and

she was all over him that night, but Shay had to make sure he didn't go too far with her until after the finals in 2 weeks time. Shay called Goldsten the next day and said he would sign as long as Kenny coached him, Frank wasn't too happy, but agreed as he wanted Shay to sign with him.

From then on Kenny took over all the talking with Frank and told him he wanted a copy of the contract so he could let a solicitor look at it before they signed. Frank agreed and said to Kenny "Don't you trust me Ken?"

Kenny replied straight away with "No I don't Frank, so don't try and fuck us over".

Frank had the contract sent over to Shay, and Kenny gave them to his solicitor to look at. The solicitor gave the contract the thumbs up. Kenny called Frank to tell him they would sign.

Frank said "That's great Kenny, I'll tell you what, we will do the signing on the day of the finals. I'll see you down there".

Shay trained hard that week, he had a few articles wrote about him in the local papers saying they thought he was going to win the British title and the Olympic spot. Emma even managed to have her own interview with one of the local papers talking mostly about herself and how proud she was of Shay. Emma was trying to break into the modeling industry, so getting a few pictures in the paper wasn't going to do Emma any harm.

The week of the fight Shay took it easy on the training, just some light pad work and some short jogs. Kenny had been working on the strategy Shay was going to use for the fight, he told Shay he had got a plan to beat Gary Britain, Shay was all ears on the master plan Kenny had came up with.

Kenny started to tell him his plan "It's quite simple, if you try and out box Britain, and don't knock him out you won't get the decision, we both know he's the '*Golden Boy*' and the one they would like to go to the Olympics".

Shay shrugged his shoulders and said "Yeah I know Ken, so what's the plan".

Kenny smiled and said "You go out there from the start of the first round and smash fuck out of him and you don't stop throwing bombs until you stop him".

Shay looked a bit shocked and said "But Britain's a proper slick boxer, if I do that he will just make me look stupid".

Kenny shook his head and replied "No he won't Shay he'll expect you to try and out box him, if you catch him cold at the start, trust me he won't know what hit him".

Shay said "Well if you think that will work, I trust you ken".

There was 2 days to go before the final; Kenny got a call off Frank saying to come down the day before the fight as he had booked them in to a hotel near the York Hall. Kenny told Shay and said he would pick him up at midday before the fight. Kenny picked Shay and Emma up from his house and they set off to London. Kenny wasn't too pleased to see that Emma was coming down with them, but she wasn't going to miss a night in a hotel in London.

They got to the hotel around 3 o'clock in the afternoon and Mr Goldsten was waiting at the hotel to meet them. They were staying at the 5 star Town Hall Hotel; it was less than 5 minutes away from the York Hall where the fight was being held.

Frank was standing next to the entrance to welcome them, "Well Ken, what do you think?"

Kenny smiled and said "Yeah it looks nice Frank".

Frank then said to Shay "You all ready for tomorrow Son".

Then Frank clocked Emma getting out of the car and said "And who is this lovely lady with you?"

Shay replied "This is my girlfriend Emma and yeah I'm more than ready".

Frank smiled and said "That's what I like to hear and you're a very lucky man she a stunner, now let's get you booked in to your rooms".

The porter took their bags and showed them to their rooms, the rooms were pure luxury. Emma and Shay were sharing one room and Kenny was in the room next to them. Emma was well impressed when they got into the room.

She hugged Shay and gave him a very loving kiss and said "This is how we will be living from now on, you've done it Babe".

Shay just said "Let's not count our chickens yet, I still got to win this fight".

Emma smiled and replied "Well even if you don't we'll still have money".

Shay nodded his head and said "Yeah I suppose we will".

Frank had invited them all to dinner in the restraint in the hotel at 7 o'clock. Kenny and Shay met in the bar just before 7.

Kenny asked Shay "Where's Emma?"

Shay replied "She is still getting ready; she said she'll be down in a while".

Shay and Kenny were all suited and booted in their best suits, well there only suits. Frank saw them and called them over to the table. As they walked to the table Shay could see there were a few people at the table already, as they got closer Shay recognized who one of them was.

Shay knocked Kenny's arm and said "Fuck me Ken what the fuck is Gary Britain doing here?"

Kenny replied "Just keep your cool Son, from the look on his face I don't think he knew you were coming either".

Kenny and Shay got to the table and Frank stood up to welcome them, he shook Kenny's hand and said "You o.k. Ken".

Then shook Shay's hand and said "You alright Shay?"

Shay replied "Yeah I'm fine".

Shay looked pissed off that Gary Britain was there. Frank then introduced the rest of his guests to them, he said "Kenny, Shay I would like you to meet Henry and Dianna Britain".

They stood up and shook hands with Ken and Shay and said "Hello". Then Frank said "And I think you all know this young man, Kenny, Shay you remember Gary Britain?"

Gary stood up and shook Kenny's hand first and said "Very nice to meet you Mr Case, I have heard a lot about you and it's an honor to meet you".

Kenny just smiled and replied "It's nice to meet you as well Gary".

Gary then grabbed Shay's hand and squeezed it as hard as he could and said "Alright Shay, it's been a long time, how's the hand mate?" Shay just squeezed back and said "Yeah the hands fine, thanks Gary". You could feel the tension between them, but the tension was broken when Frank came out with "Hey Shay is that your girlfriend?"

The whole table looked round to see Emma walking down the steps; she had a long black designer dress on and looked absolutely stunning. Even Shay had to look twice to make sure it was her, she looked like a model straight out of the pages of *Vogue Magazine*. Emma walked up to Shay gave him a kiss on the cheek and said "Sorry I'm late".

Shay with a big smile on his face just said "No problem Em, you look gorgeous".

He introduced Emma to everyone and they sat down to eat.

The night went pretty well only with the odd rant by Kenny about the A.B.A to Gary's Dad and Chairman of the A.B.A. even Shay and Gary didn't really have a cross word over dinner, it was a very pleasant night. Emma got on with everyone and was being the perfect lady; she was charming to everyone and had made a real big impression especially on Gary Britain. Gary couldn't take his eyes off her and was giving her all his attention, Shay didn't seem to bothered about this. He kind of thought to himself, dream on Gary she's my girl, but it did seem that Emma was enjoying Gary's attentions.

It was about 10 o'clock on the night when Kenny said to Shay he should get an early night. Everyone seemed to agree and they all said there goodnights and made their way to their rooms.

Gary made sure he said good night to Emma, and then said to Shay "Your one lucky man Shay to have such a gorgeous girlfriend".

Shay thanked him and went to get into the lift with Emma. Gary called Shay back; Emma got into the lift and held it while Shay went back to see what Gary wanted. Gary smiled at Shay and in his cockney voice said "Good luck tomorrow, but don't think for one second it's going to be anything like 3 years ago".

Shay replied "Well we'll find out tomorrow won't we".

Gary lent forward and whispered in Shay's ear "You got no chance, first I'm taking the British title and the Olympic spot, and then I'm going to take your bird".

Shay looked Gary straight in the eye his blood was boiling and said "Well we will see how 'Great' Britain is tomorrow won't we".

But all Shay really wanted to do was smash him all over the posh foyer of the hotel, but kept his temper and turned and walked into the lift.

Gary gave Emma a cheeky wink and said "Good night Emma" as the lift doors closed. Shay was fuming and couldn't wait to get him in the ring tomorrow. It didn't help Shay's mood that all Emma went on about was how nice Gary was. Shay just nodded and smiled and agreed with her he knew he had to keep his cool and control his temper in the ring tomorrow.

It took Shay ages to get to sleep, but he did manage to drop off. He was up early and went down for breakfast and then to meet his Mom and Dad who were meeting him at the York Hall. He met them there with Kenny about 12 o'clock and weighed in for the fight, Shay then took them back to the hotel to relax before the show started. Shay's fight was top of the bill on a 10 fight British title show, so he was going to have a long wait before he got it on with Britain.

Shay's Mom and Dad were well impressed with the hotel Frank had put Shay up in. Emma came down from their room and was chatting with Shay's Mom and Dad. Shay was very quiet, he was still stewing over what Gary had said to him last night and couldn't wait to get him in the ring.

The show started at 7 o'clock and they all got there just before. Emma and Shay's Mom and Dad were on a table with Gary Britain's Mom and Dad, Frank Goldstein and Gary Southan the owner of Brumsdale and Chef Sponsor of Case's Gym. Shay was in the changing room with Kenny, he already had his kit on, hands taped up, the only thing he didn't have on was his gloves.

Frank came into the dressing room with Shay's Professional contract for him to sign. Kenny had already had the contract looked over so Shay signed it straight away. Frank got a photographer to take some pictures of this memorable occasion, they had a few of him and Frank shaking hands on the deal, Frank wished him good luck and went to walk out of the room.

As he walked to the door another person came walking in, Frank stopped in his tracks and looked shocked to see this person

standing there. "Hello Frank, hello Ken, thought I'd surprise you and wish your boy good luck".

Frank was lost for words and didn't know what to say, Kenny with a big smile on his face said "Fuck me Dexter Hastings, this is a surprise, I thought you were living it up in New York".

Dexter replied "Yeah I was Ken, but I'm back in England now and coming back to Brum".

Dexter looked around at Frank who looked like he had seen a ghost "Well aint you going to say hello Frank? It's been a long time".

Frank just said nervously "Yeah Dext it been a long time really nice to see you" and got out of the changing room as quickly as he could.

Dexter walked over to Kenny and gave him a big hug.

Kenny said "I can't believe your back, you look great Son".

Dexter smiled and replied "Yeah Ken I'm back mate and coming back to Brum".

Dexter looked over at Shay and said "So your Newtown's great Olympic hope, nice to meet you Son".

Shay was a bit confused, he was thinking, who is this bloke standing in the changing room in a 1,000 pound Armarni suit?

Dexter Hastings was one of Kenny's first boxers to make it as a pro over 20 years ago; this was when Case's gym was strictly a Professional gym and Dexter was the top boy there. Over a 4 year career Dexter had 15 fights and got a crack at the British Cruiser Weight title. Kenny was his manager and Frank Goldsten was the promoter, but the problems started when the Cruiser Weight Champ at the time Danny Adams was also promoted by Frank. In their title fight Dexter completely out boxed Danny, but lost the fight on a unanimous decision by the judges, it was a complete stitch up and Dexter and Kenny went mental at Frank in the ring, but he wasn't bothered as he celebrated with his other boxer Danny who had been given the decision.

After this fight Dexter never put on the pro gloves again, retiring from boxing at the young age of 23. Kenny turned Case's gym into an Amateur gym after this as he had, had enough of the pro game. Dexter took the money he had made from boxing and headed to

New York in America and invested his money in a few bars around the meat packing district of Manhattan. He made a fortune with his bars and by the time he had came back to England he was a multi millionaire and owned 4 of the biggest night clubs in New York.

Kenny introduced Dexter to Shay and explained who he was; Shay asked Kenny how come he has never mentioned Dexter before.

Kenny just replied "I just wanted to leave it in the past and concentrate on the amateur boxing, that's why".

Kenny asked Dexter "So what you going to be doing over in England?"

Dexter explained he was bored with New York and missed Birmingham and he had brought a club in the city centre of Birmingham and was moving back. Dexter invited both of them to the opening night, he wished Shay all the luck in the world on his fight and boxing career and that if Shay ever needed some advice to come and see him. Shay thanked him and Dexter left the changing room and went and took his seat in the main room.

The York Hall, Bethnal Green was buzzing, the people who were lucky enough to get tickets had already witnessed a great night of Amateur boxing with championships won and lost. There were about 300 people from Birmingham to see Shay's title fight and were making themselves heard in the famous hall.

The stage was set, no more talk, no more hype, it was all down to the next 4 , 2 minute rounds of the senior British Amateur Middleweight Title and the precious Olympic spot on the line, it had all came down to this. Shay came out and the crowd roared, especially the Birmingham lot, Shay looked pumped up and ready to fight, he slipped though the ropes and acknowledged his supporters from Birmingham. He saw Emma, his Mom and Dad at ringside and gave Emma a wink.

Gary Britain came to the ring to a cheer that nearly took the roof off the York Hall, he looked in great shape and really, really confident, he stepped into the ring and gave Shay a look of contempt as he walked up to him.

The Ref gave then there instructions in the centre of the ring, they both went back to their corners. Kenny put Shay's gum shield in

and said "Remember get on him from the start and don't stop, he won't be able to cope with you".

Shay nodded his head and got ready for the first round.

The bell rang for the first round and Shay nearly sprinted to the other side of the ring, Britain hadn't even got out of his corner and Shay was on him. Shay threw left hook after right hook to Gary's head and body, Britain tried to grab on to Shay, but he was relentless. Eventually Britain managed to grab on to Shay near enough round the waist to stop the onslaught. The Ref told them to stop boxing and called Shay to the centre of the ring, he gave Shay a caution for holding. Shay just looked at the Ref in disbelief at the caution, but just went straight back into it as soon as the Ref told them to box on. Britain hadn't got himself together and Shay went straight back at him. Shay got Britain on the ropes and went to work again with hooks to the body and head. Britain grabbed on again, but Shay pushed him off. The Ref told them to stop boxing again, and called Shay to the centre of the ring. The Ref gave Shay another caution for holding, Shay looked at the Ref and though his gum shield said "For fuck sake Ref he's holding me"! The Ref told him to shut up and box on. Britain still looked in shock at how Shay had came out, Gary tried to move round the ring and get his jab working, but Shay moved in slipped under Britain's jab and caught him with the Case's Gym Special, left hook to the body, then left hook to the head and then a straight right hand. This sent Britain back to the ropes and Shay went to work on Gary's body. Shay pounded away as Britain tried to tie him up again, Shay was just letting his shots go and caught Britain just under the belt. The Ref stopped the fight again, Shay thought fair enough he was going to caution him for a low blow, the Ref called Shay to the centre and gave Shay his 3rd caution for holding then disqualified Shay from the fight.

Shay couldn't believe it; he looked at Kenny who was already getting into the ring.

Kenny grabbed the Ref and said "Why have you disqualified him? You're a cheat, you're a disgrace".

The Ref just pulled away from Kenny and went and raised Gary Britain's hand. Britain didn't really know he had won at that time

but celebrated like he had knocked Shay out. The crowd was going mad, booing the Ref and shouting fix and cheat. It wasn't just fans from Birmingham that were shouting this; a lot of the other people there were disgusted about this decision. Kenny told Shay to get out of the ring as he could see Shay was losing his temper. Kenny said to Shay "Look there's nothing we can do just keep your cool" Shay nodded and headed out of the ring.

Just as they got to the dressing room, Ben Meadings Birmingham's A.B.A Chairman came up to them and said to Kenny "Bet you wished you had of took my offer now".

Kenny didn't say anything, he turn round and hit Ben with a lethal right hook to the jaw knocking Mr Meadings spark out.

Shay looked at Ken and said "I thought you said to be cool".

Kenny smiled and replied "That was cool, now let's get you changed".

When they got in the changing room Shay went to Ken "What the fuck was that Ken, Britain was the one holding, I didn't stop throwing punches?"

Kenny just replied "You have been stitched up proper Shay; Britain was always going to win this fight". Kenny put his hand on Shay's Shoulder and said "Look kid get dressed and let's get out of here".

As Shay was getting dressed, Frank came into see how Shay was; he said "Fuck me kid, you got done over proper there, what a stitch up". Kenny grabbed Frank and said "Did you know the stitch was on" Frank replied "No I fucking didn't, now take your fucking hands off me".

Kenny let Frank go and he said "Hard luck Shay, but at least you got a pro contract, your get your signing fee in the next few days and I'll be in touch soon".

Frank left the dressing room just as Shays Mom, Dad and Emma came in. Shay's Mom asked him if he was o.k.

Shay just replied "Yeah I'm great for someone who has just got fucked over".

Shay's Dad jumped in then and said "Don't you dare talk to your mother like that, show some respect".

Shay looked at his Mom and said "I'm sorry Mom I'm just a bit upset".

His Mom smiled and just replied "I know Son, I know".

Emma then went up to Shay, she gave him a hug told him she loved him and told him how proud she was of him.

Shay looked at her and replied "I love you to Em, but think of the money they have done me out of".

Emma smiled at Shay and said "Well you still got you pro contract and a big signing on fee, we'll be fine".

This did seem a bit strange for Emma, but it did seem like she was looking at the long game now.

Shay, Emma and Kenny went back to the hotel, they were booked in for one more night, but they were just going to get back to Birmingham as soon as they could. They got back in the early hours of the next morning, Shay didn't say much, and he just went up to bed and went to sleep.

Shay got up the next morning still in shock about being disqualified, he went down stairs and his Mom had cooked him a big fry up to try and cheer him up. He sat down at the table with his Dad who was reading the Sunday paper. Shay asked him was there anything in the papers about the fight?

His Dad replied "No son it will probably be in tomorrows"

Shay's Mom and Dad didn't say much to Shay that day; they just didn't want to upset him.

Shay was quiet and spent most of the day in his room; he had called Emma and told her he wanted to be alone tonight.

CHAPTER 5



The following day there were some small articles in the national newspapers, but all they went on about was Gary Britain going to the Olympics. Shay thought the papers would have reported on how wrong the decision was, but it was all just about Britain being Britain's big hope for Olympic gold. Shay wasn't happy about this and to make matters worse, in the *Boxing News* a weekly magazine Shay gets there was a 2 page spread about Britain. The headline read in big bold letters *Gary "Great" Britain New Olympic Hope*. The article went on about Gary's quest for Olympic gold after winning the A.B.A British Title.

Shay was pretty down and didn't really leave his house for the week after the fight. The only person he saw apart from his Mom and Dad was Emma, who came round a few times to see him. Near the end of the week Kenny came round to tell Shay that he was being called in front of the A.B.A committee about his behavior at the Championships.

Shay asked Kenny "Do you want me to come with you?" Kenny replied "No Son, best you stay out of this".

Shay wished Kenny good luck with the committee.

Kenny just said "I'm going to take this chance to tell them exactly what I think of them".

Kenny went to leave, but then stopped at Shay's front door and said "Oh yeah Dexter's clubs big opening is next Saturday, here is your invite" Shay looked at the invite and replied "I probably won't go, just not in the mood".

Kenny then said “Shay you’re a pro boxer now and I’m your Manager and I’m telling you to go out and enjoy yourself, that’s an order”.

Shay looked at the ticket again, the ticket had on it V.I.P, Shay pondered for a second then said “Well it is my 19th birthday next week, so I suppose it would be good”.

Kenny smiled and said “Just go Shay, because after that you are in training Son”.

As Kenny left a Courier came walking up the path to Shays house with an envelope for Shay.

Shay signed for it and went back into his home, he opened the envelope it was from Goldsten Promotions, there was a letter welcoming him to the Goldsten’s stable and also enclosed was a bankers draft as promised for £20,000. Shay’s eyes nearly popped out of his head when he saw this, the most money Shay had ever had before was £1000 that he had saved for a holiday for him and Emma. This put Shay in a much better frame of mind, whatever had happened he was now a Professional Boxer and was signed to the biggest Promoter in Britain.

Shay went round to Emma’s to show her what had come in the post, as you can imagine she was overjoyed when she saw the number of zero’s on the bankers draft. Emma suggested that they should think about getting their own place together and Shay seemed to agree, but first Shay was going to take Emma shopping for some new clothes as she always went on about she never had anything to wear.

They went to the bank and put the bankers draft into his account, Shay asked “When will it be cleared?”

The cashier replied “It’s a banker’s draft Sir, the money is in your account now”.

Shay withdrew £2000 and took Emma on a shopping spree. He brought her all the designer clothes she asked for and he took her to the poshest restaurant in town for lunch and spent a bit on clothes for himself. They had a really nice day; it was the first time in Shay’s life where he actually had money to spend and not had to worry about the price. He spent over £1000 on Emma that day and when he got home he wrote his Mom and Dad a cheque for £2000 to say thank you for putting up with him.

His Dad wouldn't take it and told Shay "Son keep your money, put it towards a house for you and Emma".

Shay tried to make his Dad take the cheque, but he wouldn't, even though his Mom and Dad didn't have a lot of money they didn't want to take Shay's.

The same day Shay got even more good news. Gary Southan the Owner of Brumsdale came to see Shay at his house with a proposition. Brumsdale wanted to sign him to wear their clothes and sponsor him in his fights; they were offering him £20,000 for a one year contract with them. Shay accepted straight away and signed the deal there and then.

Shay's life was going so well, he had made 40 grand in just a few hours and hadn't even thrown a punch as a Pro Boxer yet. He was now really looking forward to his V.I.P invite to the opening night of Dexter's new club.

The night of the big opening of the new club, Shay had splashed out on an Armani suit for himself and he had paid for Emma to get her hair, nails and everything else a woman could get done at one of the top salons in Birmingham. Emma as always looked stunning and Shay was looking pretty sharp for once.

Shay called a taxi and they headed off to the city centre where the club was, they pulled up outside the club, there were hundreds of people queuing outside to get into the club. Shay and Emma got out of the taxi; Shay looked up at the big neon sign on top of the club's front doors. It read '*The Squared Circle*'.

Shay said to Emma "What a wicked name for a club".

Emma just looked at the queue and said "Well I'm not waiting in that cue to get in".

Shay smiled and said "We don't have to Babe, we're V.I.P's".

They walked up to the front doors, Shay showed the very smartly dressed doorman the tickets, the doorman said "Welcome to The Squared Circle, here are your passes to the V.I.P area; I hope you enjoy your night".

The welcome really shocked Shay, any other time he had been to a club the doormen were usually rude to him and 9 times out of 10 he would end up knocking them out. Shay and Emma walked through the entrance, there were lots of boxing memorabilia and signed pictures

of famous boxers all over the walls, they walked into the main room and they couldn't believe their eyes. In the centre of the massive main room was a full size boxing ring, the D.J was in the centre of the ring mixing up the top dance tune of the time. There were also scantily dressed female dancers in the ring around the D.J to whip up the massive crowd already dancing the night away. Shay and Emma just looked at each other in complete amazement, the place was packed and the music was pumping.

Shay went up to one of the doormen inside and asked him where the V.I.P area was, the doorman didn't tell them, but led them through the packed room to the V.I.P area. Shay noticed as they walked through the crowds of people dancing and enjoying themselves, there was even more boxing memorabilia on the walls. The doorman led them up some stairs to a room overlooking the main room.

The doorman turned to Shay and Emma and said "Welcome to the V.I.P room, I hope you enjoy your night".

They were just stunned at how amazing the club was, the V.I.P area was rammed with local celebrity's and football players from Aston Villa and Birmingham City.

In the corner of the room Shay spotted Dexter entertaining some of his V.I.P guests, Dexter saw Shay and called him over; Shay walked over and Dexter shook Shay's hand. "Alright Shay welcome to The Squared Circle, what do you think of the place?" Dexter asked.

Shay replied "its amazing Dext, truly amazing".

Dexter just smiled and said "Well it has had a million pound refurbishment so it should be".

Dexter saw Emma standing next to Shay and said "So who is this lovely looking lady with you?"

Shay replied "Oh sorry Dext, this is my girlfriend Emma".

Dexter smiled at Emma and said "Well I'm pleased to meet you Emma and may I say you look stunning tonight".

He turned to Shay and said "You're a very lucky man Shay, she an absolute knockout".

Shay replied "Yeah she's a diamond".

Dexter offered Shay and Emma a drink, the champagne was flowing, Dexter called over one of the waitress's all of them were dressed as ring girls in short skirts and revealing tops. Dexter gave Shay and

Emma a glass of champagne and asked Emma what she did for a living, Emma told him she worked as a receptionist, but was trying to get into the modeling business.

Dexter smiled and replied “Well Emma you defiantly got the look for it, all the girls here are models, I hired them from one of my good friend’s agency”.

Dexter called over this elegant looking lady and introduced her to Emma. “Emma this is Samantha she has got her own modeling agency, have a chat I just need to have a chat with Shay”.

Dexter asked Shay to follow him to his office for a chat, they left Emma and Samantha chatting and Shay followed Dexter to his office.

On the way to his office Shay noticed Gary Southan the Brumsdale owner partying away. Shay tapped him on the shoulder to say hello.

Gary was the worst for wear from the drink and said in a slurred voice “Alright Shay how you doing Son, it’s a great party isn’t it?”

Shay replied “Yeah its bang on Gary, Dexter wants a word with me; I’ll chat to you in a bit”.

Gary just replied “Nice one Shay chat to you later”.

Shay went into Dexter’s office with him and Dext asked him to sit down, Shay looked round Dexter’s office, there was even more boxing memorabilia on the walls.

Shay then said “I love what you have done with the club Dext, but what’s with the ring in the middle of the dance floor?”

Dexter smiled as he pawed Shay a drink and told him about his plans for the club.

“You see Shay this isn’t just a night club, it’s also going to be the main venue for boxing shows in Birmingham, that’s one of the reasons I was at the A.B.A championships. My aim is to hold Professional, Amateur and even Unlicensed shows here”.

Shay was well impressed with Dexter’s plan and asked him how many he could fit in here

Dexter replied “About 2000 give or take a few, I’ll be able to showcase all the new talent in boxing from Birmingham before the big boys get their hands on them”.

Dexter continued “Anyway that’s not why I got you here; Gary told me Brumsdale are sponsoring you?”

Shay replied “Yeah they are why?”

Dexter then said “well I would like to sponsor you as well I want 1066 entertainment on you shorts, how much are Brumsdale paying you?”

Shay replied “I can’t tell you that”.

Dexter just laughed and said “It don’t matter Gary told me 20 grand wasn’t it? Tell you what I’ll give you 20 grand for the year as well, how does that sound?”

Shay said “Yeah sounds good to me Dext”.

Dexter wrote Shay a cheque there and then for 20 grand, Dexter handed him the cheque and shook Shay’s hand and said “Now go and enjoy the rest of your night”.

Shay went back into the V.I.P room with a big smile on his face, Emma was there mingling with some Birmingham City players, he walked up to Emma and said “I’ve got some great news for you.”

Emma replied “Have you? Well I’ve got some good news myself.”

Shay asked “What’s your news then?”

Emma replied “That Samantha has asked me to come to her office; she wants to sign me to her modeling agency, what’s your news?”

Shay said “Dexter’s company have just sponsored me 20 grand for the year.”

Emma smiled and gave Shay a real loving kiss and said “That’s brilliant things are really seem to be going our way”.

As they were enjoying their good news one of the Birmingham City players who had been chatting to Emma butted into their convocation, he seemed to think Shay was trying to muscle in on the bird he was chatting up.

The City player said “Alright mate me and the young lady are having a drink, so go find yourself someone else to talk to”.

Shay looked at him with a smug grin on his face and said “Mate the young lady you’re talking to is my girlfriend, so you go find someone else to talk to.”

Shay went back to talking to Emma, but the City player was not having that this young lad was mugging him off like that. He taped Shay on the shoulder now with one of his team mates behind him and said “Do you know who I am, I earn more in a week than you make in a year son and if I want to talk to the young lady I will now fuck off”.

Shay just smiled at Emma gave her a cheeky wink turned to the City player with a deadly look on his face lent forward and whispered in his ear “Look mate I couldn’t give a fuck who you are, now I’ll tell you this once, take you and your fucking boyfriend over to the other side of the room or I will knock you spark out”.

The City player looked shocked at what had just been said to him by this young lad; Shay took a step back to give himself some room, just in case the City player tried to have ago.

Emma looking a bit concerned and said to Shay “Your hand Babes, remember your hand”.

The City player squared up to Shay, but before anything could happen Dexter who had seen what was going on from the other side of the room came over.

Dexter stepped between them then said “Everything alright here lads?”

The city player said “No Dext it aint alright, this young lad is giving it the big one, I think he needs to be taught some manners”.

Dexter who had seen what had been going on replied to the city player by saying “Really? And you’re going to teach him some are you? Mate he would snap you like a twig, he is a Professional Boxer you silly cunt”.

The city player went to reply but before he could Dexter continued “Oh and I’ve seen you trying to chat his misses up, I think you and your mates should leave now”.

The City player looked stunned and tried to apologize, but Dexter was having none of it and got 2 of his doormen to remove them from the club.

Dexter apologized to Shay and Emma and told them to enjoy the rest of their night and they did. They had a fantastic night and the opening of the club was a great success.

CHAPTER 6



Shay got up the next day with a hangover from hell, he and Emma had, had a great night, but he was paying for it today.

Shays Mom told him that Kenny had called and wanted to see him down the gym. Shay got himself together and made his way to see Kenny. When he got to the gym, it was all locked up which was strange as it would usually be open by now. Shay banged on the front doors and Kenny answered it, they went into Kenny's office, Shay asked why the gym was closed? Kenny told him that the A.B.A had banned him indefinitely so the gym was closed.

Shay looked confused and said "Fuck me Ken that's bang out of order of them, so what you going to do?"

Kenny lent back in his chair and smiled and said "The gym will be open by next week son; I knew they'd do something like this so I got my pro coaching license renewed. Case's gym is going back to being a professional gym again".

Shay was chuffed with this news as he knew he wouldn't have been able to train there with the Amateur boxers.

Shay said "Well that's great news Ken; I'll be back in next week."

Kenny replied "Yeah Son and be ready to train hard, I've already got some good lads coming in on the opening night".

A few days later Shay got a call from Frank Goldsten, Frank told him to start getting himself fit as they wanted him to box on the same show as Gary Britain after the Olympics that started in a few days time. Frank was expecting at least a bronze from Gary at the games and was putting on a big show for his debut as a Pro Boxer. Frank told Shay it would be in 3 months time and his opponent would be named closer to the date.

Shay started back at Case's gym the first night it was reopened; there was a good mix of Pro Boxers there, which meant Shay was getting some useful sparring. While Shay was training for his fourth coming fight, Emma had started house hunting for them. She had signed with Dexter's friend Samantha's modeling agency so they had plenty of money for a deposit on a house.

Shay's training was going well and Emma's modeling career was taking off as well. Shay was doing the odd promotion for Brumsdale and 1066 Entertainment which was earning him a bit of extra cash.

The Olympics were in full swing and Gary Britain was doing well destroying everyone they put in front of him to reach the finals of the Olympics. The papers were full of articles about the '*Golden Boy*' Gary Britain which did annoy Shay, not that he didn't want Gary to do well, but for the fact that he thought he should have been there.

Gary Britain won the Olympic Middleweight Gold medal in a tough fight against a hard boxer from the U.S.A called Roy Frazer. Gary was brought home a hero from the games and was doing loads of interviews on television and radio and always had Frank Goldsten by his side.

Shay and Emma had now moved into a nice big house in one of the posh areas in Birmingham called Harbourne. They had got it at a decent price as it needed some work done to it, but as Shay's Dad was a builder they could get it fixed up for next to nothing.

They were relaxing one night in their new home, when there was an interview on the telly with Frank Goldsten and Gary Britain. Frank was announcing Gary's first fight, it was to be held at the N.I.A Birmingham and the main event would be Riche Hatter defending his Welterweight World titles. Also the newly crowned British Super Middleweight Champion Bruno Beef would be defending his title against Jeff Ripper. Gary would be fighting his first 4 rounder with Irish hope Danny O'Dyer also having his first Pro fight, their opponents were not named. Frank did mention Shay, but it seemed only as an afterthought.

Shay sat there watching and said in a very annoyed manner "It's nice of him to mention me."

Emma just replied "Just think Babe that could be you on telly if you had of beaten that Gary".

Shay just looked at Emma and replied "Yeah nice one Em, just what I need to hear".

Emma gave him a cuddle and said "I was only saying, I know you got stitched up". Emma paused for a second and then said "but I got to say that Gary Britain is looking well fit".

Shay just shook his head and carried on watching the television.

The next day Shay got a call off Frank to tell him when and where he was fighting, Shay told him he already knew from the telly interview yesterday.

Frank replied "Oh yeah don't you think Gary is handling the press well?"

Shay just said in a sarcastic voice "Yeah Frank he was '*great*'.

Frank laughed and said "Yeah good one Shay '*great*' I like it, just make sure your ready in 2 months time for your fight, I'll let you know who your opponent is closer to the date".

Shay replied "Nice one Frank I'll talk to you soon".

Shay really started doing some hard training; Kenny worked him hard at the gym with lots of sessions purely on cardio and fitness. Kenny got Shay sparring some of the bigger lads one week to teach him how to take a heavy shot. Then the next week he'd spar the smaller, faster pro's to improve his hand speed and foot work. Shay was doing well looking really sharp and really strong at Middleweight.

Emma's modeling career was starting to take off as well, Samantha had got her some promotion and a few modeling jobs and she was becoming even more of a diva than she already was. Shay wasn't too bothered about this, he was more focused on his first pro fight and it was going to be in his home town, he just couldn't wait to get in there. The 2 months of training went quickly, Shay and Emma didn't really get to spend much time together with his training and her modeling career, and there was just no quality time. There was just 2 days before the fight and his opponent still hadn't been announced, Shay and Kenny had both been asking Frank who it was going to be, but Frank said they would find out on the day of the fight like the rest of the new lads.

This really frustrated Shay as he couldn't prepare properly for the fight, but Kenny told him it was normal for boxers on their first few fights.

The day before the fight Shay was up bright and early for the weigh in. It was going to be held at the venue where the show was. When Shay and Kenny got to the weigh in Danny O'Dyer had just finished being weighed in and knew who he was fighting. Shay stepped on to the scales and as always was bang on the weight, he found out he was fighting 30 year old Jeff Johnson, a boxer from Manchester with a very poor record of 10 wins and 50 defeats, but 8 of his wins were by knockout.

As Shay stepped off the scales he heard a lot of noise coming towards the room the weigh in was being held in. It was the World Champion Richie Hatter coming to be weighed in; he walked in and by his side was the new Olympic Gold Medalist "Gary 'Great' Britain. They had reporters all round them and the crowd that who were at the weigh in were going mad, cheering Richie and Gary's names.

Shay looked at Ken, smiled and said "I should have got the Newtown boys to have come to the weigh in".

Kenny just laughed and replied "Come on Son, let the pantomime commence".

Richie and Gary got to the scales and then Richie's opponent came in. Carlos Motaina was a real tough Cuban boxer with a 25 fight unbeaten record, he squared up to Richie, but there people kept them from getting physical.

Gary Britain was the first to weigh in, his opponent Jack Dobbs who was 21 and had, had 5 fights and lost 4 of them had weighed in earlier.

Gary was bang on the weight and looked real good; he put his Gold medal round his neck so the photographers could get some pictures of him. He really milked it and the press loved it.

Gary turned and looked at Shay and said “You like my gold medal Shay? It looks good don’t it?”

You could see Shay was ready to exploded, but Kenny whispered in his ear “keep calm son don’t let the prick get to you”.

Shay took a deep breath and replied “Yeah Gary it looks real good mate, well done on winning it”.

Gary didn’t really know what to say to that, he expected Shay to kickoff.

Richie and Carlos both weighed in, both right on the weight limit, there was the normal stare down. The stare down was broken by Bruno Beef walking in; Bruno the British Super Middle Weight champ came walking in with a very pissed off looking Frank Goldsten behind him. Bruno was supposed to have been there an hours earlier to have his own stare down with his challenger Benny Baker, but Bruno had over slept, well that’s what he told Frank who had, had to drag him out of the hotel room to get him there. Bruno walked up to the scales, brazen as hell, telling Richie and Carlos to make way for the champ.

Richie said “I’m the World Champion you joker”.

Which Bruno replied “Well just be glad you’re not in my weight division or you wouldn’t be”.

Richie’s entourage had to hold him back, Bruno didn’t even flinch, and he just laughed at Richie. He got on the scales and he was smack on the weight, one of his people handed him his belt, he looked at Gary Britain smiled and said “Have a look at this kid as it’s the closest you will get to holding it while I’m British Champ. If you ask me nicely I might let you touch it”.

Gary didn’t say anything he just smiled and walked off the stage keeping his dignity.

Bruno shouted after Britain, “Runaway little boy”.

Frank was there shaking his head, but secretly loving the publicity it would bring. Shay and Kenny got out of there before Bruno could start on them. Shay and Kenny had a real good laugh about what had happened, Shay was relaxed and seemed really ready for his first Professional fight tomorrow.

When he got back home that night, Emma had prepared him a 3 course meal with a starter, a main course and a desert. Shay was stunned that she had gone to so much trouble, but as he went to get a drink out of the kitchen he noticed the trays the food had been delivered in from his favorite restraint just down the road. Shay didn't say anything and just thought to himself that it's the thought that counts. They had a really nice night, very relaxing; Shay didn't stay up to late and got a really good night sleep.

Shay got up fresh and ready for the day ahead. He got a call off Dexter wishing him luck and a bit of a pep talk; he also got a call off Gary Southan, his Mom and Dad and Kenny. Because Shay lived so close to the event he was going to make his own way there. Shay had sold over 1,000 tickets himself to friends and people from around Birmingham. The N.I.A had sold out for this show, there was going to be over 12,000 boxing fans watching the show live and millions would be watching from around the world for the World Title Fight. Shay seemed undaunted by all this, he just wanted to get in there and show the world what Shay "*The Hammer*" Dempsey could do.

The show was starting at 8 o'clock that night and had a total of 10 fights on. Sky was covering the later part of the show, and Shay's fight was one of the first that would be shown in the warm up to the big World Title Fight.

The broadcast wasn't starting until 10 o'clock and they wanted interviews with all the boxers fighting on their live show. While the first 5 fights were being fought they started interviewing the undercard, Danny O'Dyer mumbled his way through his interview he looked really nervous, but his Irish charm got him through it.

Shay was up next, he answered all the questions they asked him, well until the interviewer asked him about his box off against Gary Britain for the Olympic place. This unnerved Shay as he still really held a grudge with the A.B.A's for stitching him up.

Shay paused before answering it and said “I think the Ref stopped the fight to soon, I don’t think I fouled him once, but it’s up to the Ref and he disqualified me”.

The Interviewer then asked Shay about what he thought about Gary Britain, Shay took a deep breath and said “Gary is a class boxer, he won an Olympic Gold, fair play to him”.

They finished the interview there and went on to interview Gary Britain. Gary gave a polished interview, it seemed like he knew exactly what questions he was going to be asked, and he charmed his way through it saying how he was going to be a World Champ one day and how proud he was to be British.

The Interviewer lapped it up, even Shay who was watching the interview on one of the monitors had to give Gary his dues; he defiantly had the gift of the gab.

The broadcast for Sky started at 10 o’clock, Danny O’Dyer was up first, he was having 4, 3 minute round fight against a local boxer.

Danny dispatched the journey man a minute into the second round; it was a good Professional display. Shay had been warming up in the dressing room and was looking focus and very sharp. He was wearing black Brumsdale shorts with gold trim; he had the Brumsdale logo on one leg and 1066 Entertainments on the other. He was ready and couldn’t wait to get out there.

They called him to make his way out, Kenny led him to the entrants of the arena then said “Shay you know what you got to do, now go out there and do it”.

Shay just looked at him smiled and replied “Ken that’s the best pep talk you have ever given me”.

Kenny just laughed and said “Just focus Shay and remember you don’t get paid for over time”.

Shay’s music came on and he walked out, he only took a few steps into the arena and looked up at the capacity crowd. The crowd gave him a very warm reception, him being a local lad. There was one section of the crowd that were going mad, most of the 1,000 tickets that Shay had sold were all seated together and making themselves heard.

Shay looked at Kenny and just said “Fuck me Ken look how many people there are here”.

Kenny replied “Just focus Shay, keep your focus”.

Shay walked to the ring and slipped through the ropes; at ring side he saw Dexter and Gary Southan sitting there applauding and cheering. Next to them were his Mom and Dad and of course Emma. Emma had gone all out for Shay’s big night; she had brought a £1000 designer dress. She had her hair, nails and make up done professionally. Emma looked more gorgeous than ever. Shay acknowledged Dexter, Gary his Mom and Dad and blew Emma a kiss with a cheeky wink.

Jeff Johnson was already in the ring, the Ref called them to the centre of the ring and gave them their final instructions and they were ready to go.

The bell rang to start the first round, Johnson came forward very aggressively which shocked Shay, but Shay was moving well and just kept out of range. Shay took the centre of the ring and got his jab going, he looked really slick and already you could see Johnson wouldn’t be able to cope with him. The first one, two Shay caught him with sent Johnson back to the ropes, Johnson covered up and Shay stepped in and went to work with a left hook to the body, left hook to the head and then a thunderous straight right that nearly took Johnsons head off. Johnson went straight down like a ton of bricks from the Case’s Special. The Ref didn’t even count and just waved the fight over.

Shay had won his first pro fight and won it in style. The place was going mad; the 1,000 people Shay had sold tickets to were chanting his name.

Shay was buzzing; he went over to Kenny and said “How was that Ken?

Kenny just smiled and said “That will do Son that will do”.

The announcements were made and it was official Shay had won in just under a minute of the first round. He looked down at Emma, his Mom and Dad, Dexter and Gary and said with a smug grin on his face “Was that o.k.?”

Emma, who was nearly in tears, mouthed the words “I love you”.

Dexter and Gary gave him the thumbs up to show what they thought; his Mom and Dad didn’t have to say anything. He could see how proud they were of him.

Shay got out of the ring and walked back to the changing room, as he got backstage Richie Hatter came out of his changing room and called Shay over. Shay sheepishly walked over. Shay was thinking what did one of his boxing hero's what him for? Richie first congratulated him on his win and then asked him about his finishing combo.

Richie said "That was a cracking combo you finished him with, it looked like you practice it a lot, how does it go?"

Shay couldn't believe his hero was asking him about his finishing combo, Shay explained, "It's called the Casey special, we're all taught it at the gym by our trainer Kenny".

Richie then said "So what is it then?"

Shay replied "Well it's a left hook to the body, left hook to the head and then a straight right".

Richie smiled and said "I'll have to try and remember that one and well done on your win again".

Shay thanked Richie and he went back into his changing room, as Shay continued down the corridor to his changing room Gary Britain was on his way to the ring for his fight. Gary stopped as he walked passed Shay. Gary was decked out in union jack shorts and he had his Gold medal and Olympic vest on. Gary gave Shay a look of contempt then a cheeky wink, Shay just stared right at him and just shook his head.

Kenny whispered in Shay's ear "Just ignore the prat".

Shay laughed and replied "He looks like a big flag".

They both laughed and went into the changing room. As Shay was having his bandages taken off his hands he watched Gary Britain's ring entrance on the monitor in his room. It was completely over the top, you would have thought he was the World Champion, he came out to the National Anthem playing, he also had 3 ring girls either side of him carrying British flags, the crowd loved it and was going wild. Gary got into the ring looking really confident; his opponent was already in the ring and looked a beaten man before a punch had been thrown just from all the bravado from Mr Britain. His coach took off Gary's gold medal and made a big deal about taking off his Olympic vest.

Gary took his vest off his coach and was looking like he was going to throw it into the crowd, but then he saw Emma sitting ringside.

He lent over the ropes looked her straight in the eyes and threw his vest to her and said “Here you go gorgeous, here a souvenir of a real Champion”.

Shay’s Dad leaped from his seat to try and give Gary a slap, but the security stopped him getting anywhere near the ring.

Gary just laughed at this and said “Carful old man you might have a heart attack”.

Shay was watching from the changing room and was going mad, saying he was going to knock him out when he saw him after.

Kenny just grabbed him and said “That’s the reaction he wants Shay, don’t give him the satisfaction”.

Shay sat back and looked like he had calmed down a bit but inside he was still fuming. Shay’s Dad was still going mad at the side of the ring, you would have thought Emma would have thrown Gary’s vest away from her, but she didn’t, she just put it in her bag and carried on watching the show.

The bell rang to start Britain’s first Pro fight, Gary’s opponent Dobbs looked really nervous and was just trying to stay away from Britain. Gary moved in nice and slick, he caught Dobbs with a viscous double jab and a straight right that put Dobbs flat on his back. Dobbs made no attempt to get up and the Ref counted him out. Gary had won in under 30 seconds of the first round; as much as it was impressive some of the crowd booed Gary as they thought his opponent was no were near good enough, but the boos were drowned out by cheering from the rest of the capacity crowd. Gary just walked round the ring with his hands in the air, acknowledging the cheering fans and as he walked past Emma he gave he a smile and a little wink.

By the time Britain had finished posing in the ring, Shay had got changed and had made his way to see Emma, his Mom and Dad and his Sponsors at the side of the ring.

Emma gave him a real big hug and a kiss and his Mom and Dad told him how proud they were of him, but all Shay wanted to know was what Emma had done with Britain’s vest.

He asked Emma and she told him “It’s in my bag”.

Shay replied “What the fuck do you want with that?”

Emma smiled and said “Just think how much I can sell that for”.

Shay just huffed and said “Well I don’t fucking want it in my house, that Britain’s lucky I don’t smash his face in”.

Dexter who was sitting next to Emma heard what Shay said and told him “Look Shay, he knows he can whined you up with your misses just enjoy the rest of the show”.

Shay sat down next to Emma and watched the end of the show.

British Super Middle Weight champ Bruno Beef was up next defending his title for the first time against Benny Baker.

Bruno abused Baker for 8 long rounds before knocking him out cold.

He probably could have stopped him earlier, but every time he had Baker in trouble he would backed off so he could give him even more punishment. It was a brutal one sided fight and the crowd loved it, love him or hate him you had to respect how good Bruno was.

Richie Hatters fight was the last one of the night, Richie and Carlos went toe to toe for 10 rounds of the championship 12 rounds. They were a minute into the 10th round and Richie had Carlos on the ropes, Richie let rip with the Casey Special that he had been talking to Shay about earlier. Carlos fell to the floor and was unable to beat the count, Riche was still champion.

Shay turned to Emma and said “I told him about that combo”.

Emma just smiled at Shay and replied “Yeah babes of course you did”.

When Richie was being interviewed after the fight, Richie mentioned that he had got his finishing combo from watching Shay earlier. To hear this was a great feeling for Shay, one of his all time heroes’ talking about him and thanking him for telling him how to do it.

Shay was in such a good mood now and forgot all about Gary and the vest incident. He was all ready for celebrating his first Pro win in the V.I.P room at The Squared Circle where Dexter was laying on a private party for all the boxers and V.I.P’s that were at the show that night.

The Squared Circle was packed as always, the V.I.P’s were led though the main room and up the stairs to the V.I.P area. There were lots of British film stars there; the 2 young female stars from the hit British film *Have I Told You Yet*, Deanna Moore and Charlie Anderson were attending. There was also the British heart throb and

Hollywood movie star Conor Stevenson who was there to watch his long time friend Richie Hatter fight.

There were the normal set of footballers from the Villa and Birmingham City and a few soap stars from television. Shay and Emma were in ore of all these film and telly stars that were partying away in The Squared Circle. Shay thought to himself how far he had come from the days of hanging in a gang on the streets corners in Newtown.

Frank Goldsten came up to them and congratulated Shay on a good pro debut, Shay hadn't seen Frank all night while he was at the show. Frank told him he had to stay close to Bruno so he didn't do anything mad before his title defense. Frank also told Shay he would be back in the ring again in about 4 month's time. Frank then saw Gary Britain entering the V.I.P area and told Shay he would talk to him later.

There was a big commotion when Gary came in; he was more of an attraction than Richie Hatter. Richie was sitting in one of the booths chatting to Conor Stevenson; Richie saw Shay and called him over. Shay and Emma went over to the booth and Richie asked them to join them for a drink, Shay sat down next to Richie and Shay introduced Emma to Richie and Conor, Emma was star struck, she was a big fan of Conor's films and Richie was one of her favorite boxers.

Conor told Shay that he thought his fight was one of the best of the night and even had a joke with him. Conor asking him if he had anymore tips for Richie. They were all having a laugh at this, but Richie did thank him for showing him the Casey Special, he said "Yeah Son nice one for that, that Carlos was one tough fighter, but your combo sorted him out".

Shay smiled, but didn't really know what to say to his hero and just replied "Thanks Rich".

They chatted with Richie and Conor for a while, loads of people came up to the table to congratulate Richie and Shay and said hello to Conor. Emma loved all the attention she was getting in the booth, she was sitting with a World Champion and a Hollywood star and they were chatting to her like they had known her for years.

Emma's little bubble was burst when Deanna and Charlie came over and joined them at the table. Now Emma was a gorgeous woman, but these girls were absolute knockouts, they were 2 of Britain's biggest

up and coming actresses' and were both drop dead gorgeous. They sat next to Conor and he introduced them to Shay and Emma. They congratulated him on his win and then asked Emma where she got the dress she was wearing. Emma told them it was a Mary Apple original. Mary Apple was one of the top designers in New York, the two actresses' loved it, and this made Emma feel pretty good as she thought they were going to be bitchy with her. They were all having a fantastic time, the drinks were flowing and the music was pumping. The mood was broken when Gary Britain came over to their table to have a chat; he congratulated Richie on a great victory and shook his hand. Gary told Richie what a big fan of his he was, Gary introduced himself to Deanna, Charlie and Conor.

He then turned to Emma and said "Hello Emma so nice to meet you again, I hope you like the vest", he gave her a kiss on the cheek, but as he did he looked at Shay and winked at him.

Shay exploded out of his seat, he had had enough off this cocky Cockney and was going to let him have it. He grabbed Gary by the throat and pushed him away from Emma.

Shay said "You're taking the piss Britain".

Shay was just about to land a right hand on Gary when Dexter who was just on his way over saw what was going to happen and grabbed Shay and held on to him.

Gary took a step back, he fixed his suit and said very calmly "What's your problem mate, I was only saying hello".

Shay replied "Gary your some kind of cunt, let's go outside and we'll sort this out now".

Gary laughed and replied "Shay we're professional boxers, you what to start acting like one instead of a street thug".

Dexter who could see how mad Shay was tried to calm him down by saying, "Shay this aint neither the time nor the place, calm down Son, I know he is a prick, but just think of your career".

Shay looked at Dexter and realized he was talking sense.

Shay said to Dexter "Sorry mate your right, this aint neither the time nor the place".

Frank Goldsten came over to see what all the commotion was about, he said "What's going on here?"

Before anyone else could say anything Dexter said “Nothing Frank, someone just spilt a drink that’s all”.

Frank looked at Gary to get the truth, but Richie piped up and said “Yeah Frank that’s all that’s happened, no problem here”.

Gary smiled and said “Yeah Frank there’s no problem here”.

Frank knew they were all lying but just said “Well ok let’s just keep it like that”.

Dexter had let go of Shay who had calmed down, Bruno Beef then walked over, he had been pretty quite at the party for him, but had seen all that had went on at the table. He stood next to Frank looked at Shay and Gary then said to Frank “What’s up Frank, the new boys having a little disagreement?”

How about I take them both outside and teach them some manners”.

Bruno stared at Gary who wouldn’t even look at Bruno, but when he tried to do the same thing with Shay, Shay just stared right back at him.

Bruno smiled at this and said “Here Frank you got a game one here, I tell you what kid, put half a stone on and I’ll give you an education in boxing”.

Shay who was ready for anything at this moment kept his eyes fixed on Bruno and replied “Mate I wouldn’t worry about me putting on half a stone, if I was you I’d be more worried about all that white powder round your nose”.

Frank looked at Bruno and he could see what looked like cocaine on the end of his nose, Frank went mental at him as Bruno tried to wipe it off and dragged him away saying “For fuck sake Bruno, what the fuck have I told you about that stuff”.

Dexter, Richie and Conor all started laughing.

Dexter said “You told him Shay, but I’d be careful round him he’s a right nutter”.

Dexter then turned to Gary and said “I think it’s time for you to leave son”.

Gary tried to do what Bruno had done to him and gave Dexter a hardened stare. Dexter smiled at this and squared up to Gary and said “Look son you might think you’re the bollocks, but let me give you some advice, fuck off now or I’m going to do you right here right now”.

Gary looked at Dexter shocked at what he had said to him, Dexter may have been 40 years old, but still kept himself in shape and looked in good enough condition to still be fighting as a Pro Boxer.

Gary took a step back and said "Well I was going anyway".

Dexter replied "Well we're all good then, enjoy the rest of your night son".

Gary walked out of the club and they carried on enjoying their night,

Dexter pulled Shay to one side to give him some advice, he said

"Look Shay all this shit is all part of the boxing game, you have got to learn to control your temper. You have got a gorgeous looking girlfriend and people like Gary will use it to annoy you because they know it gets to you. You got to play the game mate and not show them any emotion".

Shay knew Dexter was right as Kenny had told him the same thing before; Shay thanked him for his good advice and went back to the table. Emma looked up at Shay and asked him if he was o.k.

Shay smiled and at her and gave her a kiss and said "Yeah Em I'm o.k. Sorry about all that I'd just had enough of him".

Emma gave him a big hug and said "Babe you got nothing to be sorry about, you were just protecting your woman, it really turned me on".

Shay nearly spilled his drink in shock and said "Did it really?"

Emma replied "Yeah it did, showed you still care".

Emma snuggled into Shays neck and whispered "Why don't we go home and have our own party".

Shay didn't even reply, he just got up said his goodbyes to Richie, Conor, Deanna and Charlie, then walked over to Dexter to tell him he was off.

Dexter smiled as he realized why they were leaving so early and said to Shay "Well you make sure you enjoy the rest of your night".

They got back to their home in Harboure at about 2 am and enjoyed a really nice night of quality time together.

CHAPTER 7



The papers the next day all had big articles about the show, they mainly reported on Richie's great victory and Bruno's destructive win. They mentioned Gary's 1st round knockout win, but only gave the results of Danny's and Shay's victories. In the interview with Richie Hatter he did mention that he had seen the finishing combo when watching Shay stopping his opponent at the start of the show. He also said that he thought that Shay had a real big future in boxing and that he could maybe be a Champion one day.

Shay was really happy to read what his hero had said about him, he called Kenny to ask him if he had seen the papers. Kenny said he had, but was more concerned about what had happened last night. Shay asked him who he had been talking to.

Kenny replied "Dexter told me all about it Shay, you need to calm yourself down Son, there's going to be a lots of idiots like Britain in this game and they are all going to try to whined you up".

Shay tried to explain what Britain had said, "But Kenny didn't want to hear it".

Kenny continued "Look Shay it doesn't matter what he says or what anyone else says, you just got to keep your cool".

Shay apologized to Kenny and Kenny said “Son I’m just thinking of you, have a few weeks off and then your back in training”.

Shay had booked a holiday for him and Emma, they had 2 relaxing weeks in the sun, and it was just what they needed as they hadn’t really spent much quality time together.

When they got back, Shay was back in training straight away, the publicity from what Richie had said about Shay in the papers had got him a lot more sponsorship. Emma was working hard on her modeling career and the money was rolling in.

His training was going well and he was ready for his next fight. It was to be held in London. It was another 4 rounder against an up and coming boxer. Gary Britain was top of the bill; he was having his second 4 round fight as well. It wasn’t a big event like their first one at the N.I.A in Birmingham, it was basically being held just to get them a “w” in there win columns. Shay and Gary wiped the floor with their opponents in 2 easy victory’s, Emma didn’t come to this fight as Kenny said he thought she was too much of a distraction. Frank Goldsten kept Shay and Gary away from each other as he didn’t want another bust up like after their first fight.

Over the next 2 years Gary and Shay fought 3 more times on the same bills, and had moved up to fighting 8 rounder’s. None of their fights lasted that long, they all ended in knockouts wins for both of them. Their records seemed to be mirroring each other, but Shay was having a big problem. At his last fight, he weighed in 2 lbs over the weight limit, he had to go away and try and lose it. Kenny had him skipping in the steam room in the hotel to try and drop the weight. He managed it, but was completely shattered by the time of the fight. Shay was lucky in his fight as he managed to stop his opponent in the first round.

Kenny and Shay talked about this weight problem, Kenny just put it down to Shay growing up, as he was 21 now and a fully grown man. Kenny told him “Look Son I think it’s time for you to move up in weight divisions, it’s just too hard for you to make the Middleweight limit now”.

Shay replied “Yeah I think you may be right Ken, that last fight nearly killed me”.

Kenny talked to Frank about Shay moving up and he was more than happy for him to do this. Shay was now a Super Middleweight and the stakes had been raised. The Super Middleweight division was rated as the hardest division to be in at this time. On the domestic scene you had '*Iron*' Bryan Taylor, Sam '*I am*' Magson and of course the British Champion Bruno Beef. It was even harder on the world scene, there was the Mexican Oscar Hoya, the German Hans Van Bison and the undisputed world champion Jimmy '*The Parana*' Tarana.

Taylor and Magson had both been beaten by Bruno in the last 2 years; Bruno had defended his title 2 times now and only needed to defend it once more to be able to keep that precious Lonsdale belt.

Emma's modeling career was in full swing, Samantha had her traveling all over the world doing photo shoots for clothing magazines. She was really enjoying her career. Shay was happy for her as it was extra money for them and it kept her busy while he was in training.

Shay's 6th fight and 1st at Super Middleweight was going to be against Tyler Tompson, a very durable boxer from South London. It was an 8 rounder and it was going to be one of the undercards for Bruno Beefs 3rd title defense.

Gary Britain was also fighting, but for once Shay was higher in the lineup than him, the show was being held at the Wembley Arena, London.

Bruno had been told by Frank to behave himself as if he won this fight they would be moving him up for a world title shot in his next few fights.

Bruno was the model boxer, the perfect gent at the weigh in, he even shook his opponent's hand. Bruno commented on how well Shay and Gary had done in their careers so far, but even with all the niceties from him you could still see that evil look in his eyes.

Shay kept his distance from Bruno and Gary as he didn't need any baiting from them on his debut as a Super Middleweight.

Emma and Shays Mom had made the trip down to London; Shay's Dad didn't come as he had been suffering from a real bad chest infection for the last week. All the Newtown boys had come down to

watch this show, even Kelly who was now living in London called Shay to tell him she had brought tickets to come and see him.

When Kelly told Shay this he said “He would get her some tickets ringside next to his Mom and Emma.

Kelly asked him if he was sure as she knew how Emma felt about her. Shay laughed and said jokingly “Yeah she should be fine about it, anyway haven’t you found yourself a boyfriend yet?”

Kelly laughed and said “Well for your information I have, he works at the same office as me”.

Shay still joking around said “He must be an absolute saint to put up with you”.

Kelly just replied “Shut up, he is lovely, he has really looked after me since I have been in London”.

Shay told her he was really happy for her, but if he ever hurt her, he would have him to deal with.

When Shay told Emma that Kelly was coming she didn’t seem to be bothered, she just kept playing with her new accessory a mobile phone which was the size of a house brick.

Shays main Sponsors were coming as well. Gary and Dexter hadn’t missed any of his fights and they definitely weren’t going to miss this one.

Shay and Kenny were in the changing room, Shay was warming up for his fight and Kenny was giving him his instructions on what he wanted him to do in the ring.

Kenny told him “Look Shay this Tyler has never been stopped. He’s lost his last 2 fights, but has won the 8 before it. He’s the most dangerous boxer you have faced as a Pro, so just be prepared to do all 8 rounds. He isn’t just going to fall over for you.”

Shay said “So how shall I fight him?”

Kenny said “Box him Shay, keep your distance and you will out box him”.

Shay was all warmed up and ready for his fight, he caught the end of Gary Britain’s match, he had knocked his opponent out in the 3rd round in a very classy performance, the London crowd was going crazy cheering and chanting his name.

Shay was the first to enter the ring in his fight; he walked into the arena to a sea of booing and jeering from the capacity crowd.

Shay looked at Kenny and said “What the fuck is their problem?”
Kenny said “Your fighting a popular boxer in his home town, don’t let it get to you”.

Shay smiled and said “It won’t Ken, It won’t”.

Shay walked to the ring looking focused and confident any nerves he had evaporated as he soaked up the very hostile atmosphere.

Emma, his Mom, Dexter and Gary were all seated ringside; he gave Emma his customary wink that he always did when she came to see his fights. As he looked down at the ringside crowd he then noticed Kelly sitting with her very smartly dress boyfriend. Shay had to take a second look to make sure it was Kelly, he hadn’t seen her for a few years, they had only talked on the phone in that time, Kelly looked stunning.

Shay thought to himself “Is this the girl that I used to take the piss out of about being a tomboy?”

Kelly waved at Shay as he walked passed in the ring; Shay just smiled and pointed his gloved hand at her in acknowledgment.

There was a massive roar from the crowd as Tyler Thompson entered the Arena, when Tyler stepped into the ring Shay looked at him and then turned to Kenny and said “Fuck me Ken, there’s no way that bloke is 12 stone, look at him his massive”.

Kenny said “Well he weighed 12 stone yesterday morning, he’s had over a day to rehydrate he’s probably closer to 13 stone than 12 now. Don’t worry about that Son, just keep moving and out box him”.

Shay replied “O.k. Ken I will, just can’t believe how big he is”.

The fight started and Tyler tried to get straight at Shay, but Shay moved away nicely and caught him with some sweet one, two’s. Shay completely out boxed Tyler for the first 4 rounds which quieted down the London crowd. At the end of the 4th round Shay sat in his corner, Kenny was well pleased with him and told him to keep it up.

Shay replied “Ken I’ve hit him with some of my hardest shots and they haven’t moved him, I can’t keep this up for 8 rounds”.

Kenny said to Shay calmly “Well son do you want me to throw the towel in now then?”

Shay replied in a shocked voice “No I fucking don’t!”

Kenny then said “Well stop crying about being tired and get out there and box him”.

Shay out classed Tyler for the next 2 rounds, Tyler could not get anywhere near him.

The 7th and 8th rounds were harder as Tyler poured on the pressure, but Shay kept going and gave as good as he got in the final 2 rounds. Tyler's face was a complete mess, he had a cut above his left eye, his right eye was swollen shut and his nose looked like it had been broken. Shay didn't look to bad, he had some swelling under his left eye, but he was more exhausted than anything else.

The announcement was made Shay had won by unanimous decision; he had won his first fight at Super Middleweight.

He had his hand raised and the London crowd applauded in respect of a great performance. Kenny got Shay back to the changing room as soon as he could, Shay was shattered, it was the first time he had done 8 rounds in any fight, but this fight had really took it out of him because of how hard Tyler had pushed him.

Kenny told Shay to rest in the changing room until he felt ready to go and see his friends and family ringside. He watched the Bruno Beef fight from the dressing room; it was a very one sided destruction job by Bruno. Roy Davis had no chance Bruno was just in supreme form. Davis was as a top contender, but Bruno was making him look like a rank novice.

Bruno finished Davis off in the 4th round and the announced straight after the fight that he wanted Jimmy Tarana to put his titles on the line against him.

Frank Goldsten said in the interview after "We will be looking to get Bruno a title shot in the next year or so".

Shay was watching it on the monitor in the changing room and was just in ore of what he had just witnessed.

Kenny turned to him and said "Well son at least it will be a while before you fight him".

Shay replied "I know Ken, he might be a complete nutter, but boy that Bruno can box".

Kenny and Shay left the changing room and met up with Emma, his Mom and his Sponsors Dexter and Gary. Emma gave him a hug and kissed him and told him how well he had done, Shays Mom hugged him as well and said she was proud of him. He chatted to Dexter and Gary who were pleased with his performance.

Shay then saw Kelly standing with her chap; he went over to her and said jokingly “Alright Kell how’s it going? You scrub up quite well for a tomboy from Newtown”.

Kelly laughed and replied “Thanks Shay, you aint a bad boxer for someone who’s still got a comfort blanket”.

Shay laughed and said “Shut up you cow, it’s great to see you”.

He gave her a big hug and she said “It’s great to see you too”.

Shay looked at the smartly dressed man standing next to Kelly and asked “So who is your friend?”

Kelly replied “Sorry Shay, this is my boyfriend James”.

Shay looked him up and down then shook his hand and said “Nice to meet you James I’m Shay”.

James replied “Nice to meet you Shay, Kelly’s told me all about you, great fight by the way”.

Shay thanked James and then called Emma over to say hello, Emma and Kelly didn’t talk during the show, the only person Kelly talked to was Shay’s Mom who she had known since she was a kid.

Emma came over and Shay said “Aint you going to say hello”.

Emma smiled and said “Hello Kelly, it’s been a long time”.

Kelly replied “Yes it has, I’ve heard you’re a model now, I’m so happy for you”.

Emma smiled and said “Thank you, by the way you are looking lovely tonight, I love your dress”.

Kelly replied quite shocked at the complement off Emma with “Thank you”.

Emma then said “Yes, I think I had dress last year”.

Shay could see what was about to happen and told Emma his Mom needed her, Emma smiled at Kelly and James and said in a very smug voice “I hope to see you soon”.

As Emma walked away Kelly gave Shay a look he hadn’t seen in years, it was Kelly’s disapproving look she used to give him when he had done something wrong.

Shay smiled and said “Sorry about that”.

Kelly just laughed and said “Same old Emma hey”.

They chatted for a while until Emma came back to say they had to go to the after show party. Shay invited Kelly and James to come along. But Kelly said no as they had work the next day. He told Kelly to stay

in touch and left with Emma, his Mom had headed back to Birmingham with Kenny.

Emma and Shay headed to the after show party with Dexter and Gary and a few young lady's they had picked up on the way. When they got there the party was in full swing, Shay didn't stop long; the fight had really taken it out of him. He went back to the hotel, but told Emma to stay and enjoy herself. Emma got back to the hotel in the early hours of the morning very, very drunk, Shay was fast asleep so she just got in next to him without waking him up.

When they got up in the morning, Emma told Shay she had a real good night, they headed back to Birmingham so he could tell his Dad about the fight.

Shay dropped Emma off at their house and went to see his Dad, when he got to the house there was no one there. The next-door neighbor saw Shay and told him that his Dad had been taken in to hospital. He went straight up there and found his Mom outside the ward, she told him that the Doctor had told her that his Dad had the first signs of Emphysema; they were keeping him in over night to sort the chest infection out. They had prescribed him with an inhalator to help him when he was short of breath.

Shay went into the ward to see his Dad. His Dad told him they were making a fuss about nothing.

But Shay said to him "Well I hope you're going to stop smoking now Dad like the Doctors have said".

Shay's Dad said in a very husky voice "Son I like a drink and I like a smoke, I'm 55 years old, I'm not going to change now".

Shay replied with tears in his eyes "So you're just going to carry on till you die an early death".

Shay's Dad grabbed his hand and said "Well at least I'll die as me, now can we talk about something else, tell me about your fight?"

Shay knew he wasn't going to win by going on at him, his Dad was a stubborn man and the more he try to change his mind the more he dig his heels in.

Shay told him about the fight and Kelly coming to see him fight, his Dad mentioned to him that he always thought him and Kelly would get together. Shay just laughed at that and told his Dad they have only

ever been friends and anyway he was with Emma and Kelly had a new boyfriend.

After he had finished at the hospital he took his Mom back to her house and made sure she was alright, she told Shay not to worry about her, she was fine and that he should concentrate on getting ready for his next fight.

The fight was in 4 months time, another 8 rounder, he took a month off from the gym and spent most of his time round his Mom and Dad's house.

Emma was away a lot on modeling shoots, so she wasn't bothered about him not being at home.

After a month Shay went back to the gym. He had a heart to heart with Kenny about his Dad.

Kenny was sympathetic to what he was going through, but said "You won't be helping your Dad if you lose your next fight will you. You have to train Shay and train hard; the easy fights are over Son".

Shay did train hard real hard for this fight, but if he wasn't in the gym he was at his Mom and Dad's house making sure they were alright.

Him and Emma hardly saw each other either, she was away on modeling jobs or Shay was training.

All the hard training paid off, in his next 2 fights, he was back to his knockout ways taking out Adam '*Slick*' Dickens in 3 rounds and the highly rated Bruce Roberts. On the same bills Gary Britain had won both his fights easily with early knockouts.

Shay's Dad's Emphysema had gotten worse; he now had to be on oxygen for 8 hours of the day. This worried Shay, but his Dad told him he wasn't going anywhere until he saw his son holding that Lonsdale belt over his head.

While Shay had been winning, in the rest of the Super Middleweight division there had been a few title fights. '*Iron*' Bryan Taylor had beaten Sam '*I am*' Magson for the vacant British title in a very controversial title fight.

On the World scene Bruno Beef had got his world title shot against Jimmy Tarana and been completely out boxed. Jimmy was just too strong and too quick for the '*Bully of British Boxing*', this didn't humble Bruno at all, he told the world's press that Tarana got lucky and got him on a bad day, but when asked if he wanted a rematch his

answer was “I want to regroup and I’m going to win back my British title then take it from there”.

Shay had got a call off Kenny to come to the gym; he had news about his next fight. When Shay arrived at the gym, Kenny told him he had talked to Frank and they had got him his new opponent.

Kenny said “I hope you’re ready for the big time son, your next fights a big one, and it’s a 10 rounder”.

Shay said excitedly “against who Ken? Who do they want me to fight?”

Kenny took a drink of water out of the bottle on his desk, and then he said “Frank wants you to fight Sam Magson and the winner gets to fight for the British Title”.

Shay smiled, Sam Magson was a good boxer, but Shay was confident if he trained hard he could beat him.

Shay replied “I’m happy with that Ken, beat Magson, then Taylor for the title, I can do that”.

Kenny smiled and looked at Shay and said “I wish it was that easy, Taylor is defending his title on the same show as your next fight”.

Shay said “So who’s Taylor fighting then?”

Kenny replied “he is fighting Bruno Beef; he wants his British Title back”.

Shay’s smile turned to concern “Fuck me Ken do you mean I’ll have to fight that nutter to win the title?”

Kenny replied “Yeah if you beat Magson and he beats Taylor, but don’t worry yourself about Bruno, concentrate on the Magson fight, we’ll worry about Bruno after”.

Shay asked “So when and where is the fight going to be held?”

Kenny smiled and replied “Right here in Birmingham at the N.E.C, oh and you will be getting more money for this one Shay , I have talked to Frank about it and you will get 10 grand for the Magson fight and if you win you’ll get 20 grand for the Title fight”.

Shay smiled at the news and knew Emma would be happy with the rise in purse money.

Kenny told Shay there was going to be a big press conference in the next few weeks to announce the big fight.

CHAPTER 8



The first thing Shay did after finding out the news was to go round to his Mom and Dad's house and tell them. His Mom and Dad were so happy for him, Shay told them the scenario about he had to beat Magson then fight Taylor or Bruno for the title.

His Dad who was on his oxygen at the time said to him in-between deep breaths, "Son I know you can beat Magson, but that Bruno Beef is an animal, just make sure you have a good plan in that fight".

Shay replied "Dad I'm just going to concentrate on Magson first and worry about Beef if he wins the title".

You could see that seeing his Dad like this, on oxygen and looking really frail upset Shay no end, but he had to keep his emotions in check, not just for himself, but for his Mom and Dad.

When Shay got home he went into the living room where Emma was sitting watching television with a glass of wine. Shay started to tell her that he had got his next 2 fights sorted and they were big ones, Emma just looked at him and said "Yeah I know babe you're fighting Magson and if you win Taylor or Bruno".

Shay replied astonished "Yeah how did you know?"

Emma looked down at the floor like she was thinking hard for an answer then replied "Err Frank called and told me".

Shay replied "Frank called here?"

Emma snapped back at him "Yeah he did".

Shay looked shocked at this snappy reply and said "O.k. then, what's up with you?"

Emma then seemed to calm down and said "Nothing I'm sorry I've just had a bad day, its great news though about the fights, I know you can do it I'm so proud of you" she then hugged him and gave him a loving kiss.

The fight was over 3 months away, but Frank wanted a big promotion campaign for this show. The show was going to be

called The Battle of Britain, there was going to be 2 British title fights in the lineup, the Super Middleweight and the Middle Weight titles were both on the line. The Middleweight title was going to be contested by the champ Winston Wilson and the challenger James Deen, Wilson was a very heavily built black boxer from Brixton London, and the 32 year old had a very impressive record of 30 wins and only 2 defeats. James was a mixed race lad from Birmingham and the 25 year old was unbeaten in 15 fights.

There was an impressive undercard as well, there was going to be 3 warm up fights featuring local lads from Birmingham, then there would be the 2 boxes off fights to see who fought for the titles next. There was Shay against Magson and Gary Britain against another Birmingham hope Duncan Rogers a wiry looking lad with a decent record of 15 wins and only 1 defeat.

At the press conference there was Rodgers, Deen, Magson and Taylor on one side of the podium and on the other side there was Gary Britain, Shay and Wilson. Bruno hadn't turned up yet and Frank was livid, the press conference was going out live on Sky Sports, so it could not be held up. Frank started it off by announcing *The Battle of Britain* would be held at the N.E.C arena Birmingham, he continued to tell the press it was going to be the best British boxing show ever held because of the quality of boxers.

When asked where Bruno was Frank answered "Bruno is stuck in traffic, I'm sure he will be here soon".

The press conference was going well all the boxers were respectful of each other, there was not a bad word said. They were all confident of winning, but they gave their opponents the respect they deserved. When the champ Taylor was asked about his fight against Bruno Beef, Taylor said "Bruno is a great boxer, but I have improved since we last fought and I'm very confident I can beat him".

As Taylor finished speaking Bruno walked in, he had heard what Taylor had said, Bruno shouted as he walked to the stage "Taylor do you really think you can beat me?"

Taylor looked shaken as Bruno approached the stage. Bruno went straight up to the podium where Frank was standing, he looked at Frank and said "Hello boss sorry I'm late".

Frank just looked at him like he was going to explode, but somehow controlled his anger, Frank smiled and said "So nice of you to join us Bruno, please take a seat".

Bruno replied "I don't need a seat Frank this won't take long". He grabbed the mic from the podium and turned and stared at Taylor. Taylor wouldn't look at him.

Bruno then said "Taylor you have got no chance at the *Battle of Britain*, I intend to beat you worst than I beat you last time".

Taylor still wouldn't look at him and refused to answer Bruno, Bruno continued "You see" pointing at Taylor and looking at the press "He is already beat; I'll tell you what I'm making a prediction right now. I will stop Taylor in 3 rounds, I want my belt back" the press were loving it and one of the reporters asked Bruno what he thought of the box off fights for his next contenders.

Bruno stopped for a second and first looked at Magson on his left then at Shay on his right; Shay looked deep into Bruno's eyes not wanting to break the stare. Bruno smiled at this and winked at Shay, Bruno turned to the press and said in a very calm voice "Well I think it will be a great fight, Magson is a great boxer he would have to be he went the distance with me, but I think the young lad Dempsey will just be a bit too strong for him and win on points".

This made Shay smile, one of Britain's best boxers thinking he would win the box off, but Shay's smile was soon wiped off his face as Bruno was asked who he thought would win if Shay and himself met for the title.

Bruno smiled and said in a very smug voice "Not if mate when. It will be a no contest, I will give him an education in boxing, it will be just a case of how much pain this young lad can take before he goes down".

Shay was speechless at what Bruno had said; he looked at Kenny who was sitting in the front row of the conference.

Kenny just looked at Shay and gestured with his hands for Shay to stay calm.

Shay took a deep breath and replied "I'm just concentrating on my next fight against Magson and that's all, I think Bruno should do the same".

Bruno then started on Gary Britain saying "Ahh there's Britain's *golden boy*, what's up Gary scared to move up in weight? I think Britain will win the box off easy and beat whoever wins the title" Gary Britain didn't look at Bruno and just kept smiling at the press. Bruno then really started to get out of order, he said "Well at least if Gary wins the title it will be back in British hands".

Wilson turned to Bruno and got out of his chair and said in a very urban street like accent "What you trying to say Beef I'm more British than you".

Bruno just smiled and said "Well you want to learn to speak English mate, not that Patwari urban shit, you're not on the streets now selling drugs".

Wilson went for Bruno, but the security stopped him, Frank went to pull Bruno away from the mic, but Bruno just put it down and walked out of the conference.

Frank apologized to the press, but he knew he had all the publicity he needed for this show to be a success.

The next day the newspapers were full of the story of Bruno Beef's attack on Wilson and the other boxers. It was going to be a must see event of the summer.

All the publicity hadn't done Shay any harm, he was interviewed a few times for the national and local papers and he even got to appear on a sky sports boxing show as one of the pundits.

Shay was training hard, after his last fight Kenny was concentrating on Shay's cardio as he didn't want him running out of steam in the later rounds.

Shay and Emma didn't get to see much of each other with her modeling and him training. Shay was also spending a lot of time round his Mom and Dad's, to make sure they were o.k.

Shay and Kenny watched loads of Magson's fights; he was a very durable boxer who liked to mixes it up on the inside. They watched the Magson v Beef fight and Shay couldn't believe how

well Magson had done. He took everything Bruno threw at him and still kept coming forward, Kenny's plan was simple.

He said to Shay "Do the same as you did in the last fight, box him on the outside, keep your distance, but be ready to do 10 rounds". Shay just replied "Yeah just can't be running out of steam against him".

As the fight drew closer Shay got a call from Kelly telling him she was coming back to Birmingham to see him fight.

Shay said "Ahh I see you got the boxing bug now, I'll get you and James ringside tickets again.

Kelly replied "No I haven't, but it is a big fight for you, so I'm coming to support you".

Shay thanked Kelly and said he looked forward to seeing her again.

It was now the day before the fight, Shay weighted in spot on the 12 stone limit and so did Magson, there were no dramas at the weigh in, that's until Bruno and Taylor came to weigh in. Bruno taunted Taylor all the way though, telling him he was going to knock him out in the 3rd round. Taylor already looked like he was beaten, he was trying to laugh it off, but you could see in his eyes he was scared.

Emma was on a modeling job, but told Shay she would be back for the fight, Shay wasn't happy about this she had always been with him the night before a fight and he didn't like the change in his routine. He had a decent sleep that night and woke up ready for his biggest challenge. Shay got his normal phone calls from Dexter, Gary Southan and Kenny. Kenny told him he would pick him up later and drive him to the show.

His Mom called him to wish him luck; she wasn't coming to the fight as his Dad couldn't come because of his condition. Shay's Mom wished him all the luck in the world and told him how proud they were of him.

His Mom put his Dad on the phone to talk to him, he said in a very breathless voice "Listen to Kenny son; I know you can do it".

Shay replied "Dad I'm going to do it, I'm going to make you proud". His Dad replied in-between breaths "You already have son, I'll be watching on telly".

After he had finished on the phone to his Mom and Dad, he called Emma on her mobile to see what time she would be back, Emma told him she was driving back right now and would be there for the start of the fight, she wished him good luck and told him that she loved him and couldn't wait to see him".

When he had got off the phone to Emma he was feeling very inspired and very confident from what his Dad and Emma had said to him. Kenny picked him up about 6 o'clock in the evening and they headed off to the N.E.C just on the outskirts of Birmingham. They got there at 7 o'clock, the show started at half past 7, but the live show on Sky didn't start till 9. Kenny and Shay went to the changing room and were told that Gary Britain would be kicking off the live show against Duncan Rogers, then it would be him and Magson followed by the 2 British title fights.

Shay watched the build up fights on the television in his changing room while he got ready and warmed up. He was very calm and very focused.

As Kenny taped his hands he said to Shay "Remember Son, this Magson is one tough lad, so box him, wear him down don't get involved in a brawl" Shay just replied confidently "Ken I aint putting a foot wrong tonight, Magson aint going to get near me". Kenny just smiled and said "That's what I wanted to hear".

The live show started bang on 9 o'clock, the N.E.C was full to capacity, 25,000 people in the arena waiting in anticipation of the great night of boxing a head.

The Britain, Rogers fight was a hard fought match, Rogers really took it to the *golden boy* Britain and seemed to wobble him a few times, but Britain showed great grit and determination and stopped Rogers with a devastating combination of punches in the 8th round.

Shay watched on from his changing room and could not be anything but impressed, he turned to Kenny and said "Do you know what Ken, I think Britain is going to win that title, whoever has it after tonight". Kenny nodded his head in agreement then said "Well he'll be saying the same thing about you after your fight".

Shay laughed and replied "Somehow I don't think so Ken".

Because Shay was the local lad he was told he would be entering the ring second, Magson had got a warm welcome from the crowd, he was a well respected boxer and had brought quite a few supporters with him.

When Shay came out the place went wild, the local lad was getting a great reception from the mostly Birmingham crowd. Shay soaked up the atmosphere as he climbed the steps to the ring. Shay slipped though the ropes, Magson moved over towards him and got right into Shay's face to try and intimidate him. Shay stood there eyes fixed on Magson with only an inch between them, the Ref pushed them apart and told them to go to their corners.

Shay saw Emma, Dexter and Gary sitting ringside.

Emma who looked stunning as always shouted up to him "Come on baby, you can do it".

Shay smiled and gave her a wink. As the announcements were being made he saw Kelly waving at him from the other side of the ring, he pointed his glove at her like he did last time.

The Ref called them to the centre of the ring. Magson looked charged and was really trying to get in Shay's face, the ref told him to move back. He gave them their instructions and they went back to their corners.

As Shay walked back to his corner he noticed another familiar face ringside, it was a face that he never thought he would see again. Sitting there with a slutty looking woman on each side of him was his old foe Chav. The lad Shay had knocked out when he was 14 was sitting in the most expensive seats in the arena, Shay looked over at him and Chav shouted "Dempsey you're going down".

Shay just shook his head.

When Shay got back to the corner, he said to Kenny "How's that fucker have ringside seats".

Kenny said "Who you going on about?"

Shay replied "Him with the 2 birds".

Kenny looked over and then said "Shay does it matter, concentrate on Magson and stick to the plan".

Shay nodded as Kenny put his gum shield in.

The bell went for the first round; Magson came forward and went straight on the attack with a volley of lefts and rights. Shay moved out of the way and caught Magson with some sweet one, two's. Magson kept coming forward, but Shay was controlling the fight with his superior jabbing and countering.

Shay completely out boxed Sam in the first 3 rounds of the fight and was completely in control.

In the 4th round Magson's pressure started to pay off for him, he was cutting the ring down well and not giving Shay any room to move. Magson got Shay on the ropes and banged in some viscous body shots. Shay just couldn't get his distance in this round, Magson had started pouring it on in this round and Shay was feeling it and was happy to hear the bell to end the round.

He sat down in the corner.

Kenny gave him a drink of water and said "You have got to keep your distance Shay, don't get into a war with this bloke, that's not the plan".

Shay took a deep breath and replied "Ken I'm trying, but he's better than I thought he was".

Ken then said "Look Shay, you have out boxed him for 3 out of 4 rounds, now get out there and do it".

As he got up for the 5th round the capacity crowd were applauding and cheering both boxers, but Shay could hear one voice above all the crowd. Chav was right next to his corner and he could hear him shouting "Come on Magson, smash him up, he is nothing".

Shay looked down at him with a look that could kill, Chav stood there with his arms spread wide and a smug grin on his face mouthing the words "Wanker" to Shay.

Kenny shouted up at Shay "Stop looking at that dick head and concentrate on the fight".

Rounds 5 to 9 were a complete war both boxers gave it their all, one minute Magson would look like he was going to go down, then Magson would come back and Shay would look in trouble. Both boxers were bloody and bruised as the 9th round came to an end, Magson's right eye was completely swollen shut and Shay had swelling over both eyes.

Shay sat in the corner, Kenny just said "Right son it's the last round and were home and dry"

Shay didn't say anything he just nodded and took deep breaths. Chav was still shouting abuse at Shay from his ringside seat, but by this time Shay had blocked all the noise out.

Shay and Magson went to the centre of the ring and touched gloves to start the 10th and final round.

Shay got his jab going from the start of the round; he pumped his left hand into Magson's swollen face. Magson bobbed and weaved trying to get on the inside knowing that he needed a knock out to win. Shay was controlling the fight and looked like he was going to cruise to victory, but Magson from somewhere mustered up the strength for one more attack. Shay let a nice one, two go, but Magson managed to slip past Shay's right hand and caught Shay with a ferocious left hook and then a devastating straight right hand. For the first time ever, Shay was looking up from the canvas, he had always wondered what it felt like to be knocked down and now he was getting a first hand account of it.

He remembered what Kenny had told him all through his career, "If you get knocked down Son, don't try and be a big man and get straight back up. Look over to your corner and listen to the Refs count".

To Shay the whole thing seemed to be in slow motion, he looked over at Kenny who was shouting "Are you o.k son, Are you o.k?" Shay nodded at him to let him know he was. The ref was up to 4 on the count, Shay's head had cleared slightly, but he was still a bit disorientated. He focused on Kenny in the corner, but could see right behind Ken in the crowd Chav laughing and cheering at the sight of Shay being knocked down.

The count was now at 7, Kenny shouted "Get up Shay get up".

The ref got to 8 and Shay rose to his feet. Shay put his hands up to show the ref he was o.k., the Ref looked him in the eyes wiped Shay's gloves down on his shirt and told them to box on. Shay's head still wasn't fully recovered and Magson seemed to sense this and moved in to finish him.

Shay could see a very blurry looking Magson coming towards him; he took a deep breath and shot out a straight right hand. Magson

had just got into range to unleash a volley of punches, but Shay's hopeful straight right caught him flush on the jaw nearly taking his head off with its power and Magson's forward Momentum. Magson went crashing to the floor; Shay still not fully recovered from the knock down could tell from the feel of how hard he had hit Magson that he wasn't going to be getting up. Shay stepped over Magson's motionless body and walked over to where Emma and the rest were sitting with his hands raised in the air.

The ref got to the count of 2 before calling the fight over as Magson was out cold. Shay was still celebrating his win and hadn't realized that the Ref had called for the doctor and the paramedic's to come into the ring. Ken came over to Shay.

Shay turned round with a smile on his face saying "I've done it Ken, I got my title shot".

Kenny grabbed him and replied "Yes Son, you have, but Magson looks in a real bad way".

Shay looked over and saw all the medical staff standing round Magson as he lay unconscious on the ring floor, Shay rushed over to see if he was o.k. the crowd was silent as Magson hadn't moved for 2 minutes, Kenny tried to take Shay back to the changing room to get him out of there, but he wouldn't leave until he knew what was going on with Magson.

CHAPTER 9



They brought a stretcher into the ring, but as they put Magson on to it he came round. Magson tried to get up, but the doctor told him to just lie down and they would take him to hospital.

Magson still trying to get off the stretcher said “Fuck off doc, I’m o.k. I’ve never been carried out of the ring and never will be, now let me get up”.

Magson was helped to his feet by his trainers; there was a massive roar and applause from the crowd. Shay was relieved to see Magson back on his feet.

Magson came over to Shay and said to him “That was one hell of a punch Son, good luck with your title fight”.

Shay hugged Magson and said “Thanks Sam, great fight mate, great fight”.

Magson then raised Shay’s hand as the crowd went wild.

Magson left the ring to a lot of cheering and applause, Shay soaked up the atmosphere of the Birmingham crowd that was chanting his name.

Shay and Kenny went back to the changing room, Shay’s face was a mess, there was swelling and bruises everywhere, but he didn’t care he wanted to get out to Emma and go to the after show party and celebrate.

He called his Mom and Dad, his Mom told him they had saw it on telly and hoped that both of them were o.k., Shay told them him and Magson were fine. Shay then had a chat with his Dad who told him how proud he was of him and what a great fight it was.

Shay got showered and changed and went down to see Emma and his friends, as he walked down to ringside the Wilson, Deen fight had already started .

Chav saw him and couldn’t resist getting in his face.

He stood in front of Shay and said “Hello Dempsey remember me? You were lucky in their Son”.

Shay who didn't really want a straighter just after the biggest fight of his life looked down at the floor, bit his lip then said "Yeah I remember you Chav, nice to see you, you look like you have done well for yourself, I didn't know you were a boxing fan?".

Chav replied "Yeah I have done well for myself, and the only reason I'm here is to see Bruno Beef. I do a bit of business with him if he's around Brum".

Shay was curious to know what business Chav would have with Bruno, but just couldn't be bothered to have a drawn out conversation with someone he really didn't like.

Shay said "Ahh nice one Chav, well nice to see you, but I got to go see the misses and one of my sponsors is calling me".

Shay had seen Dexter from over Chav's shoulder calling him.

Chav said as Shay was walking away "Well I'm sure we'll meet again".

Shay just smiled and nodded.

When Shay walked up to Dexter, Dexter shook his hand and said "Well done Shay that was a great fight son".

Dexter paused for a second then continued "So how do you know Chav then?"

Shay replied "I knocked him out when I was a kid, why? How do you know him?"

Dexter smiled and said "I'm in the night club business Shay; it's my job to know who all the local drug dealers are".

The penny then dropped for Shay how Chav knew Bruno; he must get his coke off him when he's in Birmingham.

Shay said "I didn't know he was a drug dealer.

Dexter replied "Yeah big time mate you want to keep away from him".

Shay just said "Yeah I will Dext".

Shay went over to Emma, she hugged him and gave him a massive kiss then said "look at your face, are you o.k?"

Shay smiled and said "I'm fine Em honestly, I'm looking forward to the after show party".

Emma smiled and said "Well if you don't fancy going to it I understand, I can go on my own if you want to go home".

Shay smiled at Emma's concern and replied "Ahh baby thanks for your concern, but I'm right up for tonight".

Emma smiled and said "O.k, but if you want to go home you can". The Wilson, Deen fight was not a very good one, by the time Shay had sat down they were in the 12th round and Wilson cruised through the 12th to get a unanimous decision and retained his British title. Shay said to Emma "I think Gary Britain will beat Wilson no problem if he fights the way he did tonight".

Emma agreed and replied "yeah he was really good tonight; I'm looking forward to that fight".

Shay told Emma he would be back in a minute and went over to see Kelly and James on the other side of the ring, Shay said hello to James and chatted to Kelly while they were waiting for the main event to start. Kelly told him how impressed she was at how he handled being knocked down and that she was glad that Magson was able to walk out of the ring.

Shay said "Yeah Sam's o.k. he's had to go to hospital, but they said he would be fine".

Kelly smiled and replied "Well at least he improved your looks". Shay laughed and said "You cheeky cow".

The lights went down in the arena and Bruno was minutes away from making his big entrance.

Shay told Kelly he had put her and James on the guest list at the after show party at The Squared Circle and then went back to his seat. Kenny had joined him and the rest of them at ringside to get a good look at Shay's title opponent.

Bruno came into the ring first, arrogant and as cocky as ever, he clocked Shay at ringside and straight away started shouting comments over the ropes at him.

He shouted "Hey Dempsey you think your face is bad now; just wait until I get through with you".

Shay just laughed and tried to ignore him. This seemed to entice Bruno.

Bruno lent right over the ropes and stared straight at Shay and Shouted "Don't fucking ignore me Dempsey, your nothing son, your nothing".

Kenny could see Shay wanted to say something back to Bruno, so he leant over and whispered in Shay's ear "Just keep ignoring him Shay, don't give him the show he wants".

Shay didn't say anything; he just looked up at Bruno and winked at him. This really wound Bruno up, but Frank Goldsten who was in the ring grabbed Bruno's arm and pulled him away.

The champ Taylor entered the arena looking focused and ready, his trainer was talking to him in his ear all the way to the ring. As Taylor slipped through the ropes, Bruno came right into his face saying "3 rounds, you're going down in 3 rounds". You could see Taylor was shaken by this by the look in his eyes. He done his best to hide the fact he was so intimidated by The Beef.

The fight was as one sided as it could be, from the first bell until Taylor hit the canvas, Bruno controlled the fight, Taylor just tried to stay away from the Beef and hardly threw a punch, but in the 3rd round as predicted. Bruno dropped Taylor who didn't make any effort to get back up.

Bruno was champ once more and was shouting to Shay as he went to leave the arena "You're next boy, you're next".

Shay just smiled and shook his head at Bruno.

Shay was in a great mood and wasn't going to let anybody spoil that, he was right up for a good night of partying at The Squared Circle.

Dexter had closed the club for the night as the after show party was going to be held in the main room. It was guest list only and all the normal local stars from soaps and football were there.

As Shay and Emma walked in, the D.J who was in the centre of the boxing ring in the middle of the main room announced Shay's arrival. Everyone looked round at the door and applauded and cheered. A doorman came up to Shay and escorted them to some tables in the corner of the room where all the boxers would be seated. Gary Britain, Wilson and Deen were already seated at the tables.

Britain came over to Shay and in quite sincere voice said "Shay well done tonight that was a great fight, when you went down I thought it was all over, but you done it congratulations".

This took Shay by surprise that the cocky Cockney was being so nice; Shay replied "Thanks Gary I thought your fight was good, I know Rogers and he's on tough lad, well done".

Gary then looked at Emma and said "Hi Emma so nice to see you again, you're looking gorgeous as ever".

Emma smiled and answered "Thank you Gary nice to see you as well congratulations on your win".

The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of the champ, Bruno came walking in, Frank on one side and Chav on the other with Bruno's Lonsdale belt held high over his head. The place was going wild, everyone wanted pictures and autographs off him.

Bruno just shunned them all and walked straight over to where Shay, Gary and the rest of the boxers were sitting. Bruno pushed his way through the crowds of people and went straight up to Shay. He got right into Shay's bruised and battered face, Shay didn't flinch, he just got his game face on and stared right back at Bruno. This actually took Bruno by surprise as usually anyone he fronted out was intimidated by him.

Bruno took a slight step back and said "Hey boy has it sunk in yet that you're going to be facing me next?"

Shay kept his eyes fixed on Bruno and replied "Bruno why don't you take a night off, you've won your title back enjoy it while you can". Bruno couldn't believe Shay's reply to him and said "Wooh hold on, enjoy it while I can?"

Bruno looked at Chav who was next to him with the belt hanging over his shoulder and said "This little mug thinks he's going to beat me". Chav piped up and said "Your kill him Bruno, do him now".

Shay then fixed his eyes firmly on Chav and said "Why don't you shut your fucking mouth Chav before I break your jaw again".

Chav who was feeling pretty brave with the British champ next to him then said "Shay after Bruno's finished with you, you won't even be able to break wind son and I'm going to be ringside to see it".

Frank then came walking over with Dexter who he had gone to see in his office about some business. Frank got in-between Bruno and Shay and told them to save it for the ring.

Shay asked Frank "So when is it then Frank? When do I get to fight him?"

Frank replied "Give me a chance Shay, it won't be for another 8 months or so nothing is set yet".

Shay said "Well the sooner the better Frank".

Frank said "Yeah o.k Shay" but he was more interested in getting Bruno away from Shay.

Bruno walked away with Frank bending his ear about staying out of trouble. Chav was giving Shay the evil eye, but as he turned round Dexter was standing right behind him.

Dexter said "Who the fuck let you into my club?"

Chav replied "I'm on the guest list mate, I'm with Bruno".

Dexter who looked like he was going to explode with anger said "I don't care whose guest you are, you're a scummy drug dealer and I don't want you in my club".

Chav replied real cocky "Mate do you know who I am? Do you know the people I know? You want to watch who you are talking to". Dexter then got right in Chav's face and replied calmly "Yes I do know who you are, you're a scum bag drug dealer and yes I do know who you know, but they know me. That's why I don't get dealers in my club, now you either leave now or I'll get my doormen to remove you".

Chav smiled still thinking he had the upper hand and said "Like I said mate I'm with Bruno, take it up with him".

Dexter just shook his head then put his hand up to call over his door staff then looked at Shay and said "You just can't tell some people can you".

Dexter took Bruno's belt off Chav's shoulder and then said "Right my door staff will escort you off the premises".

Chav turns round and there was a doorman either side of him they grabbed him by the arms, Chav said "Do you know who I fucking am".

Dexter replied "We have already had this conversation".

He then said to the door men "Take this piece of shit out of here" and they took him to a side door. Chav tried to put up a fight but they got him to the door and threw him onto the street.

Emma asked Shay if he was alright, Shay smiled and said "Yeah Em I'm o.k., just don't need prats like him around me".

Emma asked him again "Do you want to go home Babe? I'll be o.k. here on my own if you do".

Shay turned to Emma and gave her a kiss and said "No Em, I'm fine" he laughed and said "It sounds like you are trying to get rid of me" Emma smiled and replied "No I'm just worried about you that's all". Shay and Emma sat down with the other boxers and their wives and girlfriends, Shay and Gary Britain had a good chat and Shay started to think that he had got Gary all wrong. Gary talked to him about how he would take on the Beef if it was him and asked Shay what he thought about him against Wilson.

Britain even brought Emma into the conversation by asking her about her modeling career; it was all very nice and civil.

Shay noticed that Gary didn't have anyone with him, Shay asked "So Gary, how come you haven't got no one with you, I though the birds would be all over you?"

Gary smiled and replied "With all the training and that I just haven't got time".

Shay said "Yeah I know what you mean mate, its hard sometimes for me and Em, but we know how to cope with it don't we?"

Emma smiled and said "Yeah we do".

They were all enjoying the party and the easy going atmosphere; people were coming up getting Shay, Gary and the other boxers autographs and pictures with them.

Kelly then walked up to the table with her boyfriend James. Emma seemed to want to make an effort for Shay and got up to greet Kelly, then Emma noticed a woman's worst fear especially if you're a top model. Kelly had exactly the same dress on as her, a Mary Apple design. Emma was mortified; especially as Kelly's fuller curvier hips and body seemed to look better in the dress than Emma's size zero figure.

Emma tried to hide the fact that it had annoyed her and said "Hello Kelly how nice to see you, what a lovely dress, I didn't think you could get that design in England?"

Kelly smiled and replied "I didn't James and I were in New York last week and I picked it up in a designer shop in Manhattan".

Kelly realized that Emma had the same dress on she said "Oh no we have got the same dress's on how embarrassing, sorry Emma I didn't know you would be wearing the same dress, anyway it looks so much better on you".

Emma trying to be dignified about it replied "Thank you Kelly, I was in a rush tonight getting back to Birmingham, so just threw something on, but it really suits you, you look gorgeous".

Kelly thanked Emma and Emma then said she needed to pop to the ladies and rushed off.

Shay got up gave Kelly a kiss on the cheek then said "Wow Kell you look amazing tonight".

He then looked at James and said "You best be looking after her mate, you're a very lucky man".

Kelly then said "Ohh I can look after myself".

Shay smiled and said "I know you can Kell".

Shay introduced Kelly and James to Gary Britain, Kelly was surprised to see them sitting at the same table after all that had happened in the past. She sat down with them and enjoyed the rest of the night. When Emma came back from the ladies she had completely changed the design of the dress she was wearing by ripping off the sleeves and adding some accessories to it. It looked like a completely different dress and Emma and Kelly seemed to get on really well as they drank champagne all though the night. It was about 4 in the morning before they all said goodbye and Shay and Emma went home.

CHAPTER 10



Shay and Emma didn't wake up until the afternoon the next day. Shay went into the bath room really hung over, he looked in the mirror and couldn't believe the state of his face. He had 2 black eyes; the top of his left eye was really swollen and was so bruised it was a deep dark blue colour. He stood in front of the mirror examining his upper body, he had grazes all over his shoulders and arms and his back had deep rope marks across it from the ring. He looked down at his ribs; the whole left side of his rib cage was bruised and very painful.

Emma walked into the bathroom and Shay said to her "Em look at my ribs Babe".

Emma looked Shay up and down very hung over herself and said "Bloody hell you look like a bad spud, do you think you need to go to hospital?"

Shay laughed which hurt his bruised and swollen ribs and his very hung over head and said "No babe the Doctor at the show said they were only bruised and I would be in pain for a week or so".

Emma wasn't really listening as she was just as hung over as Shay, she said as she left the bathroom "Ahh ok babes, do you want a coffee, I think we both need one".

Shay said "yes" then got freshened up and went down to the newsagents to get the papers.

When he got back and read the back page of the paper, boxing had for once taken over the back page from football. The head line read in big bold letters "*British Beef*" And the sub headline read *Bruno Beef destroys Taylor to become champion again*. They had an excellent picture of Bruno knocking Taylor out, it gave a brief summery about the fight and near the end it mentioned the other fights. It said there was a 8 page pull out in the centre of the paper to get the full story on all the fights.

Shay quickly turned to the centre pages, there was a whole page on all 4 fights. He went straight to the article about his fight, the head line read "*The Hammer Blow*" and under there was a small head line saying *Dempsey gets off the canvas to win one of Britain's fights of the decade*. The article itself was a glowing reference for Shay, the report said *Dempsey showed great skill to control the fight and when Magson poured on the pressure in the later rounds, Shay held his own and stayed with the veteran boxer*.

The reporter wrote about Shay getting knocked down, Magson giving it his all and when he put Dempsey down in the final round, he wrote that him and all the other reporters thought it was all over. Shay showed great grit and determination to get up, and then come back with a devastating right hand to end the fight. The reporter prediction for the title fight wasn't as pleasing to Shay's eyes. The reporter predicted that Bruno would be too strong for the 22 year old Birmingham boxer and would stop Shay early in the fight.

In all the papers there was great praise for Shay's win, but they all thought Bruno would win the title fight. It wasn't the first time Shay had been the underdog and was looking forward to proving the doubters wrong.

Shay was going to take a nice long break from boxing; him and Emma had booked a month's long island hopping in the Caribbean. Shay and Emma had a really relaxing holiday; it was just what they needed some quality time together.

Emma was straight back to work when they came back; Shay intended to have at least another month away from the gym as Kenny had ordered him to take a good break before he started back. All Shay did was relax at home or at his Mom and Dad's house making sure they were alright. His Dad had started to improve a little bit; he had stopped smoking now and didn't really drink anymore. He still didn't look the big strong man Shay had always looked up too, but at least his better life style had improved his breathing.

It had been nearly 3 months since Shay's last fight when Kenny called him to tell him to come down the gym to talk to him and Frank about when and where the title fight was going to be.

When he met up with Frank and Kenny in Kenny's office at the gym, Frank told him that he was thinking of holding the fight next summer in a football stadium, but hadn't decided which one.

Shay was a bit disappointed that he was going to have to wait so long for his shot at the title.

Shay said "So I'm going to have to wait over 12 months for a shot at Bruno? I thought you would have wanted this fight as soon as possible?"

Frank replied "Shay trust me mate, this is going to be the biggest boxing event Britain has ever seen. I'm in talks with a few football clubs who all want to hold this show next summer, we got the Britain, Wilson for the British Middleweight title and you and Bruno for the British Super Middleweight title as the main event. Win or lose Son you're going to make a mint on this fight with sponsorships and all the personal and promotion appearances you will be doing before the fight, you're going to be a busy lad".

Shay looked over at Kenny who for once was very quiet, Shay asked him "So what do you think Ken?"

Kenny looked at Frank then turned to Shay and said "I don't usually agree with Frank, but I have got to say it's a good Idea, we'll have more time to work out how to fight Bruno".

Frank smiled at Ken's reply and said "See Shay me and Kenny agree for once".

Kenny then said "But Frank, I do think Shay's purse should be more". Frank looked shocked at this and replied "Ken he's getting 20 grand for it, how much more do you want?"

Kenny leaned back in his chair smiled and said "We want 30 grand or Shay doesn't fight, no negotiations 30 grand or there's no fight".

Frank could see Kenny wasn't going to budge and said in a very annoyed voice "O.k. Ken, Shay can have 30 grand for the fight" he then looked at Shay and said "You better put on a good show for that Son".

Shay smiled and said "Good show? I'm knocking your boy out and winning the title mate".

Frank smiled and said "That's the spirit Shay; I should know when and where the fight will be by the end of the month".

Shay was kept busy for the next month by lots of promotional work for 1066 entertainments and of course Brumsdale. Dexter had asked Shay to come to the club so he could talk to him about a deal he wanted to offer him.

When Shay got there he went up to Dexter's office, he went in and Dexter was sitting behind his desk and to Shay's surprise Kenny was also sitting in his office chatting away to Dexter.

Shay said "Alright Dext how you doing mate, Ken what you doing here?"

Kenny replied "Dexter asked me to come Son; he's got an offer for you".

Shay was confused, if Dexter had a sponsorship offer for him he didn't need Kenny there, Dexter asked Shay to sit down, he did.

He asked Dexter "So are you offering me a new sponsorship deal?"

Dexter stood up smiled and replied "No Shay I don't want to sponsor you anymore".

Shay looked shocked at what Dexter had said and answered "Why have I done something wrong?"

Dexter laughed and said "No Shay I want to promote you".

Shay was still confused about what was going on and replied "But Goldsten promotes me".

Dexter smiled at Shay and said "Yes he does Shay, but for only one more fight Son. I have started promoting some of the lads that fight on the shows at The Squared Circle, but I want to expand my promotion and management company to the big boys in British boxing and then the world".

Shay looked shocked and turned and looked at Kenny.

Kenny just said to Shay "Listen to Dexter Son, I think this is the way to go".

Dexter continued "Whatever happens in the title fight Shay, win or lose, I want you to sign. I'm willing to give you 100 grand as a welcome, and then you will get a percentage of the TV and gate receipts of all the shows you fight on".

Shay still looked confused and was trying to work out in his head how that would work out for him.

Dexter then said "For instance Shay, if I was promoting your title fight I reckon you'd be getting closer to 50 grand for the fight".

Shay smiled at this and turned to Kenny again and said “And you think this is a good idea Ken?”

Kenny replied “Son I trust Dexter 100 percent, Frank is a snake and sooner or later he is going to fuck you over, so I think we should go with Dexter”.

Shay didn’t give it a second thought and said to Dexter “Well if Kenny thinks it’s a good idea I’m in Dext”.

Dexter smiled and said “That’s great Shay, 1066 promotions might have its first champion in the next year or so”.

Dexter then told Shay in a very serious voice “There is one thing though Shay, until you have had your last fight for Goldsten you can’t tell anyone and I mean anyone not even your misses”.

Shay replied “Emma won’t say anything Dext’s, she’ll be fine”.

Dexter shook his head and said “Shay look no one can know or Goldsten will fuck it up, yeah Emma’s seems like a nice girl, but shes a women and there’s no way she would be able to keep this to herself, so just keep it to yourself”.

Shay nodded his head and agreed, Dexter then put his hand out and shook hands with Shay to seal the deal.

Dexter said “I’ve shook your hand Shay so to me the deal is sealed I’m a man of my word, so whatever happens you will be with 1066 promotions next year”.

Shay nodded his head and Dexter opened a bottle of champagne to celebrate.

It was pretty easy for Shay to keep it secret from Emma, she was away an awful lot, Shay did ask her that how come she went on all these photo shoots and he didn’t see much of her in the fashion magazines she buys?

Emma snapped at this and said “A lot of them are for foreign magazines and you couldn’t get them over here”.

Shay just smiled and said “I was only asking Em, I’m just glad you’re doing so well”.

It had been 2 months since Shay had seen Frank; Shay had called him about the date and where the fight was going to be held, and Frank just kept saying he would let him know when he had news.

Shay had turned 23 now and was back at the gym, but was only keeping fit and helping Kenny train the other pro boxers.

Frank called Kenny and told him to bring Shay down to London in a week's time for a big press conference he had set up, Kenny ask Frank "So when and where's the fight then?"

Frank just replied "You will find out when you come down Ken".

Kenny told Shay about the press conference and that they would find out when and where on the day, Shay was just glad that the fight was finally on.

He got in contact with Emma who was away on another photo shoot and told her all about it. Emma told him she was really happy for him, but might not be able to get down there as she was in Paris, but she would try.

Shay replied "Well if you can't get there make sure you watch it on telly".

Shay then gave Kelly a call and told her he was coming down to London next week and did she want to meet up while he was down there. Kelly seemed a bit down, but said "Yeah it will be really nice to see you Shay".

Shay asked her if everything was alright, Kelly just said "Yeah I'm fine; I'll see you when you come down".

The press conference was being held at the Savoy Hotel in the Strand in London, as Shay and Kenny walked in they were greeted by Frank, who wanted a word with Shay. Frank told Shay that as he only had one more fight on his contract he wanted to offer him a new one.

Shay didn't know what to say to Frank, but Kenny jumped in and said "Frank he aint signing any contract till after the fight, we'll talk to you then".

Frank wasn't happy about this, but had known Kenny long enough to know he wasn't going to get anywhere going on about it. There was only going to be four of the boxers at the press conference, Shay, Wilson, Gary Britain and Bruno Beef.

Shay and Wilson were the first ones there, Gary turn up soon after, but seemed very distracted about something.

When Shay went up to him and said hello he seemed very quiet and nervous around Shay. Shay thought it was quite funny to see Gary 'Great' Britain so nervous; Shay asked him if he was o.k.

He replied "Yeah just got something on my mind that's all".

Before Shay could say anymore, Bruno entered the room, as soon as he saw Shay he was shouting abuse at him.

As Bruno walked up to the stage he shouted “You ready for me boy! I’m going to give you education in boxing then knock you out”.

Shay laughed at Bruno and replied “Bruno the cameras aint running yet, save your pantomime act for when they are rolling”.

Bruno rushed towards Shay, but the security stopped him from getting anywhere near him. Frank went over to Bruno and told him to save it for the ring.

Bruno gave Shay a look and a very sinister smile and said to Frank “Yeah he can have it all in the ring”.

The press conference started, it was being shown live on Sky Sports. Frank told the British press that *The Battle of Britain II* would be held on the 1st of August at Upton Park East London. This made Gary Britain and Bruno Beef smile as they were both lifelong West Ham supporters. Wilsons face wasn’t as happy, he was from south London and a Millwall fan and he was going to be fighting at their arch rival’s stadium. Shay on the other hand wasn’t bothered, he’d never really been into football and never really followed any team, but thought it was going to be great fighting in a football stadium outdoors.

Gary started off the press conference, when asked what he thought of where the show was being held.

Gary said “Yeah I love the fact it’s at Upton Park, I’ve been brought up a West Ham supporter and try and get down there as much as I can. I know I’ll have great support there”.

They asked Wilson the same question and his reply was blunt “I’m not bothered where it is, but it will be good to beat Britain in front of his fans especially as he’s West Ham”.

Gary looked over at Wilson and said “Well who do you support?”

Wilson replied “It doesn’t matter who I support, this aint football it’s boxing and you are going to get beat son”.

Gary smiled and said “Well all I can say is it will be a good fight, but I am pretty confident I will win and become Champion”.

Wilson sucked his teeth at this and replied in Patwari “cha man, I am eyes is going to beat your bumble clart you little rarce”.

Gary Britain looked at the press and just shrugged his shoulders and pulled a face that said to the press what did he say.

Wilson then got up and walked out shouting abuse at Gary as he went. Before Gary could say anymore Bruno piped up and said “I see the native is restless, now let’s talk about what we are really here for, me giving Dempsey a boxing lesson”.

One of the reporters asked Bruno “So don’t you think Dempsey will be any challenge?”

Bruno replied chuckling to himself “Challenge? I’m the best British boxer and there’s no one who can touch me. Yeah Dempsey done well against Magson, but let’s have it right, he was out on his feet and got lucky. On the first of August he is going to run out of luck and his unbeaten record and may be his career will be over”.

The media looked at Shay for a reply, Shay paused for a second then said with a smile on his face “I’m glad Beef remembered that I’m unbeaten and yeah I might have had a bit of luck on my side against Magson, but the fact is I stopped him, something The Beef couldn’t do”.

Shay looked over at Bruno and continued “Bruno you want to make sure I don’t do a Jimmy Tarrna on you mate”.

Bruno looked like he was going to explode; he turned to Shay his face bright red and said “Dempsey you’re not even in Tarrna’s league and he was lucky that night I wasn’t in a good place. I just hope you’re ready for the beating of your life”.

Frank ended the press conference there as he knew Bruno was ready to start acting up.

They lead Shay and Bruno out of separate doors and Shay and Kenny went up to their rooms in the hotel.

As they went up to their rooms Shay asked Kenny how he thought he done.

Kenny smiled and said “You done well Son, you got him riled, now every time you meet him do the same”.

Shay laughed and said “I don’t know Ken he looked pretty mad”

Kenny replied “I know Son, but that’s a good thing, people make mistakes when they fight mad”.

Shay went to his hotel room and called Emma to see if she was going to be coming to London. Emma told him that she was still in Paris and would be home in a few days.

Shay said “I wished you could be here, but I understand if you had to work”, he told her he loved her and couldn’t wait to see her when she got back.

Emma just replied “Yeah me too Babe, look I got to go I’ll see you at home”.

Shay then called Kelly to sort out meeting up with her later, he told her he would book a table at the Savoy where he was stopping.

He asked her “is James coming with you I need to know so I can book the table”.

Kelly replied “No it will just be me”.

Shay asked Kelly why he wasn’t coming. Kelly just said she would talk to him about it when they met.

Shay then said in a jokey way “So it’s a table for 2 then and don’t get trying it on with me, it’s not a date”.

Kelly laughed and replied “You got no chance mate, anyway isn’t Emma joining us?”

Shay said “No, she’s in Paris”.

Kelly replied “Ohh right, I thought I saw her today shopping on Oxford Street”.

Shay said “No I just talked to her on the phone she’s still in Paris”.

Kelly replied in a very bitchy way “Well I suppose all these skinny models look the same”.

Shay laughed at that and said “Shut up, I’ll see you about 7 Kell”.

When Kelly got to the Savoy, Shay was waiting at the bar for her.

Kelly looked stunning in a long black dinner dress that really showed off her womanly curves.

Shay walked over to her gave her a kiss on the cheek and said “Wow Kell what can I say you look amazing”.

Kelly smiled and replied “Thanks Shay, I thought I’d make the effort seems we’re in such a posh place”.

Kelly then said cheekily “But you could of made the effort too”.

Shay laughed at this and replied “You cheeky cow, this suit cost me a grand, its Taylor made on Savoy Road, anyway you can order what you like tonight it’s on Goldstein promotions so we don’t have to do a runner like we used to from the curry houses when we were younger”.

Kelly laughed and the Matradee showed them to their table. They sat

down and the waiter gave Shay the wine list, Shay looked through it like a connoisseur.

Kelly was very impressed with this until Shay looked up at the waiter and said “Can I have a pint of Stella and a bottle of Lambrini for the lady please”.

The waiter just looked at Shay confused; Kelly looked at him in shock, Shay just cracked up with laughter.

He then handed Kelly the wine list and said “Here you pick, what do I know about wine”.

Kelly looked at the wine list, then Shay asked “What do you want red or white?”

Kelly replied “Red I think, but there so expensive”.

Shay took the wine list off Kelly and said to the waiter “Your most expensive bottle of red please, ohh and a pint of Stella”.

Kelly looked at Shay; Shay just shrugged his shoulders and said “Goldsten paying for it so we might as well”

Shay asked Kelly where James was and how come he hadn’t come?

Kelly told him that they had split up; Shay really didn’t know what to say to that news and asked her if she was o.k. Kelly told him she was fine and it was probably for the best as she was thinking of moving back to Birmingham as she had been offered a new job there.

Shay said “I’m sorry to hear that about you and James, but I’m happy that you are coming back to Brum”.

They enjoyed an excellent 3 course meal and were really enjoying each other’s company, chatting about the old days when they were kids.

Shay said “It has been such a long time since it had just been me and you I do really miss this”.

Kelly agreed telling Shay she missed all the laughs they used to have together and they should make the effort to meet up more often. Shay agreed and said they should cap off the night with the finest

Champaign the Savoy had to offer. They went to the bar and Shay ordered a bottle of 500 pound Cristal for them and told the bar man he wanted to buy everyone in the bar a drink and to put it all on the hotel bill. Shay and Kelly drank the night away with other guest wanting to talk to Shay about his upcoming fight against Bruno, when the bar closed they went up to Shay’s hotel room to raid the mini bar.

They were both very drunk, Shay put on some old tunes from when they were kids. They reminisced about how they were when they were younger and how far they had come since their days in Newtown.

Shay said to Kelly “I got to say Kell you have grown into one stunning looking woman, I can’t believe you’re the same girl who used to help me with my home work”.

Kelly smiled at Shay and said “Come on Shay your with one of the best looking girls in Newtown when we were younger and now she’s a top model, I’m not a patch on her”.

Shay looked at Kelly and replied “Yeah Emma’s is gorgeous no doubt about it, but if you saw what she has to do to look that good”.

Shay took a drink from his bottle of beer and continued “But Kelly you go natural beauty, you don’t need hardly any make up and I got to say you got a cracking body your what a real woman should look like”.

Kelly smiled and replied “Stop trying to embarrass me, do you say this to all your mates?”

Shay laughed and said “Well if Kenny had an arse like yours, I probably wouldn’t get any training done”.

Kelly burst into laughter and said “You’re a cheeky fucker” and gave Shay a playful punch to the shoulder.

Shay jumped off the bed laughing and said “Ahh so you want to take on the soon to be Champ do you?”

He got into his boxing stance and started dancing round the room.

Kelly stood up as well and put her hand up and moved round with him shooting out playful lefts and rights.

Shay was laughing so much he did see how close he was to the bed and backed into it and ended up flat on his back on the bed.

Kelly saw her opportunity to get the advantage in there play fight and jumped on top of him. Kelly had Shay pinned to the bed and was slapping him in the face asking him if he gives up.

Eventually through the laughter Shay shouted “I give up, you win”.

Kelly put her hands in the air in triumph as she sat on Shay, laughing and shouting “I’m the champ, I’m the champ”.

As the laughter died down, there was a moment, a pause, a second where there was silence. They both looked each other in the eyes,

Kelly lent her head down and Shay's head came up at the same time, their lips met for the first time and they kissed. They had known each other since they were kids and this was the first time anything like this had happened.

CHAPTER 11



Shay woke up in the morning with one hell of a hangover, he got up out of bed, his vision was blurred as he stumbled to the bathroom. He looked in the mirror over the sink as he put cold water on his face to wake himself up. Shay then went into the bedroom and was shocked to see Kelly lying on the bed with just her underwear on. Shay put his hand on his forehead trying to remember what had happened last night, he thought hard, but the last thing he could remember was play fighting with Kelly, after that it was a complete blank.

He then looked down at himself and saw that he was just wearing his boxer shorts; Shay mumbled to himself “no, no way, I haven’t, have I?”

Kelly then woke up and said “Bloody hell what a night”.

Kelly looked up at Shay who was standing at the end of the bed and as she covered herself with the quilt she smiled and said “”What a mental night that was, it was just what I needed”.

Shay was mortified, had he slept with his best friend? All the signs were that he had. Shay sat on the edge of the bed with his face in his hands, shaking his head.

Kelly asked him “What’s wrong Shay?”

Shay replied “I’m with Emma Kell, last night shouldn’t have happened”.

Kelly sat up and said “Why shouldn’t of it had happened, didn’t you have a good time?”

Shay replied “Yes, I mean no, it shouldn’t of happened, I love Emma”.

Kelly looked confused and asked Shay “So what happened that was so wrong?”

Shay still with his face in his hands replied “Me and you sleeping together, it shouldn’t of happened”.

Kelly smiled mischievously and said “Shay it was the perfect end to a perfect night, you were unbelievable”.

Shay still trying hard to remember what happened replied “What am I going to tell Emma, I’ve never cheated on her”.

Kelly could see how upset Shay was and couldn’t keep it in anymore and started laughing.

Shay looked at her and said “Well I’m glad you think it’s funny”.

Kelly then said to the distressed Shay “Nothing happened”.

Shay looked up and replied “What do you mean nothing happened?”

Kelly explained “Yeah we kissed, but as soon as we did we both pulled away as we knew it was wrong, then you were going on about how much you love Emma and then you passed out”.

Shay still a bit confused replied “So how are we both in our underwear?”

Kelly replied chuckling to herself “Shay when you passed out I got undressed, I’m was wearing a 500 pound dress, so there was no way I

was going to sleep in that, and I remember you going to the toilet in the night you must of got undressed then”.

A relieved Shay looked at Kelly, he shook his head and said “Well why didn’t you tell me that at the start?”

Kelly laughed and replied “After all the jokes you have played on me over the year I just couldn’t resist”.

Shay looked at Kelly trying not to laugh and said “Well it not funny at all”.

Shay ordered up some breakfast to the room, Kelly left soon after and told Shay she would call him soon. As Shay saw Kelly to the door, Kenny was walking down the corridor just as she was leaving, he said “hello” to Kelly and gave them a look that said “I know what you were up to last night”. Kelly left and Kenny went into Shay’s room, Shay still looked really hung-over.

Kenny with a big smile on his face said “Well it looks like you and Kelly had a good time last night”.

Shay replied “Yeah we did Ken, but not how you think, we are just friends”.

Kenny smiled and said “Well I wouldn’t have blamed you son that Kelly has grown into one fine woman”.

Shay just shook his head and said “Well nothing like that did happen, are you ready to go?”

Kenny replied “Yeah son let’s get back to Brum”.

When they got back to Birmingham, Shay went straight home still feeling guilty about kissing Kelly, but thought to himself that it was probably best if he didn’t say anything to Emma about it. When he walked through the door Emma came rushing out of the living room to welcome him home.

He asked if everything was alright, Emma replied “Yeah I’m just happy to see you”.

This made Shay smile as they hadn’t seen much of each other over the last few months, Shay then told her to put on her best dress as he was going to take her out to dinner.

It must have been 2 hours later when Emma came down the stairs ready to go out, she looked gorgeous, absolutely stunning in a long black evening dress similar to the one Kelly was wearing the night before.

Emma said “I’m ready babes so what do you think?”

Shay smiled and replied “Em you look gorgeous as always”, but Shay did think to himself Emma’s got a fake tan on, fake hair in, fake eyelashes, fake nails and loads of makeup on, Kelly only had a bit of make up on and none of the extras and looked just as good and filled her dress out a lot better. Shay shook his head thinking why am I comparing the 2, one is my mate and one is my girlfriend.

Emma asked him if he was o.k?

Shay who was in deep thought snapped out of it and replied “yeah we ready to go?”

Shay took her to the poshest restaurant in town; Shay spared no expense on showing Emma a good night. Emma seemed to be enjoying herself, but was distracted by text messages on her phone all night; she told Shay they were off Samantha about modeling work. Emma did put Shay on the spot at one point in the night when he picked a very nice bottle of red wine from the wine list, the same wine he had with Kelly the night before.

Emma asked him how he knew about such an expensive wine.

Shay thought on his feet and told her “Kenny loves wine and picked this bottle when we were in London”.

Emma gave Shay a surprised look and replied “Kenny likes wine?”

Shay smiled and said “Yeah he does, but don’t say anything to him he don’t like people to know”.

Emma smiled and said “Well I got to say Kenny definitely knows his wine, its lovely”.

They had an excellent night out and an even better night when they got home; it had been such a long time since they had been together just the 2 of them.

The next day Emma told Shay she was having to go away to work for a week or so modeling, Shay didn’t really want her to go as while he wasn’t training he had a lot of time on his hands and wanted to spend some quietly time with her. Emma told him that it had been organized a while ago and she couldn’t get out of it and that she would be away a lot over the next few months. Shay couldn’t see why she was working as hard as he was making loads of money through boxing, sponsorship and personal appearances , but all she used to say was she wanted to make her own money and Shay had to respect that.

Over the next few months just like Frank said, Shay was a busy boy with sponsorship and promotional work all the time. He had started stepping up his training, but wasn't going to be readying himself for the title fight until 4 months before it.

Kelly had now moved back to Birmingham and Shay and her met up quite a lot and talked a lot on the phone. Emma didn't seem to be bothered about this; she was away a lot and wrapped up in her modeling career.

Shay had also been a pundit on a few boxing show's on Sky Sports and done a few charity events at The Squared Circle. Shay had become quite the celebrity to the point that the only place he could go without getting hassled was Dexter's club. Shay didn't mind people asking him for autographs and pictures, but it was the idiots who thought they could have a go at him and get a reputation for themselves. Shay use to say that most of these idiots had a big, little man syndrome, as they were usually 5 foot 6, 5 foot 7 blokes who had blown themselves up on steroids and want to prove they are big men. Shay would always try and walk away from these fools, but sometimes he just couldn't and would defend himself with real bad consequences for the big, little men.

Shay was really enjoying having Kelly his best mate back in his life, but it was time for Shay to start concentrating on his title fight that was now only 4 months away.

Shay had kept himself in pretty good shape over the months he had off, Kenny wanted to focus more on the tactics of the fight as he was confident in Shay's stamina.

Kenny was finding it hard to work out a weakness in Bruno, if it came to a brawl Bruno could brawl and if they tried to box him Bruno was a well crafted boxer. The one part of Shay's training Kenny did have a plan for was his sparring, he had enlisted the help of 2 big hitting light heavyweights to put Shay through his paces, but the piece de resistance of Kenny's master plan was getting Sam Magson to be his main sparring partner. Sam had retired after Shay had beat him, but had excepted Kenny's offer to be Shay's main sparring partner as he really wanted a British boxer to beat Bruno. Magson was the only boxer to have ever gone the distance with Bruno except for his one defeat to world champ Jimmy Tarrna.

Magson was a big part of Shay's training. Sam had lots of advice for Shay and Shay took in all that Sam and Kenny told him.

The light heavyweights Kenny had brought in to spar Shay were earning their money, Shay may have been the weight below them but he took their hardest shots and managed to put both of them down in open sparring. Kenny was well impressed with Shay's progress and Magson reckoned that he could beat Bruno easy if he used his superior hand speed and movement affectedly.

Kenny had now come up with the plan, with the help from Magson; Shay was going to box Bruno. Kenny wanted Shay to keep Bruno on the end of his jab and use his extra reach to keep out of range. The plan was that this would whine Bruno up into making mistakes and when he did Shay would capitalize on it and win the fight.

Shay was already whining Bruno up by saying things about him in the press and in TV interviews.

Shay had said that "Bruno is just one big bully boy and needs to be taught a lesson; I'm going to do a Jimmy Tarrna on him".

This didn't go down well with Bruno who was quoted as saying vile things about Shay's Mom and Dad, Shay himself and even Kenny.

The plan was working, every time Shay and Bruno met to promote the fight, Bruno would try and attack Shay, but Shay always kept his cool and never lost it once. The boxing community loved it, the feud had even been reported about in America as news spread about the hatred between the boxers.

Shay still found time to go see his Mom and Dad in his busy schedule, his Dad was now house bound and needed his oxygen all the time, but seemed in good spirits and looked a lot better than he had before.

There was just over a week to go before the big fight, Shay was in the best shape of his career and with all the sparring with Magson he was looking good to becoming British Champion. He had got Kelly a ringside seat for the fight, Upton Park had been sold out for months; it was the hottest ticket in town.

Shay had one more promotional obligation to do before the fight it was a big photo shoot at The Squared Circle for his sponsors 1066 entertainments and Brumsdale. It was going too consist of Shay in the ring decked out in Brumsdale clothing surrounded by scantily dressed models from Samantha's modeling agencies.

The photo shoot went really well, they got all the shots they needed and had a real good laugh doing it, when they had finished Dexter offered all of them a drink at the bar. As Shay's fight was less than a week away he was just having water, he saw Samantha chatting to Dexter and went over to say hello.

He went up to them and said "hello".

Samantha replied in her very posh accent "Oh hello Shay how are you doing, you must be so excited about your fight next week, Dexter has kindly asked me to come with him, I cannot wait to see you fight".

Shay smiled and replied "Yeah I'm really looking forward to it; it's going to be a great fight".

Shay then asked "So Sam how come you didn't use Emma on this photo shoot, what is she too good for Brumsdale and 1066 entertainments?"

Samantha looked at Shay a bit confused and said "Darling Emma has not worked for me for nearly 2 years. I got her lots of work and she did not turn up for some of them so I had to let her go".

Shay was shocked at this and asked Samantha "So she wasn't on a photo shoot in Paris about 8 or 9 months ago?"

Samantha replied "No Shay not for me anyway".

Shay was really confused, but Dexter then said to him "It was probably for a different company Shay, Sam aint the only agency around you know".

Shay said "Yeah mate you're probably right, but I'm sure she told me she still worked for Samantha".

Shay didn't stay there too long as he couldn't drink and Emma was coming home that night. When Shay got home Emma was already there, he went into the living room and she welcomed him with a big kiss and a hug. Shay smiled and told her he had really missed her, Emma asked him where he'd been, he told her he had been doing some promotional work for his sponsors. Shay then asked her how her modeling job had gone. Emma said it had gone really well, but she had told Samantha that she wouldn't be doing any modeling for the next few weeks as she wanted to spend time with him.

Shay looked at Emma a bit confused and said "So you told Samantha you were having a few weeks off?"

Emma replied “Yeah I made sure that I’m all you’re for the next few weeks”.

Shay then said “Oh o.k. how is Sam?”

Emma replied without drawing breath said “Yeah she is really good, she was asking me about you and your fight, she told me to wish you luck”.

Shay couldn’t believe that Emma was blatantly lying to him and he couldn’t understand why.

Shay couldn’t take anymore and said to Emma “Babe why are you lying to me, what’s going on?”

Emma looked shocked and replied “What do you mean lying? Lying about what? I thought you would be happy about me being round for a few weeks?”

Shay shook his head and said “I am happy about that, what I’m not happy about is you lying to me about working for Samantha for the last 2 years, she was at the photo shoot today and she told me you haven’t worked for here for 2 years”.

Emma’s face went from shock to guilt, she sat down on the sofa and put her face in her hands and started crying.

Shay asked her “So what’s going on Emma, I just want the truth”.

Emma looked up at him her eyes streaming with tears and said “O.k I will tell you the truth”.

Shay was expecting her to say something about being too embarrassed about being sacked and that she had joined another agency, but that was just wishful thinking.

Emma started by saying “I didn’t want to say anything until you had, had your title fight, but I suppose I might as well”.

Shay with a worried look on his face said “What is it Emma what’s wrong?”

Emma replied “I haven’t worked for Sam for over 2 years, I haven’t worked at all”.

Shay’s worry went to confusion and asked “So where were you all the times you were away?”

Emma bowed her head and said “Shay we have been drifting apart a part for the last few years and I have met someone who I want to be with and thats who I have been with when I’ve been away”.

You could see the colour drained from Shay's face; he sat down on the chair a cross from Emma and very calmly said "So every time you were away you were with someone else? It was because you were away all the time we haven't seen each other more".

Shay's eyes then widened as he could feel the anger boiling in him, he continued with a more serious voice "So why the fuck have you stayed around if you met this bloke over 2 years ago, why haven't you fucked off with him before?".

Emma replied "because I thought you were going to be champion, and you were going to make loads of money. I love you but I need someone who can look after me".

Shay stood up walked to the window not believing what Emma was saying then said "What do you mean no money? Over the last 6 years I must have made 400 grand, you should know you do the accounts. I don't know about you Em, but to have made that much money and own our own house in Harboure for two 24 year olds from Newtown I think we have done pretty well don't you? And anyway I'm going to win the title next week and when I do we will be minted".

Emma looked up at Shay and replied in a cocky voice "Do you really think you have got a chance against Bruno Beef?"

Shay replied "Yeah I fucking do, why do you think I've came this far to be beat?"

Emma shook her head and said "Shay you are the sacrificial lamb, Bruno is one of the best around, no one thinks you can win, and after that fight you won't get another chance".

Shay couldn't believe what the woman he loved was saying to him, he replied "Well you seem to know a lot about it Em, what you a professional pundit now?"

Emma replied "No but, enough people have told me that you don't stand a chance".

Shay looked at the floor shaking his head and said "Well there's nothing more to be said Em, get your stuff and get out of my house and don't ever darken my fucking door again, you gold digging money grabbing slag".

Emma didn't say anymore and just went up the stairs and packed her bags and went to leave, as she was leaving she said "Look Shay, I

love you, but you're in a dream world if you think you are going to win the title, just be careful and try not to get hurt".

Shay just looked at her in disgust and replied "Just get the fuck out and go see your fancy man, anyway who the fuck is he? I bet he's some fucking idiot".

Emma smiled and replied "you will find out soon enough, take care of yourself".

Shay just said "Fuck off Emma" and slammed the front door behind her.

Shay's head was completely smashed, he couldn't believe the betrayal of someone he had put so much faith in. He sat on his sofa and just broke down in tears, he then got up and went over to the drinks cabinet and over the space of the night he downed a whole bottle of Jack Daniels straight out of the bottle. He eventually passed out on the sofa and was woken up late the next day by a knock on his front door. He got off his sofa and staggered to the front door, still drunk; he opened the door to see Kenny standing there. Shay was supposed to have met Kenny at the gym earlier that morning and had come round to see why he hadn't turned up.

When he saw Shay he went mental and pushed his way past Shay into his house saying "What the fuck you playing at kid, you got the biggest fight of your life coming up and you're drinking? What's wrong with you?"

Shay slowly followed Kenny into the living room, and then said "Me and Emma have split up, she's been cheating on me for the last 2 years with some bloke".

Kenny couldn't get his head round this as Emma had always come across as a nice girl to him.

Shay explained the story about Samantha sacking her, all the times she was away and what she said to him last night.

Kenny could see Shay was really upset about it, but the fact was Shay was fighting Bruno Beef in less than a week's time. Kenny needed to try and get Shay's head straight.

He said to Shay "Look Son, I can see you're hurting, but are you going to let some bitch fuck your title chances up? You have trained too hard to let that happen and when you do win the title it will be like a big fuck you to her".

Shay looked up at Kenny his eyes red from crying and from the alcohol and said “I know your right Ken but me and Emma have been together for nearly 10 years, it’s not like I can just get over that”.

Kenny nodded his head and replied “I know son, but you need to focus on the fight, if your mind is on other things Bruno will hurt you real bad”.

Kenny went to walk out of the room; Shay asked him where he was going?

Kenny turned and said “I’m going to make you a coffee you got films of Bruno fighting Magson and Tarrna to watch, so you best get yourself sorted”.

Shay looked up at Kenny and replied “Kenny can’t we do this tomorrow?”

Kenny said forcefully “No we can’t and anyway it will take your mind off the bitch”.

Kenny and Shay watched both Bruno’s fights against Magson and Tarrna and then watched them again. Kenny was concentrating on trying to find chinks in the Beefs armor they could use, Shay on the other hand just seemed to be staring at the telly and not really taking any of it in, his thoughts were still with what had happened. Kenny had given Dexter a call to come round to Shay’s to help sort him out. When Kenny told Dexter about what had happened between Shay and Emma and that Shay was in a bad way about it Dexter rushed round to Shay’s to let him know his mates were there for him.

Dexter came in and Shay told him the whole sorry story, Dexter thoughts were the same as Kenny’s, he said “fucking bitch” but then tried to put a spin on it.

Dexter said “Look Shay your only 24 mate you should be out there enjoying yourself, you shouldn’t be tied down to one bird, especially a wrong un like her. Look I know it don’t feel like it now, but in a few weeks you will think to yourself why the fuck did you want to get tied down so young”.

Shay just shook his head and said “Well it don’t feel like that to me”.

Kenny who isn’t the most subtlest of people then said “Shay look you aint got a few weeks to get over this, you fight Bruno on Saturday, so snap out of it and lets win the title”.

Dexter looked at Kenny and said “Come on Ken; go easy, he’s just broken up with his misses”.

Kenny replied angrily “I’m not bothered, what I am bothered about is Shay fucking the rest of his life up over some bird, get over it Shay and get your head straight for Saturday”.

Dexter looked down at Shay, who looked really shocked at what Kenny had just said to him and said to Shay “I know it sounds harsh, but Kenny is right, Saturday is going to be a big changing point in your life. You have got to give yourself the best chance you can”.

Shay looked up at Kenny and Dexter and nodded his head in agreement, Shay then said “Yeah your right, I’ll use tonight to get my head round it, Ken I’ll call you in the morning”.

As Kenny and Dexter went to leave there was a knock at the door, it was Kelly who had just popped round for a cuppa and a chat. By the look on Kenny’s and Dexter’s face’s she could tell something was wrong.

Kenny said “Hello Kell, Shay’s in the living room, I think he could do with a good friend at the moment”.

Kenny and Dexter left and Kelly went in and asked Shay “What’s going on?”

Shay looked down to the floor and burst into tears, he told Kelly what had happened, Kelly couldn’t believe it, she sat down next to Shay and put her arms round him and gave him a big hug. All Shay kept saying was “What am I going to do now, what am I going to do now?”

Kelly sat up straight and looked at Shay with a serious face.

She said “What you’re going to do is put all this to one side and concentrate on your fight, that’s what you have got to do”.

Shay replied still with tears streaming down his face “What do you think it’s that easy?”

Kelly put her hand on his shoulder and said caringly “No Shay it isn’t, but I know how much this fight means to you. You have gone on about being a champion since we were kids and I’m not going to let you mess your chances up over some girl”.

Shay knew what Kelly was saying was right, he had always told Kelly that one day he would be a champion boxer, and he knew if he messed this chance up he might not get another one.

Shay sat up wiped away the tears from his eyes looked at Kelly and said “You know what Kelly, you, Kenny and Dexter are right, I’ve got to get a grip and win the title”.

Shay then looked with a sadden face “I’m just gutted I have wasted 10 years of my life on someone I didn’t really know, she is the only girl I have been with”.

Shay then laughed and said “I don’t even know how to chat up women.”

Kelly just smiled at him and replied “Shay believe it or not you are a real good looking bloke, you’re a celebrity as well and all my friends always ask about you telling me your so fit, so I don’t think you will have any trouble getting a new women, but for now just concentrate on winning this title”.

Shay seemed to perk up a bit after Kelly said this and asked “So you think I’m good looking then?” he laughed and then continued “and fit as well, I didn’t know you looked at me that way”.

Kelly laughed and said “Shay I said my friends think your fit, and yes you are a good looking bloke , but I’m right off blokes at the moment so don’t even think about it”.

Shay cracked up laughing at this and replied “Don’t flatter yourself Kell, I wouldn’t put it on you if you were the last women on earth”

Kelly laughed and said “Yeah right Shay I know you want me”.

Shay who was still laughing said “You know what Kell, you’re a great friend and I’m glad you came round. Thank you”.

Shay gave Kelly a hug, then asked her if she fancied going out for something to eat. Kelly said “yes” and they went down to a restaurant just down from Shay’s house.

Kelly really took his mind off what had happened with Emma and they enjoyed a really nice night. They finished their meals; Shay only had something light as he had to watch his weight so close to the fight. The waiter came over with the bill and Shay handed him his credit card to pay for it.

Shay said to the waiter “put 20 pound on there for yourself mate”.

The waiter thanked him and put his card in the machine. Shay and Kelly were having a nice chat while they were waiting for his card to come back, the waiter came back with his card and said to Shay “I’m sorry Sir, your card has been declined”.

Shay looked at the waiter in disbelief and said “Mate there’s over 100 grand in my account, run it though again”.

The waiter replied “Sir, I have put it though 3 times and it has been declined 3 times”.

The manager came over and said they would have to hold on to the card as it had been declined. Shay couldn’t believe this; Kelly then got her card out and paid for the meal.

Shay felt really embarrassed and said to Kelly “There must be a fault on the machine or the card I’ll go to the bank tomorrow and sort it out and give you the money back for the meal. Kelly told him not to worry about it, and then joked that the famous boxer couldn’t afford a 50 pound meal.

Kelly spent the night at Shay’s house in the guest bedroom and went off to work early in the morning. Shay got up early as well, he still felt down about him and Emma splitting up, but had a new positive attitude to being focused on the title fight. The first thing Shay did was to go down to the bank to sort out why his card was declined, this was the first time he had dealt with the bank as Emma used to do it all.

CHAPTER 12



Shay hadn't been to the bank in years as he used to let Emma deal with all the finances. He went to the counter and told the bank clerk what had happened, she got his account up and told him the reason his card had been declined was that it had reached its limit.

Shay looked at her confused and said "How can I have maxed my card out I never use it? I want to see the manager".

The bank manager came over and took Shay into his office; Shay explained what had happened with the card and what the bank clerk had told him. The bank manager got his details up and confirmed the bank clerk was right.

Shay then realized that Emma must have gone and maxed it out after she left.

Shay wasn't too bothered, he just said to the manager "O.k well can I pay that off from my account".

The bank manager looked at Shay very seriously and replied "Mr Dempsey your bank account is 5000 pounds over drawn".

Shay replied in a very shocked voice "Fuck off there should be over 100 grand in there".

The bank manager went through all the transactions with him, over the years there had been money taken out for trips to London, Paris,

Italy and even America. There were also transactions for over 50 grand that had been used over the years in designer clothes stores, jewelry shops and for beauty treatments. Shay couldn't believe this; he had been paying for Emma to have an affair.

He said to the manager "None of that's me, my ex girlfriend has spent all that money".

The bank manager replied "Well Sir, it is a joint bank account, so you're ex girlfriend could take out what she liked".

Shay sat there shaking his head, he hadn't had to worry about money in years and now he had only 40 pound in his pocket and owed the bank and credit card company 15 grand. He left the bank gutted, he called Emma's mobile phone to have a go at her, but the number no longer existed, to say the least Shay was pissed off, he thought about calling his Mom and Dad then thought better of it as he wouldn't want to worry them. Shay ended up going down the gym; he went into Kenny's office and told him what Emma had done.

Kenny couldn't believe it, he said to a well stressed Shay "Where's it all gone?"

Shay replied "I got 40 pound to my name Ken and I owe the bank 15 grand".

Kenny shook his head and said "That Emma has done a right number on you Son".

Shay put his head in his hands and said "Yeah Ken tell me something I don't know".

Kenny got on the phone to Dexter and told him what had happened to Shay, Dexter told Kenny to tell Shay to come over to the club and he would sort something out.

When Shay got to the club, Dexter took him into his office.

Dexter said to him "I hope you learn something from this mate, always keep your eyes on your money".

Shay who had; had probably 2 of the most stressful days in his life didn't really want another lecture.

Dexter then went over to a safe in his office wall, he took 3 sealed bundles of cash out of it, he put them on the table in front of Shay and said "Be thankful I have got a lot of faith in you son, there's 30 grand there, take it as a down payment for when you sign with me after the title fight".

Shay looked at the cash and then at Dexter and said “Are you sure Dext? That’s a lot of money to hand out”.

Dexter just laughed and replied “Like I have said to you Shay I think you have a great boxing career ahead of you and we are going to make a hell of a lot of money together”. Dexter then said smiling “anyway what’s 30 grand between friends, now pay the bank off and make sure you take her name off the account, and focus on the fight, we have all got faith in you Shay”.

Shay smiled as he put the money in the inside of his coat pockets and said “Thanks Dext, and I won’t let you down. I’ll give it my all on Saturday”.

Dexter smiled and replied “That’s all anyone can ask of you Shay”.

Shay went straight to the bank and paid them and changed the account into just his name, when he got home it was really starting to dawn on him what this women, who he still loved, had done to him, he still couldn’t believe that she could have done this.

He sat on the sofa alone and feeling very sorry for himself, he looked over at the drinks cabinet on the other side of the room and could see an unopened bottle of Jack Daniel’s. He knew it was not the right thing to do, but walked over to the cabinet and went to open the bottle. As he did the house phone rang, he answered it, and it was his mother making sure he was alright as he hadn’t been in contacted for a few days. He told her that him and Emma had split up, but didn’t tell her about any of the details about why. His Mom didn’t ask him any questions about why or what had happened, she knew if he wanted to tell her he would.

His Mom just said to him “Come over to the house tonight your Dad wants to see you, I will cook you dinner, and don’t worry about Emma I’m sure it will sort its self out”.

He said to his Mom “O.k I’ll be over later, how are you anyway? How’s Dad?”

His Mom replied “I’m o.k. Son and your Dad is the same as ever”

Shay said “Ahh that’s good” and told his Mom he would see them later.

He put the phone down and then looked at the bottle of J.D in his hand, he thought about his passed and all the times he had seen his Dad stressed out and every time his Dad would reach for a bottle or

go down the pub, and he always remembered that this didn't solve the problem it just made it worse. Shay put the bottle back in the cabinet and went to get changed to go to his Mom and Dad's house.

As soon as he walked through the door into his Mom and Dad's house he could smell his favorite meal cooking, his Mom's homemade Irish stew, the aroma took him back to when he was a kid, and gave him a real happy warm feeling inside. He went into the kitchen and his Mom was there cutting up some fresh crusty bread for them to have with the stew.

Shay gave his Mom a kiss on the cheek and said "Ahh wicked Mom, you know I love your stews, but I can't have much of it, I got to watch my weight for the fight".

His Mom replied "O.k. Son, but you got to make sure you eat, I don't want you becoming one of those anorexics".

Shay laughed and said "No Mom I'll try not to".

He went into the living room to see his Dad. His Dad was sitting in the chair he always sat in watching the telly. The telly was on quite loud to drown out the noise of the machine that pumped oxygen into him. Shay sat down and said "Alright Dad, how you feeling?"

His Dad turned the telly down, all you could hear was the humming noise from the life giving machine and replied in-between breaths "Hello Son, yeah I'm fine, nothing a good pint wouldn't fix".

Shay smiled as he always tried to be positive around his Dad, but the sound of the machine was killing him inside.

Shay replied "Now come on Dad you know that wouldn't do you any good, you going to be watching the fight on Saturday?"

His Dad said "Of course I will Son, it's going to be the proudest day of my life seeing you fight for the title, I wish I could come".

Shay's Dad then took a deep breath and said "So what this your Mom has told me about you and Emma splitting up?"

Shay replied "We are finished Dad, its over, don't worry about it I'm fine".

His Dad then said "Son I know how much you love her, all I can say is that you shouldn't let it get in the way of you reaching your goals and winning the title".

Shay nodded in agreement and said "I know Dad I have been told that by a few good friends and I won't".

His Dad then took another deep breath and said “Anyway she was to skinny for my liking pretty but to skinny”.

Shay smiled and laughed. His Dad continued “Just think Son your great, great, great uncle Jack Dempsey will be looking down on you when you win the title”.

Shay smiled at this as he never believed they were related to the great Jack Dempsey but just replied “Yeah Dad he will”.

His Mom came in with a big bowl of stew and crusty bread for his Dad, she heard what his Dad had told Shay and said “Is he going on to you about Jack Dempsey?”

She then looked at Shay’s Dad and said “You’re not related to him Mickey”.

His Dad replied “And how would you know you silly cow”.

Shay’s Mom replied jokingly “Because you aint, now eat your stew or I’ll unplug your oxygen”.

She smiled at Shay and gave him a wink, Shays Dad looked at him and said “You see what I have to put up with Son, you’re better off without a woman around you”.

Shay’s Mom shouted from the kitchen “I heard that”.

Shay’s Dad just lowered his head and tucked into his stew.

Shay chuckled to himself, he could see where he got his sarcastic sense of humor from, Shay’s Mom then came in with a massive bowl filled to the brim with stew for Shay.

He said to his Mom “Mom I can’t eat all that I told you I got to watch my weight”.

Shay’s Mom replied “I know son that why I have only given you 1 piece of bread and butter, now eat your dinner”.

Shay just shook his head and tucked in to his stew.

Shay spent the night at his Mom and Dad’s house, when he got up in the morning he went to the bathroom to have a wash. He washed his face and brushed his teeth; he then stepped onto his Mom’s scales and couldn’t believe his eyes. He looked down and the digital read out said 12 stone 3 pounds, Shay was 3 pounds over the weight limit for the fight and the weigh in was tomorrow. Shay was well stressed about it; his Mom could hear him going mad in the bathroom to himself and went up to see what was wrong.

When she asked him he said “I’m 3 pounds over Mom and it’s all because of your stew”.

His Mom replied “Don’t you go blaming my stew, 3 pounds that’s nothing, go to the toilet you’ll be fine”.

Shay just shook his head as his Mom left the bathroom, he said to her as she went down the stairs “Mom that won’t work and I have to weigh in tomorrow”.

His Mom just shouted back up to him “Well don’t blame my stew”.

Shay did go to the toilet and as he thought it didn’t make any different, he gave Kenny a call to ask him what to do.

Kenny said to him “Shay relax Son, I thought you might be a bit over”.

Shay interrupted Kenny and said “So shall I come down the gym now”.

Kenny replied “No Shay I don’t want you straining yourself, look only eat light today and go and have a swim and then go in the steam room after, that will get the weight off”.

Shay couldn’t believe how calm Kenny was, but knew if Kenny wasn’t worried he shouldn’t be. He told Kenny he would do what he said and asked him what time he was going to pick him up tomorrow? Kenny told him that he would pick him up about 9 in the morning and not to worry they could get 3 pounds off him no problem.

Shay gave Kelly a call and told her about the weight and what Kenny had said about swimming and asked her if she fancied coming with him. Kelly was a keen swimmer and told him she would as she had the day off and to meet him at the leisure centre near her house in Great Barr.

They met outside the leisure centre and the first thing Kelly said to him was “Come on fatty let’s get rid of that stomach”.

Shay laughed and replied “Stop taking the piss, you brought your arm bands with you?”

Kelly just looked at him and smiled and said “Shay you might be a top boxer, but I would beat you any day at swimming”.

Shay smirked and said “well we will just have to see about that”.

They went and got changed; Shay got changed first and dived straight into the pool. It was early in the day and apart from a few old people the pool was empty. Kelly came out 5 minutes later and Shay was gob

smacked, she had on a one piece swim suit that hugged every curve of her body, Kelly's body looked amazing. Kelly climbed down the ladder into the pool; she looked at Shay and asked him what he was staring at?

Shay smiled and said "Fuck me Kell you have got one killer body, have you got that from swimming?"

Kelly replied with a smile on her face "Well it helps, it's the only exercise I do, and anyway you ready to be beaten by a girl?"

Shay laughed and said "No chance Kell. I'm a professional sports man, you got no chance".

Kelly smiled and replied "Well we will see about that".

Kelly got into the lane next to Shay's and told him that they would race over 50 meters "that's 2 lengths of the pool Shay".

Shay looked at Kelly and said "I do know you sarcastic cow, now how much of a head start do you want"?

Kelly said "I don't need one, right you ready set go".

From the start of the race Shay was on a loser, Kelly slipped through the water like a fish and beat Shay easy.

When Shay finished the race, Kelly was full of herself, saying "Told you I would beat you".

Shay couldn't really say anything sarcastic to that and just replied "Yeah well it's been a long time since I've been swimming".

Shay and Kelly swam lengths of the pool for over an hour, they then went into the steam room. Kelly sat down on the bench and relaxed in the heat, they were the only ones in there and Shay had a brainwave and started shadow boxing in the middle of the steam room. Kelly looked at him like he was mental, but knew he was trying to get the weight off so encouraged him to keep it up. As Kelly looked on she thought to herself where Shay was going to lose this weight from.

There didn't look like there was an ounce of fat on him, as he moved his arms back and forth shadow boxing on the spot she noticed his ripped muscles and 6 pack and thought to herself that her friends were right Shay is fit.

After about 10 minutes Kelly got out of there, Shay stayed in there for another 10 minutes. When he got out they both went and got changed, Shay weighed himself just before he got dressed. He was 12 stone 1

pound. He was more confident about losing a pound before the weigh in tomorrow and really didn't feel too drained after his swim.

Shay hardly ate anything for the rest of the day; he asked Kelly how she was getting down to London on Saturday? Kelly told him she was going to drive down on the day and book a hotel for the night.

Shay asked her "Why don't you come down with me and Kenny tomorrow, I'm sure I can get you a room at the Savoy".

Kelly replied "Won't I just be in the way Shay with the weigh in and all the other stuff you have to do".

Shay replied "Look Kell I could really do with a friend with me down there, don't get me wrong I love Kenny, but if I have to listen to one more of his stories about the good old days I'll kill myself".

Kelly smiled and said "O.k. Shay I'll come down with you and Kenny".

Kelly went home packed a bag and came back to Shay's and stopped the night as Kenny was picking him up early. They had a real good night; they really enjoyed each other's company taking the piss out of each other and just having a good laugh.

They got up early the next morning and the first thing Shay did was go to the bathroom and weighed himself. He was shocked to see that he had lost the extra 1 pound and was now bang on his weight limit of 12 stone. He was chuffed to bits and really felt like this was an omen and thing were going to start going his way. He called Kelly who was getting ready in the guest room to come and see the scales, Kelly went into the bathroom.

Shay said "Look Kell, look at the scales I'm bang on the weight" Kelly looked at the scales and then looked at Shay and said "That's great Shay as least you don't have to stress about that now, but can you please put some clothes on, I really don't need to be seeing that so early in the morning".

Shay had stripped naked to weigh himself and in his excitement forgot to cover himself up before he called Kelly.

Shay grabbed a towel and put it round himself and went and got ready for when Kenny came to pick them up.

CHAPTER 13



It was just before 9 o'clock, there was a loud beeping noise from outside Shay's house, he went out to see what all the noise was and was shocked to see Kenny and Dexter standing next to a stretch limousine.

Shay asked "Is that for us?"

Dexter replied "Well Shay if you're going to be fighting for a title, you might as well arrive in style".

Shay told Kenny that he had weighed himself today and he was bang on the weight.

Kenny said “see I told you not to worry about it now go get your bag”.

Shay went back into his house, he got his bag and told Kelly, Kenny was outside. Kelly was shocked when she came out as she thought they were going down to London in Kenny’s bashed up mini bus he used to take the lads to the shows.

There was loads of room in the limo, so Kenny and Dexter were more than happy for Kelly to join them. Samantha was also in the limo and was happy to see another female joining them on the journey down. They had a nice relaxing journey down there, Kenny had told Dexter and Samantha not to mention Emma or what had happened, so all the chat was very light hearted banter.

They got to the Savoy hotel where they were all staying at about 12 o’clock, they went to check in and drop their bags off before going to the weigh in.

Shay asked the women at the reception “Can I book another room please”

The receptionist looked at the computer and then said “Sorry Sir we have no rooms available, we are fully booked”.

Shay turned to Kelly and said jokingly “There’s no room at the inn love, I think there’s a premier inn down the road”.

Kelly laughed and replied “Well it will save me some money won’t it”.

Kelly asked the receptionist where the nearest hotel was to this one. Before the receptionist could answer Shay jumped in and said “Don’t be silly Kell, you can stop in my room”.

Kelly looked at Shay and said “Are you sure? Don’t you want to focus on the fight tonight?”

Shay replied “Kell I’m more than ready for the fight, but it would be nice to have a friend round me to take my mind off things”.

Kelly smiled and said “O.k I’ll stay in your room”.

Kenny then turned to Shay and said “I don’t want you getting up to any funny business the night before the fight”.

Shay replied “No Ken, there won’t be any funny business, now we going to the weigh in or what?”

Frank had told Kenny he wanted them at the weigh in at 1 o'clock, Frank intended to keep the 2 boxers apart from each other, Bruno's team were told to turn up at 2 that day.

When they got to Upton Park there was a big press presence and also a lot of fans attending the weigh in, as Shay came in Wilson and Gary Britain had just finished weighting in for their title fight. As Shay walked up to the stage Wilson was just walking off it, as Wilson walked passed Shay Wilson gave him a wink and put his fist out for a knuckle touch. Shay raised his fist to his and they touched in a gesture of respect.

Wilson said "Good luck blud, bus that racist rarse up".

Shay nodded at him and replied "I'm going to try mate, good luck to you as well mate".

Shay stepped on to the stage, Gary Britain walked passed him, and Shay said "Good luck tonight Gaz".

Britain didn't even look or acknowledge Shay and walked straight passed him down the steps. Shay turned to Kenny and said "What's up with him?"

Kenny replied "He's probably focusing on the fight son, now come on let's get this over with".

Shay stepped on to the scales with just his track suit bottoms on; the official looked at the scales and shouted "Shay Dempsey 12 stone 3 ounce's". Shay looked down at the scales and couldn't believe he was over the weight limit as he hadn't had anything to eat since he weighed himself that morning. Shay stepped off the scales and turned and looked at Kenny.

Kenny went over to him put his hand on his shoulder and whispered in his ear "There's only one thing for it Son".

Shay replied "What half an hour in the steam room?"

Kenny smiled and said "No son, nothing like that, all I need you to do is strip".

Shay looked at Kenny and said "Are you mad Ken, I aint getting naked in front of the press and all these people".

Kenny replied "Don't argue with me and just strip, I'll put a towel in front of you".

Shay reluctantly took off his track suit bottoms and boxer shorts and with a towel held in front of the scales covering his dignity he

weighed in. the official shouted “Shay Dempsey 12 stone” the official paused for a second which felt like a life time for Shay then looked up and said “Dead”.

Shay breathed a sigh of relief and could now enjoy a good feed when he got back to the hotel.

He posed for a few pictures on stage for the press after he had got his clothes back on, Shay then made his way out of the room only stopping to sign autographs for the boxing fans who had came to see the weigh in.

He went back to the hotel with Kelly and Kenny and the first thing he did was order the biggest steak they had on the menu, he piled in the food and also took in loads of water to rehydrate. They all went back up to Shay’s hotel room; Kenny had Shay watching some of Bruno’s fights and went though the plan they had come up with.

Kenny kept saying to Shay “Use your speed, get in then get out and just keep moving”.

Kelly was sitting there very quiet; Shay asked her what she thought? Kelly paused for a second then said “That Bruno looks really good and I think your very brave getting in there with him, but if you look at your fight against Magson and his, you done a lot better against him. I truly think you are going to beat him Shay if you stick to your plan”.

Shay smiled at this and was feeling pretty confident about the fight.

Kenny went back to his room and Shay and Kelly ordered some room service and watched some film’s and chatted about the good old days when they were kids.

Kelly was surprised at how calm Shay was with less than 24 hours to his fight. Shay ended up falling asleep while watching one of Kelly’s chick flicks. Shay woke up early the next day feeling pretty confident; having Kelly round him had really taken his mind off Emma and all the crap that had gone on in the last week.

The live show didn’t start till 9 o’clock on the night and Shay’s fight was scheduled to go on at 10pm and be the main event of the night.

Shay, Kenny and Kelly met up with Dexter and Samantha in the hotel lobby, they had breakfast there then to kill time went with Dexter to see some clubs he was thinking of purchasing in London. Dexter then

took them to a posh restaurant for lunch and they headed off back to the hotel.

Kenny and Shay were heading off to Upton Park at about 7pm so they could get settled into their changing room and get a look at the layout of the place. Kelly was going to arrive later with Dexter and Samantha as she thought she would be in the way otherwise. When they got to the stadium, there were a few people just starting to enter the event that kicked off at half 7.

They met up with Frank in the reception.

He asked Shay “You alright son? You ready to put a good show on?”

Shay replied “Frank I’m not here to put a good show on, I’m here to win the title and that’s what I intend to do”.

Frank smiled and said “Well I’m sure it will be a classic fight, follow me and I’ll show you to your changing room”.

Frank led them to West Hams away dressing room.

Shay looked at Kenny then asked Frank “How many of us are sharing this then Frank?”

Frank replied “Just you and Wilson, Gary and Bruno are in the home dressing room as they are both West Ham supporters, I’ve got security outside the dressing rooms so don’t worry about Bruno trying it on before you get into the ring”.

Shay laughed at this and said “Do you really think I’m that worried about Bruno? He’s getting put in his place tonight”.

Frank smiled and said “Well good luck Shay, I’ll talk to you about a new contract after the show”.

Shay grinned at Frank and replied “Yeah Frank sure thing”.

There was a good under card for the show, there were a couple of London lads fighting on the bill, but 2 of the boxer’s names caught Shay’s eye. Two of Shay’s old adversary’s from when he was an amateur were fighting on the show, Ronnie Docker and Danny O’dyer were both fighting, they had both had ten fights, but both had lost a few. Shay had some time to kill before he had to start getting ready, Danny and Ronnie were in the same changing room and Shay went up there to wish them good luck in there fights. They both thanked him and wished him luck in his title fight.

Shay went back down to his changing room and when he opened the door he was shocked to see Richie Hatter and Sam Magson in there

chatting to Kenny. A shocked Shay said hello to Richie and Sam and asked if they were here to watch the show? Richie told him he was a pundit on the live show for Sky Sports and would be watching from the make shift studio Sky had made in one of the executive suites. Before Sam could say anything Kenny said “Shay, Sam will be helping me in the corner”.

Shay smiled at this as he had nothing but respect for Sam and all he had done in the run up to the fight.

The under cards had already started and Richie stayed for a while and had a chat with them. Richie left just before Ronnie Docker entered the ring, Shay watched on in his changing room as Docker won a good points victory against one of the tough London lads.

Kenny started taping Shay’s hands up as Shay watched Danny O’dyer fight, Danny won with a very impressive 3rd round knockout. Shay had now got changed and was just loosening up. The live show was about to start. Shay had given an interview earlier in the day as Kenny didn’t want them bothering him before the fight.

They interviewed Bruno live just before the Wilson, Britain fight started; Bruno told the Sky audience that he was going to punish Dempsey for everything he had said.

Shay watched on as he warmed up with Kenny for the fight.

Wilson who had been pretty quite was already warmed up and ready for his title defense. Shay watched Gary Britain’s entrance on the monitor, the place was packed out and the boxing fans at Upton Park went mental on this warm summer night as Gary walked down towards the ring. Britain had come out to I’m forever blowing bubbles by Max Bygraves West Hams signature tune. Upton Park was rocking to the sound of the music and the roar from the West Ham faithful who had come in there droves to see the show.

They called Wilson to come out, Shay, Kenny and Magson all wished him luck as he walked out with his precious Lonsdale belt around his waist.

Shay couldn’t believe the reception the champion got as he entered the stadium; Wilson got booed all the way to the ring.

Shay looked at Kenny and said “I hope I don’t get a reception like that”.

Kenny laughed and replied “You might do Son, but I don’t think it will be as bad as this”

The title fight started and Shay watched while he moved round shadow boxing just to keep himself warm.

It was a hard drawn out fight, but by round 5 Britain looked like he was just starting to get the better of Wilson. As the fight continued Kenny could hear a commotion outside the changing room door, he went out to see what was going on.

When he got outside he saw Dexter there arguing with the security that wouldn’t let him into the changing room.

Kenny asked Dexter what was up? Dexter took him to one side saying he needed a word.

Kenny said “What’s up Dext? Why anit you watching the fight?”

Dexter looked at Kenny with a serious face and said “Ken, you are not going to believe who’s at ringside”.

Kenny replied “Who Dext come on I aint got all day”.

Dexter looked down at the floor rubbed his hand across his mouth looked up and said “Shay’s ex Emma is ringside mate, Samantha noticed her on the other side of the ring”.

Kenny looked shocked; he brought his hand to his face trying to think what to do. He said to Dexter “How the fuck has she got a ringside seat?”

Dexter replied “Well I don’t know Ken, but she’s in the seats allocated for Bruno and Britain’s guests. Are you going to tell Shay?”

Kenny stood there thinking what he should do, he then said “I aint going to stress him out just before he gets in to the ring, hopefully he won’t notice her”.

Dexter replied “Well if you think that’s the right thing to do Ken. Just thought I’d let you know”.

Kenny told Dexter to go back to his seat and he would sort Shay out. Kenny went back into the changing room, Shay asked Kenny what was up outside?

Kenny just replied “Ahh it was just Dexter wanting to wish you luck, the security wouldn’t let him in”.

Shay laughed and said “Well his missing a cracking fight here Ken, Britain’s won this easy”.

Kenny sat down next to Shay and just watched the end of the fight; Britain won a unanimous point's decision victory and was crowned the new British Middleweight champion. The camera followed Britain around the ring as he celebrated with the cheering crowd. Britain then lent over the ropes to talk to his parents who were ringside. Kenny clocked that Emma was seated next to them and before Shay could notice his ex girlfriend on telly, Kenny distracted Shay by telling him to do some pad work with Sam.

Shay went to warm up and Kenny switched off the telly, Wilson came back to the changing room, his face was a mess.

He looked completely gutted he had lost his title, but still took the time to wish Shay luck before he went out for his fight.

One of the security came in and told Shay to get ready, they walked into the tunnel waiting to be announced into the stadium.

Kenny went though the plan with Shay, Shay seemed really calm and very composed. They were announced into the stadium his music started and so did the booing, there were some people cheering for Shay, but they were drowned out by the pro London crowd. None of it seemed to faze Shay; he was in great shape and even with all the stress of the last week was in the best shape he had ever been in. Shay got into the ring and looked over to Dexter, Kelly and the rest of his supporters that were at ringside.

Shay circled the ring and straight away saw Emma sitting ring side; he virtually stopped in his tracks and just stared at her. Emma was sitting there like she didn't have a care in the world, chatting to Britain's parents.

Kenny went over to him and led him back to the corner.

Shay said "Did you see her? What the fuck is she doing here? Who the fuck gave her a ringside seat"?

Kenny replied "I don't know son, but forget about that little bitch and concentrate on the fight".

Shay just stared down at her in shock at her having the gall to be there. Emma then looked straight over at Shay; she smiled at him and gave him a wave. Shay's face had turned bright red with rage; he could feel the anger pulsing through his body. All this time Kenny had been talking to him, but Shay had seemed to have shut down and wasn't listening.

Kenny then slapped Shay hard across the face; this seemed to snap Shay out of it.

Kenny then said “Son stick to the plan, forget about her, concentrate on winning this fight”.

Shay nodded his head and just stared at the floor, he was still raging inside and it was taking all his mental strength not to get out of the ring and give her a tyrant of verbal abuse.

Kenny kept talking to Shay trying to keep him calm, but then he heard a familiar voice from ringside shout “Ohh Dempsey you mug, you’re going to get battered”.

Shay looked down to see Chav standing right next to his corner.

Shay looked at Kenny and said “I really don’t need his shit tonight Ken”.

Kenny lent though the ropes and said to Chav “Why don’t you just fuck off you dirty drug dealing scum bag”.

Chav who was obviously coked up to his eye balls then tried to get at Kenny, he managed to get over the barriers so he was right next to the ring, Shay pulled Kenny back and stood in front of him, the security didn’t see Chav get over the barriers and it was left up to Sam Magson who was standing next to the corner to stop him.

Sam pushed Chav back and Chav then said “Don’t you put your hands on me bucket boy, who the fuck do you think you are?”

Magson didn’t give it a second thought and hit Chav flush on the jaw with a straight right that would have knocked out most professional boxers. Chav crumbed to the floor.

The security then rushed over and carried Chav out of the arena, Magson looked up at Shay and Kenny in the ring gave them a wink and said “I’ve still got it, now come on Shay concentrate on the fight”.

This did make Shay smile, but the anger inside him was very much still there. After all the commotion had settled down Bruno entered the stadium to the same song as Gary Britain had came out to earlier. The place erupted with cheers and applause and people singing along to the music.

As soon as Bruno got into the ring it took 4 security guards who had got in there with him to keep him away from Shay, Shay just stared at the floor and wouldn’t look up. After all the announcements the Ref

called them to the centre of the ring to give them their final instructions. Bruno was saying all kinds of things to Shay; Shay kept his eyes on the floor and went back to his corner. As Kenny put his gum shield in he was telling Shay to stick to the plan and concentrate. The atmosphere in Upton Park was electric; you could hardly hear the bell sound to start the first round.

Shay came out for the first round and went straight to work on Bruno, there was no attempt made by Shay to feel his opponent out or ease into the fight. Shay threw a 5 punch combination which all caught Bruno and sent him crashing to the ropes. Shay then hit him with the case's special, smashing him with a left hook to the body and then a left hook to the head and finished it off with a thunderous straight right to Bruno's jaw. Bruno was stunned and in a state of shock at how fast the young challenger had came out, he managed to move off the ropes, but Shay was straight on him again. Shay caught him with a jab as Bruno retreated away and then a sickening right to the body which everyone could see hurt Bruno badly. Bruno then tried to come back with some of his own shots, but Shay was relentless, Bruno threw a big right hand out which Shay slipped under and caught Bruno with a sweet left hook which put the champ down for the first time in his career. The pro Bruno crowd were stunned into silents, all you could hear was a few hundred people cheering in the capacity crowd of over 25,000 who had came to support Shay. As Shay walked to a neutral corner, he looked down at Emma and if looks could kill she would be dead 10 times over. Shay stood in the corner as Bruno was counted.

Kenny shouted to Shay "Shay box him Son stick to the plan". Shay didn't even look at Kenny as the anger in him was spilling over. The Ref got to 7 and Bruno rose to his feet, he still looked groggy and a bit dazed, but the ref checked him and told them to box on. Shay moved straight in looking for the finishing punch, Bruno backed away with his guard high, but Shay was on him. Shay smashed him again with a straight right to the body that brought Bruno's hands down and then hit him with a straight right to the jaw, Bruno wobbled backwards and Shay caught him with another sweet left hook to put him down again. Shay walked over to the same neutral corner and looked down at Emma again, when he looked down this time he saw

that Gary Britain was now sitting next to her with his arm round her. Emma looked up at Shay smiled and then gave Gary a kiss. Shay's eyes nearly popped out of his head, Kenny was shouting at him to concentrate as Bruno rose to feet for the second time.

The Ref had told them to box on, but Shay was still looking down at Emma and Gary.

Kenny shouted at Shay again "Shay what the fuck you doing? Finish it! Finish It!"

Shay snapped out of it and moved over to Bruno who looked completely gone. Bruno moved away just trying to survive the round, Shay kept coming forward, but his punch's seem not to be connecting as well as they did before, somehow Bruno managed to stay on his feet and get to the end of the first round.

Shay went back to his corner but his eyes were firmly fixed on Emma at ringside, Kenny sat him down and asked him what the fuck was up with him?

Shay still looking over at Emma said "Look at her Ken with that Gary fucking Britain, she was cheating on me with that tosser".

Kenny looked over then shook his head and slapped Shay again round the face to get his attention. Shay look straight at Kenny shocked at what he had just done.

Kenny then said "Look son you got this won, get on your jab and look for the knockout, don't waste your punches. Concentrate Son, he's there for the taking".

Shay nodded at Kenny as he put Shay's gum shield back in, Shay got off his stool for the second round.

Bruno looked like he had got himself together after that disastrous first round, Shay moved in snapping out the jab. Bruno was just trying to keep away and get his composer back. Shay shot out the jab and moved in with a big right hand. Bruno slipped out of the way and countered well. Shay was looking to eager to throw the big right hand, Kenny was shouting at him to calm down, but inside Shay was ragging with anger. Shay was winning the second round easy, just by all the pressure he was putting on Bruno, but his shots were getting sloppy and were not as effective as they were in the first round. Bruno seemed to take heart from this and started going on the offensive in the later part of the round.

He pushed Shay back to the ropes with some good hard shots, this seemed to wake Shay up and Shay turned him and blasted out a viscous one, two's. The jab caught Bruno clean on the nose spreading it all over his face, blood sprayed everywhere from the ferrous jab. Bruno dipped his head as he reeled from the pain, Shay's right hand landed hard on the top of Bruno's head. As Shay's right hand connected, Shay felt a shooting pain he hadn't felt in years, Shay stepped back and knew straight away he had broken his hand again. Shay didn't show any pain on his face and just shot out his jab for the final seconds of the round.

Shay walked back to his corner and Kenny sat him down, Shay kept glancing over at Emma who was laughing and joking with Gary and his parents.

Kenny turned Shay's head back towards him and said "Fucking concentrate Son that was a decent round, a couple more like that and I think he will be done".

Shay had his arms resting on the ropes; Kenny pulled them down and put them on his knees, Shay winced in agony when he did this. Kenny stopped and looked at Shay's right hand which was shaking uncontrollable.

Kenny looked up at Shay and said "Is your hand alright?"

Shay replied "Yeah its fine Ken".

Kenny put his hand on Shay's right glove which made Shay knock it away with his left glove.

Kenny shook his head and said "Son you've broken you've hand again, I'm going to call the fight off".

Shay said "No Ken, I can do this, don't let me go out on my stool, I can beat him".

Kenny looked at Shay and could see he was determined to go on, Kenny said to Shay "O.k. son get your jab going and in about 3 or 4 rounds your right hand will be numb and you will be able to use it again, now box him Shay don't let him back into this fight".

Shay nodded as he rose from his stool for the third round.

Bruno came out very reluctantly to trade with Shay at the start of the round, he hadn't noticed that Shay had broken his hand yet and Shay had broken his nose in the last round so he was being really conscious of the young challenger. Shay moved round the ring shooting out the

jab, Bruno took most of them on the gloves and countered with some jabs of his own. One of Bruno's jabs hit Shay's right hand which he had pressed right next to his face, and Shay winced as the pain shot up and down his arm. Bruno stepped back and gave an evil grin as he realized that Shay's hand was hurt.

Bruno now went on the attack shooting out combo after combo, Shay was still moving pretty well, but couldn't really do anything to stop the onslaught. Bruno pushed him back to the ropes, Shay shot out his left hand, but Bruno caught him with a big left hook and then a right hook which split the top of Shay's eyebrow wide open. Blood sprayed out like a fountain as Shay tried to get off the ropes. Shay moved to the side to get away, but Bruno landed a big straight right which smashed into Shay's nose splattering more of Shay's blood over the canvas. Shay managed to get off the ropes and shot out a few jabs, but they weren't going to stop Bruno. Bruno bobbed and weaved under Shay's jab and then let rip with a thunderous over hand right which caught Shay clean on the jaw. Shay crashed to the floor, blood pouring from his nose and the gapping gash above his eye. Shay lay on the floor and the ref began to count, he managed to get to one knee and looked over at Kenny.

He nodded at him to let him know he was alright, Kenny shouted over "Up at 8 son up at 8".

Shay looked up at the Ref he had just got to the count of 4, but Shay saw out of the corner of his eye Emma clapping and cheering Bruno. Shay rose to his feet straight away, his head was still spinning, the ref looked at him and asked if he wanted to continue, Shay put his hands up and nodded his head. The Ref wiped his gloves down and told them to box on.

Shay came forward ready for the taking, but Bruno didn't go in for the kill. Instead he spent the rest of the round dismantling Shay's face; he wanted to make an example of him.

Bruno blasted shots in to Shay bloody and battered face, but every time Shay looked like he was going to fall he backed off.

The bell rang to end the third round Shay went back to the corner and slumped onto the stool.

Kenny went straight to work on the cut above his eye; Kenny asked him if he wanted him to stop the fight?

Shay told him he was fine and what ever happened he didn't want the fight stopped.

The ring Doctor had come over to see how bad the cut was. Kenny had done a pretty good job of stopping the bleeding, the doctor looked at it and said Shay was o.k. to continue. Kenny told Shay to try and fight on the back foot and gets his jab flowing. Shay slowly got up for the fourth round.

Bruno came out and went straight back to work pummeling Shay's already bloody and swollen face with big lefts and rights, Bruno was supremely confident and was playing to the cheering crowd.

Shay knew he didn't have much time left before the Ref would stop the fight because of the cut above his eye. He took a deep breath glanced over at Emma and with all the rage in his heart mustered up a final attack. Bruno moved in quite relaxed thinking Shay had nothing left; he shot out a jab which Shay dipped under and caught Bruno with a big left hook and then a straight right hand which sent more shooting pains up and down Shay arm. Bruno was not ready or expecting Shay to come back with anything like this and he hit the floor for the third time in the fight. Shay slowly walked over to a neutral corner, Kenny and Magson were cheering at Shay from outside the ring. The Ref got to the count of 8, Bruno got up, and the bell rang to end the fourth round.

Shay went to his corner and sat down, Kenny poured water over Shay's swollen face and wiped the blood that cover it with a towel and started working on the cut above his eye.

Kenny asked him how the hand felt.

Shay replied "Broken Ken".

Kenny replied "Look Shay you got to stop him Son or the Ref is going to stop you because of this cut".

Shay got up to start the fifth round.

Bruno come flying out in this round, the knock down in the last round hadn't really hurt him, and he was more pissed off than anything else. He blasted Shay with one, twos, Shay fought back with every last bit of his strength in his body. The cut above Shay's eye had opened up again and blood was pouring down his face. Bruno shot out a crisp one, two that sent Shay back to the ropes, he then blasted Shay to the body, now looking for the knock out.

Kenny could see Shay was getting hurt real bad and picked up the towel to throw it in the ring. Shay was out on his feet; Kenny climbed up the steps to the ring and threw the towel in. As he did Bruno hit Shay with the hardest and cleanest right hand of the night right on the temple of his head. As the towel hit the floor so did Shay completely unconscious. Shay was flat on his face motionless in the middle of the ring. Kenny jumped straight in before the Ref could even start counting. The place erupted with cheering and applause from all of Bruno's fans. Kenny turned Shay over and put him into the recovery position, Shay was out cold, but was still breathing. The Doctor came into the ring and so did the paramedics. They put an oxygen mask on him to help him breathe. Bruno was still walking around the ring celebrating his victory, not once did he go over to see if Shay was alright. The medic's moved Shay on to a stretcher. Shay was still unconscious as they carried him carefully out of the ring. When the crowd saw this there was a deep silence a lot of them may have booed him, but they wouldn't have wanted any real harm to come to him.

CHAPTER 14



Dexter, Kelly and Samantha rushed over to see if Shay was o.k, but the security kept them back. Kenny told them he would call them and let them know what was going on as soon as he knew anything.

As they were leaving the arena Emma came up to Kelly with a look of concern on her face and said “Is Shay alright? Do you know anything?”

Kelly looked at Emma in complete disgust and replied “No Shay isn’t fine, no thanks to you, why the fuck did you have to come here”

Emma pointed at Gary and replied “To see my new man win the title”. Kelly shook her head her face had gone bright red with anger, Kelly said “Your new man?” Didn’t you think Shay might not want you here? Emma I have been dying to say this since we were kids”.

Emma squared up to Kelly and replied “Oh yeah what’s that then” Kelly said “I’ve always wanted to tell you that you’re a self-centered, self important, gold digging, money hungry slag”.

Emma then pushed Kelly, Kelly reacted by shooting out a right hand to Emma’s jaw knocking her back into the arms of her new man Gary

Britain. Gary caught Emma and sat her down on a seat, he moved towards Kelly with a nasty look in his eyes.

Before he could say anything to her Dexter, taped Kelly on the shoulder and told her Shay had been taken to hospital and she could come with them if she wanted.

Dexter looked at Gary standing there and said “What the fuck do you want Britain don’t you think you have done enough damage?”

Britain who was obviously on a big ego boost after winning the title replied “Who do you think you are talking to you old cunt?”

Dexter looked at Kelly smiled and said “I haven’t got time for this”.

Dexter then turned towards Gary Britain and before Britain could say anything else Dexter head butted him straight on the nose spreading it all over his face and blood all over Emma’s expensive dress. Britain went straight down into the seat next to Emma.

Dexter looked down at Gary and said “You’re not in the fucking ring now Son”.

He then snarled at Emma and said “Send me the dry cleaning bill for your dress you slag”.

Dexter grabbed Kelly by the arm and led her outside before the security knew what had happened to a car waiting for them to take them to the hospital Shay had been taken to.

It took them over an hour and a half to make the short journey to the East Ham Memorial Hospital in the busy London traffic.

When they got there Kenny was outside on the phone sounding very distressed. Kenny was talking to Shay’s Mom and from the tone in his voice it wasn’t good news, Kelly ran over to Kenny and asked if Shay was alright.

Kenny put his hand up to stop Kelly talking while he talked to Shay’s very distort Mom.

Kenny said “Brenda. Kelly, Dexter and the rest have just arrived at the hospital, I’ll tell Shay the news as soon as he comes round and I’m so sorry Brenda, I’m truly sorry”.

Kenny put the phone away and looked at Kelly and Dexter with a very morbid look on his face.

Kelly asked again “How is Shay? Is he alright?”

Kenny looked at Kelly and said in a very soft voice “Yeah Shay is going to be fine Kell, he came round in the ambulance, but they had

to sedate him again because of his injuries, there running tests on him now, but apart from his physical injuries the doctors reckon he will be fine”.

Kelly and the rest of them looked relieved.

Dexter then asked “So what was that about on the phone with Shay’s Mom, what’s happened Ken?”

Kenny looked down at the floor hardly able to speak.

Kelly asked again “What’s happened Ken?”

Kenny led them into the hospital and went and talked to one of the nurses who then led them to a private waiting room.

Kenny told them all to sit down as he had some bad news for them,

Kelly said “But you said Shay was alright?”

Kenny paced the room and answered “Yes Kell Shay is going to be fine”.

Kenny then paused, his head bowed low; Kelly, Dexter and the rest looked at him waiting for him to tell them this bad news.

Kenny looked up, took a deep breath and said “I called Shay’s Mom as soon as he came round to let her and Shay’s Dad know he was o.k.”

Kenny paused some more lowering his head again then he continued “Brenda answered distraught, she couldn’t get her words out, I tried to calm her down telling her Shay was going to be fine, but then she told me some bad news”.

Kenny paused again, Kelly asked really concerned now “What’s happened Ken, What’s happened”.

Kenny looked at her and Dexter and said “Shay’s Dad Mickey has died”.

Kelly and Dexter were stunned by the news.

Kelly asked Kenny with tears in her eyes “Does Shay know?”

Kenny shook his head and replied “No Kell they had put him back under before I found out”.

Kelly burst into tears; she had grown up next-door to Shay’s house and was always around there, and loved Shay’s Dad like her own.

Dexter comforted her and said to Kenny “What happened Ken, how did he go?”

Kenny rubbed his face and started to tell them what Shay’s Mom had told him on the phone. He told them that Mickey was fine, laughing

and joking as he watched the boxing, but clocked Emma on the telly when Britain won the title and it really got him going shouting things at the telly.

When Shay came out his Dad could see how upset he was at her being there, which Brenda could see was making him angry. He was already having to take deep long breaths because of the distress he was feeling and when Shay knocked Bruno down the first time he jumped out of his chair. Brenda told me she told him to sit down and calm himself, but as he sat back down he felt faint and slumped into the chair unconscious and very short of breath, Brenda called an ambulance, but by the time she came back to him he was gone.

Dexter shook his head not knowing what to say to Kenny or Kelly, Dexter had only ever seen Mickey at a few of the shows so really didn't know him, but could see by how upset Kenny and especially Kelly were what a good man he must have been.

Kelly turned to Kenny and said "Can I go and see Shay now?"

Kenny replied "No Kell sorry, he's not allowed anyone in there, they reckon he may be kept under sedation for a few days, I'll bring you back tomorrow and see what they say then".

Dexter led Kelly back to the car and Kenny accompanied them.

The following day Kelly and Kenny went straight back to the hospital, the doctor told them that Shay was fine he had broken 3 ribs on both sides of his body, his nose was broken and he had broken his hand. He continued by telling them that the facial damage was miners and after stitching the cut above his eye, it would heal on its own. The doctor then told them that he was going to keep Shay sedated for a few more days, but all in all he was a lucky lad. Kenny told the doctor what had happened to Shay's Dad and asked him when would be the best time to tell him?

The doctor replied "Well I'm really sorry to hear that, but I couldn't really tell you when the best time would be. All I can say that if it was me I would want to know as soon as I could".

Kenny thanked the Doctor and he and Kelly went into see Shay.

Kelly stayed by Shay's bed side for the next 3 days as he slept, Richie Hatter, Sam Magson, Ronnie Docker and Danny O'dyer all came in to see how he was doing over that period of time. Kenny was keeping Shay's Mom informed on how Shay was doing as she was dealing

with all the arrangements she was having to make, she couldn't get down to see her son. The one person Kenny was surprised didn't come to see Shay was Frank Goldsten.

Kenny had called Frank a few times and he had never answered or returned his calls, which just confirmed to Kenny that they had made the right decision going with Dexter.

On the fourth day of being in hospital Shay came round.

Kelly was the only one at his bed side when he did.

He looked up at her smiled and said jokingly "Did I win Kell?"

Kelly looked down at him, her eyes filling with tears and replied "Shay I have some bad news for you".

Before she could say anymore Shay said "I know Kell, I lost, it was my own fault, I let that bitch distract me and didn't stick to the plan. Don't cry mate I'll get him next time".

Kelly put her hand on Shay still swollen face and said "No Shay it not that something has happened at home".

Kelly didn't need to say anything else to Shay, the look in her eyes said it all.

Shay replied still numb from all the painkillers they had pumped into him "Is it my Dad, is he o.k.?"

Kelly replied tears streaming down her face "No Shay he's not alright, he passed away while you were unconscious".

Shay looked at Kelly his eyes looked dead; he had so many painkillers in him he couldn't show any emotion.

Shay asked "How did it happen? Is my Mom alright?"

Kelly told him she didn't know the details and that his Mom was upset, but o.k."

Shay tried to get out of bed and even with all the painkillers in him he reeled back in pain. Kelly told him to lie still and concentrate on getting better.

Shay replied "My fucking Dad's dead, how can I just lie here. I need to see my Mom".

Kelly tried to tell him the best thing he could do for his Mom now was to get better, Shay's swollen eyes welled up with tears as Kenny and the doctor walked into the private room.

Shay said to Kenny "I need to get out of here Ken".

Kenny looked at the Doctor who then answered Shay.

The doctor said “Mr Dempsey you have six’s broken ribs there is no way you can leave yet, you need to rest”.

Kenny looked down at Shay his eyes full of tears and said “You need to listen to the Doctor son; you need to be strong for your Mom”.

The doctor could see how distraught Shay was and that all his attempts to get out of bed weren’t going to do his recovery any good and sedated him again.

Shay slipped back into a deep sleep mumbling the words “I want my Mom, I want my Mom”.

CHAPTER 15



Kelly and Kenny went outside to get some fresh air while Shay slept; Dexter was just coming into the hospital as they came out and asked how he was? Kenny told him that Kelly had given Shay the bad news and all Shay wanted to do was to get back to Birmingham to be with his Mom, but the doctor had said he couldn’t be moved because of his injury’s.

Dexter looked a bit confused by this and asked Kenny “Have they found something wrong with Shay apart from his broken bones”?

Kenny replied “No he’s had all the scans and mentally he’s fine”.

Dexter shook his head and said “So why can’t he come home then?

They have sorted his nose his hands in a cast and you and I know

there is nothing they can do about his ribs, he'd be better off at home".

Kenny agreed with Dexter, but said "How we going to get him back to Brum?"

Dexter replied "Don't worry about that Ken, I'll sort it".

Dexter then got his phone out and started making arrangements to get Shay home.

The following day Kenny and Kelly came back to see Shay, he was sitting up in bed just staring at the telly. Kenny told him that Dexter was arranging to get him back to Birmingham so he could be with his Mom.

Shay hardly acknowledged them, he just sat there eyes fixed to the telly like he was in a trance.

Kelly and Kenny sat with Shay for nearly 2 hours, Shay hardly said a word.

Shay's silence was broken when Dexter came walking into his private room, Shay broke his stare at the telly looked at Dexter and said "When can I come home?"

Dexter replied "I have got a private ambulance to take you back to Birmingham mate, I just had a word with the doctor and reluctantly has said that you can discharger yourself tomorrow, but the hospital will not be held liable for you after that".

Shay nodded and then asked them to leave as he wanted to call his Mom and let her know.

As they left Kelly asked Shay "Do you want us to come back later?"

Shay smiled at Kelly and replied "No Kell. Get yourself back to Brum, I'll see you there tomorrow".

Kelly and the rest left, Kelly seemed upset by Shay not wanting her to come back, Dexter explained that he just thought Shay needed some time alone to get his head round all that had happened over the last few weeks.

Shay discharged himself the next day and was taken back to Birmingham in a private ambulance. Shay asked Dexter who was accompanying him on the journey why he didn't just sort out a car to bring him back as he was fine with sitting up and had got used to the pain he was in.

Dexter replied “Shay your one of my boxers now and if you’re on my books I’ll look after you, only the best mate”.

Shay looked down with a really solemn look on his face and replied “Dext I don’t know whether I want this anymore mate, I just don’t know”.

Dexter turned to Shay and said “Shay just concentrate on getting yourself healed up son, then think about what you are going to do”.

Shay nodded and replied “O.k Dext I will, but I just don’t know at the moment”.

The ambulance took Shay to his Mom’s house, she was adamant on the phone last night that her son would be stopping with her. When they got there, there was a big congregation of his and his Dad’s friends waiting outside his Mom’s house to greet him. The medic’s wanted to take Shay into his Mom’s house in a wheelchair, but Shay told them he would walk.

Shay got out of the ambulance slowly and very carefully with the help of Dexter, all the people there looked on in silence as a mark of respect to Shay’s Dad. Kelly came up to him first to welcome him home and helped lead him to his Mom’s house where his Mom was waiting on the porch for him. As he walked past the mass of people, he saw a couple of his old friends from the topside firm; he stopped and said alright to them.

They said they were sorry to hear about his Dad and that he would have been so proud of him.

Shay thanked them, but said “Why would he? I lost”

Sparky one of his oldest mates replied “Shay you may have lost, but you knocked down one of the best boxers in the world 3 times and we all know if you hadn’t broken your hand you would of beaten him”.

Shay gave his old mate half a smile and thanked him and made his way slowly up the path to his Mom.

As he walked up the path towards his Mom his mates from the topside firm started clapping and cheering Shay shouting

“Well done Champ”, “Great fight Shay”.

The rest of the people there joined in the applause.

Dexter looked at Shay and said to him “See son this is all for you, your Dad would be proud”.

Shay got to the front door, his Mom had tears in her eyes, but also a smile on her face she said to Shay “Come on son let’s get you settled inside” and kissed him on his still swollen cheek.

They led Shay into his Mom’s house, she had made the front room into a make shift bedroom for him, they got him comfortable and then his Mom made them all a cup of tea.

Shay seemed a bit more relaxed at his Mom’s home and was a bit more talkative, his Mom told him that she had sorted the arrangements for the funeral and it would be in a week’s time. Shay asked his Mom how his Dad had died; she was very vague about it as she didn’t want to upset him, but told him his Dad would have been proud of what he done in the ring.

Shay stayed in his makeshift bedroom all week recuperating, Dexter had given his Mom the whole of The Squared Circle for free for the wake after the funeral and from what Shay’s Mom had told him the whole of the Dempsey clan was coming over from Ireland and from around England to pay their respects.

Kelly, Kenny and Dexter all came to see Shay over the week, he was still very quiet, but after a week of resting he could move about a bit easier.

The day before the funeral there was a mass at St Chad’s Cathedral for Shay’s Dad. Shay didn’t attend it, he told his Mom he didn’t feel up to it, but really he didn’t think he could handle all the relations that would be there. The cathedral was packed out with well wishers and family, Shay’s Dad lay just in front of the alter in a beautifully crafted coffin with the last supper craved into the side of it. Everyone at the mass paid their last respects to a well respected man.

The day of the funeral, all outside Shay’s Mom’s house had been covered in reefs from family, friends and well wishers. There were a lot of them decked out in the green, white and orange of his Irish roots. Shay went outside with his Mom and read all the kind words on the cards on them, Shay was very emotional, but knew he had to be strong for his Mom. His Mom felt the same and was holding back her feeling for the sake of Shay. They went back inside to get ready for the funeral, Shay carefully got into his suit trying not to damage his ribs.

A few of his relatives arrived just before the hearse and the funeral cars arrived, Kelly turned up with Dexter and Kenny, she went into Shay's Mom's where she found Shay sitting in his makeshift bedroom on his own. Kelly asked him why he wasn't in the living room with all his relatives.

Shay replied "I just don't need them going on about how proud my Dad would be of me and all that shit".

Kelly could see Shay was having a hard time of it, she said "But isn't it good that they have all came over to pay their last respects to your Dad?"

Shay looked over at Kelly his eyes had anger in them and replied "Yeah they come over when he's dead, what about when he was alive? None of them wanted to know him; I've just turned 25 and hardly know any of my so called relatives. Do you see what I'm saying Kell?"

Kelly went over to Shay put her arms round him and said "Well you have got a chance to get to know them now Shay".

Shay shook his head and replied "Yeah well we'll see".

He asked Kelly if she would come with him and his Mom in one of the cars?

Kelly answered "Yeah sure if you want me to, but don't want them for the family?"

Shay looked deep into Kelly's eyes and replied "Kell you were more like family to my Dad than this lot, he loved you and always asked me about you so you have got more right than any of them to come in the car with us".

Kelly smiled at Shay and gave him a very light hug and replied "Yeah o.k, I loved your Dad as well Shay he was a good man".

Kelly accompanied Shay and his Mom to St Chad's in the funeral car for the mass before his Dad's Burrell. The priest said some nice things about his Dad, even though his Dad hadn't set foot in a church since Shay was confirmed. One of his pals got up and said a few words and a couple of relatives from Ireland did as well. Shay was sitting right at the front and the more he heard about how great and what a good man his Dad was the more he started to hurt inside. The priest asked Shay if he wanted to say a few words, but Shay just shook his head. Kelly

who was sitting next to him comforted him as he tried to fight back the tears.

Kenny stepped forward and put his hand on Shay's shoulder and said "Don't worry son, I'll say something for you".

Kenny gave a heartwarming elegy to Mickey, telling mourners how he brought Shay to the gym when he was only 11 and how proud his Dad was of all his son's achievements, there wasn't a dry eye in the cathedral.

As Shay's Dad's coffin was led out of St Chad's Shay walked slowly behind him, as they got to the doors he was shocked to see world champion Richie Hatter standing alongside Sam Magson, Brian Taylor, Ronnie Docker and Danny O'Dyer who had all come to pay their respects to Shay's Dad. As Shay walked past he knuckle touched each one of them in a show of respect from him.

The hearse led the procession of over 40 cars to Witton Cemetery where his Dad was going to be laid to rest.

The priest gave him his final eulogy as he was lowered into the ground "ashes to ashes, dust to dust".

Shay and his Mom stepped forward first and threw a hand full of soil on top of the coffin and then the rest of the mourners followed.

All the mourners headed off to The Squared Circle for the wake,

Dexter had put on a massive buffet for them which was a good job as there were a lot more people than they thought there would be.

Shay made sure his Mom was alright, she was sitting with their relatives from Ireland so he didn't sit with her as he knew he would get loads of questions that he didn't really need right now. His Mom understood this and told him to go and sit with the boxers who had come to pay their respects.

All the boxers were sitting with Dexter, Kelly and Kenny.

Kenny was having a deep conversation with Richie Hatter who was asking him if he had any other combos like the Case's special. Shay sat down next to Kelly and Dexter, the Irish music was playing the drink was flowing people were dancing, this was a proper Irish wake, It was just what his Dad would have wanted.

Kelly asked Shay if he was o.k?

Shay replied "Yeah Kell I'm o.k now let's give my Dad a good send off".

They partied and drank the night away, Shay got drunk and into a bit of a state very quickly as he was still on some hard core painkillers. Dexter got his driver to take Shay home and Kelly went with him to make sure he got in o.k. Kelly had to near enough carry Shay into his Mums house, he could barely walk. Kelly got him into his bedroom down stairs, she made sure he was alright then got Dexter's driver to take her home.

Shay physical recovery over the next few months was quick and in less than 2 months his ribs where healed and the cast was off his hand, but it wasn't his physical side that was affecting him.

Shay had moved back to his own house and almost became a recluses, the only time you would see him was in the pubs in Harbourne where he would drink alone.

Kelly, Dexter, his Mom and Kenny had all tried to get him to open up to them about what was wrong, but he wouldn't, since the funeral there wasn't a day that Shay didn't drink. Shay was also still taking the painkillers that had been prescribed for him which he didn't need any more.

Mentally Shay was a wreck, anytime Dexter or Kenny tried to talk to him about going back to the gym; he would make some kind of excuse why he couldn't. Shay in himself wasn't sure if he even wanted to box anymore.

He was plowing though the 30 grand he had got for the fight against Bruno and it would only be a matter of time before he ran out of money, he wasn't even thinking about the 30 grand Dexter had given him as an advance for him signing to 1066 promotions. Anytime Kelly phoned him or came round to see him he would cut the call or the visit short, he just seemed not to want to be around anyone.

Six months had passed since he last fought and his Dad had passed away, Shay's drinking had gotten worse and he had put on loads of weight, he just didn't look like the same person.

Kelly never stopped trying to get him to open up, but anytime she tried to talk to him he would just shut down. He just used to say to her that he just wanted to be left alone.

Even when Britain and Bruno defended their British titles he was invited to watch them at The Squared Circle by Dexter, but instead of going he stayed in his house and got drunk on his own.

Britain and Bruno both won their fights and it really boiled Shay's blood when Emma who was ringside at the fight celebrated his victory live on telly.

It took a visit from a few of his old Newtown mates from the now debunked Topside Firm to get him out of his house. They near enough had to drag him out of his house to get him to come with them. They were all having a big reunion and there was no way they were not going to have one of their top boys there.

Shay conceded that he would have to go with them and got in to the car.

Shay asked "So where is the reunion? All the pubs in Newtown have been closed except the Barton's".

Sparky one of Shay's oldest friends smiled and replied "We're not having it in Newtown mate".

Shay looked at him confused and replied "So where we having it then?"

Sparky smiled and replied "We're having it in the pub we had our greatest moment mate in Kingstanding".

Shay looked shocked and said "Fuck off your whining me up aint you?"

Sparky laughed and replied "The magnificent 7 ride again mate"

Shay sat there and just shook his head.

The reason they were having it in Kingstanding was that most of the old Newtown boys had moved up there when they got married and settled down, most of them had good jobs and had really calmed down and all the trouble between Newtown and Kingstanding had gone a long time ago. A few of the Newtown lads even drank regularly with their old foes from the Kingstanding Firm.

When they arrived at the pub there was about 20 of the old Topside firm already in their drinking, they all welcomed Shay as most of them hadn't seen him for a few years. Shay was shocked to see a few of the old Kingstanding Firm laughing and joking with the Newtown boys, it was a very rowdy atmosphere, but everyone seemed to be getting on. Shay went and sat down and Sparky went and got the drinks in, as the alcohol flowed Shay's mood seemed to mellow and he started to have the craic with his old pals. He had been in the pub

for more than 3 hours and was very drunk; he got up and went to the toilet.

While he was standing at the urinals he heard a familiar voice from behind him, the voice said “Dempsey you got some front coming up here”.

Shay turned around and saw Chav standing there with 2 burly blokes next to him.

Shay looked Chav up and down and in a slurred voice said “Alright Chav you came for the reunion? Who are your mates?”

Chav replied in an angry voice “Reunion? Are you taking the piss? This is our pub you have got no right being here”.

Shay looked at Chav smiled and said “Chav I’m here having a drink with my mates, all that Kingstanding, Newtown shit is in the past, it has been for years, just let it go mate”.

Shay walked passed them even the 2 burly blokes with Chav moved out of his way as pissed or not he was still a boxer.

As Shay walked out of the toilet Chav said “Has been Dempsey your right there son, look at you, your just a punch drunk has been, you couldn’t cope with the big boys in boxing”.

Shay paused at the toilet door for a second, his back to Chav, he bit his lip to control his anger, the last thing Shay wanted was a brawl in a pub. Shay didn’t reply to Chav and walked back into the pub. Shay walked across the room to the corner where his mates were sitting, Chav followed him hurling abuse at him.

Chav shouted “Yeah go on Dempsey, keep walking you pussy, no wonder your misses left you”.

Shay was raging inside, but just ignored him and was nearly at the table where his mates were when Chav came out with the ultimate insult.

He shouted from across the room “Look at you Dempsey you’re just like your Dad a degenerate drunk”.

This sent Shay over the edge he couldn’t control himself; he turned round and walked towards Chav. The 2 burly men that were with Chav came at Shay to stop him, Shay didn’t hesitate and rifled the first of them with a big right hand knocking him spark out. The other bloke with Chav threw a big right hand; Shay just knocked it out of

the way and cracked him straight on the jaw with an evil left hook that put him on the floor.

Chav stood there with fear in his eyes, but he couldn't back down now, not from Shay in his own pub.

Chav came at Shay with a hail of punches which Shay parried and slipped passed and hit Chav with a flurry of rights and left hooks.

Chav fell to the floor and Shay got on top of him and continued hitting him in the face shouting "What did you say about my Dad".

Sparky and a few of the other Newtown lads grabbed Shay and pulled him off Chav before he killed him. Shay had completely lost it and it took 4 of them to hold him down.

The landlord of the pub had already called the police and unfortunately for Shay there was a police car passing at the time, so the police arrived straight away.

Sparky tried to walk out with Shay, but Shay was kicking off that much the police stopped them from leaving.

One of the coppers went to talk to the landlord while the other one stood next to the door and called for backup and an ambulance for Chav and his 2 pals who were still lying on the floor.

The landlord told the police officer what had happened, but put it to the copper that Shay had attacked them, the police man looked over at Shay he didn't recognize him and couldn't believe that this one lad had taken out 3 blokes on his own.

The copper asked who else was involved and the landlord reiterated that it was just Shay.

2 ambulances arrived along with a riot van full of police, the copper who had just been talking to the landlord came over to Shay and asked him what had happened?

Shay was still fuming from what Chav had said about his Dad and told the copper to "fuck off".

The police man didn't take to kindly to that and grabbed Shay by the arm and started to read him his rights. Shay pulled away from the copper and tried to walk out of the pub, as he got to the door 4 police men wrestled him to the ground and put hand cuffs on him, Shay shouted at Sparky to call Kelly and tell her what had happened.

Sparky asked the coppers what station they were taking him to, one of them told him he would be taken to steel house lane.

They led Shay away to the police car and Sparky called Kelly and told her what had happened, Kelly then called Kenny and then Dexter to tell them that Shay had been arrested.

Dexter asked where they were taking him and he said he would get his solicitor down there.

By the time Shay had been booked in Dexter's solicitor was there asking to speak with his client straight away.

The solicitor took Shay into an interview room and asked him to tell him what had happened. Shay told him about what had been said and how he had just snapped and gone for Chav.

The solicitor asked Shay if they knew he was a boxer.

Shay replied "No, I don't think so"

His solicitor replied "Good well we won't be telling them that".

Shay was too drunk to be interviewed that night and for all the solicitors efforts they weren't going to let him out until they had.

Shay woke up the next day with a killer hangover and a copper standing over him in his cell with a piss poor cup of tea and a plate beans with one piece of dry toast for his breakfast. Shay tried to drink the tea to quench his dry throat, but he didn't even bother with the food as it looked disgusting.

It was about 10 o'clock when Shay's Solicitor arrived and talked to Shay in his cell, he told Shay they wanted to charge him with 3 counts of actual bodily harm and assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest.

When Shay heard that he really started to get worried as he knew if he got done for all that he was looking a jail time, the solicitor smiled at Shay and told him that they had taken statements off all the people in the pub and they had all said that Shay had been the one attacked and was only defending himself. He continued and said that as Chav was one of the main drug dealers in the area the police wouldn't be pushing a case against him as they found a large quantity of cocaine in Chav's position, so they were more interested in that than him.

The one thing the solicitor couldn't make go away was the assault on the police officer.

Shay asked him "So what shall I say in the interview?"

His solicitor replied "All you say is no comment to every question; we will get you out first then deal with what to do about this".

The police officer that Shay was accused of assaulting came into the cell to take him to make his statement; the copper looked at Shay and told him they were ready for him.

Shay stood up and said to the officer “Look I’m sorry if you think I assaulted you, there were just loads of people grabbing me”.

The copper looked at Shay smiled and replied “Well I’m glad you didn’t punch me Shay, saw your fight against Bruno Beef, it was a shame you broke your hand I thought you had him”.

Shay didn’t know what to say, he looked at his solicitor who just shrugged his shoulders.

The officer then said “I’m a big fan Shay I didn’t recognize you last night, have you put on some weight? Don’t worry about the assault charge, but it looks like your hand is back to its best, when you fighting next?”

Shay replied “I’m not sure mate, it’s all up in the air at the moment, I’ll tell you what give me your address and I’ll send you a signed glove”.

The police officer smile and said “That would be great Shay”.

As they walked to the interview room the police officer asked him “So Shay what do you think of that Gary Britain do you think he is good enough to be world champ one day?”

Shay bit his lip smiled and replied “No comment”.

In the interview he gave a *no comment* statement exactly like his solicitor told him to do, the police didn’t really seemed bothered about the assault as in their eyes it had taken one of the top drug dealers off the streets for a good few years.

The interview was short and sweet, the only thing they charged Shay with was being drunk and disorderly and he accepted a caution there and then for it.

As he walked out of the police station a few of the coppers asked to have their picture taken with him and he signed a few autographs as well.

Dexter, Kenny and Kelly were all waiting for him outside; Kelly was the first to come up to him and gave him a big hug.

Shay hugged her back then said laughing “I was only locked up for one night Kell, it’s not like I’ve just come out after a 10 stretch”.

Kelly let go of him and gave him a playful punch in the arm and said

“Shay when I heard what had happened I thought they were never going to let you out”.

Before Shay could answer Dexter butted in and said “Kelly’s right Shay 3 counts of A.B.H and assaulting a police officer, you have dodged a very big bullet today”.

Shay nodded his head and replied “I know I’m lucky, but this has made me see I need to get back in the ring and prove to everyone how good I can be”.

He turned to Kenny and said “You still want to train me Ken?”

Kenny smiled and replied “Of course son, but you best lay off the burgers, look at you, you fat fucker”.

They all started laughing and got into Dexter’s car, they dropped Shay at his home and Dexter told him to come to the club tomorrow and they would talk to him about his future.

CHAPTER 16



Shay got up the next day feeling a lot more optimistic about life, he knew he was lucky to have been let off with just a caution yesterday and realized that his Dad would have never wanted him to follow him with the drinking.

When Shay got to The Squared Circle, Kenny and Dexter were already in his offices waiting for him, Shay walked in and Dexter told him to sit down.

Shay sat down and said “Right then Dext, when do I get another crack at Bruno?”

Dexter shook his head smiled and said “It’s not that simple Shay”

Shay asked “Why I’ve still got to be rated high enough in the British rankings, I knocked him down 3 times”.

Dexter stood up and replied “Shay Frank promotes Bruno and you jumped ship mate, there aint no chance in the world he will let you have a crack at him again”.

Shay looked confused and said “So what I’m never going to be a champ?”

Kenny then butted in and said “Shay you’re not looking at the big picture son, fuck the British title, the one we want is the World title”.

Shay looked at Dexter thinking Kenny had gone completely mad, Dexter just smiled and nodded his head.

Shay then said “So you want me to fight Jimmy Tarnna? Are you mad?”

Kenny lent over to Shay and put his hand on his shoulder and said “No son, not yet, we are going to start again”.

Shay looked completely confused now and asked “What do you mean start again?”

Dexter told him that he was going to be having his first 5 fights at

The Squared Circle against boxers that will be brought in from around the world.

Shay's reply to this was one of shock he said "You want me to fight in your club? I'm not trying to be funny, but my last fight was in front of 25,000 people and was for a title. I can't go back to fighting in clubs".

Kenny looked deep into Shay's eyes and told him in a stern voice "Shay you need to get back to your roots son, the first thing we need to do is get you back in shape and these fights will be good warm ups for fights to come.

Dexter then said to Shay "And I've got a deal with Sky who wants to air the shows live on a Friday night".

Shay paused for a while, and then he asked "So how much do I get for each fight then?"

Dexter smiled and replied "Now we're getting somewhere, I want you to be top of the bill every 3 months and I will pay you 10 grand a fight because of the television and sponsorship money that will be generated".

Shay seemed happy with that and then asked "What would happen after the 5 fights were over?"

Dexter told him "I'll talk to you about that after you have had the fights Shay".

Dexter took a contract out of his desk draw for Shay to sign, Shay looked at Kenny who just smiled and nodded to say he should sign it. Shay signed the contract, him and Dexter shook hands and Dexter said "Welcome to 1066 promotions, oh and you should have the rest of your signing fee in your bank by tomorrow".

Shay looked at Dexter in complete shock and said "Are you serious?" Dexter smiled and said "Shay I'm a man of my word and trust me we are going to make a lot of money together".

Shay got straight back into training, he was a good 2 stone overweight and completely out of shape, but with Kenny and the lads from Case's Gym working him hard he soon got back into tip top shape.

The first live show from The Squared Circle was in December, Shay was now 26 and looking as sharp as he ever had been. Sky had a big night of boxing planned with Dexter's show which they called

Friday night at The Squared Circle starting it all off. They would then cross over to Wembley arena where Sky was going to broadcast Gary Britain and Bruno Beef both defending their British titles. Then to finish the night off in the early hours of the morning Sky were going to show Richie Hatter defending his Welterweight World title from Madison Square Garden in New York City, America.

The show at The Squared Circle was a great start to a great night of boxing, there were 4 hard fought fights by local lads from Birmingham, Shay won the main event there easy stopping the highly rated German Hanes Clout in the second round.

At Wembley, Gary Britain struggled to a point's decision in his title fight; there were rumors that he was finding it hard to make the Middleweight limit. Bruno defended his Super Middleweight title with ease by stopping his opponent in the 4th with a viscous knockout. In the big one from New York Richie Hatter won a hard fought bout with a stoppage late on in the 10th round, it was a great advert for British boxing and the Sky producers were really happy with how the night had gone.

Dexter, Kenny and Kelly were all impressed with Shay's performance on his first fight in over a year and a half, he seemed to have got back to his old self laughing and joking with Kelly and the rest of the people at the after show party. The only time you seen slight lulls in his mood was when Emma came on the telly celebrating with Gary Britain after his title defense.

In the year that followed Shay had 4 more fights at The Squared Circle winning all 4 of them by stoppage in some real good technical displays of boxing. The big news of that year was Britain moving up to Super Middleweight and beating Bruno Beef for his British title in a very close fight which he won on a split decision.

Shay had now turned 27 and had finished the 5 fights Dexter had wanted him to do at The Squared Circle, Dexter called Shay to ask him to come to his office to talk about his future.

When Shay got there he was surprised to see world champion Richie Hatter and his coach there.

Richie was just leaving as Shay walked into Dexter's office, Richie said hello to Shay and Shay asked him what he was doing here.

Richie just smiled and replied “I’m sure Dexter will tell you mate”.
Richie left and Dexter asked Shay to sit down, Shay asked Dexter what Richie had been doing here?

Dexter just smiled and said “Just wait till Kenny gets here Shay and I’ll tell you”.

When Kenny turned up the first thing he said to Dexter was “Has Richie been yet?”

Dexter replied “Yeah Ken, it’s all sorted”.

Shay sat there with a confused look on his face and asked “Sorted what? What’s going on?”

Dexter looked at Shay with a big smile on his face and said “1066 Promotion’s has just signed Richie Hatter to its ever growing stable”.

Shay looked shocked and said “No way, Richie signed with you? I thought he was with Goldsten?”

Dexter told Shay that Richie hadn’t been happy with Frank for a while now and in his last fight Goldsten had held back a payment, so I put it to Richie to come in with me. He just signed as you came in, it going to put 1066 promotions on the map son.

Shay smiled and congratulated Dexter then said “So what have you got planned for me Dext?”

Dexter looked at Kenny and said “Haven’t you told him yet?”

Kenny shook his head and said “No Dext, you tell him”.

Dexter looked at Shay and said “Well the first thing is Shay; I have got you a new trainer”

Shay looked at Dexter in disgust and said “Kenny is my trainer I don’t need anyone else training me”.

Shay looked at Kenny and asked him what he thought, Kenny said “Son I have taken you as far as I can, you have got to make the step up if you want a crack at the World title, so you need the best trainer”.

Shay just shook his head and replied “I don’t Ken, I need you in my corner, that’s all I need”.

Kenny looked Shay in the eyes and smiled and replied “Shay what you need is a trainer who has been on the world scene and Dexter has got you the best coach around”.

Kenny paused and then said “anyway I’ve got the gym to think about of and the up and coming boxers I look after, I can’t be moving halfway round the world at my age”.

Shay was completely confused he turned to Dexter and said “Whose trainer then? And what this about moving?”

Dexter smiled and said to Shay “Paddy Martin has agreed to train you Shay”.

Shay replied in a shocked voice “What, Paddy Martin? Jimmy Tarnna’s old trainer”?

Dexter nodded his head and said “Yes Shay the very same, he has also trained Richie Hatter and 3 other boxers who won World titles”.

Shay didn’t know what to say, he knew how good Paddy Martin’s reputation was.

He looked at Kenny and said “And you’re alright with this Ken?”

Kenny replied “Yes son this is differently the way to go”.

Shay then asked Dexter so what’s this about moving then?”

Dexter replied “Paddy wants you to train at his gym, the world famous Paddy’s Gym in Brooklyn New York, so you will have to move over there for a while, it will be a great experience for you Shay”.

Shay shook his head saying “I don’t know Dext, it’s a big decision”,

Dexter then said “Shay do you want to be champion?”

Shay replied straight away “Yes of course I do”.

Dexter just shrugged his shoulders and replied “Well what’s there to think about?”

Kenny butted in then and said to Dexter “Dext let him have a bit of time to think about it, it’s a big step”

Then Kenny looked at Shay and said “But I think it’s the right one”.

Dexter told Shay to go and think about it and give him an answer tomorrow, Shay left the club not knowing what to do, he called Kelly and told her what had been put to him. Kelly told him she would come round to his and talk to him about it after work.

When Kelly came round later, they both sat down and Shay told her exactly what had been said to him. Kelly listened and Shay asked her what she thought.

Kelly looked at Shay and said “Shay this is an opportunity of a lifetime, you will be being coached by one of the best trainers in the world and be living out your dream of becoming a world champ. I think you have to do it, not just for yourself, but for your Dad and all the people who have supported you over the years”.

Kelly paused for a second then continued “Anyway if you’re in New York it will give me the excuse to come over there to see you and go shopping, do you know how cheap designer clothes are over there?”

Shay laughed at this, but knew Kelly was right, if he wanted to progress in his boxing career he would have to do it.

When Kelly left he went straight down to his Moms and had the same conversation, his Mom basically told him the same thing and told him how proud his Dad would be of him and how proud she was of him.

This made Shay’s mind up for him, he was moving to New York to fulfill his destiny. He called Dexter the next day and told him he would do it.

Dexter replied “Good decision Shay I knew you would make the right choice, we’re booked on the 10 o’clock flight next week, so get your bags packed”.

CHAPTER 17



Shay started to make all the arrangements for his big move to New York; he was really looking forward to it now. He was a bit nervous, but knew he would be stupid not take this great opportunity to be trained by Paddy Martin. Shay had packed his bags already and sorted his visa, he also had gone and seen all his old Newtown mates to say goodbye as he didn't know how long he was going to be away for.

Since the incident in Kingstanding Shay had hardly touched any alcohol, he would only have a few pints if he went out which wasn't that often. He did have a good drink with the Newtown lads, but nowhere near the excess had he used to.

There were a few days left before he left and Shay had asked his Mom, Kenny and Kelly to come out to dinner with him. He had booked a table at the newly opened restraint in the Jewelry Quarter of Birmingham called Marc De Paul's. The restaurant had been highly acclaimed by loads of food critic's for having the best cuisine in Birmingham and the surrounding areas. It was near imposable to get a reservation there and the first thing Kelly asked Shay when she got there was how did he manage to get

one? Shay who was waiting at the plush bar area in the restraint with his Mom told Kelly that he knew the owner well, Kelly looked at him thinking he was joking.

She said inquisitively "You know Marc De Paul? How do you know him?"

Shay smiled at Kelly and replied "I said I know the owner, but yeah I've known Marc De Paul for years, I do know people outside of boxing Kell".

Kelly smiled and said "O.k fair enough, it's just that it's imposable to get a reservation here".

Shay smiled and replied "Yeah Kelly there something like a 2 month waiting list".

Kenny arrived soon after and they were seated in what looked like one of the best tables in the restaurant, this made Kelly think that Dexter had organized this night out for Shay and his friends. Shay told them to order whatever they liked as the night was on him, everything on the menu was in French and really expensive. The waiter came over to take their order; Shay ordered the same wine he had ordered at the Savoy as it was the only one he knew on the wine list.

His Mom and Kenny were just looking at the menus with blank expressions; they didn't know what anything was on there. Shay asked his Mom what she fancied.

His Mom just shook her head and replied "I don't know son, can you see any chicken on the menu?"

Shay asked Kenny the same question and he replied "Where are the steaks on here?"

Shay smiled and said "O.k I'll order he looked up at the waiter and said "Right mate we will have the Marc De Paul soup to start then can you ask Mr De Paul to make 2 sirloin steaks both medium and a nice breast of chicken for my Mom please".

Shay then looked at Kelly and who was in complete shock at what Shay had just said and asked her and what she was having? Kelly was dumb struck they were in one of the top restaurants in Birmingham and Shay was talking like they were in T.G.I Fridays.

Before Kelly could answer him Shay said “you like chicken as well don’t you?” he then turned to the waiter and said “so make that 2 chickens then mate and ask Marc to work his magic on them”. To Kelly’s surprise the waiter write down the order and walked away.

They enjoyed a lovely meal, the steaks were done to perfection and the chicken was seasoned exquisitely, they all had something from the sweet trolley and finished the meal with a coffee.

Shay asked them what they thought of their meals, his Mom and Kenny said they loved them and Kelly told him it was the best chicken she had ever tasted. Shay asked them if they wanted to meet the Chef, and called one of the waiters over.

Kelly tried to tell Shay that chef’s like Marc De Paul wouldn’t come out and talk to them just because he asked, but Shay ignored her. Shay asked the waiter “Can you tell Mr De Paul that we loved our meals and that Shay Dempsey would like to thank him personally”. The waiter nodded and walked towards the kitchen, Kelly was shaking her head thinking it was going to be a bit embarrassing for Shay when he said No.

The waiter came back a minute later and told Shay in a fake French accent that Marc De Paul would be out in a few minutes to see them.

As promised Mr De Paul came out of the kitchen and walked towards the table they were sitting at.

As he got closer, Kelly got the shock of her life; she leant over to Shay and asked “Is that Mark Murthy from Newtown?”

Shay just smiled and when the master chef arrived at the table Shay said “Kelly, Mom, Kenny I’d like to introduce you all to Marc De Paul”.

Mr De Paul then turned to the dumb struck Kelly and said in a deep Birmingham accent “All right Kell how yah doing bab?”

Kelly could not believe it Mark Murthy one of her and Shay’s old school mates was a Michelin star master chef.

Kelly said to Mark “I can’t believe it’s you Mark when did you learn to cook so well?”

Mark explained that while Shay and the rest of the Newtown lads were running round bashing people up he was busy learning to be

a chef, he had went to the collage of food and drink in town, then went to work in London at a top restaurant and then went to France to master his skills at cooking French cuisine.

Kelly then asked "So where did you get the name from?"

Mark replied laughing "My middle names Paul so I just used my first and middle name" he smiled and then continued "who would buy French meals made by someone called Mark Murthy?"

Shay's Mom then said to Mark "Well Mark the food was lovely and your restaurant is really nice",

Mark smiled and replied "Thank you miss D, but my cooking isn't a patch on your coddle. I used to call for Shay round tea time just to see if I could have some. You'll have to give me your recipe".

Kelly then said to Mark "Well you must have done well for yourself to get the restaurant up and running".

Mark smiled again and looked at Shay and said "I had a good backer who helped with the money".

Kelly looked at Shay and asked "Are you the backer Shay?"

Shay smiled took a drink of his coffee and said "Well you were always telling me to invest my money into something so I did".

Kelly was impressed that Shay had invested in something so sensible.

Shay then said to Kelly "There is one problem Kell. Mark might be a great chef, but he is shit with promoting and all the paper work and we are looking for someone to help run the place".

Kelly looked at Shay a bit shocked and said "What you want me to run this place?"

Shay laughed and replied "Well I definitely wouldn't want you to cook here, Kell you're great at advertising and promotions and I want to make sure the place runs smoothly while I'm away".

Kelly replied "But I have got a job Shay, what do you want me to quit my job?"

Shay smiled and answered "Yeah why not, I'll pay you exactly what you're getting now and me and Mark have talked and were willing to give you 10 percent of the restaurant, now I can't say fairer than that". Kelly just shook her head and said "I don't know Shay I just don't know".

Shay then said to her "Look Kell, we need you, I need you, you will be running something you own a piece of, and you always said to me that's what you want to do".

Kelly nodded her head and replied "Yeah it is, o.k I'll do it, I'll hand my notice in tomorrow".

Shay gave her a big smile and said "Well I need you working there by the time I leave on Sunday, so you better make it a short notice". Kelly laughed and replied "I'll sort it Shay, you will have no worries about the restaurant".

Shay nodded in agreement and said "I know Kell, I know you will look after the place, but there's one more thing I need you to do".

Kelly sighed and said "What else do you need me to do?"

Shay then went into his pocket and pulled out a set of keys and handed them to Kelly.

Kelly asked him "Are these keys for the restaurant?"

Shay smiled and replied "Yeah most of them are, but those 2 there are the keys to my house, I want you to move in while I'm away and look after the place for me".

Kelly looked at him and asked "But what about my flat?"

Shay replied "Kell your lease is nearly up, so you might as well stop at mine rent free, I'm going to be gone for at least a year according to Dexter, so you might as well use my place".

Kelly looked at Shay smiled and said "Are you sure?"

Shay nodded his head and replied Yeah; just don't make it to girly". Kelly agreed and Shay ordered a bottle of champagne to celebrate his new business venture.

The next few days flew by and the day had come for Shay to head to The Big Apple, New York.

Dexter picked Shay up early and his driver took them to the airport, they breezed through check in as Dexter had got them first class tickets, Dexter had always joked with Shay that he only turned left on planes.

They had a nice relaxing flight and landed at Newark airport in New Jersey. Dexter had one of his people there to pick them up and take them across the bridge to Manhattan where Dexter had rented an apartment for Shay. They pulled up outside the apartment block in the village part of Manhattan.

Shay looked round as he got out of the car and said to Dexter "I thought you would have lived in a better area than this Dext?" Dexter smiled and replied "I do Shay, I got a penthouse 5 blocks down, this is your place".

Shay looked at Dexter thinking to himself it must look better inside, it didn't as they walked up the stairs, there was a trampy looking bloke passed out on them and you could hear screaming and shouting from the different apartments.

When they got to Shay's apartment they went in and Shay looked round and said "It's a bit basic aint it?"

Dexter said to Shay "Son you have had way too much of the good life, it's time to rough it again, give you that edge back and Paddy wants you stopping here".

Shay looked around again shrugged his shoulder and said "I've stopped in worse" and started to unpack his bags.

Dexter told him to get some sleep as he would be picking him up early tomorrow to take him to Paddy's Gym.

Shay felt really jet lagged and went to bed early that night, he didn't have the best sleep, he kept being woken up by shouting from other apartments and yellow cab's beeping their horns, he was finding out the hard way that this was *the city that doesn't sleep*.

CHAPTER 18



Shay woke up the next day to Dexter banging on his door, Shay got up and let him in, Dexter told him to get ready and he would take him to the gym. Shay was still blurry eyed from lack of sleep and said to Dexter “I was going to go see the sights today, can’t we go to the gym after I’ve had a chance to settle in”.

Dexter shook his head and replied “You will have loads of time to see the sights son, but Paddy wants you down there today, anyway your fighting in 2 months time”.

This news woke Shay up and he said “I’m fighting in 2 months time? When was this sorted?”

Dexter smiled and said “As soon as I got Paddy on board to train you, I’ll give you the details on the way to the gym”.

Dexter took him from Manhattan over the Manhattan Bridge to Paddy’s gym in Brooklyn; they parked up outside a diner called the Brooklyn Bakery.

Shay asked Dexter “So where’s the gym then?”

Dexter pointed above the diner and said “It’s up there Shay, come on I’ll take you up”.

The entrance was at the side of the building, but Dexter took him though the main doors of the diner to get up there. As they walked

in a big heavy set bloke from behind the counter welcomed Dexter.

He said in a Brooklyn accent "Yo Dexter how you doing man, how long are you back for?"

Dexter walked over and gave the bloke a hug and a kiss on both cheeks and replied "Alright Deano, I'm going to be back for awhile mate, this is Shay he's going to be Champion of the World very soon".

Deano looked at Shay and grabbed his hand and shook it and said "Ahh right so you're the boxer Dexter has been talking about, nice to meet you Shay".

Shay replied "Yeah mate nice to meet you too Deano".

Shay looked round the diner, there were lots of boxing pictures on the walls, he looked down the diner and at one of the tables in the corner there were a lot of shady looking blokes just sitting there drinking coffee.

Shay turned back to Dexter and said "Dext is this place something to do with the mob?"

Dexter told him to keep his voice down and to follow him.

They walked over to the table where the shady blokes were and Dexter took out an envelope from his coat and handed it to an old man sitting there in a hat.

Dexter then carried on walking to a door at the back of the diner and up a set of stairs to the gym.

Shay asked him who the man in the hat was, Dexter replied "That's Ken the hat, he runs thing round here.

Shay looked at him shocked.

Dexter then said "There's no harm in having a devil in your corner son".

Dexter and Shay walked into Paddy's gym, the gym was massive it took the whole of the top of the building it was in up. Shay could see an array of bags all down the one wall of the gym, there were areas for exercising, skipping and shadow boxing. There was also a big section where they had all the weights you could need for boxing, but the thing that really court Shay's eye was the 4 full size boxing rings in the centre of the room.

The place was buzzing with the noise of bags being smashed and the sound of skipping ropes tapping the floor.

Dexter pointed over to one of the rings at this man with crazy white hair and said "There's Paddy, come on I'll introduce you".

They walked over and Dexter tapped Paddy on the shoulder and said "Hey Pad how you doing I've brought Shay to see you".

Paddy turned round and looked at Shay and said "You got your kit with you kid?"

Shay replied "Yeah in my bag".

Paddy turned back towards the ring and said "Well it's no good in there kid, get changed and then come and see me".

Shay looked at Dexter with a look that said what's his problem?

Dexter just said "Come on I'll show you where the changing rooms are".

As they walked towards the changing rooms Dexter asked Shay what he thought of Paddy and the gym.

Shay replied "The gym looks great, but Paddy reminds me of Doc from back to the future, are you sure he wants to train me?"

Dexter laughed and said "Shay he asked me if he could, he said he sees potential in you after watching some of your fights".

Shay replied "Well he's got a funny way of showing it".

Shay got changed into his training gear and came back out to Dexter and Paddy who were chatting at the side of one of the rings.

Paddy looked over at Shay and told him to warm up for some open sparring with one of there up and coming pros.

Shay done a bit of skipping, some shadow boxing and then he had a couple of rounds on the bags.

Paddy called him over and put his sparring gloves and head guard on him, Paddy then called over this young black lad who looked about the same weight as Shay and told him to get into the ring.

Shay looked at Paddy in shock and said "You want me to spar him? How many fights has he had?"

Paddy replied "That is Chad Benson he has his first pro fight in a month's time, but he's a Golden Gloves champion and I think he will be a good test for you".

Shay smiled nodded his head and as Dexter put his gum shield in for him Shay winked at Dexter and said "I'll go easy on him, he's not even a pro".

Dexter just looked at Shay and replied "I don't think that's a good idea".

Shay just shook his head as he got in the ring ready to show Paddy what he could do.

The buzzer went to start the first round of open sparring, Shay touched gloves with Chad and they both moved round the ring. Chad was zipping around the ring; Shay was moving nicely and stepped in to throw a double jab. Chad saw it coming and before Shays first jab had been fully extended Chad had countered with a sweet one, two and moved away. Chad was like a ghost to Shay every time he got near Chad he would catch him with fast and sharp combinations then move out of range before Shay could do anything. When the buzzer went to finish the first round of sparring, Shay hadn't even laid a glove on Chad.

Shay sat down in his corner shocked at how this young boxer was mugging him off.

Paddy gave Shay a drink of water and said "He's quick isn't he kid?" Shay spat the water into the bucket and replied "Quick? He's like lightening".

Paddy replied "Well kid that's how you're going to be in 2 months, but with the power to go with it. Now use some of your power to slow this kid down".

They came out for the second round and Chad done the same thing, he was just too fast for Shay to catch with any power punches, Chad's punches were nowhere near hard enough to bother Shay, but Shay just couldn't get any clean shots off.

The buzzer went and Shay went and sat down in his corner, Paddy said to him "Look kid, he's too fast for you to be chasing him, what you need to do is time him. You have had 2 rounds with him now; you know his main moves, time him coming in and then let that big right go".

Shay nodded his head and got up for the 3rd round.

Chad came out really cocky and confident and started showboating for his friends who were all watching around the

ring. His speed and movement was far superior to Shay's, but Shay had taken on board what Paddy had said to him and took the middle of the ring and waited for the right moment. Chad moved in with a fast jab which Shay took on his glove's and as Chad let his right go Shay timed it to perfection and let his own straight right go. Shay caught Chad flush on the jaw and put him flat on his back. The gym went silent from the sheer power Shay had just shown, the only noise you could hear was Paddy clapping and shouting "Now that's what I'm talking about". Paddy called Shay out of the ring; Chad's people helped him up. Chad was fine just a bit shocked at the power of the punch that floored him.

Dexter asked Paddy what he thought, Paddy said "Yeah the kids got the power to be a champ; we just got to get him moving a bit better". Paddy took Shay's gum shield out and gave him some water and said to him "You definitely got the tools kid, if you do what I tell you to; you can be one of the greats. You up for that kid?"

Shay nodded his head and replied "Yeah Paddy I'm up for that, but I can't see how I will ever move round the ring like that, Chad's movement was amazing".

Paddy smiled and said "I'll let you into a little secret kid".

Shay turned to Paddy and listened intently in anticipation of a golden piece of advice.

Paddy said "If you can dance with a woman, you can fight like Chad". Shay turned to Dexter and gave him a look like Paddy was mad, he continued "If you can lead a women round the dance floor you can lead your opponent around the ring to where you want him to be. That's what Chad did to you until he got too cocky".

Shay thought about what Paddy had said and nodded in agreement, it may have sounded mad, but Shay could see what Paddy was saying.

Paddy told Shay to go back to his apartment and relax for the rest of the day and come back tomorrow.

Dexter took Shay back and told him that he had done well today and like Paddy had said if he listened he could be champ.

When Shay got into his apartment he called his Mom, Kenny and Kelly to tell them how he had got on at his first day of training. He told them all, that he was learning a lot and was enjoying his American adventure.

He got up the next day ready for whatever Paddy wanted him to do. Shay ran the 7 miles to the gym in Brooklyn, and Paddy had him first working on the heavy bag shooting out different combinations, but had him wearing 5 pound weights around his wrists while he done it. He also had him skip for nearly an hour while he blasted out some pumping Latin music on the stereo and then do 30 minutes of shadow boxing moving round the ring with the weight on his wrists and ankles. After this grueling session, Paddy took him on the pads for 6 fast rounds with the weights still on and then spar six rounds with them off. Shay had never worked so hard and was glad when the session was over; Paddy then told him to come to the gym that night as he wanted to do some extra training with him.

Shay got a cab back to his apartment; he was completely shattered and couldn't believe on only his second day of training he had to go back to the gym on the night.

He had a good sleep then headed back to the gym, when he got there he went up the stairs, most of the lights where off except for one set of lights above one of the rings. He saw Paddy standing next to this ring with a young lady, Paddy saw Shay and told him to go and get changed into his kit. When he came out he walked over to Paddy and the young lady, and as he got closer Shay couldn't believe his eyes as he could now make out the ladies face. She was a stunning looking Latino woman with long jet black hair gorgeous big brown eyes and olive skin and a body to die for. Paddy said to Shay "Kid I'd like to introduce you to Isabella, your dance instructor".

Shay looked at Paddy confused and replied "Is this some kind of joke Pad? I'm a boxer not a dancer".

Paddy laughed and said "Kid what did I say earlier about if you could dance with a woman?"

Shay replied "Yeah I know what you said Pad, but I thought that was some kind of metaphor or something".

Paddy told Shay to get into the ring, Isabella also got into the ring as well. Isabella walked up to Shay grabbed his right hand and put it tightly around her waist, she took his left hand, pointed it out in a typical dance style and in a very sexy Hispanic voice said “now lead me”.

Paddy turned on the music and Shay tried his hardest to lead his gorgeous instructor.

To start off with it didn't go very well, his movement was stiff and he stood on Isabella's feet more than once. Isabella just kept telling him to relax and flow with the Latin sounds coming from the stereo. He did start to improve as the night went on, and Paddy told him that this was going to be part of his training every other day until he could lead Isabella properly.

Shay was quite happy to do this as this dance instructor was stunning looking and seemed really down to earth taking the time after lessons to get to know Shay. Shay didn't tell anyone back home about his dance classes as he thought it didn't suit his image, but had really started to enjoy them and started getting pretty close to his gorgeous instructor.

Over the next month Shay improved in all areas of his boxing, his hand speed had become unbelievably quick, he was fitter than he had ever been, but it was his foot work that had come on leaps and bounds which was all down to the dance lessons. When Shay sparred, he would lead his opponent round the ring to the place's he wanted and if they got close to him his new found skills could get him out of trouble.

Dexter was really impressed when he came to see Shay train, Dexter told him that he had now got the name of his first opponent on American soil.

Shay said to Dexter eagerly “Who is it? Is it anyone I would have heard of?”

Dexter smiled and replied “You're fighting Mason ‘*Pretty Boy*’ Mathews in a 10 rounder at the plaza in Atlantic City”.

Shay was shocked when he heard this; Mason Mathews was Americans great hope for the super middle weight title. The 25 year old had a perfect record of 20 wins with 15 of them coming

by the way of knockout and was tipped to be the man to topple Jimmy Tarnna's grip on all the world titles.

Paddy could see by the look on Shay's face that Shay was a bit nervous and said "Well done Dext, that's the perfect match for Shay" Paddy then looked at Shay and said "Kid your wipe the floor with him, his record has been boosted by a lot of easy fights, you'll stop him early kid no problem".

Shay took real heart from what Paddy had said and replied to Dexter "Nice one Dext, beating him should boost me up the world rankings". Dexter smiled and said "It sure will son",

Dexter then went into his coat pocket and took out a piece of paper and showed it to Shay and said "Oh yeah, I've been doing some digging around into your family tree and your Dad was right you are related to the great Jack Dempsey".

Shay looked at the paper and said "So he's my great, great, great uncle then?"

Dexter smiled and replied "no son you aint that closely related, he something like you great, great cousin by marriage, but we can definitely use that to promote you over here".

Shay smiled and thought of all the times he had laughed at his Dad when he used to tell him he was related to Jack Dempsey.

Dexter then said to Shay "Also I want to change your nickname from *The Hammer* to *Irish*; we'll get loads of support just on that".

Shay nodded his head and replied "Whatever you want to do Dext you're the boss".

When he got back to his apartment he called home to tell his Mom, Kenny and Kelly the news about the fight and about the Dempsey family tree. He asked his Mom if she wanted to come over for it, she told him that as much as she did she didn't feel up to the long flight. Shay understood about this, he asked Kenny the same thing and he replied "Son I'd love to come but some of the lads from the gym are fighting round the same time so I'll be busy with them".

When he talked to Kelly she was really excited and told Shay she wouldn't miss it for the world.

Kelly said to Shay jokingly “I’ll come over a few days before and stay a few days after, but I would have to make sure it was o.k. with my boss”.

Shay laughed and replied “Well I’m sure he will be very understanding, how is the restaurant going anyway?”

Kelly told him they were fully booked for the next 6 months and Mark was now thinking of writing a cook book. Shay was happy that his business was in such good hands and told Kelly he couldn’t wait to see her at the end of the month.

For the next 3 weeks Shay trained hard with his sessions at Paddy’s Gym and his lessons with Isabella, Shay and Isabella were starting to get pretty close, but Shay didn’t want any detraction and tried to stay focus on his pending fight. Shay was looking sharper and fitter than ever and still was a bit suspicious of any woman who tried to get close to him.

Shay met Kelly at Newark airport and took her back to his apartment; Kelly was stopping there with Shay and then heading off to Atlantic City the next day with them. Shay insisted on taking her out and they went to one of Dexter’s clubs to eat. Dexter met them there accompanied by Samantha, Emma’s ex employer who had come over to watch Shay fight. They enjoyed a great meal except for Shay who only ate something light and enjoyed the live show. After the live show the band played music for all the people at the club to dance to, Shay took his opportunity to show off his new skills and asked Kelly if she wanted to dance. Kelly looked at Shay quite shocked the only time she had ever seen Shay dance before was at raves in England over 10 years ago and the Salsa sound that was playing wasn’t really the kind of music you could throw shapes too.

Before Kelly could say anything else Shay took her by the hand and led her to the dance floor, he wrapped his right hand tightly around her waist and led her across the dance floor in a mesmerizing show of foot work and control. Kelly was stunned by how good Shay was as he twirled her round and gyrated his hips next to her. When the band finished the song, Kelly was speechless; they went back to the table where Dexter and Samantha applauded them.

Kelly asked Shay “Where the hell did you learn to dance like that Shay? That was amazing”.

Shay smiled at Kelly and replied “It’s part of my training Kell, I’ve been having lessons with this lovely lady called Isabella, she’s away for a dance contest at the moment or I’d introduce you, your see how I use it when you see me fight”.

Kelly who was still in shock replied “Well this Isabella sounds like an interesting person, shame I won’t get to meet her, but I can’t wait to see you in the ring now, that was unbelievable”.

They enjoyed the rest of their night and Shay and Kelly went back to his apartment and got some sleep for the big trip to Atlantic City.

Early the next day Dexter and Samantha pulled up in a stretched limo to pick them up for their drive to Atlantic City. The trip there took them just over an hour and a half out of New York across the bridge to the far end of New Jersey, as they pulled up outside the Trump Plaza in Atlantic City; Paddy was waiting there with the rest of the corner men.

Shay pointed out Paddy to Kelly as they walked towards them; the first thing Kelly said as they walked to them was “That Paddy? He don’t half look like the Doc out of back to the future”.

Shay laughed and replied “That’s what I said the first time I saw him”.

When they got to Paddy and the rest of the team Shay said jokingly “Hey Paddy did you drive down here in your DeLorean?” Kelly burst into laughter; Paddy didn’t hear Shay properly and asked him what he said?

Shay just laughed and replied “Nothing Pad, this is Kelly she has came over from England to watch me fight”.

Paddy said hello to Kelly and they all went into the plaza where the fight was being held and they were staying and checked in.

After they had checked in to the hotel, Dexter told Shay there would be a press conference later. Shay went and dropped his bag off in his room and got changed and met Paddy and Dexter in the lobby for the press conference. The press conference was being show on E.S.P.N one of the big American sports channels and the press conference was more for Mason Mathews than Shay, the

press loved him and he milked it telling the press and the viewers watching all over the United States that Shay was just a stepping stone to him getting a crack at the title and it would be an easy victory. Shay didn't say much; just that he was enjoying his training with Paddy Martin and thought he had a good chance in the fight.

It was left up to Paddy Martin to stir thing up by saying "When *Irish* Shay Dempsey is finished with Mason he's not going to be no *pretty boy* anymore".

Mason didn't take kindly to this and as he walked off the stage he shouted abuse not at Shay, but at Paddy.

When they got back to Dexter who had been sitting at the back of the conference room, Dexter turned to Shay and said "Think of Mason as an American Gary Britain son".

Paddy then said "Yeah man smash the pretty mother fucker".

Shay just smiled and replied to both of them "Don't worry I'm going to put on the performance that will show the world who Shay Dempsey is".

He met up with Kelly in the lobby after and they spent the rest of the day in the casino in the hotel. The weight in wasn't until the evening and went without a hitch, both boxers weighing in bang on the 12 stone limit. When that was done Shay had a good feed and went straight up to his room to get a good night sleep.

The day of the fight Shay gave his Mom and Kenny a call and they both wished him luck and said they would be watching the fight at The Squared Circle where Dexter was having it beamed live. Shay was really motivated and feeling in the best shape of his career.

While he was getting ready to leave his room, he got a surprise call off his old mate Sparky. He asked Sparky if he was going to Dexter's club to watch the fight.

Sparky replied to a shocked Shay "That it would be hard to watch it there as him and a 2 of his other mates had just checked in to a motel in Atlantic City to watch him fight".

Shay laughed and said "You got tickets for the fight then?"

Sparky replied "No mate, we were hoping if you could sort us out with some. I'll pay for them".

Shay said joyfully "Course I can mate and don't worry about the money I'm just chuffed to have you here".

He called Dexter and told him he needed 3 tickets for the fight, Dexter said "No worries he would sort it out".

After getting off the phone with Dexter he went and knocked on Kelly's door to tell her Sparky and the boys had come over to see him fight.

Kelly said "That's brilliant Shay, it will be good to have some of your mates cheering you on".

Shay and Kelly went back to his room and relaxed by watching films, Shay seemed really relaxed to Kelly he didn't look like someone who would be fighting in a few hours time.

They watched films for a few hours until Paddy came and got Shay to take him down to the changing room. Shay's fight was 5th on the card out of 8 fights the main event was a big grudge match between 2 American heavyweights that was a highly anticipated fight. As the show got underway Shay got changed and warmed up with Paddy for his American debut.

Paddy kept telling him "Lead him where you want him kid, use your hand speed and power, he won't be able to handle you".

Shay nodded his head at Paddy as he put Shay's green white and gold robe on him.

They called Shay to come to the ring; he waited at the entrance to the main room at the plaza.

The announcer called his name saying "Entering the ring hailing from Dublin, ladies and gentlemen, *Irish* Shay Dempsey".

Shay walked out to a big round of applause from the American crowd, Dexter had got them to play the fields of Athenry, Shay's Dads favorite Irish song as he walked to the ring, Shay slipped through the ropes and moved round the ring waiting for Mason to appear.

When Mason came out the place went wild, there were people holding American flags in the air and the chant of "U.S.A. U.S.A" rang through the air.

Mason got into the ring looking confident as he paraded himself in front of the welcoming crowd. The ref called them to the centre of the ring and gave them their final instructions.

Shay walked back to his corner, Paddy tapped him on the shoulder and said "Take him good kid, take him good".

The bell sounded to start the 1st round, Mason came straight at Shay with a sharp one, two, but as Mason let them go Shay had already danced out of the way and countered with a machine gun like combo of 5 straight Punches to Mason's nose busting it open. Blood spilled from Mason's face, but he moved in again, as Mason stepped in Shay stepped to the side and caught him with a big right hook. Mason was dazed by this and stumbled forwards and Shay shot out another fast combo of 5 straight shots to Mason's face. The crowd was going crazy, they may have been pro Mason, but they could appreciate great boxing.

Shay moved away like he was floating on air, Mason slowly came forward again, he doubled a jab which Shay slipped and paraded, then countered again this time with an evil right hand that hit Mason smack on the nose spreading it across his face. Mason winced in pain and went down on one knee to take the count. He got up at the count of 8 and the ref asked him if he wanted to continue, he raised his gloves and nodded his head and the ref told them to box on. The rest of the round was a white wash for Shay, Mason couldn't get near him. Shay pumped out a sweet jabs and some devastating right hands which caught Mason every time.

The bell went to end the 1st round; Mason slowly walked back to his corner and slumped on to his stool.

Shay sat down in his corner, Paddy gave him some water and said "Kid that was perfect, right this round do the same again, you will stop him if you do".

Shay nodded and got up to start the 2nd round.

Mason came out with his guard a lot higher and moved towards Shay. Shay circled him shooting out a fast jab to his head and then dropping a heavy right to Mason's body. Bit by bit Shay was dismantling Mason and everybody shot was taking its toll.

Mason's face was a complete mess and Shay moved in for the finish, he pushed Mason back to the ropes and let rip with the Casey special, the straight right at the end of the combo knocked Mason down and through the ropes into the press and

commentators sitting around the ring. The ref didn't even bother counting and called the fight over.

The ref raised Shay's arm in victory, Shay looked down to the side of the ring where Kelly, Dexter and Samantha were, and they were all standing there applauding him.

A few seats behind them he could see the Newtown boys and shouted at Sparky who was cheering and applauding with the rest of the lads "Was that alright Sparky?"

Sparky just put his thumbs up to show Shay what he thought.

Shay then went over to make sure Mason was o.k., he had been helped back into the ring and apart from his face being a state he seemed fine.

Shay thanked him for the fight; Mason said to him "No one has ever done that to me before; you're definitely going to be champ".

Shay thanked him and then went over to Paddy and gave him a hug, Paddy said to Shay "Well done kid, that was great, now go have a few days off then your back in training, your fighting in 3 months time". Shay was shocked they had already sorted him another fight, but knew at the age of 28 he needed to start moving up the world rankings if he was ever going to get that dream title fight.

As soon as he got changed he called his Mom, she was still at The Squared Circle with Kenny and over 2000 other people who had stayed up to the later hours to watch Shay's fight.

His Mom said over the noisy crowd that were there "I'm so proud of you son and your Dad would be to, hold on Shay Kenny wants to talk to you".

His Mom passed the phone to Kenny who said "Son that was unbelievable, you were great. Where the hell did you learn to move like that?"

Shay laughed and said "Paddy has had me taking dancing lessons"

Kenny replied laughing "Dancing lessons? Well whatever he's got you doing its working a treat, well done son".

Shay thanked Kenny and asked him to put his Mom back on, he told his Mom that he loved her and missed her, his Mom replied "I love you too son and I hope you come home soon".

Shay told his Mom he would try and said goodbye.

He spent the rest of the night celebrating in Atlantic City with Kelly, Sparky and the other Newtown lads; he had just earned 20 thousand dollars around 15 grand for this fight with Mason, and spent nearly 3 grand of it taking his friends out for a good night in the hotels casino.

Sparky and the other Newtown lads headed back to England the next day Kelly went back to New York with Shay as she still had a few days left before she had to be back.

When they got back to New York, Kelly told Shay she wanted to go and see the sights before she went back, but understood if Shay didn't want to come with her.

When Kelly said this Shay smiled and replied "Kell to be honest, I haven't been to see any of them, I've been just too busy training, so I will defiantly come with you".

Kelly smile at him she gave Shay a hug and told him how proud she was of him and how proud his Dad would be.

Shay nodded and replied "I just wish he was still here to see it".

Kelly hugged him again and said "Well I think he's up there looking down at you Shay".

Shay smiled and replied "I hope so Kell, I really do".

They got up the next day and they went all over New York visiting all the main sights, they went to the Empire State Building first then to pay their respects at Ground Zero where the World Trade Centre used to be before the terrorist attack. From there they went on the ferry over to the Statue of Liberty, they had pictures taken at all of them and were really enjoying their day sightseeing. They got a cab and were on their way to central park when Shay told the taxi driver to stop the cab. Kelly asked him what was wrong as Shay got out of the car, Kelly paid the cabbie and went over to Shay and asked again what was wrong. Shay was just staring upwards and pointed at the building across the street. Kelly looked up and realized what Shay was mesmerized about, the building he was pointing at was Madison Square Garden, to Shay it was the Mecca of boxing. He had always gone on to Kelly since they were kids about this place, telling her about all the great fighters that had fought there and he used to say one day he would love to fight there.

Kelly asked him if he wanted to go and have a look round, but Shay had already started crossing the street towards the entrance. It was all closed up apart from the foyer where there were big pictures of the legendary fighters that had fought there, there were also pictures of basketball stars from the New York Nicks who played there home games there.

Shay turned to Kelly with a big smile on his face and said to her "One day my name will be up in lights in front of here".

Kelly smiled and replied "I'm sure it will be Shay, now can we go to Central Park?"

Shay snapped out of his trance like state and said "Yeah of course we can".

They spent the rest of the day walking around Central Park seeing all the different parts of the massive area of trees and grass in this concrete metropolis.

They finished their sightseeing at time square where they enjoyed a meal at Planet Hollywood.

They went back to Shay's apartment after the long day of sightseeing and went straight to sleep.

When they got up in the morning Shay took Kelly shopping in all the designer stores New York had to offer. Kelly was in her element trying on loads of the top designer clothes and buying most of them. They would have been there longer if it wasn't for the fact Kelly had to get her plane back to England that day. Shay took her to Newark Airport and made sure she checked in o.k. her plane was ready to board and Shay and Kelly seemed to both get very emotional as they parted. Kelly thanked Shay for an amazing trip to New York.

Shay replied a bit teary eyed "No Kell thank you for coming over, it means a lot you did".

They both looked at each other and Shay went to give Kelly a peck on the lips, the emotion seemed to get the better of both of them and the peck turned into a full blow kiss. The only reason they stopped was an announcement on the tannoy for the final boarding of Kelly's plane home.

Shay and Kelly looked embarrassed at having such a passionate kiss; Kelly tried to make a joke about it by saying "Do you kiss all your friends like that?"

Shay laughed and replied "Well I would, but Sparky's goatee beard itches' my face".

They both laughed and the tension seemed to ease. Shay said goodbye to Kelly and she boarded the plane back to England.

Shay was straight back into training for his next fight and when he talked to Dexter, he told Shay he was going to have a very busy year with another 4 fights set up against top 10 world ranked opponents. Shay trained hard and stayed focused and over the next year took on some of the best boxers the world had to offer, stopping all 4 of his opponents in the early rounds of each fight.

Gary Britain was also busy; he had, had a rematch with Bruno for his British title and got another point decision against him. He then went on, to take on 2 of the top Super Middleweights in the world in 2 big fights in England beating both of them and setting himself up for a crack at Jimmy Tarnna and the world titles.

After Bruno was beaten by Britain for a second time he left the Goldsten stable and started trying to promote himself. He was still highly ranked in the world, but was finding it hard to get any other promoters to give him a fight with their boxers because of his crazy mentality.

Shay went to see Dexter at his penthouse to see who his next fight would be against, Shay was hoping that he was going to get a crack at Tarnna, with his new found skills he was pretty confident he could beat the unbeaten Champion.

Dexter told him to sit down and started to tell him about his next fight. Shay asked if he was going to get a crack at the Tarnna?

Dexter replied "No Shay, we tried, but the Tarnna camp have already signed a mega money deal with Goldsten to fight Gary Britain in England in 6 months time for the title, but your definitely in line for a title shot".

Shay looked disappointed at this news and asked Dexter who he would be fighting next?

Dexter smiled and said to Shay "You're going to like this Shay; it's a big one, one that I know you will be happy about".

Shay leant forward and asked again "Who is it Dext? Who am I fighting?"

Dexter replied "You will be fighting Bruno Beef for the vacant European Super Middle weight title in 5 months time".

Shay's disappointment turned to complete joy, he was going to get the chance to avenge his one defeat as a professional and become a European Champion as well.

Shay then asked Dexter "So where is the fight being held then Dext?" Dexter gave Shay a smile that would light up any room and replied "Oh yeah, I haven't told you yet, I'm putting the show on so I have hired the Aston Villa football stadium for the show".

Shay looked at Dexter and could barely get his words out, he said "Do you mean" before Shay could say anything else Dexter replied "Yeah Shay, that's right, you're going home".

CHAPTER 19



When Shay got back to his apartment, the first thing he did was to phone his Mom, Kenny and Kelly to tell them the news. They were all really happy that he was coming back to England, his Mom and Kenny hadn't seen him in over a year and were looking forward to him coming back. Kelly was really happy as well, she was glad that he was coming back and had got another title fight.

Shay told them he would be back in Britain by the end of the month; Kelly asked him "So do I need to look for somewhere else to live then?"

Shay laughed and replied "No Kell, I'm probably only going to be back for 6 months, so if you want I'd love you to stay with us in the house."

Kelly asked "Us? Is Paddy stopping here as well?"

Shay replied "No Kell he's stopping at a hotel, Isabella my dance instructor is stopping with us".

Kelly paused for a second and then said "O.k. so are you and Isabella together then?"

Shay then paused and replied "Well kind of, we have got quite close over the last year, but she's a bit too possessive for me. She insisted on coming to see where I come from".

Kelly then asked “Well wouldn’t it be better if I moved out so you and Isabella could be here on your own?”

Shay just said “Kell you’ve been living at my place for over a year, it’s your home now and I want my best mate round me when I come back”.

Kelly replied “Well o.k. as long as you are sure?”

Shay replied “Kelly I’m more than sure, see you in a month’s time”.

Shay’s training had been cut down by Paddy for the last month he was in New York, Paddy just wanted Shay to keep himself fit and there real training would start 3 months before the title fight.

Dexter had arranged with Kenny that Paddy was going to use Casey’s Gym while they were in England to train Shay.

At the end on the month Shay flew back home with Dexter, Paddy wasn’t coming over for another month when Shay would be full on with his training.

When Shay got through customs at Birmingham airport, Kelly was waiting to give him a lift home, Kelly was shocked when only Dexter and Shay came out.

Kelly asked Shay “Where’s Isabella then Shay?”

Shay smiled and shook his head and replied “She aint coming Kell, don’t ask it’s a long story”.

Kelly replied “O.k. it’s a shame I was looking forward to meeting her, anyway give us a hug, it’s good to see you”.

Shay gave Kelly a big hug and said “It’s good to see you as well Kell, will you take me round to my Mom’s house”.

Kelly smiled and said “Yes of course I will” she then asked Dexter if he wanted a lift?

Dexter smiled and replied “No thanks Kell, here’s my lift”, Samantha had just pulled up in her brand new Aston Martin.

As Dexter was getting in he called over to Shay and said “Right son, be at my office tomorrow. I’ll go through all the details with you”.

Shay replied “Alright Dext see you tomorrow”, and got into Kelly’s car.

When they got to Shay’s Mom’s house his Mom was waiting at the door to greet them. Shay ran up his Mom’s path like a little boy who’d missed his Mommy and gave her a big hug and a kiss.

Shay's Mom hugged him tightly and said "Welcome home son, I've missed you so much".

Shay replied with a tear in his eye "It's good to be home Mom, I've missed you as well, how you been?"

Shay's Mom smiled and replied "I'm fine son, now come in out the cold both of you".

They went inside and Shay could smell that his Mom had made him one of his favorite meals.

He said "Are you cooking coddle Mom?"

His Mom replied "Yes son, I haven't made one in a while, but thought I'd welcome you home with one of your favorites, it will be ready in a few minutes".

Shay and Kelly sat down in the living room and his Mom came in with his Irish broth full of sausages, bacon and vegetables, with two thick slices of crusty bread on the side of the tray. Shay tucked in like he hadn't been fed before, Kelly and his Mom just sat there both laughing at how fast he was eating. Kelly and Shay's Mom had a small bowl of it, but Shay finished his massive bowl a long time before them.

He looked up at his Mom with a very satisfied face and said "Mom it's good to be back home, that was lovely, Marc De Paul's got nothing on you".

Kelly and Shay spent the rest of the day at his Moms as he told them about his year in New York, when they got back to Shay's house the jet lag had started to kick in, so Shay called it a night and slept in his own bed for the first time in a year.

He got up the next day, he got dressed and went down stairs, Kelly had got up before him and made him a full English breakfast. All the time Shay was in New York he could never really enjoy their massive portions of food as he was always training and watching his weight. He thanked Kelly for the breakfast and got stuck into the plate of sausage bacon eggs and tomatoes. Kelly asked him what time he was going to see Dexter?

Shay replied "I'm going to go in a bit, but first I'm going to go and put some flowers on my Dad's grave".

Kelly smiled at him and asked if he wanted her to come to the grave with him before she went to the restaurant?

Shay looked at Kelly smiled and replied “No Kell, I just want to go on my own, but thank you for offering”.

As Shay finished off his breakfast he asked Kelly how the restaurant was doing.

Kelly replied “Yeah it’s busier than ever, we had a bit of a problem a few months ago, but it worked out good for us”.

Shay asked in a shocked voice “Problems? What problems? How come you never told me?”

Kelly replied “Shay you were in New York, there was nothing you could have done, and anyway it worked out really well”.

Shay asked “So what was the problem then?”

Kelly told him that someone had told the papers that Marc De Paul wasn’t French and was really a half English and half Irish lad from Newtown who used to hang out with a gang causing trouble in the area.

Shay then asked her what happened next.

Kelly took a sip of here tea and continued “Well there was a big peace in the Birmingham post about it, then I asked them to come round to talk to me and Mark about it. When they did I span the story how hard it was for Mark growing up in Newtown and how he had gone to college and worked in restaurants in London and France to learn how to become a chef. Then I told them with your help he opened Marc De Paul’s and he didn’t think anyone would come to a restaurant if they knew it was a kid from Newtown cooking the food”.

Shay then asked “So what did the papers do next?”

Kelly smiled and replied “They gave us a 2 page spread all about Mark and his struggle to become a chef, since that we have never been busier”.

Shay looked at Kelly smiled and said “See I knew it was a good idea to get you running the place, if that had have been left to me and Mark we would of probably battered the reporter. Well done Kell you deserve a pay rise”.

Kelly laughed and said “You have already given me one Shay, but thanks for offering”.

Shay laughed and said “You cheeky cow, fair play to you, you deserve it”.

Shay went to his Dads grave to pay his respects, the head stone had now been put on, Shay could see from how immaculate the grass and fresh the flowers were on the grave that his Mom was up here a lot. He laid the flowers on his Dad's grave and bowed his head in prayer asking his Dad to give him the strength to win the title.

From the grave yard Shay drove down to The Squared Circle to see Dexter, he went into his office and Dexter asked him to sit down.

Dexter asked him how his first night home was; Shay told him that he spent most of it at his Moms and all about what Kelly had done for the restaurant.

Dexter replied "That was good thinking by her; I think we should get her involved with your P.R. for this fight".

Shay said "You aint pouching her from the restaurant Dext".

Dexter laughed and said "No mate she could do it as well and I bet I pay better than you".

Dexter then told Shay what deal he had got for him for his title fight, he said "Right son, Sky have offered us a big price for the rights to show the fight so your purse will be around 100 grand, how does that sound?"

Shay was stunned at how much he was going to get paid; he replied "Yeah that sounds good to me Dext".

Dexter then said "There is one thing though; Gary Britain is fighting Jimmy Tarnna for the World title on the same night, so our show will be on Sky Sports first then they are having a pay per view show after for the world title fight".

Shay asked, "they are not having his title fight at the Villa are they?"

Dexter shook his head and replied "No Shay, they are holding the fight at Wembley arena son, he won't be fighting until 2 in the morning and the crowd for our show will be twice as big as his, their nothing to do with our show, but I just thought I'd tell you right away that you were fighting on the same night".

Shay shrugged his shoulders and said "Dext it don't bother me mate, Tarnna is going to smash him up anyway".

Dexter continued to tell Shay about the show, he told him that Ronnie Docker was fighting for the British Middleweight title against a new boxer on the scene Vinny Burr; also Brian Taylor was taking on Danny O'Dyer, it was going to be a great show.

Shay nodded his head in agreement, and then asked Dexter, “So how’s it been organizing a deal with Bruno then?”

Dexter rubbed the back of his neck just from the sound of the name and replied “It’s been a nightmare son, the geezer is a complete nutter, but he has had to agree with all my demands as no other promoter would touch him. He told me Shay, he reckons he’s going to knock you out again”.

Shay sat there smiled and replied “Well we will just have to see about that”.

Dexter told Shay that they would be having a press conference next week to announce the fights and venue. When Shay left Dexter’s office he headed straight round to Casey’s Gym to see Kenny, he walked through the doors, the gym was busy with loads of young and old pro’s training. Shay stood next to the doors and smiled to himself thinking how much he had missed the old gym.

When Kenny saw him standing there he shouted over to Shay “So the prodigal son returns”.

Shay looked over at Kenny who was standing next to the ring instructing 2 young boxers who were sparring. Shay went over and gave Kenny a big hug.

Kenny hugged him back and said “Welcome home son, it’s good to see you back”.

Shay replied “It’s good to be back Ken, how have things been while I’ve been away?”

Kenny told him about all that had been going on at the gym and that he had a few good prospects coming through.

Kenny and Shay chatted for a while, and then Kenny pointed out what he had done on one of the walls of the gym. Shay smiled when he saw a big montage of pictures of him boxing from when he started as a kid right up to his last fight in New York.

Kenny said to Shay “You put this gym on the map son and we are so proud of you here”.

Shay thanked Kenny for all his help and asked him if he would help him during his training. Kenny replied “Won’t Paddy be coming over to train you?”

Shay told him that he would, but Paddy had already said that if Kenny wanted to help out he would be more than happy as you know me so well.

Kenny nodded his head and with a big smile on his face replied “Of course I will son”.

After Shay left the gym he popped round to his Moms to make sure she was o.k. then headed back to his home in Harbourne. When he got home Kelly was already there and had cooked a meal for them. Shay was well impressed with how well Kelly could cook now.

He said “Have you been taking lessons off Mark? As you couldn’t boil an egg before”.

Kelly smiled and replied “Well when you’re in that environment you tend to pick things up”.

Shay nodded as he tucked into his food and said “Well Kell you’ll make someone a great wife someday”.

Kelly laughed at this and asked Shay “Talking of wives, how come Isabella didn’t come over with you?”

Shay looked up from his plate and said “Me and Izzy aint together anymore, the women was just too possessive”.

Kelly replied “Ahh Shay I’m sorry to hear that are you o.k?”

Shay smiled and said “Yeah Kell I’m fine, she just didn’t like the fact that my best friend was a women and she didn’t want you staying here so I told her it was over. That’s it really, I’m not having any women tell me who I can and can’t be friends with”.

Kelly smiled and said “Good for you Shay, but I would have moved out if you had wanted me to”.

Shay just shook his head and said “No way Kell this is your home now you can stay here as long as you like”.

For the rest of the week Shay spent most of his time with Kelly or his Mom, he did meet up with Sparky and a few of his old Newtown pals as well, they were buzzing when he told them where and when he was fighting next.

Sparky said to Shay “Well at least we won’t have to travel half way round the world to see you fight”.

Shay laughed and told Sparky he would make sure he got him and the boy’s ringside tickets for the fight.

The day of the press conference had come, it was being held in one of the many function rooms at Villa Park. All of the local and national newspapers were there along with the Sky Sports cameras. Dexter announced the fight for the European title and told them it would be right here at Villa Park.

Bruno as always hadn't turned up yet, one of the reporters asked Shay "So Shay do you think you can really beat Bruno after the beating he gave you last time?"

Shay replied with a smile on his face "Yes I do, I put him down 3 times in that fight, so I know I can hurt him, I'm more of a complete fighter now and I think it will be an easy victory for me".

As Shay finished his sentence Bruno walked into the room, he had just caught the end of what Shay had said and shouted at Shay as he walked to the front of the press conference "So you think it's going to be easy Dempsey? Kid I'm going to school you again like I did last time".

Shay stood up out of his seat and stared at Bruno, as Bruno got closer to the front Dexter said to him "Ahh Bruno so glad you could make it, take a seat on this side of me".

Bruno stopped looked at Dexter like he was going to tell him where to go, but then bit his lip and sat on the other side of Dexter away from Shay. One of the reporters asked Bruno what he thought about Shay and the title fight. Bruno as cocky and as brash as ever started by saying "I'm going to do what I did last time; I'll give Dempsey another hard lesson in boxing".

The reporter replied, "But Bruno he knocked you down 3 times in the fight, so you got to have some respect for Shay's power at least?"

Bruno leant back on the chair and then said "I'll give him that he shocked me with his power, but like the warrior I am I got up and schooled him and he won't be putting me down this time, he's getting another hard lesson".

Before any other reporters could ask any more questions Bruno turned to Shay and said "Anyway Dempsey what's with the name change to Irish? Was that to get the Mick's on side? You're from Birmingham son last time I looked that was in England".

Shay looked at Dexter to say what should I say to that?

Dexter spoke up then and replied “Yes Shay is English and proud of it, but his Mom and Dad are both from Ireland and after his Dad passed away he took the name Irish as a tribute to his Dad”.

Bruno sat there laughing and said “So Dempsey your Mom and Dad are Irish? That explains how thick you look”.

Bruno paused for a second and then said to Shay “Oh Dempsey I heard your Dad died of a heart attack just after I knocked you out? Best not let your Mom watch this one son, don’t want her popping her clog’s as well”.

Shay exploded in an uncontrollable rage, Dexter didn’t even try and stop Shay as he flew passed him to get to Bruno, Shay took Bruno clean off his chair with big right hand and they wrestled on the floor both smashing each other in the face. It took 8 security guards to separate them, 6 of them had to hold Shay back. He was so incensed with rage after what Bruno had said. The press and TV people loved it, this fight had just become a must see, even if you didn’t like boxing you were going to be tuning in for this one.

Dexter got Shay out of there and calmed him down.

He said to Shay “Right son you got to stay cool, use that rage in the ring, but just keep your head”.

Shay looked at Dexter with a deadly stare and replied “Dext I will, but I don’t think I could be in the same room as him again until the fight”.

Dexter nodded his head and said “Shay after that you won’t have to be, you just make sure you focus on beating him”.

Shay stood there just shaking his head still no believing what Bruno had just said and answered Dexter “Don’t worry Dext that cunts going down”.

When Shay got back to his house Kelly called him into the living room.

Shay went in and said “Did you hear what Bruno said at the conference?”

Kelly replied “Yeah he’s well out of order. Cracking dig though Shay they have show it on Sky Sports about 20 times already”.

Shay smiled and said “Well he’s going to get a few more of them when we meet in the ring Kell”.

Kelly then said to Shay “Shay watch this, it’s the Tarnna, Britain press conference, there showing it live now”.

Shay sat down and watched as Frank Goldsten announced the world title fight between Jimmy ‘*The Piranha*’ Tarnna and Gary ‘*Great*’ Britain. The first question one of the reporters asked was to Gary and what he thought about what had been said at the Dempsey, Beef press conference earlier.

Britain was taken by surprise by this, he was supposed to be answering questions about his big fight and the press were more interested in what he thought about Shay.

Britain had to keep his golden boy image up and said to the reporter “Well I thought what Bruno said was wrong and not needed in the noble art of boxing”.

Gary may have thought that would have been the end of it, but every other question the press asked was about Shay’s and Bruno’s fight, they even asked Jimmy Tarnna for a prediction.

Jimmy told them in broken English “I think Dempsey wins, he got a good trainer”.

Goldsten kept trying to move the questions back to the title fight, but the press were hooked on now what had become one of the most anticipated fights of the year, Goldsten didn’t like this and cut the press conference short.

Shay sat in his living room with a big smile on his face, watching Sky Sports play clips of his press conference every half hour and having every boxing pundit talk about the fight.

Shay called his Mom to make sure she was alright and not to upset about what had been said, his Mom told him she was fine and that his Dad would be proud of what he done on telly.

Shay’s Mom then said “Just make sure you knock that little bollocks out”.

Shay laughed and replied “Don’t worry Mom I will”.

The press were all over Shay, they were constantly outside his house wanting to talk to him, not just about the fight, but about his switch to being called Irish. A couple of the British press had ran with this story and seemed to be pro Bruno and wanted to discredit Shay’s name.

Shay would never answer any questions on this, he was proud of his Irish roots, but just as proud to have been born and raised in England.

Dexter knew that all the press talk could damage Shay's reputation, so he asked Kelly to help him with Shay's promotion. Shay was more than happy with this as it meant he could get on with just training for his fight.

There were 3 months to go to the fight, Villa Park was already sold out and over 42 thousand people were going to be there.

Paddy Martin had arrived in England and Shay's training had started. Paddy and Kenny hit it off straight away, Kenny knew he could learn a lot off Paddy and Paddy knew having Kenny round who had known Shay since he was a kid would be invaluable asset. Shay was being worked hard by both of them; Kenny couldn't believe how much Shay had improved under Paddy's tutelage. Paddy and Kenny talked a lot about the tactics for the fight, Kenny told Paddy about the problems Shay had at the time of the last fight with Bruno, and that their plan went out the window as soon as the fight started.

Kenny told Paddy that they had planned to out box Bruno and use Shay's hand speed to beat him.

Paddy replied "Well Ken I think we should use the same tactics, Shay has faster hands now and his movement is excellent, I think his going to bust this Beef bloke up".

Kenny agreed and all Shays' training was set up for hand speed and movement.

Kelly had been busy promoting Shay's image, Kelly got a double page spread in one of the national newspapers telling the story of why Shay was now known as Irish. Kelly span the story really well, they had an interview with Shay's Mom that told how devastated Shay was after his Dad died and that it was a tribute to his Dad. Kelly had also got in the story of Shay representing England as an amateur and was really proud to be English. It was a heartwarming story and only someone with no soul after reading this would hold his tribute to his Dad against him. Kelly had come up with the headline as well, it read in big bold letters across the top of the article, "*English power, Irish pride*". This and all the other things Kelly did for Shay's image really quieted the press down about the Irish switch and concentrate on the really matter, the boxing.

Shay's preparation for the fight was going excellent with Paddy and Kenny working together in tandem, Shay knew he had the best team he could dream of helping him.

There was less than a week to go before the fight; Shay's European title fight had got more column inches in the British press than Britain's world title fight.

On one of the few rest days Shay had, he was sitting at home relaxing when his phone rang. He didn't recognize the number the, but answered it anyway, he said "Hello who is this?"

Shay could hear the other person breathing on the other end of the phone, and just as he was going to hang up the person replied "Hi Shay its Emma, I just wanted to phone to see how you are doing".

Shay sat there speechless for a few seconds not knowing what to say and thinking Emma had some cheek calling him.

Shay then replied in a very calm voice "Oh hi Emma I'm good thanks, how are things with you?"

Emma said "Not to good Shay, Gary is not being very nice to me at the moment and has been slagging you off a lot over the last few months. I can't stand it when he says bad things about you. I think I need to split up with him".

On hearing this Shay took a deep breath, he still had deep feelings for Emma and did miss her every now and then.

He replied to her by saying "Ahh sorry to hear that Em, but why you telling me this?"

Emma replied in the soft sexy voice she always used when she wanted something off Shay, She said "I was just thinking babe, if I came back to Birmingham we could meet up for a chat?"

Shay replied inquisitively "Oh yeah Em what for?"

Emma then said "Shay since we split up I have really missed you, I never stopped loving you, I just got caught up in it all with Gary. I was thinking we could get back together".

Shay paused for a second then said "What you just want it to go back to the way it was?"

Emma replied to him "Yes Shay why not, we should never have split up in the first place, I should never have done what I did, I am sorry".

Shay sat there in disbelief and replied in a very angry voice "You're sorry? You're fucking sorry? You were shagging that Britain cunt for

2 years while we were together, you spent over 100 grand of my money over that time and expect me to just say its o.k. all's forgiven?"

Emma replied "Yes Shay way not? We have got history together and I know you still love me, we can work it out if you like".

Shay shouted down the phone at her "Are you joking Em? Yeah I do still care about you, but let me make one thing clear, there is no way on God's green earth that I would ever get back with you. You are a complete nightmare who only looks out for herself, so do me a favor and leave me the fuck alone".

Emma didn't expect this response and replied nastily "I was only seeing if you would, I'd never go back with you, Gary is a better boxer and better in bed than you will ever be and when he wins the title and you don't just remember I'll be laughing at you".

Shay laughed and said "Britain beating Tarnna are you on crack Em? Anyway Em I'm really glad you called, but this is me hanging up".

Shay put the phone down just as Kelly walked in and asked who was on the phone? Shay smiled and replied "No one important and carried on watching telly.

Shay was all set for the fight now, he knew the plan and what to do, Kelly who had done such a good job promoting Shay, she had even sorted him a sponsorship deal with Brumsdale again but at a much higher price because of all the publicity Shay was getting.

Kelly had also helped design Shay's shorts and robe, but she was keeping it under wraps until the day of the fight.

Bruno and Shay were kept apart at the weigh in like they were for their last encounter, they both weighed in right on the 12 stone limit.

After the weigh in Shay went with Paddy and Kenny to Marc De Paul's and Shay ordered the biggest steak on the menu. As they sat there eating Kelly came over and sat down with them, they were all just chatting and enjoying the calm before the storm.

Kelly asked Kenny "Isn't it going to be strange for you sitting ring side instead of in Shay's corner".

Kenny replied "Yeah Kell, it will be, but I know Shay is in the best hands possible".

Paddy looked up from his plate turned to Kenny and said “Kenny what’s this about watching from ringside? You’re doing the corner with me right?”

Kenny smiled a big broad smile and replied “If you’re sure Pad”

Paddy then said “Ken you know Shay better than anyone, I don’t just what you in the corner I need you in the corner”.

Kenny smiled and replied “It will be an honor”.

Shay looked up from his food and said “Well now that’s all sorted, can someone please get me another steak”.

They all laughed and Kelly called the waiter over.

Kelly and Shay went home after the meal; they relaxed in their home until it was time to go to bed.

CHAPTER 20



Shay got up the day of the fight after a good night's sleep, he felt really good and motivated, he came down stairs, Kelly had made him breakfast and asked him how he was feeling?

Shay smiled at Kelly and replied "I feel real good Kell, all I can see is me beating Bruno nothing else".

Kelly smile and nodded her head at this and said "That's good to hear Shay now eat your breakfast".

Shay finished his breakfast then called his Mom; his Mom wished him luck and Shay told his Mom Kelly would pick her up about 8 o'clock that night to take her to the show. He called Kenny after, Kenny told Shay him and Paddy would meet him there at about 7 o'clock, he chatted to Kenny about tactics and the fight then Kenny told him to try and get some rest and relax for the rest of the day. He said he would and he gave Sparky a call to tell him that his and the lads tickets would be left on the door for them. Sparky thanked him and wished him luck.

Shay replied "No Sparky thank you and I don't need luck Bruno's getting it tonight, trust me".

For the rest of the day Shay just relaxed with Kelly, it was the perfect way for Shay to get ready for the fight.

Shay left his house in Harborne and made the 20 minute journey to Villa Park in Aston just down the road from where he was brought up as a kid.

When he got into the ground he saw Dexter with Richie Hatter and the film stars Conor Stevenson, Deanna Moore and Charlie Anderson chatting in the V.I.P entrance.

He walked over to Dexter and said “Hello”.

Richie then said to Shay “Alright Shay I’m commentating on your fight tonight son, you ready for it?”

Shay smiled and said “Of course I am Richie his going down mate”.

Dexter then said to Shay “Do you remember Conor, Deanna and Charlie you met them before at The Squared Circle”.

Shay replied “Yeah of course I do Dext”.

He shook Conor’s hand and said “I loved the sequel to have *I told you yet*, you played the character so well”.

Then he turned to Charlie and Deanna and said “I thought you two were great in it as well”.

Conor thanked Shay and replied “Yeah the sequel *what I done next* was a bit grittier and better written, I really enjoyed playing the part of a boxer in it”.

Shay chatted with them for a while until Paddy came up from the Villa’s home changing room and ordered Shay to get his ass down stairs.

They all wished him luck and told him they would be cheering him on. He went down to his changing room, Paddy was scorning him all the way there telling him he had to switch on and focus on the fight.

As they walked down the corridor to the changing room Shay saw Ronnie Docker and Danny O’Dyer chatting, they were all changed and ready for their fights, he wished them both luck, but couldn’t chat to them as Paddy was near enough pulling Shay down the corridor.

The show started at 8 o’clock at Villa Park, Sky was showing the whole show live, so a few of Dexter’s up and coming prospects would get some good exposure.

Shay sat in the home changing room he had all to himself watching the show on one of the big televisions they had in there. The new lads started the show off well; there were 3 good fights, which were competitive and very entertaining for the capacity crowd of 43 thousand at Villa Park.

Taylor and O’Dyer were next up in a 10 rounder; Paddy got Kenny to tape Shay’s hands up while he watched the fight. O’Dyer beat Taylor with an 8th round knockout; O’Dyer had put on a real good performance for a very pro Irish crowd.

Kenny brought over a box that contained Shay's robe and shorts for the fight, Kelly had been very secretive about the design she had Brumsdale do for Shay.

Kenny opened the boxes and the first thing he pulled out was 3 polo shirts for the corner men, they were plain green with team Dempsey printed on the back. Kenny then pulled out Shay's robe, it had down one side the English flag and down the other the Irish flag, on the back in big bold print it had *Irish* Shay Dempsey. The shorts were the same design as the robe with both flags on the front at the bottom there was the Brumsdale logo, but on the other leg where the Irish flag ran down there was his Dad's initials M.D printed in Celtic writing with R.I.P printed underneath.

Shay smiled when he saw this and he loved the design, Kenny turned the shorts round and on the back waist band of the shorts was Casey's gym motto '*Fear No Foe*' embroidered into them.

Kenny smiled as he showed it to Shay.

Shay said to Kenny "They're wicked Ken, Kelly has done a great job".

Paddy then noticed some writing on the back of the shorts, it was also on the robe and polo shirts, it read: *English by birth, Irish by the grace of God*, one of the things Shay's Dad used to say to him when he was a kid.

Shay put on his groin protector and his shorts and started to warm up. The Docker, Burr fight was well under way and as Shay shadow boxed around the room as he watched on. Docker lost a very close fought fight on a split decision; Vinny Burr was now the British middleweight champion.

Paddy now started to talk to Shay seriously as the fight drew closer. Paddy told him "Look kid you got all the tools to beat this bum, but you got to stay focused, the only thing I want on your mind is beating Bruno".

Shay nodded his head sweat dripped off him after his vigorous warm up and he was ready to go to war.

Bruno had already entered the ring to some cheers, but a hell of a lot more boos from Shay's home crowd.

Bruno smiled and snarled at the crowd and played the pantomime villain to perfection.

Shay had come out into the tunnel area of the ground and was waiting for his name to be announced.

The M.C announced his name as the field of Athenry rang out, 90 percent of the crowd started to sing along as Shay walked out. All Shay could see all around the ground were Irish flags being waved and mixed flags with England and Ireland on them and Dempsey printed in the middle. As the noise of the crowd hit him, it was like a switch, his eyes went into a dead stare and he looked focused and ready. Shay climbed the steps and slipped through the ropes, he danced round the ring with his hand in the air acknowledging the cheering crowd. Bruno tried to intimidate Shay by getting in his face, but as soon as Bruno came up to him, instead of Shay just trying to ignore him Shay got right in his face as well which shocked Bruno. The corner pulled them apart and they went to their corners. All the announcements were done the ref called them to the centre of the ring to give them their final instructions, there was a viscous exchange of words, neither of them would touch gloves, the ref eventually sent them back to their corners to get this European title fight underway. As Shay was waiting for the bell to start the fight he looked down to where his Mom, Kelly and the rest of his friends were sitting and pointed his glove at them, Dexter, Kelly and Samantha stood up and cheered him, Shay could see a few rows back Sparky and the Newtown lads singing his name.

Paddy shouted up at him "Focus kid, stay Sharpe".

The bell went to start the first round, Bruno charged out of his corner to try and get the jump on Shay straight away. As Bruno moved in with big hard hooks, Shay just danced away hitting Bruno with 5 unanswered jabs. Bruno looked incensed; he had pure rage in his eyes and was looking to finish this early, but Shay was just too quick and too slick for him. Every time Bruno got in range to throw a shot; Shay would hit him with 5 or 6 shots and move out of range. Bruno was relentless in his attacks, but he just couldn't catch Shay, Shay was really enjoying himself putting a show on for the cheering crowd calling Bruno on and landing shots at will.

The bell went to end the first round, Shay trotted back to his corner, Bruno had to be dragged back to his, he was so hyped up he just wanted to carry on.

When Shay sat down Paddy gave him a drink of water and said “Perfect kid, keep it up, hit and move I can’t believe this bum is in the same ring as you”.

Shay spat the water out and replied “He’s not fighting the same way that he did last time, his not thinking, I reckon I could of stopped him in that round if I had pushed it”.

Paddy put his gum shield back and said “Well fucking stop him kid, you don’t get paid for overtime, knock this bum out”.

Shay nodded his head looked down at Kenny who just said “Go for it son, finish him”.

Shay stood up and the bell went to start the second round.

Bruno came flying out again and Shay met him in the centre of the ring with a super fast 5 shot combination which opened a cut above Bruno’s left eye. Blood ran down Bruno’s face as he moved forward, but Shay didn’t dance away and stood his ground forcing Bruno to go on the retreat with some hurtful right hands. Bruno was dazed and now bleeding from the nose as well as the cut above his eye. Shay pushed him to the ropes and unloaded another thunderous 5 shot combination of straight punches, everyone hitting the target. Bruno tried to come back with a big left hook and a right hook, but Shay just danced away slipping both punches on the back foot. Shay then backed into the corner where Paddy and Kenny were watching from outside.

Kenny shouted “What you doing? Get out of the corner”.

Bruno moved in with a big right hand that had everything he had left behind it, Shay slipped to his right hand side and as he moved out of the corner he caught Bruno with two beautiful right hooks. Bruno’s momentum and the power of the right hooks took him crashing into the corner padding head first, his head bounced off the corner and he fell backwards towards the centre of the ring. The ref started to count, Shay stood in a neutral corner, Bruno rose to his feet at the count of 5 still dazed. The ref continued to count to 8 and then asked Bruno if he wanted to continue. Bruno raised his hands and nodded his head and ref told them to box on, Shay moved in for the finisher, Bruno shot out a desperate right hand which Shay parried and released a deadly right hand putting Bruno down again. The ref started to count and

Bruno just stayed on the floor making no effort to get up. The ref got to the count of ten and ended the fight.

Villa Park erupted in a sea of cheers and applause, Shay dropped to his knees with his hands in the air, he had done it he was European champion.

Paddy and Kenny rushed over to him and picked him off his knees and hugged him. Shay looked over at his Mom and Kelly who were both in floods of tears applauding him.

He walked over to the ropes and shouted “Mom I did it, that was for Dad”.

His Mom just smiled still with tears of joy streaming down her face and mouthed the words “Well done son”.

Shay looked behind his Mom and Kelly to salute the Newtown lads who had come to support him, they were going mental, cheering his name.

Dexter had come into the ring and went straight up to Shay and said “That was amazing son”.

Shay then asked Dexter “Can you get Kelly in here?”

Dexter didn’t even answer him and told one of the security men to lead her to the ring. As soon as she got in the ring Shay went up to her and gave her a big hug and a kiss on the lips and said “Thank you Kell, I couldn’t have done it without you”.

Kelly smiled at him and replied “Of course you could have Shay, I’m so proud of you”.

Shay hugged her again and then someone tapped him on the shoulder.

Shay turned round to see a very humble Bruno standing there, Bruno smiled and nodded his head and said “Well done Shay, I underestimated you; you’re a lot better than I thought you were, well done”.

Shay looked at Bruno shocked at this big brash bully being so humble, Shay replied “Thanks Bruno, you’re still a great boxer”.

Bruno then said “Well maybe we could have a rematch soon?”

Before Shay could answer Dexter stepped in and said “You can have a crack at the title Bruno when Shay has the World one round his waist”.

Dexter then took Shay into the middle of the ring to be presented with the title belt.

Shay and Bruno stood either side of the ref as the m.c announced “Ladies and gentlemen you’re new European champion *Irish* Shay Dempsey!”

The place erupted again as Shay’s hand was raised and the belt was put around his waist. Shay stayed in the ring for a while, getting his picture taken with Kenny and Paddy, he even got camera shy Kelly in a few of them. Sky Sports interviewed Shay and Dexter after, Shay showed great respect to Bruno telling the viewers he was still one of the best Super Middleweights around.

When they asked what was next for Shay, Dexter answered by saying that they would be looking to fight the winner out of Tarnna and Britain for the world titles and would be doing everything they could to get it on for next summer.

Shay headed back to the changing room and got changed to go and celebrate his title win in the V.I.P area at The Squared Circle.

When Shay got there with Paddy and Kenny, he walked into the main room and got a hero’s welcome. The place was packed with fan’s that had paid to celebrate with the newly crowned champion. Shay was led to the ring in the centre of the main room where the D.J was playing the music from. He paraded his European title around the ring holding it high above his head in triumph, the crowd was going crazy.

The D.J passed Shay the microphone to address the crowd, Shay said “Ladies and gentlemen and the Newtown lads in the V.I.P room”, there was then a big roar from the balcony overlooking the main room from all the Newtown lads that were there.

Shay continued “Thank you so much for coming and supporting me, it’s been a long haul to win a title, but I have done it”.

The crowd cheered and applauded as Shay held the belt over his head again.

Shay then said, “But it’s not over yet, I am aiming for the world title and won’t stop until I reach my goal”.

The crowd cheered and applauded again, Shay finished his speech by saying “I would like to really thank my Mom and my best friend Kelly for their support and Dexter for making this fight happen, to my trainers Paddy Martin and Kenny Case thank you for training me I defiantly couldn’t have done it without you and to my Dad I know you’re watching me from up there this is for you”.

Shay got out of the ring, he had his picture taken with fans and signed autographs and then headed to the V.I.P room to celebrate with his family and friends.

The alcohol flowed and Shay showed off his dancing talents by spinning Kelly, then Samantha and finally his Mom around the dance floor.

One of the Newtown lads laughed at Shay and said to Sparky after watching Shay strut his stuff “Look at Shay Spark, do you think he’s a woofter or what?”

Sparky looked at his mate and said “Don’t be fucking stupid”.

Then Sparky laughed and said “Well if he was you wouldn’t call him a puff to his face”.

Sparky and his mate both cracked up laughing; Shay came over to see how they were doing. He asked Sparky “What was so funny?”

Sparky still laughing said “Shay he thinks you’re gay mate”.

Shay looked at their mate in shock and asked “What the fuck makes you think that you silly cunt?”

Their mate stuttered and bumbled an answer out and replied “No I was just saying all the dancing was a bit gay, anyway you got that Kelly stopping at yours, I bet you are sorting that out every night?”. Shay stared at him more pissed off with what he thought Kelly and him were getting up to than him thinking he was gay.

Shay said to his mate “Me and Kelly are just friends, that’s it, and no mate I’m not gay”.

Sparky could see Shay was getting pissed off and said to him “Well Shay, I aint being funny mate, but that Kelly would be perfect for you, you get on so well and look at her, she’s gorgeous and fit as fuck too”.

Shay looked over at Kelly shaking her stuff on the dance floor with Conor Stevenson, Shay stared for a second and then said “Nah mate, we’re just friends that’s all”.

It was coming up to the start of the world title fight, Shay went and sat down with Kelly and his Mom ready to watch his probable next opponent. The music was turn off in the club and all the people in the main room watch the show on a big screen, the V.I.P room had big televisions on every wall for them to watch it on.

The challenger Britain came out first to ‘God Save the Queen’; it was an electric atmosphere in Wembley Arena. Tarnna came out next to a warm welcome as he was a well respected champ.

The fight itself was a boring drawn out affair, Tarnna who boxed very similarly to Shay threw loads of punches, but Britain had a good defense and blocked most of them and countered really well. The fight went the distance; Shay looked at Dexter to say who do you think won it?

Dexter just shrugged his shoulders to say he didn’t know. It was a close fight, but they gave a split decision to Gary Britain, Wembley Arena went wild Gary Britain had did the imposable and beat the unbeaten Tarnna.

Shay sat there shaking his head in disbelief, Britain was announced Champion of the World and the titles were presented to him. He held one in each hand and had one around his waist as he celebrated his historic victory.

Sky interviewed him straight away and he said all the normal stuff about owing it all to his Mom and Dad and his trainer, he even thanked Frank Goldsten for supporting him.

He then called Emma into the ring; Gary had got his corner man to take his gloves off him and led Emma to the centre of the ring. Britain got down on one knee looked up at Emma and said into the microphone in front of the 20,000 people there and the millions watching around the world “Emma you are the best thing to come into my life, I love you, will you do me the honor of becoming my wife?”

One of the corner men then came over with a box with the ring in and gave it to Gary. He opened it to reveal an engagement ring with a massive diamond in the centre of it. Emma put her hand over her mouth in disbelief, the whole of Wembley Arena was silent, and the whole of The Squared Circle was silent as well.

Emma looked down at Gary smiled and replied “Yes I will, I love you Gary”.

Gary put the ring on her finger and gave her a big kiss. The whole of Wembley went crazy, even Jimmy Tarnna applauded; Gary then got out of the ring and headed back to the changing room.

The people in the main room cheered and applauded as they heard the news.

Kelly turned to Shay and asked him if he was alright? Shay sat there shocked, but not surprised as he thought to himself that less than a week ago Emma was on the phone to him saying she was going to split up with Britain and wanted to get back with him. He smiled as he thought; it's funny what a world title can do for you.

He replied to Kelly "I'm fine Kelly honestly, I'm not bothered at all, all I am thinking of is taking them 3 belts off him".

Kelly smiled and gave Shay a big hug, Shay then asked Kelly if she was ready to go home.

Kelly said "yes" they said their goodbyes and headed home in a taxi. When they got back home, Shay poured them both a drink each and put some music on, they both sat down on the sofa with Shay's newly acquired belt lying on the floor in the middle of the living room. Shay had recorded his fight and Kelly told him to put it on so they could watch it while they listened to music and drank. They chatted about the night and how good it had been, Shay was obviously still full of adrenalin from winning the title. As they watched the fight Shay talked Kelly through the whole fight, explaining that when he backed into the corner at the end of the fight, he was leading Bruno into a trap and knew exactly what he was doing. When the recording was finished Kelly got up and turned the telly off, Shay watched on as she walked across the room, her dress hugging every curve of her body and then bent over to turn off the TV. As Kelly walked back she picked up Shay's belt and put it around her waist, she laughed as she shouted "Yo Shay I did it" a reference to the old Rocky movies.

Shay just sat there admiring this perfect looking woman, dancing around the living room.

The c.d finished and Shay got up to put another one on, he asked Kelly what she wanted on next?

Kelly smiled and said "Put something on we can dance too so you can show me some of your dance moves".

Shay looked over at Kelly and smiled as he put on a C.D. of old love songs from when they were kids.

The music started playing and they were instantly taken back to their teen's smooching with boyfriends and girlfriends at the Tuesday club in Newtown. Kelly smiled as all the memories came flooding back, Shay walked over to her slowly and put his hand around her waist and

released the title belt from around her. He threw the belt to one side, and then wrapped his hand around her waist tightly. He moved Kelly around the room in a sensual dance, leaning her back and sliding his hands down the side of her body. Kelly was in ore of Shay's dance moves and quite turned on by Shay's touch and rhythmic movement of his hips. Kelly held Shay tightly enjoying being moved around the room and shocked at how sensual and sensitive this championship boxer could be.

They were both entwined in the dance, the only way they could be more intimate was to be making love.

Shay was feeling it to as he rubbed his hand down her curvaceous body. Shay really wanted to kiss Kelly, but thought to himself that if he was wrong and she didn't feel the same it would ruin their friendship which meant more to him than anything. Kelly really wanted Shay to kiss her, but Kelly was thinking the same thing as Shay. Shay plucked up the courage and moved his lips towards Kelly's, this was more nerve racking than all his fights put together. Kelly could sense that Shay wanted to kiss her and thought to herself come on Shay do it; I want you to do it. Shay moved his head into position as they moved to the slow love songs playing on the stereo; he was still thinking to himself that if he was wrong it would change everything.

Shay looked Kelly deep in her eyes and went to say something.

Kelly put her fingers to Shay's lips and said "Don't say anything, just kiss me".

Shay didn't hesitate and kissed Kelly passionately, their hands moved all over each other's body's as Shay maneuvered Kelly towards the sofa. Kelly ripped Shay's shirt open, the buttons flew everywhere as she exposed his ripped 6 pack and chest. Shay pulled her designer dress off her ripping it at the side as he did. He slide his hand down the side of her stunning curvy body, they were at the point of no return, after this things would never be the same again.

Shay asked her if she was alright.

Kelly smiled at Shay and said "Yes Shay of course I'm alright".

Shay smiled and slowly slide her panties down her legs.

Shay was stopped in his tracks as he heard a loud knock on his front door.

Kelly asked in an annoyed voice “Who the fucking hell is that at this time of night, It half 4 in the morning”.

Shay went to the window and couldn't believe what he saw. It was Sparky and a few of the Newtown lads, when they saw him at the window they all started chanting “There's only one Shay Dempsey, there's only one Shay Demmmmpsey”.

Shay told Kelly to put some clothes on as he had to let them in as they were making so much noise.

Shay answered the door completely pissed off and said “Will you keep the noise down lads; this aint Newtown you know, anyway what the fuck you are doing here at this time of night”.

They pushed passed Shay and went into the house, Sparky told him that Dexter had closed the club and they thought they would celebrate with the champ.

Sparky then looked at Shay and asked “What the fuck you doing with your top off son, you're not going to bed are you?”

Shay shook his head and replied “No Sparky it doesn't look like I am”.

Sparky went into the living room where the rest of the Newtown lad's where. Kelly had got dressed quickly and had on one of Shay's training tops and some leggings.

The lads had brought a couple of case's of lager with them curtsy of Dexter, when Sparky heard the love songs playing on the stereo, he said “What the fuck are you listening to son?”

and started rooting through Shay's c.d collection.

Shay could see his ripped shirt and Kelly's ripped dress lying next to the sofa. He quickly walked over and picked them up and put them out of sight.

Shay looked over at Kelly who didn't look happy at all, Shay mouthed the word “Sorry” to her.

Kelly just smiled and shook her head in disbelief at having a full house at this time of night.

Sparky smiled as he put on a c.d of his choice, Bob Marley started to bellow out of the speakers singing “No women, no cry”.

Shay looked at Kelly and they both started laughing.

Sparky turned to them and said “What's so funny? You can't beat a bit of Bob”.

Shay laughed and replied “I know mate, pass me one of those beers son, and let’s finish the night off properly”.

CHAPTER 21



Shay and the lads partied and drank until nearly 8 in the morning, Kelly had headed off to bed after only an hour of the Newtown lads arrival.

Shay rose from his bed sometime in the afternoon the next day to the sound of the vacuum cleaner. He slowly walked down the stairs, his head pounding from the excesses of the drinking session last night. When he walked into the living room, Kelly was there trying to get the place tidy after the mess they had made last night.

Shay looked at the 3 black bags full of larger cans Kelly had collected from around the room and couldn't believe how much they drank last night.

Remembering what had happened before the lads arrived, Shay asked Kelly "Morning Kell are you o.k? Last night was a bit mental wasn't it".

Kelly turned the vacuum off looked over at Shay and replied "Yeah it was Shay; I can't believe we drank so much".

Kelly then continued with her vacuuming, Shay was quite surprised Kelly didn't say anything about what had happened, he thought about mentioning it to her, but then thought what if she was embarrassed about it, the one thing he didn't want to do was upset his best friend. Shay decided not to say anything about what had happened until Kelly did, but Shay was now seeing Kelly in a completely different light, not just as a best friend, but as a would be girlfriend. Kelly was feeling exactly the same way about Shay, she wanted them to be more than just friends, but like Shay, she wasn't going to say anything unless he mentioned it.

Kelly finished tidying up and went and made Shay a cuppa as he sat down and watched Sky Sports news to see what was being said about his great victory.

Kelly had been down to the newsagent's earlier that day and got all the papers. As he looked through the back pages, most of the boxing reports were about Gary Britain becoming World Champion and proposing to Emma after, the way the Britain fight was span in a lot of the papers they made out that his victory was a lot easier than it was.

The one paper even had a centre page spread about Gary and Emma, telling their story of how their love had grown over the years. Shay's

big title fight just had a small pieces in most of the national papers, Shay sat there shaking his head at how the papers had belittled his European title win.

Shay said to Kelly “Have you seen this crap they have written about Britain?”

Kelly replied “Yeah I’ve read them, they haven’t really said much in there about you winning your title”, seems a bit strange to me”.

Shay nodded his head and said to Kelly “I’m going to call Dexter to see what he thinks”.

He called Dexter and asked him about the papers and what their next move was, Dexter told him “Its Goldsten son, his got the papers sown up in Britain now, your fight should have got a lot more converge in the papers”.

Shay then asked him “So am I going to get a title shot?”

Dexter paused for a second and replied “Son it’s not as easy as that, come to my office in a week or so and I’ll talk to you about it, just relax Shay enjoy your victory you were great last night”.

For the rest of the day Shay lay on the sofa recovering from the night before still thinking about what had nearly happened between him and Kelly.

Kelly had gone to work and when she came back she brought Shay some food from Marc De Paul’s. They both had an early night and neither of them mentioned their encounter the night before.

Shay didn’t do much for the rest of the week, Paddy had gone back to New York and Kenny had told him to take a step back from training until he knew what was going to happen.

At the end of the week Shay went to Dexter’s office to see what he had planned for him. Dexter asked him to sit down, he looked really annoyed, and Shay asked him what was wrong?

Dexter paced up and down his office then looked at Shay and said “I got the new Super Middleweight rankings and you are ranked second behind Jimmy Tarnna.

Shay sat there quite pleased with this news and replied “Well that’s good news aint it? Jimmy’s just fought for the title so I should be next shouldn’t I?”

Dexter nodded his head and said “Yeah Shay in a perfect world you would be, but Tarnna wants a rematch, his manager Ned Redmond is trying to get a mega money fight in Vegas”.

Shay looked disappointed in this, but could see why Tarnna wanted the rematch back in America.

Shay said philosophically “Well we will get one after that then won’t we?”

Dexter looked at Shay with a serious look and replied “Son Tarnna aint even going to get his rematch, Goldsten has already confirmed Britain’s next 2 fight’s. The first is against Mason Mathews and the second is against Josh Fury there ranked 3rd and 4th in the world”.

Shay sat there stunned at this news he said “But I have beaten both of them Dext, how is Britain aloud to do this?”

Dexter who was still pacing replied “Somehow Goldsten has got the governing body’s to sanction both fights”.

Shay sat there completely disheartened then said “So what do we do now?”

Dexter replied “We wait son, Ned Redmond will take court action against Goldsten, and if I know Frank, Britain will have his next 2 fights as quickly as they can. I’d say 4 months apart so he will be free to fight in a year’s time”.

Shay shook his head and said “So what do I do in that time?”

Dexter turned to Shay and said “Take some time out for yourself, I’m going to work on getting you a big fight sometime in the next 12 months, just relax son and enjoy being the European Champ, I’ll be in touch soon”.

Shay left Dexter’s office feeling really low, he should have been on a high after winning the title, but just thought he was always going to be in Gary Britain’s shadow.

He went to Marc De Paul’s to have something to eat and to see Kelly, when he told her what Dexter had said.

Kelly replied “Well Shay why don’t you take a holiday, somewhere hot and just relax for a month or so. You need to recharge your batteries”.

Shay smiled and said “O.k then Kell do you fancy coming with me?”

Kelly smiled and replied “I’d love to Shay, but I can’t really leave the restaurant at the moment, after doing all the promotions for your last

fight I've got loads of paper work to do here. Why don't you ask Sparky and the lads if they fancy going away on a lad's holiday?" Shay looked disappointed that Kelly couldn't come, but as he thought about it the idea of a lad's trip sounded good.

Shay nodded his head at Kelly and said "Yeah, I think your right; I'll call Sparky when I get home".

He gave Sparky a call from his house and asked him if he and the lads would fancy 2 weeks in the sun, Sparky was well up for it and said he would call the lads and see who wanted to come.

Sparky got back to him the next day and told him there were only 4 of them that could get away at such short notice.

Shay replied "That's fine mate I'll book the tickets for 2 weeks time".

Sparky asked "So where we going mate and how much is it going to cost?"

Shay replied laughing "Sparky don't worry about the cost of the flights and the accommodation it's on me, just bring some spending money".

Sparky then said "Are you sure Shay, I don't mind paying my own way".

Shay just said "Sparky it's my way of saying thank you for all your support, just make sure you pack some sun screen as we are going somewhere hot".

Shay booked the holiday for him and his 4 mates straight away; he booked 2 weeks in Barbados with no expense spared.

In the 2 weeks before he left for his holiday Shay turned 28 and celebrated it at Marc De Paul's with his Mom and Kelly, when Kelly found out where Shay and the lads were going she looked gutted that she didn't say yes.

She said to Shay "Wow that's one place I've always wanted to go", Shay replied "Well Kell if you fancy going I could book another ticket no problem".

Kelly smiled, but said no as she knew she had so much work to do at the restaurant.

Shay said to her "Well maybe we could go another time".

Kelly gave him a smile and replied "Definitely Shay that would be great".

When Shay and the lads got to the airport, Sparky asked him “Right then Shay where we off to Ibiza, Ayia Napa, Costa del Sol?”

Shay smiled and gave them the tickets for the flights, in unison they said “Fuck me Barbados”, with big smiles on their face’s they boarded the plane to Barbados.

Shay had booked them a villa with its own swimming pool and its own private beach. The 5 bed room villa also came with its very own chef and butler, Shay had really not spared any expense.

They had a great time, enjoying the hot Barbados nights in some of the clubs in the holiday complex. They had quite a few parties at the villa, where they would invite people in the clubs back to enjoy their luxury accommodation. Shay was the only single one out of the lads and was getting a lot of attention from the lady’s at the resort.

At the last party they had before they went home Shay had got chatting to stunning blonde model called Gabriella who was on holiday with some of her friends. It was obvious to everyone that she was well into Shay and he seemed to be really getting along with her. Shay asked her if she wanted to go into his room for a chat as it was getting to noisy in the main room. Gabriella went into his room with him and that is exactly what they did, talk.

Shay told her all about his year in New York and all the fights he had, had, Gabriella did seemed interested in what he was saying, but was thinking to herself when is this bloke going to kiss me.

Shay then started telling her about his best friend Kelly and how much support and help she had gave him over the years.

They talked for hours mostly about his friendship with Kelly;

Gabriella asked him “So tell me, how come you and Kelly have never got together?”

Shay tried to explain that they were just friends and he wouldn’t want to jeopardize that.

Shay then paused for a second and told her about what had happened the night of his European title win.

Gabriella asked him “Well have you talked to her about it?”

Shay shook his head and said “No, she never mentioned it so I thought it was best not to”.

Gabriella smiled at Shay and said “Well she probably thinking the same thing Shay, I really think you need to tell her how you feel”.

Shay looked at her and replied "I don't know if I should, what if she doesn't feel the same?"

Gabriella replied "Shay you love that girl, I can tell that".

Shay looked at her and said "How do you know that, I only met you a few hours ago?"

Gabriella smiled put her hand on his and said "Shay we have been in your room for the past 2 hours and all you have talked about is Kelly"

Shay replied "Well I was just telling you about my friend".

Gabriella then said "Shay you are a single man on a lads holiday and how many women have you been with while you have been here?"

Shay paused for a second and replied "None, but that's not what I came here for".

Gabriella then said "Exactly, and you have had me sitting on your bed and not tried it on once, you need to tell her how you feel".

Shay thought about what she had said and decided there and then that he would tell Kelly how he felt when he got back to England.

Shay and the lads had, had a great holiday, when they landed back in Birmingham, Shay headed straight home to talk to Kelly.

He walked though his front door to find Kelly's Dad with her, Kelly was in floods of tears as her Dad comforted her. Shay asked Kelly what was wrong; Kelly's Dad stood up and led Shay out of the living room to talk to him.

Kelly's Dad told him through teary eyes that there had been an accident and that Kelly's Mom had died. Shay was speechless, he didn't know what to say, he asked Kelly's Dad if he was o.k, her Dad replied "I've got to be Shay; Kelly is taking it really badly".

Her Dad told Shay that Kelly and her Mom hadn't talked for over a year because of a stupid argument.

Shay looked down at the floor shaking his head; he replied to her Dad "I didn't know, Kelly never told me anything about not talking to her Mom".

Her Dad told him the funeral was in a week's time, Shay asked if there was anything he could do, her Dad replied "It's all arranged Shay, just be there for Kelly she needs a good friend right now".

Shay nodded his head and replied "That goes without saying Mr Carey, I'm so sorry for your loss".

Shay shook Kelly's Dad's hand and gave him a comforting hug, Kelly's Dad then went back into the living room to say goodbye to his daughter and then left.

Shay saw him to the door and then went back into the living room; he sat down next to Kelly and said "I'm so sorry to hear about your Mom, is there anything I can do?"

Kelly looked up at Shay and replied "You can give me a hug for a start", Shay put his arms around her and hugged her tightly.

They hugged for a few minutes and then Kelly asked "So how was your holiday? Did you have a good time?"

Shay just replied "Yeah it was good Kell, but let's not talk about that, are you o.k.?"

Kelly nodded her head and said "Shay I'm fine, I've got to be".

Shay hugged her again with tears in his eyes and said "Kelly it's me you are talking to, you don't have to put a brave face on for me" as they hugged Kelly squeezed Shay tightly as she released the sorrow of her Mom's tragic death.

Shay stayed by Kelly's side the whole week before the funeral, and was so supportive at the funeral.

Kelly's Mom was laid to rest just a few rows away from Shay's Dad at Witton Cemetery; the wake was more sedate than Shay's Dad's.

Kelly put on a brave face for her Dad and all the family, but Shay knew she was hurting inside.

When they got back from the wake, Shay sat Kelly down and went to make her a cup of tea, Kelly turned the telly on and shouted to Shay to come in and see what was on.

Shay walked into the living room to see Frank Goldstein and Gary Britain announcing his first world title defense against Mason Mathews at Wembley arena in 2 months time. The reporter did ask about a rematch with Jimmy Tarnna, but all Frank would say was at the moment they were fulfilling their mandatory commitments to the different governing bodies.

Shay just looked at the telly and said "Kell turn the telly over you don't want to be watching this crap".

Kelly turned to Shay and said "Aint you bothered that he's fighting someone you beat easy? It should be you fighting for the title, what's Dexter doing about it?"

Shay shrugged his shoulders and replied “I don’t know Kell, he told me he would sort it out, and I haven’t heard from him in the last month, I have just got to wait”.

Kelly shook her head and said “I think you need to talk to Dexter, he seems to have too much on his plate to be managing your career”.

Shay nodded and walked back into the kitchen to finish off the tea, when he came back into the room with the tea he sat next to Kelly and said “Do you know what Kell, I think your right. I do need someone working closer to me on my career”.

Kelly turned to Shay and said “See I told you, don’t get me wrong Dexter has done great things for you, but with all his business’s he hasn’t always got time to put in his full efforts”.

Shay nodded in agreement then said “That’s why I’ve had a brain wave, why don’t you manage me”.

Kelly looked at him in shock and replied “Are you mad, I can’t manage you, anyway what about the restaurant”.

Shay looked at Kelly deep into her eyes and very seriously said “Kelly you’re the only one I would trust to do this for me, Kenny’s to busy and knocking on a bit now and after what you done promoting the last fight, that was enough for me to know you can do it. As for the restaurant, we can get someone in to run that with Mark, you can just check the books every now and then to make sure it’s all running right”.

Kelly shook her head again and said “I don’t know Shay it’s a big step”.

Shay smiled at her and replied “O.k. well if you don’t want to do it I’ll ask Sparky to manage me, he’d love it, travel the world, making high money deals”.

Shay paused for a second and then said “Yeah I think that’s a good idea, I think it needs a man to represent me”.

With that comment Kelly gave Shay a scornful look and said “What do you mean it needs a man? Anyway Sparky’s an electrician what the bloody hell does he know about doing business deals?”

Shay smiled with a smug grin on his face and replied “Well probably more than he does about electrics, why do you think he is called Sparky he’s always getting shocked; anyway at least I know I can trust him, who else is there?”

Kelly looked at Shay knowing she was being coerced into taking the job, she shook her head and said “O.k. I’ll do it, only so you don’t lose all your money again”.

Shay smiled and replied “Nice one Kell, I’ll call Dexter tomorrow and organize a meeting”.

When Shay called Dexter the next day and told him Dexter replied “I’m more than happy for Kelly to manage you son, but her 20 percent will come out of your end of any deals that we do”.

Shay agreed to this and asked if he had any news on his next fight? Dexter told him he would talk to him and Kelly about it tomorrow over lunch at Marc De Paul’s.

Shay gave Kelly a call and told her about the meeting, Kelly told Shay she had already started looking into possible sponsorship deals and would run it all by him at the meeting tomorrow as she was going to stay at her Dads tonight.

Kelly seemed to have come to terms with her Mom’s death and was throwing herself into her new found career as a boxing manager after only one day.

They all met up at the restaurant the next day, as Shay walked in he could see Kelly and Dexter were already seated chatting away. He sat down and they ordered lunch.

Shay then asked them “So when and who am I fighting next?”

Dexter looked at Shay and smiled and said “The World Boxing Association and the World Boxing Council have both sanctioned Britain’s next 2 fights, but the International Boxing Federation has told Goldsten that his mandatory contender for their title is Tarnna”.

Shay look at Dexter and said “So where does that leave me?”

Dexter smiled and replied “Well in normal circumstances it would leave you in the cold son, but the I.B.F are based in New Jersey, so I’ve used some of my influence and got you a box off against Tarnna for their number 1 spot”.

Shay sat there stunned at the news, but also excited, Tarnna was one of Shay’s modern day hero’s, he had ruled the Super Middleweight division for years and now he was going to get to fight him.

Shay asked “So how have you managed this Dext? I would have thought they would just want Tarnna to fight him in a rematch”.

Dexter smiled and gave Shay a wink and said “I told you before Shay; it’s always good to have a devil in your corner”.

Shay thought for a second and remembered Dexter saying the same thing after handing Ken ‘the Hat’ an envelope at the Brooklyn Bakery.

Kelly then spoke up and said “I will call Tarnna’s manager tomorrow and sort out a meeting with him”.

Dexter told Kelly that he had already got a meeting arranged with Ned Redmond in a week’s time as it was going to be a joint show between 1066 promotions and Redmond Entertainments and she could thrash a deal out with both of them then.

Kelly replied “Yes Dext that would be great, thank you. Is he landing in Birmingham or London I’ll get a car to pick him up”.

Dexter smiled and said “No Kell, we are going to New York to see him”.

Kelly smiled at this and said “Oh well if I have to, I suppose I will go to New York”.

Shay just shook his head and laughed and said “Well I’m not paying for your shopping trip”, they all laughed as their meals arrived at the table.

CHAPTER 22



Kelly landed in New York with Dexter a week later; they were meeting Tarnna's Promoter, Manager Ned Redmond at his company's head quarters in the heart of New York City.

Kelly was stopping at Dexter's luxury penthouse while she was in New York, as they sat there chatting she asked Dexter what he knew about Ned Redmond?

Dexter smiled poured them both a drink and said "Where do I start, Ned was born in England, he moved over to America with just a few hundred dollars in his pocket. The story goes he used to go round all the gyms in New York making out he was a big time British boxing coach and started training up and coming boxers".

Kelly listened intently to what Dexter was saying and said "And is that how he made his millions?"

Dexter laughed and replied "No Kell, you know more about boxing than he did at that time, but Ned managed to blag a few boxers into letting him train them for money. He made his fortune when he hooked up with a millionairess who he also told he was a big time

British boxing coach to. By the time she found out that he wasn't they were married and she loved him that much she wasn't bothered".

Kelly looked at Dexter confused and asked "So his wife bank rolled his promotion company then?"

Dexter took a sip of his drink and replied "No Kell, rumor has it that after they got married 10 years ago they went to Las Vegas and Ned got into a private high stakes card game with some movie stars and Jimmy Tarnna's Manager at the time Dick Adams. From what I have been told Ned had already won half a million dollars over the night from the poker players at the table and supposedly Dick Adams had a hand of 3 ace's and 2 kings, but Ned had raised the bet to a million pounds and Adams didn't have enough to cover it so slammed Tarnna's contract on the table to cover the bet. He only did this because he thought he couldn't lose, you can just imagine his face when Redmond turned over a royal flush and won Tarnna's contract for his next 5 fights. From there on in Ned has built Redmond entertainments and made millions for him and Tarnna, that's why he still promotes Jimmy".

Kelly sat there shocked at what she was being told about Ned Redmond, she asked Dexter "So how should I handle him?"

Dexter replied "Well keep your hands on your purse for a start, Ned will be out for as much as he can get, if you give him an inch he will take more than a mile, he'll take 3 or 4 if you let him. Trust me Kell, Ned Redmond make Frank Goldsten look like a boy scout".

Kelly nodded her head acknowledging she was going to have to do some hard bargaining.

Before they went to the meeting Dexter and Kelly sat down and worked out their strategy for the negotiations.

Dexter said "I'll try and get the fight held in England, but I know he won't go for that he'll want it in America".

Kelly replied "Well I think Shay wouldn't mind if we agreed to fight at Madison Square Garden".

Dexter smiled and said "Yeah that would be perfect; Shay's got a lot of support in New York. Now the purse is going to be a big one, he is going to insist Tarnna gets a lot bigger cut than Shay, so I think we settle for 300 grand".

Kelly nodded in agreement as she knew it would be by far his biggest pay day and that she had some big sponsorship deals in the pipe line. They walked into the sky scraper office block and headed up to the 56 floor to Redmond Entertainments offices, when they got out of the elevator, they saw a plush office environment with people busily answering phones and making deals.

They walked up to the front desk and the receptionist said “Good morning Sir, Madam. Welcome to Redmond Entertainments how may I help you?”

Dexter told them who they were and that they had a meeting with Mr. Redmond, the receptionist asked them to take a seat, she then called through to Mr. Redmond’s office to let him know his 11.30 was here. The receptionist told them that he was just finishing off a meeting and would be with them shortly.

As they sat on the expensive Italian leather sofas in the waiting area the receptionist asked if they would like anything to drink.

Dexter looked at Kelly who shook her head and replied to the young lady “No thank you” it was 25 passed so they didn’t think they would be waiting long. 15 minutes later they were still sitting there waiting; Dexter looked at Kelly and said “A typical negotiation tactic making us wait, well I’ve waited long enough”.

Dexter got up with the intention of walking straight into Redmond’s office as he turned to the office door the receptionist said “Mr. Hastings, Miss Carey, Mr. Redmond will see you now”.

Dexter walked towards the door with Kelly following behind him, he didn’t knock he just walked straight in and to his surprise saw Ned sitting at a big conference table with 4 other official looking men next to him.

Ned sat there with a big wide smile of his face and said “Ahh Dexter welcome, please take a seat.”

Ned looked at Kelly then said to Dexter “Ahh I see you have brought your secretary with you, there was no need as we record all negotiations so she doesn’t need to take notes”.

Before Dexter could answer Kelly replied sharply “I’m not Dexter’s secretary, I’m here representing Shay Dempsey. My name is Kelly, Kelly Carey”.

Ned leaned back in his seat and looked very surprised and replied “Your Dempsey’s Manager?”

He laughed then looked at Dexter and said “This has got to be a joke right? A woman managing a boxer?”

Dexter gave him a big smile and said “No Ned, if you want Shay to fight you have to talk to both of us, but Kelly is in complete control of Shay’s affairs”.

This wiped the smile off Ned’s face for a few seconds then he replied “Well these gentlemen sitting next to me are my lawyers, so shall we begin”.

Dexter started off the negotiations by saying he wanted to hold the fight in the summer in England at Villa Park as it was such a great show last time.

Ned laughed this off straight away and replied “No chance Dexter, after the last decision they gave us over there, everyone knows Tarnna beat Britain. No, no way the fight is being held in the U.S.A I’m thinking Caesars Palace Las Vegas”.

Dexter shook his head and said “No chance, for the same reason you have given, I just think the judges might be a bit swayed in the *City of Sin*”.

Ned then turned to Kelly and said “So what do you suggest in your managerial experience?”

Kelly looked at Ned and replied “Well I thought it would be obvious to you Mr. Redmond, your offices are in New York, Shay and Jimmy have both boxed out of New York so why not have it at Madison Square Garden, the place where legends are made”.

Dexter looked at Kelly smiled and then turned to Ned and said “Kelly’s got a point there, it’s the perfect venue, I can’t believe I didn’t think of that”.

Mr. Redmond leaned back in his chair quite surprised at Kelly’s reply, one of Ned’s lawyers started whispering in his ear.

Then Ned replied “Yeah we can arrange that.”

He then turned to Kelly and said “So Miss Carey when do you think we should hold this fight?”

Kelly smiled and replied “Well I think 6 months is enough time to promote this fight so how about we schedule it for mid march”.

His lawyers talked between themselves then one of them whispered in Ned's ear again.

Ned said "Yes that sounds good to me, now what about the purse split?"

Kelly looked through her notes then said to Redmond "well seems we are giving you home advantage we think it should be 50/50 split of the million pounds you and Dexter are putting up".

Ned laughed at Kelly then stood up and as he paced up and down the room replied "You are joking Miss Carey? Jimmy Tarnna was world champion for nearly 8 years, he's a house hold name sweet heart. He is boxing. The cut has to be 70/30 in Jimmy's favor and that is none negotiable".

Kelly looked at Ned and replied "Yes Jimmy *was* champion, but he isn't now, Shay is the up and coming star here, Tarnna is coming to the end of his career at 34 how many fights has he got left in him. Apart from the Britain title fight your pay per views have been pretty poor, I can guarantee you that this will be the biggest pay per view non title event ever".

Dexter then stepped in and put the cherry on the cake for Mr.

Redmond he said "Also Ned I am willing to let Richie Hatter fight on this show against your Mexican lad Costa Contez for the World title, but for that to happen we need to talk about a pay per view percentage to be included in Hatter's purse. They agreed on a percentage that Hatter and Tarnna would get for their fights on the show.

Ned said "So 20 percent each for Hatter and Tarnna and the rest split between me and you".

Dexter smiled and nodded his head.

Kelly looked at Dexter and then Ned and said "So what percentage does Shay get?"

Ned laughed at Kelly and said "He don't, he gets 300 grand purse what more does he need?"

Kelly smiled and replied "10 percent of the pay per view, that's what he needs".

Dexter looked at Kelly and said "Kell look the pay per view is nothing to do with Shay he is being paid triple what he has ever been paid before, I know he would be happy with the arrangement we have already made".

Kelly just shook her head and said “No he wouldn’t not if he knew how much money Tarnna was going to make, it’s not on if we don’t get a percentage Shay doesn’t fight”.

Kelly then stood up and went to walkout; Ned said to Dexter “Is she serious?”

Dexter nodded his head and replied “Yeah if she says don’t fight he won’t”.

Ned called Kelly back and said “O.k. we will give Shay a percentage, but 10 percent is too high”.

They negotiated for a few more hours and agreed on Shay getting 5 percent of the pay per view. When they were finished Kelly told Ned to send the contract to Dexter’s office and she would get her lawyers to look through it, Dexter and Kelly then stood up shook hands with Ned and left his office.

As they left Dexter said to Kelly “You do know some of Shay’s 5 percent comes out of my percentage”.

Kelly replied in a very stern voice “Dext you have made loads of money off Shay in the year he was in New York, now it’s time to pay him what he’s worth”.

Dexter begrudgingly nodded and replied “Well Kell if we promote this right our end Shay could be looking at over a million pounds for this fight”.

Kelly just smiled and replied “Like I said pay Shay what he’s worth”. When they got back to Dexter’s penthouse, Kelly called Shay to tell him how the meeting had gone. She told him that the fight was being held at the Garden, Shay was really happy.

He said “See I told you I would box there one day” Shay asked “So how much am I getting paid? I want at least another 100 grand or they can fuck right off”.

Kelly said to him “Well Shay, Ned Redmond bargained real hard and as Tarnna is such a big name he will be getting a bigger piece of the purse money”.

Shay replied eagerly “Yeah fair enough. So how much have they offered”.

Kelly smiled to herself and said “You are guaranteed 300 grand for the fight”.

Shay paused for a second and then said “Sorry Kell I didn’t hear you right, did you say 300 grand?”

Kelly said “yes Shay you heard me right 300 grand guaranteed”.

Shay replied joyfully “Ahh Kell well done, I knew it was a good idea to get you to do the negotiations”, before Shay could say anymore

Kelly then told him “Oh yeah there’s 1 more thing I got you 5 percent of the paper per view, so if it’s promoted right you could earn over 1 million pounds”.

Shay didn’t answer Kelly.

She asked “Hello Shay you still there?”

Shay then replied “Yeah Kell I’m still here I just can’t believe it”.

Kelly just said “Well I’ll be back tomorrow I’ll talk to you about it properly then, we have still got to sign the contract, but it’s all looking good”.

Dexter and Kelly got back to Birmingham the next day; Dexter’s driver picked them up and dropped Kelly home.

As she came through the front door, Shay came out to greet her with a welcoming hug, he said “Ahh Kell, it’s good to see you, was that all a joke on the phone last night or were you serious?”

Kelly replied “How about you let me through the front door and make me a cup of tea and I’ll tell you all about it”.

Shay went into the kitchen and made a drink while Kelly sat down and relaxed after her long journey. Shay brought her in a drink and she told him it had all been agreed.

Shay still did not really believing it and said “They have really agreed to all that?”

Kelly smiled and replied “Yes Shay the fight is in March at the Garden, you are guaranteed 300 grand and 5 percent of the paper per view”.

Shay had a massive smile on his face, Kelly asked “So you happy with the money then?”

Shay looked at her and replied “Yeah Kell, but I’m more excited about fighting at the Garden, I can’t wait”.

Kelly told him that the contracts would be brought to Dexter’s office tomorrow, so they would be signing the deal then.

Kelly was really jet lagged after her trip back from New York and had an early night.

Shay was buzzing and couldn't wait to fight at the legendary Madison Square Garden.

Kelly and Shay went to Dexter's office the next day and as promised the contract were there with one of Ned's representatives. Kelly read every word in the contract and then read it again; there was no way Kelly was going to let them have any lope holes in the contract so Shay didn't get what he deserved. After she had been through it she had her lawyer look through it as well, they both agreed and told Shay to sign. Shay didn't hesitate and signed, all he was concerned about was fighting at the Garden and that if he won he would get a title shot. Shay shook hands with Dexter and Ned's representative, Dexter told him that he had talked to Paddy and he had agreed to Kenny training him in England and then 3 months before the fight both of them would come over to New York and Shay would train at Paddy's Gym. Shay was happy with this and was looking forward to getting back in the gym at Case's and then Paddy's.

Shay and Kelly celebrated sealing the deal with Shay's Mom and Kenny at Marc De Paul's that night, Kenny was really looking forward to going to New York and helping with Shay's training, but like Shay was more excited about being involved in a big fight at Madison Square Garden as it was always his dream to have fought there.

They had a great night as Kelly told them about her first experience as a boxing manager.

Shay had a really good drink that night as it would be the last one for the next 6 months. Kenny told him to relax for the rest of this week then they would start training and just ease him back into it.

In the week before Shay started back at the gym, Kelly was busy sorting out sponsors for him and getting things ready to promote the big fight when it was announced. Shay started back at Case's gym and a week later the fight was announced, they had a press conference, one in America where Ned Redmond and Tarnna attended and one in Britain where Dexter, Shay and Kelly announced it.

With Gary Britain's first title defense only a few weeks away it wasn't the big affair they expected, Britain's fight was the only one the British press were interested in, but Kelly and Dexter knew that

when Shay got to New York in 3 months time it would be the hottest ticket in town.

Shay had started back at the gym, just doing some light bag work and pad work, the real hard training was going to start when he got to New York.

Gary Britain retained his title in an easy victory over Mason Mathews, stopping him in the 5th round. The press loved it and Gary's *golden boy* status was set in stone as they announced his next fight straight after against Josh Fury at Wembley Arena again on the same date as Tarnna's and Shay's fight.

Kelly had used her business sense and used Britain's fight by advertising Dempsey against Tarnna on every advert break between the rounds. In the advert Kelly had made sure they got the point across that Irish Shay Dempsey was fighting Tarnna the day before St Patrick's Day, Ireland's patron saint.

The fight was on the 16th of March and Saint Patrick's Day was on the Sunday, Kelly knew that this would get Irish people from all round the world tuning in.

The time had come for Shay to head off to New York; he was going to be accompanied by Dexter, Kelly and Kenny. Shay had left Kelly in charge of the flights and accommodations while they were over there. They had first class seats for the flight and Kelly had rented them an apartment in the same building as Dexter's penthouse. The apartment may not have been on the top floor, but was just as luxurious as Dexter's place. Shay and Kenny were really impressed with the 3 bed roomed apartment, Dexter told them that there was a big press conference tomorrow so to get some rest as it was going to be a busy day.

When they got up the next day Shay and Kenny headed to see Paddy at the gym, Kelly had a few meetings set up for potential sponsors. When they got to the gym, Shay took Kenny though the Brooklyn bakery to the gym.

Shay said "hello" to Deano who was behind the counter. He introduced Kenny to him.

Deano shook hands with Kenny and said "Yeah man I've heard all about you, Paddy speaks very highly of you, good to meet you" Kenny smiled and replied "Well it's good to meet you Deano".

They walked over to the door that led to the gym, Ken “the hat” was sitting at his normal table with his Hench men.

Shay walked over to him and kissed him on each cheek and thanked him for his help, Ken replied in a voice straight from the godfather movies “Shay I always help people I look after, just make sure you beat the bum”.

Shay smiled and nodded his head and went up the stairs to the gym, Kenny was shocked at how close Shay had got to these people.

He asked as they walked up the stairs “Are these people in the” before he could finish Shay replied “Yes Kenny they are, but we don’t talk about it”.

Kenny just looked at Shay and said “Oh right son I understand”.

They went into the gym and saw Paddy near one of the rings training some young prospects.

As soon as Paddy saw them he called them over, he gave Shay a hug and shook Kenny by the hand and said “So good to see you Ken, we got a lot of work to do”.

Paddy then looked at Shay and said “I hope you’re ready kid, this is the big one, no more easy fights”.

Shay nodded his head knowing he was going to have to be at his very best to win this box off. They all chatted for a while and then headed off to Madison Square Garden for the press conference.

As they walked up the steps into the famous building, Kelly was waiting for them with Dexter outside so they could all enter the press conference together. When they went into the conference room they saw the worlds press waiting.

Shay took a seat next to Kelly and Paddy; Richie Hatter came in soon after and sat down on the same side as them. Ned Redmond then came in and went straight up to the podium and introduced Jimmy ‘*The Piranha*’ Tarnna and Costa Contez. There was a buzz from the reporters as Tarnna took his seat on the other side of the podium. You could tell by the response from the reporters that Tarnna was the big name here, even with Hatter being the undisputed welterweight champion, but in America Tarnna was the man.

Ned Redmond started off the conference by announcing that this was going to be an excellent night of boxing when Tarnna and Cortez would show the Brits how it’s done in America.

One of the reporters asked Ned “But Jimmy and Costa are not Americans, so how can you say that?”

Ned looked down at the reporter and said “Jimmy Tarnna escaped his war torn country with his family 15 years ago and has lived in America ever since, Costa has lived in the U.S.A for the last 10 years as well and they are both American citizens. This is the land of opportunity and on the 16th March Jimmy and Costa will show the world how true that is”.

The reporters nodded their heads in agreement.

Shay turned to Kelly and said “This Ned gezzar is one clever bloke; me and Richie are definitely going to be the bad guys”.

Ned continued “We will stop the English, Irish invasion and send them back over the waters with their tails between their legs, and after Tarnna is triumphant he will carry the flag and take on Gary Britain and win back his World titles”.

Some of the mostly American reporters actually applauded this. They then asked Richie how he thought the fight would go.

Richie just answered very politely “Yeah it will be a good fight, I love fighting at the Garden, but I think I will win”.

They asked Shay the same question, Shay replied very respectfully “I’m just happy to be fighting at the Garden, it’s been a dream of mine since I was a kid. Jimmy was a great champion and a great role model for me and I will be giving it 150 percent and I think I will do it”.

The reporters were impressed in Shay’s answer and asked if he beat Tarnna did he think he could beat Gary Britain?

Shay smiled and avoided the question by saying “Let’s just see what happens in this fight first”.

They asked Tarnna for any words on his opponent, Tarnna replied in broken English “Dempsey is good boxer, he trained by good coach, it will be good fight”.

They finished off the conference with some fight posies for the cameras.

Shay asked if he could have a look around and one of the organizers took him into the main arena. Shay stood at the entrance in ore, the New York Knicks had just had a game there so it was set up for basketball, but Shay didn’t care. He looked around and tried to

imagine all the great fighters and legendary fights that had taken place there.

The Garden wasn't the biggest event Shay had fought at with a capacity of only 20,000, but it was the essence and history that had captured Shay's imagination.

Kelly put her hand on Shay's shoulder and said "You o.k. Shay?"

Shay turned to Kelly smiled and said "I'm great Kell, look at this place, the history and I'm going to be part of it".

Kelly nodded her head and said "Yes you will be Shay, yes you will".

They left the Garden with Shay more inspired than he had ever been; he made a packed with himself that all he was going to focus on for the next 3 months was beating Jimmy Tarnna.

CHAPTER 23



Shay started training the very next day, running the 7 miles from Manhattan to Paddy's Gym in Brooklyn, Paddy and Kenny worked on the tactics for the fight, Paddy had trained Jimmy for the first 6 years he was a professional boxer and knew a lot about him. Paddy told Kenny that they would have to change Shay's tactics from the Bruno fight as Tarnna fights exactly the same way and they would just cancel each other out.

Kenny told Paddy that if they mixed Shay's old boxing style with what he had been taught over here that, that may be the key.

Paddy replied "Yeah Ken I think your right, but what we got to get Shay to do is go to the body, break Jimmy down and take it from there".

They worked Shay hard over the next 3 months, working on his movement and hand speed, but most of all on getting Shay to work the body every chance he got.

All Kelly's sponsorship meetings started to pay dividends as well, she had secured Shay a deal with Nike to sponsor him, and it was a massive deal that Brumsdale could not come close to.

Shay wasn't really happy with letting down the company that had supported him from the start of his career, but with this 2 year deal with Nike he would be set for life.

Shay had got Sparky and 5 of the lad's tickets ringside for the show, the fight had been so well promoted that the pay per view was looking like being one of the biggest ever especially in England and Ireland, Tarnna v Dempsey was being talked about more than Hatter's and Britain's world title fights.

The weigh in was very dignified and Shay and Jimmy weighed in right on the weight. Richie and Costa also, weighed in bang on, no dramas, no fuss; everyone was professional and was ready for the big show the following day.

The day had come for the biggest night of Shay's boxing career, Sky were showing Britain's title fight on the first of their pay per views at 10 o'clock in the evening British time and had got the European rights to show the fights from Madison Square Garden at 1 o'clock in the morning 8pm New York time.

Shay looked nervous all day; he was not his normal relaxed self. Even when he talked to his Mom on the phone she could sense he was not himself. Shay knew that his whole career hinged on this one fight and he was going up against one of the greatest boxers of all time. Paddy and Kenny both tried to talk to him to try and ease his tension, but they just seemed to make him worse. It took Kelly to sit him down and talk to him to calm him down.

She said to him "What's wrong Shay? Why are you so nervous".

Shay told her how he was feeling and that for the first time he was scared, not about fighting Tarnna, but about how important it was to win this fight.

Kelly put her hand on his and said "Shay look you go out there and do your best, no one can take anything away from you. Everyone here thinks you can do it, Paddy does, Kenny does, Dexter does and I know you can do it". You're at the Garden, the place you have always talked about fighting at so join the legends that have fought here and show the world what Shay Dempsey is all about".

Shay sat there in thought for a second and knew Kelly was right; he looked up at Kelly and said "How do you always know what to say? Your right, I'm going to beat Tarnna".

Kelly smiled at Shay and replied "Isn't that what managers are supposed to do?"

Kelly went and turned the telly on as the Britain fight was just about to start. It was being show on E.S.P.N's normal sports channel as in New York it was only 5 in the evening. Shay watched as Gary Britain gave an excellent display by stopping Josh Fury in the second round. Britain didn't even look like he broke a sweat, the British crowd at Wembley Arena loved it and cheered and applauded their *golden boy* World Champion.

At the interview directly after Frank and Gary were asked who they thought would win between Tarnna and Dempsey and when they would get a shot at the title?

Gary replied first by saying “It doesn’t matter who wins, I’ve beaten both of them before and the one that wins will be beaten again”.

Frank Goldsten then said “As Gary is a fighting champion; he will be looking to face the winner in 4 months time in a stadium in Britain”.

Gary then continued “After I defend my titles for the 3rd time I am going to take some time out and marry my gorgeous fiancée Emma”.

Shay looked at Kelly and said “Don’t he just make you sick?”

Kelly smiled and replied “Well I think it’s quite sweet, anyway enough about Gary Britain get your head on beating Jimmy Tarnna”.

Shays smiled and replied “Yeah fuck him; let’s get this one done first”.

Shay then went and checked he had all his gear ready for the fight for about the 5th time that day. Paddy told him to sit down and relax until it was time to go to the show.

Shay, Kenny, Paddy and Kelly made the short journey only a few blocks down to Madison Square Garden, as they drove passed the front of the famous building Shay saw his name lit up on the big advertising screen on the front of the building. Shay looked around the crowds of people outside waiting to get in, there were loads of people dressed in green white and orange and carrying Irish flags, Shay’s Irish roots had definitely got him a lot of support in America. They drove to the back entrance of the Garden and they all went in and straight up to Shay’s changing room.

Shay started warming up for the fight as soon as they got in there;

Dexter came in to see how he was. Shay looked focus and ready,

Kelly handed him a box with his new robe and shorts in and a shoe box with his new boots in. Kelly kissed Shay on the cheek and wished him good luck; she left him to get ready and took her place at ringside with Dexter. Shay opened the box and pulled out his new Nike robe and shorts, the design was exactly the same as it was on his old Brumsdale gear he wore against Bruno Beef. He opened the shoe box to reveal a pair of Nike boxing boots in the same design as his shorts. Shay got changed while watching the undercard, as he was getting his hands taped up by Kenny; Richie Hatter came into his changing room to wish him luck. Shay thanked him and wished him all the best for his fight. Shay looked ready and focused.

Paddy said to him “Kid remember, work the body every chance you get and keep on your toes, stay off the rope and try and dictate the pace of the fight”.

Shay nodded his head as Kenny smeared Vaseline on his eyebrows and cheek bones.

Shay was coming out first and was called to the ring; he walked out to the entrance of the arena and was announced in by the M.C. He walked out and the crowd went mental, Shay was trying to look focused, but he couldn't help noticing all the green white and orange flags being held up. Shay stopped halfway down the walk way to the ring and just looked around at the crowd.

Paddy asked him “Are you o.k kid?”

Shay nodded his head and replied “Yes Paddy I'm good”.

Paddy then said “Well stop just fucking standing there and get in the ring”.

Shay smiled and walked the rest of the way to the ring.

The crowd was still cheering as he moved around in the ring, Shay may have been over 3000 miles away from home, but the amount of Americans with Irish roots that had taken Shay to their hearts was amazing.

When Jimmy Tarnna came out he got just as much of a good reception even Shay applauded as Jimmy slipped through the ropes into the ring. Tarnna moved over towards Shay and touched gloves with him as a mark of respect. Kenny sprayed water over Shay's face as Paddy put his gum shield in, he then took Shay's robe off him and he was ready for the battle a head.

After all the announcements were finished by the M.C the ref called both of them to the centre of the ring and gave them their final instructions. Tarnna was wired, he stared at Shay with an icy stare, Shay stared back trying not to be intimidated by this modern day legend. They touched gloves and went back to their corners. Paddy shouted up to Shay to remind him to work the body every chance he got, Shay nodded his head and then looked over at Kelly at ringside and gave her a wink. The atmosphere was everything Shay expected from the Garden, he knew it was his time to make history as the bell rang to start the first round.

They both moved to the centre of the ring and then circled each other, Shay shot out a sharp double jab which Jimmy slipped away from and countered with a right hand that Shay parried away. Tarnna then moved in with a fast 5 shot combination, Shay slipped, parried and blocked all of them. Every shot that they let go the other boxer seemed to know exactly what the other was doing. The first round was high paced, but neither boxer got through with any decent shots. The bell went to end the first round and Shay went back to his corner. Paddy sat him down and said “Kid you need to work the body, get inside and break him down”.

Shay shook his head and replied “Pad I can’t get nowhere near him, the blokes unreal”.

Paddy gave Shay a drink of water and said “Kid the reason you can’t get near him and he can’t get near to you is that you fight exactly the same, he knows everything that you know, remember I trained him”. Shay replied “So what do I do then?”

Paddy said as he put Shay’s gum shield back in “Mix it up kid, work the body, rough him up a bit, slow him down and then you can use your boxing to finish it”.

Shay nodded and got up to start the second round.

Tarnna came out dancing around; Shay fainted a jab and smashed a right hand into Tarnna’s body which sent him back to the ropes.

Jimmy came back with a sweet one, two catching Shay with both of them, but Shay kept him on the ropes and blasted in 2 evil left and right hooks to the body. Tarnna tied Shay up like any veteran professional would do and the ref broke them up. Shay now knew he could hurt Jimmy and every chance he got he smashed in body shots, Shay’s tactics were working, but he was leaving himself open and Jimmy was now getting through with his own shots. The second round ended with the judges having both fighters even.

When Shay sat down, Paddy said “That was great kid, keep it up, but we need more pressure”.

Shay replied “The man is made of stone; I don’t think the body is going to work”.

Paddy shook his head and said “Kid it is working, just try and cover up a bit more on your way in and break him down”.

The 3rd 4th 5th and 6th rounds were all brutal for both boxers, Shay's body shots had started to pay dividends and Tarnna had slowed down in his movement, but Shay was taking a lot of punishment on the way in and both of the boxers were cut and bleeding.

By the end of the 6th round it was still too close to call on the judges' score cards.

Shay sat in his corner as Kenny tried to stem the bleeding from a cut on the top of Shay's left eye.

Paddy told him "Kid we need more from you, he's slowing now so get on your toes in this round and box him".

Shay replied "O.k. Pad I'll try, but he still feels strong to me".

Paddy then said "Trust me kid, one big push now and we got him".

Shay got up to start the 7th round, ready to put everything he could into this round. Shay came out and danced around the ring, Jimmy was not moving as quick as he had been in the earlier rounds and Shay moved in with some sweet shots to Jimmy's head. All of Shay's shots caught Tarnna clean and hard, but Jimmy just seemed to absorb them like they were nothing and came back with shots of his own. Both fighters were now standing toe to toe in the centre of the ring hitting each other with everything they had. Just before the bell rang to end the 7th round, Shay unleashed an evil straight right body shot with everything he had left, blood came shooting out of Tarnna's mouth as the bell went. They both stopped boxing and looked at each other in total respect.

The capacity crowd at the Garden stood and applauded at the display of boxing and the pure guts both boxers had shown in the last round. Shay got back to his corner completely drained of energy; he sat down, blood pouring down his face. Kenny started working on Shays cut, but gave Paddy a look to say it was a bad one.

Paddy said to Shay "Kid you got him, I need one more round from you like that and he's going to go I can tell".

Shay took in some deep, deep breaths trying hard to get oxygen into his body.

He looked at Paddy and replied "Paddy I can't do it that last round nearly killed me".

Paddy looked at him and said "So you want to quit then kid? I didn't have you down as a quitter".

Shay replied strongly “No I’m not a quitter” he then rose to his feet to show Paddy that he was ready to carry on.

There were less than 10 seconds to go before the bell rang for the 8th round, Paddy talked to Shay as he got out of the ring, Kenny noticed the ref talking to Tarnna’s corner.

Kenny tapped Paddy and said “Look something is going on in Tarnna’s corner”

As Paddy looked up the ref turned and walked towards them, he went straight up to Shay and raised his hand. Tarnna the modern day legend had retired in his corner unable to come out for the 8th round. Shay took a few steps forward with his hands in the air and dropped to his knees, he had done it, he had stopped the unstoppable, the man of stone, Jimmy “*The Piranha*” Tarnna.

The crowd were all out of their seats cheering this great and for a lot of them unexpected victory. Paddy and Kenny both picked Shay off his knees and they both hugged him in the centre of the ring. Shay then went over to Jimmy’s corner to make sure he was alright and to show him the respect he deserved, Jimmy had suffered broken ribs and his corner had to stop the fight because he was bringing up blood. They were trying to get Jimmy out of the ring as quickly as possible and to hospital as they feared he may have a punctured lung.

As Shay came toward Tarnna, Jimmy waved the people around him away and rose to his feet.

He said to Shay “Well done, you will be great Champion”.

Shay then thanked him and told him that he was still a legend and will always be in his eyes.

Jimmy nodded and was led out of the ring to a standing ovation.

By this time Dexter and Kelly had got into the ring, Dexter said to him “Well done Son that was the best battle in a ring I have ever seen, Britain is going down in 4 months time”.

Shay nodded his head with blood still streaming down his face, he then walked up to Kelly and said “Well miss Boxing Manager, was that o.k.?”

Kelly who was nearly in tears replied “That was unbelievable”

Kelly then embraced Shay and hugged him tightly.

Shay hugged her back and with all the adrenalin rushing through him took his chance and said “Kelly there is one thing I have wanted to say to you”.

Kelly looked at Shay, her eyes wide open and replied “What’s that then?”

Shay didn’t say another word and kissed Kelly passionately on the lips. The Madison Square Garden crowd went mental cheering and applauding this as it was shown on the big screens above the ring and to all the millions of people watching around the world.

As they stopped kissing, Kelly said “So what does this mean then?”

Shay smiled and replied “Well hopefully that you don’t just want to be my manager, but also my partner, Kelly I love you”.

Kelly smiled as she wiped some blood off Shay’s face and said “I love you too”.

Kelly then went in for a second kiss to the roaring crowds delight.

One of the Sky Sports commentators then came up to Shay to interview him about the fight, he asked Shay how he was feeling and what winning this fight meant to him?

Shay replied with a big, big smile on his face “It’s feels great, Jimmy is by far the hardest opponent I have ever fought and probably ever will be, the man is a living legend and I have nothing ,but respect for him”.

Shay was then asked, did he think he would be ready to fight Gary Britain in 4 months time and what he thought about the fight?

Shay answered “I’ll be more than ready to fight Britain and with my trainers Paddy and Kenny behind me and my gorgeous manager Kelly and my promoter Dexter, I know I can beat Gary Britain”.

The commentator thanked Shay and they all headed back to the changing room to start the celebrations.

Shay saw Sparky and the rest of the lads at ringside as he walked back to the changing room and told the security to let them through the barriers so they could come back stage with them.

As the drink flowed in the dressing room, Shay had the cut above his eye stitched up by one of the doctors on hand at the show, there was no way he was going to hospital tonight.

They drank and watch on as Richie Hatter destroyed Costa Contez in 4 easy rounds, Shay was now showered and changed and told them all they would continue the party at their apartment.

As they left Shay saw Richie Hatter returning from the ring after his win, he congratulated Richie on another title defense and invited him and his guests back to his place to celebrate. Richie told him he would be there with Conor, Deanna and Charlie when he had finished here.

CHAPTER 24



Shay and Kelly were inseparable at the party; they just couldn't keep their hands off each other.

Shay thought about calling his Mom, but realized it would be 4 o'clock in the morning over in England so decided to call her tomorrow. They partied all night with their friends, it felt like Shay had already won the World title, but Shay knew he still had a big hurdle to get over in beating Gary Britain.

The party didn't end until the early hours of the morning and Kelly and Shay retired to Shay's bedroom to sleep in the same bed as a couple for the very first time.

When Shay woke up the next day he opened his swollen eyes and saw Kelly lying next to him, he smiled and stroked her face softly with his hand.

Kelly opened her eyes, smiled and said “Good morning”.

Shay replied “Good morning to you gorgeous are you o.k?”

Kelly slowly put her hand on his face and softly stroked it and said

“I’m great Shay, but look at your face, how are you feeling today?”

Shay smiled and replied “I feel great”, but as he tried to sit up he got a shooting pain down the one side of his body.

He let out an agonizing groan, Kelly could see he was in pain and told him that she was going to take him to hospital to get him checked out.

Kelly got Dexter’s driver to take them to the Lenox Hill Hospital just a couple of blocks away from them, they gave Shay a thorough examination and concluded that Shay had 4 badly bruised ribs on his left hand side and was told he should rest for at least a month before any physical exercise. This really was the best news possible, Shay might be in pain, but at least nothing was broken and a month’s lay off from the gym was well in order after the war Shay had just injured.

The doctor also reopened Shay’s stitches above his eye and resealed it in a way that it would heal better with less scarring. When they got back to the apartment Dexter had arrived with the pay per view figures and they were good, over 4 and a half million people tuned in to watch the show.

Shay asked Dexter “So how much have I come away with then?”

Dexter started to waffle on about show costs and advertising costs,

Kelly stopped him and said “Just tell us how much Shay made”.

Dexter replied “Well with the 300 grand we reckon you have made a cool 2 million pounds Son now that is a big step up from your last fight”.

Shay was stunned and just looked at Kelly and said “This is all down to you Kell, thank you”.

Kelly smiled and Shay kissed her.

Kelly then said with a big smile on his face “And don’t forget my 20 percent”.

Shay laughed and replied “Kelly your worth every penny”

he paused for a second trying to take it all in and then said “Fuck me I’m a millionaire”.

He then went and called his Mom to tell her the news and make sure she was alright; his Mom told him how proud she was of him and how proud his Dad would have been of him. Shay told his Mom that he would be back in England tomorrow and couldn't wait to see her. Kelly told Shay to sit down as the doctor had told him to rest and not to make any sudden movements; Dexter told Shay that after the British government had taken their share of 40 percent tax he would be left with 1.2 million with 360 thousand of that going to Kelly. Shay begrudgingly nodded his head as he knew that the government would have to take their pound of flesh.

Kelly booked her, Shay and Kenny first class tickets back to England for the next day.

Shay was still in a lot of pain with the bruised ribs so Kelly got him into bed early and just lay with him all night.

When they got up the next day, Shay got up and made Kelly breakfast in bed, she asked him how he was feeling.

He replied with a smile on his face "I feel great Kell, my ribs still hurt a bit, but the pain killers are really working a treat".

Kelly smiled and asked him what he wanted to do before they headed back to England later that day?

Shay replied "Anything you like gorgeous, it's all about you today".

Kelly gave him a smoldering look and a very sexy smile and said "Well if you're feeling o.k. why don't you come back to bed for a while".

Shay's eyes widened and he got back into bed and slid his hands across Kelly's sexy body.

Kelly then said "Yeah, let's get some rest because you'll need all your strength to carry all the shopping I got planed before we go back".

Shay stopped for a second and looked at Kelly disappointed and said "Oh I thought you meant something else".

Kelly cracked up laughing as she saw Shay's disappointed face, she smiled and said, "But first Shay" and gave him a really sexy kiss.

Shay took that as his cue and started to maneuver his way into position to make love to her.

They went shopping later in the day and as money was no object to them they went on a massive spending spree buying thousands of pounds of designer clothes.

Shay said his goodbye's to Paddy thanking him for everything he had done, Paddy told him to rest up and he would see him in a month's time in England to start his training for his title fight.

Kenny, Shay and Kelly flew back to England later that day; they landed in England early in the morning and went back to their homes to sleep off the long flight.

When Kelly and Shay got up later that day they went over to Shay's Moms to see her and to tell her about the news of them now being together.

While they all sat in his Moms house, Shay said to his Mom "I'm thinking of buying a new house Mom, something bigger".

Shay's Mom looked at him inquisitively and said "But why son? You got a nice 3 bedroom house, why do you need something bigger?"

Shay smiled and replied "Well Mom, me and Kelly have been talking and I know this place is starting to get a bit too much for you and we were thinking that you could live with us at the new house".

Shay's Mom looked at him and then at Kelly who nodded and smiled at her, his Mom replied "Son this is mine and your Dad's house, I couldn't leave this place, it's my home".

Shay shook his head and said "I understand what you are saying, but you can't live here on your own anymore. Newtown aint the same no more, I want my Mom to live with me in a nice new house in a nice area and I know Dad would have wanted the same thing, he always went on about getting you out of the area".

His Mom thought for a while and then said "I couldn't move, I couldn't bare thinking of someone else living in this house".

Shay smiled and replied "Mom you don't have to sell the place, you can keep it, I just want my Mom safe in a nice area living with me".

His Mom sat there thinking and then said "I don't know son, I just don't know".

Shay nodded his head and said to his Mom "O.k. Mom, it's up to you, but can you do something for me?"

His Mom replied "Yes son what do you want me to do?"

Shay replied "Kelly is going to look at some houses and I'd like you to go with her so you can help her choose a good one".

His Mom smiled and said "O.k. son I can do that, but it doesn't mean I'm moving".

Shay smiled and said “I know Mom, but it will be a big help to me and Kelly”.

His Mom agreed and Kelly told her she would be around tomorrow to take her to look at some houses in Harborne.

When they left his Mom’s house, Shay and Kelly went to their restaurant Marc De Paul’s to have something to eat and check the place was running smoothly. As soon as Shay walked in there was a buzz in the air, all the people in the restaurant who were dinning stopped eating and started to applaud him. Shay smiled and acknowledged the applause; he signed autographs and had pictures taken with the people eating at the restaurant. They went and sat down at a table and ordered there meal, Kelly started talking to Shay about the Britain fight, she told him that she was going to call Goldsten tomorrow and sort out a meeting for when Dexter came back from New York.

Kelly then said “I need to find out where and when they want to hold the fight and about how much money you will get, from what I have seen in the papers he is even more popular than he ever was and the British fans love him. I think we are going to be hard pushed to make the same amount of money as we did last time”.

Shay smiled at Kelly and replied “Kell, I’m not bothered about the money; all I’m concerned about is winning the titles”.

Kelly nodded her head and said “Well I’ll make sure you get the best deal I can get for you”.

Shay smiled and replied “I know you will gorgeous”.

He then gave Kelly a loving kiss.

After dinner and talking to Mark to make sure the restaurant was alright, they spent the rest of the night smooching and cuddling on the sofa at home.

The next day Kelly called Goldsten and arranged a meeting with him for the next day in London, she called Dexter to let him know and he told her he would fly in to London and meet her there.

Kelly went house hunting with Shay’s Mom for the rest of the day.

Shay gave Sparky a call and asked him if he wanted to meet up.

Sparky told him he would be in his local in Kingstanding if he fancied coming up. Shay told him he would be up there later and called Kelly and asked her to meet him up there after dropping his Mom off.

When Shay got up to Sparky's local, he saw him sitting there with his wife, as he walked across the pub towards them a lot of the drinkers recognized him and congratulated him on his great victory. Sparky had already got him a drink in, Shay sat down and they talked about the Tarnna fight and the fourth coming Britain fight. Kelly came in soon after and Shay went up to the bar to get a round of drinks in, when he got to the bar the landlord served him and with a big smile on his face said

"I hope you're not going to cause any trouble in here tonight".

Shay smile at him and replied "Well with that idiot Chav in prison there aint no one in here I want to start on".

The landlord laughed and replied "He's not in prison, he got out a few months ago, but don't worry he's barred".

Shay laughed and said to the landlord "Why do I have to be worried? But I didn't think he would be out so soon".

When he got back to the table he asked Sparky "Did you know Chav was out of prison?"

Sparky nodded his head and replied "Yeah mate, but you should see him, prison fucked him right up, he's not the big man anymore. He's more interested in where he is getting his next fix from; he's a proper bag head".

Shay smiled and replied "Well it couldn't have happened to a nicer person, all the people he must have got hooked on drugs, he deserves to be a druggy himself".

Shay then changed the subject and asked Kelly how the house hunting had gone? Kelly told him that they had looked at a few houses and her and his Mom had fell in love with this 5 bed roomed house.

She told him "It's got a massive garden and every bed room has its own on suite shower".

Shay asked her if it was in there price range?

Kelly replied "Yeah it is and I think if we make an offer we could get it a bit cheaper and I think your Mom would defiantly move in with us".

Shay smiled and replied "Well put a bid in for it, if you and my Mom love it, I know I will".

Kelly smiled and said "O.k. as long as your sure, I'll call them tomorrow before I go to London".

They stayed in the pub for a few hours and then headed home. Kelly met Dexter at Goldsten's offices the next day, they went in and the secretary led them straight into his office. Frank was sitting behind his desk with that same old smug grin on his face; he welcomed them and asked them to take a seat.

He then started to tell them about the show, he said "We are having the show at Wembley Stadium; I plan it to be the biggest boxing event Britain has ever seen. The tickets will only be sold through Goldsten's ticket offices and people who are members of the Gary Britain fan club get priority, the rest of the tickets will then be offered to the general public".

Dexter looked at Frank shocked at what he was saying and replied "You can't do that with the tickets, Frank come on you got to be fair". Frank smiled and said "No Dexter I don't have to be fair, Gary is the Champion, I get to say how everything goes".

Kelly then interrupted and said "So what about if I tell Shay not to fight, your show won't happen then".

Frank looked at Kelly in disgust at having to deal with a women boxing manager and replied "O.k. pull Shay out of the fight, it's not the end of the world, all I'll do is get one of the lower ranked fighters to fight for the title and then I will make damn sure Shay never gets another title shot".

Dexter and Kelly knew Frank was holding all the cards and they knew that if they wanted the fight to go ahead they had to agree to his demands.

They reluctantly agreed to Goldsten's demands.

Kelly then asked "So how much are you thinking of paying Shay for the fight?"

Frank replied "We will give him 500 grand for the fight; we think that's more than fair".

Kelly smiled and said "That sounds fine, but we want 10 percent of the pay per view as well".

Frank laughed and replied "Not a chance sweetheart Shay gets 500 grand and that's it, there are no negotiations, it's a Goldsten promotion, so all pay per view rights are mine".

Kelly argued with Frank for hours about Shay's purse money, but Goldsten wasn't going to move on the pay per view.

Kelly did get Goldsten to considerably increase Shay's purse money to and even 1 million pounds as she broke down to Frank just how much money he would make off this mega fight.

Frank told them to bring Shay down to London next week for the press conference to announce the show and where it would be held. When Kelly got back to Birmingham and told Shay where the fight was being held.

He smiled and said "Fuck me, that's great Kell, just think, we could fill the whole place with green, white and orange, the Irish invasion of Wembley stadium".

Kelly looked down at the floor and replied "I don't think that will happen", she continued by telling him about how the tickets would be allocated and that there was nothing she could do about it.

Shay looked disappointed, but just shrugged his shoulders and said "Well I'll just have to beat him in front of his own fans".

Kelly then told him how much he was getting for the fight and how hard she had to negotiate to get that, Shay didn't seem to be worried about how much he was getting paid, he just wanted to fight for the World titles.

Shay and Kelly spent some quality time together over the next week; Dexter had organized a party in Shay's honor at The Squared Circle to celebrate his great victory over Tarnna.

The party was filled with Shay's supporters; The Square Circle was decked out in Shamrocks and Irish flags.

Shay's Mom was there and told Shay that his Dad would have loved this party and would be so proud of him; Shay gave his Mom a hug and told her he loved her. Shay and Kelly enjoyed a really nice night mingling with all his fans and having a lot of pictures taken.

CHAPTER 25



The day of the press conference had come, Kelly and Shay headed down to London's Wembley stadium. When they arrived at the

stadium, there were a lot of reporters waiting for them outside. As they pulled up the reporters swarmed around his car, he looked at Kelly and said “Why are they all outside? I’ll answer all their questions when I get in there”.

Kelly looked out of the car window and replied “I don’t think they are sports reporters Shay; whatever you do don’t answer any of their questions”.

As Shay and Kelly got out of their car, Dexter came towards them with 6 security guards to escort them into the stadium.

As they walked towards the entrance Shay asked Dexter “What’s with all the reporters? What’s going on?”

Dexter looking really stressed and replied “Haven’t you read the papers today?”

Shay shook his head and said “No Dext I try not to read them as their full of shit”.

Dexter shook his head and replied “Well son you should see what shit they have written about you, come on let’s get inside”.

Dexter took them into a private room and said “The press has fucked you over son”.

Shay who still didn’t know what was going on replied “So what have they said?”

Dexter took a deep breath and told them that at the celebration party at The Squared Circle there were some pictures taken of Shay holding a flag.

Shay nodded his head and said “Yeah I had loads of pictures with me holding supporters flags up, but we have had all this Irish shit already, they can’t have brought all that up again”.

Dexter shook his head and replied “No Shay it’s worse than that, some of the flags you had pictures taken with had republican slogans on them”.

Shay shrugged his shoulders and replied “I didn’t notice Dext, what’s the big deal anyway?”

Kelly who had been listening to Dexter and reading the front page of one of the daily rags said “It is a big deal Shay a very big deal”.

Kelly then showed him the front page of the paper. Shay looked at the picture, it had him and a few of his fans holding a Irish flag with the Gallic words ‘*tiocfaidh ar la*’.

Shay looked at Kelly and said “So what it weren’t my flag, anyway what does that mean?”

Dexter looked at Shay and said “Don’t you know anything about your roots? It’s an I.R.A slogan made famous by Bobby Sands when he was on hunger strike”.

Shay still looked bewildered with it all and replied “Dext, the only thing I know about my Irish roots is they like to drink Guinness and say be Jesus a lot, oh and that Britain runs the north”.

Kelly turned to Shay and said with a serious look on her face “Look at the headline, there trying to make you out as an I.R.A sympathizer”.

Shay looked down at the headline on the front page; it read “*Dempsey I.R.A Shame*”.

He shook his head and said “that’s a load of bollocks Kell, you know even my Dad hated all that terrorist shit, he always said that it made life a nightmare for Irish people in England. I’d never get involved with anything like that”.

Kelly nodded her head and replied “I know Shay, but most of the people who read this won’t”.

Kelly paused for a while deep in thought then continued “If they ask you about the pictures do not answer, only answer questions on the fight”.

Shay nodded his head and Dexter said “Right then shall we get this over and done with”.

As they walked into the press conference, the whole room went quiet; Shay, Kelly and Dexter went and sat on the stage. Frank Goldsten then announced that Britain, Dempsey will be fighting at Wembley Stadium on the 28th of July for all 3 Super Middleweight titles.

Frank then went and sat next to his boxer Gary Britain and asked the reporters if they had any questions. The place was in uproar every reporter shouted out a question, Frank pointed to one of the reporters at the front too ask the first question.

The reporter asked Shay straight out “Shay do you support the I.R.A and its terrorist activities?”

Shay just sat there stunned at being asked this question.

Kelly replied for Shay by saying “Shay will not be answering questions on any matters, but about the fight. The only comment we

will give on the pictures in the news papers today is that they were supporter's flags and nothing to do with Shay's beliefs".

The reporter then asked Gary Britain what he thought of the pictures and report in the papers.

Gary responded by saying "I think that it is a disgrace that Dempsey has let himself be pictured with these flags, I have had family members killed in the troubles in Northern Ireland and it sickens me that now we have a sort of peace there that it has raised its ugly head again, it has no place in boxing, on the 28th of July I will beat Dempsey, not just for the titles, but for every person who has lost someone in the troubles".

The reporters all nodded their heads as they knew that, that quote would be great for their articles.

Shay was dumbfounded at how these pictures had been misinterpreted, another journalist asked Shay for a response to what Gary had said, Kelly went to answer, but Shay stopped her and replied himself.

He said "I'm not going to comment on the pictures, but for Britain to say what he has said about losing people in the troubles in Ireland is ridiculous. I have many friends who have fought for this country in Northern Ireland and in Iraq and Afghanistan and I think they do a great job trying to keep the peace in these countries. Britain is trying to make a big deal of this to get the British public on his side, my manager has stated before, I was born in England and proud to be English, but I am also proud of my Irish roots. My parents are both Irish and I would never hide that fact, on my shorts I wear both flags with pride and on July 28th I will beat Gary Britain because I am the better boxer and not because of my nationality".

Dexter and Kelly were really impressed with Shay's answer and so were many of the press.

Another reporter then asked Shay "So what are your views on Ireland, do you think Britain should relinquish its power over the North?"

Kelly butted in again and said "This is not a political debate; it's a boxing match, so please keep your questions to that".

Gary Britain then spoke up and said to Shay "Come on Dempsey, I'd love to know your views on this, answer the man or do you need a women to answer the question for you?"

Shay turned to Gary and replied “You want to keep your mouth shut Britain, on the 28th I’m going to knock you out again, or have you forgotten about that?”

Gary stood up and looked directly at Shay, this was the first time Shay had ever seen Britain unnerved.

Shay stood up as well and shouted at Britain “What? What you going to do Britain?”

Gary seemed to get his composure back and replied “Answer the question Dempsey or haven’t you got an opinion”.

Shay looked down at Kelly and then at Dexter who were both shaking their heads to tell him not to answer, Shay then looked out at the reporters and the world’s press who were waiting for his answer.

Shay then said “Do I think Ireland should be one country? Yes, yes I do, I think the Irish should be left to sort out their own problems, but I don’t agree with all the bombings or any terrorist activities, but yes Ireland should be one country”.

The press all went mad trying to get the next question in, Dexter then stood up and told Shay and Kelly they were leaving.

As they went to leave through the side of the stage, Gary Britain mumbled to Shay “I told you I’d take your girl Dempsey”.

Shay turned and looked at Britain and replied “Oh yeah Britain, I almost forgot about that”.

Shay then smashed him with a right hook to the jaw knocking him clean off his feet and over the table on the stage. The security grabbed Shay, but Shay shrugged them off and said to Britain who had now got back to his feet “That was for mugging me off for 2 years, but you’re more than welcome to the gold digging slag”.

Shay turned away and said to Kelly and Dexter “Come on let’s get out of here”.

When they got outside, Dexter said “Well that couldn’t have gone any worse, why didn’t you listen and just not answer”.

Shay looked at Dexter and said “fuck that they were trying to make out that I was thick and some kind of I.R.A sympathizer, my Dad never agreed with what they have done and nor do I, but like I said in there Ireland should be one country”.

Dexter just shook his head and said “Right go back to Brum and I’ll see what I can do here”.

Kelly and Shay went back to Birmingham; Shay apologized to Kelly if what he had said had made her job harder.

Kelly smiled and replied “Shay, at the end of the day you told them what you thought, you didn’t say anything wrong, you answered them well, but I’m sure they will use it against you”.

Shay shrugged his shoulders and said “Well it won’t be the first time I’m the bad guy will it”.

Kelly smiled and replied “No it won’t Shay, but I think you may get a lot of shit over this, anyway that was one wicked punch you gave Britain, make sure you hit him like that in the fight”.

Shay laughed and said “Don’t worry he’s going to get a lot more of them in July”.

When they got back to their home in Birmingham, they couldn’t believe their eyes, there front windows had been smashed and someone had sprayed unionist slogans all over their walls.

Shay was livid and said to Kelly “Fucking wankers, what fucking idiot would do something like this, I wish I’d been here when they had done this”.

Shay then went around to his neighbors’ houses asking if they had seen or heard anything. Everyone that answered there door to Shay said they hadn’t seen anything, Shay couldn’t believe this as it was only 6 o’clock in the evening and this must of happened in broad daylight.

Kelly had called the police and then called someone to board up the windows. The police arrived 2 hours later; they looked at the graffiti and damage to the house and told Shay it was probably kids. Shay asked them what they were going to do about it.

One of the policemen said “Well Sir, unless someone saw something there is not a lot we can do”.

Shay shook his head and before he could say anything that would get him into trouble Kelly butted in and thanked the officer and asked him for a crime number for the insurance. The police man told her to call the station tomorrow and they would give her one, she thanked the officer again and showed them to the door.

When Kelly came back into the living room Shay said “Did you see one of them coppers, the fucker was loving it, fucking old bill, I can’t believe this”.

Kelly told him to calm down and said “Does it matter Shay we are moving soon and we will make sure no one knows where the new address is”.

Shay stood there still fuming and replied, “Yeah I can’t fuck wait to get out of this place”.

Kelly smiled and replied “Yes Shay a fresh start”.

The next day the papers were full of the story about the press conference, a lot of the papers went with the story of Shay’s disgraceful act of hitting Gary Britain and how well Gary held his temper and acted like a true champion.

They had even miss quoted Shay by saying he was an I.R.A sympathizer. Shay sat there reading the papers in shock at how they had portrayed him as the bad guy.

Some papers were more sensible still condemning Shay’s actions of hitting Gary Britain, but commending him on word about not supporting terrorism.

One paper even had an exclusive interview with Gary Britain with him telling them that Dempsey just lost his temper for no reason and said it was probably because Shay knew he was going to lose the title fight.

Shay showed Kelly all the articles on the press conference and asked her what they were going to do about it?

Kelly shook her head and replied “I don’t know, I’ll call Dexter and ask him what he thinks”.

She called Dexter and he told her that the more Shay talked to the press the worst it was going to be, he then said “I think it would be a good idea to get Shay to go back to New York and train for the fight at Paddy’s Gym instead of Paddy coming over here”.

Kelly agreed as he wouldn’t have all the pressure of the British press, Dexter told her he would contact Paddy and let him know and book them on a flight tomorrow.

Kelly told Shay what had been said, he was a bit disappointed about leaving as he thought it was like running away, but agreed and then said he was going to go and see his Mom and then see what Sparky was up to as he would be away again for 3 months.

He went to his Moms and told her he was going away again, she was sad, but could understand why he had to go.

She said to Shay “Son, they have used your Irish roots to try and upset you, be proud of them and show the world what the little country your Mom and Dad are from is made of”.

Shay hugged his Mom and told her he loved her and said he was now more determined than ever to win the title.

As he got into his car, he called Sparky to see what he was up to; Sparky answered the phone with the words in a fake Irish accent “*tiocfaidh ar la*, top of the morning to you brother Shay”.

Shay cracked up laughing and replied “Fuck off Sparky that shit aint funny”.

He then told him about his new plans to set up his training in New York and did he want to come for a drink?

Sparky told him he would call some of the lads and told him to meet them in his local in Kingstanding in an hour’s time.

Shay agreed and went to Case’s Gym to see Kenny, when he got there Kenny was just opening up, he told Kenny what was going on and Kenny told him that Dexter had already told him about it. Kenny then said “It’s a bit short notice, but I can see why Dexter and Kelly have chosen for you to train there”.

Shay nodded his head and replied “Yeah it will be good, but I wish you could come over there with us”.

Kenny smiled and said “Son I’ll be over in a week’s time, I got Sam Magson looking after the gym, so I’ll be there for all your training”.

Shay smiled and said “You’re coming over Ken? That’s brilliant; I’m really starting to feel like things are going to go my way”.

Kenny smiled a big smile and replied with pride in his voice “Yes son, Paddy has asked me to come over, he said he needs my help”.

Shay smiled and nodded his head and said “Well it’s going to be good to have the best 2 trainers in the world in my corner”.

After chatting to Kenny for a while Shay left the gym and headed up to meet Sparky at his local.

Shay arrived at the pub he walked in and was stunned to see 8 men standing there in a line with balaclavas on their heads. Shay stopped still at the door in shock until one of the hooded men shouted in a terrible fake northern Irish accent “Irish Shay Dempsey, we salute you”.

The 8 men then all saluted him, Shay shook his head and said “Fuck off Sparky, it’s not funny”.

The men then took off their balaclavas to reveal Sparky and the boys laughing their heads off.

Shay looked at them and shook his head and then started to laugh himself and said “I suppose you lot all want Guinness then”.

Shay and the lads all had a good drink that night, they knew the articles in the papers were rubbish and were all right behind Shay.

At the end of the night Shay handed his car keys to Sparky and said “Here you go mate, look after this for the next 3 months”.

Sparky looked at Shay shocked and replied “Are you sure mate?

You’re going to let me drive your Range Rover Sport around?

Shay smiled and said “Yeah mate, I’m not going to be needing it for a while, just make sure you don’t smash it up that’s a 60 grand car”.

Sparky smiled and replied “No mate, I’ll look after it, I don’t need you sending the boys round and blowing my knee caps off”.

Shay laughed and shook his head and said “You’re a proper piss taker, just look after it for me”.

Shay got a taxi home from the pub, when he staggered into the house; Kelly was there waiting for him.

She took one look at him and laughed and said “You had a good night then?”

Shay nodded his head and in a slurred voice replied “Ahh hello gorgeous, yeah it’s been good, just had a few pints with the boys that’s all”.

He then walked over to Kelly and started kissing her and telling her how much he loved her, Kelly smiled and told him she loved him to and helped him up the stairs to bed, where he collapsed into a deep, deep sleep.

He got up the next day very worst for wear; he came down the stairs to be greeted by Kelly busily packing bags for their trip to New York. She had already packed Shay’s suit case and was just finishing off hers. Shay walked into the living room gave her a kiss and a hug and asked her if she wanted a coffee or anything?

Kelly replied “You haven’t got time to Shay; Dexter’s driver will be here soon to take us to the airport.

Have a shower and I'll make you a coffee while you're in there. Shay got showered and changed and had just taken a few sips of his coffee when the driver turned up to take them to the airport.

CHAPTER 26



They landed in New York later that day and where met by another one of Dexter's people who took them to Dexter's luxury penthouse where they were stopping for the duration of the training camp. They got settled in and enjoyed an early night together as they had the whole penthouse to themselves as Dexter was staying in England to make sure everything was running smoothly over there.

The next day Shay and Kelly went over to Paddy's gym to see Paddy. He welcomed them and took them into his office, they sat down and Shay told him all about the crap that had been written in the British press and about him hitting Britain at the press conference and his windows being smashed on his house.

Paddy sat there and listen and then shook his head and said "All this because of a picture, well I can tell you now kid, over here it has been reported a lot differently. You got a lot of support over here. There's a massive amount of Irish descendants in America and they loved seeing Britain being knocked on his ass for disrespecting your Irish roots, I'm proud of you kid, real proud".

Shay smiled and said "Well it's caused loads of trouble over in England; I just want to get down to training for the fight and smashing Gary Britain up".

Paddy smiled and replied "That's good to hear kid; we will start training at the end of the week when Kenny comes over".

Paddy then looked at Kelly and said to them, "Enjoy the next few days kids, because after that it is all about the fight nothing else".

Shay and Kelly went back to the penthouse and enjoyed a really good evening soaking in the hot tub and enjoying being away as a couple.

Over the next few days they done all the things that couples do when they are in New York, they went and saw all the sights again, they even went in a horse drawn carriage around Central park, they looked like a couple who was so in love with each other. The one thing that did keep happening while they were out were people recognizing Shay and asking him for his autographs and taking pictures of him, Shay was more famous and popular in the U.S than Gary Britain could every dream of being.

Shay and Kelly really enjoyed their 3 days together and used their nights to the fullest as when Shay went into his 3 months of training they both knew it was all going to be about the fight.

Kenny arrived at the end of the week and after a day getting over the jet lag set to work with Paddy formulating a plan to beat Gary Britain. Shay was back at Paddy's gym training hard, sparing some world class boxers they had got in and doing some murderous circuit training for his fitness.

Paddy and Kenny were in Paddy's office watching video's of old Gary Britain fights and discussing how they thought Shay should fight him. They mainly watched him against Bruno and Tarnna and both came up with the conclusion that Bruno's style had been the more effective against the champ.

Paddy said to Kenny "The way Shay fights now is more like Tarnna, Britain seemed to deal with Tarnna's style pretty well, but with that Bruno he didn't seem to like it when the Beef roughed him up".

Kenny smiled and replied "Yeah your right Pad, I got something to show you".

Kenny then put on Shay's 2 fights as an amateur against Britain. Paddy watched the tapes in silence.

When they had finished Paddy smiled and said "Well if Shay can fight like that, that's how we will fight him, rough him up early and hope Shay knocks him out".

Kenny nodded his head and said "I got no doubts he will knock him out, Shay has been waiting years for this chance".

For the 3 months Shay trained in New York, it all went perfectly, his dancing had been replaced by a lot more bobbing and weaving and getting on the inside and roughing up his opponent. Kelly had been busy as well, talking to Nike who at one point were talking about

pulling out of there sponsorship deal until they realized that sale may have gone down in Britain but had risen a hell of a lot more in the U.S.

For their last few weeks in New York Kelly hadn't been feeling too well, Shay had told her to go and see a doctor, but she said it might just be a bit of food poisoning.

There were only a few days to go to the fight when they flew back to England with Kenny and Paddy, Sparky picked them up from the airport in Shay's car and drove them home.

Paddy was stopping at Kenny's house until after the fight. When they got to Shay's, they went in and Shay told Sparky all about what he had done in New York.

Sparky asked him "So when you moving to your new place then?"

Shay replied "It will have to be after the fight".

Shay then went into the kitchen to make them all a drink, Sparky then looked at Kelly and asked her how she was feeling?

Kelly replied "I feel really good, I felt a bit ill when we were in New York, but I feel great now".

Sparky then said "Well you look great Kelly you have got a glow to you, being with Shay seems to agree with you".

Kelly smiled and replied "Yeah I think it does".

As she said that Shay came back in and said "Kell we got no milk".

Kelly replied "I'll pop down the shops and get some while I drop Sparky home, I'll pop in and see your Mom on the way back to make sure she is o.k.

Shay smiled at Kelly and gave her a kiss then looked at Sparky and said "I love this woman".

Sparky smiled and replied "It's just good to see you happy mate".

Kelly dropped Sparky off at his home in Kingstanding then headed to Shay's Moms in Newtown.

As soon as Kelly walked through the door his Mom was looking at her funny, Kelly asked her if everything was alright.

Shay's Mom replied "I'm grand Kelly, now tell me, is it me or have you put a bit of weight on?"

Kelly was a bit shocked that his Mom had asked such a question, but replied "Yes Brenda, I have put a few pounds on, I think it's all them big portions in America".

Shay's Mom smiled and stared at her and then said "Now you're sure you're not a bit pregnant, when was the last time you come on?"

Kelly didn't know where to look she was stunned at what his Mom had just asked her.

Kelly then thought for a while and realized that it had been just before they went to New York, by the look on Kelly's face Brenda knew she had missed one or two.

Shay's Mom then said "be Jesus, Mary and Josiah, you are, I could tell when you came in, Shay will be so happy".

Kelly looked at his Mom and said "Brenda, I don't know if I am, but if I am we can't tell Shay until after the fight, he needs to focused on that".

Brenda nodded her head and replied "Yes Kelly your right, now go get one of them tests so we know for sure".

Kelly went and got a couple of them, when she got back to Shay's Moms house she done all of them and they all came back saying the same thing, Kelly was pregnant. Kelly thought back to the last time Shay and her were together and from that could see she must be over 3 months pregnant, Brenda told her to make an appointment at the doctor to get it confirmed, but Kelly knew that she must be gone at least that long. Brenda agreed not to say anything to Shay and Kelly promised to tell him straight after the fight.

Kelly went to the doctors the following day while Shay went down to London and got weighed in for the fight. Shay weighed in perfectly on the weight in an empty room at Wembley Stadium, Dexter had arranged that they had a separate weigh in and that there were no press at Shay's.

The doctor confirmed to Kelly that she was pregnant and he reckoned that 3 months was about right, but would have to book her in for a scan. The doctor told her they would send her a letter with her scan date in the next few days. Kelly thanked the doctor then headed down to London to be with Shay.

She met him in there hotel room and Shay gave her a big hug and a kiss; she looked at Shay and could tell he was nervous.

She asked Shay how he was feeling, he looked at her and smiled and replied "I'm feeling good Kell real good, I'm in the best shape of my life".

Kelly shook her head and said “Shay I’m not Paddy, Kenny or a reporter so don’t tell me your o.k. when you’re not”.

Shay bowed his head and said “Well I would be lying if I said I wasn’t a bit nervous, as much as I don’t like the bloke, I got to admit that Gary Britain is a great boxer. He’s got all the support of the British public; I’m just worried I’m going to let everyone down”.

Kelly grabbed him and kissed him softly on the lips, then she said “Shay your fighting for the World titles, there’s no one in the world you can let down, win or lose the people closest to you will know you have gave it your all, but I know you’re going to do it”.

Shay looked at her and said “How can you be so sure?”

Kelly smiled and replied “Because you are Irish Shay Dempsey, Irelands great hope, descendent of legend Jack Dempsey, you’re the man who has beaten Sam Magson, Bruno Beef, Mason Mathews and the first person to stop Jimmy Tarnna, it is you destiny to win the world titles and beat Gary Britain, that is how I know”.

Shay looked at Kelly and smiled and said “As always Kell you know exactly what to say”.

He kissed her passionately and then said “It’s a shame I’m fighting tomorrow, I want you so bad”.

Kelly smiled and replied “I know, but I’m not getting the blame if you’re shattered when you get in the ring”.

Shay laughed and said “o.k. then after the fight”

Kelly laughed and replied “defiantly, I’ll wear the belts”.

They both laughed and then got into bed for a good night’s sleep.

CHAPTER 27



The show at Wembley Stadium didn't start until 10 o'clock on the night and the title fight wasn't going to be until 12 o'clock so it could be shown at a decent time in America.

It was a sweltering hot July day, Shay got up and gave Kelly a kiss and said "Good morning gorgeous what do you want for breakfast, I'll call room service".

Kelly smiled and said "Whatever you want Shay, I'm not hungry" Shay ordered a massive full English breakfast for himself and some toast for Kelly.

Shay ate the lot and when he had finished asked Kelly if she fancied going for a walk so he could stretch his legs, Kelly told him that she didn't feel like it, but he should go.

Shay left the hotel room and got the lift down to the lobby, as he walked out of the hotel he heard someone call his name.

When he turned around he was stunned to see Emma standing there. Emma walked up to him and said "Hello Shay, I just thought I'd come by and wish you good luck for tonight".

Shay stood there shocked to see her and replied "What the fuck do you want?"

Emma smiled and said "Like I said, I came to wish you luck".

Shay looked at her in disbelief and replied “What would Gary say if he knew you were here wishing me luck”.

Emma shrugged her shoulders and said “Gary’s is a nightmare, all he has gone on about for the last year is the World title, and he bores me”.

Shay smiled and said “Well you’re marrying the dickhead this year aint you”.

Emma smiled at Shay and replied “Not if I get a better offer Shay, I know we have had our ups and downs, but we could make it work”.

Shay cracked up laughing and said “You are mental Emma, I’m with Kelly now and even if I wasn’t I wouldn’t go near you again”.

Emma then said “Yeah I’d heard you were with that, I always knew there was something more going on between you and her. I saw her in a picture of you and her not so long ago, it looks like she has put on a lot of weight”.

Emma then opened her coat to reveal a tight hugging dress that showed off her toned thin body and her new fake breasts and said “Wouldn’t you rather wake up to this every morning instead of something like that?”

Shay looked smiled and then shook his head and replied “Emma like I said I wouldn’t be with you even if I wasn’t with Kelly, and to tell you the truth I like the way Kelly looks. She’s a really women not a Barbie doll like you, but thanks for dropping by and wishing me luck. Now please do me a favor, go back to Gary and leave me the fuck alone”.

Emma’s smile then turn to a frown, well it would have if she hadn’t had all the Botox done to her face and said nastily “Well you have had your chance, anyway Gary is going to beat you tonight, he’s got the whole of Britain behind him, and everyone hates you”.

Shay smiled as he walked back to the lift and replied to Emma by saying “Emma if you thought Britain was going to beat me tonight you wouldn’t be here, now please leave me alone”.

Before Emma could say anything else Shay got into the lift and went back up to his room, when he got in there Kelly said “That was a short walk”.

Shay smiled and told her what had just happened.

Kelly asked him worryingly “Have you still got feelings for her?” Shay laughed and gave Kelly a big hug and said “Kelly I don’t feel nothing for her anymore, I love you and I always have and no one especially a faked breasted gold digger could ever change that”. He then kissed her.

Kelly hugged him and said “I hope so Shay because I want you with me for life”.

Shay smiled and replied “Yes gorgeous, me too Kell, me too”.

They relaxed in their hotel room for the rest of the day, Shay had brought 1000 tickets for the fight, they were all in one block right next to the ring, he had given most of them out to friends and family so he knew he would have some supporters near the ring.

Kelly and Shay went down to the restaurant to have a meal, they met up with Paddy and Kenny and Shay had his now customary steak. Shay was quiet, but looked quite relaxed, but the time was getting closer to when they would leave for Wembley Stadium.

CHAPTER 28



Dexter had organized a car to pick them up at half past 9; by the time they had got there the show had just started. Shay knew he had a 2 hour wait before his fight and the nerves had started to kick in.

Kelly wished him luck and then went and sat with his Mom at ringside, the whole section of the crowd around them where there to support Shay, but they all had, had any Irish flags or banners taken off them on the way into the stadium by the security. The stadium was only half full when the show started with a couple of Dexter's up and coming lads against boxers from the Goldsten stables.

There was less than an hour to go before the title fight the stadium had started to fill up, Shay had got changed and started warming up and then started to get his hands taped up.

Shay cracked the joke that eased the tension in the room and everyone laughed.

Paddy then said to Shay “Kid this is your big shot, you have beaten him before and you will beat him again tonight, just jump on him from the start and don’t let him settle”.

Shay nodded his head and replied “Thanks for all you have done for me Pad”, and then he turned to Kenny and said “and thank you Ken for sticking by me all these years”.

Kenny smiled and replied “No son thank you, you have let me live my dreams through your eyes”.

The man came in to call them to the ring, Paddy stood up and said “Right then kid, let’s go and win the World titles”.

Shay smiled as he stood up and replied “To fucking right Pad”.

They walked towards the entrance of the stadium and waited for his music to start.

As soon as the fields of Athenry came on the boos rang out around the stadium, Shay walked out and the booing got loader. Shay tried to block it out, but it was hard as he could hear people next to the walk way shouting things at him, one person shouted “Fuck off home you paddy bastard”, another one shouted “You fucking I.R.A scum”.

Kenny could see Shay was getting riled and kept talking to him all the way down the walk way. When he got to the ring the boos rained out even louder, he slipped through the ropes and then looked over at Kelly and his Mom and the rest of his supporters he had got tickets for. They clapped and cheered, but were drowned out by the rest of the 105 thousand capacity crowd at Wembley stadium.

Shay stood in his corner and the ref checked his gloves, a young lady then came into the ring, she was handed a microphone and started to sing *God Save the Queen*. The capacity crowd rose to their feet and all started singing along as Gary “Great” Britain walked into the stadium, as he walked towards the ring fireworks went off in the midnight sky, there was also a film of Gary’s best knockout shown on the big screens around Wembley, they had a laser show as well with the lasers spelling out Gary’s name in the summer sky.

It was truly an amazing ring entrance and the crowd roared as Britain got into the ring with the I.B.F belt around his waist and his corner men holding the W.B.C and W.B.A belts high in the air.

Shay never took his eyes off Gary Britain; Gary was trying not to make any eye contact with Shay.

Shay knew this would probably be his only chance of winning the World titles.

After all the announcements were made they walked to the centre of the ring for their final instructions, they found it hard to hear what the ref was saying because of the noise the crowd was making. Shay stared hard at Britain, but Gary wouldn't look him in the eyes, the ref made them touch gloves and they went back to their corners. Shay took a quick glance at Kelly and his Mom and gave them a wink. The referee called for the bell and the first round was under way.

Shay flew across the ring at Britain and smashed him with a big straight right hand, this sent Britain reeling back into the corner. Shay moved in and crashed a big left hook and then a right hook to Gary's head, Britain tried to hold and get out of the corner, but Shay wasn't having it. He stepped back just enough to be out of Gary's reach and unleashed 5 straight shots to Britain's head with everyone catching Gary clean. Britain had nowhere to go and tried to cover up, Shay moved in again and hit him with a right hook to the body and quickly switched it to an uppercut that nearly took Britain's head off. Gary crumbled to the floor; the crowd fell silent as they saw the *golden boy* put on the canvas for the first time in his professional career.

The only people you could hear were the 1000 supporters cheering Shay on at ringside. Shay walked to a neutral corner and looked down at Kelly and winked.

Kelly who was up on her feet shouted at Shay "Concentrate Shay, you got him".

Britain got up at the count of 8 the ref asked him if he was o.k. he nodded his head and raised his gloves and walked towards the ref.

The ref then told them to box on, Shay rushed across the ring looking to keep the pressure on, Britain kept his guard up well and tried to stay out of danger. Shay bashed Gary all over the ring for the first 2 minutes of the round, but in the last minute Gary got his jab going and finished the round well.

This got the crowd going again and the whole of Wembley was rocking.

Shay sat down in his corner and Paddy told him to keep going, but try and bob and weave a bit more as he was coming in. Shay looked

relaxed in his corner; he knew he could stop Britain if he got the chance again. He stood up ready for the 2nd round.

The bell went and Shay moved in, but this time Britain was more prepared and moved out of his corner with some sweet sharp jabs. Shay bobbed and weaved trying to get on the inside, but Britain was moving well and his jab was catching Shay every time. Shay used his head and stopped trying to charge in, he then got on his jab as well. Shay's jab was far superior to Britain's and Shay started picking him off with some great one, two's. By the end of the 2nd round Shay had shown the world just how much better a boxer he was than Britain, he had started to embarrass Gary by making him make amateurish mistakes.

Britain went back to his corner fuming at being made to look silly, Shay trotted back to his corner feeling pretty good about himself. Paddy sat him down and said "Very good kid, but you got to stick to the plan, rough him up kid, work his body, get nasty".

Shay replied "Paddy he couldn't get near me when I boxed him",

Paddy then said "Kid, stick to the plan, listen to me".

Shay nodded his head and got up for the 3rd round very confident.

The bell rang and Shay went straight to work dancing around shooting out his sharp jabs and right hands. Britain was moving well and blocking a lot of Shay's shots, near the end of the 3rd round Shay got through with a stiff jab and an evil body shot that put Britain on the ropes. Shay went for the famous Case's special to finish Britain off, he smashed in a left hook to the body, but Britain brought his arm down to block it, Shay then turned in a left hook to the head, Britain slipped out of the way and crashed in a destructive right hook to Shay's jaw. The right hook took Shay clean off his feet and Shay crashed to the floor.

Britain raised his hands in victory as he walked to a neutral corner and the ref started to count. Shay was more shocked than hurt and stood up straight away; he could feel blood pouring down his face from above his left eye. The ref got to the count of 8 and took a good long look at Shay's eye, he asked Shay if he wanted to continue and Shay nodded his head. The ref told them to box on, but before they got to each other the bell rang to end the 3rd round.

Shay sat down in his corner and Kenny went straight to work on his cut, Paddy looked up at Kenny who said "It's the cut from the last fight, he's opened it back up".

Paddy asked "Is it fixable?"

Kenny looked down at Paddy shook his head and mouthed the words "2 rounds maybe".

Paddy looked Shay deep in the eyes and said "Look kid, I aint going to lie to you, the cut is bad, you got 1 maybe 2 rounds before the ref stops the fight".

Kenny then said to Shay still holding gorse to his cut "You can do this Shay come on son *Fear No Foe*".

Shay took a deep breath and nodded his head and got up for the 4th round.

Britain came out strong and opened Shay's eye back up with a cracking jab and a straight right, Shay winced as pain shot down the side of his face, Shay took a step back to get out of trouble, but this just spurred Britain on. He got Shay on the ropes and smashed him to the body with rights and lefts, Shay looked like he was finished and the ref seemed to be just waiting for the right time to jump in and stop the fight. The Wembley crowd was going crazy as they could sense that Britain was going to be victorious. Shay bobbed and weaved on the ropes, blocking as many shots as he could and then from out of nowhere he took a step to the side dipped down and brought up a tremendous uppercut that caught Britain clean on the chin.

Britain stumbled back Shay followed it up with a big straight right which sent Britain sprawling across the floor. Shay walked to a neutral corner, blood was now gushing out of his cut and he watched on as Gary Britain tried to get back to his feet. The ref got to 5 and Gary had managed to get to his feet by pulling himself up with the ropes, he stood up, but as soon as he did his legs gave way and he fell to the floor again. The ref had no choice, but to wave the fight over.

Shay collapsed in the corner from the sheer emotion that he was feeling, his supporters went wild, Shay was Champion of the World! Kenny and Paddy rushed over to him and picked him up off the floor. The ref came over and handed him the 3 belts, Shay's eye was still pumping out blood and Kenny did his best to stem the bleeding. Shay saw Kelly as she got into the ring and went over to her.

He took her in his arms and kissed, Kelly then said “Shay I have got something to tell you”.

Shay stopped her and said “Well Kell, I have got something to ask you”.

He then got down on one knee and said “Kelly will you marry me?”

Kelly looked at him in shock and said “Are you serious?”

Shay smiled and said “I’ve never been more serious in my life, Kelly will you marry me?”

Kelly smiled and replied “Yes of course I’ll marry you”.

Shay then stood up and hugged her; he then asked her what she wanted to tell him?

Kelly smiled and said “Shay I’m pregnant”.

Shay looked gob smacked.

Kelly then said “So do you still want to marry me?”

Shay smiled and hugged Kelly and replied “More than ever Kell, this is the happiest day of my life”.

The M.C then announced the result to the title fight he said

“Ladies and gentlemen you’re new super middleweight undisputed champion of the world Irish Shay Dempsey”.

Shay’s Supporters went crazy as his hand was raised; even the rest of the hostile crowd had to applaud a great victory for Shay. He walked out of the ring with the I.B.F title around his waist and Paddy and Kenny holding the other 2 belts high in the air.

Shay got his Mom and Sparky and some of the lads to come back to the changing room. Kenny cleaned up the cut above his eye and then the doctor stitched it up. Shay got up on the table in the changing room and announced to everyone that it was a triple celebration, Sparky shouted “You won the title and your getting married, what else we celebrating?”

Shay looked down at Kelly and she nodded her head to say he could tell them.

Shay then said “after I proposed to Kelly, she told me that she is pregnant, I’m going to be a Dad”.

Sparky and the rest of the people in the room cheered the news.

Shay looked down at his Mom and said “You ready to be a Grandmother Mom?”

His Mom smiled and replied “It’s about time son, I’m so proud of you, you and Kelly are going to be great parents”.
Shay got down and hugged his Mom and said” I just wish Dad was still here to see all this”.
His Mom replied “He would be so proud of you son”.

CHAPTER 29



There was then a knock on the changing room door, Sparky answered it and was shocked to see Gary Britain who asked if he could talk to Shay.

Sparky told Shay who it was at the door; the whole room went quiet as Shay told Sparky to let him in. Gary walked in and went over to Shay and said “I didn’t get to say it before you got out of the ring, well done, you beat me fair and square, and you deserve to be Champion”.

Gary then put his hand out to shake Shay’s hand.

Shay looked at Gary and could see he was sincere and that what he was saying was from the heart. Shay took his hand and shook it and thanked Gary for a great fight. Shay then told Gary that him and Kelly were getting married and having a baby.

Gary congratulated him and Kelly and wished them all good health and happiness.

As he was about to go Shay asked him “So Gary when are you and Emma getting married? That o.k. magazine are covering it aint they?”

Gary turned around and said to Shay “There’s not going to be any wedding, I was told about her going to see you today and found out she had been stealing money out of my bank accounts, that’s why she wasn’t at the fight. I made her pack her bags and she has gone back to her Mom and Dad’s”.

Shay shook his head and said “I’m sorry to hear that Gary, but trust me your better off without her”.

Gary nodded his head and left.

Shay never left Kelly’s side all night; he wouldn’t let her do anything and was being very protective over his fiancé.

Shay left the celebrations early with Kelly and his Mom; he had booked his Mom a room at the same hotel as they were staying at. Shay got her booked in and made sure she was o.k., and then took Kelly and his 3 World titles up to their room.

When they got into bed, Shay kissed Kelly and then said “Do you know what, even if I had lost the fight tonight, this still would have been the happiest day of my life, I can’t believe it we are having a baby Kell”.

Kelly smiled and gave Shay a kiss and said “Well Shay you won the titles as well, so it’s an even better day, I’m so proud of you and I love you so much”.

Shay replied with a big smile on his face “I love you as well Kell, now get some sleep, you need to keep your strength up”.

They got up the next day and when they came down to the lobby of the hotel Dexter was there with his driver ready to take them home.

He apologized for not being around at the end of the fight, but one of his other boxers had been taken to hospital after his fight, so he had spent all night with him.

Shay told him not to worry about it and asked how the lad was doing? Dexter told him he was fine now, and would be out of hospital tomorrow.

Dexter then said to him “I hear congratulations are in order, I’m made up for both of you. Getting married and having a baby Son, you don’t mess around do you”.

Shay laughed and replied “We are not getting married because of the baby, I asked her before I knew”.

Dexter then said “Well it’s all good Son, it will be the making of you, now we going to get out of here and get back to Birmingham”.

They got back to Birmingham later that day; Dexter dropped Shay’s Mom off first and then Shay and Kelly. Dexter told them that he had organized a celebration party for him tomorrow night at The Squared Circle and he expected both of them there.

Shay smiled and replied “Well we will see how Kelly feels Dext”.

Kelly then said to Dexter “Don’t worry Dext, he’ll be there”.

Dexter smiled and gave Kelly a wink and replied “Nice one Kell, I’ll see both of you tomorrow”

Then got back in his car and drove off.

As soon as they got into their house the phone never stopped ringing with people wanting to interview Shay, even some of the papers that had slatted him wanted to have a piece of him. After a few hours Shay decided to turn the phones off so they wouldn’t be disturbed.

Shay waited on Kelly all night, and he wouldn’t let her do anything. He even got Marc De Paul to bring Kelly her favorite meal round.

The next day, Shay asked Kelly if she wanted to come to the cemetery with him to visit his Dads and her Moms graves.

Kelly smiled and said “Yes Shay that would be good, it’s been a while since we paid our respects”.

They got to the cemetery around midday; they went and laid flowers on Kelly’s Mom’s grave first. Kelly started to talk to her Mom like she was standing in front of her, she told her about Shay winning the titles and that they were having a baby and were getting married and that she could not be anymore happier.

Shay then told her Mom how much he loved her daughter and that he would always look after her.

They then made the short walk on this hot summer’s day to Shay’s Dad’s grave.

Shay looked down at the grave and said “Well Dad I did it, I proved you right, I’m Champion of the World. I wish you were here to see it, but I know you’re looking down on me and I really hope that you are proud”.

Kelly then put her arm around him to comfort him, Shay then said “See Dad you were right there as well, you always said I should be with Kelly and now we are getting married and having a baby”.

Shay fought back the tears that were building up in his eyes.

He looked at Kelly and said “Kell I really couldn’t be happier”, Kelly hugged Shay tightly and then said “I’ll give you some time alone with your Dad; I’ll just be over at my Mom’s grave”.

Kelly walked over to her Mom’s grave and Shay bowed his head in prayer.

The grave yard was quiet, Shay thought him and Kelly were the only people in there, but he was wrong. Shay’s silent prayer was broken by someone shouting at him “Ohh Dempsey your dead”.

Shay turned around to see who had shouted at him and saw this scruffy looking bloke in a hoody standing just a few feet away from him.

Shay said to the man “What’s your problem mate? Show some respect”.

He then turned back towards his Dad’s grave.

The man then said “What don’t you remember me Dempsey? You fucking ruined my life”.

Shay turned around again and looked at this scruffy man, who to Shay looked nothing more than a bag head.

Shay replied to the man “Sorry mate, do I know you then?”

The man then pulled off his hood so Shay could see the whole of his face and replied “Take a good look Dempsey, it will come to you”.

Shay looked deep into the man’s eyes and as soon as he did, he realized who he was.

Shay said “Chav is that you? Fuck me you look rough, what’s your problem now?”

Chav looked completely different, he had lost lots of weight and his face looked gaunt and drawn and his clothes looked ragged and worn.

Chav replied snarling “My problem is you Dempsey, everywhere I look your there, on telly in the papers, you fucking ruined my life”.

Shay shook his head and said “How the fuck have I ruined your life Chav? Did I make you take drugs? No I didn’t. Now do me a favor and fuck off”.

Chav snarled and replied “Oh what you going to do Dempsey hit me, I forgot you’re the Champion of the World aint you”.

Shay looked at Chav and shook his head and said “Chav, go back to the rock you just crawled out from underneath”.

Chav stood there his face bright red with rage, he shouted “Dempsey I’m going to kill you”.

Shay laughed at Chav and said “Do we have to go through all this again, you couldn’t beat me when you had your boys around you, so you got no chance now, now do me a favor and go away”.

Kelly then came walking back over and asked Shay who his friend was?

Shay smiled and replied “You remember Chav don’t you Kell”.

Kelly looked at Chav and couldn’t believe it was him, she could see in Chav’s eyes that he had nothing but hatred for Shay and said to Shay “Come on let’s get out of here”.

Shay nodded at Kelly and they started to walk towards the exit, but as they went to take their first step towards it Chav reached into his track suit top and pulled out a gun.

He pointed it at Shay and said “Don’t fucking walk away from me Dempsey”

When Shay saw the gun he moved in front of Kelly and said “What the fuck you doing Chav? There’s no need for all this, put the gun away and get out of here while you still can”.

Chav moved towards Shay still pointing the gun at his head, he stood in front of him with the barrel of the revolver just inches away from his head, Chav smiled and said “Well this has evened the odds up a bit, hasn’t it Dempsey, you might be able to dodge a punch, but do you think you can dodge a bullet?”

Kelly who was behind Shay petrified and said to Chav “All this is in the past Chav, just leave us alone”.

Chav shouted at Kelly “Shut up you slag before I blow you’re fucking head off as well”.

Shay who inside was scared stiff, but on the outside didn’t look like he had a care in the world said to Chav “Don’t fucking talk to her like that; it’s me you got the problem with”.

Chav looked directly into Shay’s eyes and replied “Yeah you’re right, fuck off now bitch before I put a bullet in your head as well”.

Shay told Kelly to go, but she refused to leave Shay.

Shay could see in Chav’s eyes he was scared and thought to himself that he didn’t have the bottle to use the gun.

He then said to Chav “Come on then, do it, here’s your big moment, shoot me”.

Shay then moved forward and placed his head on the barrel of the revolver Chav had pointed at him. This seemed to unnerve Chav, who then said “Get on your fucking knees Dempsey and beg”.

Shay smiled at Chav and replied very calmly “No Chav, I think I’ll stay as I am, now come on big man shoot me”.

Kelly who was now crying her eyes out shouted at Shay “What you doing Shay he’s got a gun”.

Shay calmly told Kelly to go again, but Kelly replied “No I’m only leaving when you leave”.

Chav shouted at Shay again telling him to get to his knees.

Shay replied “No” again and then said to Chav “so you going to shoot me or what?”

Chav pulled back the hammer on the revolver with his thumb, as he did this Kelly let out a scream.

This distracted Chav just enough for Shay to knock the gun away from his head. The gun went off, the bullet hitting a nearby grave stone; Shay tackled Chav to the ground desperately trying to get the gun out of his grip. They frantically wrestled on the floor, and then

there was a muffled bang. For a second neither of them moved, then Chav pushed Shay off him.

When he realized what he had done he got up, Kelly screamed and ran over to Shay, Chav looked down with complete fear in his eyes and ran out of the cemetery.

Kelly turned Shay on to his back and rested his head on her chest; she called 999 and told them that Shay had been shot. The operator got the details and told her an ambulance and the police were on their way, Kelly got off the phone and tried to tend to Shay.

Blood was pumping out of the bullet hole in his chest every time he took a breath. Kelly tried to comfort him, telling him the ambulance was on its way.

Kelly could hear the sirens of the ambulance getting closer and said to Shay “Hold on baby, there nearly here”.

With all the strength Shay had left, he lifted his hand and stroked Kelly’s face and in a very weak voice said “Kelly make sure our kid doesn’t grow up like me, make sure he gets the best”.

Kelly smiled at the sound of his voice and replied “We will do it together Shay, you’re going to be o.k.”.

Shay stroked her face again and with his very last breath said “Tell my Mom I love her and please look after her for me. Kelly I love you so much”.

Shay’s hand then slumped down to the side of his motionless body, his eyes slowly closed and his head tilted to the side.

The paramedics arrived soon after, but they could not revive him.

Kelly was inconsolable, when they told her he had gone, the police took her away to get a statement and because of how upset she was.

Shay was buried 2 weeks later at Witton cemetery in one of the biggest funerals Birmingham had ever seen. Shay was laid to rest next to his Dad.

Chav was found dead 3 weeks after the shooting in a squat in Kingstanding after overdosing on heroin.

6 months after Shay’s death, Kelly gave birth to a baby boy and called him Michael Shay Dempsey who weighed in at a healthy 8 pounds. Kelly and Shay’s Mom moved into the new house Shay had brought

and Brenda help raise her grandson. Kelly never promoted another boxer and put all her efforts into raising their child and building Marc De Paul's into one of the best restaurants in the country.

Over a year after Shay's death Gary Britain won the vacant World titles back by beating Mason Mathews in a hard fought contest. Britain now promoted by Dexter Hastings humbly dedicated his win to *Irish* Shay Dempsey, the greatest boxer he had ever fought.

Kenny Case closed Case's gym and with the help of Dexter brought the run down Mohamed Ali centre just down the road from the old gym. They renamed the place *Dempsey's School of Boxing* in honor of Shay and turned it in to one of the best amateur gyms in the country. They kept the Case's gym motto *Fear No Foe* and dedicated a whole wall in the gym in memory of Shay Dempsey.

THE END

I hope you enjoyed the book, if you did make sure you read my first one *Dexter – Have I Told You Yet* the true story of my life in boxing. It is available at Lulu.com or by messaging me via e-mail to dexter.hastings@hotmail.co.uk.

I am starting work on another book *Dexter - What I Done Next* the follow up to *Have I Told You Yet*; I am also going to be working on a book of short stories based on the fictional book *Fear No Foe*, taking characters from the book and seeing the story from their point of view.

Thank you for reading and please feel free to send me your thoughts on any of my books at [dexter.hastings@ hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dexter.hastings@hotmail.co.uk) or by facebook – Dexter Hastings.

Thank You

BRUMSDALE
BIRMINGHAM



Dexter Hastings was born in Birmingham, England and is a proud father to four wonderful children, Deanna, Conor, Shay and Charlie-Ann. Dexter has been an avid Boxing fan from a young age whose love of the sport has seen him box and win the Celtic Boxing Union's Birmingham & West Midlands cruiser-weight title and also fight for the Supreme and light heavyweight title's of Birmingham & West Midlands. Dexter is one of the main trainers at Paddy's gym in Birmingham, England he has trained both men and women, helping others pursue their ambitions of learning the noble art.



FEAR NO FOE



Fear No Foe is the story of Shay Dempsey's journey from amateur to professional boxer and his quest to gain the world title. A gripping and exciting story, Shay comes from Newtown one of the most deprived areas in Birmingham UK. Shay's goal in life is to fight his way into a better one, with the love and support of his loving family and good friends Kelly and Sparky.

Although this book follows Shay's boxing career, it also tells the story of how he deals with all sorts of drama both inside and outside the ring. Throughout Shay's story there is drama, heartbreak as well as a great deal of happiness.