

THE FIGHT

Written by

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THE FIGHT

Characters

Actor 1 Cuthbert

Actor 2 Charlie and Soldier

Actor 3 Margaret and Mrs Protheroe

Actor 4 Boxing Promoter; Charles Donnal; Emlyn Davies; Mr Hardy; Evans The Pint; Freddie Miller;

Newspaper reports and commentary are played by the cast or Voice over

SCENE 1

We see Cuthbert Taylor step forward out of the shadows. He turns to face the audience and speaks to them as if he is speaking to a group of youngsters who have shown up at his gym in Merthyr Tydfil to train to be boxers.

CUTHBERT

When you're in the ring, you're one with your opponent. Everything goes silent and it's you and that person. You hear your breath. You hear the other person, and as you try to figure out their strength and weaknesses, you're learning about your strengths and weaknesses. And each person that you spar or fight with, brings out new strengths and weaknesses in you. But the second you think, 'I have this person,' and get cocky, you can lose and you usually do.
You have to remain humble and have respect for the other person.

Slowly the music changes to a barrel organ of a funfair.

Cuthbert turns to watch a boxer fighting in a boxing booth

A 1920s boxing ring. A downlight warms the stage and we see the silhouette of a boxer. He spars on his own. It's Cuthbert's father Charlie Taylor

We hear the sound of crowds as they watch a boxing match as the light changes, we see he is in a boxing booth in a fairground. A man steps forward into the ring to fight. - Charlie Taylor.

An opponent steps forward and they begin to box.

A young boy Cuthbert Taylor looks on.

The opponent is ducking and diving, but then the boxer skips forward and punches his opponent. He hits the canvas. A cheer goes up.

Cuthbert runs up to his dad hands him a towel, and cleans up his face as he talks to him.

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

That left hook took him by surprise, he never stood a chance.

CHARLIE

No, but I didn't expect him to get up after the first knockout.

CUTHBERT

He knew he was finished with the jab, one-two.

CHARLIE

But he kept going though.

CUTHBERT

He was floundering, rolling on the side of his feet to get his balance.

CHARLIE

Each person that you spar or fight with, their strength and weakness brings out new strengths and weaknesses in you. But the moment you think you've got him beat, that's the moment you have to watch out. It only takes one punch. Like in life. You have to remain humble and have respect for the other person

CUTHBERT

Yes Dad.

CHARLIE

Anyone left?

Cuthbert looks around to see if there is anyone else left to fight.

CUTHBERT

No dad. You cleared them all out.

CHARLIE

Good, now let's get our money and go home. Any nobbings?

Cuthbert runs back into the ring to collect coins from the floor.

Cuthbert lifts his head to see his dad is hurting

CUTHBERT

You alright dad?

CHARLIE

Yes, 15 rounds takes its toll.

Their conversation is interrupted by the Boxing promoter

BOXING PROMOTER

And yes Gentlemen and lady,
(*pointing to the only woman in the crowd*)

The winner this evening is the hard man from Toxteth - The Toxteth Terror - Charlie Taylor.

CHARLIE

I live in Merthyr Tydfil now.

BOXING PROMOTER

Yes, I know but there are so many hard men in Merthyr there's nothing special about that. Toxteth sounds more... exotic.

CHARLIE

It's in Liverpool!

BOXING PROMOTER

Oh?
(*feigning interest*)
Another round?

CHARLIE

Are you mad? There's no one left to fight.

BOXING PROMOTER

And you were just getting warmed up.

CHARLIE

I've done 15 rounds as it is.

BOXING PROMOTER

Ah, alright, here's your money.

He hands Charlie the money.

Charlie counts it. He looks to the Promoter.

CHARLIE

Half a crown?

BOXING PROMOTER

Yes

CHARLIE

You said I'd get at least 10 bob

The Promoter hands over a few more coins.

BOXING PROMOTER

I'm not made of money, but to be fair you always bring in a good crowd Charlie Taylor, so here's a crown for your trouble. Lets call it quits.

Quickly changing the subject

Where are you next?

CHARLIE

Neath Fair.

BOXING PROMOTER

That's a bit small time for you, isn't it?

CHARLIE

I'm just putting food on the table for me and my family. I'm not chasing dreams,

BOXING PROMOTER

I could get you a few more bouts, come with me and the Fair, you'll do well.

CHARLIE

I dare say. But I've promised my wife we are staying put.

BOXING PROMOTER

You are missing an opportunity.

CHARLIE

So you say.

BOXING PROMOTER

Look you know as well as I do. Since the War, There's been no more call for coal or iron. I'm seeing more and more young lads, those that made it home that is. Those that are fit and well, come forward to box. It's lifting them up and out of this misery. And the crowds? They love it. It's entertainment for the masses.

(MORE)

BOXING PROMOTER (CONT'D)

Helping them to escape from the drudgery of their lives.

You'll get a fair few bob. Come on everyone loves seeing an old workhorse putting a shift in and showing the young ones how it's done.

Charlie looks at him. We are not sure if he is going to deck him or not.

CHARLIE

I do it on my terms or not at all. And in this case? Not at all.

BOXING PROMOTER

What about the lad?
Any good?

CHARLIE

He's my son, isn't he?

BOXING PROMOTER

Who's his trainer?

CHARLIE

Me.

BOXING PROMOTER

Well if he wants a couple of rounds, let me know

CHARLIE

He's at the Drill Hall in Merthyr on Monday.
Come along. It might lift you out of your misery.

Charlie looks over to Cuthbert, he's yawning.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Thanks for the opportunity.

Charlie goes over to Cuthbert as the Boxing promoter exits, and he calls out to him.

BOXING PROMOTER

Just think on it, the offer is always there.

He exits

CUTHBERT

What was he talking about Dad?

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

Wanting me to go with him, with the fair.

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

Will you go?

CHARLIE

No, I've done that, that's how I'm down here in the first place. It's how I met your mam

CUTHBERT

She was with the fair?

CHARLIE

Yeah, the bearded lady!

CUTHBERT

Dad!

CHARLIE

Don't tell her I said that mind.

No, I had travelled with the boxing booths from Liverpool and one autumn I found myself down here in Wales, at Neath Fair as it happens. Famous fair it is and people come from all around and your mam had travelled on the train from Swansea with some of her friends. I had won a few rounds but had a cut above my eye, so I went off to find some ice. Bumped into her by chance, by Cascarini's Ice Cream barrow and she took pity on me. Thought I had been in a fight...

CUTHBERT

Well, you had!

CHARLIE

You know what I mean.

CUTHBERT

Don't tell me it was love at first sight!

CHARLIE

For her, it was yeah even with my face all swollen like a football.

CUTHBERT

Did you go back to the booth?

CHARLIE

No lost out on a few shillings that night...but she was worth it.

A train whistle blows

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Come on we'd better put a move on, that's the the last train up the valley. It'll be gone midnight by the time we get home. Otherwise, we'll be on the milk train.

CUTHBERT

How much did you get?

CHARLIE

Half a crown -

CUTHBERT & CHARLIE

Half a crown is better than working underground!

CHARLIE

Yes especially as I'm coming home with my face intact.

CUTHBERT

Well just about!

CHARLIE

Hey, watch your cheek, my lad.

He goes to swipe him jokingly and Cuthbert ducks.

CUTHBERT

I could do 15 rounds.

CHARLIE

Not with this workhorse!

CUTHBERT

Mr Hardy, the schoolmaster says I could be a champion one day.

CHARLIE

Does he now?

CUTHBERT

Yeah. Do you think so, dad?

Charlie looks at him, knowing that there is little likelihood for him to get to be a champion.

Train whistle blows in the distance

CHARLIE

Come on champ, lets get you home.

They exit. We hear a train pulling out of a station.

Lights fade

SCENE 2

The offices of the British Boxing Board of Control

A gentleman walks forward. He is the chair of the British Boxing Board of Control. He speaks to the committee

CHARLES DORNALL

Thank you gentlemen for your time this evening, so just to conclude the meeting we have one more item on the agenda. As we are fully aware of the ruling spearheaded by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, we cannot have black boxers competing for British titles. These interracial fights may lead to trouble and unrest in the racially mixed populations of the colonies. We must protect the integrity of the Empire. Therefore the regulation and to integrate 'Rule 24' into the rule book, which bars black boxers and those who do not have two white parents from competing for the national title.

Those in agreement say aye.

Pause

CHARLES DONNAL

Carried. Let that now be inserted into the rules and regulations.

SCENE 3

Margaret Taylor is sitting sewing by the light of an oil lamp. Cuthbert and Charlie enter.

CHARLIE

You are going to need jam jars for glasses if you keep working in that light.

MARGARET

Dyma amser i ddod a'r crwt gatre
(There's a time to bring the boy home)

CHARLIE

It's not that late.

Clock strikes twelve

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Well...

MARGARET

Syth i dy wely nawr.
(straight to bed now)

CHARLIE

Up the wooden hill.

Cuthbert is almost sleepwalking his way up to his bed.

MARGARET

He's got school in the morning.

CHARLIE

He wanted to come with me.

MARGARET

How did you do?

CHARLIE

Fifteen rounds.

MARGARET

Good god, you are not as young as you think you are.

CHARLIE

Don't you start, I was called a workhorse tonight.

MARGARET

(checking his face)

No marks though?

CHARLIE

No but got a few body blows.

She holds her hand out. He gives her the money. She counts it out.

MARGARET

I'll put a shilling behind the clock, just in case. Eileen's little one isn't too good.

CHARLIE

Still no better?

MARGARET

No.

CHARLIE

I'm not surprised with all that damp running down the walls. It's a wonder they haven't all got consumption.

MARGARET

Bless her, Eileen waited so long to have a little girl.

CHARLIE

Especially after 6 boys. Some would have given up trying.

MARGARET

Ahh, but their Bronnie, she's a pretty little thing. Like a china doll, so delicate and with those curls...

I'll give Eileen some money so that they can see Dr Jones in the morning.

CHARLIE

Comes to something when you can't afford to be ill.

He rubs his side and lifts his shirt.

MARGARET

Put some vinegar and brown paper on it.
I don't know how long you can keep this up
mind.

CHARLIE

It's keeping our heads above water.

MARGARET

I know, but it's taking longer for you to recover
from each fight.
What will we do?

CHARLIE

I don't know. There's very little around. It's
either the ring or the pit, and I know which I'd
prefer.

MARGARET

Out of the frying pan into the fire. Something
will come. I'm sure.

Pause

CHARLIE

Perhaps Cuth' can take my place.

MARGARET

What about school?

CHARLIE

Well he can still go to school. I'll just train him
and he can do curtain raisers at the Drill Hall, a
couple of bob will help out.

MARGARET

I want him to have an education.

CHARLIE

And he will, but let's face it, we have to make
the most of what you've got.

MARGARET

And has our Cuth got it?

CHARLIE

Yeah I think he has. Come to the Drill Hall on Monday night and see for yourself.

MARGARET

I can't bear to watch you fight, let alone my own son.

CHARLIE

Well, you are going to have to trust me on this. I'm off to bed, I'm on earlies tomorrow.

MARGARET

You'll work your self into the ground.

CHARLIE

Yeah but it'll be worth it.

He kisses her on the cheek and exits.

Margaret turns the oil lamp down.

Blackout.

School bell

SCENE 4

The schoolyard in Twynrodyn school. Cuthbert is sparring with another boy, Emlyn Davies.

EMLYN DAVIES

You be Firpo and I be Dempsey.

CUTHBERT

But I'm always Firpo, why can't I be Dempsey.

EMLYN DAVIES

But you've got the advantage already by being a boxer.

CUTHBERT

Yes, but this isn't real boxing.

EMLYN DAVIES

Can you do the voice of the commentator?

CUTHBERT

No.

EMLYN DAVIES

Well, then I have to be Dempsey and the commentator.

CUTHBERT

Why

EMLYN DAVIES

Because Firpo is always on the floor.
Look I bet you we get to the end of the Firpo fight before the schoolbell goes.

CUTHBERT

I'm not betting you Em...

EMLYN DAVIES

Ding Ding.

Cuthbert doesn't move

EMLYN DAVIES (CONT'D)

Come on! Before the bell goes - Ding Ding!

Cuthbert falls to the ground.

EMLYN DAVIES (CONT'D)

Firpo down, taking a lightning fast right to the body and he takes a three count. One. Two. Three.

Firpo hanging on. Dempsey's speed is too much for him. Firpo down again but up without a count.

Dempsey knocks him down a third time, with the first round not even half over.

Firpo down a fourth time and the crowd going wild.

Looks like its all over. Dempsey hits him down for a fifth time. But he won't stay down.

Firpo like a wild bull. Dempseys right cross takes Firpo down again.

But he's up again. A terrific right by Firpio and Demspey goes flying out of the ring. But he's back in and he's not taking any chances with Firpos wild swings.

Firpo down again a right cross to the chin and a button Dempsey favourite combination.

(MORE)

EMLYN DAVIES (CONT'D)

Firpo desperately trying to get up but this time he can't make it. He's out for the count.

School bell rings.

EMLYN DAVIES (CONT'D)

Saved by the bell. I win. And the bet.

CUTHBERT

We didn't bet-

MRS PROTHEROE

Right line up. No more talking!

The boys line up as the teacher prowls back and forth

EMLYN DAVIES

(whispering)

You training after school?

CUTHBERT

(whispering)

Yeah and then I'm off down the Drill Hall.

EMLYN DAVIES

Are you? I'll ask my dad if I can come down. Who you boxing?

CUTHBERT

Some boy from over Ammanford way. Bledd the Blood

EMLYN DAVIES

Do you think you'll beat him?

CUTHBERT

My dad seems to think so.

EMLYN DAVIES

I'll tell my dad to put a few bob on you then.

MRS PROTHEROE

Who's talking?

EMLYN DAVIES

(whispering)

But don't tell my mam.

MRS PROTHEROE

Who's talking? Taylor is it you?

CUTHBERT

No Miss.

MRS PROTHEROE

It better not be or I'll keep you in after school

EMLYN DAVIES

You can't do that Miss, he's got a fight after school.

MRS PROTHEROE

A fight.

EMLYN DAVIES

Boxing match.

MRS PROTHEROE

Do your parents know about this?

CUTHBERT

Yes, it's my dad who trains me, Miss.

EMLYN DAVIES

He's going to be World Champion one day miss.

MRS PROTHEROE

I very much doubt that.

EMLYN DAVIES

Do you want a bet?

MRS PROTHEROE

No Emlyn Davies I do not want to bet. Gambling is frowned upon and if this fighting continues I will make sure you pair are banned from Noddfa Chapel.

Mrs Protheroe walks away

EMLYN DAVIES

Is that a promise?

MRS PROTHEROE

What did you say?

EMLYN DAVIES

Potatoes.

MRS PROTHEROE

What

EMLYN DAVIES

My potato.

All the children get a potato out with their initials on it ready to have a baked potato for lunch.

MRS PROTHEROE

(takes Emlyn's potato)

Your name doesn't start with an F Emlyn.

EMLYN DAVIES

No, but my potato is so small didn't have room for an E.

MRS PROTHEROE

Get into class.

As Cuthbert passes her.

MRS PROTHEROE (CONT'D)

Cuthbert, I hope you don't think that you can make something of yourself by fighting.

CUTHBERT

It's boxing Miss. There's a difference.

MRS PROTHEROE

What difference is there?

CUTHBERT

Boxing is an art.

MRS PROTHEROE

Don't be so ridiculous. Who do you think you are?

CUTHBERT

I'm...

MRS PROTHEROE

Do you think you are better than us?

CUTHBERT

Pardon Miss?

MRS PROTHEROE

Just remember where you people come from.

CUTHBERT

My people Miss?

MRS PROTHEROE

Yes, your people.

CUTHBERT

They come from Swansea and Liverpool.

MRS PROTHEROE

I am warning you, Cuthbert. I'll have no more of this insolence. Get into class.

He looks at her and goes into class.

Ding Ding

SCENE 5

The rain is pouring down outside as Cuthbert trains with his dad. We see a bag hanging down. A bucket in the corner to catch the rain.

CHARLIE

Right let's get you warmed up

On the spot for 1 min.

Push ups 30 seconds.

Jumping Jacks, 1 min.

This will help loosen up the arms come punching time.

Create a huge explosion, like you're reaching for the stars.

Rest and Repeat

This time harder

Jog. Pushups. Jumping Jacks. Reach for the stars, Rest.

Now Shadow Boxing.

Nonstop punching—jabs, crosses, lead hooks, rear hooks, uppercuts, as well as defence slips and rolls. Stay light on your feet, with nonstop motion.

.(MORE).

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You should be breathing heavy;
Heavier than that, your opponent is right on
your heels,

Now four-punch combos, pivoting after each
one, playing with speed, and focus on your
footwork.

This is the time to show off your best moves.

Rest: Take a minute to reset,
Catch your breath and get focused as you go
into Round 2.

They both sit.

CUTHBERT

Where do our people come from?

CHARLIE

What are you talking about?

CUTHBERT

Well, Miss Protheroe said, "Just remember
where your people come from."

CHARLIE

And did you tell her?

CUTHBERT

Yes, I said you were from Liverpool and my
mam is from Swansea.

CHARLIE

Don't pay much attention to her ignorance.
You'll face a lot worse than her in life but it's
how you back yourself that's important.

Pause

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

With grace and dignity.

Pause

CUTHBERT

Where did your mam and dad come from?

CHARLIE

Well, my mam was from Preston in Lancashire and my dad was born in Pennsylvania in the US of A. Came over to find work in the docks in Liverpool.

CUTHBERT

I'd love to go to America one day, and box with the great American boxers like Jack Dempsey.

CHARLIE

Well if that's what you want we'd better put a shift in. Come on up on your feet.

They start to spar

Make your punches cleaner and snap even faster than in Round 1.

By the end of Round 2, you want to feel like you've just gone eight rounds with Jim Driscoll. Grab a sip of water. Then keep pushing!

CUTHBERT

Thank goodness, I only have to last 3 minutes.

CHARLIE

In a proper fight yes, but not in the booths, you need to be strong enough to last until the last man is down. Resilience. Stamina. That's how all those boxers learnt their craft, in the booths, and before then up on that mountain, bare-knuckle fighting. Early Sunday morning, when the dew was still wet on the grass and the mist from the Taff hung like cotton wool in the air. Men and boys would stride up the mountain to settle a score, or to make a bit more money by placing a bet on the next best thing. Bare knuckles, bathed in brine and gunpowder. There were no rules there. No Queensbury Rules. No three-minute rounds you would fight till you could take no more. Then some of the hypocrites would run down the hill ready for chapel, with their winnings jangling in their pockets.

CUTHBERT

No training either then?

CHARLIE

Oh, your day at the coalface or at the furnace would be all the training you need. That's why this town is famous for boxers. They are the hardmen bred on iron and steel. They say babies born in Merthyr are born with clenched fists, and that's not because they are tight, mind you, but born to fight.

Cuthbert spars with his dad.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

How do you fancy your chances with Bleddyn Pugh tonight?

CUTHBERT

Bledd the blood?

CHARLIE

Is that what he calls himself?

CUTHBERT

He says he only puts gloves on to keep his hands warm.

CHARLIE

Well, we'll see about that.

CUTHBERT

They say he could be a champion one day.

CHARLIE

It's about the work you put in. The toil and the graft. Nothing comes easy in this life, you have to work for everything. And timing. Doing the right thing at the right time. Anyone can be a champion.

Silence

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Come on then. Let's go see to this Bledd the Blood

We crossfade to the Drill Hall where we see Cuthbert fighting Bledd the Blood.

SCENE 6

A washing line comes across the stage with huge sheets. Cuthbert's shadow is boxing and we see his shadow on the sheet.

MARGARET

"Bleddyn Pugh gave a sound display of cool calculating boxing but he was not as enterprising as Taylor. The Merthyr lad was always well on his toes and obtained an early lead..."

Cuthbert comes through the sheets

CUTHBERT

...then like a flash, shot out lefts and rights - hooks and swings - to beat his opponent Bledd the Blood. Aptly named as the only blood you saw, was on him.

MARGARET

Dere mlan twinkle toes! Mae rhaid bod nhw'n sych nawr?

(Come on Twinkle Toes! They must be dry now)

Cuthbert feel the sheets

CUTHBERT

How do you know.

MARGARET

I know everything cariad bach

CUTHBERT

Dry as a bone!

MARGARET

Helpa fi i gael nhw i mewn.

(Help me to get them in)

CUTHBERT

Oh do I have to?

MARGARET

I need these ironed and folded for Mrs Evans, Gelli di fynd a nhw fyny iddi nes mlaen.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(You can take them up to her later on)

CUTHBERT

But mam, I have training later, and I have the milk round to do with Evans the Pint.

MARGARET

Fi 'di addo iddi, I've promised I'll get them to her. So you'll do as you are told. Then take this over to the Emlyn's mam

CUTHBERT

Oh mam! I'll definitely be late then. Can't it wait?

MARGARET

Emlyn' sister has a terrible cough, and they need the money so they can get the medicine from the doctor.

CUTHBERT

Emlyn says she keeps them up all night with her coughing.

MARGARET

But she's not well.

CUTHBERT

Is it TB?

MARGARET

I hope to god it's not.

CUTHBERT

Some of the boys in my class have had to go to Pontsarn, to the Sanatorium.

MARGARET

Well, they'll get the fresh air up there, better than living in the squalor down here in town. Shouldn't be allowed, with their fathers working so hard to line the pockets of the pit owners.

She hands him the money

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Now take that, so they can get a doctor.

CUTHBERT

Why are we paying for it? You are always saying to Dad that we need money to keep our heads above water. Don't they say "That charity begins at home-"

MARGARET

Now you listen to me, in this life when you see someone in need you help them out. We all rise by lifting others. And for your information The phrase is Charity begins at home but should not end there. Now go or it won't be a doctor they'll need.

CUTHBERT

lawn mam.

(Alright mam)

Beat

Once I'm back I'm going straight up the shed to train.

MARGARET

Once you've done your errands.

Cuthbert runs off. Charlie enters.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Any joy?

CHARLIE

Nothing. There's talk of a strike.

MARGARET

Well, that will suit Churchill of course. This government would rather see poor people starve than make concessions for the working man.

CHARLIE

Some of the boys are thinking of getting on their bikes and moving away.

MARGARET

There'll be no one living in this town at this rate.

CHARLIE

I know, but you've got to go where the work is.

Pause

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Where's Cuth?

MARGARET

I had to send him down to Eileens, Bronnie has a fever, and they need to call the doctor.

CHARLIE

She won't survive losing that little one.

MARGARET

No, I know. It's a crime that a country that prides itself on ruling half the earth can't look after those in need.

CHARLIE

And she's off my little Bolshevik.

MARGARET

Is it so wrong to care for those who need it most? What goes on in your heart and soul when you want others to go without, so you can go have it all? It's not right myn.

CHARLIE

Don't have go at me!

MARGARET

Sorry love, it just feel so unfair.

CHARLIE

I know.

Pause, he takes the paper , sits and reads.

MARGARET

Cuth did well last night then?

Referring to the newspaper report

CHARLIE

Yes, he's a clever boxer. In the ring, it's as if he is two steps ahead all the time. An instinct you know?

MARGARET

Yes, that's all well and good but I want him to finish school.

CHARLIE

Oh, it's alright for me to have my ears boxed but it's your son is too good for it.

MARGARET

That's all you've known.

CHARLIE

Yes, and it will only get me so far. But Cuthbert, well he's different.

MARGARET

And you know he can only get so far too...

CHARLIE

But things can change...

MARGARET

I thought that. After The Great War. I thought it would be different. You know with all the men from across the Empire fighting side by side, but after the war, they come here for work and a good life and they are turned away, or worse still, ignored.

CHARLIE

One day it'll change. It will have to, and who knows perhaps Cuthbert will be the one that helps make that change.

MARGARET

How will a boy from Merthyr change the minds of a government? It'll never happen. It sickens me that these kids aren't allowed to fulfil their potential. Every one of them has it in them to contribute and make something of themselves, but they are denied it by a small ruling class.

CHARLIE

Let me know if you are going to stand for election and I'll put a cross in the box!

MARGARET

Don't you worry as soon as I get my chance to vote, I'm making sure it's a vote for change!

CHARLIE

And that won't be too long, the way the Women's suffrage is going.

MARGARET

And about time too! Who kept the home fires burning during that War. Us, women.

He goes to her.

CHARLIE

Alright, look, whether he goes for a title or not, boxing can give him a decent living. You've read the papers. He's good you know it. Our Cuth is ...

MARGARET

...better than you?

CHARLIE

Well, oh hang on a mo', he's not that good.

Pause

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

But he could be.

MARGARET

I don't want him getting into fights around town. The other boys will see him as fair game.

CHARLIE

No one will lay a finger on him, or they'll have The Toxteth Terror to deal with. You know as well as I do. Boxing isn't that, it's a sport yes, but it is an art and it's a science

MARGARET

Science?

CHARLIE

Yes. The power doesn't come from just the fist but the whole body. He knows this. And then he has a grace to his punch...

MARGARET

An art.

CHARLIE

Yes.

MARGARET

He'll need a lot more than that to survive in this world.

Black out

SCENE 7

We see Cuthbert on a milk cart with Evans the Pint

EVANS THE PINT

Did you hear about Harris Schwarz furniture shop?

CUTHBERT

No.

EVANS THE PINT

A bull on its way to the butchers, got free from the errand boy, Des Jones, and went rampant in the shop. Took four men to catch it. Like a scene out of one of those westerns with them trying to lasso it!

CUTHBERT

Anyone get hurt.

EVANS THE PINT

Only Des Jones, when the farmer got hold of him.

Pause

Oh, and the bull.

He makes a sign of him slitting his throat.

EVANS THE PINT (CONT'D)

Right, who's next?

Cuthbert looks at his list.

CUTHBERT

One pint and a pot of cream for Miss Protheroe.

EVANS THE PINT

One pint for old prissy pants Protheroe! Oh and cream, that's for the vicar who's coming round for tea on Sunday. She's having peaches. In a tin mind.

CUTHBERT

Can you deliver it to her?

EVANS THE PINT

That's what I pay you for?

CUTHBERT

She's horrible.

EVANS THE PINT

There are a lot of horrible people in the world. Kaiser Bill for one. Now Old Protheroe has nothing on him.

Cuthbert looks towards Miss Protheroe's house.

EVANS THE PINT (CONT'D)

Go on, hurry up before the milk turns to cheese

Cuthbert goes to the house. Just as he is putting the milk down Mrs Protheroe opens the door.

MRS PROTHEROE

Cuthbert Taylor. Not earning enough money boxing, you have to take another job.

CUTHBERT

It's only a milk round.

MRS PROTHEROE

When men coming back from the war have no jobs to go for, you greedy lot are taking them all.

CUTHBERT

It's only a Saturday job Miss.

MRS PROTHEROE

That's what you say. I don't believe a word that comes out of your filthy mouth.

CUTHBERT

'Mrs Protheroe I don't understand why you don't like me. I am only trying to do my best.

MRS PROTHEROE

Your best will never be good enough for my country.

Silence. We are not quite sure if Cuthbert is going to deck her. We can see him clenching his fists.

CUTHBERT

Mrs Protheroe, it may be a surprise for you but this is my country, too.

MRS PROTHEROE

Hah! Since when?

CUTHBERT

Here's your cream.

He's about to turn and go, but then he turns back to her.

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

Don't look at it too long or your ugly mug may sour it.

He turns on his heel and walks off with a smile.

Miss Protheroe is left speechless.

Lights down

SCENE 8

At home, Cuthbert is cleaning all the boots for the family. Charlie is sitting by the fire, and MARGARET is mending clothes.

The clock above the mantelpiece ticks, and then the clock chimes.

MARGARET

Cwpla'r glanhau'r bwts na, ac yna lan a ti i dy wely

*(Finish up cleaning those boots
and up to bed with you)*

CUTHBERT

O mam! It's not even dark out.

CHARLIE

Come on now listen to your mam.
Those boots are shining like glass. I can almost see my face in them.

MARGARET

Ready for Sunday School tomorrow.

CUTHBERT

Oh, I'm not allowed in Sunday School.

MARGARET

Why's that?

CUTHBERT

Mrs Protheroe has banned me and Emlyn from Noddfa for boxing.

MARGARET

Oh, she's always been a vindictive little...

She stops herself from swearing.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I got a good mind to go and see her tomorrow.

CUTHBERT

Don't do that mam.

MARGARET

Why not?

CUTHBERT

It'll just make things worse.

MARGARET

Worse?

CHARLIE

What have you done Cuthbert?

There is a knock at the door.

MARGARET

Pwy ddiawl yw hon?

CHARLIE

Mrs Protheroe?

MARGARET

Cuthbert, cer i weld pwy sy'na.

CUTHBERT

Do I have to?

Cuthbert gets up and goes to the door. He returns with Mr Hardy his headteacher.

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

It's Mr Hardy, my headteacher.

MARGARET

Oh, dewch i fewn.

MR HARDY

Diolch yn fawr.

CHARLIE

What do we owe this pleasure on a Saturday night.

MR HARDY

Yes, apologies for coming 'round at such a late hour. but the matter is very urgent.

MARGARET

Oh?

Charlie and Margaret look at one another

MR HARDY

It concerns Cuthbert.

MARGARET

Oh.

MR HARDY

Perhaps we should talk privately?

CUTHBERT

Well, I be off to bed.

MARGARET

No you don't, if it concerns you, you stay put.

Cuthbert looks at his parents.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Oh where are our manners?

Please sit, would you like some tea?

MR HARDY

No, no thank you. This won't take long.

MARGARET

I hope Cuthbert hasn't been in any trouble.

CUTHBERT

(cutting across)

If this is about Mrs Protheroe? if it is then I can explain.

MR HARDY

Mrs Protheroe?

CUTHBERT

Yes, you see this morning I was delivering milk...

CHARLIE

Quiet Cuth...

CUTHBERT

(not listening)

...And she said some things to me...

MR HARDY

Mrs Protheroe?

CUTHBERT

...that I thought was not...

CHARLIE

Cuthbert. Quiet.

CUTHBERT

Well if you ask me she deserved it!

CHARLIE

Well we are not asking you.

Mr Hardy, how can we help?

MR HARDY

Oh well. I have been meaning to talk to you.
about Cuthbert.

He was seen boxing in the drill hall last week
and it has been brought to my attention...

MARGARET

(to Charlie)

I told you didn't I?-

CUTHBERT

-I told you, it's Mrs Protheroe.

MARGARET

(to Mr Hardy)

I am sorry it won't happen again.

CUTHBERT

She's snitched on me all because of what I
said to her.

MR HARDY

On the contrary, Mrs Taylor, we think it should
happen again.

CUTHBERT & MARGARET

What?

MR HARDY

He should be boxing.

MARGARET

He should?

MR HARDY

He has a natural ability.

CHARLIE

He does.

MR HARDY

He's a clever boxer.

CUTHBERT

I am?

MR HARDY

We think you could go far and make Merthyr proud.

MARGARET

You do?

Pause

MR HARDY

We would like to enter him into the Welsh Amateur Schoolboy Championship.

CUTHBERT

Really?

MR HARDY

Yes. What do you think Mr Taylor?

CHARLIE

Well, he's had enough practice.

MARGARET

But I didn't think he was allowed

MR HARDY

This is a Welsh amateur title, not professional.

CHARLIE

It's not a British title.

MARGARET

Oh.

CUTHBERT

Please, mam, it's what I want to do.

CHARLIE

It's that or he leaves home to find work.

MARGARET looks to Mr Hardy

MARGARET

It looks like I don't get a say.

CHARLIE

That'll be a first!

MARGARET

When is it?

MR HARDY

The contest is next month.

MARGARET

You best get to bed Cuthbert, you are going to need all the rest you can get.

Cuthbert goes to his mam and cwtshes her and goes to Mr Hardy shakes his hand.

MR HARDY

We'll talk about Mrs Protheroe on Monday in school.

Cuthbert exits

MR HARDY (CONT'D)

Well, I'll say nos da now to you both.

CHARLIE

Thank you, Mr Hardy.

MR HARDY

I believe he can go all the way.

MARGARET

I only hope others have the same faith in him as you do.

MR HARDY

Nos da.

SCENE 9

Training with Charlie...

CHARLIE

Now angles.

CUTHBERT

Oh no not maths!

CHARLIE

It's all maths son.

CUTHBERT

What?

CHARLIE

If you are to understand your opponent's movements you need to create angles, and that means good timing, and co-ordination.

Come on on your feet.

Projected on the screen as he fights are angles and trigonometry of boxing (Like scenes from the film Beautiful Mind!)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

First footwork. Move laterally, pivot, and circle around your opponent.

You can create angles for better positioning and striking opportunities.

Second. Feints and Fakes, use these to deceive. Set up angles for effective strikes. By making your opponent react, you create openings for angled attacks.

Third lateral moves. Shifting your position, creates openings from the side.

Fourth. Combination strikes. Throw combination strikes to force your opponent to defend from different angles.

Now four-punch combos, pivoting after each one, playing with speed, and focus on your footwork.

Rest and repeat.

CUTHBERT

Do you think I can win this dad?

CHARLIE

I know you can. I have nothing but faith in you son.

Pause

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You've been to see Mrs Protheroe?

CUTHBERT

No.

CHARLIE

Well you should.

CUTHBERT

What for?

CHARLIE

To apologise

CUTHBERT

What?

CHARLIE

You heard.

CUTHBERT

Shouldn't she apologise to me?

CHARLIE

Yes, but you'll never get that. Never stoop to their level. Rise above it Cuth, always rise above it.

Ding Ding.

SCENE 10

We see Cuthbert walk up to Mrs Protheroe. Speak to her

CUTHBERT

I am sorry for what I said to you Mrs Protheroe.

He stands there thinking that she will apologise to him for what she said. She turns and walks away.

NEWSPAPER REPORTER

Western Mail March 15th 1927

Five Welsh Titles find new owners.

(MORE)

NEWSPAPER REPORTER (CONT'D).

If evidence were needed of the growth of amateur boxing in Wales, it was found in large numbers of entries and interest shown in the 13th annual championships of the Welsh Amateur Boxing Association which were held at the Drill Hall in Cardiff on Monday. All the bets lads in Wales were among the competitors and although some of last year's title holders have since joined the ranks of professionals, there is an abundance of good talent. Amongst the winners was William Cuthbert Taylor from Merthyr Tydfil weighing in at 8 stone flyweight beating Tommy Davies from the Amman Valley on points.

Cuthbert wins the fight and becomes the Welsh Schoolboy champion.

Mrs Protheroe can be seen at her desk typing a letter.

MRS PROTHEROE

To whom it may concern. I would like to draw your attention to the recent Welsh Amateur Championship Boxing Competition. It was won by a boy called Cuthbert Taylor. My understanding is that to win the amateur School Boy Boxing Championship you need to be a schoolboy. I believe I am right in ascertaining that Mr Taylor is not in school and has a job delivering milk. I would not like this deceit to bring your organisation into disrepute, but there must be fair play in all things. Yours sincerely a concerned member of the public.

Crossfade to the top of a tip in Merthyr Tydfil. Cuthbert sits on his own. Throwing stones. His friend Emlyn comes scrambling up beside him. He's exhausted and gasping for breath.

EMLYN DAVIES

If I knew you were all the way up here, I wouldn't have bothered.

CUTHBERT

Well, why did you?

EMLYN DAVIES

Mr Hardy gave me a shilling to find you.

CUTHBERT

Well, you found me now, so go get your money.

EMLYN DAVIES

It's not as easy as that.

CUTHBERT

Why not?

EMLYN DAVIES

I have to bring you back home. That'll get me another shilling.

CUTHBERT

I'm old enough to get home by myself.

EMLYN DAVIES

I know but people are worried about you.

CUTHBERT

Like who? Like the busybody who told on me. Told them I wasn't a schoolboy. Well, I am. I go every day to the miserable dump.

EMLYN DAVIES

I know, you don't need to remind me.

CUTHBERT

Look why don't you get lost, I'll go home when I'm good and ready.

Pause

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

I said you can go.

EMLYN DAVIES

I don't want to. I want to sit here and look at the view of Merthyr.

Cuthbert looks at Emlyn.

CUTHBERT

Will you please go?

EMLYN DAVIES

No. You can't make me.

Emlyn knows full well that he can make him.

EMLYN DAVIES (CONT'D)

Well, perhaps **you** could.

CUTHBERT

I don't want to hurt you Emlyn, you are my friend. But I just need time to work out my next move.

EMLYN DAVIES

What next move?

CUTHBERT

Well, I can't be a boxer.

EMLYN DAVIES

What do you mean? You are a boxer. A good one.

CUTHBERT

But not a champion.

EMLYN DAVIES

My Mam says, someone will always find a way of putting someone else down, just so they can feel better about themselves. You can't let them. They were wrong. Everyone knows you are a schoolboy. A schoolboy champion.

CUTHBERT

No, I'm not, it's been taken away from me.

EMLYN DAVIES

No, it hasn't. Mr Hardy has written to the Boxing Board with proof that you go to Twynrodyn School every day of the week, and that you help Evans the Pint on a Saturday morning. Even Evans the Pint has put his name to the letter. Well, a cross.

CUTHBERT

Are you telling me the truth?

EMLYN DAVIES

Yes.

CUTHBERT

Well, why didn't you tell me earlier?

EMLYN DAVIES

Because you wouldn't listen.

Cuthbert gets up and Emlyn stands by his side. Cuthbert swings for him but Emlyn ducks

EMLYN LEWIS

Too slow!

They both laugh.

EMLYN LEWIS (CONT'D)

Come on, I need to collect my shillings. The extra will help my mam out no end.

CUTHBERT

How's your sister? Is she better?

EMLYN DAVIES

Yes, I think so. It's hard, you know, on my mam, as she spends all her time with her. Me and my brothers hardly see her. If it wasn't for your family helping us out, there's no way we could afford a doctor.

CUTHBERT

My mam says a civilised society looks after those most in need.

EMLYN DAVIES

Civilised. You eaten a dictionary or something?

CUTHBERT

Just saying what my mam says. She reads a lot.

EMLYN DAVIES

My mam is grateful. Thank you Cuth.

CUTHBERT

I'll race you back down the tip.

EMLYN DAVIES

No, I know, you race, and I'll time you. In fact I'll bet you you'll get there before...

Cuthbert has run off before he even finishes

EMLYN DAVIES (CONT'D)

Oh hang on a mo'. That's not fair.

Lights crossfade

SCENE 11

In the Training shed.

CHARLIE

Well no use resting on your laurels champ, the next contest is just around the corner. The British Amateur championship.

CUTHBERT

Where is that?

CHARLIE

In London.

CUTHBERT

London?

CHARLIE

Yes at The Royal Albert Hall

CUTHBERT

The Royal Albert Hall? Where they have concerts?

CHARLIE

Yes and boxing matches.
Up on your feet Cuth. We've got work to do .

We see Cuthbert sparring and then boxing in a championship round at the Royal Albert Hall.

We also cut between the fight and the Taylors home as Margaret is listening to it on the radio

BOXING COMMENTATOR

And here we are at this wonderful setting in South Kensington to watch the final of the Flyweights between Taylor and Connolly.

Emlyn Davies walks into the house.

FOR WELSH MEDIUM SCHOOLS THIS SCENE WILL BE PERFORMED IN WELSH.

MARGARET

Shwmai Emlyn
Oh if it's Cuthbert you want-

EMLYN DAVIES

Not really, my mam sent me-

MARGARET

-Well he's at the Royal Albert Hall. That's in London you know.

EMLYN DAVIES

Oh, I'd forgotten it was today.

MARGARET

Kettle's just boiled, I'll make us some tea now in a minute. Come and listen to it on the radio with me.

EMLYN DAVIES

I can't stop-

BOXING COMMENTATOR

It's a very close fight, but the Welsh boxer is quicker with his left leads, but at close quarters Connolly does well. But in the end it's the Welsh boxer who wins on points.

MARGARET

Yes he's done it! Lets get that tea going to celebrate, and we'll have some bara brith, what you say Em?

She notices Emlyn is silent

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Emlyn? Emlyn what is it? What's happened?

EMLYN DAVIES

It's my sister, Bronnie.

MARGARET

No?

EMLYN DAVIES

My mam sent me to tell you. She's gone. The doctor said there was nothing more they could do for her.

MARGARET

Oh no.

EMLYN DAVIES

My mam wanted you to know, and that we are grateful for everything you did for us.

MARGARET

How's your mam?

EMLYN DAVIES

She can't find any comfort.

MARGARET

Let me get my coat. I'll go and see her now.

Pause

EMLYN DAVIES

I couldn't help her.

MARGARET

It's not your fault Emlyn. She should have had the care she needed.

EMLYN DAVIES

We couldn't afford it.

MARGARET

It shouldn't come down to that. It should never have come to that. Ever. In a civil...

EMLYN DAVIES

Civilised society? But its not civilised is it Mrs Taylor?

MARGARET

Come on I'll walk you back home.

EMLYN DAVIES

No, it's fine. I need some time on my own.

Margaret exits

Emlyn listens to the radio.

BOXING COMMENTATOR

And there we have it the new Amateur British Champion - Cuthbert Taylor. He may be an amateur but it is a matter of time before we see this young lad box professionally.

(MORE)

BOXING COMMENTATOR (CONT'D).

Young Taylor has the full boxing instinct is clever and punches hard. He is attended in his corner by a man who knows all there is to know in the science and there is no doubt that it is specially due to his splendid coaching that the lad has made such headway in the sport.

EMLYN DAVIES

Da iawn Cuth...

Black out.

SCENE 12

Cuthbert runs into the kitchen, where his mam, is sitting sewing and mending clothes.

MARGARET

Ti'n hwyr heno.
(you are late tonight)

CUTHBERT

Is Dad not back yet?

MARGARET

No, he said he had a meeting with Boxing Board.

CUTHBERT

He's probably sorting out the fight in the Rhondda next week.

MARGARET

Mae te yn y pot.
(There's tea in the pot)
Where've you been?

CUTHBERT

I ran up Mountain Hare, up over The Bogey Rd and then down through Dowlais.

MARGARET

Did Emlyn go with you?

CUTHBERT

No, he had to help his mam. He's talking about leaving Merthyr to find work. He wants to work, to earn money for his mam.

MARGARET

She'll miss him.

CUTHBERT

We all will.

Charlie enters

CHARLIE

Well, have I got news for you pair? Best sit down.

MARGARET

There's tea in the pot.

CHARLIE

No time for tea, if I drank, I'd go for something stronger.

CUTHBERT

What is it Dad?

CHARLIE

(reading a letter)

The Welsh Amateur Boxing Association would like to take this opportunity to invite William Cuthbert Taylor to represent Great Britain at the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam.

MARGARET

Is he old enough to go?

CHARLIE

Yes, although he'll be the youngest boxer to represent Great Britain. Once you get back you can turn professional I'm sure of it.

Newsreel of the Olympics

As Cuthbert spars in the background, we listen to the news report of the fight on the radio. His mother listens to the radio as his father spars with an imaginary opponent.

MARGARET

Will you please sit down!

CHARLIE

I should have gone with him

MARGARET

And how would we afford that?

BBC BOXING COMMENTATOR

Well after getting a bye in the first round, Cuthbert Taylor who is the first black boxer to represent Great Britain is looking in fine form as he enters the ring for this quarter-final round. In a very strange occurrence, it looks like there is no referee in the ring.

CHARLIE

What? No referee?

BBC BOXING COMMENTATOR

That is very unconventional. Dare I say it, but our British boxers are not having a fair go at it.

CHARLIE

I told you I should have gone with him.

MARGARET

Sit down.

He sits.

BOXING COMMENTATOR

And Cuthbert's opponent the Frenchman Armand Apell goes down again for the second time.

Charlie Stands

CHARLIE

Yes. That's it Cuth, don't give in.

Ding Ding.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

He'll go through on points now

BBC BOXING COMMENTATOR

Although Taylor defeated his opponent in the second round it looks like the attempt at a medal position has evaded the Welshman...

CHARLIE

What?

BBC BOXING COMMENTATOR

...on points.

CHARLIE

I should have been there.

MARGARET

What as the ref?

BBC BOXING COMMENTATOR

I do not think it'll be the last we have seen of this young man. Well done him.

MARGARET

Well, he did us all proud.

CHARLIE

Yes, he did. There are not many in Merthyr who can say they have competed in the Olympics that's for sure. He'll turn professional now

MARGARET

Yes, but will that be enough for him?

CHARLIE

He'll want a title.
He should go for the Welsh Championship.

MARGARET

Will he be allowed?

CHARLIE

The Welsh Boxing Board are a completely different entity from the British Boxing Board. He can't fight for, a British title but he can be the Welsh Champion. They can't stop the black boxers from competing. It'll soon change. It can't stay like this forever. But as soon as he's home we'll need to get him back in the ring.

Ding Ding.

SCENE 13

We crossfade into another boxing match, as Cuthbert boxes we see Margaret reading a newspaper by oil lamp.

MARGARET TAYLOR

Cuthbert Taylor - The Merthyr Flyweight and schoolboy champion has now moved up to Bantamweight and is taking part in his first senior championship, for the Welsh title. He boxed with the skill of a veteran. His hitting with a tigerish temperament which not even the courageous Goss, his final opponent could not withstand. He fought at lightning speed and outclassed his opponent. Taylor has the point and is the winner. Tonight we welcome a new Welsh Champion Cuthbert Taylor.

Cuthbert's arm is raised aloft as the victor.

A smartly dressed man walks forward

TED LEWIS

Good evening Mr Taylor, Mr Taylor.

He shakes hands with both Charlie and Cuthbert.

TED LEWIS (CONT'D)

Let me introduce myself my name is Ted Lewis and I manage boxers from all over Great Britain.

CHARLIE

We know who you are Mr Lewis.

CUTHBERT

You managed Jimmy Wilde.

TED LEWIS

Yes I did.

CHARLIE

"The Mighty Atom"

TED LEWIS

Yes.

CHARLIE

"Ghost with the Hammer in His Hand"

TED LEWIS

Yes

CHARLIE

"The Tylorstown Terror"

CUTHBERT

Dad!

Is it true he fought 800 fights?

TED LEWIS

Don't believe everything you hear.

CUTHBERT

They say he's going to make a comeback?

TED LEWIS

And don't believe everything you read. That was two years ago now. He won't be coming back to the ring.

Pause

CHARLIE

So what brings you here?

TED LEWIS

I'm looking for new talent, and I think I may have found him. I'd like to offer my services to manage Cuthbert Taylor.

CHARLIE

Manage?

TED LEWIS

Yes. That's correct. I will organise fights for him, the travel to and from and any accommodation. I will take 5% for my time in administration. I will do my best for your son, and take him to where he wants to go or whatever he wants to be.

CHARLIE

Well, what do you say to that Cuth?

CUTHBERT

I want to be the best I can be.

TED LEWIS

Then that's what we shall do.

Ted Lewis shakes Cuthbert's hand and then shakes Charlie's hand.

TED LEWIS (CONT'D)

Fine. I can get you a fight this Monday evening at the National Sporting Club in London

CHARLIE

How will we get there?

TED LEWIS

Well, train to Cardiff then train to London. Arriving just before 6.30 pm. Ready to fight at 8pm.

CUTHBERT

Who will I be fighting?

TED LEWIS

Johnny Gibson.

CHARLIE

Will we get the train home?

TED LEWIS

Yes or stay at a hotel. The choice is yours. I'll be in touch.

Ted Lewis exits and shakes hands with them both.

CUTHBERT

National Sporting Club!

CHARLIE

Where boxing began as a proper sport, with rules and fairness.

CUTHBERT

And if you win a British title you get the Lonsdale Belt, made of porcelain and 22-carat gold.

CHARLIE

Come on son, one step at a time.

The train whistle blows, and the steam train pulls out of the station.

MARGARET reads a telegram

MARGARET

Cuthbert knocked Gibson out. Stop. Leaving now. Stop. Be home Tuesday evening. Stop. Charlie. stop.

SCENE 12TED LEWIS

I have fixed Cuthbert to fight Stan Jehu next Saturday in Tylorstown. Over 15 threes. 25% of the gate with a £10 guarantee. Best of luck to him. So you'll leave Merthyr at 4.10pm Due in Pontypridd at 4.42pm. Then go on the 4.43pm to Tylorstown arriving at 5.22pm.

The next section is a montage sequence of travelling, fights, winning, and losing, all reported either by telegrams newspaper reports, or boxing commentary.

Train whistle blows and steam train pulls out of station

Ding Ding

A boxing ring with Cuthbert boxing his opponent.

COMMENTATOR V/O

Welcome Gentlemen to the Liverpool Stadium, Pudsey Street, Liverpool. Tonight we have the Scotsman Jim Ireland against Cuthbert Taylor from Wales

MARGARET

(Reading a newspaper report)

Right from the bell the exchanges were brilliant. The pair hammered each other at express speed and in missing a blow the Welshman came down in the first round.

CHARLIE

The second was brimful of interest, top-speed punching.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Taylor reached the chin but the Scot was soon back mixing matters beautifully. During the next couple, Taylor showed himself the better double-handed exponent. Ireland was cautious and only let go when he found an opening.

CUTHBERT

(as he is fighting is commentating on himself)

In the 6th the Scot became wild and he was reprimanded for elbowing. Both of us landed good shots to the jaw in this session and mixed it between them.

Ding Ding

He came out well in the 9th, a sharp left to the jaw surprised the me, but I never slackened the attack for one moment.

OPPONENT

For round after round, we milled furiously and the crowd were delighted. I slipped to my knees in the 12th...

Ding Ding

MARGARET

and in the next round Taylor sought a knock out in desperate fashion, but Ireland countered capital to the final bell of the 15th round.

Ding Ding

CHARLIE

When the verdict on point went to the Merthyr lad.

Ding Ding

Train whistle blows and steam train pulls out of station

BOXING COMMENTARY V/O

Welcome Gentlemen to the Palais de Danse, Pontypridd. Tonight competing for the British Boxing Board of Control Welsh Area Bantam Title Dan Dando and Cuthbert Taylor.

Ding Ding

Cuthbert Taylor wins on points, and a purse of £125.00.

What a prize for the young Merthyr boy,, when most of his peers wouldn't earn that in a year. But there's only one thing eluding him...

Crossfade to Cuthbert and Ted Lewis

CUTHBERT

Do you think I could go for the British Title?

TED LEWIS

I think you are ready but I would need to speak with The British Boxing Board. No one can deny you the chance but there's a lot at stake.

CUTHBERT

Like what?

TED LEWIS

You know as well as I do, you need both parents to be white, or at least born here.

CUTHBERT

My dad is a scouser, born and bred.

TED LEWIS

They don't see it like that.

CUTHBERT

No, because they don't want to see it.

TED LEWIS

Leave it to me

The train whistle blows and the steam train pulls out of the station

Cuthbert sits and reads a newspaper report.

CUTHBERT

"Everyone knows Cuthbert's capabilities. He is a clean fighter. Trained to go the full distance at top speed and with a variety of tactics only to be found in the foremost of men of his calling. A true champion to make Merthyr and Wales proud. It is just a crying shame that he's not white enough for the title."

As he reads this we see his Mam, Margaret come into the house. She has been shopping. She puts the bag on the table, as she does so, she takes a sharp intake of breath and starts to cough, she stands and reaches for her handkerchief tucked neatly in her sleeve. She takes the handkerchief to her mouth and as she looks at it, it is bright red with blood. She sits back down in the chair.

Charlie enters

CHARLIE

Looks like Mr Lewis is going to speak with the Board about Cuthbert.

Silence

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Well? I thought you'd be pleased.

MARGARET

I am.

Pause

CHARLIE

What is it my love?

She hands him the handkerchief.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, no. I'll go get the doctor.

MARGARET

Don't let Cuthbert know.

He looks at her and hugs her tight never wanting to let her go.

Lights fade

SCENE 13

Cuthbert is sitting on top of the tip. He's holding a letter in his hand.

Emlyn enters, looking smart and sits beside him.

Cuthbert puts the letter away.

CUTHBERT

You off to Sunday school.

EMLYN DAVIES

Bit too old for that.

CUTHBERT

Where you off all dressed up.

EMLYN DAVIES

I'm catching the 12 o'clock to Cardiff

CUTHBERT

What for?

EMLYN DAVIES

I'm going, Cuth.

CUTHBERT

Where.

EMLYN DAVIES

There's nothing here for me.

CUTHBERT

What about your mam?

EMLYN DAVIES

I need to find work to help her, and there's nothing here.

CUTHBERT

I can help you. How much do you need?

EMLYN DAVIES

It's not that Cuth. I need to be able to stand on my own two feet and provide for my family. I'm not going to find that here. My uncle has got me a job in Coventry.

CUTHBERT

I did eight rounds with a black boy from Leamington Spa, that's near Coventry. Turpin his name was. He was good.

EMLYN DAVIES

If you are ever up that way again, let me know and we can meet up.

CUTHBERT

Yes. I will.

EMLYN DAVIES

I'll miss you Cuth, I'm really proud to call you my friend. All that you have faced, you still keep going, not many would have done that.

CUTHBERT

No. I suppose not, but as you said what else is there for us?

EMLYN DAVIES

Well, I best be off. Say goodbye to your mam for me. I'm sure my mam will be round your house all the time now.

CUTHBERT

I'm sure.

They shake hands

Noticing the letter in Cuthbert's hand

EMLYN DAVIES

What's that?

CUTHBERT

Or it's nothing. Just a letter from my manager

EMLYN DAVIES

You keep going. I'll be watching out for you. Goodbye, then Cuth.

CUTHBERT

Goodbye.

Emlyn leaves and Cuthbert watches him go. He looks at the letter and reads it out.

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

Dear Mr Lewis. Thank you for your recent letter stating your desire for Mr Cuthbert Taylor to compete for a British Title. We are aware that he has achieved the Welsh Bantamweight Title. However the rules are very clear and we must adhere to them at all costs, to contest for a title both parents need to be white and British. We will reiterate this rule to the Welsh Boxing Board and make recommendations that he will not be able to contest for a Welsh title in the future.

Cuthbert crumples the letter up, throws it and begins to cry.

Margaret appears by the side of him.

MARGARET

Now what's brought this on?

CUTHBERT

I won't ever win a title mam, doesn't matter how good I am, I'm just not white enough.

MARGARET

There is nothing anyone can do about the colour of your skin, but what you see as a weakness is your strength. What you have to do is show them, prove them wrong.

CUTHBERT

How mam? How can I do that? Emlyn has had to move away to fight for his family. Is that what you want?

MARGARET

You have to find a way to make it work for you, or else their small-minded, bigoted ways will eat you up and destroy you. Don't let them ever do that to you as Dad says rise above it.

Pause

Come on your tea's on the table...

She turns to go.

CUTHBERT

How did you know I was up here mam

MARGARET

I know everything cariad bach. Come on.

He turns to pick up the letter. Looks at it once again and folds it up.

She disappears.

He turns to speak to his mother but she's gone.

CUTHBERT

Mam?

Crossfade

Cuthbert walks into his home and the table is clear, there is no food on the table.

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

Mam?

He looks around it's silent.

Charlie enters

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

Where's my tea?

CHARLIE

Cuth, there'll be no tea tonight.

CUTHBERT

But mam...

CHARLIE

She's gone Cuth.

CUTHBERT

Gone?

CHARLIE

The doctor came this afternoon and there was nothing he could do. She had been ill for a very long time but didn't want to see the doctor.

CUTHBERT

But we could've afford...

CHARLIE

Yes, we could, but she didn't want that...

CUTHBERT

Where is she?

CHARLIE

She's upstairs in bed.

CUTHBERT

Is she...?

CHARLIE

It's as if she's asleep. I am so sorry son.

Charlie sits in the chair and begins to sob.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I don't know what I will do without her.

Cuthbert goes to him.

CUTHBERT
We carry on Dad. We have to be strong. Just like mam would have wanted us to.

Cuthbert leaves.

Lights face to black

SCENE 14

It's the wake of his mam's funeral, Cuthbert stands with a cup and saucer in his hand. Charlie is by his side. Ted Lewis comes forward.

TED LEWIS
I am very sorry for your loss. Mrs Taylor was a formidable woman.

CHARLIE
The real fighter of this family.

Awkward silence

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Did you have a piece of the bara brith?

TED LEWIS
Yes. Thank you.

CHARLIE
There's enough here to feed an army. The neighbours have all rallied 'round to be fair. So please take some home with you.

TED LEWIS
Thank you.

Beat

How are you Cuthbert?

CHARLIE

He'll be fine. Won't you Cuth?

TED LEWIS

I am sorry about the Board's decision. I am so disgusted with the whole matter that I have resigned from the council altogether. Their decision baffles me. It doesn't make any sense. When I fought in the trenches there were boys by my side from the West Indies, India. They came to fight for the Mother Country.

CUTHBERT

My mam used to say if they were good enough to fight in a war they are good enough to fight for a title.

TED LEWIS

She was right.

CUTHBERT

She was always right.

Pause

CUTHBERT (CONT'D)

Mr Lewis, when's my next fight?

TED LEWIS

There's no rush, son

CUTHBERT

But I want to.

TED LEWIS

Are you sure it is not too soon?

CUTHBERT

No, I need to fight.

Ted Lewis looks to Charlie. Charlie nods to him

TED LEWIS

I'll be in touch.

SCENE 15

The sound of a pit hooter, screams out. Newsreel of the Gresford Mining Disaster

NEWSREEL

The most terrible colliery disaster this country has suffered since the war occurred at Gresford near Wrexham. Although the official figure given is 111, rescuers declare that 207 men are trapped below behind a wall of fire. Men from the surrounding pits ceased work and rushed to help in the task of rescue, already three heroic men have lost their lives. As they fall, others are waiting undaunted to take their place. Greater love hath no man.

CHARLIE

Ted Lewis has got you a fight, but I don't think you should do it.

CUTHBERT

Who with?

CHARLIE

Freddie Miller.

CUTHBERT

Freddie Miller? The American?

CHARLIE

Yes, he's over here, on a European tour and before he goes back to America, he's been asked to fight in a match to raise money for the miners' families in Gresford.

CUTHBERT

And?

CHARLIE

Well Ted thinks this could be a good opponent for you.

CUTHBERT

The World Featherweight Champion?

CHARLIE

I know.

CUTHBERT

He knocked Tommy Watson out in two rounds.

CHARLIE

Yes, the knockout blow came in the shape of a punch of which fighters dream. It was a left cross to the jaw. It didn't land a fraction of an inch too high, and it didn't land a fraction of an inch too low. It just landed where it was meant to land, on the fatal spot.

Cuthbert is contemplating the proposition

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

There'll be nothing in it for you, no money for you.

CUTHBERT

Dad, you always said that each person that you fight with brings out new strengths and weaknesses in you, this is my chance to find that out against the World Champion. I may never ever get my chance to be a world champion, so I may as well fight one.

CHARLIE

You don't need to do this.

CUTHBERT

I do but it's not just for me and my fight is it? It's for all those families suffering after their men lost their lives. I can make a difference here.

Remember Mam always said charity begins at home...

CUTHBERT & CHARLIE

but it doesn't end there.

CHARLIE

She'd be so proud of you Cuth.

Ding ding.

Cuthbert steps into the ring to fight Freddie Miller

BOXING COMMENTATOR

And tonight here at Anfield Stadium we welcome Freddie Miller the World Featherweight Champion from the United States of America in his last fight here on British soil against the Welsh man Cuthbert Taylor. A credit to both men who have devoted all the money to helping the families of the Gresford Mining Disaster.

The two boxers fight as Charlie reads the account of the match in the newspaper

CHARLIE

In the last three rounds, Taylor boxed like a champion and his skilful ducking and clever slipping made Miller miss at times by the proverbial mile and trying all he knew, he could not put the gallant Welshman down! When the final gong went the two boxers were given a wonderful reception and the cheers lasted several minutes after the fighters had left the ring. Miller won on points after 12 rounds

As Cuthbert leaves the ring He walks towards Charlie.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Look what he said about you,
(reading the paper)

The World Featherweight Champion, Freddie Miller said although the winner, he says...

A spotlight picks out Freddie Miller

FREDDIE MILLER

Cuthbert Taylor is the best British boxer I have ever fought.

CUTHBERT

I didn't just do it for that. I did it because it was the right thing to do.

An air raid siren sounds out and we hear Neville Chamberlain's famous speech "We are now at war with Germany."

SCENE 16

We see Cuthbert sparring and training a black soldier

CUTHBERT

Right let's get you warmed up
 On the spot for 1 min.
 Push ups 30 seconds.
 Jumping Jacks, 1 min.
 This will help loosen up the arms come
 punching time.
 Create a huge explosion, like you're reaching
 for the stars.
 Rest and Repeat
 This time harder
 Jog. Pushups. Jumping Jacks. Reach for the
 stars, Rest.

Now Shadow Boxing.

Nonstop punching—jabs, crosses, lead hooks,
 rear hooks, uppercuts, as well as defence slips
 and rolls. Stay light on your feet, with nonstop
 motion.

You should be breathing heavy;
 Heavier than that, your opponent is right on
 your heels,

Now four-punch combos, pivoting after each
 one, playing with speed, and focus on your
 footwork.

This is the time to show off your best moves.

Rest: Take a minute to reset,
 Catch your breath and get focused as you go
 into Round 2.

SOLDIER

Hey, you coming with us to the fight tonight

CUTHBERT

Who's boxing?

SOLDIER

Turpin.

CUTHBERT

Turpin? Dick Turpin

SOLDIER

Yeah, have you boxed him?

CUTHBERT

Yes years ago in the booths. He was good.
Middleweight I believe now.

SOLDIER

Yeah. They say once this war is over he's
going for the title.

CUTHBERT

But he's black.

SOLDIER

So? Once this war is over everything will
change, and for the better.

Crossfade to

Newsreel a montage of VE day and the end of the war. Labour landslide victory
the NHS and SS Windrush.

Music

Margaret Taylor steps forward as she watches Cuthbert take off his gloves and
start unwrapping the bandages around his hands

SCENE 17

MARGARET

...and things did change, in 1948, there was
the National Health Service, free for everyone
who needed it.

Charlie steps forward

CHARLIE

The SS Empire Windrush, which carried over
1,000 migrants from the Caribbean, many of
whom were war veterans, arrived to start a
new life. The British Nationality Act was passed
confirming the right of all British and
Commonwealth citizens to enter and live in
Britain if they so wished.

CUTHBERT

And in 1948 the colour bar was lifted, the thing that had stopped me from achieving the only thing I ever wanted, to compete for a British Title, and so, after over 400 fights, I retired from boxing.

MARGARET

And to this very day he never received an apology for being denied his chance.

Cuthbert goes back into the ring.

CUTHBERT

There's such an art to boxing, it's like a great game of chess. When you're in the ring, you're one with your opponent. Everything goes silent and it's you and that person. You hear your breath. You hear the other person. As you try to figure out their strength and weaknesses, you're learning about your own strengths and weaknesses. And each person that you spar or fight with, brings out new strengths and weaknesses in you. But the second you think, 'I have this person,' and get cocky, you can lose and you usually do. It's a bit like life.

Pause

You have to remain humble and have respect for the other person.

A video of Cuthbert being interviewed for an ITV documentary, recorded in November 1977 is projected on the screen.

Cuthbert Taylor died in December 1977.

Blackout

The End.