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# The Contender



## Synopsis

Before you can be a champion, you have to be a contender. Alfred Brooks is scared. He's a highschool dropout and his grocery store job is leading nowhere. His best friend is sinking further and further into drug addiction. Some street kids are after him for something he didn't even do. So Alfred begins going to Donatelli's Gym, a boxing club in Harlem that has trained champions. There he learns it's the effort, not the win, that makes the man -- that last desperate struggle to get back on your feet when you thought you were down for the count.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Alfred Brooks, a teenager and a high-school dropout, knows that his life is going nowhere. He's had the same old job at a local grocery store, and there are no opportunities for advancement. He wants to be someone, someone special. When one of his best friends, James, starts hanging around with the wrong group of teens, and later is sent to prison for robbing Alfred's grocery store, Alfred knows that his friend's friends are not the kids to be with. To avoid being thrashed by James's possy, Major and Hollis, Alfred wants to defend himself. He doesn't want to be pushed around. Alfred decides he wants to be a boxer, and begins his training at Donatelli's Gym, a gym that has turned out three champions. At first, Mr. Donatelli tried to dissuade Alfred from boxing, by telling him the many trifles he would have to go through to become a contender, but Alfred still wants to try. He runs in the morning, eats a select diet, and after work, he goes to the gym to work out. For a long while, Alfred maintained his training. One night, however, Major and Hollis gang up on Alfred, and bring him to their clubroom. They keep Alfred there by telling him that James had just been let out of prison, and

that he would stop by the club. While there, Alfred got drunk from vodka and got high from marijuana, both of which he was unsuspectant of until James arrived. Before he blacked out, Alfred saw that James was fumbling with a bag of cocaine, and knew that his friend was sinking further and further in to drug addiction. Alfred was very spacey for the next few days. Later, Alfred resumes his training, and then is fitted for a custom-mouthpiece. This is a sign that shows that Alfred is close to fighting. After three professional fights, Mr.

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