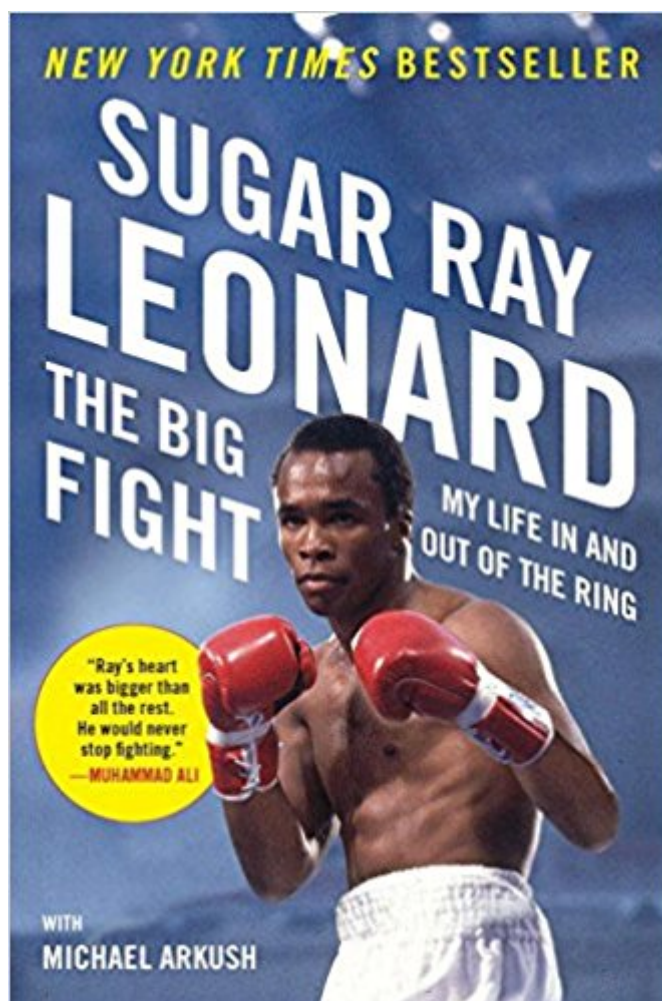


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# The Big Fight: My Life In And Out Of The Ring



## Synopsis

In his New York Times bestselling memoir, one of America's greatest boxing legends faces his single greatest competitor: himself. In Washington, D.C., during the 1970s, a black man could get into the newspapers in one of two ways: crime or boxing. Sugar Ray Leonard chose to fight. After winning a gold medal at the 1976 Olympics, Ray wanted to call it quits and go to college, but his family's financial needs made him go pro. Boxing history was made. All the while, another, darker Ray—one overwhelmed by depression, rage, drug addiction, sexual abuse, and greed—battled for dominance. In *The Big Fight*, Ray comes to terms with both these men and shares a brutally honest and remarkably inspiring portrait of the rise, fall, and ultimate redemption of a true fighter inside and outside the ring.

## Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Plume; Reprint edition (May 29, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0452298040

ISBN-13: 978-0452298040

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (61 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #351,133 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #58 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors > Boxing, Wrestling & MMA > Boxing #124 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Individual Sports > Boxing #2557 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National

## Customer Reviews

"He, truly, is supreme in battle, Who would conquer himself alone, Rather than he who would conquer in battle A thousand, thousand men." These words, from a Buddhist scripture called the Dhammapada, express a sentiment common to all religions. They also seem to me an appropriate motto for this autobiography of the famous boxer, Sugar Ray Leonard (b. 1956) who frequently called himself simply "the champ". During the height of his boxing career from the late 1970's through the 1980's, Leonard fought and won great fights in the ring against high caliber opposition including Wilfred Benitez, Roberto Duran, Thomas Hearns, and in 1987 coming out of retirement his famous and controversial upset of Marvin Hagler. Yet during the time he was vanquishing his ring

opponents and cultivating a smooth, clean-cut public appearance, Leonard was nearly defeated by his own womanizing, alcoholism, and drug addiction. Leonard was a person who needed to conquer himself. Leonard tells his own story in this new autobiography, "The Big Fight" written (ghostwritten) with the assistance of sportswriter Michael Arkush. I was interested in this book because I lived in Washington, D.C. during Leonard's glory years and followed boxing during that time. Autobiography is a difficult medium. In spite of the best of intentions, few writers of autobiographies are able to describe their lives honestly, both the good parts and the bad parts. Sugar Ray Leonard does not fully succeed in this effort, but he makes a game attempt. Ray Charles Leonard was named for his mother's favorite singer. Leonard was a quiet, introspective boy who found what he wanted to do when he began to box at a club in suburban Maryland at the age of 14. He progressed rapidly.

Any American who was even the most remote Sports fan in the late 1970's and early 1980's knew about Sugar Ray Leonard. The heir apparent to the fading Muhammad Ali, blessed with the pixie-like looks, a 500 watt telegenic smile and an articulate speaking style rarely seen in the sweet science, he became both a media darling and a fan favorite. He also began pulling down purses previously unheard of for non-heavyweight fighters. And, he was a winner. He handed Roberto Duran, a fighting machine, only his second loss in almost eighty fights. In his defining fight, he rallied from behind for a late round stoppage of a previously unbeaten Thomas Hearns. After a premature retirement brought on by a detached retina, he made a comeback after fighting only one fight in almost four years to challenge Marvin Hagler. This was significant for two reasons. He was stepping up two weight classes, and he was taking on a Champion who hadn't lost in ten years. Hagler had steamrolled through the middle weight division, laying waste to all legitimate contenders over a six year reign. Sugar Ray walked into the ring a 4-1 underdog, and pulled off the stunning upset via a controversial decision. But beneath the glare of the cameras and his celebrity persona, trouble brewed. His marriage and family life were badly shattered. His relationships with his wife and kids were fractured and non-existent. His battle with the bottle and cocaine were as painful as any punishment he took in the ring. Although, to the naked eye, he seemed to be a man who had everything, he was deeply unhappy. Sugar Ray Leonard takes a refreshingly honest look at himself. A man never known for his humility dishes it out in heavy dosages here.

"The Big Fight: My Life in and out of the Ring" is an autobiography written by Sugar Ray Leonard with Michael Arkush. The hardcover book is 320 pages in length while the Kindle e-edition is a 449

Kb download. This book, details in a chronological fashion, many events throughout Sugar Ray Leonard's life...beginning with his childhood, the circumstances that lead him into boxing, his rise to fame and glory within the boxing world and maybe most importantly, how that life of success and achievement almost destroyed this remarkable athlete. Initially I found a lot of childhood info, particularly in early chapters, that while may have important and interesting to some, was not what I'd bought this book for. I had expected that Leonard had come from a poor black neighborhood and grew up with few advantages in life...what I'd wanted was the details of his boxing career and the things that influenced this period in his life. However, as I got deeper into his story, I began to realize that these childhood anecdotes did in fact have a major influence in his boxing development and then later on when things began to drift out of control. Also, the revelations in this book made me realize just how naive a person (me) can be about a perceived hero...Sugar Ray Leonard. During his boxing and commentary career he was one of the few sports figures that I always truly admired...he was, as he says in his own words personable and charismatic and this was how I thought of him, until I read this book. To witness your hero display and succumb to the human frailties that were exposed in this book...his unabashed philandering, the alcohol abuse and cocaine addiction, was to say the least, eye opening and disturbing.

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