The Life of Davod Kruglick

John Fogelson*

*Iowa State College

Copyright ©1954 by the authors. Sketch is produced by The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress).
http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/sketch
The Life of Davod Kruglick

John Fogelson

Abstract

Late again, I’ll blame it on the streetcars. Any mail?...
LATE AGAIN, I'll blame it on the streetcars. Any mail? Kruglick — Mr., Mrs., Simon, Davod, none for Davod. Christ, I never seem to get any, not even advertisements. At least Simon gets ads for stamp collections. I wonder what we'll have for supper. I'd better get up and find out or I'll get nothing.

"Hello, Mama." Smells like cabbage, I thought.

"The clock says almost seven, don't it? We eat at six," was her cheery greeting.

"Look, Mama, I got my first fight booking — for money yet. Five rounds at the Zion Athletic Club, Saturday — that's tomorrow."

"We eat at six, come Zion Athletic or not. Go wash, we been waiting."

"Why so late, Davod?" said Papa Kruglick at supper.

"He was fighting with those hooligans," said Mama.

"Boxing, Mama. Not fighting. Saturday I fight for money."

"You want money," said Mama. "Why don't you work. Your Aunt Rose's son — already yet he's assistant manager of Klein's Dry Goods."

"Yes, Mama." I should be like Rose's son. Assistant manager now! He's the only person working for Klein, and if he can marry Klein's daughter he becomes full manager."

"Davod," said his father, "do you know what you want? Next year you graduate high school. Why don't you become a salesman in women's garments. I can talk to the Rabbi, maybe he knows someone who'll take you."

"I don't like selling," I answered. "I want big money. I'm tired of living on the West side, smelling gefilte-fish, boiled cabbage, and mediocrity. I can box. I want big money cars, girls, to be a man!"

[1]
“Davod,” said his father, “you, a Jew, are fighting for money, not sport, or an idea—just money. When will you realize that money isn’t everything? When you do you’ll act like a man not an animal.”

“I’m going out,” I said when we’d finished supper.

“Stay home and study,” shouted Mama.

“I’ll be home early.” I left. Can’t they leave me alone? Always harping! Always old country! These lame ones never left the Ghetto, they brought pieces of it with them.

I had planned to go to my girl’s, but on the way I met Yaoul Brenner, Sam Golub’s handy man. Being Sam’s man meant quite a bit, cause Sam was in the rackets and generous.

“Sholem, Davod,” said Yaoul.

“Sholem, Yaoul, was hoorst du?”

“Davod”, said Yaoul, “I heard Sam talking the other day. He said to me: Go find Davod Kruglick, I got a proposition for him. So Davey, why not drop in the High Hat around nine. Sam’ll be in then.”

“What choice do I got, Yaoul?”

“None, Davey, but it sounds better when I ask.”

I went to the drugstore. “Hi ya, Davod”, said several of the gang. It’s nice being known.

I ordered a coke, and Perlstein, the soda jerk, says, “I hear you’re fighting tomorrow?”

“Ya,” I said.

“Some of the guys are making book,” says the jerk. “Are you worth while?”

“Of course,” I answered. “And Golub wants to talk to me to-night.”

“Geez, Davey, that’s all right,” says Perlstein. “What about?”

“Something big,” says I finishing my coke. “I guess I’ll move on. It’ll take me until nine to walk to the High Hat. How much for the coke?”

“On the house,” says the jerk.

“Thanks,” I said swinging off the stool just like Bogart in the movies, and with an Edward G. Robinson wave at the gang I left the place.

“Set down, Davod,” said Yaoul. “Mr. Golub’ll be in in a minute.”
"Don't make me wait," says I like a big shot.
"So you don't like to wait, heh?" says Mr. Golub a minute later. "Ain't that a shame."
"I am sorry, sir."
"That's O.K., son, I like wise kids. Are you a wise kid, son?"
"Yes, sir," I replied.
"Your school lets out for the summer pretty soon, heh?" asked Golub.
"In a month, sir," I said.
"You want a job tha won' bother your training?" he said.
"Sure."
"All right, here's what. You're big, look older than you are, and you're supposed to be tough; I want you to take tickets at the Melody Lane. Just take tickets and keep your eyes open for anyone that looks like a bull. Hear me?"
"Yes, sir, but why me?" I asked.
"I want someone new," says Golub, "someone who could pass as a college boy. Here's ten so you don't forget you got a job. And I wouldn't tell my folks who I was working for."
"Thank you sir," I said as I left. What could such a slick operator want with me, I wondered, as I walked home. I had to work tomorrow, I still had a part-time job that Mama wouldn't let me quit.
I hit the sack and tried to sleep, but I couldn't. Moshe Toulon, my trainer, hadn't made me work out that day cause it was the day before my fight, so I wouldn't be tired. I lay there, and went over boxing patterns, taking advantages of imaginary openings. Around two I fell asleep, and all of a sudden Mama was waking me up.
"Get up, you Palooka," was her cheery cry. "Remember you still got a part-time job."
So I got up and went through the usual motions in the ever dirty head with its smell of the old man's shave soap and its cold floor. Then I ate the usual breakfast of scrambled eggs, rye bread toast covered with goose schmaltz, and left.
The job was terrible. I gold-bricked around, staying out of the boss's sight, finally ditching out at four-thirty. The ride home was bad too. In the first place I hate busses.
They stink of fuel oil and people, and they go too damn slow. When I make my pile I'm gonna have a real car. A big one, not a Ford or Chevy, but one like Mr. Golub has, a Buick. That Golub, I thought—I remember when I used to carry groceries for his wife and get tipped a quarter. Now I'm working for him. Working for him and gonna be a fighter. Maybe I'll call myself Slugger Kruglick or something refined like Gentleman Davod Kruglick.

Well, the North Avenue Express bus got home, and I went through the usual eat scene with the folks, only this time Mama says, "Davey, you ain't eating nothing."

"That's O.K., Mama, you ain't supposed to eat too much before a fight."

"And you're fighting on the Sabbath," she continued. "In case you've forgotten, Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath."

"Look, Mama, people have bought their tickets to see fighting on the Sabbath."

For the love of Mike I thought, let's not go into this again. "Look, I got to rest, sort of quiet my nerves before I leave."

"You want a pill, Davey?" asked Mama. "Aspirin will make you feel better."

"No, thanks, Mama. I'll be leaving in forty-five minutes."

She's a pretty good Mama, I thought, but God, I wish she'd knock off the old country stuff. What the hell. What is it Golub says? Money talks—well, maybe it'll bring peace in this house.

Time never went faster than the small rest and ride to the Zion Athletic Club. When I walked in Moshe said, "Right on time, boy. Get in suit. I'll tape your hands."

"O.K." I said.

"Nervous, Davod?" asked Moshe. "You only got twenty minutes."

"No," I said. I was too scared to be nervous. I pictured myself going home with a face like a red, wet blotter, and it seemed I'd forgotten all the boxing I'd ever learned.

"Let's go, boy," said Moshe. "You just listen to me and don't pay no attention to the crowd, and you'll do O.K."

All of a sudden we were in the ring. The M. C. introduced us, my opponent's name was John Domianos, a Greek. This being a Jewish neighborhood, I drew all the cheers. They
made me feel better. Then we were called to the center of the ring, the ref muttered the rules, we went to our corners. Moshe slipped the mouthpiece in, and suddenly I was facing Domianos. Christ, I felt like the times I watched my brother almost get run over by a truck — sick and helpless.

We walked around a while, and the ref pussy-footed up and hissed, "Fight, you bastards."

I led with a left, feinted right, threw a left cross. It felt good. I had caught him on the side of the head. He countered and tried a straight right, working it off a left — feint — left — right pattern. I caught it on my arm and tried a right hook. Missed. He gave a straight left that got me over the right eye. All of a sudden I wasn't scared. I wanted that Greek, and I wanted him like sausage. We clinched — the ref broke us. Stepping out, I socked him with a hard left, low in the stomach, right below the little rib. A real place. We'll give it three rounds. Clang! So soon, we'd just started.

"Good going, Davey," said Moshe. He slipped the mouthpiece out, sponged me with water, and put fine salt on the bruise over my eye. "Try for his guts, boy — that round was a draw — keep your head tucked down. Breathe deep. There! Gloves all right? Remember, meet him in his corner."

Clang went the bell. I tried to meet him, but he was out for blood, so we met in the center. You're hungry, huh, boy? Ouch, he got me in the mouth. Another one on the side of my head. More. Back off, Davey, he'll get you. He keeps coming. Throw straight lefts at his head. It's good to have long arms. I stood flat-footed and bent from the waist, covered up real good, and started walking around the Greek — like a dog before he picks a fight. The purpose is to confuse your opponent, cause he never knows what you're going to do next. You can do almost anything, but nothing too well, 'cause you just can't hit bent over. It slowed the Greek. — Good, he's moving in. Now I'll get your weak guts. Go on, hit my head, it don't hurt. Now a left in the heart, a right — straight, low on his breast bone. Good! Try to clinch, heh? Here's a left in the neck. Hurt? Ha. Now you're set. A right cross from the floor up. Huh, below your cheekbone — you felt it, hah. Why are you down? What's 'a matter? Are you hurt, boy?"
"Get to a neutral corner, jerk," I heard someone holler later. I learned it was Moshe. He said I must'a stood looking down at the Greek for almost six seconds.

The ref held up my hand, the Mike said my name, and I felt like a new Cadillac looks, all good.

"O.K., Schmiss," said Moshe, when I left the Zion Athletic Club. "See you Monday. I got you another fight a week from tonight."

* * * * *

'Hello, Samson," said Mama when I walked in. "You look like you won. Where's the money?"

"In my pocket," says I.

"Give me half," she said.

"You gonna save it for me?" I asked.

"No, you fight on the Sabbath, you can pay rent like a roomer," she answered.

"Since when is business done in the family?" I asked.

"Since when do you act like a member of the family?" she said.

"Since always, when you leave me alone, that's when!" I hollered. "I'm going out for a walk or something."

"Davod, sit down," said the old man.

"I won't, I'm going."

"You go, and you don't come back," he answered.

"All right, I'm sitting. Talk."

"Davod, you are the eldest son. It's your duty to help with the money."

"It's your duty to make enough. I just get to where I can make some, and you want it."

"Davod," he continued, "we got your brother to send to school, times are bad, you are worse. What are we going to do?"

"Since when are you asking me?" I sneered.

"Since when? You're the eldest son, that's when," he hollers. "I'm asking you as a man to assume your responsibility, get a job, quit this fighting, fear God, become a citizen, not a Cossack in a fur hat."

"This ain't the old country," I yelled back. "I am a citizen, and your God sure as hell isn't mine."

"What!" he said in a quiet tone. "You deny your religion?"
“Your religion, yes,” I said.
“So you’re a Jew only by birth, heh? Get out! You are no longer my son. You deny your Lord and his people. From this day on you are as dead. I have now but one son and his name is Simon. Wife, have you heard?”
“Yes,” said Mama in a quiet voice.
“Go, you have no longer a home.”
“I’m going. I don’t need you stinking refugees or any part of you. I can stand by myself. Go to hell.
I packed a few things and left.
* * * * *
PART II
“Davod, when you coming home?”
“Look, Simon, every time I see you, you ask the same question. Now shut up about it.”
“Ya, Davod, but you been gone over a year.”
“Sure, and I’m going to stay that way. Why shouldn’t I? The old man said the prayer for the dead over me, didn’t he?”
“Yes.”
“Then why shouldn’t I be dead? What does he care? I don’t care—if I never see him or his house again it’ll be too soon.”
Who you kidding, I thought, and for once I wouldn’t have minded the smell of cooking knish, or the sound of the old man reading Saturday evening papers.
I worked for Moshe from ten a.m. to six p.m. and Golub at the Melody Lane Ballroom from eight p.m. to two a.m.. It wasn’t as tight as it sounds, though. We weren’t busy at the gym before three, so I used to sleep in the rubdown room.
Every once in awhile I had real trouble at the Melody Lane, mostly Irish. They used to come in groups of about eight and mess around. They’d been nice for a month now, though. I’d crocked three in the alley that’s behind the hall, and since then they’ve played nice. Good they were drunk, though, or I might have lost.
“Go stand at the till,” hollered Arny.
“O.K.” says I.
“What time is it, Alice?” I asked the girl selling tickets.
“Only eleven,” she sighed. “Take over while I have a break, will you, Davey?”
"Sure."

Boy, do I got a big heart, I thought. Twenty minutes later I wish the big heart had been killed at birth—still no Alice. I looked up and saw two drags. Christ, I couldn't let 'em in.

"Gimme two," says the male drag.
"Sorry," I said, "just sold the last ticket."
"Wa'd'ya mean, last ticket," said the one playing butch.
"How'd those two in front of us get in?"
"Capacity law," I said. "We got a new band tonight and we just reached a full house."
"Full house, my eye," says Butch. "Look at that space! Gimme a ticket."
"Sorry, can't do it," I smiled and made to close the window.
"Well, you're back," I said to Alice. "Feel better?"
"You're a doll, Davey," said Alice. "Thanks."
"Just call me sucker," says I.
"Kruglick," someone hollers.

It was Golub. How did he get in? I'm paid to know what happens, and I hadn't even seen the boss come in.
"Here, sir, just watching the till," I say trotting up.
"Yer asleep," says Golub. "Remember you're expendable."
"Yes, sir."
"How's your boxing?" he asks.
"Fine, sir."
"You might be interested, I bought sixty percent of you," he says
"Yes, sir."
"Go check the floor."
I did, and walking through the crowd, I thought, if you think you got a slave you're crazy. I stayed out of sight till closing. As I walked out Alice hailed me.
"Give me a ride, Davey," she cooed.
"O.K."
Outside she said, "I'm hungry, Davod."
"Go get yourself something to eat."
"I don't like eating alone."
"All right," I said. "I'll have something too."

We went to an all-night diner. All of a sudden I was
hungry. "Two corn-beefs and a chile," I told the waitress. Alice didn't say a word. The waitress looks at me—trapped.

"What'll you have?" I asked Alice.

"Coffee and toast," she said.

Not only trapped, but eating like a pig.

"I thought you were hungry," I asked her.

"I am, I don't eat much."

She held her cup in both hands, like a baby. She was good lookin' too, the usual quota of sex appeal, and didn't look too wise and tired.

"Guess."

"How the hell should I know," I said. "I ain't being fresh."

I hate guessing games and women who read me wrong.

"Now, Davey, don't swear. You can walk me home if you want."

"I go west," I said, "by El train, and I got a job. I box all day with fat men in an athletic club."

"Answer me," she said. "Besides I live on the car line."

I walked her home. She didn't live on the line, she lived on a side street just off it.

"You want to come up?" she said.

"Where's your roommate?"

"I don't have one," she said.

"All right."

"I don't want to twist your arm," she said.

"You ain't."

We went upstairs.

"I'm going to change," she said. "Make yourself at home."

It was some joint, so clean I felt like taking my shoes off, and she didn't get it by selling tickets at Golub's free flesh emporium. One thing I've learned, don't ask questions—just take.

She walked back in barefoot—no stockings, but she wore a redesigned men's shirt, the kind banned by television, and a ballerina type skirt.

"What'll you drink, Davey?" she asked.

"I don't drink," I said.

"I forgot, you're in training. Then I won't have anything either. Do you like music?"

"Sure."
She played popular stuff.

“Dance?” she asked.

“Great idea,” I said. I liked to dance, but I didn’t get much chance. It isn’t wise to dance with the customers at the Melody Lane, and my two jobs kept me pretty busy.

“You dance all right,” I said after awhile.

“You do O.K. yourself,” she said.

I was wondering whether I ought to try and make out. One voice said go ahead, only a dope wouldn’t try. The other voice said, man—you got to box, you’re an athlete, scram! I figured I might as well try. I kissed her. The ayes had it.

“You look beat, kid,” said Moshe, next day before closing time, “better lay off the women. Remember, for me you box. Don’t let nothing interfere.”

“Box, huh? I’m just reminded that Golub bought sixty percent. I thought you were a friend. What the hell did you sell for? You know Golub don’t care. All he wants is prestige—to be a sportsman!”

“Look, Davod, everyone has his price. Golub offered, I’m in business, Golub paid, simple. Anything else?”

“Good night, friend,” I said and left.

That night when Alice had invited me up I told her what I thought about being sold.

“Don’t let it bother you,” she said. “Let’s dance.”

She was curved like a kitten and had changed into something domestic.

All of a sudden she asks, ‘You hungry, Davey?’

“Sure.” I’d been too mad to eat much supper. People aren’t supposed to sell each other.

“I’ll fix us something.”

“Don’t bother, we’ll go out.”

“No, I like to cook,” she replied.

Oh, boy, I thought, the old little-white-cottage and home-cooked-meal routine. Every girl that I can remember who has been anyway near nice or thought I was anyway, pulls this at sometime.

“O.K.” I said, “go ahead. Cook your head off, but remember I’m particular.”

“You wait, hot shot,” she said. “I’ll show you how good I can cook.”
She could. There was a lot about this girl that didn’t add up. Dancing, cooking, what smelled like money, but what the hell-don’t ask, take! Besides, she seemed hard enough to look out for herself.

‘Davod,” she said, “where do you live?”

“Out by Koulan’s Gym,” I answered. “My good friend Moshe Koulan got me a room close, so I wouldn’t tire myself walking back and forth. Sweet, huh?”

“Davod,” she said, “would you like living here?”

“Huh!”

“You heard me, move in with me,” she said, in a calm voice.

“That’s what I thought you said — why?”

“I just want to make you happy — that’s all.”

“You made a good start,” I said.

Later I tried to figure out what made this creature tick. She is no fool, she has nothing to gain. Christ, there has to be an angle.

I moved in the next day and I still couldn’t figure her out. A few weeks later and I still couldn’t. I’d thought Golub was paying her to take my mind off the purchase. After a week of sleuthing I found I was wrong. Even after the first six months I couldn’t figure her out. What the hell —don’t ask why — just take.

Living with her was terrific. I ate regular, had a clean house, and she seemed to like it. At least she used to sing the way women do when they’re happy. What was nice about her songs is that they were American, not this Russian—Jewish junk like Mama used to sing.

* * * * *

PART III

I was lying in bed — it must have been Sunday morning 'cause that's the only time I just lie there—when Alice walked in and started cleaning the place.

“Davod,” she says.

“Yes.”

“Do you know what happens next week?”

“Naw,” I answered.

“We celebrate,” she said.

“Celebrate what?”

“Our anniversary.”
"Why? We ain't married." I almost sat up.
"You know what I mean," she said in a subdued tone.
"Ya, sure, good idea. We'll go out some place. I'll try
to get the night off."
I rolled over, she left, and I tried to sleep.
Anniversary, I thought, second anniversary at that. I
been dead four years. Wow!
I tried but sleep wouldn't come. Four years, four soft
rotten years and still nothing. Nothing but El trains, buses,
nightclubs, dance halls, not even a decent car. And now
anniversaries yet—Christ, I'm trapped! I jumped out of
bed, even the sheets trapped me.
"Alice," I hollered, as I walked to where she was clean­ing.
"Do you realize it's two years we been living together
and four since I been dead?"
"Yes."
"Look, I started out to be a somebody, and here I'm
hardly any better off than I was. It stinks!"
"Take it easy, Davod," she said. "Go put some clothes
on."
"Clothes—who you kidding? I'll lay two to five Golub
and Moshe make over two times more off 'a me that what
they pay."
"What are you going to do?" she asked.
"I don't know."
Next morning, while riding the bus to Koulan's, I was
still trying to figure a way out.
"Sholem, Davod," said Moshe. "How'd you like to make
some extra money?"
Perhaps God lives, I thought. "How?"
"Well, look," says Moshe, "you got this eight-rounder
coming up. It's not too big a fight, you're sure to win
—why don't you lose?"
"Whose idea is this?" I said. "It better not be yours."
"Whose but Golub's," he answered.
"That bastard," I said. 'How much do I get?"
"A thousand," said Moshe.
"Fifteen hundred," I said.
"I'll make a phone call," says Moshe.
Christ, I thought, I should have asked three grand. After
all, my reputation must cost too.
"All set!" he bubbled as he came back. "This guy's out to make a come-back, the odds are in your favor, you lose in the fifth.

"Lovely," I said. "What about my reputation as a clean fighter?"

"Don't worry," he said, "everyone is entitled to a bad night."

The night of the fight I felt worse. Here I was in top shape and going to lose to an old bum. An Irishman at that. The fight was in a Polish, Lithuanian neighborhood. When a joker in the crowd hollered, 'Kill the sheenie," I didn't feel much better.

"Now remember, Davod," said Moshe, "fade in the fifth."

"Kruglick!" hollered Golub. He was sitting under my corner, where Alice usually sat. "I got a hell of a roll on you, and I don't want no slip ups."

That was for the crowd. Sportsman Golub had his roll on the Irishman, if it was anywhere away from his pocket. I tried to smile at him while wearing my mouthpiece. I wasn't too successful.

"Good going, Davey," said Moshe after the first round. "It looks real."

"I hate that guy, he has no right to win," I said.

"I'd hate to be you if you win," says Moshe. "Remember Golub's against you, and you're paid to lose."

"Yeah," I said.

Clang went the bell.

Up, out, bounce, weave, hit, give him an opening clinch. Hit—ouch, your head in my eye when we broke? Wait and see. Left, feint-right, left, hook-right-low, a left low, a right high. I hate you, it's a joy to hit you.

Clang.

"Davey, you're supposed to lose," whispered Moshe.

"I know," I said.

"That round didn't look it."

"Don't worry," I said. "Hey, ain't you going to fix that place he opened with his head?"

'No, it'll help your memory," said Moshe.

Clang.

I bounced out for round three. Now, breath of the sewer, let's play. We played, but the bastard got my eye to bleed-
Sketch

ing bad after that round. Moshe said nothing. He just put warm water on my cuts and bruises, so they’d tear and bleed easier.

“Lose, dope!” he said as the bell clanged.

Golub had walked out.

I won’t, I thought. How’s a straight right for size? Good? Left, left, move away, this pig’s got another two minutes to last. In the guts? Good idea, move in, feint at his head — drive to his ribs. Get close, shoulder near his chin — hammer his middle. God, I hate you, I hate everything — the Whole World. Clinch? I’m holding him up. Break, move him to the ropes, left, right-cross. Your eyes are glassed, man, you sure made a hell of a comeback. Last minute mackerel-snapper, come to the center so you fall pretty. That’s it, follow me, my guard’s down to my belly, I’m wide open. If you were smart you’d loaf. Now, a straight-left, right in the mouth. A right to the side near the kidneys — don’t foul him. A left to steady you, right-cross, hard to the cheek. What, still up? Another right, from the floor to your chin — over. About time, you dumb bastard, you didn’t even know when to quit.

“You’re dumb as hell,” said Moshe in the lockers. “It’s hard to believe you’re Jewish.”

“Davod,” said Golub, “come into my office.”

It was the day after the fight and I still hated this fat slob who thought he could tell me what to do.

“Davod, you didn’t lose,” he said, from behind his desk.

“Naw.”

“You know what usually happens?”

“Who cares,” I answered.

“You’re lucky the prize money almost covers my losses. You ain’t gonna see a cent of it,” he continued. “Such ingratitude! Here I raised you from a kid. I’m giving you one more chance. You’re back to a bouncer. Let’s see you work at it.”

“Thanks,” I said and left.

I planned for about a week.

“What’s the matter, Davod?” Alice would ask when I came home.

“Wad ya mean.”

“You’re so quiet.”
"I'm thinking," I said.
"I don't like it," she answered.
"Who's asking you?" I said.

I thought for another week and came up with something like this. The tickets are counted as they're sold and turned in at the gate. As bouncer and handy man, I collected the tickets and carried the money to the safe. Why not turn back the number sold at the window, take out the number turned back, and help myself to the amount of the tickets? I did, and at a dollar a head I covered over fifty a night. A swell racket and easy.

"Sholem, Yaoul," I said, as Brenner walked in one day.
"Sholem, Davod," he answered.
"Ain't seen you in over three years," said I. "Where you been?"

I knew he'd been a trouble shooter for the syndicate in Florida.
"What're you doing?" I asked.
"Looking around," said Yaoul.
"I gotta work," I said. "I'll see you."
"You will," said Yaoul.

Christ, I'm in a spot, I thought. I wonder how much time I have. Later that night I watched Yaoul Brenner, Golub, and two sweet-faced plugs go into Golub's office. I was standing at the door and said hello. The only one to answer was Brenner. He smiled his hello like a cat. The others gave me the fish-eye. Ten minutes later a waitress walked up and said, "Golub wants you in the office."

"Tell him I'll be right in. I want to go to the head first."
"He said right away," she answered.

"He'll wait." I'd better scram—but how do you know they want you, said logic? What the hell are the plugs for? Why is Brenner here? Why did he smile, and why the three sets of fish-eyes? Scram, Davey, you got nothing to lose!

I took a cab home—a thing I don't often do, since they're only for rich folks.

"What's the matter?" said Alice. "You look like something's wrong."

She was working days now and making better than she had at the Melody Lane. We had moved, so I wouldn't have
so far to go to the gym.
  "I have to go," I said.
  "Go?"
  "Yes, go, leave. You know, like the wind — blow."
  "Why — you can't."
  "Move, I got to get my suitcase. I been robbing the till," I said. "Golub called in two plugs, plus Yaoul Brenner. They came for me at work. Besides that, I didn't throw a fight I was supposed to."
  "Your last one?" she said.
  "Yes."
  "I'd heard about that," she said. "I was proud of you."
  Fine, I thought, here I was caught robbing the till and my woman's proud.
  "Don't go, Davod," she said, quiet like.
  "I got no choice.
  "Where will you go?" she asked standing up.
  "I don't know. West someplace. Cut the tears," I said, "they won't work."
  "Stay, Davod, you can hide in the city."
  "I can hide in heaven, but the angel will find me, and if I don't hurry up I'll be welcomed in hell."
  "What will you do?"
  "What can I do? All I know is bar-tending, fighting, and bouncing drunks; if I work at any of those Golub'll find me. Besides, what do you care? You got no cause to strain."
  "I care because I love you," she said.
  It made me feel bad; for some reason I believed her.
  "That's your tough luck," I said. "You'll get over it."
  "Oh, Davod, please stay! We'll find a place to hide together."
  "Look," I said, "I'll write. Hand me that coat."
  "You won't, Davod. I know you, you won't."
  She was crying.
  "Look, Alice," I said, "I didn't ask to live with you. I didn't ask nothing. You gave, I took — now, shut up."
  "You don't mean that, Davod, she said.
  "What's the difference?" I said. "I want to believe it. I must believe it. Now kiss me goodby."
  "Stay, Davod — please stay!"
“Goodby, Alice,” I said. “You picked a loser. I’m sorry. If things had been different, we wouldn’t have to end this way.”

As I reached the landing she yelled, “Goodby, Davod.”

Goodby, Alice, I thought as I ran down the street. It was raining. I usually like a spring rain in the city, but not tonight. Goodby, Alice — if nothing else, you always played me square.

* * * * *

“Christ, Simon, I got to go. You know what Golub does to people who cross him.” I couldn’t decide what I needed to take with me. Here my bus was leaving in less than two hours, I had to get all the way to the Loop to catch it, and my brother wanted to take an hour to say goodby.

“Where you gonna go, Davod?” asked Simon.

“I don’t know,” I said. “Move, will you, I got to get in those drawers. Five years from under the parental roof and all I’ve gone is down.”

“But what’re you gonna do?” continued brother Simon, “Who cares?” says I. “What the hell can I do? All I know is how to fight, manage a bar, and bounce drunk suckers. Anyone of those type jobs and Golub’d know where I was. That bastard got his fingers everyplace. Christ, I don’t know what I’ll do. Sit on the bed, will you. I got to get in that closet.”

“It seems a shame you just got to go, Davod,” he said. “I’ll miss you.”

“That’s your tough luck, kid. You remember the old man told you not to see me. Well, he was right. What am I going to do? Ha, I should have thrown the fight in the first place, stayed out of love in the second place. Christ, I should’a known better’n to fall for a tramp. And in the third place I should’a kept my hands in my own pockets instead of helping myself to Golub’s gains! He’ll never know she said. Go on, don’t be a dope. Ya, man, just a little and then a little more. The son of a bitch,Golub, he had to come back from Miami today. Lousy bastard, said he’d be gone two weeks. Then he pulls a surprise check. I can forgive you not pulling a fade in the ring he says, but if I find you been cheating the till I’ll have what the rabbi left.
Look, Simon, you’re a good kid. I never knew you too well, but that is none of our faults. Play it cool, will you kid? Don’t mess around with guys like Golub.”

“Please, Davod, stay,” says Simon.

The way he said it made me feel bad. No one had talked to me that way in a long time.

“Look, kid, I can’t, it’d be suicide. I’ll write to you, how’s that?”

“You won’t, Davod,” he said. “I know you. Please stay.”

“Sure I’ll write, kid. Remember what I taught you about boxing? Keep your guard up. Come here.”

I hugged him, picked up my bag and said, “Goodby, Simon. If I can ever help you let me know.”

“Please, Davod, please stay.” Then as I hit the bottom stair I heard him holler, “Goodby, Davod.”

Goodby, I thought. Peace be with you, Simon. May you not be me in any form. I hope he remembers to turn off the light and lock the door, so the landlady don’t find out I’m gone. I still owe some rent.

—John Fogelson, ’54

The Jellyfish

What about the jellyfish?
When he walks he makes his bellysquish.
And when he squeals, his face congeals,
So he isn’t what’s known as a ‘yelly’ fish!

He’s an evolutionary calamity
A protoplasmic nonentity,
And it is said that his inside
Can be shifted to his extremity.