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## The Contender

**Author:**

Robert Lipsyte

**Reading Level:** Grades 7+

"Boxing is a dying sport. People aren't much interested anymore. They want easy things, like television, bowling, car rides."

Alfred Brooks wants to be somebody special - a champion. Donatelli assures him that's impossible - first Alfred has to train - train so hard he'll start to feel like it's not worth it, that he should just quit - that he'll never be a fighter at all, let alone a contender. But Alfred is determined, and begins to train, hard. When he's boxing, Alfred doesn't have to think about all the bad stuff going on in his life, it's just him and the ring, nothing going on outside it matters at all. Inside the ring, Alfred can contend with his life.

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