

On Boxing

By Joyce Carol Oates

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A reissue of bestselling, award-winning author Joyce Carol Oates' classic collection of essays on boxing.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Yes, the same Joyce Carol Oates who packs one of the most lethal punches in American literature also happens to be an astute observer of the sweet science. Oates filters her knockout collection of essays through multifaceted prisms of art, history, sexuality, and politics to directly confront and explore boxing's physical and commercial brutality, but also the sense of human struggle and survival that's at boxing's purest core. "In the boxing ring," she writes, "man is *in extremis*, performing an atavistic rite ... for the mysterious solace of those who can participate only vicariously in such drama: the drama of life in the flesh. Boxing has become America's tragic theater." And from her ringside perspective, Oates, a true heavyweight of letters, analyzes the performances just brilliantly.

From Library Journal
A fight fan since her youth, novelist Oates follows in the tradition of boxing-loving writers like Hemingway and Mailer. In a slim volume expanded from a New York Times Magazine article, she candidly assays "The Sweet Science" for its spectacle, aesthetic elements, and its history from ancient Greece and Rome to today's ring dominated by callous promoters, casinos, and TV. Oates concedes boxing's brutality and often seamy side but finds positive merits as tragic theater. Good fare for fans and haters alike, especially those who have read Thomas Hauser's The Black Lights (LJ 10/15/85) and Sam Toperoff's Sugar Ray Leonard and Other Noble Warriors (LJ 11/1/86). Morey Berger, Monmouth Cty. Lib., Freehold, N.J.
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Review
In On Boxing, Joyce Carol Oates offers a collection of powerful essays on the sport that has long fascinated her. Whether she's discussing boxing in terms of art, lore, history or politics, Oates' observation brim with insight and clear, informative detail. She discovers in the sport abiding truths about instinct and survival, and treats reach with characteristic energy and wit. She's able to explore issues of masculinity, racial exploitation, and corruption without oversimplification and also convey the enthusiasm of an aficionado. The great characters of boxing history receive their due, from Joe louis and Muhammed Ali to Sugar Ray Leonard and Mike Tyson. On Boxing, enhanced by John Ranard's evocative photographs, is a testimony to our endless fascination with boxing and the seemingly endless variety and skill in the work of Joyce Carol Oates. -- *Midwest Book Review*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

April Wages:

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Shannon Bland:

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John Mallery:

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