The Fighter: A True Story by Arnold Zable

The Fighter: A True Story by Arnold Zable (Text Publishing)

Judges' Comments

_The Fighter_ does not merely echo the slang of Melbourne's once mean, working-class streets or the cries and clangs of its equally mean docks, but it also utterly inhabits its protagonist's voice and perspective. This book is an intriguing, compelling, moving and lyrical hybrid between memoir and fiction, just like the many lives of its subject, Henry Nissen. Boxer, dock worker, social worker, son, brother, husband and father, Jew and Australian, Nissen's life story is, literally, stranger than fiction — and more heartbreaking and inspiring than any novel could ever imagine.

Zable unflinchingly tells Nissen's inspiring and affecting story. In vivid, evocative prose he celebrates not only Nissen's many unprecedented achievements in the boxing ring and his tireless, selfless work with Melbourne's most desperate, but also the achievements of his family, friends, and community. Skilfully juxtaposing the intersections between boxing, fighting and survival, good luck and bad, sanity and madness, this sensitively written book is ultimately a paean of hope and dignity, generosity and optimism, courage and love.


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