Paris ringside at Pacquiao-Mosley. We're hopeful that she, like "A Woman Who Loves Boxing," knows that "one punch can end a fight and also the life of either young man in front of her."

By and large, there are two kinds of women at ringside. Those who are true fans of the ring, living and dying with each blow. And those who are true fans of the bling, eyes darting about, admiring the movie stars, professional athletes, high-stakes hustlers, and high-price escorts who generally populate ringside.

The universe has chosen to endow me with frequent ringside seats at world championship

boxing matches. It's an unusual gift for a middle-aged, middle class, single working mom, who until recently only had a passive interest in the sport and no knowledge of its intricacies. I did not seek this, nor did I desire it. But I have tried to make the most of the experience.

I've asked knowledgeable people a lot of questions, read articles about boxing, studied fights on video-tape, and learned the life stories of fighters. I've tried to understand what actually goes on in the ring. I now know the difference between a boxer and a brawler, a contender and an opponent, a defender and an attacking fighter, and the all-encompassing importance of speed. I know how matches are scored and how, sometimes, the scoring does not accurately reflect what happened in the ring. I can tell the difference between a good referee and a bad one, a fair judge and a poor one, and a trainer who is there for his boxer or there for himself. I am not now, nor will I ever be, an expert. But as long as I have the honor of sitting at ringside, I owe the gathering of this knowledge to myself and to boxing.

Many women who have the same opportunity to sit at ringside that I have are not versed in the intricacies of boxing. They are, however, engaged and emotionally present. It isn't the fight they've come for, but the fighter. I sometimes ask them what made them a boxing fan. Their answers vary. They're dating, or once dated, a fighter. They work out in a boxing gym. They were raised by a boxing-fan father. Some have just fallen into it, like me.

But "blingside women" have no real interest in the sport. They come to please their boyfriend, their date for the evening, or their husband. They come to have an exciting Las Vegas casino experience. They come as an excuse to buy a new dress. There is nothing wrong with this as long as one is respectful to the young men in the ring who are providing the experience. Respect means more than shouting "HIT 'EM" over and over again.

Believe me, I know; it's a lot of the fun to people-watch. Between fights, I'm texting my girlfriends that I'm sitting behind Jay-Z and Beyonce, and that Jack Nicholson is one section over. I'm observing that a certain very-aged sports team owner just walked by with a girl drenched in fake diamonds who is too young to be his granddaughter. The furs and jewelry and designer cocktail dresses are an eye-catching adjunct to the gritty brutality inside the ring.

But once the bell rings, my eyes are fixed. At ringside, if you're paying attention, you hear each blow. A leather glove smacking into human flesh makes a distinctive sound unlike any other I have ever heard. Some fighters moan with punches suffered; others are silent. Sweat and blood fly, sometimes snot. It's a spectacle that I'll never get used to. But I've come to admire the years of deprivation, training, and hard work that go into every punch. I also understand that, despite all the years of hard work, one punch can end a fight and also the life of either young man in front of me. For this reason if none other, they deserve my full attention.

I've learned to appreciate that boxers are, for the most part, unselfish people. They chose boxing as a way to survive in gang-infested neighborhoods, a way out of poverty, and to follow a great cultural tradition. Those who are good enough and lucky enough to escape from their disadvantages through boxing can earn a good living and bask in the glow of admiration from their family and friends, their neighborhood, and sometimes their entire country.

In the best of all worlds, a woman who comes for Blingside leaves the arena as a boxing fan. But it saddens me to see the woman seated next to me, whether her diamonds are real or fake, talking on her cell phone or reading a book or looking into her cocktail during a fight. I want to tell her, “You don’t have to understand it or even admire it. But you are here and these young men are risking their lives. So cheer for them. In your female voice, he will hear his mother or his wife or his girlfriend, and it will give him the power to take or throw one more punch!” I would never say this, of course. I just think it. And later, I might wonder if I thought it out loud.

For everyone lucky enough or rich enough or famous enough to have a seat at ringside, there are millions of people who would give just about anything to be there just once. I told myself in the beginning that I would enjoy the experience of being there for all the people around the world who would like to be but aren’t.

What I did not know is that I would learn to love this brutal sport. I’m not ashamed to say that I too enjoy the bling. But once the bell rings, it’s all about the ring . . . and not a diamond one.

Comment on this article

Radam G says:

Oh, YUP! Bling! Bling! BLINGSIDE ringside every time Da Manny enters dat squared jungle and get his beat down on. And YA' KNO' IT, babbbbeeee! Yall bettah stop fo'gettin' what time it is. Only da super, super greats bring da Bling, da sing to da ring because he is da KING! Holla!

the Roast says:

I've been watching from the sidelines since the B-Hop-Dawson, uuuhh fight, but this pic brings the Roast back. I've got to watch myself here.. I got in trouble the last time I typed about a Paris Hilton pic, I got to think about that mom I upset and all the young Roast fans out there... be responsible... be adult... OK kids if you are fortunate enough to get with a blonde hottie like Paris always wear a condom and dont get emotionally involved because there's a beautiful brunette or redhead waiting around the corner. Not to mention all the ethnic groups you can dip into.. Give me a call Paris, you could be the one....

brownsugar says:

I remember Antonio Tarvers wife mugging for the camera when Tarver was fighting his 2 bids against Dawson, She almost got as much air time as Tarver did,... everytime the camera found her,.. she was ALWAYS ready... Oh the challenges of maintaining and containing the "Trophy Wife".

Paris is beginning to show her age,... and that push-up bra could use a few more bands of elastic... But I still doubt anyone would be kicking her out of bed anytime soon.

Radam G says:

Wow! I'm reminded of the words of one of my late icon, movie actor Humpy Bogart: "We'll always have Paris...." Holla!