Do not weep for them when it ends. If anything, during these final stages of their storied careers, these heroes of the ring serve as stark reminders of one of life's all too ignored truths: its brevity.

Everything in this world comes to an end, even for guys like Erik Morales.

Don't think you know better than them either. The men and women who choose the rugged sport of boxing to leave their indelible marks upon have done so with the full consent of their will. It's what they want to do. Let them do it.

We boxing writers have become fakers of sorts. We fake being appalled by a fighter who holds on too long, yet we look indifferently and uncaringly upon the wake of no-named, no-hopers our hero has left by the wayside on his way to the top of the sport. Poor Erik Morales, we say, for being sprawled out helpless on the floor, made human again by the forceful blow of Danny Garcia.

Let's be real about this. Morales deserves just as much a chance to fight now as he did when he was young. So does Evander Holyfield. So do they all, those who beckon to dance the painful chorus of pugilism into the twilight of their careers. It's their right. They've benefited from it and so have we. The least we can do is let them finish how they choose.

Erik Morales was one of the greatest fighters who ever lived. He was everything we say we want our fighters to be. He built his impressive resume fighting the very best. He was the epitome of deft skillfulness and willful aggression. He was a man's man. He was *El Terrible*.

Now, Morales is old.

He's a step too slow. His jab has no snap. He can't get out of the way of punches, and his once feared combinations look like a game of pattycake next to the punishing blows of a 24-year-old like Garcia.

"Time passes," he said with a look of resignation on this face after being thoroughly outclassed by the young and vibrant Garcia (whose own best case scenario, by the way, is to someday face the same cruel fate of growing old).

In reality, time passed long before Morales noticed it, but it was his right to decide when he'd acknowledge it, and it appears now he has done so. No one told him when he should start fighting. He decided that. Why should we tell him when to stop?

Morales might have damaged his reputation with the loss. Not because he couldn't simultaneously ward off both a good fighter in Garcia and Father Time, but because he might have turned to a PED (clenbuterol) to help him do it.

Regardless, it didn't appear to help him if he did, and something tells me it won't be obsessed upon by historians when it comes time to tell the tale. After all, unlike many of his contemporaries, Morales' body carries the weight and weariness of age in what appears to be a natural looking way.

However minusculey damaging his last fight may have been to his legacy, something more important has seemed to go unnoticed on fight night. It wasn't his lack of speed or endurance. It wasn't his inability to get out of the way of Garcia's hook or the lack of crispness in the once feared punchers' fists. No, it wasn't anything he *used to* do at all.

No, down on there on the canvas, his head lying slightly askew outside the ropes, his body contorted into a twisted heap of what used to be a fantastic fighter, we saw what probably drove us all to truly love him so much in the first place.

Because faced with seemingly insurmountable odds, where it appeared he had brought something akin to a knife to a gun fight, Erik Morales was still trying to get up and fight when his corner stepped in to stop it.

Viva Morales.

Comment on this article

SouthPaul says:

Well said, homey was serious with it! Not only a mans man but a Mexicans Mexican. Never faked a smile, He never wavered with it...represented the green, white, and red to the fullest.

Viva Morales, Viva Boxing.... Viva the beauty of the brutality!

deepwater says:

a true great.its been a pleasure

ultimoshogun says:

Yup, nice comeback attempt. El Terrible proved he still had a few bullets left in the ole gun, just came up short. One of my all time favs for sure!