

# 'Left Hook' Wright-novel

By : Mike Stevens

A violence-challenged boxer; part of this novel was published previously!

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'Left Hook' Wright

By Mike Stevens

Chapter One:

"Eight, nine, ten, you're *out* !" the referee cried.

'Left Hook' Wright didn't know where he was; who he was; or what day it was. Why was he lying down? He tried to stand, but his legs wobbled and he went down again. Damn, something was wrong with his legs! It was like they had a mind of their own. He thought to himself, *I'll just rest down here for a while*. Suddenly, above him was an older man puffing on, on, now what was the word? Oh yeah, a cigar, leering down at him, saying something that he couldn't quite make out.

"Kid, you're through. I'm going back to Bruiser's Gym to find a younger guy with a brighter future."

What did he mean by 'a younger guy'? Was he looking for sex? Well, he didn't swing that way. As sure as his name wasâ now, what the hell was his name? Then he remembered. Sedahoy Wright. That was his name. Only, he went by the nickname 'Left Hook' because he hated his real name, and he was a boxer. Sure, he remembered now. And that older guy towering over him, was Dirk Wailer, his manager.

"Did I lose again, Dirk?"

"Did you lose again? Yeah, you could say that. You could also say you got you're a\*\* handed to you! It's time to find a less-violent way to make your living. Your brain can't take being knocked out every fight any more."

"It's all I'm good at," replied Sedahoy.

Wailer guffawed and said, "I got news for you, kid, you 'aint very good at it, anymore. Do yourself a favor: give something else a try."

Sedahoy replied, "But, what, Dirk?"

"I don't know, but your future in the fight game is bleak," responded Wailer, who added, "You know I care about you, but I've got to look out for myself now."

Sedahoy answered, "Fine! You're going to c\*\*p on me after you sucked every ounce of talent from me."

Wailer replied, "Yeah, every bit of your talent. It sure didn't take very long. Well, I tried. See ya, kid, and good luck."

Sedahoy replied, "Yeah, thanks for nothing!"

Wailer didn't answer or turn around, which only made him angrier.

"Fine, I don't need you; I don't need anybody!"

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His anguished mutterings echoed down the hall to the exit door, and bounced back from the now-empty hallway back to him. He had to face the fact that he lost every time now; he was 42 years old, which was ancient in the fight racket; he had nothing to show for his life but a cauliflower ear and a face that looked like a deformed pile of raw meat, and he didn't know how to do anything else.

Sedahoy Wright crawled back into the gutter, which ran putrid with all kinds of slime he couldn't, and didn't want to identify. Since giving up boxing, he'd been floundering. He'd tried several menial jobs, but had been fired from each and every one. This lousy job wouldn't be any different. He didn't give a damn, this job sucked, just like all the others he had tried. He had to face it; he sucked at everything but boxing, and now he sucked at that too. He was s\*\*\*\*\*d. He damned his broken-down body; then he began punching himself in the stomach as hard as he could, over and over.

He was just about at the end of his rope. His future seemed bleak. He'd been fired again. He couldn't find a single thing besides boxing he was good at. He had just about recovered from the lacerated kidney he had inflicted upon himself by hitting himself in the gut, and it was time to find work. The very thought of job searching made his head hurt, and made him even-more depressed. He had to go looking, but what was the point?

Jerry Rigg had been told about the perfect stooge for his scheme. The boxer's name was 'Left Hook' Wright, and he would be perfect. Here was a washed-up, low-skill, aging dude who would jump at the chance to earn a little money by taking a dive and letting the other guy win the fight. All he had to do was bet heavily against 'Left Hook' and he'd clean up.

'Left Hook' Wright couldn't believe his good fortune. He had given up, and was resigned to the fact his life would suck forever more when out of the blue came a man promising him \$20,000 dollars to fight again. Jerry Rigg had told him he was a fight promoter who needed someone to make it look good, but ultimately take a dive. Sedahoy figured that since he lost every fight now, he wouldn't have to take that dive. He would fight it honest and lose anyway. There was no need to tell Jerry Rigg that little bit of information, anyhow. And so he'd agreed.

Any time now he'd surely start losing. But 'Left Hook' was fighting like a winner. What had gotten into him? It was already the seventh round, and he was starting to think that maybe he'd have to take a dive, after all. He stepped back from a punch thrown by the other fighter and lazily threw one of his own. He needed to make this look good. He had decided to take a dive, when much to his surprise his punch connected on the other fighter's glass jaw, and he went down. 'Left Hook' stood there incredulously while the referee kept counting. Surely the other fighter had to get up soon. But then the ref reached 10, he said,

"You're out!" and the fight was over. Unbelievably, he'd won.

Jerry Rigg was livid. He was bitching out Sedahoy in the boxing gym he owned. He'd bet a fortune against 'Left Hook' and the stiff had actually won.

"You dumb son of a b\*\*\*h nobody, you were supposed to lose, but no. You haven't won a fight in 10 years, but somehow, miraculously, you won this one. You can't even lose right. Get out of my sight, hack, and don't come back!"

"But what do I do now, this is all I know?" replied Sedahoy.

"Why the hell should I care? You failed me, failure," answered Jerry Rigg.

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And so a disappointed and angry Sedahoy left, with no money, and no future. He cursed; of all the times for his fighting talent to return.

As Sedahoy walked dejectedly away from the gym, a man wearing a fur-lined mink coat came up to him and said,

"Kid, it's your lucky day, I represent the champion and I'd like to offer you a one-in-a-million chance to box the champ for the title."

Sedahoy looked angrily at the man and yelled, "Don't mess with me right now; I'm in no mood for a practical joke. Who put you up to this?"

The dude in fur looked at Sedahoy and replied, "This is no joke, believe me. Just like in that famous movie, we'd like to give an unknown underdog a chance at the title. From what I saw of the fight, you do have plenty of skills and you look hungry, so I think we both could benefit from the publicity; us from giving a relative unknown a shot; and you for taking it. And there'll be a hefty pay day in it for you. So, what do you say, are you interested?"

Sedahoy looked hard at the man's face for any sign of mirth, and didn't see any sign this was a practical joke. He asked the guy, "Hey, pal, if we're going to do business, I'd like to know your name."

"So, you *are* interested. The name's Bob Jones."

Sedahoy grasped Mr. Jones's outstretched hand and asked him, "You mentioned a pay day. How much are we talking?"

He was having a hard time believing that he, Sedahoy 'Left Hook' Wright, was going to fight for the championship. He had better start training. Since Dirk Wailer had quit he would have to think of ways to train on his own. First, he'd need to make sure his legs were in good shape, but how? Then he came up with a good way to leg-train: lift as much weight as the weight machine had. He hadn't lifted weights at all, but didn't want to wait and slowly increase the weight. That would take much too long, so he set the weight to 300 pounds. Then, setting his cigarette down carefully, he sat in the chair attached to the machine and pushed as hard as he could on the pedals that allowed him to lift the weights. Nothing happened, the damn weights didn't budge. He reached down deep inside himself and pushed with all his might. Suddenly he felt a shooting pain up and down his leg. He had pulled at least one muscle. He somehow got up off of the seat, and picking up his cigarette, limped over to the gym's refrigerator. What he needed was ice. Then he noticed the malt liquor someone else had brought. Oh, this was an emergency, surely whoever had brought it would mind if he borrowed it. Closing the door, he gimped his way to a recliner in the corner. He flopped down, guzzled the entire beer, and put the empty bottle against his sore leg. He thought, *So much for the training crap.*

Sedahoy Wright was so sore. He didn't feel like boxing, but there wasn't much he could do about it. He limped to center ring; listened to the referee give his spiel, touched gloves with the champion, and limped back to his corner to wait for the bell that would signal the beginning of the first round. He thought over his strategy. He had decided he'd get the champ in a clench to tie him up; then dance away from him. He didn't want to give him a chance to punch him. He was beginning to think he actually might have a chance. What a great story. Unlike the movie, this was real. He sure wished Dirk Wailer was here to manage him. He needed his advice, but there was no sense in wishful thinking. Then the bell sounded to begin Round 1. *Here goes nothing*, he thought, and danced out to begin the fight. He danced, bobbed and weaved his way towards the champ. He faked with his right, and swung his left-

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Sedahoy swam through the dark fog, towards the light. Where was he? What had happened? Slowly the outline of a man bending over him; staring into his eyes, took shape.

"Yeah, he's coming around now. What day is it?"

He struggled to think.

"How many fingers am I holding up?"

He tried to see them. It looked to him like three. "Three?"

"Look again."

Oh, now he saw it was two. "Two?"

"He'll be alright. Do you know where you are?"

"Of course I know; what a stupid question! I'm in my living room."

"Oh, just give him a moment."

Sedahoy Wright just didn't get it; hadn't he fought well in the fight previous to this one? Yet he'd been knocked out in what very well might be record time in this one. It didn't make sense. He strode down the aisle of the grocery store, looking for the cereal. It had to be around here somewhere. As he was looking; down the aisle the other way came his old manager, Dirk Wailer.

"Hey Dirk, how have you been?"

Wailer answered, "Not too good, thanks to you!"

"Me? What did I do?"

"You were supposed to take a dive against the fighter Jerry and I were betting on, but you didn't, and because our fighter was so wasted, he passed out, and you won. Now, Jerry and I are both broke," Wailer wailed.

Sedahoy was shocked and said, "So, I didn't fight any better in that bout; your fighter just fell down because he'd passed out?" He was hurt that Dirk had hooked up with Jerry Rigg, and had bet against him.

"That's right, you lummoX, you fought about as well as you normally do," replied Wailer.

And to think, he'd thought he had fought better in that bout, when actually the other fighter had passed out! That would explain why he'd lost today's fight.

Sedahoy Wright lit a cigarette, poured himself two-fingers worth of 180-proof whiskey, and tried to roll out of bed, but it was too hard. He was depressed, the kind of knuckle-dragging depression that makes you feel like someone has pulled a black curtain over your eyes, and if it was possible, over your brain. He had put dark blankets over his windows, to keep the sunlight from reaching into his bedroom. He could hear rain hitting the roof. Perfect! The gloomy, sullen weather matched his mood. He guzzled the rest of the whiskey, took a deep drag on the cigarette, stubbed it out in the ashtray he kept by his bed, and tried again to get out of bed. It was again tough but he managed to rise.

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He was being interviewed for a stock-room assistant, and he knew if he acted the way he felt, he had no shot, so he was all smiles as he answered the guy's questions.

Apparently, he had pulled it off, for he was hired. He was told to be back at the crack of dawn to begin. The crack of dawn? The very thought depressed him even more.

Somehow, and thanks to several cups of coffee, he had made it. Damn, it was early! He was following the owner who had hired him into an office, where he would meet his supervisor. Once inside he was introduced to Happy Jensen, who said,

"Nice to meet you Wright; if you do what I ask, we shouldn't have any trouble."

"I'll try," answered Sedahoy. He sure wasn't looking forward to this, but at least Jensen looked like a nice fellow.

He was stocking auto parts, which were bought by auto repair places, who then sold them to the general public. It was boring, crappy work, and Sedahoy found his mind drifting back to his championship bout; only this time, instead of quickly being beaten unconscious and losing, he fantasized he was the winner, and the new champion of the world. He was so into the fantasy he failed to hear Jensen calling his name.

"Wright, *Wright!*"

He snapped out of it when he'd finally heard Jensen, and sheepishly said, "Yeah, Mr. Jensen?"

"What, are you deaf? Your mind should be on working, not day-dreaming!"

Sedahoy felt the red-hot flame of anger, but knew he had to stay cool. "I'm sorry Mr. Jensen, it won't happen again."

"It had better not, or you'll quickly find yourself looking for another job," Jensen snapped back.

Sedahoy muttered, "Like *this* place would be such a loss," under his breath, to which Jensen quickly replied,

"What was that, did you just whisper something derogatory, mister?"

Sedahoy could control himself no longer. "I just said this job blows, and from the look of you, so do you!"

Jensen at first looked shocked, then said, "Why you weak little p\*\*s-ant!" He then came at Sedahoy with a menacing, threatening look on his face.

Sedahoy quickly warned, "Ah, I would try punching me; I used to be a box-"

He groaned, and wobbled up to a sitting position. He wondered, *what the hell?* He was lying next to his car. How did he get here? Then, his face began to ache and it all came back to him. He had been cold-cocked by Happy Jensen. He groggily got to his feet and stormed back towards the office. He wasn't going to put up---wait a minute, that Jensen was one tough b\*\*\*\*\*d. If he stormed up to him angrily and threw a punch, he might wind up either out here again, or the hospital. He wisely decided prudence was the better part of valor. He stopped dead in his tracks, turned around, got in his car, and drove away.

Sedahoy Wright was hacked! He hadn't collected his wages, and now he was hurting financially. He needed money. He had broken down and swallowed his pride. He had come here, the Unemployment Office, in order

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to get at least some money.

At last, after standing in a line that never seemed to move, he was waved over to a lady and sat down.

She looked over his paperwork and said,

"Well, it says here you were fired from your job; what was the circumstance behind your being terminated?"

Sedahoy didn't like the tone of her voice and didn't care for her attitude. "I was *let go* because I didn't get along with my supervisor."

She said woodenly, "So, you might have brought it on yourself?"

Sedahoy saw red and snapped, "I didn't bring it on myself," which wasn't exactly true, "and I don't care for your insinuation!"

"Please calm down, sir; I'm only doing my job."

"Well, is it your job to be so damn b\*\*\*\*y?"

With those words, she angrily stomped from behind her desk, and came at him.

Sedahoy smirked and said, "Oh, no, I'm not going to fight a woma-"



## Chapter 2

Chapter Two:

Sedahoy Wright was awakened by the sound of yelling. He pounded the wall and yelled, "Shut up over there!"

Immediately, a voice answered back, "Why don't you *move* if you don't want to hear us fight?"

He was quite used to the Brackens' fighting every day, all day. The Brackens were his immediate neighbors in the cheap apartment where he was now living. Since quitting boxing, which was the only thing he'd ever wanted to do, and the only life he knew, he'd been lost. He'd tried a regular job but that hadn't worked out too well. So, he had gone to collect unemployment and had got in another argument with the female employee, who had proceeded to land yet-another lucky punch, and once again he had been knocked out. He had decided not to file charges against the woman, after her husband threatened him with more physical violence. He'd had enough violence for quite awhile, so he'd backed off. Now, with no boxing, no job, and no unemployment, he had been forced to sell everything he owned, just to rent an apartment in this absolute joke of an apartment building. He was desperate for money, any money, and had answered an advertisement in the local newspaper wanting to hire someone to haul yard-waste. He would be starting today, and he needed as much sleep as he could get, but with the paper-thin walls, and the Brackens in full screaming mode, he might as well just get up. There wouldn't be any more sleep this morning. As he got up and sleepily made his way to the kitchen to put on some coffee, he heard through the walls,

"You son of a b\*\*\*h, why don't you do us both a favor, and drop dead!" This was screamed by Mrs. Brackens.

Mr. Brackens angrily screamed back, "I should drop dead? I should drop dead!"

"That's what I said, drop dead!"

Sedahoy yelled, "Why don't you compromise, and *both* of you drop dead!"

There was a lull, and then Mr. Brackens screamed, "Hey, Mr. Neighbor, why don't you blow off and mind your own business, okay buddy?"

Sedahoy shot back, "Hey pal, watch your mouth; if I hadn't have been a professional boxer, I'd come over there and kick you're a\*\*!"

Brackens shot back with, "Why, you couldn't fight your way out of a paper bag; by all means, don't let being a one-time boxer stop you, come ahead, you wimp!"

That statement really hacked Sedahoy off, and he stomped angrily across the hall and kicked the Brackens' door. "Okay, dip-wad, here I am!"

The door was flung open and there stood Mr. Brackens, arms raised, yelling, "Call the ambulance Mildred, there's about to be a bleeding, unconscious dude right outside our door!"

"Oh, I hope you're talking about yourself, because the unconscious dude will be you!" answered Sedahoy.

Then, Mr. Brackens advanced towards him and Sedahoy swung a roundhouse right, which connected on Brackens face, sending him backwards and upending the box of used liquor bottles that Brackens' had been

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keeping on a near-by table. Brackens fell hard to the floor where he lay motionless.

"I tried to warn you, you don't mess with an ex boxer!" Sedahoy screamed in triumph.

It was at Sedahoy's moment of triumph that Mrs. Brackens appeared, took one look at her husband's unconscious form lying amidst the upended liquor bottles, and came at Sedahoy with fists raised. "Oh, you son of a b\*\*\*h!"

Sedahoy answered with, "Well, I tried to warn him. You don't try to mess with an ex-boxe-"

His mouth felt like a mouthful of cotton and when he tried to open his eyes, blinding light caused him to close them again in a hurry. He looked around him, trying to understand what had happened. He looked at the cold metal bars and immediately knew he was in prison, but why? Oh yeah, Mrs. Brackens had come at him. After that, he was totally clueless. Then a guard unlocked the cell, saying,

"Okay, Mr. Woman-Attacker, your bail has been posted and you're free to go."

"Mr. Woman-Attacker, why did you call me that?"

The guard gave him a withering look and responded, "Because the police responded to a domestic disturbance call and found you unconscious, along with another man, and a woman claimed you first knocked out her husband, and then attacked her. In the course of defending herself she beat you unconscious. She filed a complaint against you for an unprovoked attack on her husband, then her.

Sedahoy tried to remember exactly what had happened. His memory was a little foggy, but the way he remembered it, Mr. Brackens had attacked *him*. He had just only been defending himself. He'd tried to reason with Mrs. Brackens, but she had attacked him and that's the last thing he could remember. "No, I was only defending myself."

The guard replied, "Sure pal, whatever you say. Tell it to the judge, but for now you're free to go, you've been bailed out."

Sedahoy Wright walked out of the jailhouse, for the moment a free man. He had been bailed out by Mrs. Beulah, the woman who had hired him to haul her yard-waste. Sedahoy had called her to tell her he wouldn't be there today, and she had come right to the jail.

He couldn't believe how far he had fallen; after fighting for the world championship, he had been reduced to hauling compost for someone. Oh well, a guy had to make a living somehow.

He was just coming up on her front porch to start work, and to thank her for bailing him out of jail, as she's left after posting his bail. When he'd seen just how much yard-waste he'd be picking up and hauling away, he'd been dismayed. Her yard was a veritable orchard, with apple trees galore, all dropping their rotten, worm-ridden fruit all over the yard. Oh well, he needed the work. He was at her door as soon as he'd run home to change into his work clothes, and he rang the doorbell. Immediately, cries and screams from what sounded like a lot of little kids reached his ears, and when the door was opened, and there stood Mrs. Beulah.

"Hi, Mr. Wright."

Sedahoy replied, "Mrs. Beulah, I'm here to start work, and I just wanted to thank you for bailing me out of jail."

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"Oh, no problem, I'm glad to bail you out of jail. Cheap labor is almost impossible to find now days. All the neighborhood kids, when I mention work they're interested, but as soon as I mention the compensation, they're suddenly busy."

Sedahoy then said, "Well, the charges against me are ridicu-"

"Oh, I really don't care. I've got enough problems of my own to worry about. Like yard-waste. Of course, your bail money will be subtracted from your wages, and can you get started right away?"

He was shocked at her lack of compassion. "Oh, yes ma'am. If you'll just give me the keys to your truck, I'll start the first load."

He was sweaty, hot, and bone-weary, and this was only the first truck-load. He looked at all the work still to be done and cursed. So much work to go. As he looked back to the pile of waste he was slowly raking up, he heard,

"You said a bad word. Mommy says anyone who uses words like that should have his mouth washed out with soap!"

Sedahoy gazed upon a child who appeared to be five or six; one of the daycare children Mrs. Beulah was running out of her home; and replied,

"Hello, I didn't see you there. I would have never used language like that if I'd known you were there."

The kid then said, "Well I was here, you should never talk like that, and I'm going to tell!"

Sedahoy sighed, and responded, "Look kid, I said I was sorry. What more do you want from me?"

"Oh, \$20.00 ought to help keep my mouth shut," the kid answered.

Sedahoy laughed, for he thought the kid was kidding, but saw that he wasn't, he said, "Not a chance, you little extortionist!"

The kid started screaming, "Stop touching me, mister. Let me go!"

Sedahoy knew he had to shut the kid's mouth, and soon, before anyone heard. He went to grab the kid, to tell him to be quiet, when the kid suddenly balled up his fist. "Look kid, calm down! How about I buy you a gum ball? Yeah, you'd like tha-"

Fuzzy light slowly came into focus. Where was he? Who was he? Was he even sure he was a he? Gradually, the pieces of what had happened returned to him. His name was Sedahoy Wright, and he'd been knocked into next week by about an 8 year old kid. How could he have let that happen? It must have been a lucky punch that had done the deed. It was an embarrassment to his manhood! He had to shake this off, and never tell a soul.

Sedahoy 'Left Hook' Wright was living on the streets; after getting out of jail this last time when he'd been falsely accused of inappropriate touching of a child. The charges were totally false. After a series of violent interrogations, he had finally been released after the boy had admitted he'd been lying.

Sedahoy was briskly walking towards home, when, going in the opposite direction, came a man pushing an infant in a stroller. Sedahoy glanced at the child as he passed, casually remarking,

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"Hey there, kid!"

Immediately, the man pushing the stroller whirled around and gave the startled Sedahoy a withering look.

"What did you just call my son?"

"I didn't call him anything," replied Sedahoy.

"That's funny; I could have sworn I heard you call him a hayseed something!"

"No, I just said "Hey there, kid!"

"Oh, so now you're accusing me of lying?"

"I'm not accusing you of anything."

"Well, no one insults my family and gets away with it!" the man screamed in reply.

"Look, I was only trying to be polite. I don't want any trouble. I'm sorry if I've offended you, and I'm sorry for the misunderstanding."

The angry man answered, "Oh, there's no misunderstanding, but seeing as how you apologized, I guess I'm not going to be mad with you any longer."

Sedahoy started to disagree with the man about there being no misunderstanding, but then thought better of it. It would be better if he just left it alone. "No hard feelings?" he said, and held out his hand.

"Well, no hard feelings," grudgingly replied the man. "My name is Marty Pendergrass, and the little tyke in the stroller is Marty Jr."

Sedahoy bent over the stroller and said, "How do you do Marty Jr. I'm pleased to make your acquaintance."

The baby gurgled and reached out for Sedahoy's hair. He missed, and wind-milled his little hands around seeking to grab a hold.

"Well, well, aren't you a feisty on----"

The light was blinding! What had happened? Sedahoy Wright groaned and shook his head, trying to clear the cobwebs. He tried to get his addled brain to work. Then he vaguely remembered the bout. He had faced a giant of a man; a vicious giant man. One of these days, he was going to get out of the fight game. He must have been knocked out. *Not again!* Then a doctor appeared, saying,

"Well, well, look who's finally coming around."

A woman standing nearby immediately said, "He's waking up?"

The doctor nodded to her, and she told Sedahoy, "I'm so sorry mister, it was completely an accident. My little Marty wasn't trying to knock you out; I guess he's stronger than his father and I think! Please accept our apologies."

C\*\*p!

The End

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