

Rematch

A woman in a steampunk outfit studied McKinley's artificial arm with care.

"I thought I configured this piece of junk perfectly!" Hera Hoover snarled, "But you're saying it was giving you some lag?"

"Just a little bit," McKinley replied. "Honestly, I'm surprised you managed to calibrate it as well as you did with only a day's notice."

Hoover gave a sharp snort.

"One sleepless night is an easy price to pay if it means giving one of FDR's lackies a tough time!"

"I really wish you'd drop that petty grudge of yours," McKinley said with a sigh. "Today's enemy could be tomorrow's friend if you just give them the chance, you know?"

"Well, I'm not giving that wench any more chances! Besides, you're not seriously planning to just forgive LBJ after how he treated you during that match, are you?"

"I don't see why not. There's no benefit in doing otherwise, especially not if LBJ ends up winning the tournament."

Hoover crossed her arms.

"You seriously think that brute has a shot at winning this whole thing?"

McKinley scratched his chin.

"No," he corrected himself, "I suppose not. After all," he said, looking over to the bracket, "that would require him defeating Roosevelt in the second round..."

"You seem pretty confident Roosevelt's winning his first match here," Hoover remarked. "but you do know that Wilson's beaten him once before, right?"

"I'm well aware. However..."

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"...when you defeated him," Eisenhower spoke to Wilson, "Roosevelt was heavily injured from his fight with Taft, and you were still in the middle of your Honeymoon Period."

"I'm well aware of these facts," Wilson said with a dismissive wave of her hand. "And it is precisely petty critiques like these that make this fight worthwhile! After all, there is no better way to show the world my glory than by defeating Roosevelt here today on even terms."

Eisenhower shook her head.

"I don't see any way you end up coming out the winner of this match," she said, extending out her hand, "but I'll be rooting for you with everything I got every step of the way!"

"My, what a delightful pessimist you are!" Wilson exclaimed, slapping her hand away. "But I don't need your reluctant encouragement in order to win..." she declared, making her way towards the arena.

"...God helping me, I can do no other!"

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"Alright everybody!" Thompson shouted, "we're ready to start up the next match!"

She gestured to the arena.

"Our first fighter," she continued, "comes to us by the very hand of God! Although she abhors war, she will not turn back on her path to victory! She can only go forward, looking on with lifted eyes and with freshened spirit! Some may call her an idealist, but to her, that's just proof that she's an American! Give it up for the head of Princeton University, [The Professor], Willow Wilson!"

Wilson entered wearing black suspenders over an orange dress shirt and black tie. Her appearance might have made her undistinguished from any other college professor, save for the impressive muscles bulging out from under her shirt.

"Our second fighter..."

The crowd erupted before Thompson could finish her sentence.

"Is a man known by many names!" Thompson continued, trying to scream over the raging crowd. "He's been called the Trust Buster! The Driving Force! The Dynamo of Power! The Rough Rider! The Hero of San Juan Hill! The Bull Moose! And of course, he's a mighty member of Rushmore! Give it up, for [The Man in the Arena], Theo Roosevelt!"

A thunderous roar came from the entranceway as a giant black bear walked in carrying Roosevelt atop his back. Roosevelt rode in shirtless, flexing his perfectly toned body to the audience as he waved over with one hand, his other arm wrapped tightly around a massive tree trunk resting on his shoulder.

"Before we get started," Thompson went on, "we wanted to briefly clarify a few points about how our bracket was made here."

Truman gave a short nod.

"This was a real challenge for us. No matter what system we used, we knew somebody would complain if they were given a lousy spot." Truman hit a button, shifting the screens around the arena to display an empty bracket. "To get around this, we gave our fighters some liberty as to where they were ultimately placed in the tournament."

The bracket filled the Rushmores into fights 4, 8, 12, and 16, then populated the rest of the slots randomly with the remaining fighters.

"To start," Thompson continued, "we put all the Rushmores where they are now, then filled in the rest of the slots at random. Crucially," she spoke as the names moved across the screen, "we let the non-Rushmore Presidents freely trade their positions amongst themselves!"

"That way," Truman said with a grin, "no one could say we weren't given them a fair deal! And while we assumed most people would use this system to avoid facing off against the Rushmores, in actuality, all of the Rushmores ended up being actively targeted by at least one fighter!"

"That's right!" Thompson exclaimed. "Willow Wilson, Ronda Reagan, Jorge Bush, and Quincy Adams all purposefully chose to face a Rushmore in round 1!"

“For the most part,” Truman added, “I suspect these four are going to regret making their decisions. The only possible exception,” he said looking down to Willow Wilson, “might be the one fighter who’s actually beaten a Rushmore before.”

Roosevelt dismounted off his bear and looked at Wilson with a grin.

“Bully! It’s been quite some time now!”

“Indeed it has,” Wilson spoke, calmly scanning her opponent. “And it appears you haven’t wasted a single second since then...why, your muscle mass seems to have increased by 5...maybe even 10 percent! Truly, I didn’t think you could get any stronger than you already were.”

Roosevelt flexed his biceps with a toothy grin.

“With self-discipline, almost anything is possible!”

“I couldn’t agree more,” Wilson replied, stepping back before walking to the side. “Executive Power: League of Nations.”

As Wilson walked, an exact duplicate of her appeared directly behind her. The original Wilson continued to walk, with an additional Wilson materializing behind her every 13 steps she took. By the time she circled back around, 14 copies of Wilson stood surrounding Roosevelt in a tight loop.

“Astounding!” Roosevelt exclaimed as he looked over the clones. “So you can conjure up a full 13 clones of yourself now?”

“Indeed,” one of the Wilsons replied.

“Some might say having 13 clones is unlucky,” another remarked, “but we’ve found the number 13 to bring us many a good fortune.”

“Moreover,” a third Wilson added as the clones took their stances, “I doubt even a man of your fortitude can handle a full fourteen points of attack!”

Roosevelt shook his body with visible glee.

“Delightful, delightful, deeeeeeeelightful!” Roosevelt turned to Taft with stars in his eyes. “Say old chap, why don’t you join us for this bout? It’ll be just like old times!”

“Hard pass,” Taft snarled as he slammed his gavel down.

“Fine, fine,” Roosevelt remarked as he lifted up his tree trunk. “More fun for me then!”

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Numerology. 13 was Woodrow Wilson’s lucky number: his name had a total of 13 letters, he became Princeton’s 13th President in his 13th year there, and he became President in the year 1913. The 14 clones (in addition to the connection to 13) are based off of Woodrow’s 14 points he made after the end of World War I.

Cowboy Land

Roosevelt swung his tree trunk in front of him as a pair of Wilson clones jumped back from the attack. As they moved away, another pair of Wilsons charged ahead. Roosevelt threw his leg at the clones, but they leaned back, catching Roosevelt's knee and locking it in place as a third Wilson ran over to his other side and smashed his knee with a kick.

Roosevelt clicked his tongue as he jerked his leg out of the Wilson's grip before whipping it out towards the closet clone. Another Wilson jumped towards the attack, pushing Roosevelt's leg away and redirecting its trajectory.

"Holy cow!" Thompson shouted, "Wilson is actually holding her own against a titan like Roosevelt!"

"Roosevelt has the advantage in terms of raw strength," Truman remarked, "but Wilson's technique rivals even that of Jefferson! Rumor has it that she dedicates a dozen of her clones every day towards mastering new techniques, and we've already seen a number of her moves in action: Russian Sambo to pull Roosevelt's knee, Muay Thai to strike his leg, and Japanese Aikido to deflect away his attacks. Last I heard, Wilson claimed to have mastered over 63 different martial arts!"

"Jesus!" Thompson exclaimed. "And Roosevelt has to fight 14 of these super martial artists all at the same time? I don't know if even a Rushmore could handle that!"

Truman broke into a laugh.

"Hey!" Thompson snapped, "What's so funny?"

"Sorry, sorry," he said, wiping away a tear. "What you said is perfectly reasonable. After all; you've never seen a Rushmore in action before..."

One of the Wilsons dashed towards Roosevelt, smashing his damaged knee with a kick and forcing him to buckle. Roosevelt looked up as all 14 Wilsons simultaneously jumped at him, nailing him with precision strikes from every angle.

Lincoln winced from the stands.

"Now that looks like it hurt! I dare say that an attack of that scale would be enough to kill most men." He widened his grin. "However..."

"...it takes more than that..." Roosevelt spoke softly as he took in a long, deep breath. "...to kill a Bull Moose!"

Roosevelt flexed out his muscles, bouncing the group of Wilsons off his body, then immediately grabbed at his trunk and slammed it into the closest Wilson.

The clone rocketed back, crashing into the arena wall next to where Taft stood. Taft continued looking out at the fight, not even bothering to check if the clone was still conscious. After all, he knew firsthand how devastating a single blow of Roosevelt's could be.

"One down," Roosevelt spoke with a menacing grin, "thirteen to go!"

Wilson shook her head.

"I knew your EP granted you massive strength, but I had no idea how barbaric you could be with how you used it."

"Barbaric?" Roosevelt chuckled. "No, that wasn't barbaric." He raised his trunk overhead. "This is barbaric!"

Roosevelt slammed his weapon down at one of the Wilsons. She dodged out of the way, only to stumble over as Roosevelt's trunk crashed into the ground, shattering the earth beneath her feet. Roosevelt swiftly lunged himself forward, grabbing his stunned opponent and slamming her straight into the floor.

"Two down," he cooed.

The remaining Wilson clones looked to each other.

"Quad Plan?" one asked.

"Quad Plan!" they replied in unison.

Roosevelt watched on as the Wilsons gathered themselves around into three groups of four: the front two of each cluster taking on defense stances, while the back two took on more offensive postures.

"Excellent!" Roosevelt said with a wide grin, "This will make it far easier to hit you all at once!"

Roosevelt swung his trunk at the closest of the quads. Two of its members stepped into the attack as the remaining two pressed onto their backs, their combined strengths stopping the swing harmlessly in its tracks as the remaining sets of Wilsons charged at him from behind. Roosevelt tried pulling his trunk back, but the first group of Wilsons refused to let go of his weapon.

"Buzz off!" he shouted, waving his hand at the Wilsons and forcing them to back away. As this happened, the other Wilsons reached his position, leaping towards him and landing eight perfectly placed kicks onto the square of Roosevelt's back. He turned around and swung out his trunk, only for the Wilsons to jump away just in time. The first group of clones then leapt ahead, kicking onto Roosevelt's exposed back.

"You cannot defeat my Quad Plan!" the Wilsons shouted as they jumped off his back. "It is the epitome of my idealism; of my belief in the strength of unity!"

"Your Quad Plan might be perfect in theory!" Roosevelt shouted as he brought back his trunk behind him. "But we'll see how it holds up in practice!"

Roosevelt slammed his trunk forward with tremendous strength, and the quad raised up their guard just as they did before. However, the group was entirely unprepared for the overwhelming pressure Roosevelt added into his latest swing. The group kept their ideal stance for as long as they could, only to be scattered across the arena as Roosevelt tore through them with his trunk.

Without pause, Roosevelt continued swing his weapon around before suddenly releasing it from his hands, rocketing the weapon forward as it crashed into a second unprepared quad of Wilsons and knocked them about the arena as well.

"Oof," Eisenhower remarked from the stands. "Roosevelt's really doing a number on Wilson here."

"Of course he is!" LBJ remarked with a smirk. "After all, that man's a real cowboy, just like me!"

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It was late in the night as a young Theo Roosevelt finished riding out in the Dakota badlands. He parked his steed and walked over to the closest saloon, stopping at the sound of gunfire coming from inside. He considered turning back, but there was nowhere else to go, and it was a very cold night.

Reluctantly, Roosevelt tightened up his stance and walked through the door, immediately taking note of the disheveled man shooting the face of a clock with a pair of pistols in the corner.

"Well, I'll be damned!" the man exclaimed as he took notice of Roosevelt's glasses. "We've got ourselves a four eyed cowboy over here! Shoot, I ain't never seen nuthin' like that before!"

Roosevelt carefully shuffled past the man and sat down at the bar.

"Wow, four eyes!" the man continued pestering after him, "That's a mighty fine watch you got there! You must be loaded, huh? Why, I bet you've got so much dough that you wouldn't mind paying off my tab right here. Right? Right?"

The man cackled. Roosevelt nervously joined in with a light laugh of his own as he took a small sip from his glass.

"Alright already," the man shouted, shoving his gun right into Roosevelt's face. "That's enough playing cowboy from you, four eyes! Pay up, pay up!"

Roosevelt swallowed hard.

"Well..." he remarked, standing up and gesturing over to the bartender, "...if I've got to, I've got to."

As the bartender walked over, Roosevelt suddenly clenched up his fist and struck the bully square in the jaw, knocking him to the ground. Roosevelt picked the man's weapons off the ground, straightened out his clothes, then sat back down to finish up his meal in peace.

"Ugh," the bully groaned on the floor. "You're going to regret this...I'm buddies with *the* [Redhead Finnigan] you know...when she hears what you did to me..."

"Finnigan, you say?" Roosevelt asked, getting up and standing over the man. "What a coincidence," he grabbed the bully's shoulders and slammed him into the wall. "That's the bandit who went and stole my new boat right from under me! So tell me now..." he said, tightening his grip around the man's shoulder's, "...where is she?"

"She's heading down the south river!" he squealed, desperately wriggling his body around. "But I don't know nothing more than that though, I swear!"

Roosevelt nodded, dropping the man before heading to the door.

"...why?" the bully whispered. "Why bother going over after someone so dangerous over one lousy boat? Can't you just go and buy another one?"

"This is not a mere matter of money," Roosevelt snarled. "This is a matter of principle, plain and simple!"

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“It takes more than that to kill a bull moose.” This line was famously said by Theodore Roosevelt after being shot in the chest before giving a speech (at which point he continued giving the speech as if nothing had happened).

Quad Plan. This is the name of a Princeton program Woodrow Wilson fought for as head of the university. In theory this program would have organized the campus into various “quads,” but the plan was never implemented.

Roosevelt Flashback I. The scene with Theo walking into a bar and knocking out an unhinged bully is almost word for true. The scene afterwards of the bully talking about Redhead Finnigan is entirely made up and is only there in order to lead into the story of Theodore Roosevelt’s very real pursuit of a deadly killer in the old west over a stolen boat...

Dissolve

Just after leaving the bar, the young Theo Roosevelt called two of his ranch hands to meet him by the south river. After explaining the situation, the three of them quickly got to work putting together a crude makeshift raft before setting out down the raging river.

For three days and nights, the group sailed on with no knowledge of where the bandits might be, let alone if they were still hanging out by the water. Then, during the third night, Roosevelt spotted his stolen boat docked besides a trio of ruffians sitting by a fire.

"...and then," Michelle Finnigan chuckled to her comrades, "I shot him dead!"

Her men gave thunderous laughs, stopping themselves as they noticed a towering figure pressing a rifle to Finnigan's back.

"Get your hands in the air!" Roosevelt boomed.

The two grunts shot up their arms, but Finnigan remained calm, turning her head to give Roosevelt a slow look over.

"I said," Roosevelt shouted, pressing his rifle in deeper, "put your hands up!"

Finnigan shrugged her shoulders before reluctantly raising up her hands.

"So what now?" she asked as Roosevelt gathered up her weapons. "Are you planning to leave us out here for dead? Or will you be taking us out yourself?"

"Neither; we're taking you in to the nearest county sheriff!"

"I see somebody is still trying to play cowboy here..." she mumbled under her breath.

"What's that!"

"Even with a boat," Finnigan spoke clearly, ignoring Roosevelt's outburst, "the closest town is more than a week away, and I highly doubt you brought enough rations along to feed us for that long."

"We'll eat unleavened bread if we must!" Roosevelt insisted, "But I refuse to leave you all here to die!"

And so, the group rode down the river, Roosevelt's eyes locked onto Finnigan and her gang from the moment they left until the moment they reached civilization. Tired and hungry, Roosevelt and his crew marched Finnigan straight to the local station.

"You know," Finnigan remarked as the sheriff tied up her hands. "I always thought you were another one of those wannabe cowboys...but it looks like I was severely mistaken." She waved a hand as the cop escorted her into the station. "Should you ever stop by here again, do make a call over to the prison; I should be glad to meet you."

The sheriff turned to Roosevelt with a tip of his hat.

"Thank you kindly for your service," he said, holding out a badge, "as a sign of our gratitude, I'd like to appoint you as a deputy sheriff for our county, should you be so inclined."

"I would be delighted!" Roosevelt exclaimed as he pinned the badge onto to his chest. He turned to his ranchmen with a grin. "I suppose no one can say now that I'm just `playing cowboy' anymore, eh?"

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In the present, the remaining group of four Wilsons looked out with dismay at their fallen comrades lying across the stadium floor.

"It seems that the supreme test has come," one of them remarked, "we must all speak, act, and serve together."

The group collectively raised their hands into the air.

"Executive Power: League of Nations; Dissolve!"

The unconscious Wilson clones scattered around evaporated their bodies into a pale, blue mist and started flowing towards the remaining Wilsons. The Wilsons breathed in the air of their comrades, creating a light blue aura around them. The group of Wilsons turned towards Roosevelt, then ran at him with remarkable speed. Roosevelt lifted up his arms.

"Bully!" he exclaimed with a small grin. "It seems I no longer have the luxury of taking back my weapon!"

A Wilson charged at Roosevelt with a series of rapid-fire strikes. Roosevelt blocked the attacks, feeling the heavy force of each blow against his arm. Two other Wilsons tackled onto Roosevelt's leg, bringing him to his knees. The last Wilson charged at Roosevelt's exposed side, aiming a swift right hook at his head.

"Not bad!" Roosevelt shouted, "But not good enough!"

Roosevelt thrust over to the side, slamming himself directly into the path of Wilson's punch, shattering her hand and knocking her to the ground. Roosevelt flicked his leg up, sending the two Wilsons holding onto him into the air before grabbing the last Wilson in his hand. The Wilson squirmed around, but even her enhanced strength was not enough to break free from Roosevelt's iron grip. Roosevelt flung the clone upwards, shooting her into the airborne Wilsons before the three of them crashed to the ground.

For a moment, none of the Wilsons moved. Finally, the Wilson with the broken hand rose. She looked across the stadium at her fallen clones, then turned to Roosevelt.

"Wonderful!" he exclaimed, "I think I'm finally warmed up now!"

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Roosevelt's Flashback II. Again the scenes depicted here are almost word for word true. The only minor embellishment is that this chase of Finnigan didn't happen the same day as the bar incident, and also that Theodore Roosevelt was already a deputy sheriff when he made his pursuit of Redhead Finnigan.

League of Nations. Willow Wilson's EP is named after the organization Woodrow Wilson promoted after World War I. This was a precursor to the United Nations which had a total of 63 nations taking part over the years. However, it ultimately proved unsuccessful and dissolved.

Peace Without Victory

"Amazing!" Thompson screamed. "Through sheer force of will, Roosevelt has reduced Wilson's army down to a single member! This folks, is the strength of a Rushmore!"

The stands erupted into cheers, with Roosevelt turning from his opponent to greet the audience with cheer. The last remaining Wilson gave a dejected chuckle.

"I'm still here," she muttered, looking over the crowd as they chanted Roosevelt's name. "But for them, I suppose that hardly matters. After all, you are a real, vivid person, whom they have seen and cheered for, millions strong. I, on the other hand, am a vague, conjectural personality, more made up of opinions and academic prepossessions than of human traits and red corpuscles."

She started undoing her tie with her good hand.

"As such," she continued, "if we wish to draw the will of the masses, there is but one response possible for us..."

As she spoke, the remaining Wilsons dissolved, pouring their essence into the final Wilson. Roosevelt turned, raising his guard as Wilson walked towards him, her previously gray eyes transformed into an azure blue.

"Our only response," Wilson exclaimed as she smashed Roosevelt's arms. "Is force!"

Roosevelt slide back from the blow. He started lowering his arms, only to put them back up as Wilson appeared before him.

"Force to the utmost!" Wilson screamed as she struck Roosevelt with another seismic blow. "Force without stint or limit! The righteous and triumphant force which shall make right the law of the world and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust!"

"Yes!" Roosevelt exclaimed as he took another hit. "Yes, yes, yes! This! This right here is the Wilson I remember!"

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Years ago, Wilson's secretary Eddy House barged into her office with a look of frustration.

"Come on, Wilson!" he screamed. "How long are we going to sit back and watch while this madness unfolds around us?"

"There is such a thing as a woman being too proud to fight," Wilson muttered. She turned to her window, watching as another building crumbled in the distance.

That morning, the former allies Roosevelt and Taft had suddenly started a brawl at the center of Princeton's campus. Wilson had of course contemplated stepping in to stop them, but she abhorred violence, and none of her students had been caught in the crossfire so far. However, this would not last for long.

House's phone buzzed. He looked down, then put on a solemn grimace.

"I just got a note from Zimmerman...it looks like they've sunk one of our boats."

Wilson removed her glasses.

“...Were there any students aboard?”

“They don’t know the exact numbers for sure, but it seems like there were around 12 or 13.”

Wilson rubbed her nose.

“And what do you believe should be the right response for us to make regarding this event?”

“Are you serious right now? Obviously the people are going to demand you go out and put a stop to them!”

“I did not ask you about popular opinion!” she snapped, “I asked you what is right!” She looked to the window. “I do not care for popular demand. I want to do right, whether popular or not.” She gave a sigh. “No, I am merely deluding myself. God knows I’ve tried keeping us out of this war. But alas, there is one price which is too great to pay for peace.” She left her office with an expression dark calm. “One cannot pay the price of self-respect!”

Wilson reached the center of Princeton’s campus just as Taft slammed his hammer into Roosevelt, shooting him straight through the nearest building.

Roosevelt shot up off the ground, only to find Wilson between him and Taft.

“Both of you,” Wilson spoke in her sternest professorial voice, “stand down.”

“Out of the way, Wilson!” Taft screamed, “This fight’s got nothing to do with you!”

“Oh how I wish that were true,” she replied with a shake of her head. “But I must ask once more: will you two go away quietly? Or shall I be forced to make you leave?”

Roosevelt snarled as he tightened up his fists and charged right at her

“I’ll take my chances on you trying to snub me! You lack valor! You can’t do it; I’d like to see you try!”

Wilson shook her head.

“It is true that I might not be able to stop you two on my own...but what you fail to realize,” she spoke looking Roosevelt right in the eyes, “is that I have God on my side!”

A radiant light suddenly burst from Wilson’s body, halting Roosevelt and Taft as a Presidential Seal formed across her hand.

“An...an Election on command?” Roosevelt stammered, “That’s...that’s impossible!”

“Remember this...”

Taft and Roosevelt stepped back as a pair of Wilsons running to each of them.

“God himself ordained that I should be the next President of the United States; neither you nor any other mortals could have prevented this!”

Taft gritted his teeth.

“We’ll see about that!”

Taft drew back his weapon and swung his gavel straight for one of the Wilsons. She planted down her feet, slamming her arm into the hammer and stopping it midswing. Another Wilson grabbed at Taft’s outstretched arm before he could draw it back, tossing him over her head and slamming him into the ground. Roosevelt took half a step back.

“This is...this is...” he stammered before twisting his face into a look of pure ecstasy. “This is absolutely fantastic!” he screamed, jumping around with the excitement of a young child. “Oh, I am overjoyed at your Election, Wilson! What else can you do? What heights can you reach?” He brought back his arm as a Wilson drew closer. “Let’s find out!”

Roosevelt thrust out his palm. The Wilson caught his hand in her own and twisted out her wrist, spinning Roosevelt around and lifting him off his feet. The airborne Roosevelt flung his free hand at his opponent, but not before a second Wilson leapt out in front, dropkicking Roosevelt and shooting him into a neighboring building.

Roosevelt shot back up as the pair of Wilsons stepped in front of him. Roosevelt swung out his arm, but the first Wilson pushed off the shoulder’s of the second, lifting herself over the attack as the other Wilson ducked down underneath. The crouching Wilson instantly sprung up with an uppercut to Roosevelt’s chin as the other slammed down their leg onto the top of Roosevelt’s head, the two monstrous attacks crashing simultaneously into his skull.

Roosevelt fell to the ground, struggling to lift himself up as the four Wilsons smashed their fists into his face, knocking him out cold.

The Wilson clones nodded at each other, then dissolved back into the original as she adjusted her tie.

“You say I lack valor,” she spoke to her downed opponent. “Well, you ought to know that valor is not defined by jumping headfirst into battle. No; valor is self-respecting. Valor is circumspect! Valor,” she said looking at her Presidential Seal. “Valor strikes only when it is right to strike!”

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Roosevelt readied a punch, but Wilson slammed into his chest, throwing him off.

“Hell yeah!” Eisenhower exclaimed. “Wilson is actually overpowering Roosevelt!”

“It’s shocking as all hell,” LBJ remarked, “the master technician Wilson has seriously turned this fight into a contest of pure strength...”

Wilson kicked Roosevelt, knocking him back. Roosevelt gritted his teeth, then flung forward. Wilson punched him in the face, but he endured the strike and grabbed hold of her outstretched arm.

“Seriously,” LBJ continued with a sad shake of his head, “I can’t believe someone as smart as Wilson could be so damn stupid!”

Roosevelt flung Wilson overhead, slamming her down, then raised her up and slammed her again. He lifted her a third time, but Wilson wrapped herself around his arm and squeeze with everything she had. Roosevelt gave a small grunt and pulled at Wilson with his free hand. Wilson tightened her grip, refusing to compromise her position by a single centimeter. Roosevelt gritted his teeth.

"If you refuse to budge!" he shouted while raising his arm. "Then I'll bury you in the ground!"

Roosevelt thrust his hand together with Wilson through the floor beneath them. He sprinted forward, his arm tearing through the dirt as he ran, then crashed his arm straight through the arena wall.

Wilson released her hold, dropping off Roosevelt and plopping on the ground. Roosevelt jumped back and rubbed his battered arm, then looked up with shock to see Wilson standing back up and walking towards him. Roosevelt raised his guard, only to lower it as he took a closer look at Wilson's condition.

"...you put up a decent fight," Roosevelt remarked, "but you're through now."

"Your assessment is correct! I dare say I barely have the strength left to stand. However," she raised her fist, "even if I have to give my life to it, I shall refuse to back down so long as I possess the strength left to stand!" She gave a small grin. "...that is the only way I can find peace without victory."

Roosevelt lowered his head.

"It took far too long for you to get into this fight," he said, raising his head with his biggest grin yet. "But I'm oh so glad you finally did!"

He walked up to Wilson and readied his fist.

"Truly," Wilson said with a smile, "there is no more glorious a way to die than in battle."

"Agreed," Roosevelt said, then smashed into Wilson, slamming her to the wall before collapsing to the ground. Taft rushed to Wilson, checked her condition, then slammed his gavel.

"The match is over!" Taft shouted, his voice drowned out by the roar of the crowd. "The winner, is [The Man in the Arena], Theo Roosevelt!"

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"...Rise and shine, sleepyhead," Eisenhower cooed as Wilson came to.

"Oh my," Wilson spoke as she took in the sights of the infirmary around her, "it seems we've had a reversal of circumstances since this morning." She looked to her broken hand with a somber smile.

"Well little girl, you were right in expecting we should lose the fight. Frankly I did not, but I suppose God knew better than I did after all."

"And just so you know," Eisenhower said, sarcastically leaning towards Wilson, "I am more than happy to be your shoulder to cry on, just like you were for me."

"Oh, there is nothing to cry about! After all, the outcome is God's will. If anything, I feel a great load has been lifted from my tired shoulders."

Wilson turned to the television screen in front of her and raised an eyebrow.

"I say," she remarked as she looked to the clock on the wall, "shouldn't the next match have started by now?"

“About that,” Eisenhower remarked while scratching the back of her head. “It seems there’s been some sort of issue with the next set of fighters...”

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Wilson’s Flashback. This is a rough amalgamation of two events. The first is the 1912 Presidential Election between Woodrow Wilson, William Howard Taft, and Theodore Roosevelt (who ran as a third party candidate due to frustration with Taft). Ultimately Woodrow emerged victorious, in part due to William and Theodore taking votes from each other.

The second event is Woodrow Wilson’s entry into World War I. He resisted this for as long as he could, but eventually Germany’s aggressiveness was too much to bear. In particular, a major turning point was Germany sinking the Lusitania, a boat which carried 128 United States passengers. Not long after this, Woodrow declared war, with the US forces achieving a relatively quick victory over their battered enemies.

Wilson and Roosevelt. In the novel, the relationship between Willow and Theo is depicted as a friendly rivalry. In the beginning these two really did like each other, e.g. with Theodore saying “Woodrow Wilson is a perfect trump. I am overjoyed at his election” upon hearing Woodrow was made head of Princeton. However, their relationship quickly soured after Woodrow entered politics, with Theodore in particular bashing Woodrow for not jumping into WWI sooner.