



# THE GREATEST

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IN THE AUTUMN OF 1989, I MET MUHAMMAD ALI. I'm sure he doesn't remember, and hasn't ever given the slightest thought to, that meeting. It was the first and only time I've seen him in person, but not the first time I learned something from him that changed the course of my life. We sat together on a stone bench in the woods in Farmington, Connecticut for three or four minutes, and in that time he only said five words. I think he said them to me. But he might have been talking to himself.

In 1964, 22-year-old Cassius Clay, later to be known as Muhammad Ali, beat the "Big Ugly Bear," Sonny Liston, for the heavyweight boxing title of the world. I was only ten, but I was aware of the fight because my family was into boxing. No one expected him to win. He was a 7-to-1 underdog, and everyone in my family and