



# No Ordinary Joe: The Autobiography of the Greatest British Boxer of All Time

*Joe Calzaghe*

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## **No Ordinary Joe: The Autobiography of the Greatest British Boxer of All Time** Joe Calzaghe

It was past three in the morning when Joe Calzaghe experienced the sweetest validation of his professional life. Victory over Jeff Lacy, a 28-year-old American compared to a young Mike Tyson because of his power and "take-no-prisoners attitude," left no one in doubt about the world super middleweight champion's talent. Hugh McIlvanney, the doyen of British sportswriters and a veteran chronicler of fights, described what he had witnessed as "one of the greatest displays of superb technique, confidence, and fighting intelligence a British boxer has delivered in a major contest." For years, Calzaghe's virtuosity remained a legend of the Welsh valleys. His defeat in 1997 of Chris Eubank brought him to prominence and won him the World Boxing Organization super middleweight title. But despite a record number of defenses of the belt, his career lacked a defining contest. A long line of challengers and ex-titleholders were disposed of but the biggest names in American boxing avoided the ultimate showdown he craved. Hand injuries further obscured the true level of his aptitude for an art he began to learn from his father, Enzo, at the age of eight when—inspired by Sugar Ray Leonard—a rolled-up carpet in the family home in Newbridge became a makeshift punching bag. This is the story of Calzaghe's extraordinary life, from his humble beginnings in his hometown of Newbridge to his ascent to personal greatness, becoming the first super middleweight boxer to win the prized belt awarded by *The Ring*—the bible of boxing—in the division's near 20-year history. As reticent outside the ring as he is remarkable inside, for the first time Calzaghe reveals his fears and motivations and the real extent of the hand injuries that have dogged his career. One of Britain's foremost sporting champions, a warrior, and a working-class hero, this is the story of the triumphs and trials that made Calzaghe a legend.

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