



Rafa, mi historia (Indicios no ficción)

Rafael Nadal

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¿Cómo se forja un campeón? ¿Qué hay que hacer para ser el mejor del mundo en un deporte como el tenis? Con sencillez, franqueza e inteligencia, Rafael Nadal guía a los lectores por el dramático y triunfante viaje de su vida, sin perder nunca de vista el trofeo que más valora en este mundo: la unidad y el amor de su familia. Desde que inició su trayectoria profesional ha ascendido meteóricamente y es el tenista profesional más joven que ha ganado los cuatro títulos de Grand Slam.

Su historia empieza en la isla de Mallorca, donde la familia Nadal ha vivido durante generaciones. Entrenado por su tío Toni desde que tenía 4 años, educado por sus padres en la modestia y el respeto, Rafa ha conseguido la inusual hazaña de ser una persona sencilla, laboriosa y amable, y un ejemplo de conducta en todos los aspectos de la vida.

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Beth says

So, why would a 25 year old athlete write a memoir when for all accounts he is still on the top of the game? Sure, Rafa is no longer #1 in the world but he still is #2 and with a good 5 or 6 years left in his career. Not that I'm complaining because I am fan of his and I'm fascinated by what makes athletes tick. I always wonder what is going on in their heads during matches, especially the big matches.

The book is kind of a memoir/bio. It goes back and forth between Rafa's own recollections of matches and growing up and John Carlin putting everything in context. Rafa focuses mainly on two matches. The 2008 Wimbledon final and the 2010 US Open final. He goes set by set of his epic Wimbledon final with Roger Federer, while flash back to childhood memories that made him who he is today. I think it works well. This match is probably the best match he has ever played and probably the best match to ever. It is clearly the match that has meant the most to him in his career.

While Rafa is no Andre Agassi and he reveals no big bombshells that Andre did in his memoir Open, it's still a pretty eye opening read. For all his fearless, aggressive style of play, Rafa is probably the most neurotic man on the face of the earth. He's afraid of the dark, loves the water but doesn't like to swim in the ocean unless he can see the bottom. For how orderly he lays out all his belongings before each match, making sure his bottles labels are facing out, he is completely unorganized in everything else in his life. Carlin's compares him to Clark Kent and Superman. In real life he is just your average, no name guy but put a tennis racquet and a bandana and he becomes Superman. For anyone who has ever seen him play, particularly live, it's a quite an impressive transformation.

Rafa's memoir is good read. I'm glad I read it. It was an interesting insight into the mindset of a great champion and of a man who is still coming into his own. I'm not sure if non-tennis fans will find it as interesting as hardcore tennis fans but for Rafa fans, it's a must read.

Surshank says

This book is priceless. Open, straight and deliciously honest, this gives a first hand account of both - Rafa the tennis champion and Rafa the human being. It also depicts how these two people are so different from each other - Rafa the human is beset with doubts and insecurities, is indecisive, is scared of thunder, lightning and the dark and is wary and scared of any small incursion that can upset his tightly knit family life. Rafa the tennis player, in stark contrast is a decisive, ruthless, super-competitive champion and is the epitome of endurance - something that has been etched into his conscience by his uncle, coach and friend - Toni. The book offers a deep dive into every aspect that makes Rafa who he is today - the fiercely protective and closer-than-close family that gives Rafa the emotional stability he needs and thrives on, the dogmatic Toni who brings Rafa to train at 9 AM despite any late night sojourns or a match the previous day and who keeps him grounded by constantly reminding him that he is nothing special and that to endure when all seems lost is what will set him apart, his team - Titin, Tuts and the rest who always manage to keep him game ready and the mental make-up of Rafa himself.

Written in a unique manner - the Wimbledon 2008 finals interspersed with Rafa's words on his childhood

and growing up years and those of someone else who have seen and worked with him lends a beautiful lucidity to the book. The bits about the Wimbledon 2008 finals in particular are gripping and give us a glimpse of what usually transpires in a player's mind during one of the biggest matches of his career. It not only confirmed my belief that tennis is a game of mind over matter, but also demonstrated in more occasions than one, how Rafa's single-minded concentration, his ability to endure, his desire for victory and his never-say-die attitude overcame all - injury, history, rankings and expectations. Rafa, unlike Federer, always gave the impression that he was human and prone to error and injury - something which Rafa admits to on more occasions than one. The manner in which he admits to all his flaws and opens up his private emotions and thoughts at the most definitive moments of his life is endearing to say the least. In addition to all this, the book offers valuable life lessons in endurance, hard work, grabbing opportunities, never giving up, discipline and humility more than any others that I have read in recent times. Vamos Rafa! You have converted me.

Scott says

First I'll say, I'm a big fan of Rafa and there's not much in here that I didn't already know. When I saw this guy beat Roger Federer in 2005 at the French Open, I was very pleased as a tennis fan that Federer finally had his kryptonite. The book was an easy read, but not as captivating as Open (Agassi's bio). Plenty of information in here about Rafa's relationship with his uncle Toni (it's not all peaches and cream). In fact Toni's tough (borderline cruel) training of Rafa was meant to teach him "mental endurance". And that trait alone is Rafa's biggest strength.... especially important in a game like tennis with razor thin marginal differences between top player's talents. Also, Nadal speaks a ton about his Wimbledon win in 2008, his parent's separation in 2009, and there's special sections about Nadal's inner circle as well as the women in his life. Tennis fans will love this

Avinash says

First of all!

It's the 100th book I have finished this year :) so my 2017 reading challenge is -

About the book... well it's obviously awesome and inspiring, a slight bit monotonous at place but I deducted a star because of the publishing time he chose. It was a lot sooner than I would've liked.

I mean, what about those career threatening injuries in 2015 and the heroic come-back after that, that 2nd Olympic gold in 2016 and those awesomeness yet to come. But what I'll always miss the most in this book is the dream double team of FEDAL. That had to be there. Anyway, I'll post a long review but it will probably take time. Signing off for now

Marisabel Bonet-Cruz says

I admire Rafael Nadal.

During the 2012 Australian Open, I got the chance to watch Rafael Nadal compete. I enjoyed every moment, and have been a follower of his career for some time now. Along with Roger Federer, he is my top favourite tennis player. He is one of my heroes. The reasons I admire him are similar to those of other Nadal followers from across the world: he is kind, humane, quiet, and humble. He is handsome and talented, and a fighter. He loves family and pushes himself to the limit. Not to mention, he is Spanish, and anyone who lifts the image of us Latinos is worthy of my admiration.

I couldn't love Nadal without knowing who he is, so I picked up this book. And I loved it. Every second of it. The book allows you to understand Nadal's thinking and where he is coming from when he's playing a match. Do not expect a memoir full of juicy, naughty scandals. Do not expect a book full of the sad details you might find in Open, because it isn't that type of book. Maybe, there will never be a book like that about Nadal. His life and his career isn't that type, and I hope it never turns that way.

The book allows you to grow closer to Nadal as he muses about his career, his family, his success, his challenges. Mostly: his battle with Federer. You see him open up about his losses, his injuries, and his love of tennis. You get to know him on a personal level, as personal as a book can allow, and you end up smiling all the way.

I recommend reading this book to anyone who wants to get to know Nadal, and to anyone who loves tennis. You will enjoy it.

If I were to pin-point a downside to this book is that, towards the end, the book gets a little repetitive. However, I suppose one can expect that, given the book is about Nadal and that it highlights his good qualities. One also needs to understand that there is little drama and that there are no "horrible, nasty stories" in Nadal's career, so the book can feel repetitive. Yes, he endures some sad moments and his life is not perfect, but over all, he is Ok. So, you get over the repetitiveness fairly quickly.

You concentrate on what's truly alluring about this book: Nadal's spirit.

Faith Spinks says

What makes Nadal the champion that he is? What makes him play with such determination and will to win? What makes Nadal such a strong player on court but such a gentle, polite, unassuming guy off court?

I found this book a fascinating insight into the childhood and life of Nadal as well as into his attitude to tennis and the way he plays. Not just a 'this happened, then that happened', or a 'he won this and then he almost won this'. The book is built up around some of the biggest matches of his career - particularly his amazing match against Federer in the 2008 Wimbledon final. It was fascinating to see how all the different parts of his life played into his style and attitude of play. Made me realise even more not only what a spectacular player he is but also what a humble and just all round real guy he is.

I couldn't get enough of this book, and by the time I reached the end had grown in even more respect for the

man and for the tennis player that is Rafael Nadal!

????? ???? says

Vinayak Kesarwani says

The success of Rafa has always appealed to me more than Federer's. Federer, has always appeared like a God who was born with a tennis racquet in his hand, to wield and establish his supremacy on this world. In Rafa's case it hasn't ever appeared so. He always seemed like someone who toils hard for all his successes, for whom things don't come as naturally as his other compatriots, but fuelled by his massive hunger and desire for winning he keeps on pushing, through sweat, through pain.

The book presents two of Rafa's most important wins, the final at Wimbledon 2008 and the final at US Open 2010 from Rafa's own point of view. This is interlaced with stories from his past to showcase his development sometimes in his own voice, sometimes in others. It is well written and if you are a fan you should read it.

The one gripe I have with the book is that I would have liked to know more about his life, as he developed but maybe Rafa the private person could only allow this much to be known for the sake of Rafa the tennis player.

Akanksha Chattpadhyay says

As I sit to review Rafael Nadal's autobiography, fresh from having watched del Potro triumph over Wawrinka in a hard fought Wimbledon second round (an unfortunate fixture for this stage of the tournament with both men capable of winning Grand Slam finals on their days), memories come flooding my mind. Nearly six years from where the book leaves off and Nadal being far from the top of the ATP rankings, "Rafa-my story" doesn't fall short of putting into perspective all it says, all Rafa Nadal comes to signify, and perhaps some of the key values that everyone must embody. Mildly Puritanical as the overtones may suggest, and starkly in contrast with my present Postmodernist bearings, Nadal's book is a wholesome experience. However, I don't regret not having read it immediately after publication, for though the sixteen year old me might have clutched it harder in fanatic enthusiasm, the raw information the book provides is scarcely novel to an ardent fan. The achievement of the book lies in revealing the sensitive and clear-headed Rafael behind Rafa Nadal, the tennis champion.

One fine morning more than eleven years back, while watching a match, probably in Rome Masters, in the run-up to his debut French Open, I chanced to get a glimpse of the player who was to become the biggest

hero of my growing years during which tennis remained my singular obsession. Keeping this in mind, an objective judgement of this memoir of my superman is fairly impossible, and when I go over the top in adulation, which I frequently do, I do so unapologetically.

“Rafa: my story”, though compared with Andre Agassi’s “Open” for its popularity, never for once becomes controversial or explosive, and the only attacks that ever ensue are wrapped in affection and aimed at his “uncle, coach and friend”, Toni. It narrates along smooth anticipation a tale of struggle and love for struggle, and human endurance raising itself to the superhuman. Nadal is neither a swan-like Federer nor a dazzling-blasting Djokovic. He runs runs and at the baseline hitting incessantly and knows exactly when to send that charged curling forehand past his opponent, leaving the whole world gaping. It’s the story of the boy, who though uncomfortable with the dark and dogs, had had to learn to go out and play a Wimbledon final, aged twenty.

The narrative technique doesn’t fail to intrigue either as it alternates between first person monologues and third person reports. Though I had initially found Carlin’s interruptions slightly annoying but comprehend in retrospection, their utility and symbolic value. Nadal’s part is chronologically non-linear. Through two of the biggest matches of his career—Wimbledon final 2008 and US Open final 2010—he revisits the whole of his life: the loving family and happy childhood, his love for football, the beginnings of tennis and subsequent conquest of the world, his many injuries, but most of all, the shaping of his trademark morale. To be “good people” was ingrained in him right from his childhood by his parents and the fierce uncle Toni. And that resulted not just in his good-natured persona off the court, but also his on-court humility which he describes to have taught him to respect the good balls and consequently know which ones to kill.

The two matches, especially the Wimbledon final of 2008, have been described with meticulous details, facilitating an insight into the brain of a tennis player in action at the highest level, which might at times seem to drag for non-tennis readers, but lovers of the game must find them a treat. Carlin comes in at every nerve wrecking juncture, mostly to take him home to the island of Mallorca, when the gladiatorial stance becomes too dominant. Though personally, I would have loved an uninterrupted monologue just as well. The prose deserves a mention of its own, especially Nadal’s parts—carefully crafted, it retains an echo of his voice, which makes the text all the more effective.

The book deserves to be read, read widely. Or so I believe. And as for myself, I’m definitely going to reread it and love it everytime. “Rafa: my story” stands out as does Rafa Nadal himself—not for literary genius and beyond sporting genius—with its unique human appeal.

Vamos!

Tara says

I enjoy following Rafa's career not only because of his sheer brilliance as a player but his demonstrated class and humility in the world of sports where ego and arrogance often dominate. Whenever I attend the US Open, I am always most struck by Rafa's speeches after a game that make clear his respect for both his opponents and the fans.

This book drives home that Rafa has worked hard to be one of the world's best tennis players without success going to his head and making him exude less effort for the next win.

Rafa, compared with Agassi's experience detailed in Open, has passion and respect for the game of tennis and for his rivals. And it comes across in Rafa's retelling of trainings, games and the ups/downs of wins/losses.

I, of course, was most thrilled with the recounting of his US Open win in 2010. I was there and saw what victory meant to Rafa. After reading his account of that winning match, however, the victory meant even more than what fans saw on the outside. And I couldn't be happier for him. Vamos Rafa!

Kristin says

I was quite disappointed by this book. It's really not much of an autobiography at all. Instead, it is practically a point by point breakdown of the 2008 Wimbledon final and, to a lesser extent, the 2010 U.S. Open final. The reader learns very little of Nadal's life, and what tidbits can be found are repeated frequently. (There is a lot about the closeness of the Nadal family, for instance. A LOT.) I did enjoy learning the meaning of his last name (which is the same meaning as mine, in a different language!) and that he likes Nutella and olives, and the insight into his game and life philosophy was interesting too. However, if I was looking for such a book, I would have expected a subtitle more along the lines of "A Look into My Game."

Also, it was quite a sucker punch when he said that the sportsman he most respected was Tiger Woods BECAUSE OF HIS GOOD ATTITUDE. Woods has one of the worst attitudes of any sportsman I've seen, always blaming something else for his mistakes and getting in a mood whenever he loses. So that was shocking.

Anyway, this book was interesting and informative, just not what I was hoping for at all. Probably the whole thing could be condensed to 50 pages. Still, it's going to be a must-read for any Nadal (or tennis) fan.

Cheryl says

As a huge Rafa fan this was interesting to read, mainly for the indepth match analysis he gives for the 2008 Wimbledon final. I am sure many people watch these big matches and wonder what is going through the players minds during a massive occasion like that and here we have one of the biggest players ever giving us a blow by blow account.

There are definitely no big revelations, I knew all the stories he referred to in here, from the eating too many chocolate croissants, having special shoes designed to uncle Toni telling him he could make it rain, so if you're a long time Rafa fan who follows him closely you're not going to learn anything new from this at all. The only thing that did surprise me was the level at which he discussed Toni's strictness, again I have known about the water bottle thing for a while but it was different reading it from Rafa's perspective and it comes across that Rafa is in no doubt that Toni's behaviour helped to mould him into the player he is today, along with his very supportive parents.

Overall a good read with some interesting point of view information but not the warts and all kind of book that Agassi gave us, which is actually not what a Rafa fan should expect anyway. :)

John Boettcher says

This book was amazing for several reasons. Let me explain. Most times when I am reading a book, I am sitting down, lying in bed, or at most riding a bike at the gym. Rafa's book makes you motivated to be more than what you currently are in some of the most personal and honest ways I have ever come across.

Yes, he has accomplished some of the greatest feats in tennis history, and for tennis fans, we take that for granted and do a lot of armchair commentary as he is playing some of the top level players in the world. However, the real Nadal, the person who goes through his life day in and day out, is an extremely unique individual, one that wants to be competitive in everything he does, but yet is one of the nicest people you would ever meet.

The honesty in which the book is written reminds me a lot of Agassi's book, "OPEN" but with main differences. A lot of Agassi's book had to do with how much he hated growing up the way he did, his family, and especially, Tennis. This is exactly the opposite of what Nadal is all about.

There are tons of autobiographies out there, and most of them just say the same old things over and over and over and you get tired of listening to them drone on about themselves and how great they are. Read this book, and you will read about how great Nadal is, through the lens of humility and grace.

I really wish I could just post all of my favorite quotes I had to underline throughout the book, because they should be plastered all over in gyms and tennis facilities, or sports complexes all over the world. In some ways, we all should strive to be a bit more like Rafa.

Amalie says

I did like the book, I did. But something lacked. Nadal seems very humble, and very down-to-earth - and you can only applaud him for that. But the book becomes too mundane. I was not a huge Nadal before I read the book, and I haven't become one since I finished with it. I wasn't told anything new about the sport or about how an athlete behaves. He works hard, has his routines and his uncle/trainer wasn't always very nice. The truth is that is pretty much every tennis-player life.

But it was interesting reading - but having read Agassi's biography before Nadal's, I guess I'm bound to be a bit disappointed!

Rachel C. says

Less of an autobiography and more of a detailed breakdown of two particular matches (Wimbledon 2008 v. Federer and US Open 2010 v. Djokovic) with some personal history mixed in.

This book definitely doesn't have the broader appeal of Agassi's "Open." I liked it because I'm a big Rafa fan, and you get a lot more info here than you do from his generally stilted and uninformative interviews. Turns out he's quite a Jekyll and Hyde personality: very timid and sensitive off court despite being an absolute beast on court. (Would you believe he's terrified of dogs and thunderstorms, and doesn't like to sleep in the dark?)

The language is sort of awkward, and often sounds like it's poorly translated from Nadal's native Spanish. On the other hand, the awkward syntax is more consistent with his public "voice" than a smoother translation would be. I'm sure it was a difficult balance for his "co-author" to strike.

I'd like to see Nadal expand on this book in about 15 years, when his career is concluded and he has some more perspective.

