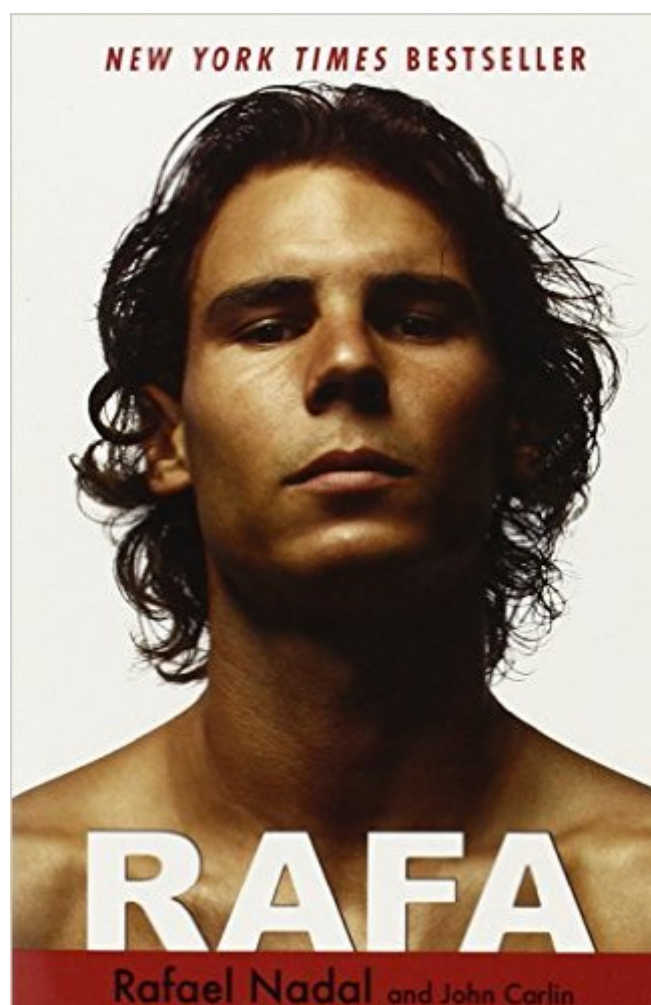


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# Rafa



## Synopsis

What makes a champion? What does it take to be the best in the world at your sport? Rafael Nadal has the answers. In his memoir, written with award-winning journalist John Carlin, he reveals the secrets of his game and shares the inspiring personal story behind his success. It begins in Mallorca, where the tight-knit Nadal family has lived for generations. Coached by his uncle Toni from the age of four and taught humility and respect by his parents, Nadal has managed the uncommon feat of becoming an acclaimed global celebrity while remaining a gracious, hardworking role model for people in all walks of life. Now he takes us behind the scenes, from winning the Wimbledon 2008 final—described by John McEnroe as "the greatest game of tennis" he had ever seen—to the family problems that brought him low in 2009 and the numerous injuries that have threatened his career. With candor and intelligence, Nadal brings readers on his dramatic and triumphant journey, never losing sight of the prize he values above all others: the unity and love of his family. From RAFA: "During a match, you are in a permanent battle to fight back your everyday vulnerabilities, bottle up your human feelings. The more bottled up they are, the greater your chances of winning, so long as you've trained as hard as you play and the gap in talent is not too wide between you and your rival. The gap in talent with Federer existed, but it was not impossibly wide. It was narrow enough, even on his favorite surface in the tournament he played best, for me to know that if I silenced the doubts and fears, and exaggerated hopes, inside my head better than he did, I could beat him. You have to cage yourself in protective armor, turn yourself into a bloodless warrior. It's a kind of self-hypnosis, a game you play, with deadly seriousness, to disguise your own weaknesses from yourself, as well as from your rival."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

RAFA is a remarkable book which gives amazing insights into the mind of a tennis legend. The way he prepares before a game, his mental state during a game, his methods of handling the disappointments and the successes of the tennis court - all of this makes RAFA a fascinating read. The book has a unique format in which the first person account by Nadal is interspersed with chapters by John Carlin. The chapters by Nadal mainly talk about some of the important matches of his fledging tennis career, starting with THE MATCH - the Wimbledon 2008 final; his surprisingly strong family ties and its impact on his game; his domineering uncle and coach for 20 years - Toni and of course, his never say die spirit which is visible in most of his matches, among other things. As the chapters go on, the book slowly uncovers the duality of Rafael Nadal - the one on the tennis court and the other off it. The one on the court is a gladiator who fights till the end, never gives up, doesn't know what fear is and ruthlessly decimates his opposition. The one off the tennis court is a soft, insecure lad, a boy next door, who is scared of dog, who is uncomfortable driving a bicycle or a motorbike and one who is scared of flying in a helicopter! The contrast cannot be more starker. The importance he gives to his family and friends and in turn their impact on his game is mentioned throughout the book. After a remarkable year of 2008 when he won both French Open and Wimbledon and became No.1 for the first time, 2009 was a big let down, when he was dogged by injuries, when he lost in French Open for the first time and eventually lost the No.1 ranking. As he writes, this dip in his career was as much due to the separation of his parents as due to external factors like injuries and loss of form.

I am enjoying the Rafa memoir. Initially, I wondered how a memoir could be written so early in this young man's life, and not be "fluff" for over 270 pages. I quickly learned that not only is there no fluff, it sucked me in as a reader. The format is almost like "Forrest Gump" in print. It starts with Rafa prepping for his 2008 Wimbledon match against Roger Federer, the slam he's always wanted to win. Rafa writes somewhat of a diary/journal entry of his thought as he gets ready for the match. And as he goes through these motions, he has "flashbacks" of times earlier in life that has gotten him to where he's at: lessons he's learned, the family's who's been a solid foundation of support, and the human side of of who Rafa's become of these things. The flashbacks come back to the present match and integrates itself whole. Once a short entry of that match is read, John Carlin interjects with words and mini vignettes/interviews from family and friends who fill the "gaps" of the

thought processes of how Rafa thinks and what he's become. The story then heads back to that Wimbledon match and Rafa writes more. The cycle continues. I bought this book right as I was about to go to sleep and ended up reading nearly 20% of the book and took it to work to read during my lunch. I could not put it down, but had to because the eyes were drooping. At this rate, the book will not make it to the weekend. Rafa draws me in and paints a story of an every day man who happens to do something extraordinary professionally. Nadal speaks with desires of a simple life and yet, with a profound sense of thought of in how to approach it. Tennis is the backddrop of this story, but many life lessons are learned as well as we watch someone grow into their own.

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