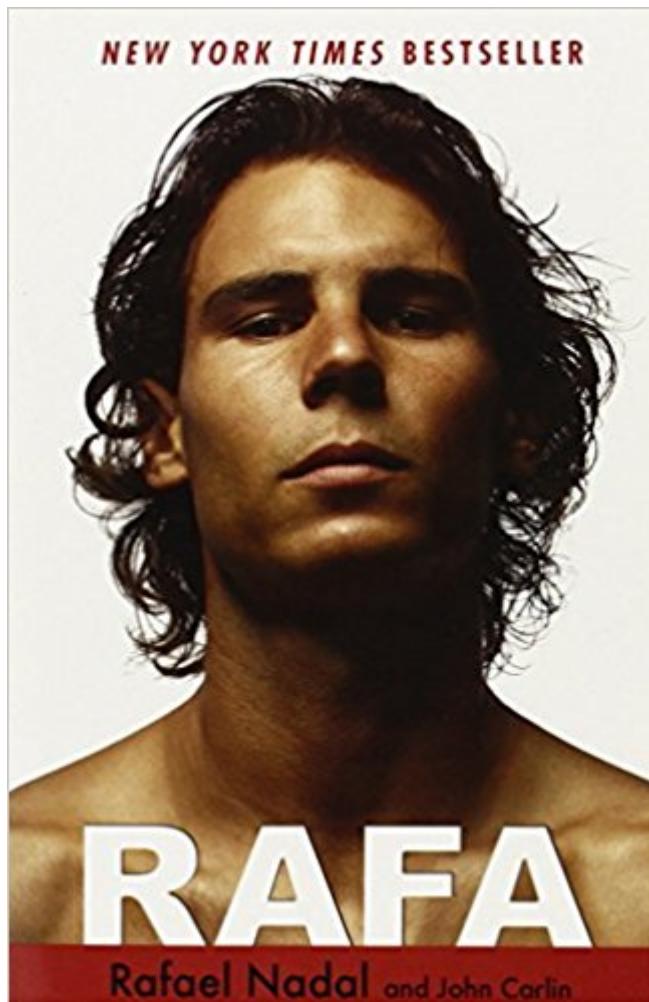


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# Rafa



## 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

Take a glimpse behind the curtain of both his private and professional life - it's as exciting as Rafa himself \* Woman's Own \* Between them they have served up a winner -- Simon Redfern \* Independent \* Rafa: My Story is a terrific sporting memoir, full of memorable anecdotes and stamped with the authority of a ghostwriter who earned the complete trust of his subject. It is hard to imagine how Nadal could have done any more to get the best out of his own raw material. And it is to Carlin's enormous credit that the book is a true reflection of the man, in every sense -- Ed Smith \* New Statesman \* --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Rafael Nadal was born in 1986 in Mallorca, Spain. Currently ranked #1 in the world, he has won 9 Grand Slam titles and a career "Golden Slam" all four majors plus a gold medal at the 2008 Olympics. He lives in Mallorca, Spain. John Carlin, originally from the UK, is currently a Senior International writer for El País, the world's leading Spanish-language newspaper. He wrote the book that became the feature film *Invictus*.

Rafa comes across as a pretty likable guy -as expected- but abundant insight in to his life is lacking. A bit heavy on match commentary -and I'm pretty tolerant of that- but after a while it got to be a grind. Some of the before-match Wimbledon discussion was interesting -actually taking us behind the scenes to a place most fans never see. More of that would have been great. Some of the info about his father was appreciated since he's so reserved in the player's box and leery of publicity. His father comes across as much more stable and savvy than the somewhat mercurial Uncle Tony. Rafa paints himself as a bit of a man-child but he's still pretty young. What would you expect? A fast and easy read but in the end a bit light on substance.

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 fledgling 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. In fact, according to him, the mental trauma he experienced due to his parent's separation was actually the root cause for most of his injuries during that time. In the final part of the book he also mentions his rather strange relationship with his uncle and coach - Toni. Though he gives a lot of credit to Toni for installing in him the fighting spirit of a gladiator and making him the tennis player he is now, he also mentions couple of incidents where he thinks Toni crossed the line. There are nuggets spread throughout book about their relationship and if you connect the dots you feel as if Nadal is only 'tolerating' Toni because of his gratitude towards Toni for making him what he is now. But again, that is only my interpretation. Overall, RAFA is an inspirational read. Through a living example the book tells that to succeed you have to make sacrifices, to succeed you need to have discipline and dedication, to succeed you have to fight till the last point. Nothing comes easy in this world, but if you put an honest effort, nothing is too difficult to achieve !

I appreciated the emphasis on home being a "safety net" for Rafa so his brain could remain free to focus on his goals. The clarity expressed regarding the push/pull relationship with Uncle Tony was accurate and insightful. At some point I hope (if not already), Rafa can have more independence, and even confidence, as it seems his uncle (from his own issues) has worked hard to stymie the possibility of over-confidence. The sweetness of his connection to his home island was evident. He is a strong role model of hard work and keeping your head on straight. Rafa will always be one of the top names of tennis; to read of his work ethic and humility was impressive. There is only one Rafa Nadal.

I love tennis and already read several biographies from top players like Sampras, Agassi, Federer. It's interesting to see how different players face the game and the lifestyle. I enjoyed this one as much as Sampras and Agassi, would put Federer (read more than one) one step below them because it's not autobiography. If you enjoy the game it's definitely a book to read from one of this generation masters. (I'm a Federer/Sampras fan so no bias here.)

This is among the best biographical books I have read in a long time. The book is beautifully written and presents starkly and poignantly the story of one of the best Tennis players in history - Rafael Nadal. The writing is insightful and the reader is carried along on a rare journey enabling a first hand view of the making of a remarkable athlete, and one of the greatest tennis players in history. One learns about challenges that could have been insurmountable for most, and the unique importance of family support and love that allowed these barriers to be overcome. I could not put this book down. I began reading it because I have long admired this humble tennis great and wanted to know more about his life and his development as a great tennis player. As I finished the book I was so happy to know that my admiration was not misplaced and that Rafael Nadal is among the select few who truly deserve to be called GREAT! It is an uplifting and inspirational book and I recommend it most highly and without reservation.

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