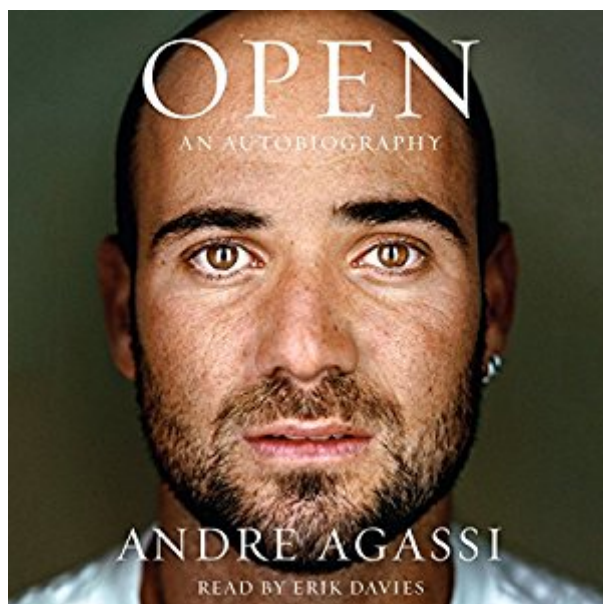


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# Open: An Autobiography



## Synopsis

From Andre Agassi, one of the most beloved athletes in history and one of the most gifted men ever to step onto a tennis court, a beautiful, haunting autobiography. Agassi's incredibly rigorous training begins when he is just a child. By the age of thirteen, he is banished to a Florida tennis camp that feels like a prison camp. Lonely, scared, a ninth-grade dropout, he rebels in ways that will soon make him a 1980s icon. He dyes his hair, pierces his ears, dresses like a punk rocker. By the time he turns pro at sixteen, his new look promises to change tennis forever, as does his lightning-fast return. And yet, despite his raw talent, he struggles early on. We feel his confusion as he loses to the world's best, his greater confusion as he starts to win. After stumbling in three Grand Slam finals, Agassi shocks the world, and himself, by capturing the 1992 Wimbledon. Overnight he becomes a fan favorite and a media target. Agassi brings a near-photographic memory to every pivotal match and every relationship. Never before has the inner game of tennis and the outer game of fame been so precisely limned. Alongside vivid portraits of rivals from several generations—Jimmy Connors, Pete Sampras, Roger Federer—Agassi gives unstinting accounts of his brief time with Barbra Streisand and his doomed marriage to Brooke Shields. He reveals a shattering loss of confidence. And he recounts his spectacular resurrection, a comeback climaxing with his epic run at the 1999 French Open and his march to become the oldest man ever ranked number one. In clear, taut prose, Agassi evokes his loyal brother, his wise coach, his gentle trainer, all the people who help him regain his balance and find love at last with Stefanie Graf. Inspired by her quiet strength, he fights through crippling pain from a deteriorating spine to remain a dangerous opponent in the twenty-first and final year of his career. Entering his last tournament in 2006, he's hailed for completing a stunning metamorphosis, from nonconformist to elder statesman, from dropout to education advocate. And still he's not done. At a U.S. Open for the ages, he makes a courageous last stand, then delivers one of the most stirring farewells ever heard in a sporting arena. With its breakneck tempo and raw candor, *Open* will be read and cherished for years. A treat for ardent fans, it will also captivate readers who know nothing about tennis. Like Agassi's game, it sets a new standard for grace, style, speed, and power. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

So you're thinking this might be one of those recently retired famous people books aren't you? One where a celebrity, or a Politician, or a sports star cranks out hundreds of pages of self-serving, history-correcting drivel in order to cash the big advance check. A book you can't even bring yourself to finish; better than a tranquilizer at bedtime. Well, this is certainly not that book. "Open" is a journey that I predict will stay with you for a very long time. It's a completely unexpected trip to places you've never been. I'm not one of those quasi-professional reviewers you see on . But this book practically made me write about it. Interestingly, Open starts not at the beginning and not quite at the end. Second round, US Open, 2006. Not the final match of Andre's career--but the one right before that. Against a competitor you'd never heard of before or since. The battle was against the guy across the net, and also Andre's hatred of tennis, his failing body, the demons that he harnessed to get through the unending heroic contest that seemed destined to continue until both just fell into a heap on the court. And it is so well told. After 20 pages, I knew that this was unlike any other biography I had ever read. Couldn't put it down. Couldn't stop thinking about it. Agassi dug deeper inside than most of us ever will have to, to get to core of what made him so powerful as a player and so conflicted as a person. It is all conspicuously real: The small moments, the outlandish triumphs and the friendships that sustained him and/or corrupted him. The gauntlet he had to run through to arrive at the balance and joy he has today. It's transformative.

Andre Agassi has written a 'tell-all' book about his life in tennis. And, it turns out, he hated tennis. That was a bigger shocker to me than the salacious fact that he was on 'crystal meth' for a period of time. J.R. Moehringer, the author of 'A Tender Bar' and a Pulitzer Prize winner for his writing was a co-author of this autobiography. Andre loved Moehringer's writing in 'The Tender Bar', and he is

correct, the man's writing and the book are excellent. This book, too, is very well written and is an exceptional read. Andre tells us that he started playing tennis at the age of 3 and by the age of 5 he was showing an aptitude for the game. He was pushed by his father-an obsessive man who pushed his son too far and too much. In fact his father felt that education was not necessary and a hindrance to his tennis practice. Andre could never tell his father how much he hated the game because it was Andre's responsibility to help his family, and that is what he did. He left school in the ninth grade, something that has bothered him his entire career. His goal was to achieve in tennis. He was enrolled in the Bollettien tennis camp, but it felt more like a prison than a camp. The academy, in Agassi's words, was "Lord of the Flies with forehands." In retaliation Andre started wearing earrings, grew his hair long and wore loud clothes. Thus his reputation was born. As his career started to flourish, Andre, tried to keep it all together. He was known as the flamboyant player, the real player. He played the best tennis players in the world, and he was one of the best. He had an eye for the ball, and the 'tell' of players when they were about to hit the big one.

We have all read the press and watched the news; the drug allegations, the "I hate tennis". Tennis fans aren't quite sure whether they should feel cheated for all the love and support they have given Andre, to me the book set things straight. Most of us look back at chapters of our lives and can identify with particularly unhappy periods. Andre kicks off the book with what was going through his head with the match against Baghdatis in the 2006 US Open. It is a blow by blow account of key parts of the match and a thought provoking glimpse into the mind and heart of a tennis player. He then goes straight into his childhood, the discomfort and unhappiness of being the child prodigy son of an obsessive father. There are weirdly honest stories - his grandmother tried to breastfeed him, very disturbing but a revelation of a dysfunctional upbringing. What seems to carry Andre through his childhood are friendships with his brother Phil and Perry who later becomes his manager. The importance of the childhood friendships are critical and from the way they are explained it is easy to understand why these friends are crucial figures for Andre. The critical friendship is that of his mentor/guide/life coach/surrogate father Gill Reyes. Andre is taken under his wing and treated with the love and respect a father should treat his son, you sense through the stories in the book that now they have met each other neither could really exist happily without the other. His marriage with Brooke Shields is dealt with candidly, many will buy this book to find out what celebrities do behind closed doors. Whereas I did think Brooke appeared superficial from some of the things mentioned here, I think it merely shows how fame affects people differently.

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