



# No Way Renee: The Second Half of My Notorious Life

*Renee Richards*

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In 1975, at the age of forty, Richard Raskind, a renowned eye surgeon and highly ranked amateur tennis player, "died," and Renée Richards was "born," in what was to become the most public and highly scrutinized sex reassignment to date. It was not until Renée Richards was discovered playing in an amateur tennis tournament that the world took notice. Extensive media coverage and criticism thrust Renée reluctantly into the spotlight, sparking an intense public debate over her private life. Now, at seventy-two, Richards looks back and speaks frankly about all aspects of her complicated and often notorious life in this eye-opening, thought-provoking memoir.

Richards' honest and compelling narrative explores the dichotomy between the successful life she lived as Dr. Richard Raskind, who seemed to have everything (devoted friends, a beautiful wife and son, a stellar record of academic and professional achievement, and outstanding athletic ability), and a secret life of struggle with a drive that could not be suppressed, even by years of psychotherapy and the force of a considerable will.

Richards takes readers through her difficult decision to undergo surgery and the complex mixture of relief and continued frustration that came with the realization of her new identity. Discussing life after her transformation, Richards candidly relates the details, trials, and pleasures of her romantic life as well as fascinating stories about her tennis career, including her experiences as Martina Navratilova's coach. She also provides an intimate account of her difficult but rewarding relationship with her rebellious son: runaway teenager, high-stakes Vegas gambler, karate champion, and entrepreneur. She describes the deterioration of a once-loving marriage and the challenges of reclaiming her place at the forefront of her demanding medical specialty.

Having lived as a woman almost as long as she lived as a man, Richards draws on a personal history that illuminates thirty years of remarkable change in society's attitude toward gender issues. Her absorbing and inspiring story, at once heartbreaking and uplifting, is a testimony to how far we have progressed in our ability to discuss and accept sexuality in all its iterations, as well as a reminder of how far we still must travel.

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