

## Carrie Soto is Back

Book review by Andera

My first words when I slammed this book shut, grinning were: “Taylor Jenkins Reid has done it again!” This was my third of her books, and I have to say, it was my favorite yet. Coming into the book, I knew I loved the faux-biographical documentary feel of Jenkins Reid’s books, having read *Daisy Jones and the Six* and *Malibu Rising* previously. However, I thought I would have a harder time connecting with this book, since I have never played tennis. The first couple pages proved me wrong. Carrie’s fierce, determined spirit immediately resonated with me, being a competitive athlete myself, and while the sports I have played are very different from tennis, the author did an excellent job of explaining the basic level of tennis knowledge needed to understand Carrie Soto’s athletic journey.

The story starts off in 1994, where our heroine, now retired, is watching the Championship match of the US Open with her father. In the match, rising tennis superstar Nicki Chan wins, matching the record that Carrie previously held for most Grand Slam singles titles. Carrie decides to come out of retirement, with her father’s coaching, and defend her standing as the best tennis player of all time. After this captivating first chapter, the book goes back in time to explain the points in Carrie’s childhood and in her career that led up to this point, all the compounding effort and sacrifices and years of practice that made her the sensational athlete she is. Afterward, the storyline jumps back to the present and takes the reader on the wild roller coaster that is Carrie Soto’s return to the world of professional tennis.

Carrie Soto has a unique point of view of her situation, given that her personality is unlike that of any other main protagonist I have read before. She is known in the tennis world as the *Battle Axe*, not only because of her talent and strength, but because of her ruthless and cold demeanor. Carrie struggles throughout the book coming to terms with the prospect of losing, being beaten out by someone, being lesser than someone. She does not make friends easily due to her cocky, brutally honest nature, but she has a heartwarming close relationship with her father. Javier Soto, former tennis star, raised Carrie on his own after the death of Carrie's mother shortly after she was born, and taught Carrie everything she knows about tennis. I thought it was sweet how he was able to have such a close relationship with Carrie both as her father and her coach, and to really understand her on a level that not even she herself could.

This book elicited very strong reactions from me. You can ask my mother, who walked past my room several times to exclamations of "YES," "Dude," and "What?! No way!" I am not the type of person to cry at a book, but if I was, I know I would be sobbing due to the sheer inspiration of this novel, paired with the fact that I did not want it to end. (Though the ending was *so good*.) Thank you, Taylor Jenkins Reid, for this literary masterpiece. I will be continuing to devour your books in the future.