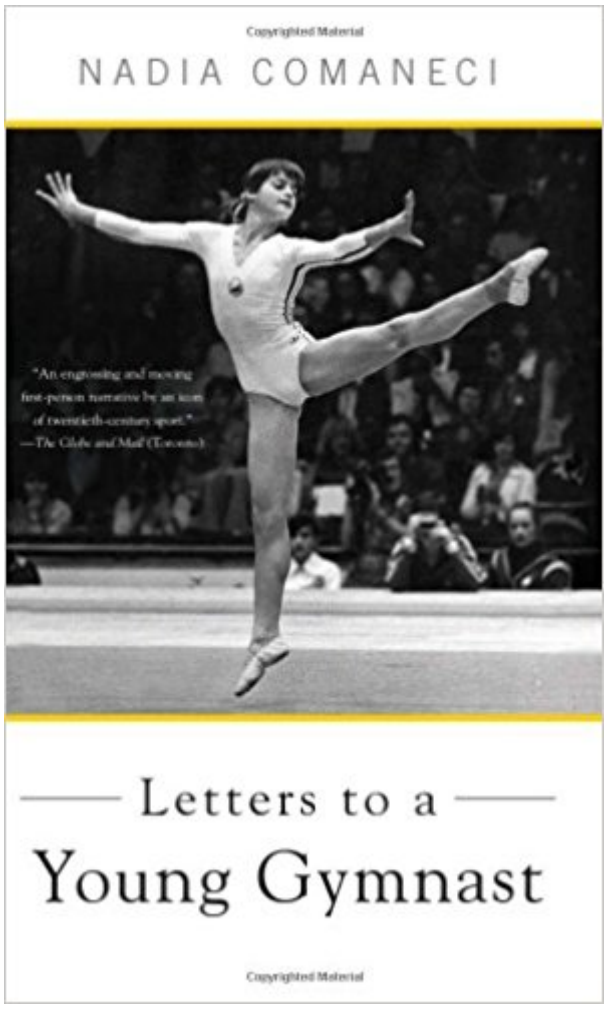
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Letters To A Young Gymnast



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Synopsis

In Letters to a Young Gymnast, Nadia Comaneci tells how she found the inner strength to become a world-class athlete at such a young age. Now a woman of tremendous poise and self-assurance, she offers unique insights into the mind of a top competitor. From how to live after you've realized your dream to the necessity of “a spirit forged with mettle,Ã¢â ¬Â• Comaneci's thoughts on athleticism and sacrifice are eye-opening.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although part of a mentoring series (Letters to a Young Lawyer; Letters to a Young Chef; etc.), this memoir is less about motivating aspiring gymnasts than justifying the author’s life choices. Romanian-born Comaneci took the sports world by storm when, at the age of 14, she was the first person in Olympic history to earn a perfect score in gymnastics. At the event she garnered several more medals. When the author recounts her early years with legendary coach Bela Karolyi and details how his intensive training requirements plus her own determination led to her success, the text is engrossing. Comaneci, however, devotes far too much space to discussing the controversies that dogged her career. She refutes the oft-repeated accusation that Karolyi abusively overworked his young gymnasts and further denies that she drank bleach when the Romanian government assigned her to another coach. Although Comaneci’s descriptions of her harsh life in Romania (although far easier than most) under dictator Ceausescu are compelling, and her decision to defect in 1989 completely understandable, she does not acknowledge that the man who facilitated her escape, Constantin Panait, was anything other than a personal manager. According to newspaper

reports at the time, Panait, married with four children, controlled her life and finances and was responsible for TV bookings where the gymnast appeared overweight and inappropriately dressed. More discussions about the sport and less defensiveness about mostly forgotten gossip would have strengthened this mentoring guide. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Born in 1961 in Onesti, Romania, Nadia Comaneci made sports history during the 1976 Olympic Games by scoring the first perfect “10.00Ã¢â ¬Â• in a gymnastics competition. Since defecting to the United States in 1989, she is an international spokesman for her sport as well as numerous charities. She lives in Norman, Oklahoma, with her husband, American gymnast Bart Conner.

Growing up as a gymnast, with Nadia as my idol, I was very interested and excited when coming across this book. Although the first half of the book, Nadia’s gymnastics career and accomplishments, was not new news for me, I became deeply engaged in the latter part of the book when Nadia spoke of life in Romania after gymnastics, defection, the United States, Canada etc. Being born into a Ukrainian culture and heritage here in the US, I was familiar with the communistic regime as Ukraine was also a communist state within the USSR, the nation and its people suffering greatly within this regime. Thus I was able to empathize and better appreciate Nadia’s situation. I was frustrated at times throughout the book because I would have liked to hear more detail or the "full story" in various situations that Nadia brings up. At times I felt like I was reading "cliff notes" to Nadia’s story, each chapter leaving me with more questions than the fulfillment of complete understanding. Nadia did mention in the beginning of her story that there would be details that she would leave out due to respect and confidentiality but I felt like there was a lot left out. For example, I was very eager to hear about how she re connected with Marta and Bela after all those years. Marta and Bela were is essence part of her family for the majority of her young life and she consistently mentioned them in the first half of the book yet after her defection to the US she barely mentions them at all. Why did she not reach out to them? What was the real story behind Constantin? What was her relationship with her father like? Perhaps all of these details would have made the book much too long or perhaps Nadia simply chooses not to share them. In all I appreciated learning more about Nadia but feel unfulfilled in getting the "full story."

This is a book, that, at least to me, gave me a true insight about Nadia. The part about the recurring

dream she has had for years gives so much information about her, more than statistics or stories about her triumphs. This is a brave and true book. It helps to know and understand how and why she became one of the greatest athletes of all times. Inspiring. A must book for all fathers who wonder if their children have a chance to make it to profesional levels in their sports. Like Nadie tells us, its something she was born with: her personality, her energy, her drive, it’s something that can’t be taught or forced, she was born with it.

Loved the book. It was an invaluable look at the hard work, close relationships, and troubled times in her native Romania that Nadia lived through. I was so engrossed that I finished the book in one sitting. She had me spellbound explaining what she went through when she escaped from Romania and the heartbreak of leaving her family behind. She has lived quite a life, and all ends well with her marriage to Bart Conner.

The book is pretty good but some of the content is not meant for a "young gymnast" due to some mature content. Luckily, I was reading the book to my eight year old and could easily skip over those parts and not change too much of what Nadia was trying to convey.

Excellent book! Learned so much I never knew before!! Nadia treats the people in her life with honesty and respect. Inspiring!!

Incredible story!!

Bought the book for an 11 year old and I loved reading it. Great story and well written. Everything i had hoped it would be and more.

The book started out very interesting, as you can tell that Nadia was writing this book for younger gymnasts. She starts out describing her early days in Romania & how she needed an outlet for her mischievousness and gymnastics turned out to be that outlet. However, mid-way through the book she mentions her relationship with Coach Bela Karolyi, but she hesitates to talk about how she felt about that relationship or her personal feelings about she felt what she was going through with him as her coach (especially after their defection to the U.S.). Rather, she leaves the reader to see the movie "Nadia" (which isn’t accurate regarding her relationship with him) or form their own thoughts of what ’might’ have happened. By the end, the book sort of falls apart when she starts to

concentrate more on her audience of a 'young gymnast' vs. her feelings about her life. I would've really liked to hear & SEE (for gosh sakes put some pictures in the book!) more about her personal feelings about how she felt growing up at each stage in her life vs. what has already been reiterated in movies.

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