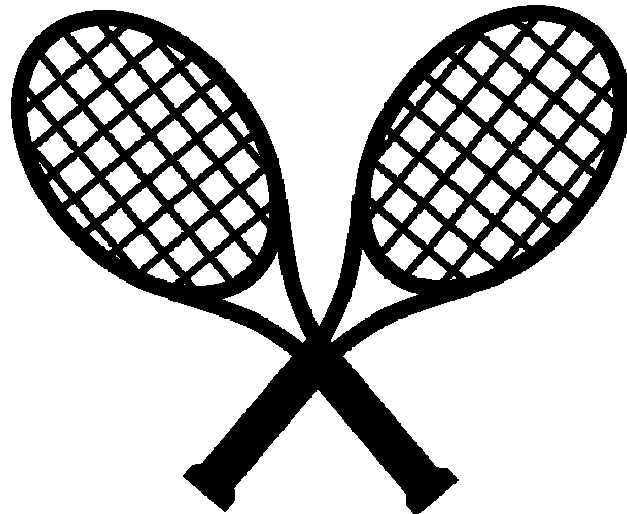

best of five



a tennis story collection
by serenade

disclaimer

This is a work of fiction. Although it contains references to actual persons, places, and events, their depiction is based solely on the author's imagination, and should not be implied as representing reality in any way.

credits

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tennis is not a game you play alone

Summary: Roger gets drunk. Rafa finds him.

Notes: Set after the Australian Open 2009.

* * *

Roger pushed open the access door with one hand, the other dangling the bottle of Penfolds Grange, and emerged onto the rooftop garden of the hotel. It was still oppressively hot; long past midnight, but the temperature had barely dipped. At least the place was deserted.

He wandered past potted palms and miniature fountains and white spotlights recessed into the ground. It was cooler near the perimeter, a slight breeze stirring the air. Roger leaned his elbows on the railing and looked out over the Melbourne skyline: lights tiling the office towers, lights pulsing along the roads, the black surface of the Yarra reflecting the neon glow of the city.

In the distance, Melbourne Park, its lights dimmed now that the carnival was over, the Australian Open done for another year. Where yesterday he had stood before fifteen thousand people, a hundred cameras in his face, completely unable to hold back his wrenching disappointment.

Now he had his privacy; but no tears came. Roger uncorked the bottle and took a long swig. Rich flavours rolled over his tongue, the liquor burning pleasantly, sliding smooth and warm down his throat. Blessed anaesthesia.

He knew that someday he would retire, same as he knew that someday he would die; it lay in the distant unimaginable future, impossibly far away. But if it galled him to be introduced as the world number two, how much worse would it be to slip to number three, number ten, number one hundred? Maybe it was time to

admit his deepest fears: that it was too late, he would never get it back, and this was all there would be.

And now at last it came, moisture pricking at his eyes, blurring the city lights into a misty orange haze. He drew in a long ragged breath.

“Roger?”

He knew that voice. The last person in the world he wanted to see right now, naturally. He blinked twice and turned. “Hello, Rafa.”

The new Australian Open champion stood at the entrance to the roof, the jacket of his suit knotted about his waist, tie hanging loose around his neck. His dress shirt was unbuttoned at the collar, its sleeves rolled to the elbow. He rocked on the balls of his feet, gazing at Roger in consternation. “What are you doing up here?”

Roger raised the bottle in a mock salute. “Getting drunk.” He leaned back against the railing and curved a sardonic smile at Rafa, but the other man did not return it. Instead, he stepped forward cautiously, as though Roger were a startled deer that might bolt at any second. No need, Roger thought, there was nowhere he could go.

Rafa closed the distance between them and wrapped an arm around his shoulders. “You should not be out here alone.” He drew Roger back towards the centre of the roof, glancing behind once. Roger allowed himself to be guided, over to a bench beneath a trellis heavy with jasmine. “Are you okay?”

Roger didn’t have the energy to pretend. Instead, he said, “You should be celebrating.”

Rafa shook his head. “Too much celebrating already. I need air.” He sank down on the bench beside Roger, stretching his long legs out in front of him.

“Would you like a drink?” Roger said, proffering the bottle.

Rafa hesitated, then accepted. He tilted it back for a polite sip, then lowered the bottle with a choked gasp. “This is good!”

“It should be,” Roger said. “It’s nearly twenty years old.” It was the kind of vintage you saved for special occasions. He didn’t say why he had bought it; Rafa could probably guess.

They passed the bottle back and forth for a while in silence, Roger growing pleasantly muzzy-headed. But Rafa kept casting him sideways glances, until Roger finally said, “What is it?”

With absolute seriousness, Rafa said, “Do you hate me?”

“No,” Roger said. “Well, maybe a little.” He smiled, but Rafa looked stricken. “It’s a joke,” he said gently, tousling Rafa’s hair.

“It’s not funny.”

Roger let his hand fall. “What do you want me to say, Rafa? I’m not perfect. On court or off court.”

Rafa looked like he wanted to respectfully disagree.

“Stop worrying about it,” Roger added. “You played better than me. You deserved the win.”

“I mean what I said before. You are still a great champion—”

“There is only one champion in a grand slam. There is only one number one in the world. And we both know that is you.” The words came out sharper than he intended. He rubbed his face with both hands. “I’m sorry. I’m not fit company right now. You should go.”

Rafa shook his head. “Stop asking me to leave. Or I start thinking you do hate me.”

Roger huffed a broken laugh. He leaned back against the bench, leaves rustling against his neck, shirt clinging to his skin with sweat. Rafa's profile was backlit, outlined in gold like a king on the coins of old. Not a kid anymore, Roger thought.

"Three years," he said. At Rafa's quizzical look, "As number two. How did you stand it?"

"You were better—"

"Forget the line," he interrupted. "I'm not some journalist. Don't tell me you never wished that guy would get out of your way. Never wondered what it would be like if he wasn't around."

Rafa met his gaze, dark eyes unreadable. "I would rather lose to you," he said, "than win everything in a world where you never exist."

Time stopped beating. Roger could not look away, even as he was sure everything showed on his face. His throat tightened, like he was back on that podium again.

Rafa leaned in close, breath warm. "You are special. Always." He touched Roger's cheek, almost shyly, then drew away. "Been following you for a long time. Had to climb a long, long way to reach you."

"Well, you're here," Roger said, mesmerised. He had to resist the impulse to trace his fingers over that spot. "What now?"

"We keep climbing together, no?" With a brilliant smile, Rafa stood. Reached out a hand. After a moment, Roger clasped it, and the other man pulled him up. They stood facing each other, not releasing that grip, exactly eye to eye. The same calluses ridged both their hands.

"I will see you in Paris?" Rafa said. It was almost a statement.

“You will.” And all of a sudden Roger could imagine it, the landscape of the year unrolling ahead of him, game after beautiful game. Because this was what he did, this was why he was. And the future was full of changes, but now he wanted to see it very much.

“Good,” Rafa said. “I’ll be waiting.”

- *fin* -

red dust

Summary: Roger has a Rafa complex.
Notes: Set during the French Open 2009.

* * *

Roger stands riveted in disbelief, staring down at centre court, as the hushed silence of the crowd explodes into uproarious babble. They will talk of nothing else for seven days. The king of clay has been dethroned, barely halfway through the tournament he has owned for years.

Rafa sinks onto the bench, tiredness in every line. For one wild moment, Roger thinks about leaping down to speak to him; wonders what he could say that isn't hopelessly inadequate. *Better luck next time?* Four months ago, this man had hugged him as he wept inconsolably over the loss of his own title. But Rafa isn't weeping. He stows his gear, hefts his bag, and walks through the other players, for the first time exiting past them all.

There will be no final between the two of them this year.

For days, the vision has haunted Roger, playing a nightmare loop in his skull—that once again, they will meet on the clay of Roland Garros, and once again, Rafa will methodically take him apart.

But now, as a terrible hope blooms inside him for the first time, he wonders why it feels like a pillar of his world is shaken.

* * *

Rafa is a paradox.

Off the court, he is a modest young man, who still ducks his head shyly whenever Roger pays him a compliment; whose earnest smile

ignites a warm glow in the pit of Roger's stomach. A good kid grown into a thoughtful man, humble in victory, gracious in defeat.

But he is a monster on the court, all power and sinew, relentless and implacable, his eyes looking right through Roger as though he is only another point to play. Everything Roger does is not enough, all his serves returned with lightning, all his shots answered with thunder. Rafa is everywhere he needs to be, as though impossible calculations are rolling through his head, instinct deeper than thought, and all Roger can do is move in answer.

* * *

Roger stands under the pounding blast of the shower, letting the spray flatten his curls to his scalp and rinse away the gritty sweat coating his skin. The clay dust gets everywhere: under his fingernails, into his pores, even in the very air he breathes. Persistent. Pervasive.

He almost lost it today against Haas, two sets down before he turned the match around. He can't afford to lose. Not when he has a clear run at the cup.

Sampras never conquered Roland Garros. Nor has Roger been able to claim it thus far. Always it has eluded him. Always the same man has stepped into his path.

But this time will be different. He can do it. Silence the naysayers once and for all.

Roger has a chance, now that Rafa is out of the fight.

He leans his forehead against the cool tile.

Roger has a chance, only because Rafa is out of the fight.

* * *

Roger steps onto centre court for the final, the dazzle of cameras flashing. He waves. He smiles.

Three times he has reached this point. Three times he has been beaten back.

He looks over at his opponent, who stands ready, determined not to make this easy. For the first time in forever, the man he is facing across the net is not Rafa. He is seized with an odd sensation of displacement, as though he has stepped onto the wrong court. And somewhere else, Rafa is waiting for him.

Roger pushes the thought away.

He grips his racquet, waiting for the first serve.

* * *

The ball arcs towards him. Hits the net. Match point.

The crowd roars.

Roger falls to his knees, laughing and crying.

There are no words that can compass this.

* * *

The aftermath is a blur of light and noise. People are congratulating him, and he is thanking them, hopefully in words appropriate and intelligible. He is still floating on air, accelerating towards the moon.

This is the golden moment. All doubts dissolve, all hurts fade, as he proves himself worthy of playing the perfect game. No one can catch him, nothing can take this away.

Then he sees Rafa, advancing towards him. The whole world goes into freeze frame, except for the two of them.

“Congratulations,” Rafa says, clasping his hand. “Maybe we will play here next year, no?” He smiles, dimpling.

But Roger feels ice at his throat.

- fin -

a year is a long time in tennis

Summary: Rafa finds out who he is.
Notes: Set during the Australian Open 2010.

* * *

The fireworks woke Rafa.

He lay in the dark, listening to the explosions, stirred to uneasy memory, like a bright afterimage etched against his eyelids.

He threw off the sheets and padded out into the dim hotel corridor. Without knowing why, he took the stairs to the roof.

A gust of cool air met him as he pushed open the door to the rooftop garden. The fireworks threw shadows from palms and ferns, bursting in crimson and gold across the Melbourne skyline, as the Australians celebrated their national day.

Someone was already there, at the edge of the roof, watching the fireworks and their reflection in the river. Rafa nodded to the familiar silhouette, haloed against the sky.

“Hello, Roger.”

“Hello, Rafa,” the other man said. “I’ve been waiting for you to show up.”

“Waiting for me?” How strange. Rafa looked down at himself, dressed only in pyjama pants, and realised. “I’m still dreaming, aren’t I?”

“If you say so,” Roger said, amused.

Rafa drew up alongside, and leaned his bare arms upon the railing. The fireworks shot from the tops of towers, bright and brilliant, then fell like flowers from the sky.

“You saw the match?” Rafa asked.

“I saw the match.”

They watched the skyshow in silence.

Rockets rose, whistling and shattering. Rafa would never hear that sound again without remembering. Sitting alone during the time out, the fireworks exploding overhead, as the ache flared in his joints, and dread sank in him like a stone. Walking across the wide court, under the eyes of the crowd, to surrender the match to his opponent.

“Sorry I won’t be there on Sunday,” he said at last.

“You keep missing our rendezvous.” Gently chiding. “What should I do? It’s been almost a year.”

Since they had met in a grand slam.

Since his dizzying victory here.

One year ago, Rafa had been number one in the world. He had Olympic gold, he held three grand slam titles, and he was chasing the fourth and final. He stood on top of the mountain, with nowhere else to climb.

One year on, he had lost that ranking, lost those titles, and the mountain was crumbling beneath his feet. Sidelined with injury, as others overtook him without a backward glance.

“Looks like you’re going to have some new rivals,” Rafa said.

“Are you really going to let that happen?”

Their eyes met. It was a challenge. But Rafa had no answer this time.

The silence stretched. The horizon grew dark as the fireworks faded.

“Ah. Looks like the show is over,” Rafa said. He suddenly longed to sit down. He caught sight of a bench beneath a trellis hung with jasmine; he made his way over, Roger agreeably accompanying him. Rafa eased himself down, trying not to betray any stiffness.

“How are the knees?” Roger asked anyway.

“Not so good. Not like before.”

He did not say, maybe never again like before. Unspoken fear, too terrible to voice, although he heard talk, everywhere.

They had said the same of Roger this time last year: this was it, he was finished, he would never win another slam. And look at him now. Rafa clung to that thought.

“Things will get better,” Roger said, as though reading his mind. “You have many more tournaments to play.”

The echoes of Rafa’s own words drifted back from last year to haunt him, from when they stood on the podium after the final: *Remember, you are a great champion, you are one of the best of history.* And then, for only the two of them to hear: *Don’t take it too hard, it’s not a big deal.* And Roger had smiled through his tears and said, *I know.*

It seemed like the height of presumption now, that he had ever imagined mere words could fix things.

“Well?” Roger said, still watching him. “Do you want me to tell you it’s not over? Is that what you need to hear?”

Roger didn't need to tell him. He didn't need to say anything. He stood there as living testament, that you could climb back out of the abyss, that you could pass through despair into glory. Rafa had followed him up the mountain; now he had to follow him through the valley. There was no path he walked that this man had not walked before him.

How did you do it? Rafa wanted to ask. How did you get through this?

He had believed he could conquer the world through sheer force of will. But there was a fine distinction between willpower and delusion, when you came up against the hard limits of reality, and the truth of what the human body would endure. You could bend the laws of physics, but you couldn't break them, and sooner or later, they would exact their toll.

"I am not the same as you," he said out loud. "My game is not the same. Maybe the future for me is also not the same."

Roger cast him an acute look. "What if that was true? If you couldn't play anymore. What would you do then?"

"I don't know." *Home*, his brain supplied. *You would go home*. His dream, someday, was the boat: sailing the island he had loved all his life, blue water below and blue sky above. But that was for when he retired. He was twenty three years old.

"Tell me," Roger said, intent, "who is Rafael Nadal?"

"A tennis player," he said without hesitation.

"Mm," Roger said. "Do you remember a year ago?"

"Always." It was at once so close and so far away.

"The world will remember the man who won that tournament," Roger said quietly. "But what I remember is the man who spoke those words of kindness to me afterwards."

Slowly, he lifted his hand towards Rafa, so as not to startle him. “Rafael Nadal is not here—” tracing his bicep—“or here—” touching his knee—“but here—” laying a hand on his heart. “This is who Rafael Nadal is. And this is what will last forever.”

Rafa saw himself reflected in Roger’s eyes, and wondered what the other man saw there. “You think so?” he managed. His heart thudded so wildly he was sure Roger could feel it.

“I know so.”

With a tiny smile, Roger drew his hand away and clapped Rafa on the shoulder. “Go get some sleep.”

“I’m not a baby.” But Rafa stood and stretched anyway, fighting off a yawn.

He was halfway to the door when he remembered something. “Roger.”

“Yes?”

“Good luck for Sunday.”

Roger smiled back, and said, “I wish it was with you.”

* * *

The sun woke Rafa.

He lay blinking in the light, and pressed his palm to his heart.

- *fin* -

sun king

Summary: Viva la vida.

Notes: Set during Wimbledon 2010.

* * *

Midsummer in England is brilliant blue sky above these hallowed green lawns. But Rafa, tugging on his sneakers in the locker room, has only lead in his stomach; nothing to do with the match he is about to play, and everything to do with the match Roger has just finished.

No. The match Roger has just lost.

Rafa already knows what the press will say, as swift to tear down as they are to raise up. He cannot be thinking of Roger now, he tells himself, when he has his own hungry young opponent to face. But his thoughts keep spiralling back, drawn by compulsion as inevitable as gravity.

Rafa had thought it would always be them, playing beautiful tennis together, spurring each other closer to perfection.

But maybe Roger has never seen it that way. Maybe what he sees is the future rising up to obliterate the past.

* * *

From the time Rafa chose tennis, Roger has always been there.

Soaring across the court with surpassing grace, striking each forehand with immaculate skill. His name emblazoned upon the trophies and plaques; his face adorning the magazines with that enigmatic smile. Moving relentlessly through the tournaments like

the sun across the sky, conquering titles with the seasons, felling records with the years.

Rafa cannot imagine tennis without Roger: the man who has dominated it for a decade, who has defined it for a generation. And yet once, there was a world before him; and someday, there will be a world beyond him.

But Rafa cannot imagine it; it is alien territory, as foreign as the far side of the moon.

* * *

They first met in Miami, Rafa just seventeen, completely tongue-tied at being introduced to the number one in the world. But Roger had smiled at him kindly and clasped his hand in a warm grip, and Rafa had been stunned to find he was a real person after all. Hoped wistfully that Roger would remember his name.

Then Rafa had beaten him, in straight sets, and Roger had looked stunned too.

* * *

Three times Rafa has played on the grass of Wimbledon. Three times he has reached the final. Three times he has met Roger there.

Never anyone else.

Now he feels like the last man standing, on an abandoned battlefield.

* * *

Rafa finishes knotting his shoelaces with a firm yank. He rises to his feet, shoulders his bag, and strides to the exit.

Runs right into Roger.

They almost bump noses in the doorway. Rafa backpedals so fast he nearly falls over his own feet; Roger steadies him with a hand to his waist.

“I’m sorry,” Rafa blurts.

Roger steps aside, out of the way. Summer sweat still sheens his brow, but his face is perfectly composed. That only makes it harder. Rafa is at a loss for what to say.

“I’m sorry,” he says again, and he truly means it. Roger only shrugs.

“Well. It looks like only one of us has a shot at that trophy now.” His tone is light. His eyes betray him.

Rafa wants to say everything to him, but there is no time. He has to get to his own match in minutes.

They have spent eternal hours facing each other on the court, as daylight deepens to dusk, and the skies revolve overhead. But they have never shared close conversations of the heart. Sometimes it seems like all they have are brief moments like passing shots.

“It was never about the trophies,” Rafa says. “My goal was always you.”

He thinks Roger widens his eyes, just for a moment, before his expression falls back into place. Rafa wonders, not for the first time, how much Roger knows.

But Roger only says, “And here you are.” He looks at Rafa, closely, not the same way he usually does, with wry humour and easy warmth, but as though reading every heartbeat ravelled in his bones. Finally, he runs a hand through Rafa’s hair, thumb brushing his forehead like a benediction. “Go on, they’re waiting for you.”

They can already hear the crowd, roaring in anticipation.

“You’re playing Soderling next?” Roger says.

“Yes.” Soderling. Who had, shockingly, dethroned Rafa at Roland Garros last year. And even though Rafa had returned to vanquish him and reclaim his title, the man remains a shadow, tirelessly dogging his steps. Challenging him wherever he turns.

Sometimes Rafa has uneasy dreams.

Roger gives Rafa an ironic smile. “Good luck.”

- fin -

love is not a zero sum game

Summary: Rafa wants to meet Roger again on court.

Notes: Set during the Australian Open 2011.

* * *

“Come in,” Roger said, opening his hotel suite door wider. “Are you sure you should be on your feet?”

“The doctors say I will be fine. I just wanted to say goodbye.” Rafa hobbled inside, and promptly trod on something lumpy that almost sent him hurtling onto his face.

He was saved by Roger’s quick grab of his shoulder, steadying him. “Are you okay?”

The lethal object turned out to be a teddy bear, whose fluffy head Rafa had squashed flat. Horrified, he tried to fix it. Roger laughed at his dismay. “Relax, it’s survived worse.” He patted it back into shape. “Sorry about the mess. I wasn’t expecting visitors.”

“It’s okay,” Rafa said, feeling like a fool. “Where are the girls?”

“At the aquarium with their mother.”

“Oh! I went there too. To see the penguins.”

Roger smiled. “Where do you think they got the idea?”

As Rafa limped inside, Roger moved ahead of him, sweeping up an obstacle course of stuffed animals and building blocks. It was strange to see him in disordered surroundings, clutching an armful of toys. Rafa twitched a smile, and Roger grinned back, as if aware how incongruous he looked. “Make yourself comfortable. I’ll get you a drink.”

Rafa sank onto the couch gratefully—discovering another building block behind the cushions—and stretched out his legs in front of him. The glass coffee table held a bowl of Lindt chocolates and two coasters marked by coffee rings from a fortnight of breakfasts.

Rafa wondered what he was still doing here in Melbourne. He had wanted to apologise for not reaching the final, although he didn't know if Roger honestly wanted to face him, despite what he said in the interviews. He had planned to congratulate Roger, to wish him well, to show he could be mature about it being someone else on that day.

But he had hesitated too long, and now Roger was out too, his aggressive new tactics not finding their rhythm against Novak. And now Roger would be going home, to Switzerland, and they had not had the chance to play. Another grand slam gone, from the finite store they had left.

“What's wrong?” Roger had returned, a glass of cold orange juice in each hand.

“Nothing!” Rafa smiled, too brightly, and babbled something about the weather.

Roger quirked an eyebrow, but allowed Rafa to divert the conversation. So they chatted about the weather, and the food, and the sights, while Rafa longed to ask the real question.

Are you sorry it isn't us? Are you sorry it isn't me?

Rafa could not tell, even though Roger sat only inches away. Here was a man who no longer held any of the grand slam titles. But he looked as confident and assured as ever. A king who needed no crown. Or maybe a man who no longer had anything to prove.

What was there left to prove? Roger could retire tomorrow, with glory unmatched.

Rafa was afraid Roger would retire tomorrow. He had a whole new life waiting for him now.

Things were changing. Had changed. There were two men in the final, who were neither of them.

Roger's phone rang. He smiled apologetically. "Ah, excuse me. I'll be right back." He wandered into the kitchenette, talking amiably. It sounded like Swiss-German.

Rafa should make his farewells and go. He had already taken up enough of Roger's time. He wasn't even sure what he wanted from this. He stood, but his bad leg wobbled and banged against the coffee table, spilling his orange juice all over the glassy surface.

Rafa swung his head around frantically for something to mop it up. Through the bedroom door, he spotted a box of tissues on the nightstand, atop a pile of books and papers. He stumbled over and grabbed the whole box, his hip brushing a manila folder. It slipped from the nightstand. Rafa fumbled for it too late; it hit the carpet, scattering papers everywhere.

This was not his day. Rafa bent forward to clean up.

His own face stared back at him.

It was a photo from the French Open: Rafa on red clay, frozen in midswing, eyes dark with concentration.

Heart thumping, he crouched down, sorting through the papers. Newspaper clippings. Press photos. Interview transcripts. All of him. His eye was drawn to one article with an entire paragraph circled in red pen. As he began to read, he recognised his own words:

When I was young, I always had this dream: I was at the bottom of a huge mountain and I was looking at the top. When I beat Roger Federer in January, in Melbourne, in the final of the Australian Open, I felt an animal

excitement. But afterwards, I felt an indescribable emptiness, as if I had no more purpose. To me, Federer is still the number one in the world. I want to meet him again on court. I know he can beat me.

Rafa remembered that interview, trying to give voice to the strange ache inside him. He had never read it after, had not realised how much of his heart he had poured upon the page.

“Rafa?” Roger stood in the doorway, phone dangling from one hand. Rafa scrambled upright, face heating.

“I’m sorry. It was an accident—”

“It’s okay.” Roger came forward and gathered up the papers. “I shouldn’t leave these things lying around.”

He smiled, casually, and Rafa wondered if this was normal, that maybe of course Roger kept a secret dossier on every player in the top twenty. Maybe everyone did it.

There was one photo of them together at the net, at Wimbledon, the first year they had played there. Before Rafa had started seizing the titles from Roger. The Rafa in the photo was grinning from ear to ear, delighted even to have lost to his hero. The Roger in the photo smiled back with casual affection. Rafa remembered those golden days well. Evidently Roger did too.

“I never even wanted a rival, you know?” he said, conversationally, as though he wasn’t crushing Rafa’s heart into tiny pieces. “All I ever wanted was to play great tennis.”

“You do,” Rafa blurted. “You are still the best.”

“You always say that,” Roger said.

“I always mean it.” And he had said too much, surely; he would plough open a chasm between them, full of awkward silences. But Roger only regarded him thoughtfully.

“Did you know,” Roger said slowly, “I came here ready to beat you. I changed my game, for you. I found a new coach, for you. I’m a different player now from before. Because of you.” His fingers brushed the name lettered upon the folder. He smiled.

Rafa could not speak. There were things that had never been spoken, things that Rafa did not know how to say, even had his English been perfect. But maybe some things needed no words; tennis was a language that crossed borders, like mathematics, like music.

“Next time,” Rafa said, heart beating like a wild bird. “I’ll get better soon, for next time.”

“Good,” Roger said. “I’m counting on it.”

- *fin* -

afterword

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are professional tennis players engaged in a storied rivalry that many consider to be among the greatest in tennis history.

~ "Federer–Nadal rivalry", *Wikipedia*

One is perhaps the greatest tennis player who ever lived. The other is the only man who rivals him, but who still reveres him as the greatest ever.

And this is what fascinates me about their dynamic.

These stories were written over a timespan of two years. They begin with the Australian Open in January 2009, and end with the Australian Open in January 2011.

They were two turbulent years. Both men suffered losses, endured injury, and faced negative speculation about their futures, as well as undergoing upheavals in their personal lives. Both men also achieved the greatest victories of their careers.

These small stories are my own humble efforts at charting their journey and expressing what their tennis makes me feel.

Serenade
June 2011

best of five

a tennis story collection
by serenade

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