



Lay the Favorite: A Memoir of Gambling

Beth Raymer

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“Beth Raymer’s crackling, hilarious memoir ricochets through the gambling underworld in Las Vegas, and is peopled with all manner of lovable wack-jobs, none of whom is quite as wacky—or lovable—as Raymer herself.”—*Marie Claire*

Beth Raymer waited tables at a dive in Las Vegas until a customer sent her to see Dink, of Dink Inc., one of the town’s biggest professional sports gamblers. Dink needed a right-hand man—someone who would show up on time, who had a head for numbers, and who didn’t steal. Beth got the job.

Lay the Favorite is the story of Beth’s years in the high-stakes, high-anxiety world of sports betting—a period that saw the fall of the local bookie and the birth of the freewheeling, unregulated offshore sports book, and with it the elevation of sports betting in popular culture. As the business explodes, Beth rises from assistant to expert, running an offshore booking office in the Caribbean. As the men around her succumb to their vices—money, sex, drugs, gambling—Beth improbably emerges with her integrity intact, wiser, sharper, nobody’s fool. A keen and compassionate observer of the adrenaline-addicted roguish types who become her mentors, her enemies, her family, Beth Raymer depicts an insanely colorful world teeming with pathos and ecstasy.

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“Candid, smart, funny, wild and crazy.”—*Elle*

“Raymer gleefully shatters the myth of the modern gambler. . . . Seduced by her stories, we long for this strange, sleazy and alluring landscape.”—*Los Angeles Times*

“[Raymer depicts] a sordid, florid microworld lurching along the edge of society, not to mention legality. . . . She never condescends or indulges in reality-show caricature; she finds charm in the charmless, a point of light in the most lost of souls.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

“*Lay the Favorite* reads more like a novel than a memoir. The rich characters are drawn in depth, yet simply and honestly.”—*The Wall Street Journal*

“Entertaining (and often quite funny) . . . a delight to read.”—*The New Yorker*

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