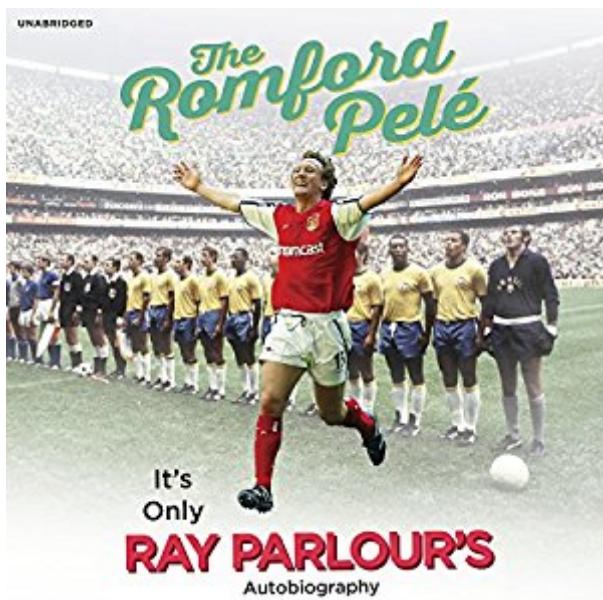


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The Romford Pelé: It's Only Ray Parlour's Autobiography



Synopsis

Ooh, ah, Ray Parlour! Nicknamed the Romford Pele for his solid but unglamorous image, Ray Parlour is one of the most well-loved Arsenal players of the last few decades. A loyal club servant for over 14 years (1992-2007), he is revered among the Arsenal faithful for his down-to-earth Essex charm, his mischievous sense of humour and his hardworking performances on the pitch. Often in the shadows of his flashier teammates, he didn't have the flair of a Pires or an Henry, but he worked tirelessly to become an integral part of many of George Graham's and Arsene Wenger's greatest sides, including the Invincibles of 2004. In this wonderfully funny and candid autobiography, full of side-splitting stories, Parlour looks back fondly on his life and career. From the all-day drinking sessions and banter of the Tony Adams years to the antics he got up to with his more cultured continental teammates, teaching Thierry Henry cockney rhyming slang and Dennis Bergkamp how to play golf, this is a portrait of a man who was as loved as much for his personality as for his often underrated talent. From his days as a schoolboy working on market stalls to playing alongside the world's finest players in the Champions League, it is also the rags-to-riches story of a career that spanned enormous change in British football, the likes of which may not be seen again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A funny and sometimes hysterical look back at a fine career. Thanks for the memories Ray!

A fun read for all fans of EPL. Fortunately he was able to conquer the drink.

It's only ray parlour...what more needs to be said?

Firstly I have to say that I am neither an Arsenal supporter nor particularly a fan of Ray Parlour. I do however love my sport autobiographies which is why I wanted to read this book. I also do like listening to him these days as a pundit/commentator/presenter on TALKSport. So, this biography is pretty similar to the majority I have read. He does jump about a little in time but it is pretty much chronological in nature. He goes through his early days, his apprenticeship and what they had to do back in the days. Continues on through the George Graham era and then the Arsene Wenger time bringing up nicely to current day. Personal life is obviously mentioned, he comes across as pretty big on family and he is quite frank in places especially regarding the high profile divorce and aftermath of that. I would have to say though that the majority of the book does mostly focus around the football and social side of things. The book is full of anecdotes detailing shenanigans - remember that these were the days when the football drinking culture is high and there are several amusing stories involving Merson and Adams. As I am very familiar with his voice, occasionally whilst reading, I was hearing it read in that very distinctive voice. I did find that quite a few of the later stories did fall a bit flat for me. There was all the build up and then, at the end, they kind of fizzled out. Maybe that's cos I am not a fan. Dunno! At the end of the book, there is a good section where he has selected teams of variously themed favourite players with explanations for inclusion. I agree with some, others notsomuch. But hey, I support Villa so, what do I know! One really good reason for reading this book would be the descriptions of life as a footballer in that era. The pay, the work rate, the drinking culture; all things that have really changed these days. It really is eye opening to see what people like him got paid then compared to if they were playing these days. All in all, it is a good sports autobiography. I do feel however that Parlour/Arsenal fans would probably get more out of reading it than just fans of the game due to the balance between life and sport as depicted. I received a free ARC of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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