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A Few Words About the Author

Marek Richert, born in Gdańsk, Poland, on January 6, 1986. Son of Henryk Richert and Grażyna Richert. That day, Poland was hit by the winter of the century — there was so much snow that neither cars nor trams could move. My mom was supposed to give birth to me a week earlier, but I was in no hurry to come into this world. Honestly, I didn't want to be here at all — but fate had other plans.

For the first year, my parents went through hell with me. My umbilical cord fell off in such a way that the wound wouldn't heal, so I cried constantly, driving my parents insane. Later, I had trouble sleeping — I'd stay up until 1 a.m., 2 a.m., sometimes even 4 a.m. Instead of helping, I made their lives harder. But apparently, my dad really wanted a son — and I was his fourth attempt. So, when I finally arrived, he celebrated for two straight months with his buddies.

As soon as I started talking, I bombarded my mom with weird questions — why is a giraffe called a giraffe and not something else? When will I die? Is my dad really my dad, or was I switched at the hospital? How could someone so wild, like Genghis Khan, be my father? I asked those questions at the age of five.

I have three sisters. Apparently, the two oldest were outraged when they found out my mom was pregnant with me — they thought it was embarrassing at her age (she was 36 at the time). My youngest sister was 11, the middle one 13, and the oldest 15. Apart from embarrassment, they were also worried there wouldn't be enough money for their clothes anymore — a serious issue, apparently requiring an abortion.

I got my revenge on the oldest one when she was changing my diaper — I knocked her glasses off and peed in her face. To this day, she remembers that moment. Fair payback for trying to get me aborted.

I owe the most to my youngest sister, Karina. She taught me how to whistle, snap my fingers, roll my tongue, ride a bike, play ping pong, play soccer, and helped me with math and so much more. My middle sister taught me how to sketch, shade, and color using an unusual but beautiful technique.

The oldest one, well...she gave me some paper rolls from her accounting job, and I'd make them into long fingers or claws.

Introduction

I'm writing this book for several reasons — first, to leave something behind for my kids and loved ones. Second, I wanted to document the many unusual, crazy experiences I've had. They're all true. Most of my friends, when we talk, rarely have interesting stories to tell. Maybe a handful of anecdotes, but that's it. Meanwhile, I've got well over a hundred — and if I remembered everything, I'm sure it would be closer to two hundred.

I can't say my life has ever been boring. It constantly surprises me, pulling me away from routine or peace.

I'm also an inventor, raising funds for my projects, so every purchased copy of this book supports me and my inventions. My projects are meant to improve life for people around the world.

The chapters aren't in chronological order. The very first story changed me forever — from a crying, emotional child into someone tough and stubborn. As I always say — every cloud has a silver lining. But I wouldn't recommend my method of character building to anyone.

The Wedding

Let's start with the event that had a huge impact on me — the day after my oldest sister Aneta's wedding. I was six years old, a scrawny kid with a bloated belly, like one of those malnourished children from Ethiopia. My sister used to make fun of me for that, which made me start doing sit-ups every day.

The whole wedding took place at my parents' house. Apparently, my dad drank and danced all night. In the morning, for some reason, he tried to catch me. I could tell from his insane stare — like the wide-eyed look of a psychopath — that something was wrong.

It started in my mom's living room. My two oldest sisters were cleaning up plates and saw my dad chasing me around the table. They didn't say a word to my mom. Just before he caught me, I saw their guilty, downcast faces — they wanted this to happen.

When he finally grabbed me by the throat, he lifted me up to the ceiling, choking me. I couldn't scream — his grip was too tight. I peed myself from fear. If my cousins, who were in the next room, hadn't intervened, I wouldn't be here today. I remember seeing my sisters handing plates to my mom in the kitchen, not saying a word. Only when my cousins ran to get her did she step in.

My neck was cut, and I was bleeding.

The next day, I kept wondering — how could someone who's supposed to love and protect you try to kill you? What kind of heartless monster does that?

But I wasn't scared of him. I swore to myself that I'd train and one day beat him. I would never let anyone make me feel so helpless again.

There was no way my parents would pay for martial arts or self-defense classes — they always said it was a waste of money. Food was the only priority.

Martial Arts

So I had to train on my own, using books and VHS tapes. I had movies with Jackie Chan, *Enter the Dragon* with Bruce Lee, and *Karate Kid*. I knew *Enter the Dragon* so well I could tell you which kick or punch was coming up in every minute.

I practiced two hours every day — 100 push-ups, 200 sit-ups, 200 squats, and stretching to improve my kicks. I shadowboxed, imagining opponents attacking me, figuring out how to block, counter, and strike back.

Terror

My family was my mom, my youngest sister Karina, my older sisters Marieta and Aneta, and my father — a workaholic with the soul of Genghis Khan, loud, short-tempered, but strangely never swearing.

He came home drunk four to five times a week, and if he didn't pass out immediately, chaos followed. Sometimes we had to flee the house.

One day, during one of his drunken rages, he tried to throw our two-meter fridge off the balcony. We often had to sit on park benches until he either passed out or sobered up. Sometimes until midnight. When we returned, my sister had to climb in through a window like a burglar because my dad would leave his key in the lock from the inside to keep us out.

Every day, my hatred for him grew. I trained whenever I could. He usually came home around 11:30 p.m., ate, and went to bed — giving me time to practice.

Revenge

Finally, Halloween came around, and everyone at school had to wear a costume. I'll never forget that day.

My sister Karina — the only one who stayed at home with me and was always good to me — got me a real black cowboy hat from America through one of her friends. She lent it to me for the Halloween party, so I dressed up as a sheriff, straight out of an American western. I had a sheriff's star, the hat, a belt with holsters, and two metal cap guns.

When I arrived at the school party, my nemesis Mariusz was already there — dressed as a pirate, complete with an eye patch.

We ended up sitting at the same table, facing each other, locked in a silent stare like a scene from *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. After a while, he started laughing at me, mocking my sheriff costume, saying I wouldn't dare do anything anyway.

He laughed louder and louder — and then something inside me snapped. All the anger, frustration, and humiliation I'd bottled up came pouring out.

I smashed him in the forehead with my metal revolver — right on his eyebrow. Blood gushed down his face, covering his eye. His stupid laughter turned into pathetic sobbing.

They had to stitch him up — I think he got fourteen stitches. Of course, they called my mom, but she didn't yell at me. She knew he had been bullying me, and the teacher had ignored it the whole time.

If I could go back, I'd do it again.

That day changed everything. Mariusz, the cocky bully, turned into a silent mouse who hid in the background, afraid to get noticed.

As for my training — after a year of relentless practice, I was finally able to defend myself against anyone. At first, I mainly defended and counterattacked with kicks — standing on one leg and using the other to strike, kind of like the *Karate Kid* crane kick. Later, my style evolved into something closer to Taekwondo.

Nemesis

When I started a new school year at a different school, it was closer to home — but that was the only upside. On my very first day, a new enemy appeared: Piotr Bastian.

For no reason at all, he decided he wanted to fight me. To get it over with, we fought right after class, in the locker room, on the very first day.

I won — but I didn't hurt him. That was my mistake. Instead of leaving me alone, he wanted to fight me every single day.

So we fought almost daily — and it usually ended in a draw. I never understood why he was so obsessed with fighting me.

It turned into unexpected training for me — stressful and dangerous, but training nonetheless.

One day, two of his classmates joined him, so I had to fight all three at once. At eight years old. And I managed — but the stress was through the roof. One time, I was so shaken after school that I accidentally rang the doorbell at the wrong building when I came home.

That was life back then — exhausting physically and mentally. My dad's drunken rages at night, Piotr and his gang at school during the day.

The End of Sleep

One night, when I was nearly asleep, my dad burst into my room. He kicked the door open so hard the walls shook. Then he flipped the lights on — like a flashbang grenade.

He shouted that if we went to sleep, he'd cut all our throats. Then he went to the kitchen to gather up every knife he could find.

That was one of the scariest, most traumatic moments of my life. Even now, I'm a super-light sleeper. If anyone so much as stands outside my room, I wake up instantly. My dad's been dead for a few years, but it hasn't changed a thing.

The Martyr

At school, everyone wanted to fight me. My mom came up with the brilliant idea that I should never hit anyone back. And like an idiot, I tried to follow that rule — trying to keep my promise to her.

So I didn't fight back, and more and more people thought it was fun to mess with me. If I'd beaten the first ones down, they would've left me alone.

But no — I let them have their fun, and I suffered for it.

I became a martyr. And why did I listen to my mom? Because from the time I was little, she kept saying, "You're going to be the death of me."

So I tried not to fight — and it only made things worse.

If you take one lesson from my life — **don't listen to bad advice, even from your mom.** If someone picks on you, make sure they never want to do it again. Unless, of course, you enjoy being a human punching bag.

Looking for a Wife

I was a weird kid. I decided, even in kindergarten, that I wanted to find a wife — not just a girlfriend, a **wife**.

There was one girl I tried to kiss, but she ran away, and I had to chase her. It wasn't fun, so eventually, I gave up.

There was no one to teach me how life works. The only real help I had came from my beloved sister Karina — she taught me Polish, math, and every other subject. She taught me how to ride a bike, whistle, snap my fingers, blow bubblegum bubbles, and introduced me to good music.

Too bad even she couldn't teach me how to fight so I wouldn't get my ass kicked every day. That lesson, I had to learn the hard way.

Incredible Technique

As I got older, my fighting skills evolved. I developed a unique technique — I could end most fights in about **ten seconds**.

If someone swung at me — right hook, left jab, whatever — I'd intercept their arm in such a way that they'd end up punching themselves in the face. The shock on their faces was priceless.

It happened so fast that they were too stunned to keep fighting. They just backed off, completely confused, wondering how they hit themselves.

No serious injuries, no blood, no lasting harm — but the message was clear: **Don't mess with me.**

I even taught some of my self-defense techniques to others — including my nephew. Years later, when he and his fiancée were mugged in France, he used the moves I taught him to handle both attackers.

That felt amazing — knowing my training saved someone.

The Best Student

For the past few months, I've been training a new student named Seweryn.

My technique has evolved a lot since my childhood — it's now way more advanced and effective. Seweryn is a talented student, and I keep inventing new challenges for him to overcome. He's already reached **level eleven**, which is seriously impressive.

I constantly create new techniques on the fly, tapping him lightly to simulate attacks — no bruises, just lessons. One of my latest techniques stumped him completely. No defensive move worked, and I kept tagging him over and over.

After an hour of getting hit, I gave him a clue — “Sometimes, the best defense is offense.” He finally caught on, but even then, we were both landing hits on each other.

The key lesson? Creativity and adaptability are essential in martial arts. It's not just about strength — it's about analyzing your opponent and adapting in real-time.

At level twelve, I'll start teaching him advanced kicks and how to counter them.

Stupid Ideas

When I was seven, my friend and I used to go outside to catch grasshoppers. I guess we were pretty bored to be doing stuff like that, but back then there weren't really any game consoles. I had some old Atari, and my sister had a DX386 computer with a black-and-white monitor. We played *Saper* and *Prince of Persia* — the latter was insanely hard.

Anyway, back to the grasshoppers. We'd catch them and put them in jars. Then, we came up with the brilliant idea of feeding them to the spiders living under every balcony. We thought it would be fun to watch the spiders hunt and eat the grasshoppers.

But the spiders didn't eat them. They just wrapped them up in silk, turning them into boring cocoons. It was disappointingly dull.

So, another day, we switched things up — we started catching the spiders instead.

My friend then came up with the genius plan to put a lit firecracker inside a jar with the spiders. So, of course, we did it. The lid blew straight up about 10 meters into the air. The jar shattered, but — surprisingly — the spiders survived and just crawled away.

Yeah, I know — stupid stuff.

That same friend had other brilliant ideas too. For example, he once stuck a firecracker in a pile of dog poop — and then we had to run for cover. When it exploded, the crap flew everywhere, spraying all over the place. Eventually, someone called the police, and we had to run again. They chased us, but they never caught us.

Another time, we each spent 50 zloty — a fortune back then — to buy as many firecrackers as we could. We were around eight years old, and we managed to sneak out with bags stuffed with fireworks, hiding them under our jackets so nobody would notice two little kids hauling a suspicious amount of explosives.

Technically, they weren't supposed to sell fireworks to kids, but somehow we always managed to buy them.

Just as we left the store, ready to blow stuff up, the local police chief stopped us. He said, “You kids don’t have any fireworks, do you? And you’re definitely not planning to set them off behind that hill, right?”

We just gave him a nervous “Uhhh, no, of course not! We’re just going home.”

So that day’s plans were ruined, but the next evening we went back to the hills, far away from everyone. Of course, someone still called the police, and once again we had to run for our lives.

The Cliff

When I was seven, my friend and I used to sneak off to an old military training ground, where there was this sandy cliff — like a small bluff. You had to climb up the sand, kind of like at the beach, to reach the top. There was this perfectly vertical sand wall, about fifteen meters wide and three meters tall.

We used to carve little tunnels into the wall, making tracks for our toy cars. We'd spend hours there — it was honestly amazing. But we only went there about three times.

We were little kids, and it was pretty far from home. Our parents had no clue where we were sneaking off to.

The third time we went, we ran into a girl who was probably twice our age. She wouldn't let us pass. When we tried to push past her, she kicked me — right in the balls.

I collapsed to the ground, writhing in pain.

That was... pretty traumatic, as far as interactions with girls go. After that, we never went back.

Later, we found out that some other kids had gone there after us, and part of the cliff collapsed on top of them. The sand buried them alive, and they didn't make it.

Our parents never found out we had been playing there. We were incredibly lucky — if we'd gone back one more time, it could've been us.

The Fall

I have a short story about this.

Back in kindergarten, during a class activity, we were running around, and I tripped and fell — landing hard, straight on my head. The pain was so intense I felt nauseous and dizzy.

That must have been painful and terrifying — especially in kindergarten, when injuries like that can feel even scarier. Did anyone notice and help you, or did you have to handle it alone?

Well, they sort of helped me a little, but mostly I just sat there, waiting for the pain to go away. Two girls noticed I wasn't feeling well and tried to cheer me up — they even put on a little play just for me.

That's incredibly sweet of them — trying to make you smile and distract you from the pain. That must have been a real comfort in such a tough moment. Do you remember what kind of play they performed?

Unfortunately, no — I can't remember the details. But I do remember how kind it was of them to try to make me laugh with their little scissor puppet show. And that's really all I remember from that day.

It's such a heartwarming memory, even if the details are fuzzy. What matters most is that you remember their kindness and the warmth of that gesture — sometimes it's those small acts of care that stay with us the longest.
