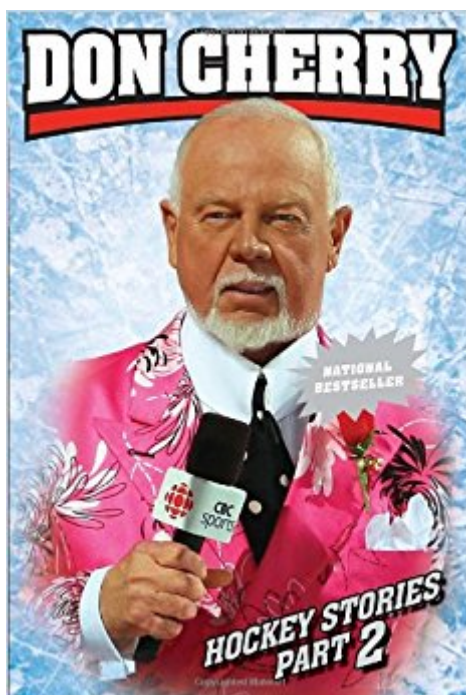


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Don Cherry's Hockey Stories, Part 2



Synopsis

You thought you'd read them all, did you? Well, you haven't. Simultaneously loved and loathed, Don Cherry is one of the most talkative and talked-about personalities in hockey today. His more than twenty-five years as a player and coach have informed his popular Hockey Night in Canada commentary segment, "Coach's Corner." And now he's got more stories to share. In Don Cherry's Hockey Stories, Part 2, Grapes tells us about the 2010 Stanley Cup, relays the lessons he's learned both on and off the ice, and takes us inside hockey's mythical players' "code." You'll encounter familiar names from the game and find out who this idol looks up to. You'll travel back in time to Cherry's days playing in the minor leagues. You'll share his experiences of being named Coach of the Year in the NHL and in the AHL. And you'll hear from his kids about what it was like growing up with a dad like Don. Don Cherry tells it like it is, for better or for worse. You won't be disappointed. P.S. Don wants you to know it's a book the whole family can enjoy. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

A high school dropout from Kingston, Ontario, Cherry laced up with the American Hockey League's Hershey Bears in 1954 to begin what would be nearly a two-decade playing career. The 20-year-old rookie would jump to a number of minor league teams in the United States and Canada over the course of his 16 years on the ice, bringing his young family with him on more than 50 moves. After being fired from his role as Coach of the Boston Bruins in 1979 Cherry went on to coach the Colorado Rockies for one unsuccessful season. A chance appearance on Hockey Night in Canada

impressed CBC officials enough for them to create a platform for the bombastic ex-player and coach. "Coach's Corner" would go on to court both controversy and high ratings, as hockey fans rushed to their televisions to take in his singular mix of game analysis, cultural commentary and playful parrying with host Ron MacLean. Cherry has parlayed his broadcast success into a line of popular videos, a chain of restaurants, a syndicated radio show and lucrative endorsements. In addition to these ventures he has spent the past few years raising funds for Rose Cherry's Home for Kids, a hospice for terminally-ill children. Named after his beloved wife, who died of cancer in June 1997, Don Cherry has passionately campaigned for the Milton, Ontario hospice.

It's June 2010 the Stanley Cup finals between the Chicago Blackhawks and Philadelphia Flyers. Ron MacLean and I have been going since April 8, every other night for two months. It's not bad. The first two series we do out of the CBC studio in Toronto. For the semifinals and finals, we are on the road. Our first night on the road, we're in Philadelphia. Ron and I have a few too many pops, kind of deliberately. The playoffs remind me of when I played: you come to camp in good shape, but you all get together the first night and have a session. You'd be good all summer, and then just before camp, you ruin it. So about ten the next morning, Ron and I are in this cab and we're bakin', it's so hot. We're in our shirts and ties because we always travel that way in the States. (People at airports think we're detectives, as there's usually an older cop and a young cop.) I always think my shirts look good, but they're murder in the summer. The cab, as usual, is so small my legs are jammed up against the front seat. Why is every American cab dirty and small, with no air-conditioning and windows that don't roll down? And, of course, I'm on the side where the sun shines through. And the extra pops don't help. When will we ever learn? Folks, this is not the glamorous life everybody thinks it is. There are ticket lines at the airport. And security lines. The customs guys always seem to be ticked off about something. You get to the hotel and the rooms aren't ready. Eventually, you unpack (I've got tons to unpack and Ron seems to have nothing). So here I am, sittin' in this hot cab, thinkin' all these things and feelin' sorry for myself. I look at Ron and he says, "Never mind. Just think of the twelve cold ones we'll have on ice for after the game tonight." I do. Everything is right with the world. * * * Still in the finals. Now we're into Chicago, and we land. We're walking through the tunnel between O'Hare Airport and the airport hotel. As we walk along the tunnel and we're the only ones in it we come to a guy with a little organ, and he's singin'. He really sounds great. Ron says, "Isn't that guy a wonderful singer?"

and before I can say anything, he has dropped a fiver into the guy's hat. I say, "You jerk. That guy's not singing. It's a record. That's Sam Cooke singing. The guy is only lip-synching." Ron says, "You know, you're too cynical. You should wake up to the world. There aren't people like that. You couldn't be more wrong." So about four days later, we're on our way back. Same tunnel. Same guy. Now the guy is letting on he's playing a violin. He sounds like Stratovarius, or whatever his name is. I drop a fiver into his hat as a reward for being such a good con artist. Ron gets taken every time. He never passes a guy who needs a handout, no matter what. But he definitely does get taken a lot. For instance, we're in Anaheim one night, and after a few pops in the bar, we're walkin' back to the hotel. This guy comes up to us and gives us this song and dance. "Can you guys help me out? I've spent all my money on the bar, and now don't have any money for a taxi to get home. I was wondering if you guys could help me because now I'm over the limit, and I don't want to drive my car." Believe it or not, Ron bites on this one and gives the guy twenty-five bucks to get home. I say, "Are you nuts?" He answers, "Yes, I know. He could be lying. But what if it was true? I would never forgive myself, and I'd feel so guilty if he drove and hurt somebody." Hoo boy. It's in Philly, right between the fifth and sixth games. We go out to a bar. Now, usually, we stay in Ron's room at night and have a twelv-pack on ice and watch TV and have a few munchies and cheese and we have a grand time. But we figured this series is going to wind up pretty soon, so the night before the sixth game, we go out to a bar for a little celebration. Believe it or not, the bartender knows all about my Bruins back when I was coachin' them against Philly's Broad Street Bullies. He knows everything. I know he's not a phony because he remembers the one game—the second game of the semifinals—that we were up 3-0 and we blew a three-goal lead, with Bobby Clarke tyin' it up with two minutes to go. He has it all down, and he remembers how Terry O'Reilly got the winner for us in the second overtime. Ron, who not only gives money to guys who drink too much, tips bartenders and waitresses like he's paying off the national debt. This time, he tips the guy fifty bucks. I say, "Hey, fifty bucks? What are you doing?" He says, "Everybody's gotta live." So on the way back to our hotel, we're strollin' along, feelin' no pain, and we see a young guy who is really down on his luck, and he has a little dog on a piece of rope with him. Ron says to me as we cross an intersection, "Doesn't it break your heart to see a young fellow like that? And isn't it wonderful how that dog loves him and sticks with him?" So we're halfway across the intersection by now, and I say, "Well, if you feel that way, why don't you go back and help him out?" I was just kiddin'. It was just a joke. He says, "I'll do that," and he goes

back and says to the young fella. "Don't take this the wrong way. I just want to help you out a little. I want to give you a little something to help you out, you and your dog." And he slips him a fifty as well. What a guy! He falls for everything. From the Hardcover edition.

Don Cherry is a hockey icon in Canada. Living in America, I don't see him often, but from what I've seen I've been quite impressed. As television is a communications medium, often style takes precedent over substance. We see that former players and coaches who turn analysts eventually morph into smooth and polished personalities, who are acting more than they are analyzing. Don Cherry is a rare and welcome exception. He speaks from the heart, and not always eloquently. His honesty is what makes him endearing, and in this book you get honest stories from a man who has spent a lifetime in hockey. I found myself looking up a lot of the incidents and people mentioned, as I didn't have the context. That still didn't take anything away from the book for me, though. As you may have read from other reviewers, the structure of this book is unique. There aren't really any chapters. There are just short stories, and many of them. It is like sitting down with Grapes and hearing him sound off on everything about hockey, history, family and politics. All in all, a very entertaining read, with a refreshing change of pace in style.

I've never played hockey, but for the past several years I've been a fan and I've enjoyed watching Coaches Corner anytime I could get a CBC broadcast (Thank you NHL Network). In this book, Don Cherry takes a non-linear trip down memory lane with great stories about his career as a player, coach and commentator. He also talks about his childhood and family ties. The writing style is pretty much exactly the way he talks and some of the stories are hilarious. There are two things that stand out in my mind about this book: Unlike most autobiographies, Don Cherry doesn't sugar coat his mistakes. Many authors take the position of, "I wouldn't change a thing," but not this guy. If he had it all to do over again, he would change lots of things and he doesn't hesitate to point out how stupid he was at times. The other thing that stands out are two sections at the end of the book where his daughter and son write about their Dad. It's odd that you get these types of perspectives in a book like this and it is refreshing. Finally, I found his stories about the single NHL game that he played to be both riveting and heart breaking. Although I don't like paying more than \$9.99 for a Kindle book, this one was worth the price.

Don Cherry is like the family member I never had but wish I did...For all the hockey that I've watched

and played this book (like part 1) has taught me so much about it and has really educated me about coaching, playing, tradition, respect and how great it is to be a passionate hockey fan like I am. I had this book with me while my daughter was having eye surgery and it was like Don was with me the whole time keeping my spirits up. Who knew that me being a hockey die hard would help me get through a tough time like that, especially with it involving Don "Grapes" Cherry! My daughter did great, and I can only hope that when she grows up she reads this book and as much about Don Cherry as I can hope for, let alone read to her.

This book is for the fan who has had a long history of following hockey. When you read the book, it is like you and Cherry are having a beer at a bar. He switches seamlessly back and forth from his days in Junior Hockey to American Hockey League to his one NHL game, and his duties on Hockey Night in Canada. If you know hockey, you'll love this book; if you're just a casual fan, you will not. You have to be able to recognize names and teams without being told exactly who they are, or what they are. For example, the Barrie Flyers of the "O" without telling you the O stands for the Ontario Hockey League.

If you love Don Cherry, former NHL & minor-league coach, you'll enjoy this book. It is entertaining from the 1st page, and is pure Grapes, without spelling, syntax or grammar corrections. Any hockey fan will get a kick out of these great stories, but to know this man is to love him. There is no American equivalent to this larger-than-the NHL figure. You'll laugh and you'll grind your teeth while reading it, but you'll be glad you bought it. Highly recommended.

Another great books from Grapes!

I enjoy reading this book.

Fun read. Great stories and great reflections on Grapes career both as a player and coach. Great family stories as well

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