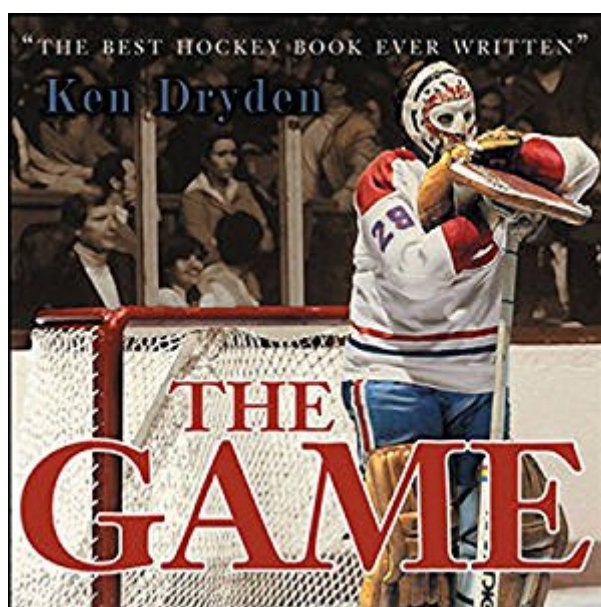


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# The Game: 20th Anniversary Edition



## Synopsis

Widely acknowledged as the best hockey book ever written and lauded by Sports Illustrated as one of the Top 10 Sports Books of All Time, *The Game* is a reflective and thought-provoking look at a life in hockey. Intelligent and insightful, former Montreal Canadiens goalie and former President of the Toronto Maple Leafs, Ken Dryden captures the essence of the sport and what it means to all hockey fans. He gives us vivid and affectionate portraits of the characters - Guy Lafleur, Larry Robinson, Guy Lapointe, Serge Savard, and coach Scotty Bowman among them - that made the Canadiens of the 1970s one of the greatest hockey teams in history. But beyond that, Dryden reflects on life on the road, in the spotlight, and on the ice, offering up a rare inside look at the game of hockey and an incredible personal memoir. This commemorative edition marks the 20th anniversary of *The Game*'s original publication. It includes black and white photography from the Hockey Hall of Fame and a new chapter from the author. Take a journey to the heart and soul of the game with this timeless hockey classic.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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## Customer Reviews

Calling this "the best book ever written about hockey" somehow does not do this work justice. Ken Dryden was one of the best goalies of his time, on one of the greatest teams of all time, and yet this portrayal of a year in the life of that team is much more than "team wins hockey games, gets Stanley Cup." In fact, unless you know what happened in 1979 you may miss that fact. What Dryden aims to do with this book is far more ambitious than to simply describe his last year in the NHL. He wants to discuss the meaning of hockey in the context of his own life as well as that of his country. If this seems a little ambitious, well it is. But Dryden is certainly up to the task. Written in what amounts to a

modified stream-of-consciousness, there are many digressions as Dryden wanders away from descriptions of game days to talk about his early career, the origins of the game, and what it means to Canadians. It's not hard to follow this, but you do have to pay attention. The thing that struck me most was that, while Dryden the author is articulate, thoughtful, and clearly smarter than the average bear, he describes "Ken Dryden the goalie" as a bit of a goof, the last to get locker room jokes, the guy who falls for pranks, who makes himself the target of other, quicker minds. Dryden clearly feels no need to make himself look good to the reading public and when he dissects his playing ability you get the impression that he's being totally honest: he's a Hall of Fame goalie who wishes he could have been just a little better. (On the other hand, while I agree that popular culture creates images of athletes that they often cannot live up to, I balk at Dryden's insistence that "people think I am smarter than I am, because of this image."

Ken Dryden: lawyer, father, Cornell and McGill graduate, former President of the Toronto Maple Leafs, Canadian MP and Minister of Social Development, former member of the Montreal Canadiens, winner of six Stanley Cups, member of the Hockey Hall of Fame, and author. I had the pleasure of watching his last run through the playoffs, winning the Cup one last time, as my introduction to hockey...he became my childhood idol, and was the reason I went into goaltending myself. I just finished reading his book, *The Game*, which was a gift from my fiancée. I don't think I've read many books as good as this. The writing style is conversational, and it relates a snapshot view of Dryden's latter half of his last season, once he had decided to retire from hockey. There are many excellent portraits of team-mates, friends, coaches, family, and even opponents, and even himself; no punches are pulled, but nothing is mean-spirited, and you can tell he had a fondness for his team-mates, even though he felt somewhat separated from them due to his position as goalie. About himself, he relates his introduction to hockey, his self-doubts, his game-time superstitions, and his happy memories. Interspersed with this are thoughts on the business of hockey: the grind of going from city to city to play night after night, how trades affect the team's spirit, injuries and illness and retirement, how a player's ego and the skill level of his team-mates affect his play, the NHLPA, and the effects of TV and expansion and the WHA on the NHL and the game.

Ken Dryden is perhaps best known to the casual U.S. sports fan as the color commentator for hockey during the 1980 Winter Olympics. Only the hockey enthusiasts realize that he also authored "*The Game*", which achieved rarified air in the sports book genre. Not only did it almost instantly become the best hockey book of all time, it is one of the most erudite, intellectual books in the entire

sports genre that has been written. Mr. Dryden, star goalie for the vaunted Montreal Canadiens, is widely regarded as one of the best at his position to ever play. He is also widely regarded as one who retired at least a few seasons too early. It is from this foundation that "The Game" builds from. The book essentially charts Mr. Dryden's decision to retire from the game based on a fading lack of drive and interest in playing at that level (he was studying for a degree in law at the time), and then follows he and the Canadiens' routine through a portion of a season. He provides the reader a very unique look at the travel, the routine of practice, the struggle to maintain team performance at a championship-caliber level, the games themselves, and the game of hockey in general. In the case of the Canadiens teams he played on, he doesn't convey a sense that there was a raucous, salacious environment. Even though he does hint at the struggle to satisfy the individual egos, Mr. Dryden doesn't linger on it too long, choosing instead to put the reader inside his mind - in a manner of speaking - as he observes, prepares, and plays the game. If there is a drawback to "The Game", it is that its focus on hockey - although Mr. Dryden wisely avoids getting into too much technical detail about the game - and intellectual tone may not be for a wide audience.

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