



Red or Dead: A Novel

By David Peace

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A *New York Times* Editors' Choice

"[T]he stuff of great literature." —*The New York Times* | "Red or Dead is a winner." —*The Washington Post*

The place where the swinging sixties started — Liverpool, England, birthplace of the Beatles — wasn't so swinging. Amid industrial blight and a bad economy, the port town's shipping industry was going bust and there was widespread unemployment, with no assistance from a government tightening its belt. Even the Beatles moved to London.

Into these hard times walked Bill Shankly, a former Scottish coal miner who took over the city's perpetually last-place soccer team. He had a straightforward work ethic and a favorite song — a silly pop song done by a local band, "You'll Never Walk Alone." Soon he would have entire stadiums singing along, tens of thousands of people all dressed in the team color red . . . as Liverpool began to win . . .

And soon, too, there was something else those thousands of people would chant as one: Shank-lee, Shank-lee . . .

In *Red or Dead*, the acclaimed writer David Peace tells the stirring story of the real-life working-class hero who lifted the spirits of an entire city in turbulent times. But *Red or Dead* is more than a fictional biography of a real man, and more than a thrilling novel about sports. It is an epic novel that transcends those categories, until there's nothing left to call it but — as many of the world's leading newspapers already have — a masterpiece.

From the Hardcover edition.



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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review A 700-page, experimental novel about the coach of an English soccer team? A limited audience pretty much guarantees this won't be a best-seller, which is a bloody shame—it's a magnificent literary achievement. Peace, the respected British novelist who also wrote *The Damned Utd* (2006), about the short, controversial tenure of Brian Clough at Leeds United (adapted into a fine film starring Michael Sheen), here tackles Bill Shankly, the legendary man who, from 1959 to 1974, transformed Liverpool Football Club from an also-ran into a modern-day powerhouse. Peace's prose is at first daunting: weaving a dense tapestry of short, declarative sentences, he builds each scene with painstaking, poetic repetition. Whole scenes are repeated with minor variation—and, needless to say, he leaves out quotation marks. (Commas are also in short supply.) But, training session by training session, and game by game (seemingly every game he managed for Liverpool), the pummeling repetition achieves a profoundly powerful effect, like an incantation, bringing to life Shankly's relentless drive, his committed socialism, his near saintly concern for the fans—and rendering his rudderless retirement all the more poignant. Peace is clearly an admirer, and no matter which team you support, it will be hard to remain unmoved. --Keir Graff

Review

"I'd offer the British P.M. *Red or Dead*, David Peace's demented novel about real-life soccer coach Bill Shankly... The novel is barking mad, but quite brilliant, and is a monument to a kind of magnificent decency once at the core of British life, but now rapidly fading."

—Kazuo Ishiguro, *New York Times Book Review*

A *New York Times Book Review* Editor's Choice

"As both postmodern epic and ultimate sports novel, *Red or Dead* is a winner."

—*Washington Post*

"*Red or Dead* is hypnotic, the words casting a spell that verges on the shamanistic....[it] creates the most remarkable, operatic sweeps of emotion in the reader... This is the stuff of great literature."

—*New York Times Book Review*

"Sprawling, ambitious and heartbreaking, it's one of the best sports novels in recent years."

—*NPR, Best Books of 2014*

10 Best Books of 2014

—Janet Potter, *NPR's On Point*

One of Liberty Hardy's (RiverRun Bookstore) Must-Read Books from Indie Presses for 2014 on *Book Riot*

"It's about so much more than soccer. It's about politics, obsession, community—plus, what could be more British than football?"

—*Condé Nast Traveler, 10 Books to Inspire Your Next Trip to the United Kingdom*

"*Red or Dead* might be seen as an elegy for that period when the game was played by and for the working classes and perhaps even seemed an authentic expression of their collectivist sensibility... In writing an elegy

for Bill Shankly's world, then, Peace suggests that what has been lost goes far beyond sports. Or to put it another way, he shows us ourselves in soccer."

—***The Millions***

"David Peace's writing reverberates in your head, pulling you along headfirst into the story... *Red or Dead* is a feat of writing. The manner in which Peace shares this history with us is just as important as the story itself. It's not often that writing can transport you through style. Peace more than just succeeds in this. He excels."

—**Preeti Chhibber, *Book Riot's Books of the Year***

"Truly brave and utterly heroic . . . I don't think I've ever read anything quite like *Red or Dead* before. Not ever."

—***The Goldsmiths Prize shortlist citation***

"I want to go out and knock on doors like a Jehovah's Witness and read this book to people."

—***The Observer***

"A magnificent literary achievement . . . Profoundly powerful."

—***Booklist***

"An epic that has more in common with *Beowulf* or *The Iliad* than with the conventional sports novel."

—***The Times of London***

"The writing is honed, sculpted, poetic . . . It doesn't matter if you don't follow the game, this is also a profound investigation of the tension between aspiration and the constraints of time, the very essence of the human condition."

—***Metro***

"A book about the choices by which we live and die, the moments that make us feel alive, and those that choke our souls. It is a masterpiece. Make no mistake of that. A masterpiece."

—***The Quietus***

"An extraordinary piece of writing."

—***The Independent***

"A story of triumph . . . one that might be quoted for decades."

—***Kirkus***

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

David Peace – named as one of *Granta's* Best of Young British Novelists in 2003 – was born and brought up in Yorkshire, England. He is the author of the Red Riding Quartet (*Nineteen Seventy-four, Nineteen Seventy-seven, Nineteen Eighty*, and *Nineteen Eighty-three*), which was adapted into a three-part BBC series; *GB84*, which was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize; and *The Damned Utd*, which was adapted into a film starring Michael Sheen. *Tokyo Year Zero*, the first part of his acclaimed Tokyo Trilogy, was published in 2007, and the second part, *Occupied City*, in 2009.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer Stewart:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or read a book called Red or Dead: A Novel? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have various other opinion?

Roger Lindsey:

The guide with title Red or Dead: A Novel has a lot of information that you can find out it. You can get a lot of benefit after read this book. This particular book exist new know-how the information that exist in this guide represented the condition of the world right now. That is important to you to understand how the improvement of the world. This particular book will bring you with new era of the internationalization. You can read the e-book on the smart phone, so you can read this anywhere you want.

Travis Pope:

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Shirley Williams:

What is your hobby? Have you heard which question when you got pupils? We believe that that problem was given by teacher on their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everyone has different hobby. And also you know that little person such as reading or as reading become their hobby. You must know that reading is very important as well as book as to be the point. Book is important thing to increase you knowledge, except your teacher or lecturer. You find good news or update about something by book. Amount types of books that can you choose to use be your object. One of them is this Red or Dead: A Novel.

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