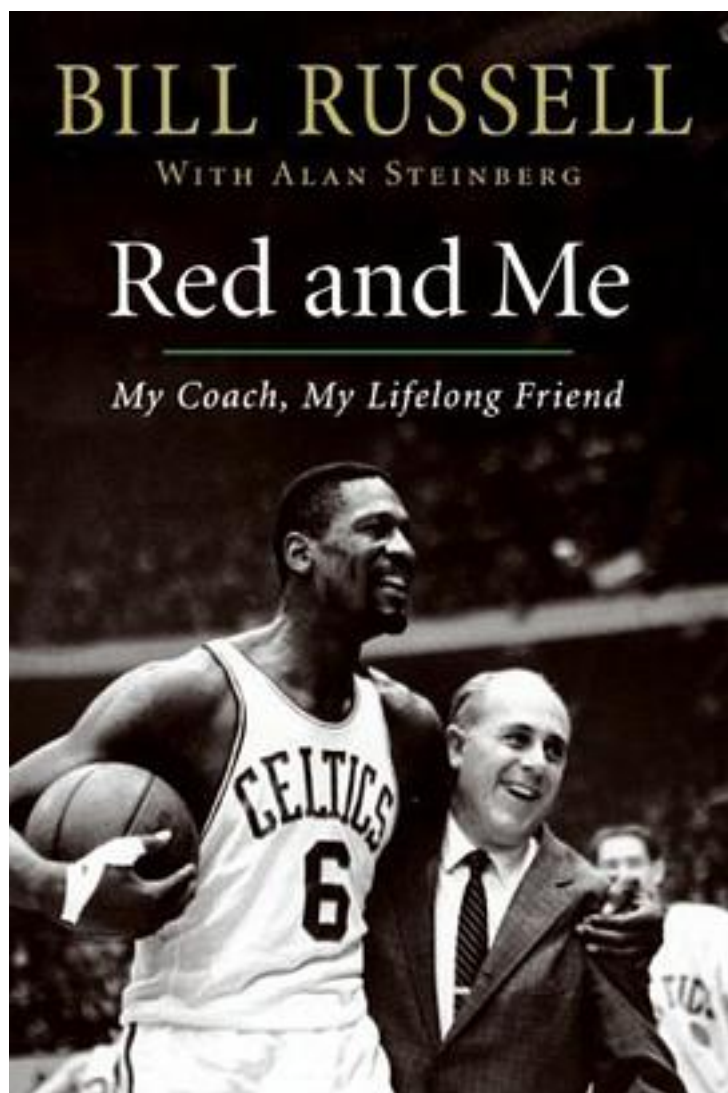


Red and Me



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When Bill Russell joined the Boston Celtics in 1957 as the nation's first prominent black basketball star, he was not expecting much from coach Red Auerbach. Despite two national college championships and an Olympic gold medal, Russell's previous coaches—all whites—had barely spoken to him. Russell's style was unorthodox, redefining the meaning of defense and offense, and many scouts dismissed him. Yet Auerbach, the Jewish outsider in Irish Boston, immediately took to Russell, the African American from Louisiana and Oakland, and he was a coach like no other. Auerbach listened to his players, experimented freely, and knit together a team based only on results. Together they made sports history, winning 11 championships in 13 years. Along the way, Auerbach elevated Russell to player-coach, the first African-American coach in league history. Together, they battled prejudice both on and off the court, and created a team chemistry for the ages. Even this glory is surpassed by another, little known aspect of their relationship: they became lifelong friends. As Russell explains, they were prepared for each other by their fathers, both strong men who loved their sons unconditionally. They both intuitively understood the dynamics of male friendship: there are many things left unsaid, but there is always understanding and respect. Over the many years since Russell retired from the Celtics and moved to the west coast, they saw each other rarely but spoke on the phone regularly. They were always there for each other. As Auerbach fell ill and declined, Russell was there, knowing how to reach out while respecting his former coach's privacy. When Auerbach passed away in October, 2006, Russell refused to speak publicly about a relationship that was so deeply personal. Here, he offers a tribute greater than any speech. This is a book not just for sports lovers, not just for fathers and sons, but for male friendships of all shapes and sizes.

作者介绍:

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