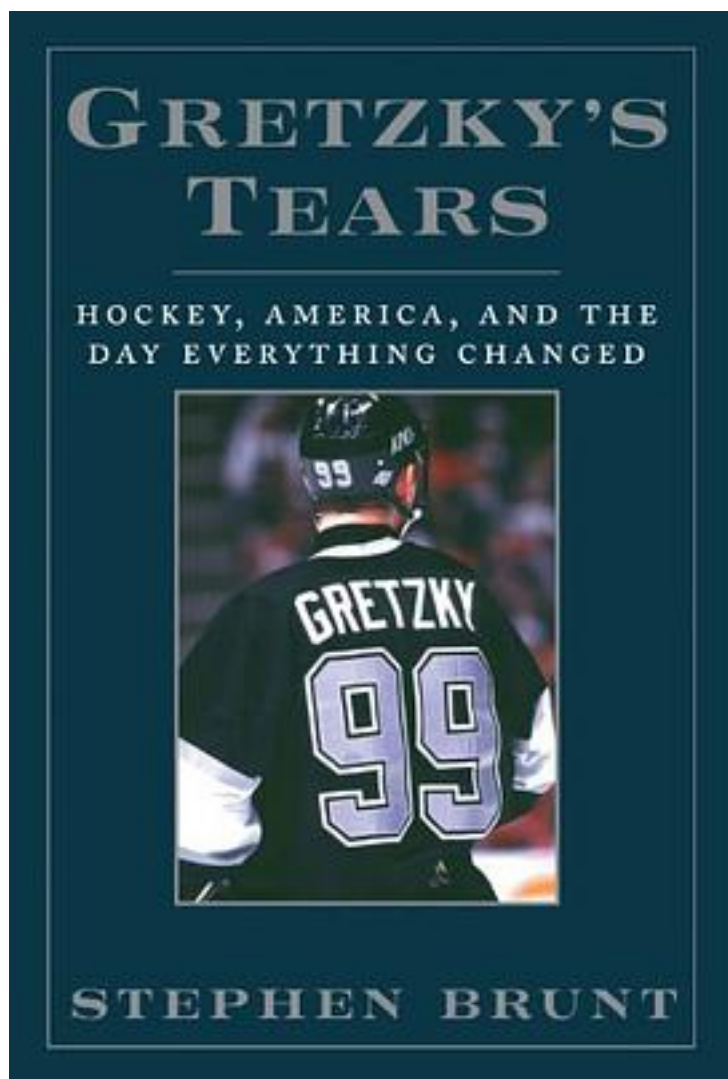


Gretzky's Tears



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As he did so well with Searching for Bobby Orr, Stephen Brunt--Canada's premier sportswriter--tells the amazing story of Wayne Gretzky, the phenom from Brantford, Ontario, who in the 1980s and 1990s became the face of the NHL, especially in the United States. Brunt follows the gifted Gretzky from his youth, where he honed his skills on a backyard rink, to his unlikely jump to the pros at the age of 17 via the World Hockey Association. Gretzky entered the NHL with the ex-WHA Edmonton Oilers and proceeded to win the league's most valuable player award eight years running. Then, in 1998, after leading the Oilers to four Stanley Cup titles, Gretzky was inexplicably traded to Bruce McNeil's L.A. Kings, an event that rocked hockey fans across North America. Brunt reveals for the first time the true story behind the deal as well as Gretzky's important role in making it happen. At the press conference announcing the trade, Gretzky cried. Brunt--comparing the event to Bobby's Orr's tears at the end of his injury-shortened career--noted that "The Great One" instead shed tears of joy: he realized that his life was about to get a whole lot better, playing for more money in a California city that would be a perfect home for him and his glamorous new actress-wife. Though Gretzky never enjoyed another Stanley Cup title, he is credited with buoying the popularity of the NHL throughout the U.S.--especially in the Sun Belt states--and he remains a key figure in the league. Following Gretzky's career right up through his current role as head coach and part owner of the Phoenix Coyotes, Brunt weaves a fascinating tale about one of hockey's greatest legends and how the love of sports and the business of sports are often inextricably intertwined--for better or for worse.

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