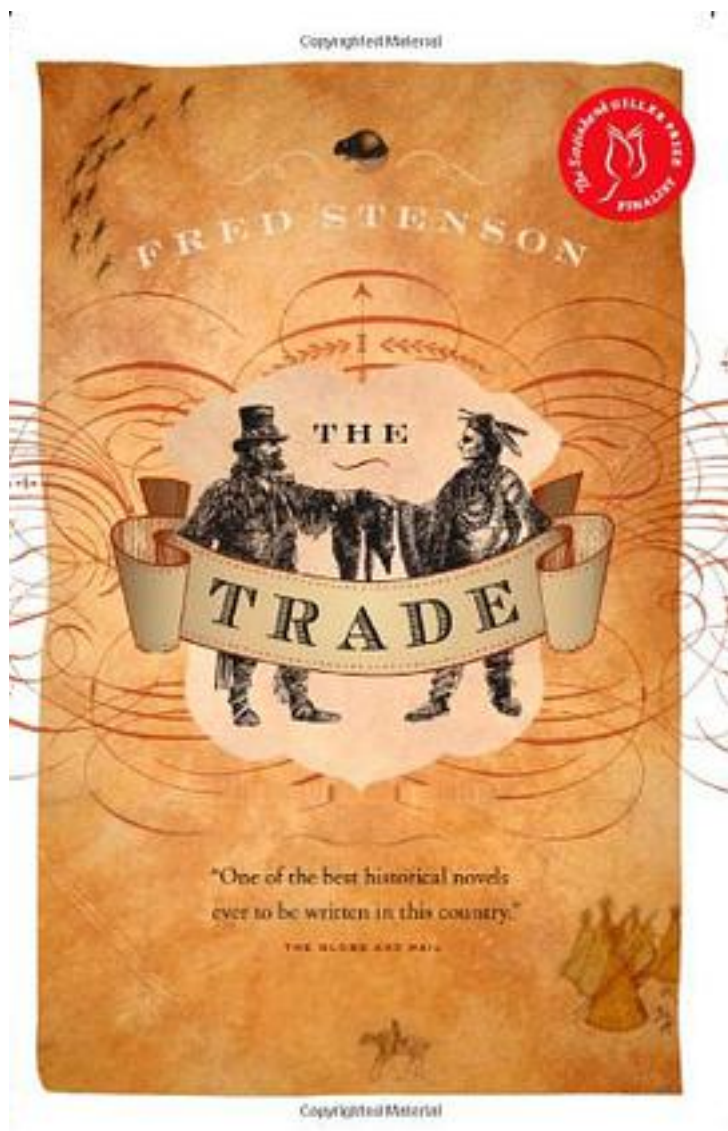


The Trade



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1822. The Hudson's Bay Company, swollen by a merger with its bitter rival, the North West Company, is about to exercise its uncontested monopoly over the lands drained by Hudson Bay. The first step is to find a new source of beaver pelts and profits, and the only hope lies in the unmapped territory held by the Blackfoot-speaking Indian tribes: the Piegan, Siksika and Blood. With little information, the new governor of the territory mounts an expedition into the heart of this unknown land, a journey that will test the mettle of a new generation of Hudson's Bay Company men. For John Rowand, who goes by the nickname "One Pound One," the expedition is also a test of patience, a time to wonder bitterly why he has not been chosen to lead the way. For Rowand's young friend Ted Harriott, a lowly clerk madly in love with his Metis cousin, it is a chance to demonstrate by some act of bravery that her father should allow them to marry. Harriot's journey on foot to the Missouri in winter begins in danger and ends in the iron grip of cold and starvation. At the far end of the trail, he meets Jimmy Jock Bird, who has gone to make his life among the Piegan and who will become a middleman of increasing power among those who would rule the West. This brilliant novel, written between the lines of official history, tells an incredible story of those who were ruled by the often brutalizing fur trade. It is a story of love and economics, and of the nexus between the two. It is a story of how European culture, including religion, tried to root itself in this anarchic place and often failed. In the end, it is the story of how the mighty fur trade was rolled under by the greater forces of change and history.

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