

Key Takeaways From “Shantaram: A Novel” by Gregory David Roberts

- the loved one is instantly recognised because she's loved in every gesture, every expression of thought, every movement, every sound, and every mood that prays in her eyes.
- wanting her kills every other desire of love.
- Love survives in us precisely because it isn't wise.
- The past reflects eternally between two mirrors—the bright mirror of words and deeds, and the dark one, full of things we didn't do or say.
- I was tough, which is probably the saddest thing you can say about a man.
- Being listened to—really listened to—is the second-best thing in the world.'
- The best thing in the world is power.'
- 'Love is the opposite of power. That's why we fear it so much.'
- Every sane and rational person one day realises that money is almost everything. The great principles and the noble virtues are all very well, in the long run of history, but from one day to the next, it's money that keeps us going—and the lack of it that drives us under the great wheel.
- But there's no nation uncorrupted. There's no system that's immune to the misuse of money. Privileged and powerful elites grease the wheels of their progress with kickbacks and campaign contributions in the noblest assemblies. And the rich, all over the world, live longer and healthier lives than the poor.
- In matters of food I am French, in matters of love I am Italian, and in matters of business I am Swiss. Very Swiss. Strictly neutral.
- 'It's a very sad thing, to be in no hurry, and I would not be so free in admitting it, if I were you,'
- 'We have a saying in Marseilles: a man in no hurry gets nowhere fast.'
- Civilisation, after all, is defined by what we forbid, more than what we permit.'
- If you control one trade, the drugs, you can influence the other, the guns.

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Taken directly out of the book

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- When you judge the power that is in a person, you must judge their capacities as both friend and as enemy.
- The power to make men shine like the stars, or crush them to dust.
- The power to live without remorse or regret.
- never let anyone know what you’re thinking.
- always know what the other thinks of you.
- The truth is a bully we all pretend to like.
- that sometimes, even with the purest intentions, we make things worse when we do our best to make things better.
- cost of knowing love, is sometimes greater than any heart would willingly pay.
- The two fastest ways to develop a healthy loathing for the human race and its destiny is to serve it food, or clean up after it, on the minimum wage. I have done both jobs, in those terrible days when I was forced to work for a living.
- we all have to earn our future,’
- The facts of life are very simple. In the beginning we feared everything—animals, the weather, the trees, the night sky—everything except each other. Now we fear each other, and almost nothing else.
- real trick in life is to want nothing, and to succeed in getting it.’
- A lot of the bad stuff in the world wasn’t really that bad until someone tried to change it.’
- They weren’t begging or stealing. They were working hard to earn their way, and they were proud of it.
- What is necessary?
- One of the reasons why we crave love, and seek it so desperately, is that love is the only cure for loneliness, and shame, and sorrow. But some feelings sink so deep into the heart that only loneliness can help you find them again. Some truths about yourself are so painful that only shame can help you live with them. And some things are just so sad that only your soul can do the crying for you.
- a dream is the place where a wish and a fear meet.

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- Waiting for nothing, that is what kills the heart of a man,
- We can compel men not to be bad, but we cannot compel them to be good,
- Everyone profited, and everyone was well pleased. The worst thing about corruption as a system of governance, Didier once said, is that it works so well.
- ‘There is no act of faith more beautiful than the generosity of the very poor,’
- He was the kind of man that tough criminals call a hundred-percenter: the kind of man who’ll put his life on the line if he calls you his friend; the kind who’ll put his shoulder beside yours, without question or complaint, and stand with you against any odds.
- justice is not only the way we punish those who do wrong. It is also the way we try to save them.’
- Fear and guilt are the dark angels that haunt rich men,
- despair and humiliation haunt the poor.
- sometimes think that the size of our happiness is inversely proportional to the size of our house.’
- ‘I take everything personally—that’s what being a person is all about.
- We can’t really know what a pleasure it is to run in our own language until we’re forced to stumble in someone else’s.
- That those of us who have never known a real hardship, and true suffering, cannot have the same strength as others, who have suffered much?
- what we learn from suffering is what unites us as one human people.
- If we do not suffer with our pain, then we have not learned about anything but ourselves.
- Pain without suffering is like victory without struggle.
- that suffering, of every kind, is always a matter of what we’ve lost.
- People always hurt us with their trust,
- The surest way to hurt someone you like, is to put all your trust in him.

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- Wealth and power, in a city where half the many millions were homeless, were measured by the privacy that only money could buy, and the solitude that only power could demand and enforce.
- I wanted her to wonder about me—to ask herself what I'd been thinking and what I'd done there, in her house.
- you are not a man until you give your love, truly and freely, to a child. And you are not a good man until you earn the love, truly and freely, of a child in return.'
- Are we ever justified in what we do?
- Some of the worst wrongs, Karla once said, were caused by people who tried to change things.
- What characterises the human race more, Karla once asked me, cruelty, or the capacity to feel shame for it?
- It's forgiveness that makes us what we are. Without forgiveness, our species would've annihilated itself in endless retributions. Without forgiveness, there would be no history. Without that hope, there would be no art, for every work of art is in some way an act of forgiveness. Without that dream, there would be no love, for every act of love is in some way a promise to forgive. We live on because we can love, and we love because we can forgive.
- We gave ourselves to our routines, our needs, and our harmless, hopeful scheming
- Lovers find their way by such insights and confidences: they're the stars we use to navigate the ocean of desire. And the brightest of those stars are the heartbreaks and sorrows.
- The most precious gift you can bring to your lover is your suffering.
- real fear and real hate have no words.
- Every virtuous act has some dark secret in its heart, Khaderbhai once told me, and every risk we take contains a mystery that can't be solved.
- The worst things that people do to us always make us feel ashamed.
The worst things that people do always strike at the part of us that

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wants to love the world. And a tiny part of the shame we feel, when we’re violated, is shame at being human.

- Whatever it takes from now on.
- Money isn’t the root of all evil. Evil is the root of all money.
- All the money in the world is dirty, in some way, because there’s no clean way to make it.
- If you get paid in money, somebody, somewhere, is suffering for it. That’s one of the reasons, I think, why just about everybody—even people who’d never break the law in any other way—is happy to add an extra buck or two to their money on the black market.’
- Suffering is the truth. Not suffering is the lie.
- ‘Money only comes in two kinds, Lin—yours, and mine.’
- It’s all about greed, and control. These are the two elements that make for commercial crime.
- When greed meets control, you get a black market.’
- There’s a little arrogance at the heart of every better self.
- if you make your heart into a weapon, you always end up using it on yourself.’
- ‘WHEREVER YOU GO in the world, in any society, it is always the same when it comes to questions of justice,’
- Tell people as much as they need to know,
- ‘The history of the universe is a history of motion,’
- Our bodies are the children of all the suns and other stars that died, before us, making the atoms that we are made of. And if we were destroyed, by an asteroid, or by our own hand, well, somewhere else in the universe, our level of complexity, this level of complexity, with a consciousness capable of understanding the process, would be duplicated.
- Happiness is a myth, Karla once said. It was invented to make us buy things.
- If it was just sex or power we’d still be chimpanzees. It’s meaning that makes us human beings.’

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- it's meaning that makes us human.
- You give me a reason to love the world.'
- Love goes on forever because love is born in the part of us that does not die.'
- The wrong thing, for the right reasons.
- A man trusts another man when he sees enough of himself in him, I guess. Or maybe when he sees the things he wishes he had in himself.'
- every virtuous act is inspired by a dark secret.
- When all the guilt and shame for the bad we've done have run their course, it's the good we did that can save us.
- the rich in any country, and any system, always got the best justice money could buy.
- if we envy someone for all the right reasons, we're half way to wisdom.
- man has to find a good woman, and when he finds her he has to win her love.
- man is truly a man when he wins the love of a good woman, earns her respect, and keeps her trust.
- not trusting her, as Vikram said, because I didn't trust myself.
- At first, when we truly love someone, our greatest fear is that the loved one will stop loving us.
- Personality and personal identity are in some ways like co-ordinates on the street map drawn by our intersecting relationships. We know who we are and we define what we are by references to the people we love and our reasons for loving them.
- we all attempt suicide several times in our lives, and sooner or later we all succeed.'
- ‘that a good man is as strong as the right woman needs him to be.’
- You can't kill love. You can't even kill it with hate. You can kill in-love, and loving, and even loveliness. You can kill them all, or numb them into dense, leaden regret, but you can't kill love itself. Love is the passionate search for a truth other than your own; and once you feel it, honestly and completely, love is forever. Every act of love, every moment of the

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heart reaching out, is a part of the universal good: it's a part of God, or what we call God, and it can never die.

- Whatever you do in life, do it with courage, and you won't go far wrong
- ...
- and I don't really trust—people who don't believe in anything.'
- The end, when it comes, is always too soon.
- You can't reason with a man who has no sense of money and its ... its value.
- If money doesn't mean anything, there is no civilisation. There is nothing.'
- You can only ever be yourself. The more you try to be like someone else, the more you find yourself standing in the way.
- Fate always gives you two choices, Scorpio George once said: the one you should take, and the one you do.
- Silences can wound as surely as the twisting lash,
- 'There is no man, and no place, without war,'
- 'The only thing we can do is choose a side, and fight. That is the only choice we get—who we fight for, who we fight against. That is life.'
- It is always a fool's mistake, Didier once said to me, to be alone with someone you shouldn't have loved.
- The truth is that, no matter what kind of game you find yourself in, no matter how good or bad the luck, you can change your life completely with a single thought or a single act of love.
- With love: the passionate search for a truth other than our own.