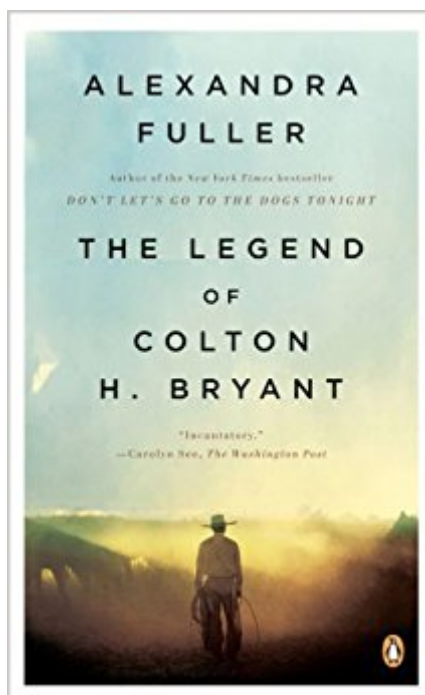


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The Legend Of Colton H. Bryant



Synopsis

A heartrending story of the human spirit from the author of the bestselling *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* Alexandra Fuller returns with the unforgettable true story of Colton H. Bryant, a soulful boy with a mustang-taming heart who comes of age in the oil fields and open plains of Wyoming. After surviving a sometimes cruel adolescence with his own brand of optimistic goofiness, Colton goes to work on an oil rig-and there the biggest heart in the world can't save him from the new, unkind greed that has possessed his beloved Wyoming during the latest boom. Colton's story could not be told without telling of the land that grew him, where the great high plains meet the Rocky Mountains to create a vista of lonely beauty. It is here that the existence of one boy is a true story as deeply moving as the life that inspired it.

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Customer Reviews

Fuller, author of the bestselling *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, narrates the tragically short life of Colton H. Bryant, a Wyoming roughneck in his mid-20s who in 2006 fell to his death on an oil rig owned by Patterson-UTI Energy. A Wyoming resident herself since 1994, Fuller is expert in evoking the stark landscape and recreating the speech and mentality of her adopted state's native sons. Along the way, she sheds light on the tough, unpredictable lives of Wyoming's oilmen and the toll exacted on their families. Though the book is wonderfully poignant and poetic and reads more like a novel than biography, Fuller acknowledges that she has taken narrative liberties, composed dialogue, disregarded certain aspects of Colton's life and occasionally juggled chronology to create a smoother story line, leading readers to wonder what is true and what

invented for dramatic purposes. As such, it is difficult to assess Fuller's simplistic conclusion that the company's drive to cut costs killed the young man, though she is right to highlight the strikingly high number of fatalities in the industry. As a touching portrait of a life cut short and a perceptive immersion in the environment that nurtures such men, Fuller's volume excels, but in terms of absolute veracity it should be read with caution. (May 6) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review Fuller's re-creation of the brief life of Colton H. Bryant is the story of a third-generation oil-patch worker in Wyoming. Spotlessly capturing the distinctive scenes from his life, Fuller takes readers into the Bryant family and the small-town community and oil rigs they inhabited. To know Colton, who "has a way of tearing out of the chute, firing with all hooves at once, one must experience him, and Fuller, with pinpoint detailing and a deadeye aim on Wyoming dialect, teases out a portrait of a young man that is staggering in its spareness, and heartbreaking in its tenderness. But, "like all westerns, this story is a tragedy before it even starts because there was never a way for anyone to win against all the odds out here. The stacked deck belongs to the oil companies, of course, and the lesson learned from Colton's life and death is that human life is small change and protecting it isn't in the best interest of profit. Although it's little consolation, Fuller's deeply moving celebration of Colton's life is bursting with humor, love, and tragedy, like all that is best in life, and without ever having met him, you won't soon forget Colton H. Bryant. --Ian Chipman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is a heartbreaker of a book that will also make you angry. Based on a true story - though the author herself says at the end that she took some liberties with the material, so it's hard to know how "creative" the book is as creative nonfiction. Nonetheless, you come to know its central character, Colton, as a young man who's the product of an LDS upbringing in small-town and rural Wyoming. Not much of a student and pegged as a "slow learner," he compensates for the meager hand he's been dealt with an enthusiasm for living, a love of his friends and family, and a talent for overcoming obstacles ("Mind over matter" is his motto - "I don't mind, so it don't matter") that leaves everyone else shaking their heads in disbelief. We learn a lot about southwestern Wyoming, the winds, the extremes of weather, and the limited opportunities for a young man, which are mostly comprised of the ups and downs of oil extraction in desolate areas of the state. Here, at the age of

25, he is employed and working to make ends meet for a young wife, her son that he's adopted, and their own infant boy. And that's where the story ends. Although not without a final comment about the indifference to human safety in the pursuit of profits by Colton's employer, Patterson-UTI. This is a slim volume, made up of short chapters that are often little more than vignettes, each capturing a moment in a young life and ending up finally as a eulogy.

My Book Club read this book and we all loved Colton and were inspired by his story and by Fuller's often out-of-this-world writing. The discussion ranged from Colton's endearing, ADD personality to the lack of safety enforcements on the oil rig and the obvious parallels to the BP disaster. We also touched on the Mormon Church's influence in the area, especially as it relates to the closeness and hierarchy of family life. In an interview, Alexandra Fuller said that the real tension in the book was between Colton and the reader. I cried at the end, completely undone by such a needless, preventable accident and I was angry. Fuller said she considered Wyoming America's Serengeti, "a mythical land they wrote their songs about. And it's gone." Gone because of the damage oil drilling does to both the environment and to people. Colton's death was the third in six months on an Ultra Petroleum oil rig. Ultra Petroleum earned more than \$592 million the year Colton died. The company was fined less than \$8,000 for not putting up a \$2000 railing that would have prevented Colton's death; his family received not one penny. Sound familiar? But this book is not a finger-pointing angry book. It is a love story between the author and the people of Wyoming she came so to admire. *THE LEGEND OF COLTON* H. BRYANT is an important book, beautifully written, that will tug at your heart long after you have read it. In the end, it may also make you very, very angry.

I don't know anything about oil rigging, but I do know that that is not the focus of this book, this is a beautifully written character study of a wonderfully interesting, life-loving young man whom appreciated the place in which he lived and the people in his life in a way that makes you smile and feel grateful for everything you have and the places you've lived. Sometimes a book comes along that just makes you feel good and this is one of those books; it reminds you of the great things in life we so often overlook or corner away as trivial. Colton seemed to live each day as his last, and it's contagious. Fuller has an amazing talent, she can write and write well, it was fluid, beautiful prose, not too long or too pretentious. I was pleased to spend an afternoon reading about Colton and would recommend this book quite highly.

I had great expectations for this because it was recommended by Ivan Doig. The sad story of Colton H. Bryant is probably emblematic of other equally dismal tales. And I don't discount all the issues the story touches on of hard lives in a hard landscape, where hard work which is often unreasonably high risk doesn't yield much. But I think there were lots of ethical, moral and social issues which the author touched on, without comment, without any kind of direction. Just plain disappointing.

I've decided to review on the top ten books I've read in the past five years. This is absolutely one of the top 2 (can't choose between Knockemstiff or this one for #1). I loved this book. I really did. Because of limited space there are few books I buy after reading them at the library but "The Legend of Colton H. Bryant" quickly found a spot on my shelf. Another reviewer mentioned that this story could be found in most rural, poverty-stricken areas. I don't believe that's so. Colton is one-of-a-kind. I know a little of what I speak as my husband was a rough neck in the oil fields of Texas and I know the culture. And it is a culture that can't be found anywhere else. Colton was a good man. An inspiring man. He was very human. He worked hard and gave much. I took something from this book that will stay with me always. An attitude that "if I don't mind then it don't matter". This book gave me a "memory" of a man I'd never met but surely wish I had.

I bought this book because I love Alexandra Fulton books. I've read them all now and until the next one comes out I'll just have to pony up I guess. It wasn't until I turned the last page and saw the photo of Colton h. Bryant that the tears started. The story I just read will stay with me for a long time both because of Fulton amazing ability to write the way that actually makes me SEE what she is writing but also because I so wanted things to turn out well for Colton.

Alexandra Fuller is a wonderful author, with a voice all her own. This was the fourth book I read by this author, the others about her life growing up in Rhodesia with her family. The story of Colton Bryant is at once hilarious, full of angst and insight and warmth. I highly recommend it. Meg Kelsey Wright

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