



# The Legend of Colton H. Bryant

*Alexandra Fuller*

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**From the bestselling author of *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight* and *Scribbling the Cat*, the unforgettable true story of a boy who comes of age in the oil-fields and open plains of Wyoming; a heartrending story of the human spirit that lays bare where it is that wisdom truly resides**

Colton H. Bryant was one of Wyoming's native sons and grown by that high, dry place, he never once wanted to leave it. "Wyoming loves me," he said, and it was true. Wyoming—roughneck, wild, open, and searingly beautiful—loved him, and Colton loved it back. As a child in school, Colton never could force himself to focus on his lessons. Instead, he'd plan where he'd go fishing later, or he'd wonder how many jackrabbits he might find on his favorite hunting patch, or he'd dream about the rides he would take on the wild mare he was breaking. "At my funeral, you'll all feel sorry for making me waste so much time in school," he said to his best friend Jake—and it was true.

Two things got Colton through the boredom of school and the neighborhood "K-mart cowboys" who bullied him: His best friend Jake and his favorite mantra, a snatch of a saying he heard on TV: *Mind over matter*—which meant to him: If you don't mind, it don't matter. Colton and Jake grew up wanting nothing more than the freedom to sleep out under the great Wyoming night sky, to hunt and fish and chase the horizon and to be just like Colton's dad, a strong and gentle man of few words. When it was time for Colton to marry and make money on his own, he took up as a hand on an oil rig. It was dangerous work, but Colton was the third generation in his family to work on the oil patch and he claimed it was in his blood. And anyway, he joked, he always knew he'd die young.

Colton did die young, and he died on the rig—falling to his death because the drilling company had neglected to spend two thousand dollars on the mandated safety rails that would have saved his life. His family received no compensation. But they didn't expect to—they knew the company's ways, and after all as Colton would have said: *Mind over matter*.

In *Scribbling the Cat*, Alexandra Fuller brought us the examined life of a Rhodesian soldier; now—in her inimitable poetic voice and with her pitch-perfect ear for dialogue—she brings before us the life of someone much closer to home, as unexpected as he is iconic. The moving, tough, and in many ways quintessentially American story of Colton H. Bryant's life could not be told without also telling the story of the land that grew him—the beautiful and somehow tragic Wyoming; the land where there are still such things as cowboys roaming the plains, where it's relationships that get you through, and where a just, soulful, passionate man named Colton H. Bryant lived and died.

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