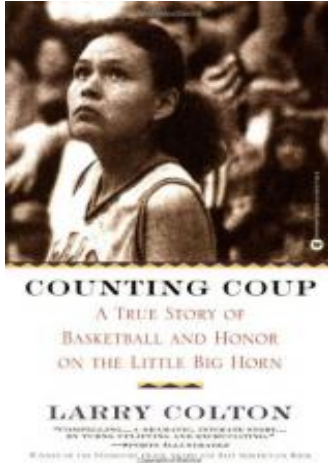


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## Counting Coup: A True Story of Basketball and Honor on the Little Big Horn

by Larry Colton

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### About the Book

Winner of the Frankfurt eBook Award for Best Nonfiction Book

In Native American tradition, a warrior gained glory by touching his enemy in battle and living to tell the tale. They called it...

#### COUNTING COUP

Freelance journalist Larry Colton traveled to the Crow Indian reservation in Montana to do a story on high-school basketball. There he met Sharon LaForge, a seventeen-year-old Native American basketball player who lit up the gym with talent, spirit, and a fierce will to win...a young woman engaged in a heroic struggle not only to lead her team to the state finals but to save herself from a life of poverty and loss.

In this brilliant account, Colton takes us through one frantic, pressure-packed basketball season with Sharon. Through her eyes, and those of the Indians and whites around her, we witness a harrowing battle with alcoholism, a shattered family, racial conflict, and perhaps the most daunting challenge of all: growing up. Set on the banks of the Little Big Horn River, **Counting Coup** is Sharon's unforgettable story-and the story of today's forgotten Americans fighting for the victories that count.

### Discussion Guide

1. We all make bad choices, and Sharon LaForge is certainly no exception. What bad choice did she make? How would you have steered her in different directions?

2. Should the U.S. government make reparation to the Indians for past discrimination and wrongdoing?
3. What rituals and customs did you learn about? What importance do they play in Crow life?
4. In what ways did Sharon count coup?
5. Did the author's writing in the first person get in the way of the story?
6. Did the author betray the trust given to him by the people of Big Horn County?
7. The author obviously disagreed with Coach Mac's distribution of playing time, but do you think she was a good coach?
8. Many white people in Hardin are upset with this book. Why?
9. Many Indians on the reservation are upset with this book. Why?
10. If you managed a bookstore, in which section would you stock this book? Sports? Native American studies? Biographies? Contemporary American culture? Women's studies?
11. What are the biggest problems facing reservations today, and what would you do about them?
12. Why do Crow women appear to be progressing faster than Crow men?
13. If you could write a letter to Sharon LaForge, what would it say?
14. Some people say that the Crows are their own worst enemy. Do you agree?
15. Some people also say that the Crows enjoy playing the role of the victim, and this prevents them from making progress. Do you agree?
16. If you were in charge of government programs to improve life on the reservations, what would you do?
17. What forms of racism did you encounter in this book?
18. What can women like Sharon LaForge do to escape the cycle?
19. Should a white male outsider write a book about a teenage Crow girl?
20. Did the author's depiction of life in a small town seem true? Did the author's depiction of life on the reservation seem true?
21. What literary devices did the author use to keep the story moving?
22. What social issues emerge in the story?

23. What is it that has created despair and hopelessness for these people?
24. Why do Sharon and Native American people continue to endure incidents of abuse?
25. If you were a white farmer working ten hours a day, six days a week in Big Horn County, and you daily encountered Indians on welfare or government assistance, what would your attitude be?
26. If you were county commissioner of Big Horn County, what steps would you take to unite the two cultures? Or would you encourage the Crows to become a sovereign state?
27. Should the government do away with the reservation system?
28. Is Sharon a modern-day American hero? Or is she a victim of her own inability to take charge of her life and break free?
29. There are those on the reservation who look at white culture and society and say, "Look at the mess you've created. Why would we want to aspire to that?" How would you respond?
30. Why haven't Crow high school basketball players been able to use the sport as a springboard to a college education?
31. If you had \$10 million to invest in the Crow reservation, how would you spend it?
32. The author concludes the story by saying that "out here on the Little Big Horn there is no surrender." What does he mean? Do you agree?

## Author Bio

Larry Colton is the author of several notable works, including *COUNTING COUP*, *GOAT BROTHERS* and *NO ORDINARY JOES*.. He has written for *Esquire*, *Sports Illustrated* and the *New York Times Magazine*. A former pitcher for the Philadelphia Phillies, Colton himself played in the Southern League in 1966 for a farm team in Macon, GA.

## Critical Praise

"The best new sports book...one heck of a compelling story."

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