



Drinking Coffee With a Fork: The Story of Steve Carlton and the '72 Phillies

Steve Bucci, Dave Brown, Foreword by Jamie Moyer

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During spring training in 1972, southpaw pitcher Steve Carlton, coming off a 20-win season and embroiled in a contract dispute, was traded from the star-studded St. Louis Cardinals to the lowly, last-place Philadelphia Phillies.

Surrounded by a squad decidedly lacking in talent, Carlton overcame insurmountable odds. For a Phillies team that won just 59 games, he posted 27 wins a record 46 percent and in so doing captured his first of four Cy Young Awards in a career that culminated in his induction into the Hall of Fame.

In *Drinking Coffee with a Fork*, Steve Bucci and Dave Brown chronicle Carlton's extraordinary and improbable '72 season. Drawing on interviews with Carlton's teammates, coaches, opponents, and the writers who covered the team, as well as newspaper accounts and box scores of the games, Bucci and Brown recreate the phenomenal performance by the man called Lefty: his early season duels with superstar pitchers Bob Gibson and Juan Marichal, his brilliant shutout against the Expos in a game marred by a bench-clearing brawl triggered by a retaliatory beanball thrown by Carlton, and a remarkable and exhilarating 15-game winning streak, achieved while the Phils rarely won on days that he didn't pitch.

Throughout the book, the authors intersperse memorable conversations and anecdotes involving Carlton from the dugout, the locker room, and the team hotel which illuminate Lefty's eccentricities, including his intense pregame preparation, his uncanny focus and concentration on the mound, and the sage and sometimes offbeat advice that he imparted to his fellow Phillies.

After recounting Carlton's amazing season, Bucci and Brown rely on statistical analysis and opinions solicited from some of the country's foremost baseball experts including Bob Costas, Jayson Stark, and Tom Verducci to dissect this thought-provoking question: Is Carlton's 1972 season the greatest ever for a pitcher?

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