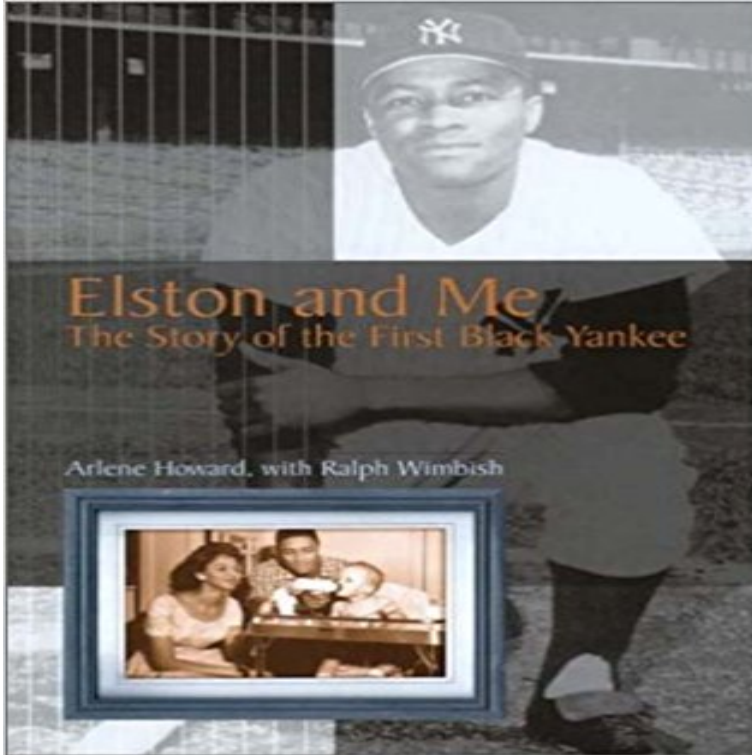


## Elston and Me: The Story of the First Black Yankee (SPORTS & AMERICAN CULTURE)



Of all the great ballplayers to wear Yankee pinstripes, Elston Howard was among the proudest. Remarkable temperament and courage made him the Jackie Robinson of baseballs most storied franchise. No Yankee carried himself with more dignity. No Yankee had greater respect for his teammates or love for his wife and family. And no one loved being a Yankee more than Elston Howard. In *Elston and Me*, Howards widow, Arlene, and coauthor Ralph Wimbish recall the life of the first black to play baseball for the New York Yankees. Howard, who played fourteen major-league seasons, was signed by the Yankees in 1950, but the reluctance of the Yankee organization to break the color barrier held Howard back from the major leagues until 1955 when he was twenty-six years old. By 1961, the year he batted .348 for the Yankees, Elston had become the everyday catcher. Voted the American Leagues Most Valuable Player in 1963, Howard was a three-time Gold Glove winner, and his fielding average of the same year remains one of the highest among catchers in major-league history. In 1967, with the Yankee dynasty in decay, Elston was traded to the Boston Red Sox, although Yankee management had promised him that he would finish his career in pinstripes. After contemplating retirement, he moved to Boston late that season and helped the Red Sox win the Impossible Dream pennant. After one more season with the Red Sox, he returned to the Yankees as the first black coach in the American League. Howard died at the age of fifty-one without fulfilling his dream of becoming baseballs first black manager. Beginning with Howards early years as a St. Louis teenager, the book relates his encounters with racism and his love of baseball. He began his professional career for the legendary Negro League team the Kansas City Monarchs. His three decades with the New York Yankees include

numerous anecdotes about fellow Yankee legends such as Mickey Mantle, Whitey Ford, and Yogi Berra. With countless personal moments and never-before-published photographs and clippings from family albums, Elston and Me is the touching story of one of baseball's great players.

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