



The Courting of Marcus Dupree

Willie Morris

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At the time of Marcus Dupree's birth, when Deep South racism was about to crest and shatter against the Civil Rights Movement, Willie Morris journeyed north in a circular transit peculiar to southern writers. His memoir of those years, *North Toward Home*, became a modern classic. In *The Courting of Marcus Dupree* he turned again home to Mississippi to write about the small town of Philadelphia and its favorite son, a black high-school quarterback. In Marcus Dupree, Morris found a living emblem of that baroque strain in the American character called "southern."

Beginning on the summer practice fields, Morris follows Marcus Dupree through each game of his senior varsity year. He talks with the Dupree family, the college recruiters, the coach and the school principal, some of the teachers and townspeople, and, of course, with the young man himself. As the season progresses and the seventeen-year-old Dupree attracts a degree of national attention to Philadelphia neither known nor endured since "the Troubles" of the early sixties, these conversations take on a wider significance. Willie Morris has created more than a spectator's journal. He writes here of his repatriation to a land and a people who have recovered something that fear and misdirected loyalties had once eclipsed. The result is a fascinating, unusual, and even topical work that tells a story richer than its apparent subject, for it brings the whole of the eighties South, with all its distinctive resonances, to life.

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