



Growing Up King: An Intimate Memoir

Dexter Scott King, Ralph Wiley

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Dexter King was just seven years old when an assassin took his father Martin Luther King's life. The bond between father and son was a close one and for years afterwards Dexter was haunted by a memory of himself and his dad riding their bikes through Atlanta's streets and by his father's laugh as he romped with his family. Dexter tried to find courage in his father's example of selfless heroism but as his shattered childhood ripened into adolescence the weight of "the King legacy" pressed down more heavily. Kept at arms-length by schoolchildren unsure what to make of the son of a secular saint, afflicted with undiagnosed ADD and shell-shocked further by the murder of his grandmother, Dexter stumbled warily into adulthood. Ironically the wall that kept him from potential friends and girlfriends was sometimes a comfort - in distancing himself from others he lessened the chances of further loss. Only in his early thirties did he confront the legacy head-on, discovering what his father was trying to tell him - and us - about what really matters. Dexter Scott King's memoir is replete with insights into what families of "fallen heroes" must contend with, as well as intimate moments and fresh reflections on race in America.

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