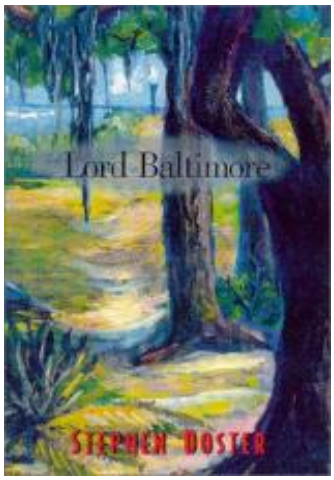
Lord Baltimore

by Stephen Doster



About the Book

Country-club slacker Ensworth Harding is in for a surprise on his 18th birthday. "Son, his father tells him, "I give you a great gift today. See that open road? Your destiny lies down there." Ensworth is then kicked out of the car, given instructions to deliver a letter to an address in Savannah, Georgia, and told, "If I hear so much as a peep until your journey is complete, I will disinherit you."

Early into his forced march to manhood, Ensworth falls in with a bearded, unkempt, Keds-wearing gentleman who is part overgrown forest sprite, part enlightened bum, and part old-time British knight. He calls himself Lord Baltimore, and he will serve as Ensworth's guide and mentor.

In the great tradition of the picaresque novel, the two subsequently endure a series on misadventures that bring Ensworth a little closer to his destination physically but go a long way toward preparing him for it spiritually. They run afoul of a cracker sheriff, live through a hurricane, and encounter a professional boxer turned evangelist. Most of the action takes place on the Gullah island of Zapala off the Georgia coast, a place where the witch doctor is the leading community figure and where ghosts of dead slaves linger in the air.

Partly an homage to classics ranging from **Don Quixote** to **Huck Finn**, **Lord Baltimore** is ultimately one of those novels that creates its own universe and whose characters walk the line between the real and the fantastic.

Discussion Guide

1. What did you think of the unusual voice used by Ensworth as the narrator? What clues did the novel offer as to why he "speaks" in that style? Did you enjoy Ensworth as the narrator?

2. Lord Baltimore was written in the picaresque tradition of novels such as **Don Quixote**, **Tom Jones** and **Huckleberry Finn**

, in which a character encounters a series of usually humorous adventures. Do you feel **Lord Baltimore** lived up to that tradition? In what ways did Ensworth?s journey differ from those in the other novels?

3. What part does the Georgia coast and its Gullah population play in Ensworth?s journey?

4. Though Ensworth obviously admires his father and grandfather a great deal, he doesn?t seem much like them. Why not?

5. Do you think Ensworth would have learned something on his trip to Savannah without Lord Baltimore?s help? Do you think he would have even reached Savannah?

6. Though Lord Baltimore mostly tries to teach Ensworth how to think critically, he also places great importance on faith. What are some instances in which he tries to teach Ensworth and Brantley the importance of faith? Why do you think a character as rational as Lord Baltimore places such store by faith?

7. Though Lord Baltimore is Ensworth?s primary guide on his journey, Ensworth learns from the novel?s other characters as well. What do you think Ensworth learns from Liverpool? From Tilly? From Brantley?

8. What do you think Ensworth has learned by the time he reaches Savannah? Do you think his father?s plan worked?

Author Bio

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