

DASHAUN: Shoot, I'd be fifty myself by the time I'd saved enough. [*Pause.*] I just want stuff, Corey. You know?

COREY: I know. Me, too.

DASHAUN: A big ole house.

COREY: A big backyard.

DASHAUN: A big-screen TV.

COREY: A little red sports car.

DASHAUN: A girl I can talk to. [*DASHAUN and COREY suddenly look at each other, both a little embarrassed. They just as quickly look away.*] Well, you know . . .

COREY: Oh, man, I'm gonna be late.

DASHAUN: [*Jumping up.*] Yeah, let's bounce.

COREY: See you tomorrow, D.

DASHAUN: Yeah, all up in school.

COREY: [*Taking out the book.*] Wait, the book.

[*DASHAUN looks at the book, then takes it reluctantly.*]

DASHAUN: Thanks.

[*The boys pound fists.*]

Smoldering Fires

Kermit Frazier

Dramatic

COREY: 12, African American

DASHAUN: 12, African American

COREY and DASHAUN are 12-year-old African American boys. They are best friends living in a sometimes violent, drug-infested, urban neighborhood. This scene takes place toward the end of act 1. DASHAUN has been at home because he has been suspended for fighting in the schoolyard (actually defending COREY), when he suddenly decides in frustration that he will accept drug dealer Willis's offer to be a "slinger" for him. But when he gets to Willis's, DASHAUN overhears the dealer plotting with an addict to get revenge on COREY's parents for their neighborhood "stop the drugs" campaign. With that, DASHAUN rushes away. In this scene, COREY has met DASHAUN at their hangout spot in the park.

COREY: But that doesn't mean he's going to do anything, D.

DASHAUN: I'm just saying what I heard.

COREY: Well, my mom's got a lot of signatures on the petition already. So she's got a lot of people behind her. Besides, my dad can take care of any ole nodded-out junkie.

DASHAUN: Not if he takes you by surprise.

COREY: By doing what?

DASHAUN: I don't know. I didn't go up and ask him.

COREY: What were you doing hanging around Willis anyway?

DASHAUN: I wasn't hanging.

COREY: What then? [**DASHAUN** says *nothing*. *Something suddenly dawns on COREY.*] Oh, man.

DASHAUN: Look, my grandma's birthday is soon, awright?

COREY: So you're slinging for Willis now?

DASHAUN: No! . . . I mean . . . he offered me something yesterday and I was about ready to play. But then I heard what he said to Bogus and . . . I changed my mind.

COREY: So you're not slinging?

DASHAUN: What did I just say, Corey? Man . . .

COREY: Okay, okay. . . . So now you can sign my mom's petition. And help me with the park thing. That's how we're gonna play it.

DASHAUN: For free?

COREY: It's what we've gotta do, D. Or at least try. [**DASHAUN** says *nothing*.] I really feel bad about you getting suspended. And all because of me.

DASHAUN: It wasn't just because of you.

COREY: I don't mind being called "shrimpie," you know. Or "shake 'n' bake."

DASHAUN: I would.

COREY: I know that. [*With a laugh.*] You wouldn't have lasted one second during the civil rights thing. You would have been throwing punches and jumping people if they even *looked* at you funny.

DASHAUN: Yeah, well, that's the way it is, Corey, awright?

COREY: But it doesn't have to be that way. You know, in *Freedom's Children* . . .

DASHAUN: Lay off about that book, Corey, awright?

COREY: Okay. Sorry. [*Awkward pause.*] What'd your grandma say?

DASHAUN: She grounded me for the three days of my suspension and another week after that.

COREY: Then how can you be here?

DASHAUN: I had to tell you, man.

COREY: Yeah, but even before now you were. . .

DASHAUN: Look, I'm gonna be back before she gets home. Stop worrying about me.

COREY: Hey, you worry about me. [*They look away from each other, slightly embarrassed. Then:*] Well, at least you've got more time to work on that free birthday present. Your "Fifty Rap."

DASHAUN: Yeah, right.

COREY: How's it coming?

DASHAUN: It's not.

COREY: Hey, I know. We could do a rap together.

DASHAUN: About being fifty?

COREY: No, no, about anything. For practice. To get your words flowing. We could do the . . . the "Petition Rap."

DASHAUN: How about the "Stomp Harold Rap?"

COREY: Come on, man.

DASHAUN: I'm just shouting out.

COREY: [*Getting excited.*] Hey, hey. Maybe we could "rap" all the drug dealers up and send them FedEx to the North Pole.

DASHAUN: Humm. . . . Wait a minute. [*He begins to bang out a beat.*]

Now it wouldn't be too cold

In fact, it'd be big and bold

If we could rap up some dudes

And send them straight to the Pole.

COREY: [*Jumping in.*]

Uh . . . uh, polar bears to the right

Snowdrifts to the left

And a temperature so low

They're gonna always see their breath.

[*The boys take bold stances and slap fives, then stop and pull back.*]

Needs a lotta work, right?

DASHAUN: A *whole* lotta work. [*They laugh.*] But it could be goin' on. We could call ourselves the CD Players.

COREY: I like that. Especially with the "C" coming first.

DASHAUN: Uh-huh.

COREY: Well, I *am* the oldest. By one whole month.

DASHAUN: True 'dat, "Shrimpie."

COREY: [*Feigning indignation.*] Don't call me that.

DASHAUN: Why? What you gonna do? Protest? Rap me over the head?

COREY: Your grandma's gonna be rapping you if you don't get home soon.

DASHAUN: Naw, she don't do no corporal punishment.

COREY: Not yet, you mean.

DASHAUN: So let's kick it then. [*He takes off running.*]

COREY: Hey, no fair! [*He takes off after him.*]