

NEWBERY MEDAL-WINNER

# THE CROSSOVER

GRAPHIC NOVEL



BY **KWAME ALEXANDER**

ILLUSTRATED BY **DAWUD ANYABWILE**

# THE CROSSOVER



THE

# CROS



# SOVER

BY KWAME ALEXANDER

ILLUSTRATED BY DAWUD ANYABWILE



ANDERSEN PRESS

*For Samayah and Jackson-Leroi*

—K.A.

*I dedicate this book to the memory of my high school art teacher and mentor, the late Mr. Bernard Harmon—Central High School of Philadelphia. Thank you for your guidance, patience, and instruction.*

—D.A.

This edition first published in Great Britain in 2020 by  
Andersen Press Limited  
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road  
London SW1V 2SA  
www.andersenpress.co.uk

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

First published in the United States of America in 2019 by  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Published by special arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt  
Publishing Company, and Rights People, London

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

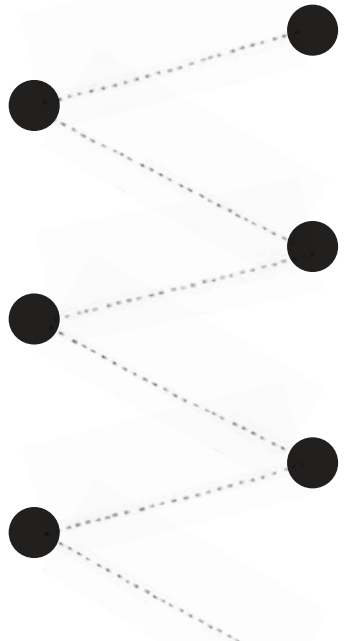
The rights of Kwame Alexander and Dawud Anyabwile to be identified as the author and illustrator of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

Text copyright © Kwame Alexander, 2014  
Illustrations copyright © Dawud Anyabwile, 2019

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data available

ISBN 978 1 78344 959 0

Printed and bound in Italy by Elcograf



**WARM-UP**



# DRIBBLING

AT THE TOP OF THE KEY, I'M  
MOVING & GROOVING,  
POPPING AND ROCKING—

WHY YOU BUMPING?

WHY YOU LOCKING?  
MAN, TAKE THIS THUMPING.

BE CAREFUL THOUGH, 'CAUSE NOW I'M CRUNKING

CRISSCROSSING  
FLOSSING

FLIPPING AND MY DIPPING  
WILL LEAVE YOU

SLIPPING

ON THE  
FLOOR,





WHILE I SWOOP  
IN TO THE FINISH



WITH A  
FIERCE  
FINGER ROLL...



STRAIGHT  
IN THE  
HOLE!

SWOOSH!



JOSH BELL  
IS MY NAME.



BUT FILTHY McNASTY IS MY CLAIM TO FAME.

FOLKS CALL ME THAT 'CAUSE MY GAME'S  
ACCLAIMED,



SO DOWNRIGHT  
DIRTY,

IT'LL PUT YOU  
TO SHAME.

MY HAIR IS  
LONG,

MY HEIGHT'S  
TALL.



SEE, I'M  
THE NEXT  
KEVIN DURANT



LEBRON

AND  
CHRIS PAUL.





REMEMBER THE  
GREATS,  
MY DAD LIKES TO  
GLOAT:

I BALLED WITH  
MAGIC  
AND THE  
GOAT.

BUT TRICKS ARE FOR  
KIDS, I REPLY.

DON'T NEED YOUR PETS  
MY GAME'S **SO FLY.**

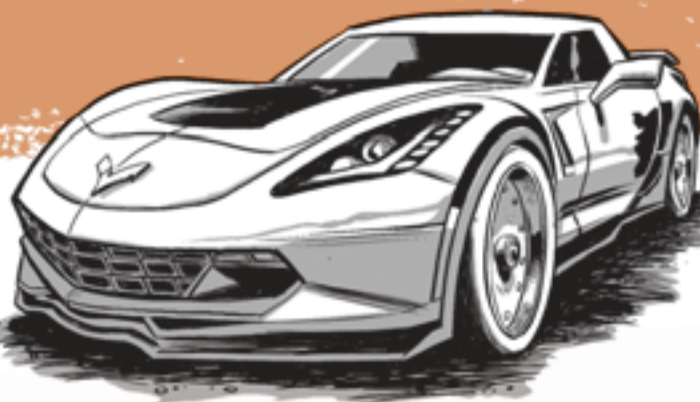




MOM SAYS, YOUR DAD'S OLD  
SCHOOL, LIKE AN OL'  
CHEVETTE.



YOU'RE FRESH AND NEW,  
LIKE A RED CORVETTE.



YOUR GAME  
SO SWEET,

IT'S A CRÊPES  
SUZETTE.





EACH TIME YOU **PLAY**

IT'S

**ALLLLLLLLLL**

**NET.**



IF ANYONE ELSE CALLED  
ME **FRESH** AND  
**SWEET**,

I'D BURN MAD AS A **FLAME**.  
BUT I KNOW SHE'S ONLY  
TALKING ABOUT  
**MY GAME**.

SEE, WHEN I PLAY BALL,  
I'M ON **FIRE**.

WHEN I SHOOT,  
I **INSPIRE**.

THE HOOP'S FOR  
SALE, AND I'M THE  
**BUYER**.





# HOW I GOT MY NICKNAME

I'M NOT THAT BIG ON JAZZ MUSIC,  
BUT DAD IS.

ONE DAY WE WERE LISTENING  
TO A CD OF A MUSICIAN  
NAMED HORACE SILVER,  
AND DAD SAYS,

JOSH, THIS CAT IS THE REAL  
DEAL. LISTEN TO THAT PIANO,  
FAST AND FREE, JUST LIKE YOU  
AND JB ON THE COURT.

IT'S OKAY, I GUESS, DAD.

OKAY? DID YOU SAY  
OKAY?



BOY, YOU BETTER RECOGNIZE GREATNESS WHEN YOU HEAR IT.  
HORACE SILVER IS ONE OF THE HIPPEST. IF YOU SHOOT  
HALF AS GOOD AS HE JAMS —

DAD, NO ONE SAYS "HIPPEST" ANYMORE.

WELL, THEY OUGHT TO, 'CAUSE THIS CAT  
IS SO HIP, WHEN HE SITS DOWN HE'S  
STILL STANDING, HE SAYS.

REAL FUNNY, DAD.





YOU KNOW WHAT,  
JOSH?



WHAT,  
DAD?



I'M DEDICATING THIS NEXT SONG TO YOU.  
WHAT'S THE NEXT SONG?

ONLY THE BEST SONG, THE FUNKIEST SONG  
ON SILVER'S PARIS BLUES ALBUM:

"FILTHY McNASTY."



HORACE SILVER QUINTET  
FILTHY McNASTY

# AT FIRST

I DIDN'T LIKE THE NAME BECAUSE  
SO MANY KIDS MADE FUN OF ME  
ON THE SCHOOL BUS,

AT  
LUNCH,

IN THE  
BATHROOM.



EVEN MOM HAD JOKES.

IT FITS YOU PERFECTLY, JOSH.  
SHE SAID: YOU NEVER CLEAN  
YOUR CLOSET, AND THAT BED  
OF YOURS IS ALWAYS FILLED  
WITH COOKIE CRUMBS AND  
CANDY WRAPPERS.

IT'S JUST PLAIN NASTY, SON.



BUT, AS I GOT OLDER  
AND STARTED GETTING GAME,  
THE NAME TOOK ON A NEW MEANING.

AND EVEN THOUGH I WASN'T INTO ALL  
THAT **JAZZ**, EVERY TIME I'D  
SCORE, REBOUND, OR **STEAL**  
A **BALL**, DAD WOULD JUMP  
UP **SMILING** AND  
**SCREAMIN'**,



THAT'S MY BOY OUT THERE,  
KEEP IT **FUNKY, FILTHY!**

AND THAT MADE ME FEEL  
REAL GOOD ABOUT MY  
**NICKNAME.**





# FILTHY McNASTY

IS A MYTHICAL MANCHILD OF  
RATHER DUBIOUS DISTINCTION.

ALWAYS AGITATING,  
COMBINATING, AND  
ELEVATING HIS GAME.

HE DRIBBLES, FAKES, THEN TAKES  
THE ROCK TO THE GLASS, FAST,  
AND ON **BLAST**.

BUT WATCH OUT WHEN HE  
SHOOTS OR YOU'LL GET

SCHOOLED  
FOOLED  
UNCOOLED.

'CAUSE WHEN FILTHY  
GETS HOT HE HAS A

SLAMMERIFIC SHOT.

IT'S DUNKALIGIOUS CLASSY  
SUPERSONIC SASSY  
AND DOWNRIGHT  
IN YOUR FACE  
McNASTY.



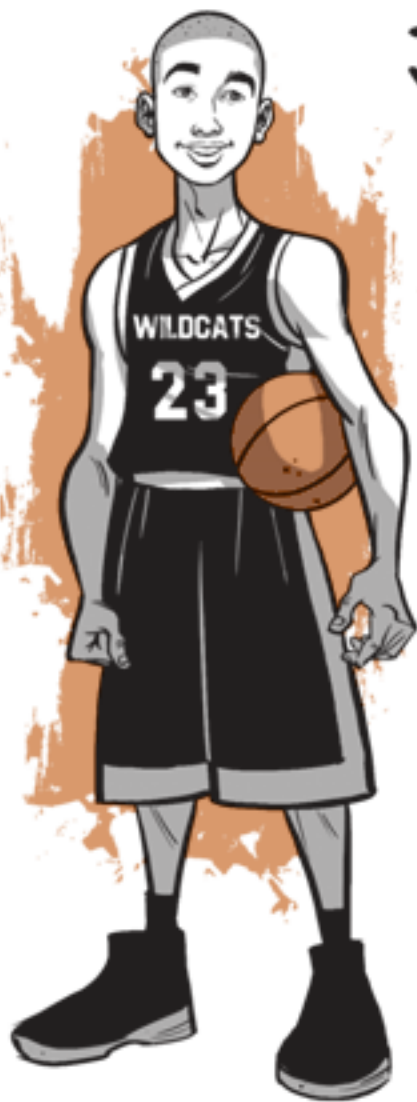
# JORDAN BELL

MY TWIN BROTHER IS A **BALLER**.

THE ONLY THING HE LOVES MORE THAN BASKETBALL IS **BETTING**.

IF IT'S NINETY DEGREES OUTSIDE AND THE SKY IS **CLOUDLESS**, HE WILL BET YOU THAT IT'S GOING TO **RAIN**.

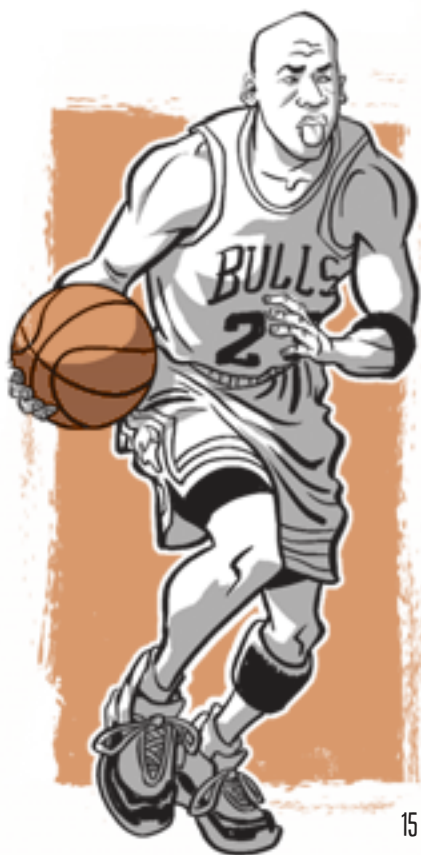
IT'S ANNOYING AND SOMETIMES **FUNNY**.



JORDAN INSISTS THAT EVERYONE CALL HIM **JB**.

HIS FAVORITE PLAYER IS **MICHAEL JORDAN**, BUT HE DOESN'T WANT PEOPLE TO THINK HE'S **SWEATING HIM**.

EVEN THOUGH **HE IS**.





EVIDENCE: HE HAS ONE PAIR  
OF AIR JORDAN SNEAKERS  
FOR EVERY MONTH OF THE YEAR  
INCLUDING AIR JORDAN  
1 LOW BARACK  
OBAMA EDITIONS,

WHICH HE  
NEVER WEARS.

PLUS HE HAS MJ  
SHEETS, PILLOWCASES,  
SLIPPERS,



SOCKS,  
UNDERWEAR,  
NOTEBOOKS, PENCILS,  
CUPS, HATS,

WRISTBANDS,  
AND SUNGLASSES.

