

## **Shooting Stars**

LeBron James, Buzz Bissinger

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From the ultimate team—basketball superstar LeBron James and Buzz Bissinger, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Friday Night Lights and Three Nights in August—a poignant, thrilling tale of the power of teamwork to transform young lives, including James's own

The Shooting Stars were a bunch of kids—LeBron James and his best friends—from Akron, Ohio, who first met on a youth basketball team of the same name when they were ten and eleven years old. United by their love of the game and their yearning for companionship, they quickly forged a bond that would carry them through thick and thin (a lot of thin) and, at last, to a national championship in their senior year of high school.

They were a motley group who faced challenges all too typical of inner-city America. LeBron grew up without a father and had moved with his mother more than a dozen times by the age of ten. Willie McGee, the quiet one, had left both his parents behind in Chicago to be raised by his older brother in Akron. Dru Joyce was outspoken, and his dad was ever present; he would end up coaching all five of the boys in high school. Sian Cotton, who also played football, was the happy-go-lucky enforcer, while Romeo Travis was unhappy, bitter, even surly, until he finally opened himself up to the bond his teammates offered him.

In the summer after seventh grade, the Shooting Stars tasted glory when they qualified for a national championship tournament in Memphis. But they lost their focus and had to go home early. They promised one another they would stay together and do whatever it took to win a national title.

They had no idea how hard it would be to fulfill that promise. In the years that followed, they would endure jealousy, hostility, exploitation, resentment from the black community (because they went to a "white" high school), and the consequences of their own overconfidence. Not least, they would all have to wrestle with LeBron's outsize success, which brought too much attention and even a whiff of scandal their way. But together these five boys became men, and together they claimed the prize they had fought for all those years—a national championship.

Shooting Stars is a stirring depiction of the challenges that face America's youth today and a gorgeous evocation of the transcendent impact of teamwork.



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