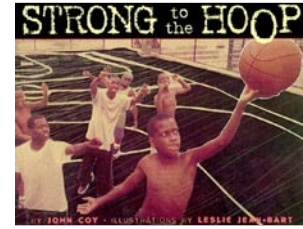


Strong to the Hoop by John Coy

Readers' Theater Script Adaptation
by Christine Boardman Moen



Chorus: **Dribble, Dribble, Dribble, Pass (Repeat)**

James: The ball bounces as my big brother Nate and I walk into the park.

Narrator: At the court everybody shakes hands, and the guys split into two teams of four, Shirts and Skins.

James: I wish I was big enough to play, but because I'm only ten. I go to the side court.

Narrator: No other kids are on the side court so James begins to practice his game.

Chorus: **Dribble, Dribble, Bounce Pass Shoot**

Narrator: Suddenly, a scream rips from the main court.

Luke: "Oh, No!"

Narrator: One of the players lies under the basket grabbing his ankle.

Luke: "I'm done. You need another player."

Narrator: Slinky points to James and says,

Slinky: "How about James? You want to run?"

James: "Yeah!"

Narrator: Nate and the guys gather around James, but Marcus says,

Marcus: "He's not big enough. Someone else will show."

Narrator: Zo picks up the ball and says,

Zo: "We're not waiting. C'mon James. You're a Skin."

- Narrator: Excitedly, James peels off his shirt. His brother Nate warns,
- Nate: "You guard Marcus. Stick to him!"
- James: I look at Marcus who's a head taller. His muscles push out of his shirt. Maybe I'm not ready to be out here yet.
- Zo: "Three, Three. Game's fifteen."
- James: Right away the ball goes to Marcus. I slip and fall to the asphalt as he goes to the hoop.
- Narrator: Out of nowhere, Slinky leaps to block Marcus' shot and gets the rebound. He flips a pass to James who bounces the ball twice and passes it to Zo.
- Chorus: **Dribble Dribble Pass**
- Zo: "Count it!"
- Narrator: yells Zo as the ball leaves his hand. The ball swishes in, and James thinks to himself,
- James: Someday I want to be able to shoot like that.
- Narrator: Nate rushes by James and tells him,
- Nate: "Play back on Marcus. Make him shoot outside!"
- Narrator: James shuffles his feet and bends his knees. Marcus is not impressed. He looks at James.
- Marcus: "You can't guard me."
- Narrator: Marcus shoots, but the ball rattles off the rim. Zo rebounds, and the Skins race the other way. Marcus is furious at James.
- Marcus: "You're too small. Get out of here or I'll push you out!"
- Narrator: At midcourt, Zo passes the ball to James who has a wide-open lay-up.
- James: Here's my chance. Shoot softly. Shoot softly.
- Marcus: "Miss! Miss!"

- Narrator: James' shot bangs off the rim. Everyone's eyes are on him.
- Nate: "James — go strong to the hoop!"
- Zo: "Go strong to the hoop, James!"
- Slinky: "Always go strong to the hoop!"
- Chorus: **Dribble. Dribble. Pass. GO STRONG TO THE HOOP!**
- James: I have to do better. I have to stay in the game. I bang against legs and hips to stay with Marcus. He keeps trash talking. His elbow hits my head, but I keep my feet. I'm breathing so hard my lungs feel on fire, and my mouth is so dry I can't spit.
- Narrator: Marcus makes a move, and James grabs him, tearing his shirt.
- Marcus: "What are you doing? You ripped my shirt!"
- James: "Call the foul then. I'm tired of your mouth!"
- Marcus: "Foul. And keep your hands off me!"
- James: "Then keep your hands off me at the other end!"
- Marcus: "What? I don't need to hold you! You're just a skinny kid!"
- Slinky: "Okay you two. Let's play ball."
- Narrator: A crowd has gathered around the court, and someone's turned on music. Marcus leads forward and makes a move. James slides his feet, and the ball hits Marcus' leg and skips out of bounds. Marcus glares at James but doesn't say anything.
- James: I zoom down court, ferocious like a lion. I bounce pass to Slinky, who scores off the board.
- Slinky: "Nice look, James!"
- Narrator: "The kid can hoop" says a man in dark glasses as James hurries back on defense.
- Chorus: **Dribble Dribble Pass. The kid can hoop.
Dribble Dribble Pass. Go strong to the hoop.**

- Narrator: Marcus is furious.
- Marcus: "OK, kid. You and me!"
- Narrator: Marcus pushes off James and hits a jumper.
- Zo: "Fourteen, fourteen. Game point! This is it!"
- James: The team that wins keeps playing, and I feel my heart beating. I wipe my hands on my shorts, but right away they're sweaty again.
- Narrator: Zo zips a pass to Nate. James and Marcus bump shoulders. Nate passes back to Zo, and Marcus rushes to double team. Zo passes to James.
- Zo/Nate/
Slinky: "Shoot it!"
- Narrator: James turns and shoots in one smooth motion.
- Nate: "Yes! Game point by James!"
- Narrator: Nate and Slinky lift up James who is grinning a championship smile.
- Zo: "That was our plan! Go to James for the game!"
- Narrator: Marcus walks to James and slaps his hand.
- Marcus: "Good game, James."
- James: "Good game, Marcus."
- Chorus: **Dribble Pass Good Game!**
- James: I'm happy as the last day of school. I can't believe I'm on the main court with these guys. I feel strong enough to run all afternoon.
- Narrator: At the hoop, four new players are warming up.
- James: "Zero, Zero, Going to fifteen. Ball's in! Going strong to the hoop!"
- All: Strong to the hoop!

THE END

Cast of Characters

Chorus: Three or Four Students. Each has a basketball.

James: Main character who stands apart from the action

*Narrator: Describes action

Players:	Marcus	Slinky
	Nate	Zo
	Luke (Two lines)	

**Narrator's lines can be split if larger cast is desired*