

DooRag



*Dedicated to Big L
A Son of Harlem
1979 - 1999*

© 2003
Diane Richards
530 Manhattan Ave. Apt. 32
New York, New York 10027

Flow

Part I

Dreams

Timberland
Strong Force
Athena
Durag
Big Daddy KRS1
Crack
Mason Tyler
Shaka
Zulu Land
Timberland's Purple Palace

Part II

Awake

MVP
The Corner
Tokyo
Yuko
Sao Paulo
Sonia
Harlem
Seville
Dion Rich

Part III

Life on Life's Terms

Street time
Jail Time
End of Game

Chapter 1 Timberland

At 7 years old, Lamont Coleman imagined himself a ferocious fighter and the son of a warlord named Big Daddy KRS1. Lamont lived in Timberland, a dangerous thugged-out playground deep in the heart of Harlem.

"I live in Timberland!" he said to his mother Latisha pointing to the dreary project playground on the corner of 123rd and Amsterdam Avenue. The moon was hanging low and clouded over in dark blue-sky dust making the playground appear ominous.

"You bet not come in here without my permission," he said to imaginary foes as he stood at the entrance of the dark court. He spied a group of bigger boys and said, "I mean you! Cuz I have my Timberlands on!"

A group of thugged-out boys were gathered together on the front courtyard of the General Grant housing projects shooting basketball, running killer rhymes and intimidating passersby who looked like outsiders.

A skinny, hood-wearing boy named Bones stood nearby with his taller best friend Sinister surveying the courtyard for trouble. When Bones saw DooRag marching toward them he roared with delight, "Yo, Yo! There's the

shortie who thinks he's sinister!" The boys stopped shooting ball and looked over at DooRag.

"Yo he look like me." Sinister shouted. "We bet not mess with him. Yo, we petrified shortie. We frightened little dude. We ain't gon mess with you. We got mad respect!" Then they started in on the strangerpeople passing by.

"Yo, Yo YO get the fuck outta here or hand over the food nigga," Bones yelled at a Chinese food deliveryman. The deliveryman scurried across the court into the building.

Even with all the cajoling of outsiders it was a quiet night in the General Grant projects; no one had gotten desperate enough to shoot or stab. Latisha looked at the young thugs bursting to be hard-core criminals and decided it was safe to walk by them this time.

"OK Lamont, you Mr. Timberland fo sure." But where the hell is Timberland?" she asked knowing he had made the name up.

He pouted at his mother. "Don't call me Lamont mama. My street name is DooRag!"

"What do you know about the streets? You seven years old."

His face went dark and flat - he hoped a slap wasn't on its way. She lit up a Kool cigarette inhaling deeply. Her nails needed done and she had no money except grocery money. She had to get those nails done so she'd have to feed them cereal again tonight.

"OK DooRag. Exactly what you know about Timberland? Is it gon get us some money?"

He beamed at hearing his street name. "Of course mama I'm gon get you some money. I'm mean. I can fight and when I get a big gun, I'm gon whip me some ass just like grandmaw!"

"OK then I can get with that," she giggled pulling her baby son to her chest.

They went inside the project building stepping over trash in the vestibule and bypassing a broken ceiling light. The elevator door was full of fingerprints and dirt. DooRag rushed to push the up bottom.

"Careful now. The door is nasty," Latisha said. "And don't rush right into the elevator - somebody might be in there waiting for you."

"I hope Leroy is home mama. I want to practice my rhymes."

He mumbled to himself, "My name is DooRag. I live to rule. I smash mikes and take no hypes. Call me DooRag."

The elevator came and a drunk stumbled off and into the hallway.

They got on the elevator and stepped around vomit. DooRag pressed the 13th floor button. When the door opened Latisha peeped out on the hall holding DooRag back. He peeped around his mother.

"OK," she said and then he ran down the long corridor to apartment 1313.

Hip-hop music seeped from underneath the door of apartment 1313 and mixed with the other music in the hall. Latisha and DooRag walked into the living room and saw Leroy slouched on the couch smoking a blunt; his three boys, Damen, Puffy and Mace, roughnecks from around the way, were bopping their heads in unison to Big L's Devil's Son.

Cut it off," Latisha said waving her hands through the reefer smoke. She walked to the living room window and opened it wide to let the smoke out.

"OK ma." Leroy cut the music off and put his blunt out and stuffed it into his shirt pocket. He nodded to his friends and they all stood up and headed for the door.

"We out ma."

"Where you goin'?"

"Around the way."

"Don't come in here after one. I mean that Leroy."

He said nothing. He leaned down at DooRag. "What chu got?"

"Nothin'. Nah, I mean a stash that gon make me mad loot! That's what I got."

"Give me some."

"DooRag pushed out his hands. It's all good ain't it Leroy."

"Yeah, it's all good DooRag," Leroy said with pride.

"Yo son you got it good," Damen added.

"Yeah he's mad cool," Mace said.

"Yo, your little bro is swift...mad swift," Puffy said.

"Too swift for his own good," Latisha said. "Tryin to act street."

"We out ma."

They left and as soon as they got out of the building the four young men turned old and mean as the streets they walked. They all wore Timberlands.