

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910162791003321
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Titolo	Jumped in // William Kowalski ; cover design by Jenn Playford
Pubbl/distr/stampa	[Victoria, Ontario] : , : Raven Books, , 2017 ©2017
ISBN	1-4598-1628-5
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (112 pages)
Disciplina	813.54
Soggetti	African American
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Sommario/riassunto	Sixteen-year-old Rasheed is smart, tough and a survivor. In his neighborhood, he has to be. The streets are run by a gang called the E Street Locals, and they've been trying to jump him in since he was a child. So far, he's managed to escape their clutches. But the gang is not his only problem. Rasheed's sister, Daneeka, was paralyzed in a drive-by shooting, and now she's confined to a wheelchair, mentally frozen at the age of nine. His mother is an addict. His father hasn't been heard from in years. High school is no safer than the streets, so Rasheed seeks solace at the local university campus. There he meets a young woman named Lanaia who takes an interest in him. He also bumps up against a police officer who he thinks at first is hassling him just because he's black. But eventually Rasheed realizes that the officer is only pushing him to become a better person. Though he can't escape his home life, or the gang, as easily as he'd like, Rasheed does learn some valuable lessons in his struggles: you and you alone are accountable for the decisions you make in life; even though the world is not a fair place, you can still accomplish whatever you set your mind to; and we all become stronger when we admit we need someone to lean on.