

**"I CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM WHO I AM,
BUT I CAN RUN TOWARD WHO I WANT TO BE."**



GHOST



2019/2020
SEASON

PRESENTING SPONSOR:



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*A rolling world premiere
by award-winning playwright*
IDRIS GOODWIN

*Based on the award-winning bestseller
by New York Times bestselling author*
JASON REYNOLDS

Co-commissioned by Metro Theater Company and Nashville Children's Theatre

SYNOPSIS

Castle Cranshaw, a.k.a. Ghost, has been running his entire life, but for all the wrong reasons. Then one day he meets Coach, an Olympic medalist who sees his unique raw talent. Can Ghost achieve the speed he needs for success, or will his past finally catch up to him?

TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE THE GUIDE:

- ABOUT THE AUTHOR
- ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT
- HISTORY OF TRACK
- CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
(with Common Core, Missouri GLE,
and National Core Arts Standards)
- DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
- RESOURCES FOR READERS
AND EDUCATORS

ABOUT THE PLAYRIGHT

Idris Goodwin is an award-winning playwright, director, orator, and educator. He is the Producing Artistic Director of Stage One Family Theater in Louisville, KY for which he penned the widely produced *And In This Corner: Cassius Clay*.

Other widely produced plays include: *How We Got On*, *This Is Modern Art* co-written with Kevin Coval, *Bars and Measures*, *The Raid*, and *Hype Man: a break beat play*. His *The Way The Mountain Moved* was commissioned and produced as part of Oregon Shakespeare's American Revolutions series.

He has work produced by or developed with The Actor's Theater of Louisville, Steppenwolf Theater, The Kennedy Center, The Denver Center

for The Performing Arts, Cleveland Playhouse, Seattle Children's Theater, Nashville Children's Theatre, Boulder Ensemble Theater, TheaterWorks, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor Program, La Jolla Playhouse, The Eugene O'Neill Center, The Lark Playwriting Center and New Harmony Project.

He's received support from the NEA, The Ford, Mellon and Edgerton Foundation, and is the recipient of InterAct Theater's 20/20 Prize and The Playwrights' Center's McKnight Fellowship. Idris is a member of The Dramatists Guild and serves on the boards of TYA/USA and The Children's Theatre Foundation of America.



▲ IDRIS GOODWIN

ABOUT the Author

Jason Reynolds wrote the novel *Ghost*, a National Book Award Finalist for Young People’s Literature. He is an American author who writes novels and poetry for young adult and middle-grade audiences.

Born in Washington DC and raised in neighboring Oxon Hill, Maryland, Reynolds found inspiration in rap to begin writing poetry at nine years old. He focused on poetry for approximately the next two decades, only reading a novel cover to cover for the first time at age 17 and publishing several poetry collections before he published his own first novel, *When I Was The Greatest*, in 2014.

He won the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent for this first work of prose and seven more novels followed in the next four years, including *Ghost* (2016) and three more books in what became his

New York Times best-selling Track series, *Patina* (2017), *Sunny* (2018) and *Lu* (2018); *As Brave As You* (2016), winner of the 2016 Kirkus Prize, the 2017 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work for Youth/Teen, and the 2017 Schneider Family Book Award; and a Marvel Comics novel called *Miles Morales: Spider-Man* (2017).

Reynolds returned to poetry with *Long Way Down* (2017), a novel in verse which was named a Newbery Honor book, a Printz Honor Book, and best young adult work by the Mystery Writers of America’s Edgar Awards.



HISTORY of Track

START

2
3

THE STARTING LINE (adapted from Nashville Children’s Theatre)

The character Ghost discovers a talent for track and invests time and practice into his love for a new sport. Humans have used running for survival since we have walked on two feet. The sport of track also dates back thousands of years in human history. Check out the timeline below to see some important events in track and field!

490 BCE Pheidippides ran the news of the Persian landing at Marathon, Greece back to Sparta, a distance of 26 miles.

776 BCE The first Ancient Olympic Games are held in Olympia, Greece, and a contestant named Koroibos won a foot race 600 feet long.

393 CE Christian Emperor of Rome, Theodosius I, ordered closure of the Ancient Olympic Games.

1873 CE The Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletes of America held the first collegiate track races.



1896 CE The Modern Olympic Games began



1908 CE The “marathon” distance is standardized as 26.2 miles (or 42.195 km) and incorporated into the Modern Olympic Game events.

1912 CE The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) was founded after the Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden. The IAAF created and adopted Modern Rules for Track and Field.



1913 CE Because the Olympics were intended to be an event solely for amateur athletes, **Jim Thorpe** was stripped of his 1912 Olympic medals because he had previously been paid to play baseball.



1921 CE The first NCAA national championships were held for men in America.

1928 CE Women’s track and field events were allowed to be part of the Olympic Games.

1936 CE **Jessie Owens**, an African American US runner, won four gold medals in the Berlin Summer Olympic Games.



1952 CE The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) sent their first team to the Helsinki Summer Olympic Games, which sparked the first rivalry in sports between the US and the USSR.

1960 CE Sir Ludwig Guttman, neurologist, brought 400 athletes in wheelchairs to compete in what was called the Parallel Olympics to the Rome Summer Olympics. The name was later changed to the Paralympics.



1960 CE Also at the Rome Olympics, **Wilma Rudolph**, a black woman who had suffered and then recovered from polio in childhood, became the first American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympiad.



1968 CE African-American Athletes Tommie Smith (Gold Medal) and John Carlos (Bronze Medal) raise their fists in a “Black Power” salute on the podium of the 200m sprint at the Mexico Olympic Games.



1982 CE The IAAF revises its rules to allow athletes to receive payment for international competition. Jim Thorpe’s amateur status and two Olympic medals are restored posthumously.



1984 CE Zola Budd tripped reigning world champion **Mary Decker** at the Los Angeles Olympics and received backlash from the athletic community.



1988 CE **Ben Johnson** was stripped of his gold medal for using performance-enhancing drugs at Summer Olympic Games in Seoul.



1992 CE Just 15 seconds into a 400m semifinal race at the Barcelona Summer Olympics, **Derek Redmond** tears his hamstring, losing any shot at a medal. However, he continued to push through his injury and finish the race.



2000 CE **Cathy Freeman**, an Australian athlete and aboriginal woman, won gold in the 400m final in the Sydney Summer Olympics.



2008 CE **Usain Bolt** beats the world record in the 100m sprint, becoming the fastest man ever at the Beijing Summer Olympic Games.





TEAMWORK/COLLABORATION DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITY

SUPPORT THE TEAM!



Ghost and his teammates find ways to work together and respect one another, even when they aren't getting along. As a team they have to support one another. When one member of the team wins they can all share in that success. Invite your students to practice supporting one another just like Ghost and his teammates.

- Select one student to go into a separate room, so they cannot hear what the class is discussing.
- As a group, come up with a task the student who is outside of the room can complete. *(For example, the student might pick up a specific object.)*
- After the task has been determined, invite the student in the hallway back into the room. As a class, you must help the student complete the task without using any words or motions. If a student gets closer to completing the task, the students can clap. If the students get farther away from completing the task, the class does nothing.
- When the student has completed the task, the rest of the class will cheer for the student!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- **What was it like to be the student who left the classroom?**
- **What was it like to be the students helping someone else complete the task?**
- **What tactics were most successful for the students who left the classroom?**

MISSOURI COMMUNICATION ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

LS1B K-8 Demonstrate listening behaviors

MISSOURI PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

PS2A, B, C K-8 Interacting with others in ways that respect individual and group differences

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

ANCHOR STANDARD 1 Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

CROSS THE LINE



Throughout the play, several Characters in *Ghost* push against assumptions people make about them. Ghost has to work through assumptions people make about him because of where he lives and Lu faces assumptions that people make related to his albinism.

Try this activity to break down assumptions students may have about one another, and to help them see what they have in common! Arrange students in two lines on either side of the room, facing each other. Have them imagine there is a line down the middle. The facilitator will read a series of statements and if the statement is true for them they will walk across the room and join the other line.

This is also a non-verbal activity. Encourage students to notice who is crossing with them and who is standing on the line with them. If they have a question about one of the statements, it is whatever the statement means to them.

Create statements based on what is happening in your school. Check out the examples below and then make your own!

CROSS THE LINE IF...

- Reading is one of your favorite activities.
- You like to run like Ghost.
- You have ever been on a team.
- You think your parents are too strict.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- **What made you proud or excited to cross the line?**
- **Did anything make you nervous to cross the line?**
- **Were you ever surprised to find out you had something in common with someone else in the class?**

MISSOURI PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

PS1C K-8 Citizenship and contribution within a diverse community

WHERE I'M FROM POEM



Both author Jason Reynolds and playwright Idris Goodwin are avid poets. Idris Goodwin even captures the sensation of running onstage through poetry.

Throughout the story, Ghost explores his identity and what makes him unique. Use the following prewriting questions to write "Where I'm From" poems for students to reflect and honor who they are and their upbringing. After students answer the questions, they should go back and insert describing words (I am from **delicate** flowers, **smiling** Aunt Rose, and **bubbling** beef stew).

- One interesting item you would find in my home is...
- One special place you would find in my neighborhood is...
- The name of a relative or family friend who is special to me is...
- Something adults always say to me is...
- At family gatherings, we always eat...
- An activity I really enjoy outside of school is...
- A sound you often hear in my home is...
- A smell you find in my home is...
- A special place my family likes to visit is...

To write the poem students should write three sentences using the following template.

I am from _____, _____, and _____.

MISSOURI ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

W2C K-8 Compose well-developed writing texts for audience and purpose.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

ANCHOR STANDARD 2 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.



RESOURCES FOR READERS

Also by Jason Reynolds:

- Track Series
 - *Patina*
 - *Sunny*
 - *Lu*
- *As Brave As You*
- *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio
- *March* by John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell
- *The Only Game* by Mike Lupica

LEARN MORE ABOUT TRACK HISTORY!

Jessie Owens: olympic.org/videos/jesse-owens-s-inspiring-history

Paralympics: youtu.be/6RMOSDyknw8

Tommie Smith and John Carlos: youtu.be/NAacHuPgTE

Usain Bolt: youtu.be/qs1bf8L9nIO

RESOURCES FOR RUNNERS

St. Louis Track Club: stlouistrackclub.com

Girls on the Run: girlsontherunstlouis.org

Boys and Girls Club: bgcstl.org/programs/sports-fitness-and-recreation

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS:

National Child Traumatic Stress Network:

<https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/school-personnel>

Children and Families of the Incarcerated Facts:

<https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/files/nrccfi-fact-sheet-2014.pdf>

Preventing Classroom Violence:

- tolerance.org/classroom-resources

- <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/prevention.html>

- creducation.org

Albinism:

- albinism.org



1. Have you ever been a “new kid” at your school or in a club? What did other students do to make you feel welcome or unwelcome?

2. The tagline for *Ghost* is “I can’t run away from who I am, but I can run toward who I want to be.” What does this quote mean to you? In what ways does Ghost run toward or from his life?

3. Throughout the play, Ghost has to face the assumptions he fears people make about him, and he makes some incorrect assumptions himself. Have you ever made an assumption about someone that turned out to be wrong? Has anyone ever made an assumption about you? How did that make you feel?

4. What could Ghost have done when he was provoked by Brandon instead of resorting to violence?

5. Why did Ghost choose to steal the shoes from the athletic store?

6. What does it feel like when people call you names or insult you?

7. What does it mean to be on a team?

8. If you could break a world record, which one would you try to break?

9. At the end of the play, we don’t know if Ghost won his race. Why do you think the author made this choice? How do you think Ghost did?

10. If you’ve read the book *Ghost*, why do you think the playwright Idris Goodwin made the changes he did?



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MISSION

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.

