

# Alliance Theatre

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## *institute*

Study Guide  
*Ghost*

Created as part of the Alliance Theatre's Dramaturgy by Students program  
by: Maya Lawrence, Teaching Artist  
with: Ms. Dorothy Bell, Drama Teacher and Mrs. Amethyst Clowers-Davis ELA teacher  
and: 6th grade students from Dekalb Elementary School of the Arts



By Jason Reynolds  
Adapted for the stage by Idris Goodwin  
Directed by Tinashe Kajese-Bolden

October 26 - November 9, 2019  
Rich Theatre

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## Georgia Standards of Excellence

### **English/Language Arts (Grades 6-8):**

- ELAGSE6RL3: Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves towards a resolution.
- ELAGSE7RL3: Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how settings shape the characters or plot).
- ELAGSE8RL3: Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- ELAGSE8RL6: Analyze how differences in the points of view of characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

### **Theatre Art (Grades 6-8):**

- TA6.CR.2: Develop scripts through theatrical techniques.
- TA6.RE.1: Engage actively and appropriately as an audience member.
- TA6.RE.2: Critique various aspects of theatre and other media.
- TA7.CR.1.b: Compare and contrast character types and relationships by analyzing character motivations, objectives, and goals.
- TA8.CR.1: Organize, design, and refine theatrical work.
  - a. Differentiate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a variety of characters.
  - b. Compare the relationships and interactions between characters by analyzing character motivation (objectives, obstacles, strategy, action, stakes, outcome).
- TA8.PR.1.a: Demonstrate the physical, emotional, vocal, and social dimensions of a character in different types of theatre performances (e.g. rate, pitch, volume, inflection, posture, facial expression, motivation, physical movement).

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## INSTANT REPLAY

### Synopsis

Castle Crenshaw, 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 talent and offers him a life-changing invitation to join the middle school track club. Can Ghost harness his raw gift for speed, or will his past finally catch up to him? (Source: <https://alliancetheatre.org/production/2019-20/ghost>)

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## THE PROS

### Author Study



*GHOST* is a play based on the novel of the same name by Jason Reynolds. Visit the author and poet's site (<https://www.jasonwritesbooks.com/>) to learn more about his career in "not writing boring books."

1. Jason Reynolds wrote a graphic novel for which popular Marvel superhero, which was later made into a movie in 2017?
2. *Ghost* is part of a series by Jason Reynolds. In what order does *Ghost* fall, and who are the other novels about?
3. At one point, Reynolds had 3 books on the New York Times bestsellers list. What are their titles?

#### **Jason Reynolds**

Author of the novel, *Ghost*

Photo Source: <https://www.greensborobound.com/jason-reynolds-is-coming-to-greensboro/>



Now, visit the playwright's website (<http://www.idrisgoodwin.com/>) to learn more about the writer who adapted Reynold's novel into a play.

1. Where else has Goodwin's *Ghost* been performed?
2. In addition to being writers, what other similarities do Goodwin and Reynolds share?
3. Goodwin is well-known for writing a series of plays. What is the name of the series, and what genre is his work based in?

#### **Idris Goodwin**

Playwright of *Ghost*

Photo Source: <https://www.stlmag.com/idris-goodwin>

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THE WARM UP  
Pre-Show Discussion Questions



1. What does it mean to “fit in”?
2. What does family mean to you?
3. What is your favorite sport or activity? How important is it to you?
4. With whom, where, or what makes you feel the most safe and/or special? Why?
5. What does it mean to run away from yourself?

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ON YOUR MARK  
Journal Prompt



The Guinness Book of World Records is a reference book listing world records of human achievement. Their goal is to “make the amazing, official.” Part of its purpose is to know who you are, and what you stand for.

In a journal entry, define:

- Who you are
- What you aspire to do or be
- The rules you live by
- Your greatest accomplishment (the most amazing thing that you’ve done in your life); and
- The most incredible thing that has ever happened to you

Photo source: <https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2017/8/national-book-lovers-day-10-page-turning-record-titles-to-celebrate-reading-485556>

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Word (part of speech)	Definition	Used in context
Altercation (noun)	A noisy argument or disagreement, especially in public. <i>synonym</i> fight	"...the only place I would be a problem was on the track...no more altercations" (page 23)
Rap sheet (noun)	A criminal record	"I got a rap sheet. No I'm not a rapper." (page 23)
Cleaver (noun)	A tool with a heavy, broad blade, used by butchers for chopping meat.	"Look at the size of that cleaver ooooooh!" (page 46)
Adrenaline	A hormone secreted by the adrenal gland in conditions of stress, increasing rates of blood circulation, breathing, and metabolism.	"Can't look back My adrenaline" (page 47)
Loitering (verb)	To stand around idly or without apparent purpose	"pointing to the no loitering sign" (page 53)
Phlebotomy (noun)	The surgical opening or puncture of a vein to withdraw blood or introduce a fluid.	"I gotta log on and take my test on phlebotomy" (page 58)
Salisbury Steak (noun)	Dish made from a blend of minced beef and other ingredients, usually shaped into a steak	"Well tonight you and me are having Salisbury steak." (page 58)
Albino (noun)	A person or animal with pale skin, light hair, and visual abnormalities resulting from a hereditary inability to produce the pigment melanin	"what I would look like if I weren't albino" (page 60)
Diabetes (noun)	A disease in which the body's ability to or respond to the hormone insulin is impaired, resulting in abnormal metabolism of carbohydrates and elevated levels of glucose in the blood and urine.	"She got the sugar. You know, diabetes." (page 63)
Fartlek (noun)	A system of training for distance runners in which the terrain and pace are continually varied to eliminate boredom and enhance psychological aspects of conditioning	"Fartleks!...Sounds like fart licks right?" (page 65)

Read Goodwin's note below:

**Setting: An urban American City, now**

**THOUGHTS ON STAGING:**

This book is about movement and I wanted this play to also be about movement. We move through memory and setting swift but it's always connected. To put it plain, it flows.

The scenery in my brain mirrors that. Concentric circles and silos and cylinders of varying sizes that move. Some provide different setting backdrops or maybe they're visuals projected onto them. Some move set pieces on and off. Some have tread on them so actors can run in place.

It will allow us to move fluid without black outs. And of course, light and sound will help guide and accentuate that flow.

**Discussion questions:**

1. What do we know about the setting (and set), based on this description?
2. Why do you think the playwright doesn't name a specific American city?
3. How important is location in the telling of this story?
4. Consider the saying "Home is where the heart is."
  - What does that expression mean?
  - Where is "home" for Castle?

**Activity:** People, Shelter, Boom

*\*This activity requires an open space for movement\**

- Divide into groups of 3
- Shelter: 2 people on the sides will raise their arms above the person in the middle to form a "house" above their third team member
- People: the person in the middle is "people"
- When the instructor says "Shelter," the 2 people on the sides will break apart to create a shelter with someone else over a new "People"
- When the instructor says "People," the person in the middle will leave their "Shelter" to find a new group for "Shelter"
- When the instructor says "Boom," everyone will change their location, and can change their role as "People" or "Shelter"
- The instructor randomly alternates the commands of "Shelter," "People," and "Boom."

**Reflection questions:**

- How did you feel during People, Shelter, Boom?
- How does this activity relate to Castle's experience in *Ghost*?

TRACK

The Movement of the Plot

Ghost makes a series of **choices** that develop and complicate his story. As you read the play or novel *Ghost*, track at least 3 significant plot points (major moments that force the story to go in a specific direction).

For each plot point, identify:

- The event that happens
- Castle's options (at least two different options)
- The results that follow the choice he made

Plot Point	Event	Castle's Options	Results
#1			
#2			
#3			

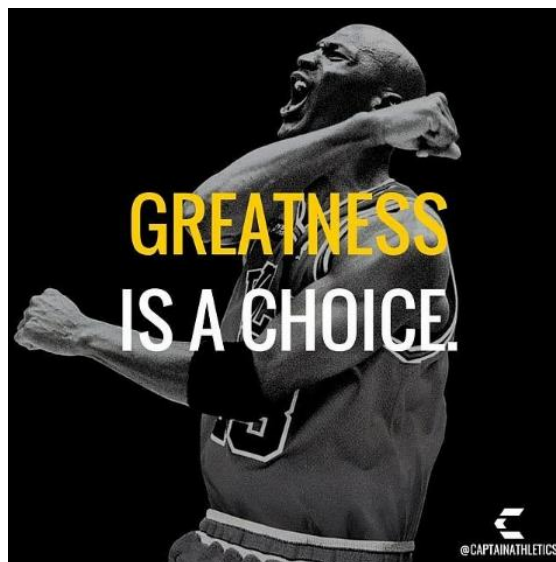


Photo source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/542824561317779868/>

Character Analysis



Pick one of the adults from the play – Coach or Terri, Castle’s Mom.

1. What motivates the character? (Hint: a complex character has multiple or conflicting motivations).
2. How does the character interact with others throughout the play?
3. How does the character develop throughout the play?
4. How does this character’s thoughts, words, or actions contribute to a major theme?

Recipe of Ghost


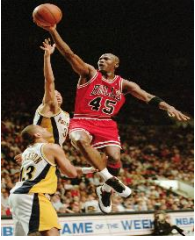





- Create a list to describe Ghost’s identity, his personality traits, things he likes to do.
- Turn that list into a recipe for the character of Ghost.
  - Example: 1 tablespoon of courage, 3 cups of patience).
  - Each recipe should include a list of ingredients and measurements, cooking and serving instructions, and an original title.

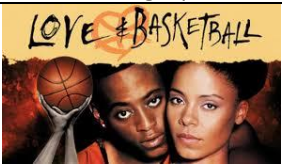
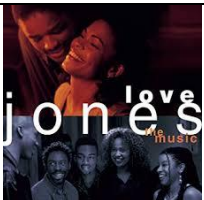







Photo source: <https://spark.adobe.com/make/card-maker/recipes/>

EVERYTHING SPORTS

Allusions

Photograph	Description
	<p><b>Guinness Book of World Records-</b> a reference book published annually since 1955 for international human achievements and the extremes of the natural world</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/">https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/</a></p>
	<p><b>Michael Jordan-</b> American former professional basketball player and the principal owner of the Charlotte Hornets of the National Basketball Association. He played 15 seasons in the NBA, winning six championships with the Chicago Bulls.</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.nba.com/history/legends/profiles/michael-jordan">https://www.nba.com/history/legends/profiles/michael-jordan</a></p>
	<p><b>Lebron James-</b> A current American professional basketball player for the Los Angeles Lakers of the National Basketball Association. (often regarded as the best basketball player of all time)</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://www.lebronjames.com/">http://www.lebronjames.com/</a></p>
	<p><b>Usain Bolt-</b> a Jamaican olympic sprinter with the world record of being the world's fastest man after winning three gold medal at 3 consecutive olympics in 2008, 2012, and 2016.</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.olympic.org/usain-bolt">https://www.olympic.org/usain-bolt</a></p>
	<p><b>James Brown-</b> was an American singer, songwriter, dancer, musician, record producer and bandleader. He is often referred to as the "Godfather of Soul".</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.biography.com/musician/james-brown">https://www.biography.com/musician/james-brown</a></p>
	<p><b>Lord of the Flies-</b> a 1954 novel by Nobel Prize–winning British author William Golding. The book focuses on a group of British boys stranded on an uninhabited island and their disastrous attempt to govern themselves.</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/">https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/flies/</a></p>
	<p><b>Alexander the Great-</b> a king of the ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/alexander-the-great">https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/alexander-the-great</a></p>

Photograph	Description
	<p><b>Love and Basketball-</b> a 2000 American romantic drama film starring Sanaa Lathan and Omar Epps. The film tells the story of two next-door neighbors in Los Angeles, California who are pursuing their basketball careers before eventually falling for each other.</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/love_and_basketball">https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/love_and_basketball</a></p>
	<p><b>Love Jones-</b> a 1997 romantic drama starring Nia Long and Lorenz Tate. The story of a novelist and photographer falling in love at first sight, invoking jazz and poetry in Chicago.</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/love_jones">https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/love_jones</a></p>
	<p><b>Puma-</b> third largest sportsware brand manufacturer</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://us.puma.com/en/us/home">https://us.puma.com/en/us/home</a></p>
	<p><b>High Tops-</b> a shoe that extends slightly over the wearer's ankle. It is commonly an athletic shoe, particularly for basketball</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.insidescience.org/news/high-tops-low-tops">https://www.insidescience.org/news/high-tops-low-tops</a></p>
	<p><b>Hospital scissors-</b> are designed for use by medical professionals in their facilities to cut sutures, skin tissue, clothing and any other materials the need immediate access.</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.vitalitymedical.com/medical-scissors.html">https://www.vitalitymedical.com/medical-scissors.html</a></p>
	<p><b>Carl Lewis-</b> an American former track and field athlete who won nine Olympic gold medals, one Olympic silver medal, and 10 World Championships medals, including eight gold. His career spanned from 1979 to 1996, when he last won an Olympic event</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.biography.com/athlete/carl-lewis">https://www.biography.com/athlete/carl-lewis</a></p>
	<p><b>1996 Atlanta Olympics-</b> an international multi-sport event that was held from July 19 to August 4, 1996, in Atlanta, Georgia, USA</p> <p>Source: <a href="https://www.olympic.org/atlanta-1996">https://www.olympic.org/atlanta-1996</a></p>

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THE COACH  
Exploring Mentorship



Photo source: [https://www.goodwillvalleys.com/work-and-training-services/youth-services/youth-mentoring/man-youth-mentors\\_optimized/](https://www.goodwillvalleys.com/work-and-training-services/youth-services/youth-mentoring/man-youth-mentors_optimized/)

Compare and contrast Coach and Castle:

- Consider their attitudes, upbringing, goals, and family relationships.
- How do they affect/influence each other?

Castle	Both	Coach

Reflection questions:

- Who is a mentor in your life?
- What advice has that person given you? Has it worked?
- What do you appreciate most about your mentor?

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THE FINISH LINE  
Post-Show Discussion Questions



1. *Making Predictions:* As an audience we are left with a cliffhanger at the end of the play. Do you think the final gunshot triggers Castle, like when he was stuck in Mr. Charles closet, or motivates him to run? What text evidence supports your prediction?
2. Who are the supportive people in Castle's life? What are examples of the way that they support him?
3. Consider Castle's altercations, or how he got the silver bullets. If you do "bad" things, but for a good reason, is it still wrong? What was his justification for those choices? How did he redeem himself? Did he know they were bad choices when he made them, or did someone help him own up to it after?



Photo source: <https://www.feedroll.com/publication/2743-how-one-very-bad-business-decision-killed-a-smartphone-giant/>

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VICTORY LAP  
Post-Show Journal Prompt



PHOTO SOURCE: <https://photos.com/featured/three-male-runners-crossing-finish-line-thomas-barwick.html?product=art-print>

### COACH

Showed me ---I can't run away from who I am, but I can run toward who I want to be.  
Does that make sense?

What does Coach mean when he says this to Castle?  
What are ways we see this to be true in Coach's life?  
In Castle's life?  
Can you think of any other character who this can apply to?

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What does it mean to own who are?  
Do you know who you want to be?  
What steps are you taking right now to make that happen?  
What are the obstacles in your way?  
Who are the people in your life that support you in becoming that?

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WINNERS CIRCLE  
Text-to-World Connections

Usain Bolt was the fastest runner on record, holding the most world championship gold medals.  
His record was broken by Olympian Allyson Felix on October 2, 2019.



Felix currently holds the most gold medals in championship history, male or female.  
Her connection to *Ghost* isn't just through Usain Bolt, though.

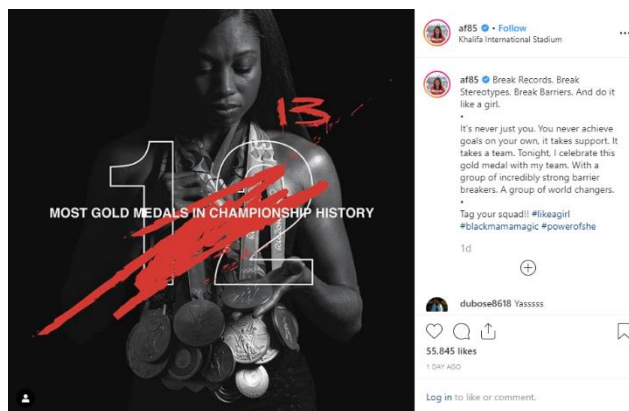
She is also connected to the character Sunny.  
Sunny mentions that his mother used to run marathons,  
and it was her goal to win one,  
but she died giving birth to him.

Felix, similarly, almost died during childbirth, giving birth only  
10 months before winning her record-breaking medal.

Black women in America are 3 to 4 times more likely to die during childbirth than white women.

As an athlete and activist, Felix uses her platform to raise awareness  
on the issue of Black Maternal Mortality.

In *Ghost*, we aren't told why Sunny's mother dies,  
but in the case of this world champion,  
her fate could've been the same.



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THE COOL DOWN  
Interpreting Photography

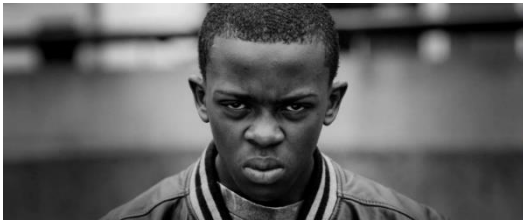
Take a look at the photos below.



A



B



C

For each photo, consider:

- What do you see?
- What do you think is happening?
- What do you wonder about the image?
- What is being expressed in each image?
- Which photograph is most captivating to you? Why?
- What three adjectives would you use to describe this image?
- How does the photograph connect to a major theme in *Ghost*?

**Activity:**

In groups of 3 or 4, create a tableau (a living picture) that depicts one of these photographs. Then, create a second tableau that illustrates its connection to a major theme in *Ghost*.

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