

Ghost

by Jason Reynolds



Inspirational Quotes

You can't run away from who you are, but what you can do is run toward who you want to be.

Trouble is, you can't run away from yourself." Coach snatched the towel from his shoulder, folded into a perfect square, and set it in the space between us. "Unfortunately," he said, "ain't nobody that fast."

Little. Don't ever let someone call your life, your dreams, little. Hear me?

Because for something to make you feel tough, you gotta be a little bit scared of it at first. Then you gotta beat it.

Have students create posters with an inspirational quote from Ghost. These can be hand-drawn or digital posters.



Symbols

Three important symbols for *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds are on the next pages. Have students respond to these symbols by telling the importance of each in the story.

Answer Key - Proof from Text Examples

Sunflower Seeds

Page 2 - Mr. Charles, who, by the way, looks just like James Brown if James Brown were white, has been ringing me up for sunflower seeds five days a week for about, let me think... since the fourth grade, which is when Ma took the hospital job. So for about three years now.

Pages 4-5 - My dad used to eat sunflower seeds too. That's where I get it from. But he used to chew the whole thing up. The shells, the seeds, everything. Just devour them like some kind of beast. When I was really young, I used to ask him if a sunflower was going to grow inside of him since he ate the seeds so much. He was always watching some kind of game, like football or basketball, and he'd turn to me just for a second, just long enough to not miss a play, and say, "Sunflowers are all up in me, kid."

Page 5 - Wasn't no sunflowers growing in him. Couldn't have been. I don't know a whole lot about sunflowers, but I know they're pretty and girls like them, and I know the word sunflower is made up of two good words, and that man ain't got two good words in him, or anything that any girl would like, because girls don't like men who try to shoot them and their son. And that's the kind of man he was.



Silver Bullets

The silver bullets represent the best and the worst part of Castle's dreams to belong to a team, to be part of something that is bigger than himself.

Page 85

I put the shoes on. The nines fit perfectly. After I laced them tight, I stood up and bounced up and down a few times like Tia suggested. They felt amazing, almost like I didn't have any shoes on at all. I stepped in front of the mirror to check myself out. Man. It looked like I was wearing spaceships on my feet. Or silver bullets! "How are they?" Tia came back over to check on me.

At this point in the story the shoes symbolize a lost dream.

Page 147

I unfolded it as quickly as I could because what the... and what I found on that piece of paper was the most shocking thing ever. It was a picture of me, dashing from the sports store. A close-up of my face, and underneath it, in red—big bold red—was the word SHOPLIFTER.

The shoes represent a change in Castle.

Page 164

I lifted my face and looked at Tia straight on. "I'm sorry," I started, and in that moment realized sometimes a real apology can go a long way.

The shoes finally represent success. Castle's dreams are fulfilled

Page 179

I was in lane six, Lu in lane one. I bent down, untied my silver shoes, then retied them. I looked around at the crowd, a smear of people rooting for their friend or son or brother or teammate.



Castle's Bedroom

The bedroom reminds Castle of the worst night in his life.

Pages 5-6

"We gotta go," she said, yanking the covers off the bed. And when I didn't move fast enough, she yelled, "Come on!"

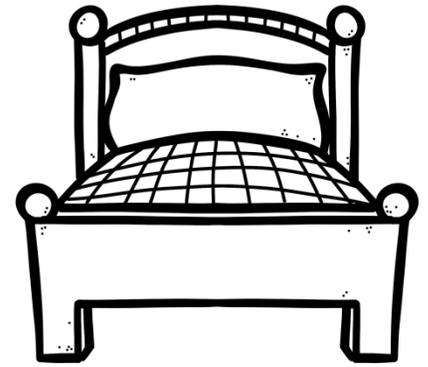
Next thing I knew, she was dragging me down the hallway, my feet tripping over themselves. And that's when I looked back and saw him, my dad, staggering from the bedroom, his lips bloody, a pistol in his hand.

"Don't make me do this, Terri!" he angry-begged, but me and my mom kept rolling. The sound of the gun cocking. The sound of the door unlocking. As soon as she swung the door open, my dad fired a shot. He was shooting at us! My dad! My dad was actually shooting... at... US! His wife and his boy! I didn't look to see what he hit, mainly because I was scared it was gonna be me.

By the end of the story Castle realizes that it wasn't the bedroom that causes his nightmares but the event he associated with it.

Page 168

My bed. The same cover. Same pillow. Same everything as that night. I sat on it, my bod sinking into the mattress, almost like it was wrapping itself around me, hugging me. Like it missed me.



Sunflower Seeds

Page 2 - Mr. Charles, who, by the way, looks just like James Brown if James Brown were white, has been ringing me up for sunflower seeds five days a week for about, let me think... since the fourth grade, which is when Ma took the hospital job. So for about three years now.



Why are sunflower seeds important to Castle?

How does eating sunflower seeds make Castle feel?

What memories from the past does Castle think of as he eats sunflower seeds?

Why is this important?

Silver Bullet Running Shoes

Page 85 - I put the shoes on. The nines fit perfectly. After I laced them tight, I stood up and bounced up and down a few times like Tia suggested. They felt amazing, almost like I didn't have any shoes on at all. I stepped in front of the mirror to check myself out. Man. It looked like I was wearing spaceships on my feet. Or silver bullets! "How are they?" Tia came back over to check on me.



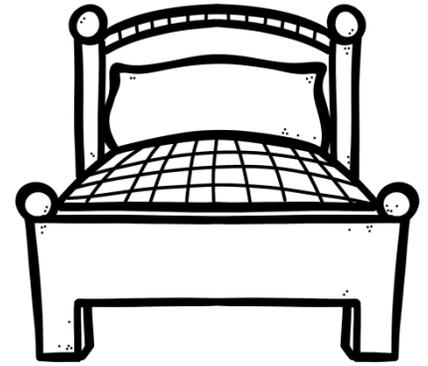
Why are the silver bullets important to Castle?

How does wearing the silver bullets make Castle feel?

Why is the silver bullets important?

Castle's Bed

Page 168 - My bed. The same cover. Same pillow. Same everything as that night. I sat on it, my bod sinking into the mattress, almost like it was wrapping itself around me, hugging me. Like it missed me.



Where does Castle normally sleep?

What changes that makes it feel okay for Castle to enter his bedroom?

Why does the bedroom and bed feel different to Castle at the end of the story than from the beginning of the story?

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