



# Telling Tales

# EDUCATOR'S

# GUIDE



# LONE RUNNER

## BY DIRK MCLEAN

**Ages:** 8-14 | 2021, James Lorimer & Company | **ISBN:** 9781459415928

Dirk McLean was born in Trinidad and came to Toronto as a teenager. He is the author of a series of sports-themed books geared to children and young adult readers, including *Not Out*, *Team Fugee* and *Tournament Fugee*. Dirk has hosted playwriting workshops in Canada, the Caribbean and South Africa, and he has written radio dramas and stage plays that have toured southern Ontario elementary schools.

Set in Scarborough, Ontario, Dirk McLean's *Lone Runner* follows Michaela as she goes from a solitary runner to an athlete who contributes to the success of her cross-country team. Focusing on themes of persistence, friendship and overcoming rivalries, this book illuminates traits of connection, empathy and forgiveness.

**Q:** Consider the differences between running track alone versus participating in cross-country on a team. Why might Michaela prefer one over the other and what could she learn from each experience? In your own life, what would you rather do?

**Activity:** Explore your own motivation by concentrating on times you are active throughout the day. As Dirk suggests, are these efforts mostly incidental like running for a bus or catching up to a friend? Or have you ever felt the urge to commit to competing in a race? Focus on your thoughts, your feelings and what gives you the confidence to move forward.

**Reflection:** When Michaela decides to go out for the cross-country team, she asks for her father's help. What benefits could she find in training for this new challenge with someone she trusts? And, in the passage Dirk reads, Michaela is the one that sets the pace of how fast and far they go. Why is this important?

**Bonus Activity:** Dirk was inspired to write this book through his involvement in the sport. He specifically mentions his appreciation of the discipline of running, the joy of being outdoors and the satisfaction that came when persisting on days he didn't feel like running at all! Is there a sport that inspires you? Write down some aspects of why you love to participate and what similarities you may have to this author's experience.

**Bonus Resources:**

Do you want to become a distance runner? Check out these resources.

[\*\*Athletics Canada\*\*](#)

[\*\*Athletics Ontario's Cross Country Club Listing\*\*](#)

[\*\*Canadian Collegiate Athletics Association-2021 Cross Country Championship\*\*](#)





# ACTIVITY SHEET

A large rectangular area enclosed by a dotted border, intended for drawing or free writing.

A series of ten horizontal solid lines for writing.



# ACTIVITY SHEET

