

PILOT THEATRE PRESENTS

RUN REBEL

BY MANJEET MANN

DIRECTED BY TESSA WALKER



RESOURCE PACK - PART A

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RUN, REBEL

*I am strength
I am power
I am courage
I am revolution
I am Amber Rai*

Amber is trapped – by her family's rules, by their expectations, by her own fears. But on the running track she is completely free. As her body speeds up, the world slows down. And the tangled, mixed up lines in her head get s t r a i g h t e r . . .

It's time to start a revolution: for her mother, for her sister, for herself.

Run, Amber. Run.

Run, Rebel is a world premiere adaptation of Manjeet Mann's celebrated novel. Following the acclaimed productions of *Noughts and Crosses*, *Crongton Knights*, *The Bone Sparrow*, and *A Song for Ella Grey*, Pilot Theatre brings another spellbinding adaptation of the very best recent young adult fiction to UK stages. Combining physical theatre and mesmerising visuals, and performed by a multi-talented ensemble this promises to be another landmark co-production made especially for audiences of 11+.

Original production co-produced with Mercury Theatre Colchester, Belgrade Theatre Coventry, Derby Theatre and York Theatre Royal.

TOUR DATES

Theatre Peckham

27 Sept – 05 Oct 2024

Leicester Curve

10 Oct – 12 Oct 2024

Oxford Playhouse

16 Oct – 19 Oct 2024

Leeds Playhouse

22 Oct – 26 Oct 2024

The Lowry

29 Oct – 02 Nov 2024

Traverse Theatre

06 Nov – 09 Nov 2024

ABOUT THIS PACK

Resource pack written by Carolyn Bradley
Edited by Oliver O'Shea
Designed by Sam Johnson
Rehearsal photos by Pamela Raith

If you have any questions about this resource pack or how to use it, please contact education@pilot-theatre.com

This resource pack accompanies the touring theatre production of *Run, Rebel* and is aimed at teachers and educators within English, Drama and PSHE curricula at KS3, KS4 and KS5 levels.

This pack can be used to help students understand the context of the story, themes, and concept behind the production. There are suggested activities and prompt questions to help engage students with some of the challenging issues and topics the play raises.

There are several existing resource packs already available from other organisations to support educators with the teaching of the *Run, Rebel* novel (see Resources and Links pp.50-51).

[Resource Pack Part B is available to download here.](#) Ideal for students preparing for the Live Theatre component of their exams, this resource includes filmed scene extracts from the live performance, allowing students to watch key scenes again, with accompanying analysis. The filmed content is audio described, BSL interpreted, and subtitled.

We are not responsible for the content of external links, and we strongly recommend checking the suitability of external content before sharing with your students.

We would also suggest that you consider whether any of the subjects explored in this pack may be triggering for some of your students. The production carries the following content warnings:

Run, Rebel contains depictions of violence (including domestic violence), alcoholism, bullying and discrimination. The production also includes references to 'honour' killings and some strong language.

A full synopsis of the production is available in this resource (pp. 7 -9), which includes plot spoilers.

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SYNOPSIS

This synopsis contains plot spoilers

Act One

Amber Rai lives in the Palm Wood estate. "One of the roughest and biggest estates in the country," with her mum and dad. She has a sister called Ruby who has left home. She talks about the stories she has heard about being unwanted as a baby due to being a girl, and how people prayed and wished she was a boy. Amber meets with her friends Tara and David on the first day back at school. David looks different after the summer break and Amber is attracted to him. In PE, Amber talks about the running track as being the only space she feels "free." Amber's teacher, Miss Sutton, wants Amber to train with the school for the county finals, so that she can go for the English Schools Athletics Championships. Amber says she can't because her dad won't let her. After school, Tara, David, and Amber go to McDonald's®, but Amber is trying to avoid being seen. After Amber runs home, her dad, Harbans, accuses her of lying about where she has been. He is drunk and aggressive. He reminds Amber about "The Man who killed his daughter-The daughter who shamed the family", a story Amber and Ruby were told as children to scare them into behaving. That evening, Amber follows the routine of having to read out her mum's shopping receipt to her, as neither her mum nor dad can speak, read or write English. Ruby, Amber and her mum then make and serve dinner for her dad when he returns home, he then goes back out again, and Amber's mum, Surinder, asks Amber to spell out her name in English so she can see what it looks like.

Back in school, Amber's History class starts learning about revolutions, and something stirs within Amber. At David's house for lunch, David's mum, Beena, asks about Amber and her mum, and says she was once in the position Amber's mum is in. She wants Amber's mum to go down to the community centre to meet people. Amber takes her dad to the job centre, and interprets for him in a meeting about their benefits being cut. After he criticises her interpretation, Amber answers back, and her dad threatens to break every bone in her body.

Miss Sutton has given Amber some new trainers which she says are from lost property, to replace Amber's ripped ones. She gives Amber a letter for her parents about allowing her to run. Amber is reading it aloud and her dad hears. He is in a strangely good mood and says he will think about letting her go, which amazes Amber, but when she tells her mum, she is suspicious. "Amber, don't you see. You can't trust him because he can't change. He will never change."

Surinder pours all of Harbans' alcohol down the sink, and when he returns home he attacks her in a rage. Amber is reminded of the History lessons and the stories of "Rebellions and their rebels" and she interrupts the fight, shouting at her dad to leave her mum alone.

Mirroring Harbans attacking Surinder at home, Amber verbally attacks Gemma, a girl at school, threatening her.

Surinder is looking at Amber's school books in her room and asks Amber to teach her to read English in secret. Amber teaches her slowly, starting their own revolution. Surinder signs the letter, consenting for Amber to take part in running practice after school.

Act Two

Amber continues to train to run, and Surinder continues to learn English. Amber is questioned by her dad again about where she has been after school, and she lies, telling him she has been studying. He threatens her by saying that people in the community will tell him things, and he will find out the truth. Amber is scared, but she is still strong, and tells her mum that "We can't let him win. We have to keep going Mum." Surinder goes to the community centre and meets Beena.

Amber trains but as she runs she is troubled by images of Tara and David, who she thinks are getting closer, and her mum, dad and the Man.

The home routine of Harbans returning home drunk is played out, with Surinder rolling out chapatis and Amber serving her dad. Harbans aggressively criticises Surinder for the chapatis being dry, and she answers him back, saying "What more do you want me to do? Nothing is ever good enough." This enrages Harbans, who then physically attacks her in front of Amber. Surinder is in hospital, and Ruby blames Amber, saying she is selfish for just focusing on her running. Jas, Ruby's husband, says they should do something to protect Amber and Surinder.

Back home, Amber looks after her mum and tries to make her comfortable. At school, Amber is angry and scared about everything that's happened at home, and takes it out on Gemma, threatening her. In a parallel scene, Harbans bumps into Beena and threatens her, ordering her to stay away from his family. Beena tells him she is not scared of him. After she has bullied Gemma, Tara and David tell Amber that she was out of order and that it "wasn't cool." Amber lashes out, telling them they don't understand what her life is like, and they argue. Tara and David try to understand but Amber pushes them away and they fall out. She reflects on how revolutions fail when groups split up and allow terror to rule.

At Christmas, Surinder encourages Amber to buy treats and nice food, as she wants this Christmas to be different and for Amber to make some nice memories. Amber doesn't see the point, as her dad drinks more at Christmas and it can be even worse. Amber reflects on how her running and rebelling against her family has caused her mum harm, and starts to think that Ruby is right, and she should give up being selfish and just look out for her mum more.

On Christmas Day, Amber's dad goes to the pub, but she asks him to come back by four so they can eat dinner together. He doesn't return, but is brought back hours later by neighbours who found him collapsed at the top of the road. Ruby and Amber kick him angrily as he lies unconscious on the living room floor. Ruby and Amber bond over this moment, and finally talk after years of being estranged. Ruby says she had to distance herself from the family when she moved out, to protect herself, and Amber tells Ruby how much this upset her and how lonely she has been.

At the Interschool Games, Amber races. She wins and is through to the regional finals, but struggles to be happy because of the turmoil in her life. Surinder talks to Beena, and says she is nearly ready to leave Harbans.

Amber attacks Gemma again, physically punching her this time.

At home, Surinder is reading with Ruby, and Harbans enters. He is angry, he has found out Amber has been at a running competition. He explodes in a rage at all of them, saying they have the devil inside them. As he goes to hit Surinder, Amber steps in and pushes him down. "Overthrow, overthrow, overthrow." They call Ruby, who comes to get them, and they leave with a small suitcase, Harbans begging them to stay. At Ruby's house, Amber has a panic attack, full of fear that, because they have left, the Man will now come after them. Jas tells Amber and Ruby that the Man across the street "wouldn't hurt a fly" and it transpires that the story of the Man murdering his daughter was made up by Harbans, to control them with fear. Amber and Ruby are shocked, but ultimately relieved.

Later, Amber is able to train in the park which is next to Ruby's house, and is embarking on "a new way of life." Amber apologises to Tara and David and they make up.

Amber briefly returns home to find her father in a pitiful state. He attempts to tell her about his life, mentioning being beaten as a child. He says he is "broken" and it's too late for him to learn how to love. Amber tells him it isn't too late, and leaves. Back at Ruby's home, Ruby confronts Surinder about not leaving Harbans sooner, and says she feels angry that she didn't have any choices when she was 18.

Amber and Surinder get their own home together and throw a small party. Surinder is more independent, shopping for things herself and knowing what she bought, and she attends classes at the community centre. Amber goes to the county finals to race, and David is there. He confesses his feelings for her, and they kiss. The play ends with three women together, "Ruby studying. Amber putting on a pair of trainers. Mum reading." Amber tells the audience they did it, they rebelled and they won. "We are rebels."

This synopsis was prepared from the rehearsal draft of the script and may differ from the final version of the play.

CHARACTERS

AMBER 15 years old

Amber is a passionate and talented runner, but lives her life in fear of her father. Harbans inflicts terror on his family, through physical and emotional abuse. He controls Amber's behaviour through fear and guilt, to the extent that she can't have normal teenage friendships and participate in extracurricular sports without lying to him. Amber acts as the translator and interpreter for her parents, who can't read nor speak English. Amber wants to protect her Mum but feels helpless, until she begins to teach her how to read. Amber is a bully herself, picking on and attacking Gemma, another student at school, which is a way of lashing out due to her own experiences of trauma. Later, Amber realises her actions are unacceptable. Amber is inspired by learning about rebellions in History at school and begins her own revolution.

Key Quote:

*No matter how small or quiet
I'm expected to be at home,
I find my voice on the running track
It's where I'm truly alive.*

HARBANS Amber's dad, late 40s

Harbans is an alcoholic and abuses his wife and daughters emotionally and physically. He cannot read or speak English, and his actions perhaps partly stem from his own feelings of inadequacy. He has experienced trauma himself, and briefly refers to his own damaged upbringing where he experienced child abuse and neglect. At times, he appears to have changed and is nice and loving towards Amber, but this is part of his manipulative character and his desire to control his family's behaviour. He is obsessive about his family's reputation in the community, often accusing Surinder of wanting to leave him, and Amber of lying to him. He appears to be respected by peers in the Temple and in the community and puts this reputation above the basic needs of his family.

Key Quote:

"My life... not easy. Here... Promise of a new life. A better life...But...No."

SURINDER Amber's mum, early 40s

Surinder is damaged by her own experiences of childhood trauma, where she was told she was unwanted because she was a girl. She is a victim of domestic abuse and coercive control and has not been able to learn to speak, read or write English, thus disempowering her further. She works very long hours in poor conditions and waits on her husband at home. Through Amber, and with Beena's support, she learns to read and write, and slowly becomes stronger. After she is brutally attacked and hospitalised by Harbans, she finally leaves with Amber, and they move in temporarily with Ruby. By the end of the play, Surinder is able to write notes to Amber in English, read simple books, and attends classes at the community centre with Beena where she is making friends.

Key Quote:

"When I arrived in this country, there were classes I could have taken. I could have learned to drive, I could have learned to read and write. But he can't read and write, he doesn't want a thinking wife, a progressive wife, a better life for me, for us."

RUBY Amber's sister, early 20s

Ruby is Amber's older sister who is married to Jas. Her marriage was arranged when she was 18, and although Ruby now has a good relationship with Jas and he is loving and kind, she still resents the fact that the marriage wasn't her choice. She wanted to go to university but was not allowed. Ruby recounts a story to the audience of when she tried to escape from home but her dad pulled her back by her hair, so she has also experienced emotional and physical abuse. She is estranged from Amber, who she frequently berates for being 'selfish' and focusing on her running instead of looking out for her mum. At the end of the play, Ruby has been more open with Jas, admitted she needs time to work out if she does love him or not, and is studying, suggesting she has achieved her goal of university.

Key Quotes:

RUBY: *"Someone, somewhere, had told him that girls do x, y, z at university. That so-and-so's daughter did x, y, z and now she's run away, got pregnant, doing drugs."*

RUBY: *"I need to figure out who I am."*

DAVID 15 years old

David is Amber's closest friend at school and a boy she is secretly attracted to. He is in the running club, and the daughter of Beena. He is worried about Amber and wants to help her but doesn't know how, and Amber's jealousy about his friendship with Tara causes tension. He doesn't understand why Amber isn't allowed to be seen with him, go to McDonald's ® or go to the running club. He knows that Beena left David's dad and he questions her about this, to try and understand more. David reveals at the end of the play that he also has feelings for Amber and they kiss.

Key Quote:

"It's Amber. I'm worried about her. Her dad won't let her join the athletics team this year..."

TARA 15 years old

Tara is Amber's close friend at school. She is interested in holistic therapies and wants to help Amber through her use of scented candles and crystals, and although she means well Amber finds this frustrating. She knows that something is up with Amber and wants to help but doesn't know what to do. Tara comes from a more privileged background and perhaps is unable to fully comprehend Amber's situation, but she is a good and loyal friend. It is suggested she too has feelings for David, but ultimately David chooses Amber.

Key Quote

"A sage candle. It'll help cleanse any negative energy by balancing out your chakras. You should light it when you meditate..."

BEENA David's mum

Beena met David's dad at 15 and was pregnant at 16. She was pressured into having an abortion, but didn't, and when everyone found out she was shamed and David's dad left her. She is a strong woman who now uses her strength to help women such as Surinder. She leads classes at the community centre for women. She is non-judgemental and empathetic. She knows about Amber and Surinder's situation, and tries to help, before they finally accept and Beena helps them escape Harbans.

Key Quote

"If there was nothing standing in your way...What sort of life do you want to live? And second, what sort of woman do you want to be?"

INTERVIEW WITH THE WRITER MANJEET MANN



Video filmed and edited by Ed Sunman.

[What inspired you to write this novel?](#)

[What were the challenges in adapting this novel for the stage?](#)

[Is the play still from Amber's perspective or has that changed?](#)

[How have you incorporated the verse into the action on stage?](#)

[What main themes will jump out to an audience?](#)

[What are your thoughts on the power of exercise?](#)

[Did you have a clear performance style in mind when writing the play?](#)

[Can you tell us about Amber and the kind of person she is?](#)

[How does the rehearsal process affect the development of the script?](#)

CREATIVE TEAM*

Novel by Manjeet Mann
Adapted by Manjeet Mann
Director: Tessa Walker
Designer: Debbie Duru
Lighting Designer: Ben Cowens
Video Designer: Daniel Denton
Associate Video Designer: Ben Glover
Sound Designer: Yvonne Gilbert
Composer: Niraj Chag
Vocalist: Japjit Kaur
Movement Director: Kuldip Singh-Barmi
Associate Movement Director: Ayesha Fazal
Casting Director: Olivia Barr
Casting Consultant: Polly Jerrold Casting
Casting Associate: Francesca Tennant
Staff Director: Neetu Singh

STAGE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Tour Production Manager: Luke James
Company Stage Manager, Colchester: Rebecca Samuels
Company Stage Manager, Tour: Emily Walls
Deputy Stage Manager: Jeanette Maggs
Assistant Stage Manager: Lizzie Hayward

*Creative Team, Cast and Stage Management Team from the 2023 Production

CAST



Pushpinder Chani
Harbans & Ensemble



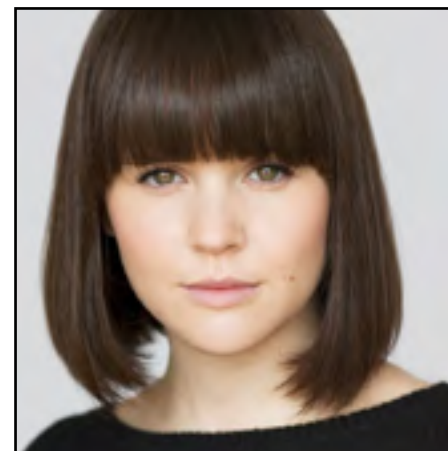
Jessica Kaur
Amber



Asha Kingsley
Surinder & Ensemble



Simran Kular
Ruby, Beena & Ensemble



Hannah Millward
Tara & Ensemble



Kiran Raywilliams
David & Ensemble

REHEARSAL PHOTOS

BY PAMELA RAITH

FROM THE 2023 PRODUCTION







REVOLUTION & REBELLION

There have been revolutions and rebellions since time began, but the major revolutions which are considered the five great revolutions of the modern world are: the English Revolution (1649), American Revolution (1776), French Revolution (1789), Russian Revolution (1917) and Chinese Revolution (1949).

- What revolutions from history have you studied? Why did they happen? What was the outcome?
- Is a rebellion the same as a revolution? Do the words have different connotations?
- Is Amber a rebel or a revolutionary?
- What first inspires Amber about revolutions?
- Does the narrative of *Run, Rebel* follow the eight stages of a revolution: Restlessness, Dissatisfaction, Control, Momentum, Honeymoon, Terror, Overthrow, Peace? Can you identify these moments in the story?

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WOMEN & SPORT

AMBER: My teacher wants me to join the running team again.

HARBANS: *I thought I made it clear what I thought about all your running. [...] You're not a young girl anymore. It doesn't look good.*

Amber is a talented runner, but is not allowed to go to the school running training because of her father's view that women should not participate in sport. He believes this will bring shame on the family, and now she is growing up she needs to behave more 'respectably.'

Miss Sutton, Amber's PE teacher, is a positive female role model, and believes in Amber's ability and that she should have these opportunities. Miss Sutton buys Amber trainers when hers rip, and sends a letter home to her parents to explain how important it is that Amber participates. Miss Sutton also likens Amber's talent to Allie Reid, a former student and professional runner.

The UN says sport has the power to change lives, and “Women in sport defy gender stereotypes and social norms, make inspiring role models, and show men and women as equals.” ([UN Women, Women and Girls in Sport](#))

However, research suggests that teenage girls are more disengaged from sport than teenage boys, with body image, self-belief and perception of capability all being cited as reasons. ([Women In Sport, Sport England Report 2022](#)) Several other reasons also come up in this research, such as:

"that girls are not as competitive; that sport is not important for girls; that they will never be as good at it compared to boys; that sport can be at odds with femininity. Add to that the harassment and unwanted attention teenage girls are subject to when exercising and quite simply, taking part becomes a burden, instead of bringing freedom and joy."

Sport England research suggests that faith also influences participation in sport, stating:

"For some faith groups, there's also a larger difference between levels of physical activity between men and women. This is influenced by certain cultural expectations around what they should wear or how they behave." ([Sport England](#))

This goes some way to explain Harbans' attitude, which is influenced by his understanding of cultural expectations of what women should do and how they should behave. Campaigns such as [This Girl Can](#) are committed to reducing inactivity and getting all women and girls, regardless of background, active and enjoying sport.

Questions for students to consider:

- What could change Harbans' mind about Amber taking part in sport?
- Is Harbans' attitude an example of gender discrimination or his religious belief?
- Is PE at your school inclusive for everyone?
- What could change in schools and nationally to encourage more girls to take part in sports?
- Is it easier for David to be in the running team than Amber? Why?
- Does Miss Sutton really understand why Amber can't take part?

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DOMESTIC ABUSE

HARBANS: *You're useless. You didn't translate properly. What's the point of school if you can't do these basic things.*

AMBER: *If they're so basic, why can't you do them yourself?*

HARBANS: *You speak to me like that again, and I'll break every bone in your body.*

Ruby, Amber and Surinder are all victims of domestic abuse. There are different kinds of abuse, such as:

- **Physical abuse:** Slapping, hitting, punching, scalding, burning or force-feeding or starving.
- **Emotional abuse:** Intimidation, coercion, harassment, threatening, bullying, preventing choice or self-expression
- **Sexual abuse:** Rape or attempted rape, non-consensual touching or penetration, any non-consensual sexual activity, indecent exposure, the taking or sending of indecent photographs, sexual teasing or innuendo
- **Neglect:** Denying access to food, shelter, clothing, heating or stimulation; isolating a person; not taking account of educational or social needs; preventing a person from making their own decisions.
- **Financial abuse:** Theft, fraud, scamming, preventing a person from accessing their own money, undue pressure to spend money.

Definitions taken from [Social Care Institute for Excellence](#)

Women's Aid defines domestic abuse as:

"an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. It is very common. In the vast majority of cases it is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men."

Women's Aid, What is Domestic Abuse?

In the play, Ruby is angry at Surinder for not leaving Harbans sooner. There are many barriers facing women who experience domestic abuse which prevent them from leaving their abuser, such as financial barriers, but mainly fear and danger. Statistics show that "41% (37 of 91) of women killed by a male partner/former partner in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2018 had separated or taken steps to separate from them." [Women's Aid](#)

Abuse can be a learned behaviour, something which some perpetrators may have experienced in their own lives growing up. Domestic abuse stems from a desire to gain power and control over other people. It is important to understand that the decision to abuse someone is a choice, and people could also choose not to. [The Hotline](#)

Questions for students to consider:

- Looking at the examples above, what types of abuse do Amber, Surinder and Ruby experience?
- Why would it have been difficult for Surinder to leave Harbans?
- Should Amber's school have noticed signs that she was being abused?
- Should the Police or Social Care have been involved in Amber's home life?

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FRIENDSHIP & RELATIONSHIPS

DAVID: I didn't want to say anything, but Tara said something about how

TARA: a life lived with regret is a life half lived

DAVID: or something, and I just knew that, even if nothing can happen, you needed to know.

AMBER: Tara said that?

There are complex relationships and friendships in the play. Amber and Ruby have a complex relationship with their parents, as they have been abused by Harbans, but also feel blame themselves for not being able to protect Surinder from this. Ruby lashes out at Amber and calls her selfish for focusing on her running and school life and not helping her mum more, but this is perhaps due to her own resentment for not being able to make her own life choices. Amber still tries to love her father despite his actions, and believes him when he says he has changed, though Surinder is more suspicious of this.

Ruby's and Jas' relationship has developed into a friendship, and Jas loves Ruby, but Ruby is still resentful that the marriage wasn't her choice. Jas is kind and loving and is willing to give Ruby the time she needs to decide if their relationship is what she wants.

Amber can't tell Tara and David the truth about her life, which causes tension in their friendship, as they can't always understand her actions, and don't know what she is going through, so can't support her with this. Tara and David are shocked at how Amber treats Gemma, and both tell her this is unacceptable behaviour. Amber's bullying of Gemma is a way of lashing out and deflecting the anger, pain and fear she feels about her home life. Amber starts to deal with these feelings.

Beena helps Surinder to realise she can leave Harbans, and through teaching her to read, Amber and Ruby help her to realise she can live independently without him. Harbans has belittled and abused Surinder over the years to make her think she is worthless and useless, and by not allowing her to learn English, has prevented her from leading her own life fully.

The Man serves as a metaphor for the control Harbans had over his daughters; he invented the story to instil fear in both of them, and to control their behaviour. When they understand the story of the Man was made up, they both feel lighter and free, as the fear of this happening to them has been lifted.

Questions for students to consider:

- What is different about David's relationship with his mum Beena, and Amber's relationship with her parents?
- Why does Amber not tell David and Tara what is happening at home?
- If you were Ruby, how would you feel about Amber's talent in running?
- In your opinion, why does Amber attack Gemma?
- What do you think will happen to Ruby and Jas in the future?

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DEPRIVATION

"Palm wood estate.

One of the roughest and biggest estates in the country.

Streets in the sky dreams

turned to sinkhole nightmares.

A bunch of concrete towers,

looming over you."

Amber and her family live in deprivation. Surinder works long hours for a low wage, and Harbans doesn't work. They receive benefits but struggle to survive on these. Harbans' and Surinder's ability to work and earn an income are limited due to their lack of English skills.

Deprivation is different to poverty. "Deprivation consists of more than just poverty. Poverty is not having enough money to get by, whereas deprivation refers to a general lack of resources and opportunities." [Deprivation and Poverty, Southampton Data Observatory](#)

The NHS explains that the factors that influence the index of multiple deprivation are:

- income
- employment
- education
- health
- crime
- barriers to housing and services
- living environment.

Health Inequalities, NHS England

Amber describes her estate as “rough.” In the play she doesn’t have the same opportunities as Tara and David who have been on foreign holidays. Miss Sutton buys Amber some new trainers after hers rip, but it is suggested that Miss Sutton doesn’t really understand Amber’s situation, and what is holding her back from running. As Amber says, “*That’s the problem with privilege. If you have it, it can be hard to imagine why others can’t live as freely as you.*”

Intersectionality is the term used to describe when multiple factors overlap in an issue such as deprivation. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that, in the UK, people from a global majority group were more likely to test positive, fall severely ill and die. This is called health inequality, and there are many factors that influence this such as poverty, ethnicity, gender, and disability.

There is also a connection between alcohol misuse and deprivation. Although studies have found that there are higher levels of non-drinkers in deprived areas, because of the cost factor of alcohol, there are also higher numbers of heavy drinkers. Furthermore, "poorer people were still more likely to suffer alcohol harms." ([Alcohol and Inequalities, Alcohol Change](#)) There are lots of reasons for this, including lack of access to preventative services, and general poorer health, all linked to the multiple factors of deprivation.

Questions for students to consider:

- How can the UK tackle its levels of deprivation?
- What are the different things that Amber and her family are deprived of?
- Was Miss Sutton right to buy Amber some new trainers?
- Why is it hard to break the cycle of deprivation?
- How does deprivation affect a young person's experience of education in school?

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BULLYING

*"Rich mum and dad,
little Miss Perfect.
Acts all shy,
victim-like –
couldn't be
further from the truth."*

AMBER: You really do think you're better than everyone else don't you. [...] You should be scared of me.

Bullying can happen in person or online, to children or adults. It isn't just something that happens in the school playground, it can happen in the workplace or the home. Bullying can include making hurtful comments, baiting or taunting, physical hitting or fighting, talking behind other people's backs, spreading rumours, or online bullying.

Bullies might not realise why they bully, or how bad they can make other people feel. Some of the reasons people bully others could be:

- They have problems at home or have experienced trauma or abuse
- They are jealous of others
- They are insecure
- They are baited to bully others by another person
- They may think that bullying makes them look 'cool' or 'hard'.

Why Do People Bully?, BullyBusters

Questions for students to consider:

- Why does Amber target Gemma in particular?
- Why do you think Amber is a bully?
- How do you think it makes Amber feel when she attacks Gemma?
- Should Tara and David have tried to understand Amber's actions more?
- How do you think Amber's school should respond to her bullying actions?
- Why does Harbans bully Beena in the street?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR TESSA WALKER



What first drew you to the novel and wanting to direct it for the stage?

I had read the novel of *Run, Rebel* and absolutely loved it; the poetry and the power of it and the sense of rebellion and of freedom the writing so beautifully expressed. I read it in one go; I couldn't put it down. I wished, and still do, that a book like this had been in the world when I was a teenager. Manjeet and I had worked together before and were keen to do so again - so when she asked me if I'd like to collaborate with her on an adaptation of it for the stage I couldn't say yes quickly enough. From the very start we knew

we wanted to work with Pilot on it too, their expertise and excellence in work for the audiences of this age is second to none, so that it has come to life in this partnership now honestly couldn't be better.

What were your initial ideas for how the piece would work on stage?

Initially I really didn't know to be honest, though several Research and Development sessions helped us all test what we thought might work, to keep the ideas that did and to let go of those that didn't. I of course knew there had to be running in it and we absolutely had to get that right - also that it needn't always be literal, the book is about running but also what it is and does to Amber, so it needs to work on various levels. I also knew we had to honour the violence in the book and not shy away from it, but at the same time I didn't at all want to transpose it literally onto stage. I also knew there would be huge choices about what stayed from the book and what went, choices we are still making now in some ways as we edit and adapt the text as we rehearse. I also knew Amber was key, that she should be warm, tough, funny, complicated, loveable and sympathetic, but not always likeable. That she is complex, and we need to honour that. Also, we needed to find a way to use the Punjabi language in the piece - something that has been through various iterations before settling on the version we have now. So, I suppose this is to say, I knew the challenges of the piece and the things we had to get right, and the ideas developed from working on the script with Manjeet and on the production with our brilliant creative team.

Could you explain your ideas behind your choices for set design, lighting and sound for the production?

Debbie (designer) and I wanted to design a space that had no literal visual references to running as we thought that was too obvious, so no running track for example. We were also keen to create a space that felt like it could have grown from the West Midlands, where the book is set - and where Debbie, Manjeet and I are all from so is a landscape we know well. So, I guess the grey is a literal reflection of this, but there's a beauty and a power in that as well as melancholy and a humour that we were all drawn to. We also wanted levels to help create the running sequences, places for the ensemble to be when they weren't in scenes - we knew early on we would have everyone on stage all the way through. We also knew it was crucial to create a space that could hold the many literal and imaginary locations the story contains, to be able to move from a church to a nightmare to a home easily and fluidly.

What themes and issues does the play explore, and how are you incorporating these themes into your production?

The play is layered and complex. It explores themes of violence, inherited trauma, class, love, education, the importance of finding what and who you love. It's about rebellion and running and family. But fundamentally it is the story of a young woman who finds freedom for herself and her family through running. Our responsibility is to tell this story as truthfully as possible. Themes aren't interesting without people, so we're focussing on the people, and it is through being really truthful to Amber and her story that I hope the themes will emerge.

How are you incorporating Amber's running in to the staging of the play?

In a variety of ways, sometimes it is literal, sometimes it is expressed, sometimes it is narrated. We want each running sequence to have a slightly different language, not least as they each do and mean different things to Amber. Kuldip and Ayesha, our movement directors, have been amazing at finding inventive and expressive ways to explore the running, in fact all of the physical moments in the piece.

What rehearsal techniques are you using to develop characterisation in the rehearsal process?

We just ask a lot of questions about why people are doing what they do, what is it they want, what stops them getting it. The text, both the script and the book, have lots of answers and provocations about who the characters are, so between that and the imaginations in the room, the characters develop and grow.

How is the character of Amber developing in the rehearsal process?

Jess is bringing her very own imagination and ideas to the character, and Amber grows and changes as we all understand more and more about how what happens to her makes her feel and what it makes her do.

USING RUN, REBEL AS A DEVISING STIMULUS

The following practical exercises could help develop students' understanding of the text and could spark creative ideas for a devised piece of theatre using *Run, Rebel* as a starting point. After watching the play, some or all of these exercises could also help students focus on key scenes and characters they want to explore in more depth for their Live Theatre work. You could pick and choose from these activities or put them together for a longer workshop.

1. Key moments: After students have watched the play, ask them to split the story into 10 key moments, which they could write on sticky notes or paper. Once they have established their 10 key moments, they can then develop each moment into a still image, and then work on transitions between each image.

2. Day in the Life: Using their knowledge of the play, ask students to write down on large pieces of paper what an average day would look like for Amber. Where does she go? Who does she see? What does she do? How similar is each day for her? What are the differences between her life at school and at home? Students could then write down what an average day in their own lives would look like, to prompt discussion about the different lives people lead.

3. Letter Writing: Ask students to imagine they are one of the characters in the play, and write a letter in role to another character. Examples of letters they could write are: Amber writing to Harbans, Amber writing to David, Ruby writing to Amber, Beena writing to Harbans. Students could then develop their writing in role into monologue performances, poetry, or group performances.

4. Untold Stories: Students could consider the characters in the play who we know less about and deepen their understanding of these characters through improvisation work. They could think about the backstories of Tara, Jas, Miss Sutton, Gemma, and develop a short improvisation to show this character's life outside of the play.

5. Rebellion: Rebellion is a key theme of the production, along with the 'revolution' Amber and Surinder stage against Harbans. Students could think about other inspiring figures who have rebelled, such as activists Greta Thunberg or Malala Yousafzai. Students could research historical revolutions or uprisings, exploring the social and political context of these events. Students could use this research as a stimulus for a piece of devising on the theme of rebellion and revolution.

6. Running: Running is depicted in various ways in the play, primarily through movement. Students could discuss the portrayal of running in the production, and could restage one moment of the play which features running through their own movement sequence – with or without props. Which other sports could be represented in this style of movement?

7. Staging the Nightmare: Amber uses running to escape the challenges of her daily life. At night, she experiences nightmares in which she is tormented by her worst fears. Students could dramatize Amber's nightmare in their own way. The following stage directions from an earlier version of the script could be used as a starting point:

- *Amber in bed. She falls back.*
- *A cacophony of sounds and images.*
- *All her fears up close and real.*
- *The Man, Tara and David together, being buried under a rose bush.*
- *Amber falls, she sinks, beneath the ground.*
- *The Man is digging. She is underneath the rosebush. She claws and claws and claws, trying to get out.*
- *Ruby appears. She stands, staring, not moving.*
- *'The Man' reaches through the earth, she screams.*

To stage this part of the action, students could use physical theatre, soundscapes, multimedia, lighting and sound – or whatever resources they have available to them. Encourage students to be imaginative with the resources available.

8. Ending: The play ends with Amber and Surinder living in their own flat: "Finally, peace. We did it. We rebelled and we won." Students could stage an epilogue scene, which continues Amber's story.

Here are some ideas for scene work:

- Students could retell the story of the play from Surinder's perspective.
- Students could show what happens to Amber, Surinder and Ruby after the play has ended.
- Students could show a scene between Amber and David set after the play has ended.
- Students could develop a scene showing Harbans seeking support with his alcoholism

PRE-SHOW WORKSHOP AND EXERCISES

This practical workshop can be used to introduce students to the themes and narrative of *Run, Rebel* before they watch the performance. You could pick and choose from these activities or put them together for a longer workshop. The activities are suitable for GCSE and A-Level students preparing to watch the performance for the Live Theatre exam, and can also be adapted for KS3 English students reading the novel.

Content warning: *The themes and synopsis contain detailed information about abuse which may be triggering, please ensure this is appropriate for your group before sharing.*

- 1. Exploring the themes:** Put students into groups and give each group one of the themes from this resource pack. Ask students to read the information and to research their theme and present back to the rest of the class. This could be done as a flip-learning task, where students take away the theme and research it as homework before coming back and presenting it in class.
- 2. Understanding the synopsis:** Put students into groups and give each group a copy of the full synopsis from this resource pack. Ask students to read the synopsis aloud, taking turns in reading to develop oracy. Then ask students to break down the synopsis into 10-15 key moments, and to write these onto a large piece of paper. This helps students to digest the synopsis and simplifies it for younger learners.
- 3. Still images:** Using the key moments from the synopsis, ask students to create 10-15 still images of each key moment. Encourage them to use levels, space, physical contact and to consider their body language and facial expressions. The images could be performed to music to create an emotive piece of physical theatre.
- 4. Collective Character:** Put students into groups of 3 and give out Extract 1 from the script extracts in this pack. Ask them to read, rehearse and perform the extract collectively in role as Amber. They can divide the lines up between them or speak in chorus, or a mixture of both. Words can be repeated, stressed, shouted, whispered, rapped, sung – encourage students to be creative in response to the text and play around with it. Encourage students to creatively consider how they can use space or physical movement to show Amber running in this scene.
- 5. Parallel Scenes:** Put students into groups of 4 and give them Extract 2 from the script extracts in this pack. Ask them to stage this scene, considering how they will block and stage the parallel settings and mirrored dialogue. They could use cross-cutting or split-screen techniques, or could be more creative and abstract with the staging.
- 6. Thought-tracking:** Using the exercise above, add two more students into each group, and ask them to stop the action at particular points and thought-track the characters. Thought-tracking means speaking the thoughts, rather than the lines of the characters. Consider what Gemma or Beena are thinking whilst they are being attacked, or what Amber or Harbans are thinking whilst they are attacking.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN WATCHING THE PRODUCTION

We don't recommend that students make notes during the production, it may spoil their experience and they might miss something! They should give the performance their full attention. Instead, use this pack to prepare students before they see the production, and you could give them pointers about what to look out for.

If you are preparing students for the Live Theatre section of the GCSE or A-Level Drama written exam, you could put students into groups and give them one area of responsibility each to pay particular attention to during the production, such as:

- Lighting
- Sound
- Projection
- Set
- Costume
- Key acting moments

Alternatively, if you want to focus on acting, give students one of the characters to focus on:

- Amber
- Surinder
- Ruby
- Harbans
- Beena

GCSE students may want to look out for the following aspects of the performance:

- Moments of tension or where fear is created
- Moments where friendship, love or romance are depicted
- How Amber breaks the fourth wall and creates a relationship with the audience
- Key relationships in the play: Amber and Surinder, Amber and Harbans, Amber and David, Amber and Ruby
- The development of Amber's character throughout the play
- How the actors use their skills to engage you as an audience member
- How the actors use their skills to convey different emotions
- How design elements are used to bring particular moments to life

A-Level students may want to focus on these more advanced aspects of the performance:

- How the theme of rebellion and revolution is communicated throughout the play
- How Amber breaks the fourth wall and creates a relationship with the audience
- How Amber communicates her relationship with multiple other characters such as Surinder, Harbans, Miss Sutton and David
- Surinder's journey through the play and how this is communicated
- The depiction of the family relationship between Amber, Surinder, Harbans and Ruby
- How design elements work together in particular moments

Encourage students to make notes immediately after the production, or as soon as possible.

LIVE THEATRE NOTES AND MEMORY AIDS

We have provided a notes template here which can be used by students to help focus their note-taking.

Production Details

Make notes on the production details so that you can remember them for the exam:

Date you saw the production: _____

Venue: _____

Director: _____

Designers: _____

Cast: _____

Memorable moments

Describe three moments in the production which really stood out to you as an audience member. Try to describe what happened on stage in as much detail as possible.

Sketch the set: Use this space to sketch the set of Run, Rebel and label it with details of shape, scale, materials, colour, etc.

Acting Moments

Here, make notes on the use of acting skills used to create specific effects at particular moments in the production. Focus on one or two characters. Try to be as detailed as you can.

Costume sketches: *Sketch the costumes of one or two characters. Label your sketches with details of colour, shape, fit, fabric.*



Use of sound:

Here, make notes on a few moments where sound was used effectively to support the action on stage. Be specific about the type of sound or music, and describe what you could hear as much as you can.

[illegible]

Use of multimedia:

Here make notes on a few moments where animation or projection was used effectively to support the action on stage.

[illegible]

Notes

[illegible]

SCRIPT EXTRACTS

Extract 1

Amber: No matter how small or quiet
I'm expected to be at home,
I find my voice on the running track
It's where I'm truly alive.
Words boomerang from trainer to tarmac,
creating ripples in every corner of my body
until all knock downs, run-ins, face offs and scraps
have been twisted, rung, exhausted and
released up, up, up,
into the clouds and sky above.

I shift my thoughts
try and make sense of stuff
and come out the other side newer, happier, better.
ALWAYS better than before.
It feels like the world slows down.
Allowing me to catch up with thoughts that usually race.
I go to places in my head that aren't here,
of this place,
of this time.
The lines in my head get tangled see
running makes the lines straighter
turns down the rage in my stomach
loosens the phantom grip on my throat.
Running gives me a purpose.
Running,
gives me a reason to live.

Extract 2

Tara, David, Amber and Gemma at school. Harbans and Beena in town.

HARBANS: Oi. You!/
BEENA: Excuse me?/
AMBER: Oi! Gemma!/
TARA: Just leave it Amber./
DAVID: Just let it go Amber.
HARBANS: You stay away from my wife and daughter, do you hear me?/
AMBER: I warned you Gemma/
BEENA: You're Amber's dad?/
AMBER: You're a fat, ugly cow you know that?/
HARBANS: You know who I am, don't act dumb. I'm warning you/
AMBER: No amount of make-up can fix this whole situation./
BEENA: Warning me?/
AMBER: What's the matter Gemma? Cat got your tongue./
DAVID: Come on Ambs leave her alone.
HARBANS: Yes. Stay out of my family's business.
BEENA: I'm not scared of you/
AMBER: You really do think you're better than everyone else don't you./
HARBANS: You should be scared of me/
AMBER: You should be scared of me./
Beena walks away, strong but shaken.

Extract 3

AMBER: I'm not OK, He's going to come after us.

JAS: Who?

AMBER: The Man.

JAS: What man?

RUBY: Mr Garcha, who lives across the road. The one who murdered his daughter.

AMBER: Dad . . . Dad . . . always said . . . Always said . . . that he'd come for us if we ever . . . if we ever . . .

JAS: Mr Garcha at number 42?

RUBY: Yes.

JAS: He wouldn't hurt fly.

SURINDER: That man is evil, people aren't always what they seem.

JAS: I've known him my whole life. I went to school with his daughters. Both alive, both doing very well for themselves.

AMBER: How come we don't see the older one? She ran away and Mr Garcha found her and murdered her.

JAS: What? No, she's just moved away, trust me I'm friends with her. I can't believe what you've been told.

The following is to the audience:

AMBER: Something is changing.

SURINDER: Something is shifting.

RUBY: A weight has been lifted

Mr Garcha waves at them. They wave back.

RUBY: A wish

SURINDER: I didn't know I had made

AMBER: Has been granted.

Notes

[illegible]

RESOURCES & SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

These resources and links might be of interest for you or your students to explore *Run, Rebel* and its themes further.

We are not responsible for the content of external links or resources and we strongly recommend checking the suitability of external content before sharing with your students.

We have also included information about support organisations for those who are experiencing, or have experienced, domestic abuse. This information is correct as of Feb 23rd 2023.

Resource Packs for teaching *Run, Rebel*

[Run Rebel CLiPPA Teaching Sequence - Centre for Literacy in Primary Education](#) (free – login required)

[Run, Rebel Resource KS3 and KS4 – Penguin Books](#) (free)

Support organisations for domestic abuse (national)

[National Health Service](#)

[Freephone, 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#): 0808 2000 247

[Home Office](#)

Support organisation for forced marriage and honour crimes

Karma Nirvana: 0800 5999 247 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm)

GOV.UK Forced Marriage Unit: 020 7008 0151

Support organisations for children

Childline - 0800 1111

RESOURCE PACK - PART B

Ideal for students preparing for the Live Theatre component of their exams, this resource includes filmed scene extracts from the live performance, allowing students to watch key scenes again, with accompanying analysis. The filmed content is audio described, BSL interpreted, and subtitled.

[Download Resource Pack B PDF.](#)

FREE CPD SESSION

Tuesday 8 October 2024: a free interactive online CPD session aimed at secondary Drama teachers, advising how to use our resources to enrich learning.

[Reserve your place on the session.](#)

WORKSHOPS

Practical drama sessions exploring the play, production, characters, and themes delivered by a Pilot artist are available. The workshop can be tailored to using *Run Rebel* as a creative stimulus for devising, exploring *Run Rebel* as a set-text, or examining social justice issues related to the play.

All workshops are bespoke and tailored to the needs of your students, and can be scheduled pre- or post-performance at your school, college or university. To arrange a workshop, please email us directly: education@pilot-theatre.com

For state schools: 2 sessions or a full day: £350 + VAT

1 session (up to 2 hours): £275 + VAT

For private schools: 2 sessions or a full day: £475 + VAT

1 session (up to 2 hours): £400 + VAT

MAILING LIST

If you would like to join Pilot Theatre's mailing list to hear about our future projects, [please sign-up here.](#)



TOUR DATES

Theatre Peckham
27 Sept – 05 Oct 2024

Leicester Curve
10 Oct – 12 Oct 2024

Oxford Playhouse
16 Oct – 19 Oct 2024

Leeds Playhouse
22 Oct – 26 Oct 2024

The Lowry
29 Oct – 02 Nov 2024

Traverse Theatre
06 Nov – 09 Nov 2024



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