

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet debut author Justin A. Reynolds and learn about his debut novel, a story of love and time travel.

Select from a wide range of discussion questions to deepen the experience of reading *Opposite of Always*.

Discover additional resources including books, videos, and websites to explore topics and themes in depth.

Opposite of Always

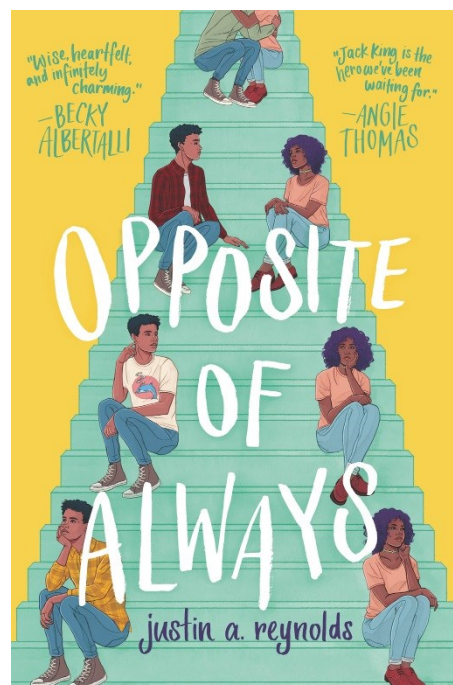
By Justin A. Reynolds



About the Book

When Jack and Kate meet at a party, bonding until sunrise over their mutual love of Froot Loops and their favorite flicks, Jack knows he's falling—hard. Soon she's meeting his best friends, Jillian and Franny, and Kate wins them over as easily as she did Jack. Jack's curse of *almost* is finally over.

But this love story is . . . complicated. It is an almost happily ever after. Because Kate dies. And their story should end there. Yet Kate's death sends Jack back to the beginning, the moment they first meet, and Kate's there again. Beautiful, radiant Kate. Healthy, happy, and charming as ever. Jack isn't sure if he's losing his mind. Still, if he has a chance to prevent Kate's death, he'll take it. Even if that means believing in time travel. However, Jack will learn that his actions are not without consequences. And when one choice turns deadly for someone else close to him, he has to figure out what he's willing to do—and let go—to save the people he loves.



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Book Details

Opposite of Always by Justin A. Reynolds.
Katherine Tegen Books, 2019. ISBN 9780062748379. Ages 14-17.
Leveled Reading: AR Points 12.0. ATOS Book Level 4.3. HL630 Lexile.
www.harpercollins.com/9780062748379

Available as an [ebook](#) and a [digital audiobook](#) through the Ohio Digital Library:
ohiodigitallibrary.com

Available through the State Library of Ohio Talking Book Program:
olbpd.klas.com



Author photo and biography courtesy Justin A. Reynolds, from www.justinareynolds.com/media-kit-1.

About the Author

Justin A. Reynolds has always wanted to be a writer. The earliest documentation of this desire was recorded on a sheet of green, learn-how-to-write-with-a-jumbo-pencil ruled kindergarten paper, which can be found prominently displayed in his mom's office. **Opposite of Always**, his debut novel, was an Indies Introduce selection, a *School Library Journal* Best Book, has been translated into seventeen languages, and is being developed for film with Paramount Players. He hangs out in northeast Ohio with his family and likes it, and is probably somewhere, right now, dancing terribly.

Author Resources

Justin A. Reynolds's official website
justinareynolds.com

Author Page on HarperCollins website
www.harpercollins.com/blogs/authors/justin-a-reynolds

United By Pop interview with Justin A. Reynolds
www.unitedbypop.com/young-adult-books/interviews-young-adult-books/justin-a-reynolds/

Listen to the **Write or Die podcast** to learn about Justin's publishing journey and his creative process.
writeordiepodcast.com/2020/05/11/s2-e25-justin-a-reynolds-when-the-tables-have-turned/

Listen to a Q & A session with Justin A. Reynolds on the **First Draft with Sarah Enni podcast**.
podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/opening-the-mailbag-with-justin-a-reynolds/id896407410?i=1000472498610

Watch this **video from Epic Reads** to learn more about Justin A. Reynolds.
youtu.be/YiaqQi2DORA

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:
Contact Justin A. Reynolds via his website,
www.justinareynolds.com/contact-2

"The thing is, you don't forfeit your whole world to prove your feelings to someone. You bring your worlds together. You get more world, not less."

Look for Justin A. Reynolds's second novel, **Early Departures** (Katherine Tegen Books, 2020, ISBN 9780062748409), which also explores friendship and mortality with a speculative twist.

www.justinareynolds.com/books-for-ed-2



Talk About It

Topics to share when discussing **Opposite of Always** with teens.

Educators: Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Other Learning Standards, such as Social and Emotional Learning: Responsible Decision-Making (HS) may also apply. Discussion questions and educational activities for **Opposite of Always** align with Learning Standards for Grades 9-12.

Librarians, parents, and others: These activities are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. For more information, see the Ohio Department of Education website, education.ohio.gov. From the Topics dropdown menu, click on "Learning in Ohio."

Spoiler warning! Some discussion questions refer to key elements in the book. Do not read if you do not want to find out what happens.

- At the beginning of the story, Jack has a serious crush on his best friend Jillian. What about their relationship surprised you in this novel? Examine Jack's friendship with Franny. How does this friendship differ from Jack's friendship with Jillian? What character traits are important to have in a best friend? Use the text to find examples that support your view of Jack's, Jillian's, and Franny's friendships.
- The author uses humor to great effect in this novel. Using the text, highlight some humorous passages that stood out to you. What makes these passages funny? Describe the ways the author uses humor to help the flow of the story. Use the text to support your argument.
- Jack and Kate bond over their love of breakfast cereals. Visit the author's website and watch the video "Opposite of Always Presents Time Loops," a mock cereal commercial: www.justinareynolds.com/videos. Select a character from the book and design a magical cereal brand for them. Craft a promotional pitch for the cereal in a way that highlights this character's importance to the story.
- Kate's life is negatively impacted by sickle cell disease. Using the text, find examples of the barriers Kate faces to obtaining treatment. Discuss what role finances play in obtaining treatment. How does Kate's illness change her relationship with Jack?
- How do the main characters' parents influence the story? Discuss how family dynamics, relationships, and experiences impact the behavior and decisions of Jack, Jillian, and Franny.
- In the story, Jack gets a series of do-overs to try to help Kate survive. Select an instance where Jack gets another do-over and rewrite it. What barriers would you remove or add?
- **Opposite of Always** is a realistic novel with the supernatural aspect of time travel. Could you imagine this story written with a similar plot and resolution, but without the do-overs? What does time travel add to the story? Think beyond plot to other aspects of the story such as theme and conflict.
- In the interview with United By Pop (see Author Resources), Justin A. Reynolds discusses how the deaths of two loved ones inspired the story of **Opposite of Always**. If you have lost someone—a family member, friend, or pet—what helped you to process the loss?

***"Maybe it's not how something ends that matters.
Maybe it's about having something good,
even for a little while."***

Go Further

*Ideas for extending the experience of reading **Opposite of Always**.*

Sickle cell disease features prominently in this book. Read this article about gene editing and sickle cell disease:

www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/06/23/877543610.

Using online resources available to students through INFOhio (infohio.org) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (ohioweblibrary.org), research genetic approaches to the treatment of sickle cell disease. How has gene therapy improved the lives of patients? What are the pros and cons of participating in clinical trials?

Watch this movie clip from the movie **Groundhog Day**: youtu.be/hQCG2AwzTxA

In what way does Jack King's experience mimic the experience of Bill Murray's character? Discuss the changes you would make if you could time travel.

Watch the trailer for the Netflix movie **See You Yesterday**: youtu.be/849he04GdV4

Discuss the dangers and opportunities involved in time travel.

Explore More

*Additional ideas and resources to use with **Opposite of Always**.*

National Institutes of Health: Sickle Cell Disease

www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-launches-initiative-accelerate-genetic-therapies-cure-sickle-cell-disease

Visit the NIH website to learn about an initiative to find a cure for sickle cell disease.

Is Time Travel Possible?

spaceplace.nasa.gov/time-travel/en/

NASA's Space Place explores the real-world math and science of time travel.

How Stuff Works: Time Travel

science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/everyday-myths/time-travel.htm

Explore some real-life, everyday methods of time travel in our universe, as well as more speculative ideas about moving back and forth in time.

How Fruity Pebbles Are Made

youtu.be/vNGfJeAoLZo

Watch this short video from Unwrapped on the Food Network to learn the secrets of this multicolored cereal.

Check It Out

*Recommended for readers of **Opposite of Always**.*

Not So Pure and Simple by Lamar Giles

The Bad Decisions Playlist by Michael Rubens

No One Here is Lonely by Sarah Everett

The Boy in the Black Suit by Jason Reynolds

Again, but Better by Christine Riccio

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors, illustrators, and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits:
library.ohio.gov/ctro.

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