



The Boy Who Runs: The Odyssey of Julius Achon

John Brant

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In the tradition of Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation* by way of Christopher McDougall's *Born to Run*, this is the inspirational true story of the Ugandan boy soldier who became a world-renowned runner, then found his calling as director of a world-renowned African children's charity.

“Julius can’t remember who first saw the men. He heard no warning sounds—no dog barking or twig snapping. Until this point, events had moved too swiftly for Julius to be afraid, but now panic seized him. In another instant, he realized that his old life was finished.”

Thus begins the extraordinary odyssey of Julius Achon, a journey that takes a barefoot twelve-year-old boy from a village in northern Uganda to the rebel camp of the notorious Lord's Resistance Army, where he was made a boy soldier, and then, miraculously, to a career as one of the world's foremost middle-distance runners. But when a devastating tragedy prevents Julius from pursuing the gold at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, he is once again set adrift and forced to forge a new path for himself, finally finding his true calling as an internationally recognized humanitarian. Today, Julius is the director of the Achon Uganda Children's Fund, a charity whose mission is to improve the quality of life in rural Uganda through access to healthcare, education, and athletics.

While pursuing his destiny, Julius encounters a range of unforgettable characters who variously befriend and betray him: the demonic Joseph Kony, a “world-class warlord”; John Cook, a brilliant and eccentric U.S. track coach; Jim Fee, an American businessman who helps Julius build a state-of-the-art medical center deep in the Ugandan bush; and finally Kristina, Julius's mother, whose own tragic journey forms the pivot for this spellbinding narrative of love, loss, suffering, and redemption.

Written by award-winning sportswriter John Brant, *The Boy Who Runs* is an empowering tale of obstacles overcome, challenges met, and light wrested from darkness. It's a story about forging your true path and finding your higher purpose—even when the road ahead bends in unexpected directions.

From the Hardcover edition.

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