

## 高雄市 109 年度國民中學英語文競賽【英語朗讀文章第四篇】

### **The Last Runner**

In my town, the annual marathon is always held in hot weather. One year, it was my job to follow the runners in an ambulance to give them medical attention if they needed it. The driver and I waited inside the ambulance. Outside, 100 runners listened for the loud crack of the starting gun.

“Remember to drive slowly,” I told the ambulance driver as we began moving forward, “because we are supposed to stay behind the last runner.”

As the fastest runners started to disappear in the distance, I saw a person who was moving very slowly. Right away, I knew she was our “last runner.” Both her feet were turned in, but her left knee was turned out. Her legs were so bent that it looked difficult for her to walk. It would be more difficult for her to run a marathon in this hot weather.

The driver and I watched in silence as she struggled forward, little by little. Without saying a word, we moved along slowly behind her. Every time she stopped, we would just stop and wait for her to continue.

Soon, she was the very last runner in sight. Tears ran down my face, and I was filled with amazement at this woman. I had a great feeling of respect for her, because she pushed forward with powerful determination through the last miles of the marathon.

A long time later, we finally reached the finish line. Most of the

crowd had already gone home, and there was trash all over the ground. But there, at the finish line, one proud man stood and waited. In his hand was one end of a paper ribbon; the other end was tied to a post. Very slowly, the woman crossed the finish line and broke the ribbon into two pieces like a winning runner.

I never knew this woman's name, but since then she has become an important part of my life. For her, the marathon wasn't about coming in first in the race. It was about finishing something that she started, no matter how difficult it was. Now, when I think things are too difficult or time-consuming, I think of that wonderful woman, the “last runner.” Right away, I realize how small my own problems really are.

-by Lisa Beach, adapted from Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul I