【读后续写原文】

Chasing a Dream

There are some defeats more triumphant than victories.—Michel de Montaigne

I was 200 yards away from the finish line when my legs stopped working. In a moment faster than I could blink, I watched my dreams crash helplessly to the ground. Lifting my face from the dirt, I looked up and saw the horror in my dad’s face. In his eyes I saw the sweat, the time, and the work we had put into our dream. The miles we had run together, all for this race, flashed across my mind. This race was the pinnacle of my hopes, the climax of my existence—the State cross-country race of my senior year of high school.

I was the fastest runner on my team, and I was supposed to make it into the top fifteen. We had been working towards this race for three years. It was everything to me, and it was everything to my dad. He was a runner and was exhilarated by my success in running. He made it to every race, even flying home early from business trips to see me run. I always listened for his voice, which rang above the crowd—telling me to relax my arms, calling out my time. He pushed me. He cheered for me. He believed in me. We spent countless hours on the sandy canals of Arizona. Breathing in the dust of the desert, the blossoms of the orange groves, and the stench of the dairy farm, we made our way across the city. We pounded miles and miles into our running shoes, marking with every step the path to greatness. It was a journey that was just ours. A dream passed on from one generation to the next.

I will never forget that November day. It was hotter than normal—too hot. My throat felt like a field of cotton, cracked with the summer heat, as I waited for the gun to fire. This was the day we had waited so long for. This was the day I was destined for. I gazed out at the crowd; dozens of familiar faces from church and school flickered across my view. They had come for me. They were counting on me. I saw my dad set his watch, worry and excitement etched across his face. Adrenaline pumped through my body, and the race began.

For the first two and a half miles, I felt great. I had never before been so ready for something. The weeks leading up to the race were filled with regimented practices and a strict diet. My friends hadn't seen me in weeks, but they understood the sacrifice required to make my dream a reality. The sizzling sun beat upon my back, blinding me with its brilliance. Nothing was going to stop me, though. Determination focused my mind, and perseverance guided my steps. As in all of my races, I didn't start out in the front. I loved the thrill of passing people as my endurance overtook their premature speed.

Without warning, my strength began to subside. My lungs fought to take in enough air, and my feet transformed into cement bricks. I still don't know what happened in those last few moments. Neck and neck with one of my greatest rivals, I could see the finish line. I had begun the final sprint into glory when my knees buckled and my legs gave way. Nothing I could do would make them hold my weight. They were as weak as Jell-O.

I watched with agony as runners rushed by me. Even though I knew my dreams of victory were destroyed, I had to finish the race. With all of the strength left in me, I got on my hands and knees and crawled, inch by inch, across the finish line. Voices, both foreign and familiar, cheered me on. They gave me the courage to keep going until the very end. The paramedics were there in seconds, sticking me with needles, covering my mouth with an oxygen mask.

My eyes scoured the crowd for him. Although my coach and teammates rushed to me, offering words of encouragement, there was only one person I wanted to talk to. Fear pulsed through my veins as he pushed his way to my side.

As the tears spilled over, I whispered, “I’m so sorry, Dad. I'm so sorry I disappointed you."

He looked at me with sadness and said, "You could never disappoint me. Sometimes these things just happen. All that matters is that you did your best."

“But we worked so hard. What about our dream?”

In that second, the world stood still. He reached over for my hand, holding back his own tears, and said, "Don't you know that you are my dream come true?

It wasn't long before my running shoes were back on, marking a new path for my journey. I learned something from that race—something I will never forget. All of the miles, the tears, the sweat, and the pain my dad and I experienced together were not for a race. When he pushed me to go faster, to work harder, or to breathe deeper, it wasn't for a dream that was unfulfilled. I thought my dad was running after a prize. What I realized, though, was that he was running after me. To him, I was the greatest prize he had ever won.