

While the World Sleeps

When I wake up to the ear-splitting sound of my alarm clock, and blindly search for the snooze button, a sudden thought dawns: "What am I doing?"

The time is 5:30 AM; all is dark and hushed. My weary body feels completely drained of energy. While straining to open my eyes, still warm and snug in my comfortable bed, I am overcome with a feeling of lethargy. "Perhaps I should call in sick." Despite all my musing, and my bed's magnetic pull, I still manage to rise each morning at this ungodly hour to join the cross-country running team in rigorous training.

Cross-country running, a sport that requires the fusing of body and mind, strives to maximize your physical ability by testing your mental tenacity. Everyday represents a new struggle to beat yesterday's maximum output, an issue of mind over matter. I have known the agony of this conflict since I joined the newly established cross-country team. As convincing as my morning doubts are, I do not heed them. Through pains and sprains and through adverse weather and unfavorable conditions, I run because I made up my mind three years ago to succeed.

With amenities such as cars and buses, I have no pragmatic reason to use my feet, especially if I lack a destination. I do not run to the gym to acquire a stylish figure, for my slender frame does not require it. And this grueling run differs from a relaxing jog to a coffee shop. I am pushing myself constantly to run faster and farther, for my team as well as for personal glory. Somehow with tireless effort and unflagging commitment, I run through the sleeping streets of my neighborhood with the awareness that I am steadily reaching my goal-maintaining the discipline that cross-country demands. In my mind I see a victory line that symbolizes the results of perseverance and hard work. This line makes me realize that ambition and tenacity do not go in vain. And it constantly reminds me that all those mornings in which I struggled to leave my cozy cocoon have allowed me to fly.

While the world slept, I, Jane Smith, was awake and working hard to attain my goal. I feel more confident now, that on the road of life, when others may be walking, I will be running. I will run through ankle injuries and through fatigue. I will endure the inevitable hills and valleys. I will endure, and I will achieve.