The Run

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Why am I running? Am I supposed to run at this hour, a dark hour of night except for some lonely streetlights? Some moments ago, I was having dinner with my family before heading towards the home of Sajid, one of my best friends. Very often, I stay at his house, and we watch movies together. Robin, another friend of ours, also spends time with us, but doesn't stay at night. Oh! I'm feeling tired! No! I mustn't stop! I've got to run! Hafta run! After having dinner, I started for Sajid's home with an immense interest in watching movies, as usual. Alone along the street, I was walking without being followed by anyone. The street was empty, but darkness was prevalent. The streetlights were staring at me only, as if they were my guardian angels. I was so obsessed with my phone, typing a message to someone. I couldn't hear any sound except my prominent footsteps amidst the silent urban landscape. Suddenly, someone snatched my phone and ran away. It was so fast that, at first, I couldn't tell at all what was happening to me. Right then, I got it! I was such a fool! I was just laughing at myself, for I didn't get it! It was Robin! I knew it was him! Only he could be there to mess with me at this late hour, around 11 p.m. I was sure he was Robin, because sometimes he walks alone in the same street. And we used to walk together almost every day. Continuously, I was laughing, thinking that he would come back and give me my phone. Suddenly, I discovered something else!

What are those on the street near my feet? Oh shit! Did I really just get snatched? Was it not Robin? Who was he? A thief? Damn! I realized that it was a thief, and he intentionally left his pair of sandals so that he could run fast. Robin would never do that. Within a moment I felt like Usain Bolt and was running like him, as if I had to cross the line before the thief. And then, I was running just behind him. It was a run that I couldn't avoid. Why do we need to run? Is there another way, instead of running? I couldn't figure it out and kept running as fast as I could. I nearly touched him once and he slipped away from my hand, still I kept running. I couldn't believe I was running so fast. While running, I could see some nearby department stores approaching us. He didn't have much time; once in front of the stores, he would be caught by the people and beaten brutally because of the theft. Suddenly, he stopped! I was quite astonished and stopped too! I was just facing his back from a distance of about 3 feet. I was thinking of protecting myself, in case he stabbed me with a knife. Immediately, he turned around and now, for the first time, we were facing each other. He was sweating heavily, just as I was. I could hear his fast, deep breaths and saw his frustrated face entirely. Then I looked at his eyes and tried to understand his intention. However, I didn't see any burning eyes, nothing like the hunting tiger I expected. The eyes were just like any others. Like one of my neighbors, who's a corrupt officer but never was accused of such deeds. Rather, he was regarded as an honorable member of our community. Then, I saw in his eyes a resemblance to those of my colleagues, friends, teachers, policemen, and so on, who were all corrupt, too. Everyone was living their lives with respect from others, though they were extremely harmful for the community. Suddenly, I came back from my vision and heard a sound. He threw away my phone in the roadside bushes. Without saying anything, he turned back and started running again. Immediately, I started running too. I don't know why I was running but I was running, that I knew. I almost caught him again. Surely, he'll be caught. He stopped again! Turned towards me, and said:

—didn't I give you the phone? Why are you still following me? Please, leave me alone!

I couldn't say a word. This time, I couldn't run. I just watched him run away—fading into the dark side of the night. While watching him, I was thinking—why can't we punish everyone? He didn't try to steal a valuable thing from me, only a phone, one cheap enough that anyone

could afford. Why can't we punish the big people who are more responsible for the downfall of society? Why did he try to snatch my phone? Was there anyone at home starving for food? Couldn't he afford to buy food because of the price hikes? I was completely silent, not uttering a single word, just watching him running. Perhaps, he was going for another run. I felt ashamed of us! We couldn't build up our community in such a way that would determine every basic need of every citizen.

Tanvir Hasan Chowdhury is currently studying in the MA program in English, in the Department of English at the University of North Dakota. He is also working as a graduate teaching assistant. He worked as a photographer for nearly nine years. He likes to read and write. He is fond of music and likes to compose songs.