

I was born into a family of runners. Mom, Dad, my sister Bella—they all love to run. My mom even coaches the track team at the high school where my sister is “the star.”

On Saturdays, while they run at the park, I play with our dog, Charlie.

My parents want me to discover my “inner runner,” whatever that means. They somehow convinced me to try out for our school’s run club. It is pretty cool that my teacher, Mrs. Thompson, is also the coach!



I was shocked when I made the team, the Blister Sisters. I told everyone at dinner that night.

Dad gave me a high five. "Way to go, Em!"

Mom squeezed my shoulder. "I can't wait to help you learn to run fast!"

Bella said, "Your teacher only took you out of pity."

"Bella, if you can't say something nice . . ." Mom said with a frown.



Maybe Bella was right.
When I ran the warm-up lap
at practice the next day,
I was dead last.



Two days later, I was second to last.

“You’re improving,” Mom said as we headed to the park that Saturday.





"Mom, can I quit the team?" I asked.

"We're not quitters, right, Em?" Dad said, doing his pre-run stretches.

I still wanted to quit. Or disappear.

A few days later during run club practice, Mrs. Thompson called me aside. "Emma, I think you should compete at the annual Lucky Runners Race. You'll learn how to pass a baton, and you'll get to be part of a team."

I wanted to say, "No way!"
But my mouth somehow said, "Okay."

Each day, we completed relays to practice building our endurance for the big race.

