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The Runner

Somewhere in the world, there was one person who liked running. He ran without a Fitbit, ran without an Apple Watch, ran without trackers. He ran simply to run. There was no reason.

He ran without sports gear, without headbands or sports bands, without music to listen to.

He ran without care for the weather, whether it was raining, shining, snowing, or hailing. He ran at his own steady pace, never faltering, never stopping.

He ran from the Jeffries over the hill to the Montgomeries, down to the Smiths and up to the Patels.

He didn't run to experience the beauty of the world, to experience the wind on his cheeks, to experience the feeling of freedom.

He already had that. He had everything besides running. So he ran.

The people that saw him didn't understand at first. They drove their cars faster so that they would beat him so that he wouldn't win. They honked at him when he ran across the road when the crosswalks weren't lighted green, tempted to run him over. They refrained, though, knowing that they would be the ones prosecuted if they did. But then they would laugh, wondering if the courts would even care if this man died, this man that was a nuisance for everyone.

They questioned his motives. He wasn't fat, so why run? He had the body of a bodybuilder already, so why run? Who is he? How did he not get too tired? How did he not stop? Was he in a race? *Why did he run?*

He didn't care; he never flinched at the noises they made, the voices they shouted, the names they called him, the questions they asked. All that mattered to him was running. So he ran.

He ran at such a steady pace that he was in the same place at the exact time every single day. He became a gauge for time, as a result. They canceled the funding for a public clock because they had seen him so often that they knew where he had to be so that they wouldn't have to run if they were late.

They used him as a guide. When they were lost, they would look for the ever-running man, knowing that they could go to safety if they followed him.

They waved hello to him, and he never responded. Some people swore they could see a hint of a smile and a raise of a finger when they greeted him, though. Other people called them liars. He became a fun public activity for discussion, attracting newsgroups from all around the world.

They named him too. They argued about that, though, holding a town council meeting in the end. Some people wanted a plain name, like John, something easy to remember. Other people wanted a unique name, something to highlight the uniqueness of his running. They settled on "Anonymous," a name both literal and unique.

He still never responded, but that faded no one. Life continued as normal with this one steady, ever-running man.

The generation grew up, time went by. The children were confused at this steady, ever-running man, and the adults never provided an adequate explanation either (they had none), not caring anymore about why... only caring about the fact that he existed.

One day, a rambunctious, too-curious boy stood right in front of him, directly blocking his path, something no one had ever dared to do. The runner disappeared that day.

People were angry, hurt, confused, and annoyed at the boy's curiosity. They wanted the constancy back, wanted the stability back. They wanted the runner back.

But he was never to be seen again.