

Reading A

The Race

Tarun was a mediocre student. His grades could barely satisfy his parents. And, he was not a good singer, dancer, painter or even an actor. He always thought of himself as the black sheep of the family. His elder brother, who was pursuing a degree in engineering from a reputed college always made the family proud. But Tarun was never good at anything like that.

However, he was blessed with the strength of a great athlete; he was an excellent runner. He would run for hours, be it day or night. Whenever he felt sad and lonely, he exhausted himself by running, thus releasing all his pent-up emotions. At times he would miss his school bus and would then run to the school, which was five miles away from his home! He just had one dream- to become the fastest runner in the world. Tarun did not know how to achieve his dream. On one hand, his parents hated his running and wanted him to concentrate more on his studies, which he never did. On the other hand, he belonged to a middle class family, and Tarun knew that to achieve his dream, he needed an intensive training, the amount which was well beyond his family's reach.

When Tarun failed in his terminal examinations, his father was very angry with him. His friends too made fun of him. It was a day he wanted to erase from his life and so he took to running. He ran all around the park. The sun beat down to check his rage but nothing could stop Tarun. After about an hour, he was fully exhausted and his fury having subsided, he threw himself on a bench and started to pant.

Suddenly he heard a voice. "What is it, son?"


Tarun looked to his left and there sat a man of about sixty.

"I failed in two subjects," Tarun replied in a depressed tone.

The man smiled sympathetically and said, "Life is full of ups and downs, boy. By the way I am Ram Narayan, and you are one of the best runners I have ever seen."

"Ram Narayan? Raaa...m...Narayan! Are you the same Ram Narayan who won an Olympic medal in the 400 metre race in the 1960s?" Tarun could not hide his excitement.

"Yes," came the reply. Tarun was dazzled.



“Son, I have been watching you for the past 45 minutes,” continued Ram Narayan, “and, I see a good future in you.”

Tarun could not help but blush.

“All you need to do is keep that passion burning in you and never give up. Have you joined some training school?”

Tarun’s smile turned to distress. “A training school is very expensive, Sir, and I am unemployed,” said Tarun, feeling happy that he could joke even in these circumstances.

But Ram Narayan seemed pretty serious, “I can train you if you want, but I have one condition.”

“What condition?” Tarun’s voice showed a sense of urgency.

“There is a race on the Children’s Day at the Nehru Stadium. Children of your age are competing there. If you win that race, I will start training you,” said Ram Narayan.

“That is no big deal,” thought Tarun. “I will, I will Sir!”, he heard himself say with complete conviction.

“Fine, boy! It is my job to get you entry in the race and remember yours to win it. Tell me, what is your name?”, asked Ram Narayan.

“Tarun... Tarun Kapoor, Sir.”

“Tarun, I will meet you here after five days to give you your participation card. All the best,” said Ram Narayan and left.

The next day brought a new ray of hope. Tarun got up early, had milk and before his mother could finish her query on what he was up to, he ran out and went to the Nehru Stadium to check the details of the race. He was very happy indeed.

Tarun started preparing with zeal. Every day he would get up at four in the morning and run ten miles. In the evenings, he would time himself according to the 1000 metre distance prescribed by the competition. He wanted everything to be perfect. He also wanted someone to back him up and so he told his mother everything.

Tarun practiced vigorously for five days, and then met Ram Narayan to collect his participation card. Tarun gazed at the piece of paper which meant so much to him. No matter what, he had to win this race. He wanted to show his father that he was not really the black sheep of the family and that; he could be good at something at least.

Then came November 14. After taking the blessings of his mother, Tarun pedalled away to the stadium. There was a huge crowd waiting to go inside. Tarun entered the office where a sign board read 'Participants only' with his heart beating faster every second. Inside, there were about fifty participants waiting for the race to begin.

Someone patted him on the shoulders. "Hello, Tarun!" It was Ram Narayan. "All the best!" he said affectionately.


Tarun smiled but did not say a word.

All the participants lined up, each one hoping to win the race. Each one of them had his family and friends on the stands to cheer for them. To his amazement, Tarun saw his mother in the stands. The fear in his eyes changed to confidence.

The whistle blew and all the participants started off with all their might. They were all determined to be the winner of the race. In the lead was the fastest of them all, Tarun. Seeing himself ahead of everybody, Tarun felt very proud of himself.



On the track there was a shallow path. As he was running fast, Tarun did not notice that and he slipped. Breathing fast he saw the other kids going past him. He could not be a



loser, today and so without wasting a second, he got up to run once more. Being quick Tarun overtook a few kids ahead of him. But as fate would have it, he slipped again.

What was happening to him? He could not bear it. He looked into the crowd and saw his mother. She was saying something to him: ‘Get up son, get up and run.’

So Tarun got up once again. He was among the last few. But he did not give up. Once more he overtook some children. Since he was fretting a little too much, he fell a third time!

Tears were rolling down his cheeks. How will he get into Ram Narayan’s training school now? How will he prove to his parents that he was talented? He was the last kid on the track now.

He turned his eyes towards the stands. Then he heard Ram Narayan screaming from somewhere, “Come on, Tarun, run!” And so he got up a third time. This twelve year old determined boy, who was last on the track, got up and ran with all the strength he had.

The crowd was cheering for Pawan, the boy who had won the race. But to Tarun’s surprise, there was louder applause when he crossed the finishing line last. The audience cheered for his determination and his valor for never giving up.

He bowed his head with shame and said to Ram Narayan, “I am sorry, Sir, I lost.”

“No, son, to me you have won the toughest race, the race of your life. You got up and started afresh each time you fell. You are a real-life hero. Your training starts tomorrow.”

Tarun could not believe his ears. Tears filled his eyes again. He smiled at his mother who hugged him and said, “You are the best son in the world.”

Nisha Punjabi

About the author

Nisha Punjabi is a freelance writer based in Lucknow U.P. Presently she is working for bindassdaily.com. She was employed in Lucknow Times (Daily magazine of Times of India) from July 2004 to January 2005. She has written around 50 articles on several prominent people residing in the city. She won a prize in sports category in a story writing competition for Children Book Trust in 2001.

Meanings in context

pent up	:	(feelings or thoughts) which have not been expressed
subsided	:	lessened
distraught	:	extremely upset
conviction	:	confidence
vigorously	:	energetically
zeal	:	enthusiasm
applause	:	a noise made by a person or group of people clapping their hands and sometimes shouting to show appreciation and enjoyment.
prescribed	:	set, approved
query	:	question

Comprehension

I. Arrange these utterances from the lesson in their correct sequence.

- “I will give you your participation card.”
- “I have failed in two subjects.”
- “That is no big deal. I will, I will Sir.”
- “I will meet you here after five days.”
- “The training school is very expensive Sir.”
- “You are one of the best runners I have ever seen.”
- “If you win the race on Children’s Day, I will train you.”
- “All you need to do is keep that passion burning in you and never give up.”
“Have you joined some training school?”
- “I can train you but on one condition.”
- “I see a good future in you`
- “ What condition?”

II. Complete the dialogue with the utterances in question I on the previous page.


Ram Narayan "What is it ,son?"
 Tarun "I _____"
 Ram Narayan "You _____"
 Tarun "Thank you, Sir"
 Ram Narayan "I _____"
 Tarun "It's so kind of you, Sir"
 Ram Narayan "All _____" " Have _____"
 Tarun "The _____"
 Ram Naryan "I _____"
 Tarun "What _____"
 Ram Narayan "If _____"
 Tarun " _____Sir"
 Ram Narayan "I _____" " I _____"

III. Complete this grid with the information from the lesson.

	Utterances	Who said	To Whom
a.	"Your training starts tomorrow."	Ram Narayan	Tarun
b.	"Get up son, get up, run."		
c.	"You are a real-life hero."		
d.	"Come on Tarun, run."		
e.	"I am sorry, I lost."		
f.	"You are the best son in the world."		
g.	"What is it son?"		
h.	"Hello, All the best!"		

IV. Answer the questions.

1. How did Tarun release his pent-up emotions?
2. Whom did Tarun happen to meet in his state of depression? How did that person console him?

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3. “Have you joined some training school?”, Ramnarayan asked Tarun. What was Tarun’s reaction to this question?
 4. How did Tarun prepare himself for the race?
 5. When did Tarun’s fear change into confidence?
 6. If Tarun had not slipped a second time, what would have been his fate?
 7. Why was there a louder applause even when Tarun crossed the finishing line last?
 8. What would have been the reaction of Tarun’s father after the race?

Vocabulary

1. Tick (✓) the correct alternative for the phrases in bold. Read the passage again and use the dictionary if necessary.

- a. He always thought himself as the **black sheep** of his family.
 - i. a person who is as meek as a sheep.
 - ii. a person who is unable to adjust
 - iii. a sheep which is black in colour
 - iv. a person who is considered useless by the family
- b. “Life is full of **ups and downs.**”
 - i. give and take
 - ii. success and failures
 - iii. moving up and down
 - iv. many good things
- c. “**All the best.**”
 - i. Wish you good luck
 - ii. Always do good to all
 - iii. Take good care of yourself
 - iv. All is well with you

d. The next day brought a new **ray of hope**.

- i. new possibility
- ii. turning point
- iii. aspiration
- iv. expectations

II. Pick out a word from the box which describes Tarun's feelings expressed by each of the following utterances and write it in the space provided. You can consult a dictionary for help.

zeal, determination, joy, shame, frustration

- i. I failed in two subjects. _____
- ii. Tarun practiced vigorously for five days. _____
- iii. He couldn't believe his ears. Tears filled his eyes. _____
- iv. Tarun got up and ran with all the strength he had. _____
- v. He wanted to erase the day from his life. _____

Now use these words to express the feelings in the following sentences. Write the words in the space provided.

- i. You are going to appear for an interview for the first time. _____
- ii. You want to help your friend but your wallet is empty. _____
- iii. You want to dance after hearing your result. _____
- iv. You are appearing for the NTSE for the third time. _____
- v. You don't want to talk to anybody after the competition. _____

Grammar

Look at the sentences from the lesson.

"I can train you if you want." *"If you win the race, I will train you."*

Each of these sentences has a clause starting with 'if'. These are called conditional clauses. These are known as open/fulfilled/ factual/ real conditional clauses. If the condition is likely to be fulfilled, then the action would take place in future.

There are other conditions which cannot be fulfilled. These are either imaginary or impossible conditions.

Compare these sentences.

	Possible condition/ fulfilled	Impossible condition/ unfulfilled	Imaginary condition/ hypothetical
1.	I can train you if you want.	I could have trained you if you had wanted.	I could train you if you wanted.
2.	If you win the race, I will train you.	If you had won the race, I would have trained you.	If you won the race, I would train you.
3.	If it rains, we will not go out.	If it had rained, we would not have gone out.	If it rained, we would not go out.
4.	If you want help, I can ask my mother to help you.	If you had wanted help, I could have asked my mother to help you.	If you wanted help, I could ask my mother to help you.
5.	If we work hard, we may pass.	If we had worked hard, we might have passed.	If we worked hard, we might pass.
6.	If you are a bird, you will fly.	If you had been a bird, you would have flown.	If you were a bird, you would fly.

I. Write the verbs of these sentences and identify the tense of the verbs.

	Possible condition	Impossible condition	Imaginary condition
1.	Main : can train	Main : could have trained	Main : could train
	If : want	If : had wanted	If : wanted
2	Main :	Main :	Main :
	If :	If :	If :
3	Main :	Main	Main :
	If :	If :	If :
4	Main :	Main	Main :
	If :	If :	If :
5	Main :	Main :	Main :
	If :	If :	If :
6	Main :	Main :	Main :
	If :	If :	If :
General	Main : + tense	Main : + tense	Main : + tense
	If : + tense	If : + tense	If : + tense

II. Fill in the blanks with the correct forms of the verbs given in brackets.

“If you wish to become a good athlete you _____ (have) to practice hard. Training will work if you _____ (know) how to use it. If you get up early and _____ (run) at your top speed, you _____ (see) that you gain pace quickly. If you have determination, success _____ (follow). And if you _____ (try) hard, you can overcome all hurdles. If your family _____ (boosts) you up, you will get success in earnest. I believe if you _____ (have) less money you will never feel the lack of it.”

Look at these sentences. These sentences have a negative ‘if- clause’.

If you don't attend school, you cannot join OSCAR.

If you don't study, you won't have a future.

These can also be written as

Unless you attend school, you cannot join OSCAR.

Unless + affirmative verb = if + negative verb

Unless you study, you won't have a future.

III. In your notebook rewrite the following paragraph using ‘unless’ in place of ‘if’. Make changes wherever necessary.

If my parents don't give permission, the sports teacher won't enroll me. And if I don't go to school, he won't teach me to play football. Moreover my mother says that if I don't take Radha with me, she won't allow me to join any sports team.

Writing

Tarun is now 23 years old. He has won many medals at the national and international level sports tournaments. He is now a pride for his teachers and friends. The school has invited Tarun as the Chief Guest on Children's Day. The Principal has given you an incomplete draft of his speech.

Complete the Principal's speech.

Dear colleagues and friends

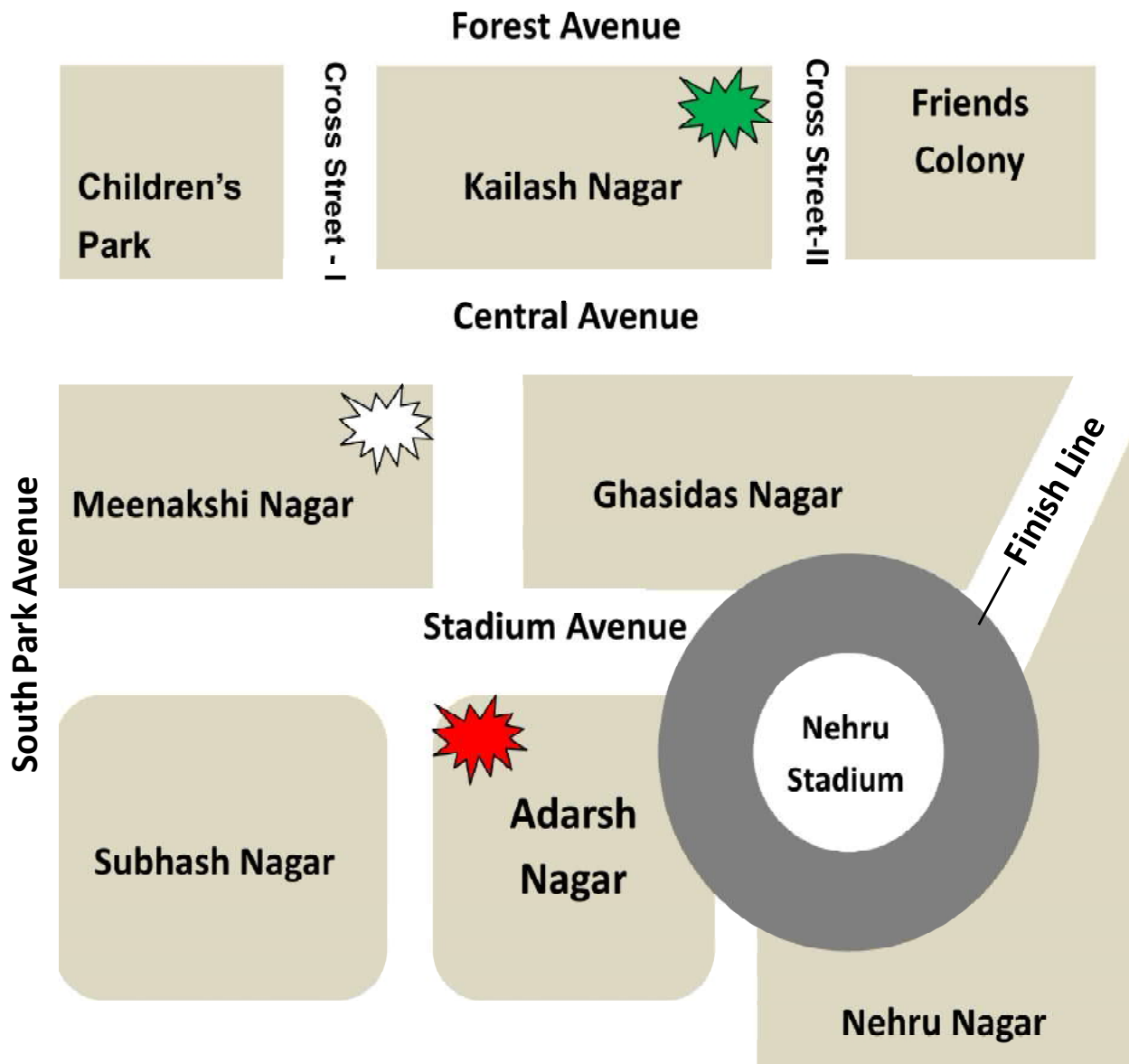
It is a great _____

Tarun who was a student _____

He showed great courage _____ overcame failure and finally _____ goal.

Listening

Listen to the instructions given to the marathon runners and trace their route on the map given below:



Speaking

Do a role play using the dialogues written in question II in Comprehension Section of 'The Race'.