

# *NIGHT RUN*

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner (Grades 5-6)

The evergreen forest flashed behind her in a green blur as she charged through the pitch black, moonless night, trying to escape the enemy that was now chasing her. She was running, quite literally, for her life. The forest began to thin and widen to reveal a rocky path that led to the mountains. Snowcapped, they reached high into the misty sky as if trying to touch it. Suddenly, the two wolves rushed out of the confines of the forest and into the wide, seemingly endless expanse that was the mountains. Rocks tumbled off the narrow path to the earth below, kicked up by the pounding paws of the wolves.

Black fur created a mask on her features and formed an ebony cloak as if it flowed down her spine and then stopped at the base of her tail, stopped by a pelt of silver. Slender elegant black legs made up for most of her considerably small stature. A small bit of white on the end of her feathery long tail lashed through the air as she ran forward hurriedly. Her body build was lithe, long, and overall, built for speed and agility. Perhaps this was the one advantage over her bulky opponent that rushed at her with snapping jaws, ready to tear flesh open and spill crimson red blood on her coat. She growled and urgently pushed forward, evading him for now.

She did not want to run; it wasn't in her nature to do this, to run like a scared little coward. She wanted to turn around and fight him, hear pained yelps escape his jaws as she raked razor-sharp claws across his side, to make him pay for the troubles he had caused her. However, she knew that she couldn't fight him and win; common sense won the battle over rage and anger. Her chest rose and fell and her breath sent little clouds in the oxygen deprived air of the mountains. The silver wolf struggled for breath and welcomed the frigid cold air that filled her

lungs and turned her throat raw. Gracefully, she sped along the path, taking up long lengths of the ground in single strides.

Her dark blue eyes widened as she saw the earth disappear into the sky, a cliff! She couldn't turn back now, not with him hot on her heels. She had but one choice: to jump. She grimaced as she forced her limbs to move faster, trying to gain the momentum that would allow her to soar safely across to the other side. He too saw the cliff, but he didn't look discouraged, not the least bit, so confident that he could catch up to her before she tried to jump. Panting heavily she took a final elongated stride and leaped. For a moment she was airborne soaring through the air and then colliding with the earth in a cloud of dust. Shaking, she got to her paws and turned to her enemy, forced to come to a screeching halt on the other side. A fearsome snarl ripped from her throat as she shouted to the world, "I've won!"