By Pandora Berman

"Mom, I haven't trained in a year and a half. Do you realize that's how out of shape that makes me!"

"Dear, if you walk the course you'll finish ahead of your grandmother!"

That's how I was entered in the Bonne Bell Mini-Marathon for women. My mother, a long-distance runner and local politician, thought a fine way of getting free publicity for her reelection campaign would be for her, her mother, and her daughter to run as a three-generation team in this 10,000-meter race around the Charles River Basin.

So on Columbus Day morning, my mother, with my grandmother and me in tow, plowed her way through the press room in the Hertz Regency hotel, passing out her press release and talking her way into being photographed and interviewed by the newspapers there.

What a sexist event an all-women's race is! This one was sponsored by Bonne Bell, a cosmetics manufacturer, whose peach-flavored lip balm was given to all participants. All the cosmetics manufacturer, her press release and talking her way into being photographed and interviewed by the newspapers there.

I didn't have my mother's upper body strength to carry me up - that's what I thought. Slow down, kid. You've got four miles to go. At least the weather was good: cool, overcast, and breezy. Although I felt cold each time I dribbled water down my shirt.

Runners started dropping out. I passed them saying, "Keep moving. Keep it up."

The third mile passed, and I finished it at 27:09. We passed one of the two wheelchair runners and offered her trite but sincere encouragement. I wondered how they would get up the stairs to the Harvard Bridge. I decided that they would be carried up - that made the most sense.

The bridge loomed, and I hoped there wouldn't be a crash at the bottom of the stairs. I couldn't tell whether the crowd ahead of me was spectators or runners. I reached the stairs, the crowed parted, and I took the steps two at a time. The way always did.

The fourth mile was on the bridge. I was sticking to a nine-minute pace. We ran down the sidewalk, and the narrow breakdown margin on the road was packed with spectators.

We turned onto Memorial Drive again, heading east. I knew there was a turnaround somewhere ahead. It was all the way down by Sloan!

I passed the fifth mile at just over 45 minutes. Sure I could maintain that pace to the end. The bridge loomed, and I knew I'd be finished. The number six was visible in the near distance.

The finish line was set by the Hotel Sonesta. I passed it up - I shouldn't need to take water more often than every mile at the stations. We crossed the little bridge; passed the MDC station, and ran over the dam. A short way down Storrow Drive we were diverted onto the Replandale!

I passed the two-mile mark at 18:06. I ran a mile in 9:36. I thought, slow down, kid, you've got four miles to go. At least the weather was good: cool, overcast, and breezy, although I felt cold each time I dribbled water down my shirt.

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