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Running with the Thing

by Guy Belleranti

Ramon shielded his eyes from the sun as he puffed along the sidewalk beside his older sister. "Marie, why are you running?"

"Exercise," Marie gasped out. "Don't you know that...exercise...does the body...good?"

"Oh, I know...that," Ramon said, equally out of breath. "I just thought...maybe you were trying...to get away from...The Thing."



"The Thing?" Marie slowed from a run to a trot, and looked around. "Do you mean that big kid back there?"

"No," Ramon said.

"That lady walking a dog?"

"No," Ramon repeated. "I mean The Thing. T-H-E and -T-H-I-N-G," Ramon spelled. "It's right behind me."

Marie slowed from a trot to a walk and looked again. "But, Ramon, there's nothing right behind you. No one, nobody and no Thing."

"Is so," Ramon declared.

"Okay," Marie said. She stopped completely and put her hands on her hips. "Then tell me what it looks like."

"Sometimes it's tall and sometimes it's short," Ramon said. "In fact, right now... Wow!"

Ramon's jaw dropped. "Now there's two Things. Come on, Marie. We have to run

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again." He chugged forward on his short legs.

"Hey, Marie...Ramon!" Tony from next door swung his bike in along the curb.

"What's with the fast feet? And why do you both keep popping looks behind yourselves?"

"I'm exercising." Marie panted.

"And I'm trying...to get...away...from the...Things," Ramon said between gasps for breath.

"Things?" Tony asked.

Marie made a face, and once again stopped running. "It's just Ramon's imagination."

"Is not!" Ramon cried. "They're there – you just aren't looking right." He spun around and stuck out his right arm. "Look—now there are three Things."

Marie and Tony looked.

"Where?" asked Tony.

"Yes," said Marie. "Where?"

"Right there." Ramon waved a finger, pointing as he counted. "One...two...three."

Marie and Tony looked again.

"Oh!" Tony smiled. "Now I see them."

Marie crossed her arms and sighed. "Tony, you can't—" She blinked. Ramon and Tony were right. There were three Things! Ramon's shadow, Tony's shadow and...her own shadow.

"Come on," she said. "Let's run again, and give our Things some exercise!"

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1) Use the idiom 'jaw dropping' in a sentence of your own.

2) Which answer best describes the way in which Marie reduced her speed while exercising?

- a) From a run to a trot and from a trot to a walk.
- b) From a run to a walk and from a walk to a trot.
- c) From a walk to a trot and from a trot to a run.
- d) From a stroll to a walk and from a walk to a trot.

3) What things came to Marie's mind when Ramon kept talking about 'The Thing'?

4) What was Tony's first response when he heard Ramon talking about 'The Thing'?

5) Why do you think shadows keep changing sizes?
