It was unseasonably warm and in retrospect, the fog wasn't very usual either. However, if you're running ten miles, you get what you can get, and Spencer was just glad it wasn't raining.

He looked down at his battered red running shoes, noticing the spots where they were permanently stained from running through creeks, deep mud and through the rain. Despite himself a small grin appeared on his face; this was going to suck so much.

The meeting place was only a couple of blocks away, and the captains usually didn't start until everyone was there. As he left his house, he glanced down at the jacket in his hand. Testing the air, he came to the quick conclusion that it was not necessary, and without looking threw it through the door and closed it behind him, forgetting that he didn't have his keys on him.

“God damn it.” He muttered to himself as he patted his empty pockets, realizing that the keys and his wallet and his phone were all in the jacket he had just unceremoniously hurled. He looked down at his watch, which, thankfully he still had.

It read 7:00.

“God damn it!” he said again, running a hand through his hair and realizing he was almost late as it was, decided to go without the items. Everything would sort itself out later when he came home.

Residential houses got taller and taller as he jogged towards the meeting place, eventually transforming into small apartment buildings, and then turning again into proper commercial buildings. The street lights were already on, and the wet wind soon made Spencer decide that it had been a mistake to leave his jacket.

“Hey Spencer!” A voice made him look up. Another member of the team was walking across the street from him.

“Oh hey!” He waved at the other person, suddenly realizing that he didn't know the other guy's name. Tryouts had only been a week ago and they were still getting to used to each other. Spencer thought this person was a freshman, because he hadn’t seen him around before, but honestly, with his skill at faces, he could have been in Spencer's own grade.

Regardless of names, the other person crossed the street towards Spencer.

“You know what we're doing tonight?” he asked, a smile on his face. Definitely a freshman.

“You're kidding right? Tonight’s the long run. We gotta do ten miles!” Spencer said, shaking his head. “Although I still haven't decided whether I would rather do this or hills.” He said, looking in the vague direction of the worst incline in the entire county.

“Definitely hills,” the other boy said, “at least with hills you can get it over quicker.”

“Err. I'm not so sure,” Spencer replied as they walked, “sure its shorter, but it really sucks, especially if you're in varsity.” He added, knowing full well that the other boy was not in varsity.

“I guess. You guys have to do like twice of our run. Pretty incredible.” The other person said, looking at Spencer's running shirt. “Is that from the last invitational?”

Spencer looked down at the white and blue athletic shirt he was wearing. “Oh yeah, they were just handing these out with some other stuff. But it was totally not worth it. That whole race was a shit show. We had two fucking false starts and they threatened to disqualify the next person who did it. And then it rained halfway through.”

“Yeah, that does sound brutal. At least you got to go though.” The other boy pointed out.

“Huh?” Spencer said as they passed through deserted Sender St. and its many shops. The lights were on, on the street but all the buildings were dark. Kinda creepy actually, like something out of silent hill.

“Wait, you didn't even notice? Only varsity got to go to that one.” The boy said with a bit of a frown.

“Sorry. I didn't know.” Spencer said, not sure of what to add.

After that, they didn't talk, but that was fine since the meeting location was only another two blocks away.

They heard the blue and white shirted teammates long before they saw them. The meeting place was on the curb of a random hardware store and they usually congregated in a large alleyway that led to a parking lot behind the building. While it meant they were off the street, it amplified their voices, and the restaurant on the other side had complained several times. Tough. They were a team long before the restaurant was even there. There was no one there ever anyway.

“Car!” Someone yelled as Spencer and the other nameless student got close.

The whole crowd of people scattered in two directions, leaving just barely enough room for the busted up silver volvo to exit the driveway.

Spencer watched the car take the turn onto the street, hopping the curve as it did so, and realized that it had been the only car he had seen yet tonight. Man they really weren't kidding when they said downtown had gone to shit.

“Ok, Spencer's here. Everyone group up!” Randal yelled. Randal was a pretty good captain all things considered. Also he ran like a fucking boss. Spencer could never understand how people did consecutive miles at six minutes or even under. He had always been good at distance, but speed was never a skill he had, hence why he was on cross country. If he had wanted to sprint the hell out of everything, he could have done track.

“Hey! I'm here too!” The other person said with a bit of a whine.

Randal looked at the freshman. Most of the group looked as well. “Who are you again?”

There were a handful of snickers from the other upper classmen, and some from the freshman's friends as well. Thank god, he wasn't the only one who had forgotten the kid's name.

“Damn it Randal, you know me, we're in history together!” The freshman protested.

Randal shrugged with a wry grin, “I know, I know, I was just joking. Also after the run I might need to talk to you about that assignment due next week. I have no idea what I'm supposed to write about.”

Randal was good at running, but academics were not his strong suite.

“Alright team. Coach Malanke can't be here because of something about actually spending time with his family or some bullshit, so we're doing this one by ourselves.” he said, clapping his hands.

“Everyone knows that today is the long run right?” He said, with a shit eating grin, looking for anyone who looked horrified, but if he was disappointed he didn't get to surprise anyone, he didn't show it.

“Teeeeeen miles!” he added. “And that’s everyone, even junior varsity. We'll split V and JV. Lets get… Partha, you wanna lead JV?” he asked an junior on the varsity team.

The girl shrugged. “Sure.”

“Cool, then we'll get going. Its not getting any earlier or warmer.”

The team then did about fifteen minutes of warmups, but were somewhat limited since the ground was concrete.

Ryan, one of Spencer's friends on the team had been talking to Spencer during the warm ups.

“You wanna try to pace this time?” Ryan asked, adjusting his watch as the team got ready, taking last drinks out of bottles, and attached or removed pieces of clothing.

“We'll see how this goes. I'm usually good at distance, but its been a while since I ran ten miles.” Spencer admitted.”

The two of them started their watches.

“Lets do this shit!” Randal yelled, the twenty or so people following him.

And just like that they were off.