

the short life and death of **my little brother** (1) moorland race

The early-morning moorland mist had lifted and the sheep that grazed beside the disused aerodrome were treated to a bizarre _____. A young family stopped their ageing black Vauxhall beside the road and one by one climbed out of the car. Two young boys walked _____ across the moor and took up crouched starting positions for a race on a former runway. Their mother stood near the car watching as their father walked some 60 yards away from his children and raised his right arm. "Ready, _____, go!" he shouted into the wind, _____ his arm at the same time.

It was immediately _____ that the race was an unfair contest. The older, dark-haired boy quickly took an early lead over his fair-haired brother. The further they ran, the more the older boy pulled _____ until, by the time he reached the imaginary finishing tape, he was 15 yards clear of his younger brother. If anyone had been watching, they would have been _____ by the interest in the predictable result and the seemingly unnecessary humiliation of the younger son. But, to the family, the race had _____ significance.

Guy, the younger boy, seven years old, was on his way to London for an operation that was intended to transform his life, and the lives of his entire family. The _____ of the race was for his parents, Stanley and Paula, to measure exactly by how far I, Andrew, their elder son, could defeat my brother while he still had a hole in his heart, a defect he had suffered since birth. At nine, I was _____ strict instructions from my father to run as hard and fast as I could and not, as had become my habit _____ the years, to _____ up and give Guy a chance of winning.

We all planned to re-run the race weeks later, when Guy was fully recovered from his operation. We were _____ that, with a "normal" heart, Guy would _____ reduce my winning margin. If he could see an improvement in running in such a short time, he would know that his _____ for physical improvement in other walks of life would be endless.

**ahead » apparent » baffled » confident » dropping »
ease » enormous » over » potential » purpose »
purposefully » sight » significantly » steady » under**