

*“Vroom!” Mike gripped the steering wheel and placed his feet firmly on the pedals of the kid-sized car. “Vroom, vroom, vroom!”*

*Pushing with his right foot then his left, he drove forward, picking up speed as the wheels made that wonderful swoosh sound over the hardwood floor of his family’s Chicago apartment. Around the living room he sped, past Dad’s chair on the right and the table beside it.*

*He heard the announcer in his head...*

*He’s coming up to the finish line. He’s . . .*

*Crash!*

*Mike’s chin hit the coffee table with a cruel smack. He reached up and felt the smooth wood in front of him. He’d forgotten about the coffee table. Mike’s lip trembled and his eyes filled with tears as the pain set in. He let out a howl, gripping his chin. Dumb coffee table! Mike wanted to yell or smack it or both. It was just tall enough for the hood of the pedal car to zoom under, but not nearly tall enough for the four-year-old driver...*

*A couple of hours later, Mike sat in the backseat of a taxi, using a finger to trace the bandage covering three stitches in his chin. He waited for Mom to break her silence and scold him for racing so fast indoors or for Dad to say they needed to take the pedal car away for a while. The thought of losing his pedal car hurt more than the stitches.*

*Ellery sat beside him. Will they give my car to Ellery?*

*“Michael,” Mom said.*

*He waited for the bad news.*

*“You need to do a better job of watching where you’re going.”*

*Mike straightened up. The weight of dread lifted. That’s it? Just watch where I’m going? I can do that, easy!*

*Some might consider this a strange thing to say to a four-year-old who had been blind since shortly after birth. But Mike knew exactly what his mother meant. He needed to learn to listen better.*

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Close your eyes and try walking around the room (no fair peeking!). What do you hear? What do you smell? Can you tell if one of your friends is in your way, or if you are about to collide with a table like Mike did? How can you tell?

Now, imagine living like this every day. How would you read, ride your bike, do your homework, or walk down stairs? What if there was an emergency while you were, let’s say, on the 78<sup>th</sup> floor of a burning building? How would you get out?

Mike has been blind his entire life. He excelled in school, shocked the neighbors by riding his bike around the neighborhood, and learned to do geometry in his head. As a grown man, Mike, along with a very special yellow Lab named Roselle, did have to escape the 78<sup>th</sup> floor of a burning building. How did he do it?

Find out by reading *Running with Roselle*: How a blind boy and puppy grew up, became best friends, and together survived one of America’s darkest days!

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*Running with Roselle*