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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Bianca's fall through the ice

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Once upon a time, in a land of snow and ice, there were two best friends, named Bianca and Douglas. They loved nothing more than ice skating on the frozen lake. Every day after school, the friends would put on their skates and glide across the smooth, white surface. The friends loved the ice, but they also knew it could be treacherous. Over the years they had learned lots of lessons about the ice. They knew that new ice is stronger than old ice. They knew what currents under the water can make it difficult for firm ice to form. They knew cloudless, snowless days were best for ice skating, for snow adds weight and slows down the creation of ice. And their mothers were very strict, each year Bianca and Douglas had to sit through a speech about how to save themselves if they should ever fall through the ice. The kids were confident in themselves and their knowledge and were never afraid to go out onto the ice.

One cold winter day, Bianca and Douglas decided to skate a little further than they usually did. They were well prepared, they each had a backpack with a rope, a thermos with hot cocoa, a blanket and a fully charged phone. They glided and twirled, not paying attention to how far they had gone. Suddenly, Bianca felt the ice beneath her start to crack. "Douglas, we need to get back to shore! It's not safe here" Bianca calmly told her friend, but it was too late. She fell through the ice and into the freezing water below. Douglas, who was a bit further away, saw his friend go down and immediately sprung into action.

As she struggled to stay afloat, Bianca remembered what her mother had told her: don't try to swim, try to preserve your energy and body heat. Control your breathing, the shock of the cold water can easily lead to hyperventilation and panic which decreases your chances of getting out the water safely. So Bianca stayed calm and breathed slow, deep breaths. And most importantly, try to get yourself into a horizontal floating position. Then, kick as hard as you can to try and get yourself to slide horizontally onto the ice.

So, Bianca kicked her legs and used her arms to try and pull herself out of the water and onto the ice. In the meantime, Douglas had called for help and then got the long rope out of his backpack. He laid down on the ice, to distribute his weight, trying to stay away from the hole best he could. Bianca grabbed the rope and slowly, but surely she got out of the water. Douglas quickly got her on shore. Offered her dry clothing, wrapped the blankets around her and gave her hot

cocoa to drink. Help arrived soon after the children got on shore and they quickly took in both Bianca and Douglas to check their vitals. They were both ok and went home that same day.

Thankfully the kids were well prepared and knew exactly what to do. They stayed calm. But they realized they got very, very lucky. The scary incident didn't scare them away of ice skating and the ice. They went ice skating the same week, but kept their eyes open for danger.



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