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The Bravery Medal

Mary Graham Bonner

One blustery winter afternoon, two children were the only ones skating on a pond. A big dog happened to be out for a run in the cold air when he spotted them.

He trotted down to the pond's edge and tested the ice — it creaked unpleasantly under his paws, and he could tell it wasn't as solid as it looked. He decided to stay close, just in case.

He had barely settled himself on the bank when a sharp crack rang out across the ice. Then another. The children fell through.

The dog went in without hesitating. He swam to the first child, helped her to the shore, then went back for the second. When he'd gotten them both safely to dry land, he saw a sleigh passing on the road above the pond. He barked and barked until the people in it pulled over, saw the shivering children, and took them straight home. The big dog rode along.

Later, someone fastened a medal to his collar in thanks.



The dog said "Bow-wow" when they did — meaning, in his way, that they were very kind and he was grateful, but also that he wasn't entirely sure what all the fuss was about. He loved children. He'd heard the ice and known the danger. He felt, if he was being honest, that any other dog would have done exactly the same thing.

Which is, of course, exactly what heroes always say.

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