

Highlights™

Stories of Winter



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The Chair Lift

By Marty Banks
Art by Sally Schaedler



**Skiing is easy.
Getting off the
chair lift is hard.**

I'm going to fall. I know it, know it, know it.

And it's going to hurt.

My mom asks, "Are you warm enough, Jake?" The only thing poking out of her ski clothes is her freckled nose.

"Yeah," I say. I'm frozen, but I can't tell her that. She'll wiggle around to make sure my jacket is zipped, and the chair will bounce. If there's anything I hate more than getting *off* the chair lift, it's sitting on one that's bouncing high off the ground.

"There's Speedway," she says, pointing to an intermediate run. "Want to go there first?"

"Sure." I can't think about Speedway now because we're only two towers from the top of the lift. The lift operator is inside his hut. He's waiting to stop the

lift for people who fall.

People like me.

"Ski Tips Up!" the sign says. I point mine *so* up. My mom shifts forward, jiggling the chair. I try to ask her to stop, but my throat is stuck shut.

The sign says, "Unload Here."

I stand. I'm standing! I'm skiing forward away from the chair. I'm still up!

Argghhh . . . I'm falling! I'm falling and I can't stop and IT'S REALLY GOING TO HURT!

My knee twists, my arm crashes, and my goggles are totally covered with snow. I bet everybody around is laughing.

My mom calls, "Are you OK?"

Great. Mom yelling. Now anybody who missed it will know I fell.

"Yeah," I call. "I'm fine."

I swipe my goggles with my glove. Everything is all smeared, but I see a bunch of older kids around me on the ground. They look even more tangled than I am.

“I hate falling,” says a kid next to me. He looks perfectly comfortable. He’s not fighting to get unwound from his skis. He’s just lying there. As if he likes it.

He asks, “Did you ever make it off without falling?”

“Yeah. A couple of times.”

“Lucky! Just once I’d like to.”

Wow. He hasn’t made it off once. And he’s older.

“Hey!” he yells, pointing to two girls about to get off the chair. “Here come Nicole and Rachel.”

The girls stand. Right away one loses her balance. She reaches for her friend, and they fall in a big lump. Hats and poles and goggles fly everywhere.

Everyone cheers. “That’s a ten!” the kid next to me shouts. “Best fall so far!”

Rachel and Nicole giggle and take a bow, sitting down.

As the lift operator stops the lift and comes out of the hut to help the girls, I pull myself up. I’ve fallen worse than that. That’s nothing. Plus, I’ve made it off twice without falling. Next time, I’m going to make it. I know it.

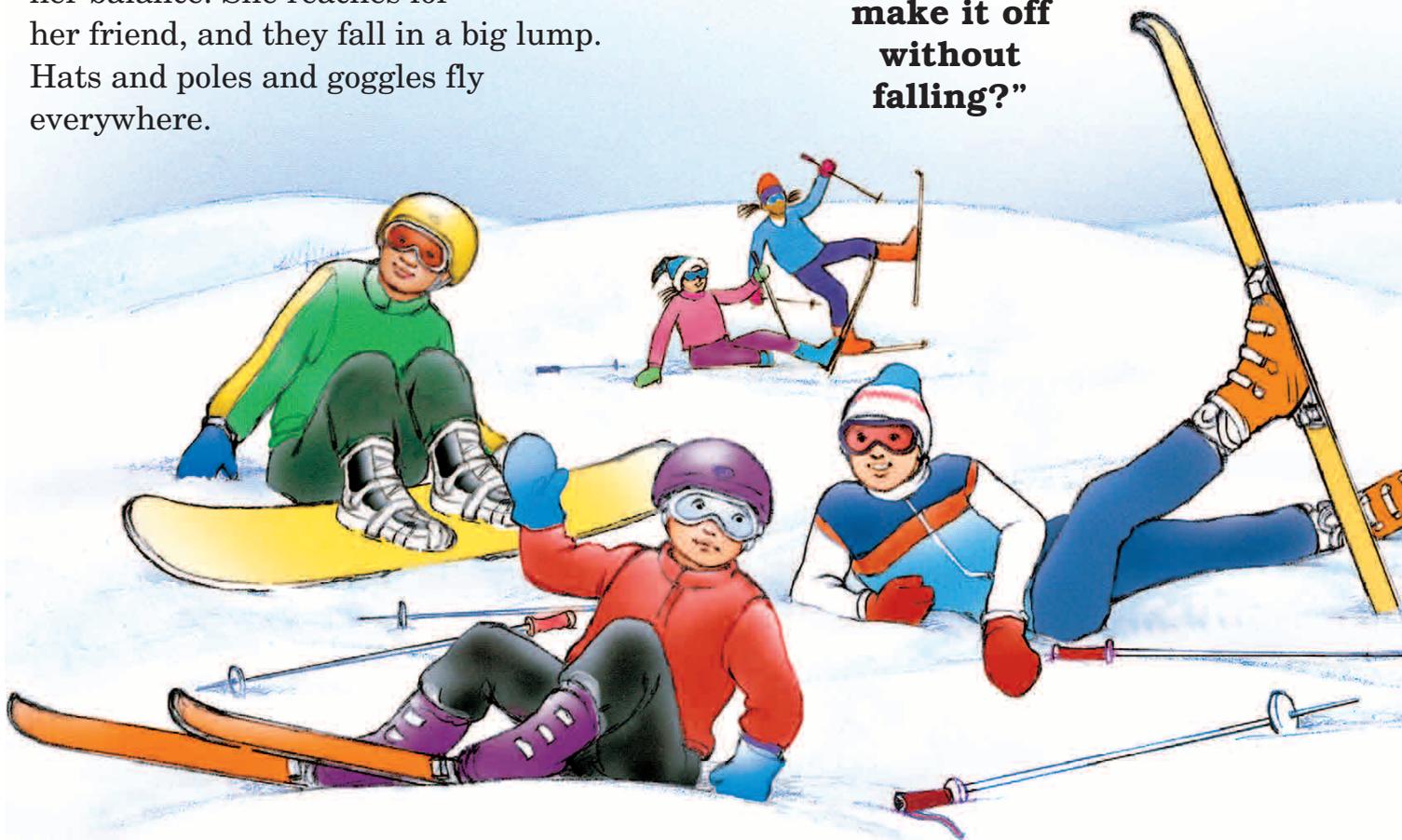
I ski to my mom. “Ready.”

“How about starting slow to warm up?” she asks.

“No, thanks. Let’s do Speedway!”

I push off, ready to go. ❄️

**“Did you ever
make it off
without
falling?”**



A Valentine by Very Special Delivery

By Marilyn Kratz
Art by Stephanie Roth

“**M**om! Look at the pretty balloon and all the valentines I got!” called Ann as she rushed into the apartment.

“They’re beautiful,” said Mom. “Did you enjoy the party at school?”

“Yes,” said Ann. “But I’m sorry Tina had to miss it. I couldn’t even give her a valentine.”

“She’s almost over her chickenpox,” said Mom. “You can take her a valentine soon.”

“But today is Valentine’s Day,” said Ann. She looked sadly at the big red balloon floating above her head. Suddenly she had an idea. She explained it to Mom.



“I think that will work,” said Mom, smiling.

Ann phoned Tina, who lived in the apartment upstairs.

“Please come out to the top of the stairs in five minutes,” said Ann.

“I have a surprise for you.”

“I’ll be there,” said Tina.

Quickly, Ann taped a colorful valentine to the balloon’s string. Then she ran to the stairs leading up to Tina’s apartment. She stood directly below the top of the stairs.

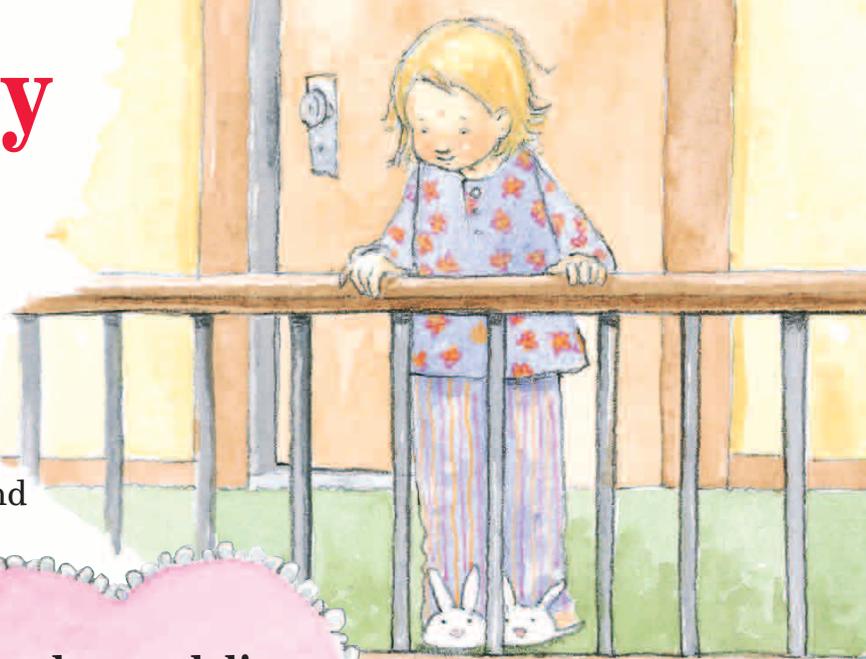
“Hi, Tina!” she called when she saw her friend above. “Catch!”

Ann let go of the balloon. Up it floated, carrying the valentine.

“You can keep the balloon,” said Ann. “Happy Valentine’s Day!”

“Thanks!” said Tina as she caught the balloon. “What a great valentine!”

Ann laughed. “And it’s probably the first one you ever got by special delivery ‘air mail!’” 



When Will It Snow?

By Nancy Dearborn Art by Joe Kulka



"It's happening!"

In early fall, Isaac and his mom moved from the Philippines to Wisconsin. It was quite a change. The Philippines is hot and wet. Wisconsin has cold winters and lots of snow. Isaac and his mom had never seen snow.

"Nanay, when is it going to snow?" Isaac asked his mom.

His mom was washing rice. "Not until most of the leaves fall from the trees," she said.

"When will that be?" Isaac asked.

"In a little while, I think."

One afternoon, a leaf fell and landed on Isaac's head. "It's happening!" Isaac said. "The leaves are falling. Soon it will snow."

"Maybe," Nanay said.

But it did not snow.

A few weeks later, Isaac said, "Nanay, most of the

leaves have fallen. When is it going to snow?"

Nanay was stirring cabbage soup on the stove. "Not until the birds fly south for the winter."

"When will that be?" Isaac asked.

"In a little while, I think."

One morning Isaac saw geese flying in V's across the sky. "It's happening!" Isaac

"Now will it snow?"



pulled Nanay to the window. "The birds are flying south for the winter. Now will it snow?"

"Maybe," Nanay said.

Still it did not snow.

A few days later, Isaac said, "Nanay, the leaves fell and the birds flew south. When is it going to snow?"

Nanay took out a package of rice-stick noodles. "The temperature needs to drop below thirty-two degrees." She showed Isaac where the red line needed to be on the thermometer.

"When will that happen?"

Isaac asked.

"In a little while, I think."

The next afternoon, the wind whipped and howled. "It's happening!" Isaac told his mom. "The leaves fell, the birds flew south, and the red line is below thirty-two degrees. Soon it will snow."

"Maybe," Nanay said.

The next morning, a white blanket covered the ground. Isaac danced into the kitchen. It had snowed!

"Let's go outside. We have to shovel the driveway," Nanay said.

Isaac put on his warm clothes and ran outside. He stuck out his tongue and caught some falling flakes. They felt wet and cold.

At first Isaac enjoyed shoveling the snow. But soon he grew tired.

It snowed that day and the next. Isaac and Nanay took turns shoveling the drive. Each night Isaac was so tired he dropped into bed.



"When will it stop?" he asked.

"I thought you wanted it to snow," Nanay said.

"That was before I knew it was so much work," Isaac replied.

Nanay said, "I want to show you something. Let's go outside."

Isaac slowly put on his coat, cap, mittens, and boots. He didn't want to shovel more snow.

Instead, Nanay and Isaac took a walk down the street. In several yards, children were building funny snowmen with coal eyes and carrot noses.

Nanay and Isaac went home and made their own snowman. Isaac decorated its head with carrots, cabbage, and rice sticks.

"This is fun!" Isaac said.

He looked up at the sky. "Nanay, when will it snow again?"

Nanay laughed. "In a little while, I think." ❄️