

Snowfall

by

Anna Pearsall

Oasis

8th grade

1,494 words

SNOWFALL

Have you ever been in a life-threatening situation? Because if you haven't, you could never understand the feeling. Being a step away from death, I still have not gotten over it. Some nights, nightmares still pounce on me. I am having a nice, peaceful, meaningless dream when suddenly, it happens. Again. I wake up in a cold sweat, breathing hard. I tell myself that I am safe now, but it still takes hours to fall back asleep. But still, if things had not worked out the way they had, I probably would not be here.

What happened? Well, if you really want to know...

It was one of those perfect, beautiful days. The sky was a clear blue, with not a cloud in site. The sun shined, making the snow sparkle. I was up early, as usual. My friends were still sleeping in the lodge. I was itching to start skiing. I loved the adrenaline, the swish of cold air on my face. My breath hitched as I felt my excitement build.

Unable to stay indoors, I had gone outside to take a walk. Now I was heading back to the lodge. It was time to go skiing. If I had to wait any longer, I would drive myself crazy.

Walking briskly back in the direction of the lodge, I felt my excitement growing. My breath quickened, and so did my pace. It would be the most perfect, long day of skiing ever!

I walked quickly alongside the lodge. My cheeks and the tip of my nose tingled in the air. I had waited for this day ever since I opened the envelope on my birthday, five months ago. I had immediately started counting down the days. I loved to ski more than anything, but I usually had to go to the little hill near my neighborhood. It had a little rope pull for the short, beyond boring bunny hill, and a rusty, creaky chairlift that looked like it might collapse at any given moment.

Thanks to the occasional ski vacations, I had gotten good. But only in my wildest dreams did I ever hope to ski on Onyx Diamond. Recommended only for intermediates and experts, it had the steepest hills, biggest moguls, and longest runs. And here I was! Today I hoped to master the moguls so I had no limits on the mountain.

I gave a little hop. I could hardly contain my excitement! I was seriously considering breaking out into my dorky, embarrassing happy dance.

Just when I decided not to, a great, rumbling noise filled my ears. I looked up, expecting to see a low-flying jet.

But what I saw was not a jet. It made me scream, a sound of pure terror. I had no time to react. My scream was cut off.

Everything hurt. Do you know how the bottom of your feet hurt after you jumped off something high? It felt like that, except all over. My breath was knocked out of me. All I could see was white. All I could feel was cold. I was buried, buried in snow. My breath grew quick and my heart jumped to my throat as I realized my situation.

I would suffocate, then my body would freeze. No one would know what happened to me until the summer, when all the snow melted. I could picture my friends' faces, livid with worry, trying to find me.

I felt my terror rise until I could not stand it. I screamed, as loud as I could. I struggled to free my arms and my legs, but that just made everything hurt more. But I could not stop. I screamed and screamed, and then realized that I could still breathe.

Wait, I could breathe? To make sure I was not mistaken, I took several deep breaths. I

could breathe.

The breathing had a calming effect. I realized that I might not die after all. My heart slowed its rapid beating and returned to its natural place. There was a high chance that someone saw me, after all. I felt my body relax. I would be fine. All I had to do was sit here and wait.

In the snow, with no way to look at my watch, I had no idea how much time had passed. It could have been seconds, it could have been hours. I slowly twitched each of my arms and legs to make sure nothing was broken. My muscles were sore, but no sharp stabs of pain came from any of them. I breathed a sigh of relief.

With only the eerie whiteness, it was very disorienting. I could not tell how long I had been there. I just wanted to get out so I could start skiing. But the minutes ticked by (or at least I thought they did) and I started to worry. Had anyone seen me?

But I had other worries. My hands, though gloved, were becoming numb. My cheeks stung with cold. My toes felt large and rubbery inside of my boots.

My stomach began to growl with hunger. As I sat there, I realized how comfortable it was. I slept hardly at all last night, because I was too excited. My breaths slowed as I felt myself drifting off to sleep...

No! I jolted myself awake. I could not fall asleep! Who knows what would happen? What if someone walked by, calling my name?

I would have slapped myself if I could. But my arms were pinned down by the snow. When I touched my fingers together, I could not feel anything. I felt panic slowly seeping into my mind.

How would I ever get out? The truth hit me in that moment, and I realized the truth. I wouldn't. It hit me harder than the avalanche of snow. I would just lay here until I fell asleep and

froze to death. I was so scared. I would never feel the cold wind against my face again.

I would never ski around moguls or zip down a cat track. I would never experience the weightless moment after a jump, or the sound of my ski boots lock into my binding.

I had never felt so miserable. I had never felt so hopeless.

My body went limp as I sank even deeper into the snow, defeated.

As I felt myself falling into a sleep I would probably never awake from, I heard a man shout.

My body stiffened as I jolted awake. I listened carefully, telling myself I had imagined it. Just as I had convinced it was all in my head, I heard the noise again.

Then I heard scuffling noises, down near my knees. It sounded like someone was digging. I called out.

The digging noises stopped, then kept going, more persistent this time. I screamed and kicked my feet. Hope surged through my limbs, revitalizing my body. I screamed and screamed until my throat felt like someone had rubbed it raw with sandpaper.

As I stopped to catch my breath, I heard a voice growing steadily clearer.

“I’m here! I’m digging, I will get you out, just hang on, stay with me!”

The voice kept chanting encouraging words and I squirmed and squirmed. There was hope. Maybe I would ski again.

The encouraging words continued until they were all I could hear. I practically cried with relief.

Suddenly, I felt a hand clamp around my knee. I screamed, first with terror and then with relief. I shook my knee. I yelled and yelled. I felt more of my leg being freed, until someone finally scooped all of the snow of my body, then my face.

I gulped the fresh air and sat up, trying to brush the snow out of my eyes. But I could hardly move my fingers.

Everything was unnaturally bright. My whole body hurt. Suddenly, I just wanted to be back in the snow.

Then someone wrapped a blanket around me and started massaging my hands. I was ushered into the lodge and next to a blazing fire. Someone wiped my face dry, and I sat there, staring into the fire. I heard someone speaking to me, so I looked up.

“You are very lucky that only new snow fell on you.” I gave a dry laugh. I could think of a lot of things describing my situation, and lucky was not one of them.

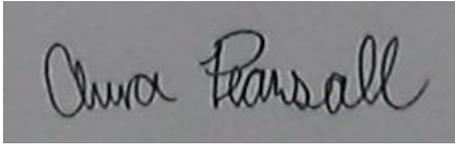
“New snow is ninety percent air. Otherwise, you would not have been able to breathe, and you would have suffocated. Luckily Mr. Thompson saw you and got help as soon as he could. However, you were still under there for twenty minutes. Give it another five, and probably each of your fingers and toes would have had frostbite. Fortunately, you only have a little frostbite on your left pinky toe, just enough not to get amputated.”

I stared at him, only understanding about half of what he said.

“Can I go skiing now?”

I give permission to publish my submitted story with my picture.

Thank you,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature reads "Anna Pearsall" in a cursive script.

Anna Pearsall

February 3, 2017