

Rescue by Ice

By Michèle Dufresne

- 1 Jason tossed the empty plastic cereal bowl into the sink and scowled. Last month they had moved from a high-rise, modern condo with towering windows overlooking the city to a dilapidated, old fishing cottage out in the middle of nowhere. Jason missed his friends. Right now, he should be with them at hockey practice, but instead, here he was alone, eating cereal, with nothing to do but homework.
- 2 He jumped when he heard a knock at the door. Who could it be? There was only one other house on this side of the lake, and it was almost a half mile away. He looked out the window and didn't see a car. He wasn't supposed to let anyone into the house when he was alone. He chewed on his bottom lip. There was a louder knock.
- 3 "Please, is anyone home? I need help!" called a woman. Then Jason heard a baby whimpering. Still not sure what to do, Jason opened the door just a crack and peered out.
- 4 "Thank goodness!" cried the woman. "Do you have a phone I could use?"
- 5 "No, sorry," said Jason. How many times had he begged his dad for his own cell phone? But his dad kept saying they couldn't afford one.



- 6 "Oh..." said the woman. The baby began to cry louder. Jason looked at the red-faced infant bundled in a fuzzy pink blanket in the woman's arms. He opened the door wider. "Do you want to come in?" he asked hesitantly. It was freezing out, at least five degrees below zero, with a wind whipping over the lake that made it feel even colder.
- 7 "Thank you, but I should go. My baby is sick. She's coughing and has a temperature, so I shouldn't even have her out of the house. But my husband's truck is being repaired, and he took mine to work. And I can't call him, because he has the phone too." The woman's eyes filled with tears. "Oh dear, what a disaster!"
- 8 "You can't just walk to town," said Jason. "It's, like, ten miles!"

- 9 “I don’t have a choice. I need to get my baby to the doctor,” she said. Just then a cold wind blew, and the woman shivered. “Maybe we can come inside for just a few minutes and warm up.”
- 10 Jason opened the door all the way, and the woman and the baby came inside.
- 11 “My name is Anna,” said the woman, “and this is Julie. We live in the cottage just down the road.”
- 12 “I’m Jason,” said Jason. “My dad and I just moved here a month ago.”
- 13 The baby stopped crying but was still making little coughing sounds. Jason looked at her with a wrinkled brow. He tried to think about what to do. It was really too far to go all the way around the lake to the doctor’s office, and the lake was too icy to walk across. Then he spotted his skates hanging near the door. That was the only good thing about living here—no hockey team, but a huge lake for skating.
- 14 “Stay here,” he said. “I’ll go get the doctor.”
- 15 “I couldn’t let you do that,” said Anna. “It’s getting dark outside.”
- 16 “I know a shortcut,” said Jason, lacing up his skates.
- 17 “But is that safe?” asked Anna.
- 18 “The lake has been frozen solid for a month,” said Jason. “And there’s no snow on top, so I can skate right across. Some kids in my class live on the other side. We can call for help from there.”
- 19 The baby coughed again. “I don’t know what to do,” Anna said softly. “You’re just a child.”
- 20 But within minutes, Jason was gliding along the silky-smooth ice on the lake. He was pretty sure he could beat his best time. *Maybe I should give up hockey and train for the Olympics*, he thought.
- 21 He knew that two twin brothers lived on the other side of the lake. They were in his math class and rode the bus home with him every afternoon. He had never really talked to them before, but they let him inside as soon as he explained why he was there. Their mother called the doctor, and an ambulance was soon on its way back to his house. As they waited for Jason’s dad to pick him up, Jason and the twins drank hot cocoa and made plans to go skating together over the weekend.
- 22 When Jason’s father arrived to pick him up, he gave Jason a bear hug and then pulled a package out of his coat pocket. “I made a quick stop to pick this up for you,” he said.
- 23 Jason opened it and shook his head. “Well, better late than never,” he said with a grin. “But I really could have used this cell phone earlier today!”



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Test Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1) What does the word *dilapidated* mean as it is used in the paragraph below?

Jason tossed the empty plastic cereal bowl into the sink and scowled. Last month they had moved out of their high-rise, modern condo with towering windows overlooking the city to a **dilapidated**, old fishing cottage out in the middle of nowhere. Jason missed his friends.

- a) different
- b) run-down
- c) classy
- d) cutting-edge

2) Why did Anna knock on Jason's door?

- a. She was tired of walking in the cold.
- b. She needed to call for help for her sick daughter.
- c. She wanted to meet her new neighbors.
- d. She needed to take a break before walking to town.

3) What caused Jason to talk to the two boys from his math class?

- a) He was lonely and wanted to make new friends.
- b) He wanted to make skating plans for the weekend.
- c) He needed more players on his hockey team.
- d) He needed to find medical help for Anna's daughter.

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Test Questions (continued)

- 4) **How do Jason's feelings about the move to the fishing village change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?**
- a) At the beginning, Jason is selfish, and at the end, he is dishonest.
 - b) At the beginning, Jason is frustrated, and at the end, he is depressed.
 - c) At the beginning, Jason is lonely, and at the end, he is delighted.
 - d) At the beginning, Jason is determined, and at the end, he is ungrateful.
- 5) **Which statement below tells why Jason's dad most likely bought him a cell phone?**
- a) He realized Jason was responsible and needed a phone in the fishing village.
 - b) He wanted Jason to like their new home in the fishing village.
 - c) He was tired of Jason begging for a phone ever since they had moved to the fishing village.
 - d) He realized Jason didn't have any friends in the fishing village.