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Be Ready to Fall

BETH GREEN (USA)

One beautiful winter's day in high school*, my best friend, my boyfriend and I were watching the Winter Olympics. I loved watching the figure skaters. They were so graceful!

"I wish I knew how to ice skate," I said.

"So let's learn!" my friend Marie said. "Let's go ice skating this weekend!"

My boyfriend, Ryan, started to laugh. "Can I watch?" he asked. "You're going to fall on your bottoms! And it will be funny!"

"Do you know how to ice skate?" Marie asked him.

"Of course," he said. "I go ice skating every year."

"So let's go together!" I said.

The next day, my mother drove me, Marie and Ryan to the ice skating rink². In the car, Ryan was very quiet. "Are you OK?" I asked. "Do you feel well?"

"I'm fine," he said. "Just remembering how much I love skating."

At the rink, my mother gave us some knee pads³ and pillows⁴. "Ice skating is a lot of fun," my mother said. "But you have to be ready to fall down."

"But what do we do with the pillows?" I asked.

Ryan laughed. "You and Marie should put them on your bottoms," he said. "When you fall down, it will be softer."

"Here's your pillow, Ryan," my mother said.

His ears looked pink under his hat. "No, thanks, I know how to skate already."

"Perfect," my mother said. "You can help the girls up when they fall down."

I put the pillow inside my coat, over my bottom and put the knee pads on my knees. Marie and I went on the ice first. We held hands and started to move slowly. I wasn't graceful, but I was having fun!

After a few minutes, Marie asked, "Where is Ryan?"

We turned around...

...just in time to see Ryan fall on his bottom!

He stood up, smiled at me... and then fell down again!

When he fell the third time, I skated over to help him back to the side of the rink.

My mother was waiting. "Don't worry, Ryan. Sometimes we fail even when we know how to do something. You just have to be ready!"

She gave him a pillow. This time he took it.

LANGUAGE NOTE

* **high school** – secondary school in the US for students aged 14-18 years

VOCABULARY

¹ **graceful** ['greɪsfʊl] – ladný

² **ice skating rink** [aɪs 'skeɪtɪŋ rɪŋk] – kluziště

³ **pad** [pəd] – chránič

⁴ **pillow** ['pɪləʊ] – polštář