

Chapter 9

Rivers of Ice

Quickly the sled zoomed downhill. Silver Sky peeked up over the front, the wind and snow slapping him in the face made him squint. Every bump made him clench the rope in his teeth tighter.

“Oh, I think we’re going too fast!” shouted Rebecca above the howling air that whipped her red-yarn hair into a tussle. She held onto the rope as tightly as possible, the sled throwing her to and fro.

It wasn’t long after they had started downhill on the sled that they realized they had very little control over its direction or speed. The world that zipped past was a blur of snow and rock. The occasional bump would send them airborne forcing them to clutch tightly to the rope or be thrown from the sled.

“I don’t like this at all!” Rebecca said after one particularly nasty jolt that sent her bounding down the sled, the rope almost slipping from her grasp.

Silver Sky mumbled something unintelligible between his clenched, and very sore, teeth.

Snow was spraying all around them, as the sled carved through the frozen mountainside. With a thunderous bump, they found themselves once more airborne. Looking back, Rebecca saw the cliff face receding behind them. In front, there was nothing but sky.

Silver Sky’s eyes went wide as the sled arced through the air.

“This can’t be good,” he said, forgetting for a moment to hold on to the rope. Before he knew it he was separated from Rebecca and the sled. As he looked on, the sled got smaller and smaller as they fell farther away, the wind carrying them in different directions. Around him, all was becoming white and blue as he fell.

With a resounding thump he hit the snow.

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Rebecca had watched in surprise as Silver Sky had disappeared in the breeze. Holding tightly to the rope of the sled, she had glided to a soft landing in the deep snow of the glacier. The ride came to an end near the edge of the river of ice, dirt and sand keeping the sled from going any farther.

“That silly horse,” she thought. “Why’d he let go?”

She stood on the ice, surveying the land around her. The cliff they had fallen from was directly in front of her, rising high and dark above the glacier, which twisted around and disappeared behind it.

Pulling the compass out her pocket, she pondered her next move. She had to find Silver Sky first. He had to be out there somewhere. A small gray horse was going to be awfully hard to spot out on the dirty snow, though, she thought.

He had to be somewhere between the cliff and where the sled had come to a stop. The wind couldn’t have blown him too far, she thought. Still, that’s a lot of snow.

“Better to get searching than to sit here worrying,” she said out loud. Before she left, she made a stack of the largest rocks she could carry, so that she would know where

she had started. Following the edge of the glacier would be the safest way down the mountain once she found Silver Sky, she thought, and she wanted to start down the mountain from here.

With that done, she started towards the cliff searching for the lost model horse.

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Silver Sky slowly opened his eyes. White. He closed them again, rubbing them with his hooves before opening them once more. Still white.

He looked up. Blue.

“Sky’s still there,” he said with a smile.

He wriggled his legs. “Oh good,” he thought. “Those still work.”

Silver Sky’s landing had made quite a deep hole in the snow. Unfortunately, he was at the bottom of it, and he wanted to be at the top.

“What would Rebecca do if she was here?” he thought to himself. Rebecca always seemed to have an answer. “I’m going to have to figure this one out for myself,” he admitted.

Absentmindedly he shoveled at the snow with his hooves. The tiny ice crystals easily gave way at his touch. He pushed harder at the white walls of the hole, slowly making a tunnel just wide enough to fit through.

“If I can’t go up, I’ll go sideways,” he thought. “Anything has got to be better than sitting here.”

Faster now, he pushed and shoveled, piling the snow behind him as he went. The desire to be free of this white prison pressed him on.

As he dug further, though, the snow became more compact and slowed him down. However, he swore he could see light ahead, and this drove him on. Shoving and grunting he made a desperate go at moving the snow.

With a mighty growl, he gave one last giant push. The snow in front of him crumbled and fell. A bright light made Silver Sky squint.

As his eyes adjusted to the light, he realized he was standing in front of a giant crack that disappeared below him in darkness. Looking up, he saw that he was still way down in the snow. Across the crevasse a wall of ice blocked his view. There was nowhere to go but down or up.

“Oh, I just have the worst luck!” grumped the model horse. He slumped to the floor of his tunnel.

That’s when the ground shook. Before he could react, the snow below him gave way and he felt the now all too familiar vertigo as he plummeted towards depths unknown. The light that had been so blinding just before was soon replaced by thick darkness.

The landing this time was not nearly as soft as before. Nor did he stop moving. He was sliding down a murky tunnel of ice. As he picked up speed he scrambled to get a grip on the slippery hidden walls and floor.

It was so dark he couldn’t tell where he was going or what direction he was facing. Stale cold air whipped at his nose. Giving in to gravity, he closed his eyes and slid.

Eventually, the slope became more gradual and he began to slow down. It wasn't until he came to a stop that he opened his eyes.

Before him was a vast chamber of blue gleaming ice. A stream emerged from a hole in the wall next to him, cascading down the ice noisily. Blue light filtered in from above.

Slack jawed, Silver Sky took in the scene. "So cool!" he said. His words echoed all around him.