

Prose/Honorable Mention
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The Cliff

I was skiing in Vail, Colorado. It was a warm winter day and the sun was shining. I was skiing in the back bowls which are full of groomed snow. Anyway, I was skiing down the mountain wishing my friend Will was here and thinking about how he loved to jump off the cliffs. I decided to find one of my own. Will always told me that they can't be over 150 ft otherwise the powder turns to ice and you'll break your legs. You have to make sure there is enough powder to break your fall or you'll just do the same thing as if you hit a 150 foot cliff.

I found the perfect one! Not too high and not too short. It was my first time hitting a cliff and I had thought about how far off the trail I had wondered. As I started to move I thought no going back now! I launched off the cliff with my heart pounding, and yet I hadn't thought of the most important thing! Always tell the ski patrol before you jump!

My body was drenched in fear and I was frozen in the air. I couldn't move to stick the landing! The snow looked shiny! Oh no it's Ice! This is why you ask the ski patrol if you can jump because they inspect every cliff in the back bowls before they open it!

I landed on the ice sideways as my skis ejected from beneath my feet. My head smacked the ice. SMACK! I suddenly had this horrible headache! My shoulders were in agony and my legs screamed in pain! I couldn't move as I slid into the deep powder. I thought, "Where's the powder when you need it?" "At least I have my tracker!" "Hopefully my friends find me by sun down." I laid there for an hour. The last thing I heard before I blacked out was the sound of a chopper. I woke up in the hospital with a minor concussion, two broken ankles, a dislocated shoulder, a broken rib, deflated lung and a broken hip.

The first visitor that came to see me was Will! He told me what happened and how he was going to surprise me on the ski hill. When he got there, he noticed that I stopped dead in my tracks off a cliff. He asked the ski patrol about the cliff and they said no one could land it, especially a beginner! They sent the chopper over and rushed me to the hospital. And that's that! If it weren't for Will I wouldn't be alive today. This event tore a big hole in my skiing life but I learned from it. I can fill that hole with the joy of when I first started to ski. I will never be able to put this completely behind me, but I can continue to ski and love the sport with all my heart.