

Triple

*Shing.* My blade gracefully glides across the thick plate of ice, almost as if I'm floating on the blanket of clouds that quietly drifts above me. *Scrape.* I leave a small pile of snow near my skate as I twirl past, leading me to the final destination

*Come on. You can do this.*

The words slip out of my mouth, mixed in with a deep breath that caused my chest to pound. I kick my foot forward and leap into the crisp air that rose from the icy glaze beneath me. Everything has led up to this moment.

\* \* \* \*

A triple axel. My final move to perfect. I launch myself outward, only for the air around me to turn into an icy, spiraling hurricane that whips my entire body around, causing me to fall onto the glass-like rink beneath me. It was almost as if I'm an unsteady book at the top of a tall shelf. *Smack.*

*Two months. That's all I have left until the most important day of my life.*

*Two months.* Those simple words consumed my mind for days like a blazing fire. I couldn't stop practicing, even when dawn's warm, golden welcome flooded through the windows and onto the cool ice. I don't have much time, but every single part of my body is determined to succeed.

\* \* \* \*

One week remains. Time has rushed by like a speeding bullet piercing through the sky. I still haven't perfected the jump; my anxiety and frustration dominates my every thought. Every

other move before the axel seems to come as easily as breathing to me, but this *one* jump could ruin my entire career.

\* \* \* \*

Today is the day. The day I have looked forward to ever since I was small. I unzip the ice-skating costume from the protective case, and gently trace each intricately placed design, jewel, and stitch. I gaze at the costume, knowing that it will be what I am going to live the biggest moment of my life in. I slip it on delicately. Then suddenly, sweeping over me like a calm breeze, every anxious thought or fear that I felt, drifted away.

“Next Contestant Please!”

I float onto the rink with extreme pride and courage, feeling like the strongest lion in the pack. Then, the music begins.

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I nervously hoist my back foot forward, and up I fly, like a rocket heading for the blazing stars above. My feet twisted like a swirling tornado in a spring storm. Then, suddenly, everything stopped. I keep spinning. Once. Twice. Three times. My body floats down, right back onto the chilling ice that I started on. My skate touches down and I land.

Perfection.