

Cali Learns to Skate

by RV Staff Writer J. C.

Wrapping paper flew everywhere as Cali opened her gift. The box had a picture of a pretty girl in a red scarf and mittens. She was wearing white ice skates and twirling around a frozen pond.

Cali looked up at her aunt and uncle with her big brown eyes. "Figure skates? Wow! How nice of you! But," the little girl hesitated, "... but I don't know how to skate." She looked embarrassed.

"Don't worry," said Aunt Lisa. "That's the fun part – learning how to do it!"

"That's right," said Uncle George. "We will take you to the ice rink and all go skating together."

"I don't know..." said Cali. She wasn't too sure she was going to be able to do it. Sometimes she had a hard time learning new things. She looked again at the happy girl on the box. It did look like fun. Cali imagined herself gliding and spinning on the ice like a real figure skater. "Okay," she agreed. "Let's do it!"

The next day Cali went to the skating rink with her aunt and uncle. Her eyes twinkled and her crazy brown curls were bouncing in excitement as she looked at the other skaters around her. She sat down on the bench and slipped her feet into the skates. Holding the laces in her fingers, could not figure out how to tie them up. "I don't know how to do it," she said. She felt sad that this was another thing she couldn't do.

"Let me show you." Her aunt bent down on one knee, explaining how to loop the laces around the small hooks in a criss-cross pattern. Then she tied them into a tight bow. "Now, you do the other skate yourself. I'll help you if you need it." Cali bent over the skate and did what her aunt had showed her. Her tongue stuck out of the side of her mouth as she paid attention. After a few tries, she worked out how to cross the laces around the hooks. Her aunt helped make sure the laces were nice and tight. "You did it!" smiled her aunt, patting Cali on the back.

"Time to hit the ice," her uncle said. He popped her helmet on and buckled it under her chin. As he helped her walk to the edge of the rink, he said, "We will hold your hands and you stand between us." Cali took their hands in hers and made her first step onto the smooth ice.

"Whoa! This is slippery!" Cali nearly fell over, but her aunt and uncle pulled up on her arms and she found her balance again. She grinned and tried taking a few steps. Her legs wanted to slide out in front of her, so she made her steps smaller. That seemed to help.

"Good, Cali. Now try to glide on one foot for just a second longer on each foot as you walk," suggested her aunt. Then her uncle skated in front of her while her aunt guided her from behind.

"Skate to your uncle now," she said, pushing her on the back a little to get more speed. Cali glided unsteadily towards her uncle, taking small steps and holding her arms wide for balance. Her uncle caught

her and gave her a hug.

"Way to go, Cali!" he said. "Now you try it on your own." Cali wasn't too sure about that. It seemed like everyone else was zooming past her. Skating seemed easy for them. She started to get nervous. She lost her balance.

Oof! She fell down, hard. It hurt. She closed her eyes and tried not to cry. In a moment, she was scooped up and put back on her feet. Her uncle smiled into her eyes. "Everyone falls down the first few times. They fall down a lot. I still do, sometimes. You just have to get back up again."

Cali took a deep breath. "Okay, I can do this." She skated away from her uncle toward the crowd. As she wobbled, she talked to herself. "Be brave. Keep going. Small steps. Yes!" She had skated almost all the way around the rink by herself! Her aunt caught up to her and took her hand.

"Look at you! You are working so hard and doing so well. We're proud of you," said Aunt Lisa. She bent to hug Cali, but got her leg tangled and fell down, knocking Cali over with her. "Ouch!" She started to laugh. Cali did, too.

Uncle George skated over. He stopped suddenly in front of them, his skates spraying ice powder at their faces. He offered them both a hand to help them back up. "Good job, ladies! But now I think it's a good time to take a break for some hot chocolate. Yes?"

Cali grinned. "Yes, please!" she said. "After that, I'm going to try and do a spin!"

Questions

1. Describe the picture on the box of ice skates.
2. Was Cali happy to receive figure skates as a gift?
3. What words would you use to describe Cali?
4. Describe a time when you learned something new and how it made you feel.

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. Hesitated
2. Tight
3. Smooth
4. Grinned
5. Glide
6. Unsteadily
7. Zooming
8. Scooped
9. Tangled

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) "How nice of you! But," the little girl **hesitated**, "... but I don't know how to skate." She looked embarrassed.

- a. asked b. paused c. worried d. yelled

2) "Her aunt bent down on one knee, explaining how to loop the laces around the small hooks in a criss-cross pattern. Then she tied them into a **tightbow**."

- a. pretty b. small c. loose d. snug

3) "Cali took their hands in hers and made her first step onto the **smooth** ice."

- a. rough b. soft c. bumpy d. even

4) "She **grinned** and tried taking a few steps."

- a. winked b. smiled c. paused d. breathed

5) "Good, Cali. Now try to **glide** on one foot for just a second longer on each foot as you walk," suggested her aunt.

- a. slide b. gallop c. hop d. twirl

6) "Cali glided **unsteadily** towards her uncle, taking small steps and holding her arms wide for balance."

- a. balanced b. unbalanced c. carefully d. straight

7) "It seemed like everyone else was **zooming** past her."

- a. skating slowly b. skating quickly c. skating carelessly d. skating loudly

8) "In a moment, she was **scooped** up and put back on her feet."

- a. pushed b. dragged c. picked d. forced

9) "She bent to hug Cali, but got her leg **tangled** and fell down, knocking Cali over with her. "Ouch!" She started to laugh. Cali did, too."

- a. twisted b. hurt c. scratched d. kicked