
1
THE BIG DAY

Have you ever had one of those days that starts off perfect, but ends up horrible? My name is Siarra Jones, I'm almost twelve years old, and this story begins with one of those days. Before I knew what had hit me, I found myself skating into trouble.

As I said, things started off great. I had a new skating outfit and was admiring it in front of my big bedroom mirror.

I swished my long auburn ponytail back and forth, side to side. "Not bad," I said to my reflection—and actually meant it.



I was wearing a white, long-sleeve shirt with tie-dyed pants and long socks. The pants were hand-me-downs from my cousin, but I didn't mind. They were new to me. And they looked brand new, too.

The socks had pictures of little pandas on them, and they were the cutest things you've ever seen. My best friend, Mia, gave them to me at my birthday party last year. We went to a trampoline park (so much fun), and all my friends were there.

"Come on, Siarra!" Dad called from the front hall. "It's time to go"

Hmm. My bedroom was still messy. I was supposed to have cleaned it up earlier, but I got distracted and read comic books instead. Priorities, right? Besides, it wasn't really messy, more... cluttered. All my dirty clothes were tossed on the floor instead of in the laundry basket. Bad habit, I know.

But I was too excited to worry about my messy room right now and I didn't want to be late.

"Coming, Dad!" I replied and ran down the stairs. I grabbed my jacket off its hook and caught up to Dad on his way to the garage.

I hopped into the car and slammed the door way too hard. "I can't wait to meet my new skating instructor!"

"Then let's not keep her waiting," Dad said as he started the car.

To say I loved skating would be an understatement. Actually, it would probably be the biggest understatement in the universe. I adored skating—loved everything about it. The sound of noisy kids as they rushed in and

out of the sports centre. The feeling as I tightly laced up my skates. The smell of cold air when I entered the rink.

But my favorite part was taking that first glide onto the ice.

I beamed at Dad. “This class is going to be extra special.”

“Why is that? Did they get a new Zamboni?”

I rolled my eyes. Dad Joke Alert! He knew exactly why it was special. I’d talked about it for WEEKS!

“First of all”—I glared at him—“Mia is going to be there. And second of all, you and Mom said if I passed this level you’d sign me up for our new teacher’s skating camp. Jill used to skate in the Olympics, you know!”

He chuckled. “I know, I know! I’ve heard!”

Dad liked to tease me, but he was happy I was learning to skate. And he was well aware of my passion for Olympic skating. Ice dance, pairs skating, speed skating—I loved it all.

I loved everything that happened on the ice, except hockey. Hockey wasn’t for me. Too aggressive.

“Come on, Dad, I don’t want to be late.”

“Right! We mustn’t keep Jill waiting! Tally ho, and off we go! To the rink!”

I shook my head as he pulled out of the garage. My dad loved embarrassing me. But it didn't matter— nothing was going to ruin this day.

Once we hit the road, Dad turned on the radio and sang along to the pop music like he always did.

And, as always, I yelled at him to stop. “Dad, you sound terrible! Turn up the music!”

“I can't help myself!” He sang the words like an opera singer. “I have a song in my heart!”

“Well, it sounds like a fart!”

“HOW RUDE!” he declared, then turned up the music.

Then we both giggled and proceeded to sing along with the radio together.

This was our routine and I loved every second of it. I couldn't tell you when or how we started it, but it was always the same. And to be totally honest, Dad and I both knew that he was a horrible singer.

Thankfully, I got Mom's singing talent.

It usually took us about five songs to get to the sports center, but today it felt like it took forever. It was weird how time seemed to slow down like that. Whenever I was waiting to do something I loved, like skating, it took FOREVER. But when I was actually skating, time sped up. Fun stuff was over in a flash.

And don't even get me started on what happened during math class. I swear the clock in Mr. Carter's class stopped as soon as I opened my textbook.

We finally pulled into the parking lot, and Dad found the closest parking spot.

I was waiting impatiently by the trunk before Dad had even unbuckled his seatbelt.

"Someone's excited," he said as he popped open the trunk. "Have fun, love."

"I'll see you in there!" I grabbed my skating bag and ran ahead, smiling from ear to ear, eager to get on the ice.

But, as I would soon discover, life has a funny way of pulling the ice out from under you.

