

*Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June*

## **A Guardian Angel**

Standing outside his pickup truck, his skin tense with pain, stretched, as the cold air merciless scratched across his face. It was another long trying day at work and as usual he ached all over.

John was at his favourite spot, he always came here to chill out. He didn't know why but this place always seemed to relax him, letting him escape the cares of the world.

As he looked ahead, he marvelled at nature's beauty before him: A great lake. The frozen crystal pane before him glistened in the fading sun light, capturing the colours of the world around him. It was beautiful and would not be seen out place in heaven. Then his tranquillity was disturbed as he saw a group of five boys step on to the ice attempting to skate. They had fallen to the temptress call, taking up the bait.

John watched their interactions for sometime as they joked about, and their laughter filled the darkening sky with the magic of their joyful sound. Even in all of this he was anxious for them. They were oblivious to the danger they were in. The layer of ice covering the lake was temporary and did not guarantee that it would support they combined weight. Any false move or one wrong step could lead to their impending doom.

As a volunteer to the local rescue team he had seen so many incidents where people had fallen through frozen lakes in which he had been called out to rescue them. There had been so many close calls and Joyful reliefs that they gave. But in turn they had been too many times when they had been too late to save that poor soul. Even though he should be used to it by now, so he was told, those occasion where heart wrenching, almost unbearable to go through each time. It was enough to turn a person to drink, having to go through all that each time. He had God. And it was only that fact, he was sure, that had kept him away from that temptation. But what did they have? Who was watching over them?

"You are," he heard the voice in his head say as he felt his heart tug at each word.

Thump, thump, thump, thump "I have sent you," again he heard that voice, pulling at his heart with each word.

Just as the resonating sound of those words faded in his head he saw the inevitable tragedy unfold before his very eyes. His heart pumped hard, erratically as he saw one of the teenagers playing on the ice fall into the water below. His heart wrenched as he heard the piercing cry, the desperate plea for help.

Before he knew what was fully happening John found himself at the edge of the iced lake, one foot ready to step onto the unknown and the other firmly on safe ground. What am I to do? He had been on the ice so many times before, but then he was with a team, now he was alone. This is foolishness, he thought, but at the same time he knew the boy had only an hour left to survive before he was a goner!

"Who said it is foolish, am I not with you?"

“Who is going to back me up?”

“I will,” God said.

Thump, thump, John’s heart seemed to slow down to a more regular beat as he felt reassured.

Stepping onto the ice, felt like stepping through a brick wall. He really had to push very hard to get through the layer of fear that stood before him and that poor soul drowning in the water.

“I will never leave you or forsake you.”

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump. John suddenly felt the strength to carry on.

He took it one step at a time as he tested the ice carefully before he put his full weight on it.

As he reached the boys, he found them in a state of complete confusion. Two of them were in complete shock and stood motionless staring at the hole in the ice where their friend fell in. Another boy was desperately trying to hang on to this friend to stop him from slipping into the icy water grave that beckoned him.

John instantly plunged his hands into the freezing water to reach for the boy’s other arm, which was submerged. His hands were met with a thousand bites from the chilly water as it seemed like it was trying to rip his skin from his arm. For a brief moment he thought it was too much, his heart pumping wildly, and he felt like he was going to pass out, then he heard a still voice in his head saying. “It’s ok I am with you.” Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump. His heart returned to a normal beating rhythm.

As the initial pain subsided he ordered the two other boys to hold on to himself and the other friend who was holding on to his fallen comrade as if his life depending on it. They didn’t have any ropes so they had to make do with what they had.

John took complete control of the situation, calming the boys as he organised them into a make shift rescue team to help their friend.

Before the paramedics arrived John had the boy, Ralph, who had fallen through the ice wrapped up in several blankets that he just happen to have in his truck. The boy was now out of danger and on his way to recovery thanks to John’s quick response and his first aid training.

James, one of Ralph’s friends, was still shaken up from the whole ordeal and he was feeling ashamed of how useless he felt he had been.

“I just froze, I couldn’t think properly,” James said.

“Don’t beat yourself up about it, you were in shock, no one can blame you for being frightened.” I know I was, and I should be used to it by now! “It is not everyday someone close to you falls through an ice covered lake.”

“I know. But all I could do was pray—asking God to help us. Then you came along.”

**Are we like John in the story above willing to help our neighbour, willing to be that miracle, willing to be that guardian angel?**

**Who is are neighbour?**

**They are anyone around us, anyone in need of help. They don't just live next door!**

**Are we willing to help someone when we see they are in trouble, willing to take on the true fast?**

**Who knows you might just save someone's life.**

Andrew