

The College Collection

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Georgina Jonas



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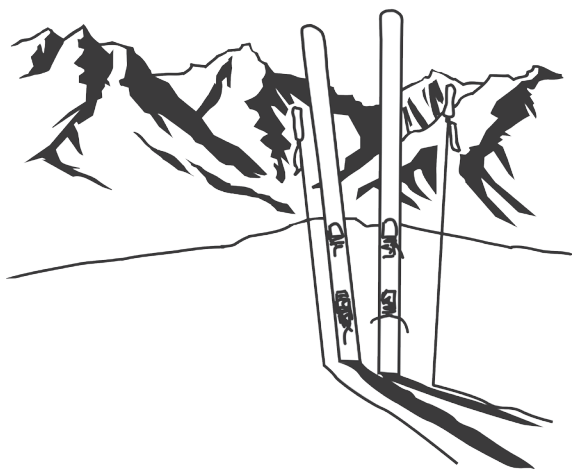
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## Chapter 1

# Buried

Did I mention the time I got buried?

Well, it happened a couple of years ago.

My parents and I were staying in a very small resort in Switzerland.

Dad was exhausted and needed a break. He had always told us that he was not a 'lie on the beach' sort of a person, so off we went to do something active. Skiing would be just the thing.

One day I was out skiing with a friend I'd met in the village.

We were right on top of the main mountain, when we noticed some men with Alsatian dogs. They didn't seem to be on skis but were walking around holding spades and very long, thin poles.

They looked very strange and we were very curious, so we skied over and asked them what was going on. They told us that they were part of the mountain rescue team and were practising avalanche training.

We were still curious so we asked them to explain exactly what they were doing in order to practise. It turned out that they actually buried one of their men, waited for a bit and then told the dogs to find the buried person.

It sounded like a challenge so we asked if we could be buried.

The mountain rescue team were delighted as the dogs knew all the men, and it would be much more of a test for them to have to find strangers.

We took off our skis and were led away across the piste to where we could see a hole in the snow. This was the entrance to a sort of a tunnel that the men had dug in the side of a snowdrift.

We crawled in to find a surprisingly large cavern with a little ledge cut out of one side which made a good place for us to sit.

The men took my scarf so the dogs could pick up the scent to follow and then said that we would have to wait for at least twenty minutes before the dogs were asked to look for us. Then they said goodbye, filled in the tunnel entrance with snow and left.

Funnily enough, it wasn't particularly cold in the cave, but it was eerie. There was a certain stillness in the air and absolutely no sound from the outside.

Just a short while ago we had been skiing fast downhill with the wind rushing in our ears, the clash of metal from the lifts overhead and the whoops and cries of other skiers.

Now it was silent.

All of that was still going on in the world above us, but we couldn't hear it.

We smiled at each other and tried to make jokes, but each of us was thinking how serious it would be if this had not been a practice and we really had been caught by an avalanche.

Of course, we wouldn't be in a ready-made cave where we could breathe, instead we might be upside down, stuck fast in compacted snow, not able to cry out for help and not even knowing which way to start trying to dig ourselves out.

Here we knew we'd be found.

We knew we'd be safe.

We knew it was just a game in order to train the rescue dogs.

All the same, twenty minutes seemed to take forever.

Twenty minutes is nothing if you are having fun or watching your favourite television show.

Here, under the snow and ice, it stretched and stretched until we became convinced of the possibility that the dogs had given up on us and the men had forgotten exactly where they left us.

Suddenly, the jokes had stopped, the fun had gone and the cold had started to creep in.



We shivered, rubbed our gloved hands and grinned to pretend to each other that we weren't scared.

Then at last, just as our smiles were fading and the cold had really started to bite, we heard noises.

Snuffling, scrabbling noises.

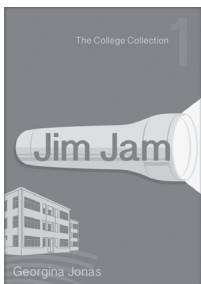
Scratching, scuffling noises.

Faintly, at first, then increasingly louder and louder until at last a dog's face appeared.

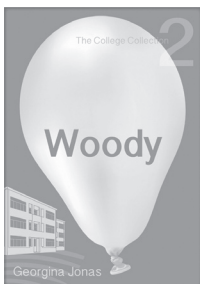
We heard a sharp whistle and immediately the dog's face disappeared.

Then came the heavy sound of digging and a grinning rescuer came crawling into the cave. We followed him out and emerged blinking into the sunlight, laughing and instantly forgetting our fears.

It was fun to do once, but I'm not sure if I'll ever ask to do it again.



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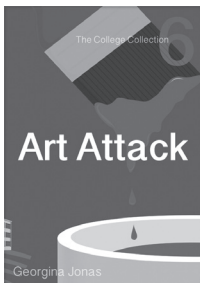
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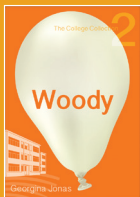
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# The College Collection

Anda is half Dutch and she has lived all over the world. Will she want to stay put when she goes to college?



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