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ENG 112

### Double Black Diamond

Before I knew it I started gaining speed and I couldn't do anything to stop my ski from popping off. The dread I previously felt was finally given a meaning as I started tumbling uncontrollably. I still felt the piercing cold wind entering every gap to my skin but now I could feel the even colder snow as it made its way up the sleeves of my winter jacket as I rolled. I couldn't see anything but white through my goggles since the sky and the ground were the exact same same color, or I was just rolling too fast I can't entirely remember. This beautiful white expanse lined with green pine trees on either side had quickly turned into a skier's hell. I couldn't feel my ski poles getting ripped off my wrists. I couldn't feel my neck getting whipped back and forth. I couldn't even feel all of the bumps I received from tumbling on a solid sheet of ice. All I could feel was the panic rising as I tried to stop rolling because I knew at this rate if I didn't stop I was going to be sent off the side of a cliff. I had no control of what happened next at that point so you can guess what happened. I couldn't feel as a rock scratched my back through all of my layers. I couldn't hear when the rock that could of killed me scratched my helmet instead of my head. I couldn't even feel the sharp pain as my thumb was broken by one of these boulders as I tumbled down this twelve foot cliff. The dread and anxiety I felt when I finally stopped rolling was immense but I was at least happy that I stopped tumbling. All of the stories I heard when I was younger of people going off the sides of slopes to their deaths only to be found in the

summer came rushing into my mind, driving my adrenaline and anxiety up farther. I was frantically trying to pull my gloves on since they got partially removed when my ski poles got ripped off, but I couldn't because every time I tried I felt searing hot pain in my right thumb. I was doing everything I could to try to get back on the slope because the slope meant safety even though it was the reason I was in this situation. As I was trying to climb back up this cliff I started screaming bloody murder at the top of my lungs for my mother because she was skiing right behind me and she must have seen me fall right? Wrong. It took two seconds from my ski popping off to me disappearing off the side of the slope, two seconds to completely change my ability to ski for years to come, and in those two seconds my mom was trying to prevent herself from falling.

There were two people that saw me fall however, and if it wasn't for them I don't know if my mother would have ever found me. My cousins Alex and Chris were with us and they saw the whole thing happen. They later told me I looked graceful as I was rolling until I disappeared off the side. They immediately rushed to my aid and when they got close enough they told me they were met with the most blood curdling scream they have ever heard. Now that you are thoroughly confused about what is happening, let me give you some context.

It was January 28, 2012 and my mother and my two cousins, Chris and Alex, and I decided to go skiing in the Poconos like we normally do every year. The only difference with this trip was we were going to a mountain we never have gone to before. The real start of this story doesn't start at the mountain but an hour before when we were at the rest stop we stop at every single time on our way to the mountains. We were having such a great time that my cousin Chris declared he had enough fun and we could go home now, at the time we all found this funny but

what we didn't know was that if we did go home right then we would be saving ourselves from one of the worst skiing trips we have ever had. Fast forward an hour where we are just arriving at Sno Mountain and have just finished watching the movie *The Island At The Top Of The World* which has put us in stitches because there is this one character who is native american and at one point you think he dies but he comes back and when asked how he survived his response is.

"I swim like white bear" which of course we all find absolutely hysterical because we ourselves are native american and we were now giving each other nicknames. I would love to be able to tell you exactly what happened when we went down the first slope of the day but I can't really remember it other than the fact that there was cold wind piercing through any gap it could find to get at my skin and we were all having a great time. The first run of the day was really nothing special but the second run? That's when I was oh so lovingly given the nickname "Rolling Log" by my cousins.

We have just gotten off the ski lift and we are all getting ourselves situated to go down the next slope. When we move to the slope my mother and cousins chose and we get down this small hill at the start of the slope which instantly becomes the point of no return because you can't really climb back up a hill in skis or ski boots, especially when its solid ice, which is actually more important to the story than you might think. It was this moment when a deep feeling of dread punched me right in the stomach. This has happened to me multiple times where I'm suddenly hit by immense dread and then I find out that this dread I feel suddenly has meaning.

So of course since I have been suddenly hit with dread I want to turn back and go down a different slope but we physically can't and I'm kind of freaking out. My mother assures me we

are going to take it slow and we do. Here's a little more information on this slope. This slope is a double black diamond which if your not a skier means that its a slope meant for advanced skiers, which was nowhere near the problem because I can do double black diamonds all day. The problem with this slope was that it was very steep and the entire slope was a solid sheet of ice. So we are going down this slope as slow as possible and basically sliding down horizontally and I'm slowly making my way over to one edge of the slope, so I flip around to face the other way and that fraction of a second I was facing forward was enough for me to gain speed, and continue to gain speed. The next thing I knew my ski popped off and I was rolling.

At this point my mother is extremely confused why my cousins have just rushed past her and are taking their snowboards off and are now screaming my name. Alex actually jumps off the cliff to come find me, hurting his own back in the process. Now I'm pretty sure that no one is going to find me because I didn't know that my cousins saw me fall and now I'm unable to climb back up this cliff to safety. I was actually thinking that I might die on the side of this valley at this point. My right thumb was burning with pain any time I tried to pull my gloves on properly which was probably the only thing preventing me from being able to climb and I felt this completely overwhelming sense that I was going to become one of those people who aren't found until summer because they fell off the side of a slope. My throat is becoming sore from all of the screaming I'm doing hoping that someone, anyone can hear me and will come to my aid. I felt cold even though I was completely bundled up in winter gear, there was a pit in my stomach the size of a bowling ball as my adrenaline was going sky high. But I couldn't figure out how I was possibly going to get out of this situation. Then I heard a branch snap. I turned away from the cliff that was causing me so much pain and anguish, planting seeds in my head that I was

going to die in this lonely valley I found myself in, and instead I saw my cousin Alex standing in the woods. The relief and happiness I felt when I saw Alex in the valley with me was all consuming and I started crying. I knew Alex was going to keep me safe like he always does.