

99 WRITING

Optimism

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TYPE
NARRATIVE

I step onto the solid ice and I glide forward. The cold seeps through my equipment and hits my skin. It stings my lungs as I inhale. The raw wind whips through my hair and lashes at my face. Across the floor, trails of sharp lines are created as experienced skaters flay the ice. My body is stiff and I feel incompetent in the face of so many experienced skaters.

I am discouraged by my inexperience. I scramble to the side of the rails as a quick skater moves behind me. I cling for dear life, believing that if I let go for two seconds, I will leave with fractured bones. I scramble around the edge of the rink with the same incompetent motions, never letting go of the rail.

A boy much younger than me holds onto the wall just like I do. However, the boy is venturing onto the ice, and he pushes himself off the railing with caution. He walks in his skates like a penguin and I reason he will inevitably fall among the whirlwind of skaters. He

does, but as quick as he falls down, he steadies himself and progresses on with his skating. Determination springs from the boy.

Gradually, he gets better, bringing his right foot back, next to the left, and zigzagging across the ice. He takes slow strides, never rushing or trying to impress anyone. He keeps his eyes on the path, remaining in a steady position. Trusting his body after a while, he seems relaxed and seems to have the perfect technique.

By the end of the night, my feet ache and my ankles are swollen; I had stayed glued to the rails the whole time. Discouragement rang through me. I never let go because if I did, I knew I would have fractured a bone. If I had let go, perhaps I would have learned something . . . but I didn't.