

DANGER

at the Ice Pond

Alice was just trying to help. But then something went terribly wrong!

By Ana Nelson Shaw

(Based on a true story)

“Is any sick among you? ... call for the elders ... and let them pray over [her], anointing [her] with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick” (James 5:14-15).

Alice wanted to watch the men who were helping Father cut big blocks of ice out on the pond. Instead she was in the kitchen, setting the table for Mother, Father, and the men.

Mother set a pan of biscuits in the oven. “You’ve been a good helper,” she said. “Would you please go call the men for dinner?”

“Oh, yes!” Alice said. Now she could see the ice being cut!

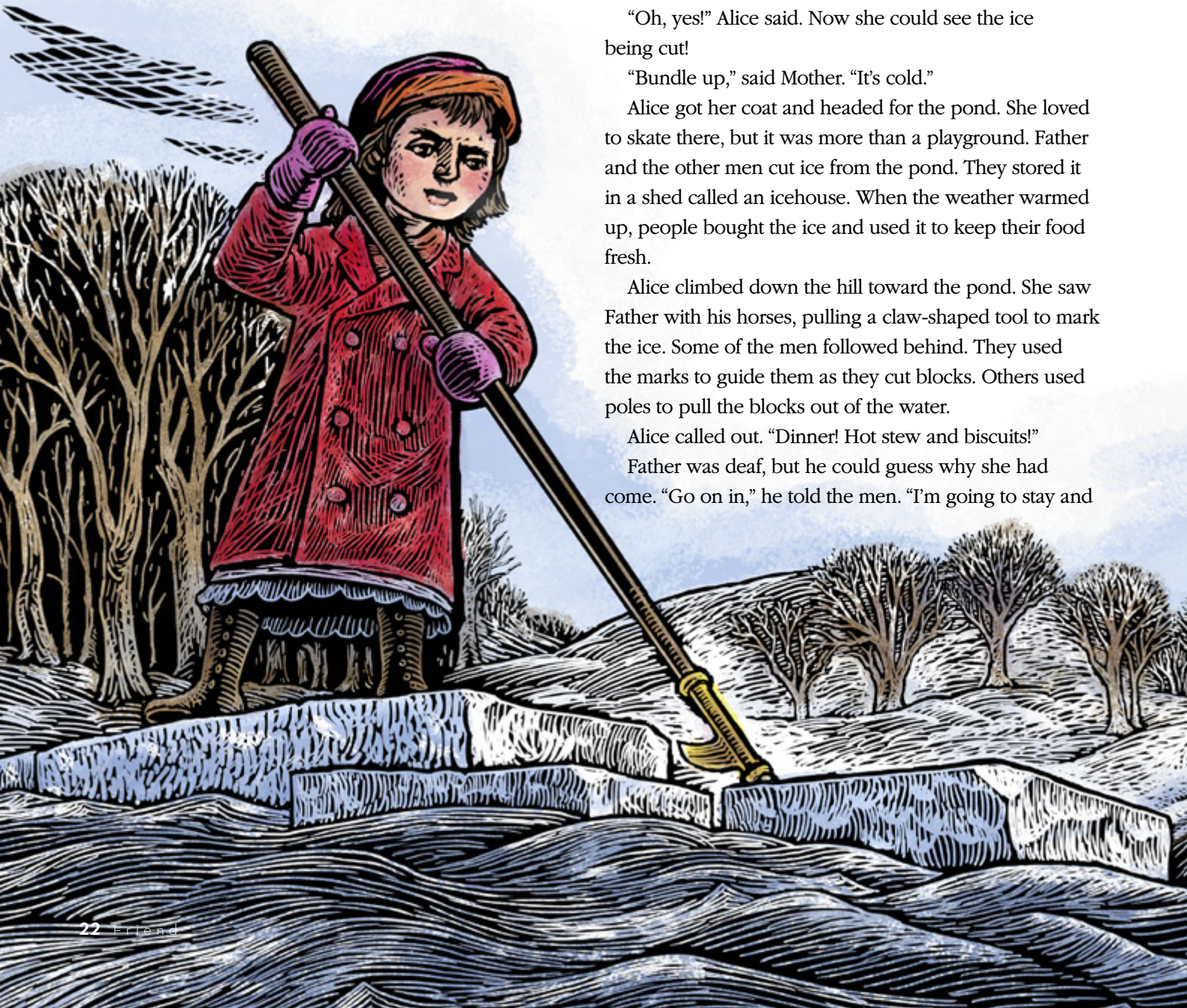
“Bundle up,” said Mother. “It’s cold.”

Alice got her coat and headed for the pond. She loved to skate there, but it was more than a playground. Father and the other men cut ice from the pond. They stored it in a shed called an icehouse. When the weather warmed up, people bought the ice and used it to keep their food fresh.

Alice climbed down the hill toward the pond. She saw Father with his horses, pulling a claw-shaped tool to mark the ice. Some of the men followed behind. They used the marks to guide them as they cut blocks. Others used poles to pull the blocks out of the water.

Alice called out. “Dinner! Hot stew and biscuits!”

Father was deaf, but he could guess why she had come. “Go on in,” he told the men. “I’m going to stay and



lift my marker out so it won't get stuck in the ice."

Alice waited while Father finished. Three big blocks floated nearby. She picked up a pole. She pulled in one block, then two. But the last block was *just* out of reach.

Then Alice noticed another block near her. It had been cut on the sides but not on the end. The men had left it attached to ice that touched the shore. It seemed like the perfect place to stand and reach the block still floating in the water. Alice stepped onto it. As she stretched out her arm, the ice broke.

Crack! With a splash, she fell into the water.

Alice screamed. She tried to keep her head above the water and saw Father turn toward her. He couldn't hear her, but he must have seen the splash! Just as her head dipped below the freezing water, she felt something tugging her toward shore. It was Father, using an ice pole. He picked Alice up and ran for home.

Alice could feel her body shivering. She knew a bad chill could make people very sick. The winter air was freezing her wet clothes. She was becoming stiff and cold, like a block of ice.

Finally they were home. Father pushed the door open. The workers stood up. Mother ran to the door. "What happened?" she asked.

"Get the oil," Father said. Mother brought a small bottle of oil that had been blessed by the priesthood.

Father spoke to the men. "If you hold the priesthood and are worthy, please help me give Alice a blessing." Several men stepped forward. Alice felt Father put a drop of oil on her head. She closed her eyes. He said something about authority and priesthood. Then the others put their hands on her head too. Father spoke. "In the name of Jesus Christ, we bless you that you will have a speedy recovery." Alice could feel her body relax. Her fear was melting away.

Father finished the blessing. Alice opened her eyes and smiled. She stretched her fingers and wiggled her toes.

"You're like a cat with nine lives," one man joked.

"No," said Mother. "She's the faithful daughter of a faithful father."

Father could understand Mother by watching her lips. "I think Alice has a faithful mother too," he said. "And good neighbors. Heavenly Father will bless her. She will be fine."

Alice never even caught a cold that winter. She remembered her father's blessing and lived to tell this story to her grandchildren and her great-grandchildren. ◆

The author lives in California, USA.

"Do not be hesitant to ask for a priesthood blessing when you are in need."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

"Priesthood Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1987, 39.

