

CHRISTMAS ON ICE

I was supposed to continue my blogging by telling you more about the Great Interior Decoration Crisis, but it's Christmas, and I have something rather more Christmassy to share with you right now. The rest of the story of the Great Interior Decoration Crisis can wait for my next blog post. It will be worth waiting for, I promise, but first, dear readers, I invite you to settle down for a spot of festive reading.

First, I must make a confession. I love Christmas. I don't just like it: I love it. I love so many things about it, both little things and big things. I love the Christmas spirit. I love Christmas decorations. I love Christmas lights. I love Christmas carols. I love Christmas cards. I even love Christmas shopping. Well, you get the idea.



There is really just one thing about Christmas that I don't like at all. It used to be just a little thing. The trouble is, there seems to be more and more of it going on. In fact, so much of it has been going on that it is becoming a big thing. That is to say, it



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is becoming more and more difficult for me to ignore it and get on with the business of enjoying Christmas. I know, I know. You want to know what it is. Well, I'll tell you. It is ICE SKATING. There seem to be outdoor rinks everywhere I go, and it seems as if everyone but me knows how to skate. Ice skating makes me feel as if there is a part of Christmas that just doesn't include me, and that makes me feel completely and utterly out of sorts, which is just not the way anyone should feel at such a happy and festive time of year.

The worst part of all this is that Kimster absolutely loves ice skating. She learned to ice-skate when she was just a little hamster, and now she can dance across the ice, twirling effortlessly and making figure-of-eight patterns in the ice with her blades. Every year, she asks me if I would like to go ice skating with her at one of the outdoor rinks, and every year I make up a silly excuse about why I cannot go. Last year, I told her that the rink was in Great-Aunt Hildegard's neighbourhood and that I didn't want to go there and risk running into Great-Aunt Hildegard, because I didn't want to end up having to eat boiled cabbage for Christmas lunch. The trouble is that yet another new rink opened this year, and this one is located only two streets away from my little box.

Sometimes in life, a hamster just has to face up to a situation. Sometimes, instead of avoiding the issue that is bothering him, instead of making up silly excuses about boiled cabbage, a hamster has to take matters into his own hands. I walked over to the ice rink, stood behind the railings and looked out over the ice. There were so many people on the ice, and they all seemed to be having a lot of fun. There were even little children chasing each other happily across the rink. Watching them, I thought that ice skating really could not be as difficult as I had imagined. After all, if little kids could do it, why not me? And if I could go ice skating just like everybody else, then there would be no reason for me to feel left out any more. I might even like it. Best of all, I would finally be able to share it with Kimster.

That was why I decided to invite Kimster to go ice skating with me. I thought that a skating session on the new outdoor rink would make a wonderful early Christmas present for her. I think that pictures tell the story of what happened at our skating

session better than words.

Here is a picture of Kimster wearing her pink skating skirt. Doesn't she look elegant, skating out on to the ice?



Here is a picture of me. I really wanted to glide out on to the ice after Kimster, but I was afraid to let go of the railings at the edge of the rink.



Here is a picture of me out on the ice. In case you are wondering why I am sitting in the middle of the rink, that is because I had just fallen over.



Here is another picture of me, in mid-fall. This picture is of my fourth fall. (I fell seven times in total.)



Here is a picture of Kimster helping me to my feet. Unfortunately, as soon as I managed to stand up, I fell over again (my sixth fall).



Here is a picture of me and Kimster heading off after our skating session.



I know, dear readers, that you must be wondering why we look so happy in that last picture. After all, I spent most of our skating session falling over, and Kimster spent most of it helping me back to my feet. The fact is that at the end of the session, I said to Kimster, "I am so sorry to have invited you to go ice skating with me. I have

ruined a perfectly nice evening for you with all my falls. All you wanted to do was dance across the ice, but you had to spend all your time helping me back up to my feet. How can I ever make it up to you?"

Do you know what Kimster replied? She said, "Harrison, it doesn't matter how many times you fell over, as long as you didn't get hurt. The main thing is that you plucked up enough courage to try ice skating, even though you have never seemed keen on it. What's more, even though you fell over so many times, you never stopped trying to skate. You knew that I absolutely love ice skating, and you wanted to give me a wonderful early Christmas present - and you did. I got to go ice skating with you, my dearest friend. I had a great time, and I hope you did too."

"Kimster," I said, "I always have a great time when I am with you. I must say, though, that I am a bit bruised from all the falls."

"Well, why don't we go and get some hot chocolate? I bet once you warm up a bit, you'll feel much better," said Kimster.

With that, we went off to the cafe by the side of the ice rink for hot chocolate with little marshmallows, and I must admit that I felt so much better that I was almost ready to try ice skating again.





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(I didn't, in case you are wondering. I think I might be able to get away with leaving that until *next* Christmas.)

The moral of this blog post is that the next time one of your good friends asks you to do something they like, but what they want to do is something you don't really want to do, do it anyway. If you have the chance to spend some time with your friend doing something that makes them happy, you'll most certainly have a great time, whatever you end up doing.

With that lovely thought, dear readers, I bid you a merry Christmas.

Bye for now!

Harrison Hamster I
25th December 2012