

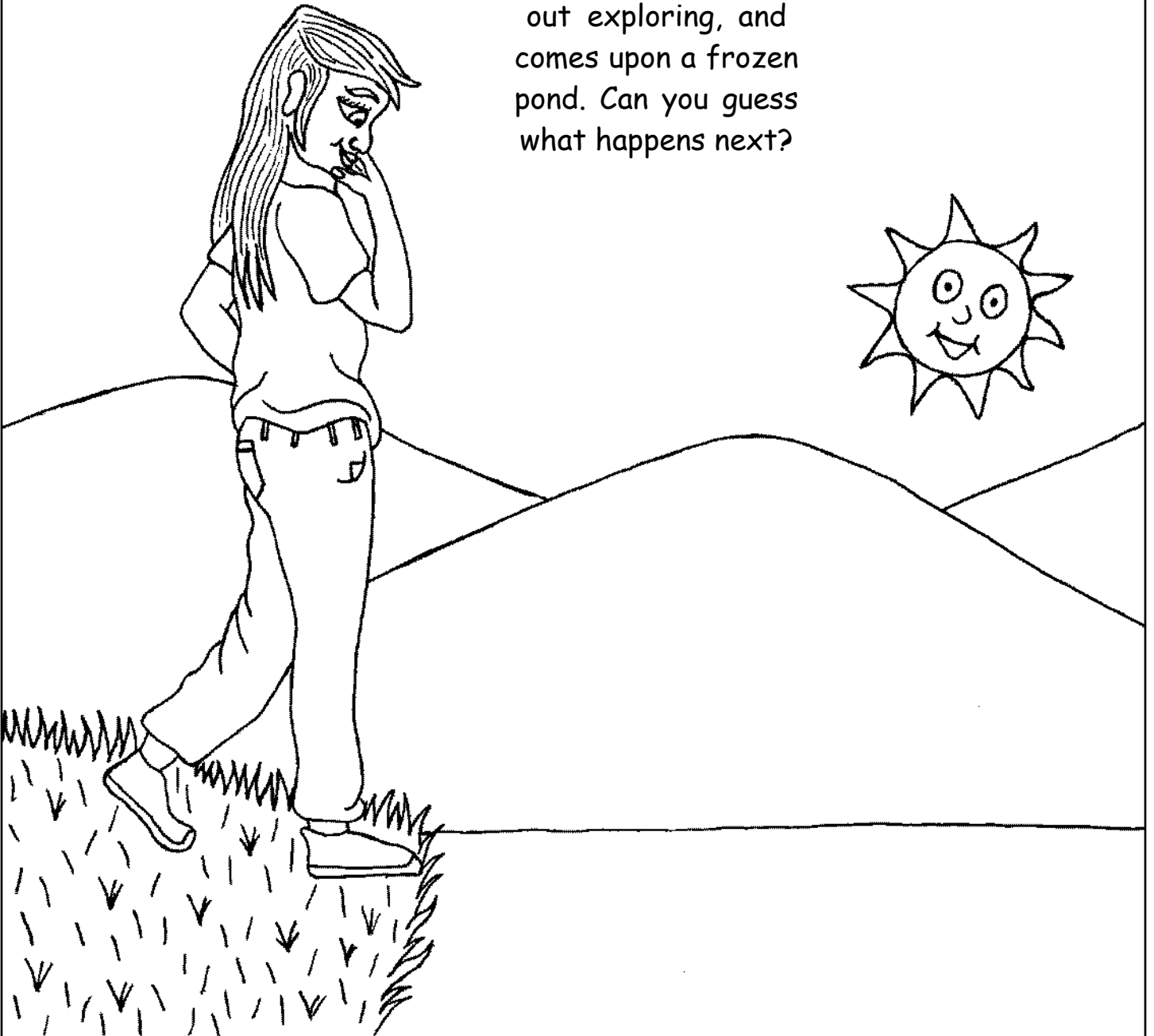
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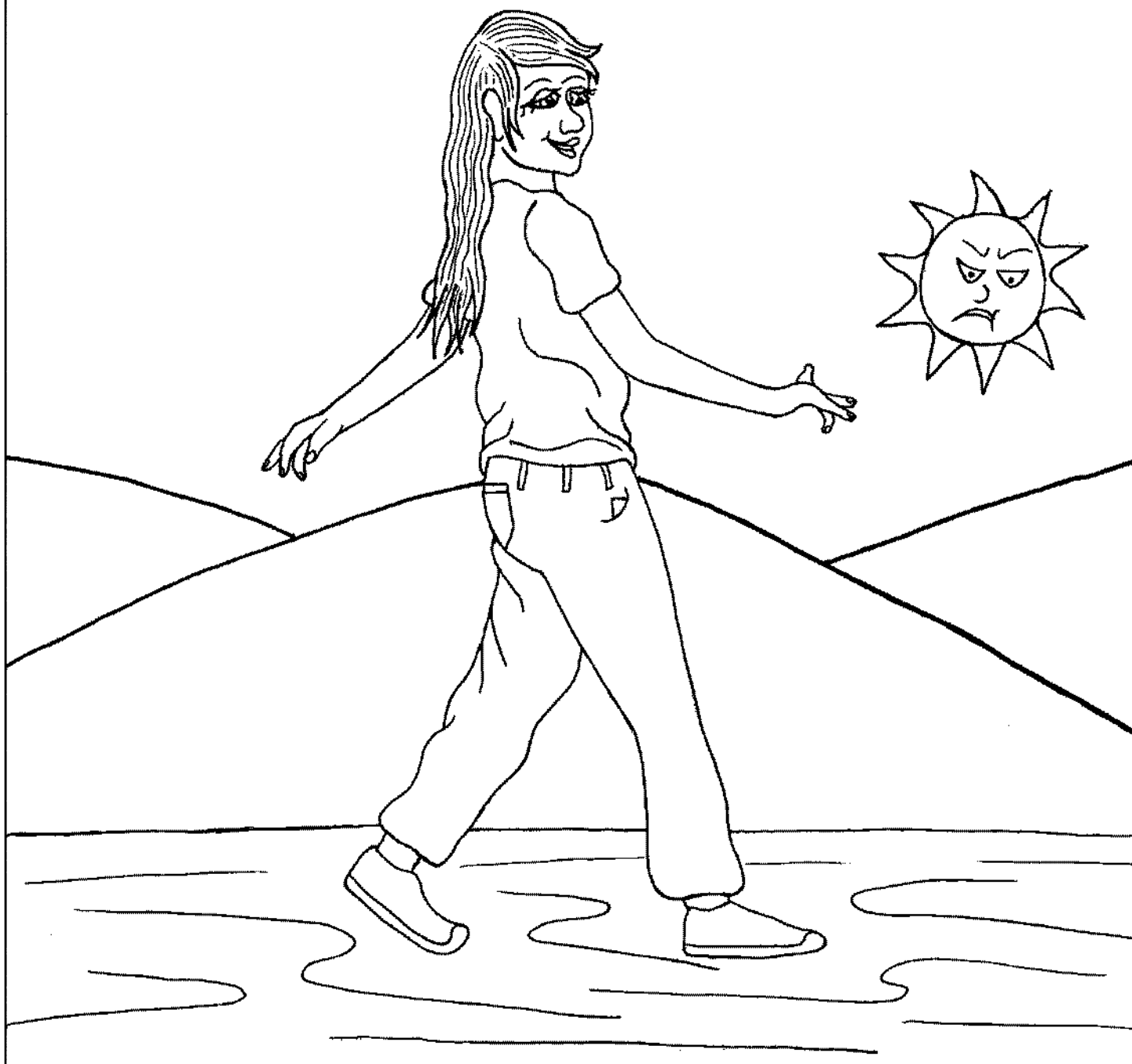
Diane's Dumb Decision

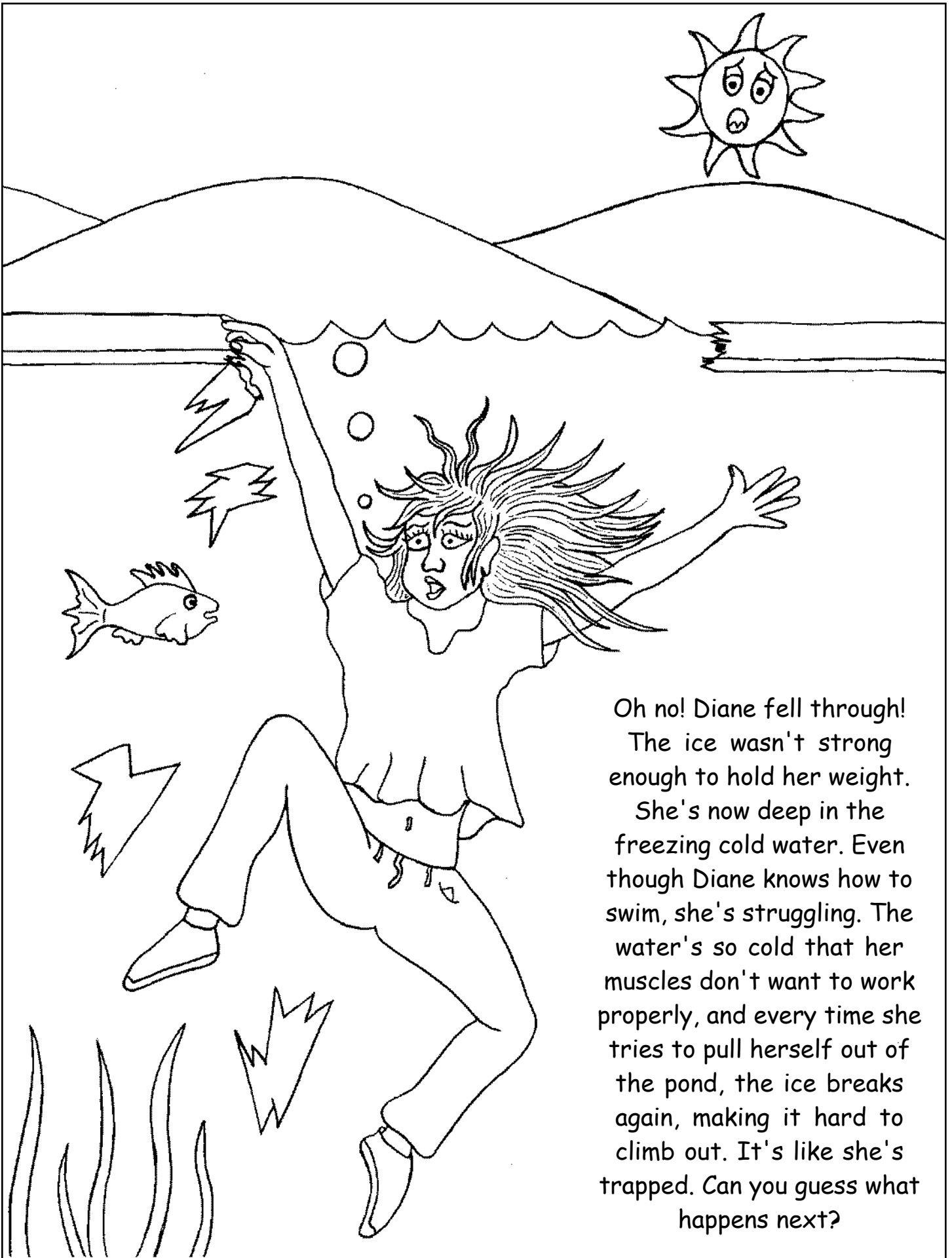
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This is Diane. Diane is out exploring, and comes upon a frozen pond. Can you guess what happens next?



Diane decides to walk across the frozen pond. Oh no, Diane, don't do that! You don't know how thick that ice is! What an unwise decision Diane has made. Can you guess what happens next?

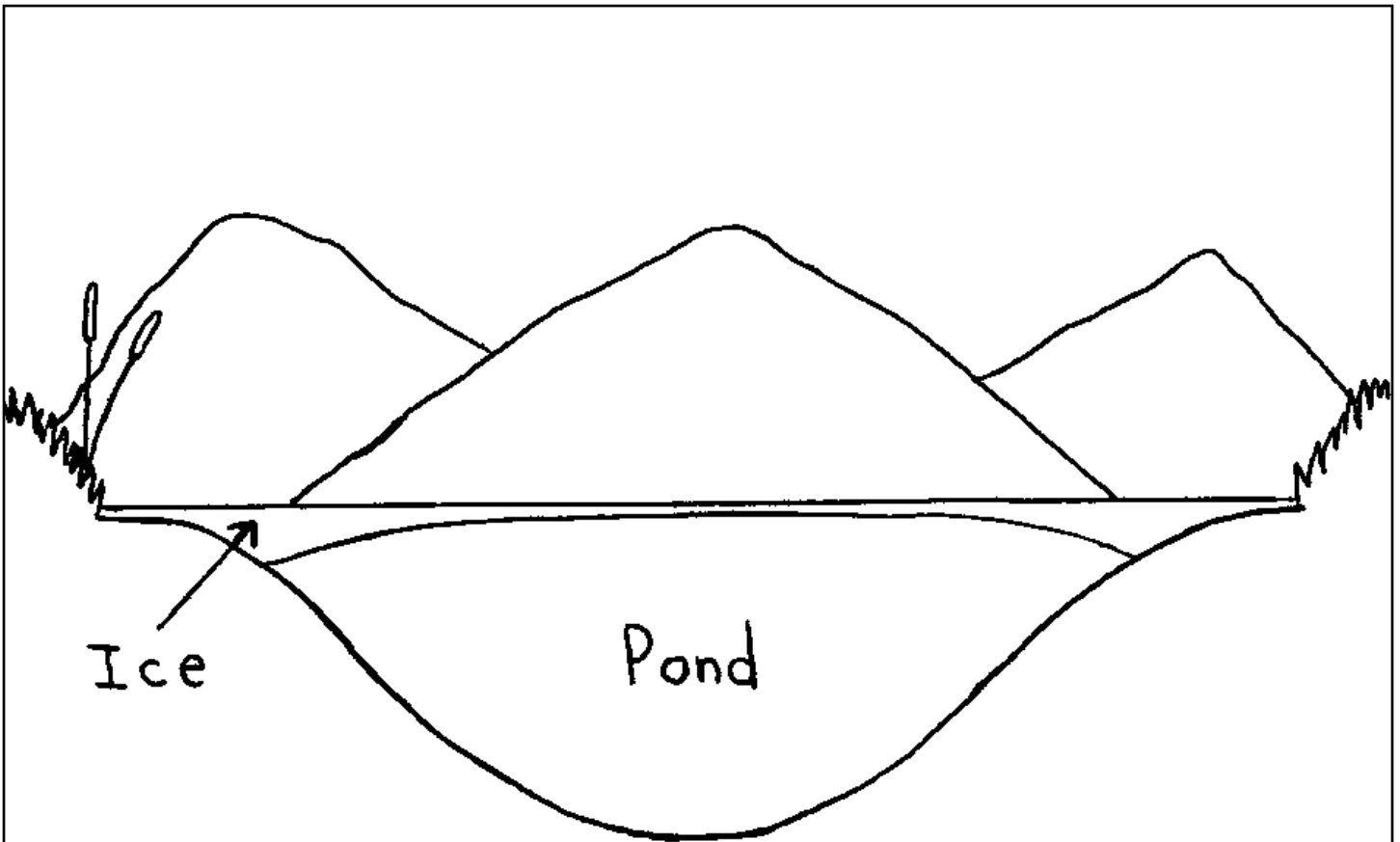




Oh no! Diane fell through!
The ice wasn't strong enough to hold her weight. She's now deep in the freezing cold water. Even though Diane knows how to swim, she's struggling. The water's so cold that her muscles don't want to work properly, and every time she tries to pull herself out of the pond, the ice breaks again, making it hard to climb out. It's like she's trapped. Can you guess what happens next?

Obviously, Diane starts to become a human popsicle. But she's a very lucky girl. In this case someone was watching and saw her fall through the ice. So he was able to come to her rescue. Not all kids are as lucky as Diane. Every year children die just like this, all because they're playing on a frozen pond that isn't as frozen as they think it is.





Important Things to Know

When a lake, river or pond freezes over, it doesn't freeze evenly. Some parts of the ice can be quite thick whereas others are very thin. The ice near the shore is usually thicker than the ice out in the middle, simply because it's shallower near the shoreline, so the water freezes more thoroughly and quickly. Water currents you can't see also affect the ice. Many people make the mistake of thinking it's safe because the ice near the shore holds their weight, only to walk out to the middle and fall through where the water is deepest.

It's hard for others to rescue kids who've fallen through the ice. If a miniature human being like you falls through, what do you think will happen when an adult who weighs 3-times as much as you comes out to try to save you? They fall through too! Now you've got two people in trouble. Which is why it's so important to stay out of situations like this in the first place.

Let's say you're out one day, and someone who isn't as wise as you gets themselves into trouble and falls through the ice. What could you do? You definitely shouldn't walk right up to the edge of where they fell through, or you're apt to end up in the icy water too.

The first thing you should do is call for help. Then look for a rope, branch, or stick they can grab onto to pull them out. Also remember that if you ever find yourself stuck on thin ice, get low and wide. When you're standing up, all your weight is on a very tiny spot beneath your feet, making the ice more likely to break. When you lay down flat, your weight is spread across a larger surface, so there isn't as much pressure on the ice. Which means ice that would break if you were standing up is much less likely to break if you're lying flat.

Don't you go making the same dumb decision as Diane. The only time you should be on frozen water is when adults have checked the thickness of the ice ahead of time and found it to be safe, like when an ice ring is set up on a lake. No matter how fun it might seem to play on the ice, it's not worth the risk of becoming a human popsicle.

Questions for discussion:

1. How can you tell if you are walking on ice covering water?

2. What would you say of a friend wants to play on a frozen lake or pond?

