



**STANLEY SKATES**



It was a crispy winter day and Berry and Dolly were walking by the lake. The lake had frozen over and was covered by a very thick layer of ice.

“Come on, Dolly, let’s slide on the ice!” the little snail suggested.  
The ladybird happily agreed.



Berry and Dolly stepped cautiously onto the ice. They held on tightly to each other and began to slide slowly around. They were really having a wonderful time.



They soon warmed up and Dolly got a bit braver and took a long slide on the ice. Berry the snail followed close behind his ladybird friend. They fell over every now and again but when they did, they just laughed and carried on playing.





Stanley the stag beetle stood and watched them.

"Stanley, you have to try this! Come and slide with us, it's so much fun!" Berry said to their friend.



Stanley was slightly scared but stepped on the ice out of curiosity. "Aaaaaaaah!" he yelled as his feet slipped out from under him and he fell on his bottom.



Berry and Dolly ran over to him.

“We’ll give you a hand, Stanley.”

The two friends stood on either side of Stanley and guided him slowly forward.





The three friends slid this way but made sure that Stanley was safe. The stag beetle started to gain a little confidence.

“Now we’ll let go of you, and you can try by yourself,” Dolly told him.

“Go on, Stanley. You’ll be fine,” Berry nodded.





Then the snail and the ladybird let Stanley go. This time he slid a long way on his own and stayed on his feet.

“Slow down, Stanley!” Dolly shouted. “You’ll slide right into those bushes.”



Stanley tried to stop but he stumbled and sped into a patch of prickly bushes.  
“Help!”



"I'm full of prickles and my antler hurts. It hurts a lot," Stanley cried. Dolly ran over quickly to take a look at the injured stag beetle.





"I'll never be able to do this. I don't think I want to slide on the ice anymore," Stanley moaned.

"Don't give up. I'm sure you'll get the hang of it soon," Dolly said and bandaged Stanley's painful antler with her dotty scarf.

"Come and give it another go," the little snail said trying to cheer Stanley up.



"I don't want to!" the stag beetle sulked.

Just then, a beautiful girl beetle slid out onto the ice. She moved over the frozen surface of the water as gracefully as can be.

"I'm Iris the ice beetle," said the beauty.

"Hi, Iris. She's Dolly the ladybird, he's Stanley the stag beetle, and I'm Berry the snail," Berry said in his politest voice.



“How do manage to glide on the ice like that?” Stanley asked the stranger.

“Because I’m wearing ice skates,” Iris replied.

“What are ice skates?” Dolly asked.

“These are ice skates. They’re special shoes that can slide on the ice. You have to buckle them to your boots.”





“And these are the bits that actually slide on the ice,” Iris said, pointing to the sharp wooden wedges on the soles of her shoes.

“Did you make them yourself?” Berry asked, unable to control his curiosity.

“Yes, I made them. It’s really not that difficult. I can make ice skates for all of you, if you like.”

“Hurray, hurray!” the three friends shouted excitedly.



Berry, Dolly, Stanley and Iris went to the forest together. Iris sorted through the branches lying on the ground and eventually found one good for the job. "This will do nicely."



“This is my house!” said proudly Iris.

“Wow! This is really beautiful!” Berry told her appreciatively.





They all got to work, sawing and hammering in tiny nails. Everybody did their share.



“They’re finished,” Iris eventually announced. And there were three pairs of brand-new ice skates sitting on the table.



Berry and Dolly felt a little bit nervous as they fastened their new ice skates on. Stanley was the most nervous of all.

"I know I'll fall. I can't do it."

"Come with me, I'll help you," Iris smiled.





Berry and Dolly held on to each other and stepped out on to the ice. Iris helped Stanley. "Sliding on the ice is so much better with ice skates!" Stanley laughed.



Iris held Stanley's hand for a long time before he was happy to slide all on his own. He soon learned how to turn, and start and stop. "I can do it! I can ice skate!" he announced at the end of a very long but happy day.