

## Emily Rose Pazos' Most Creative Winning Entry

I climbed out of the snowdrift and brushed myself off. Whew! That was a close one! I was lucky not to have hit a tree when the front ski tips of my snowmobile caught on that sapling and sent me flying through the air. Speaking of my snowmobile ... I trudged over to inspect the damage. Yikes! (Expletive) My vehicle, in short, was not getting me anywhere anytime soon. I glanced at the sky and realized a storm was not too far off. I needed a makeshift solution – and fast!

I started to panic. I needed shelter, fire! *Wait*, I told myself, *calm down*. What did I have? What could I use? I glanced around. The wind felt like a punch in the face – a cold one. So the first thing I did was turn the snowmobile lengthwise so that it blocked me from the wind. It may not have been able to transport me, but it wasn't totally useless. I thought about all the things I had with me. An emergency repair kit, consisting of a wrench, some pliers, and a few screwdrivers. I had my Leatherman, two protein bars, a water bottle, and the bottle of Scotch that I was going to give to my Auntie Bridget as a gift. That's who I was going to meet. If only I had some sort of cover, though ... of course! The snowmobile cover! How could I have forgotten? I thought of the tents made of blankets and chairs that my brothers and I always made. If I could apply the same model to my situation ... my mind worked a million miles a minute.

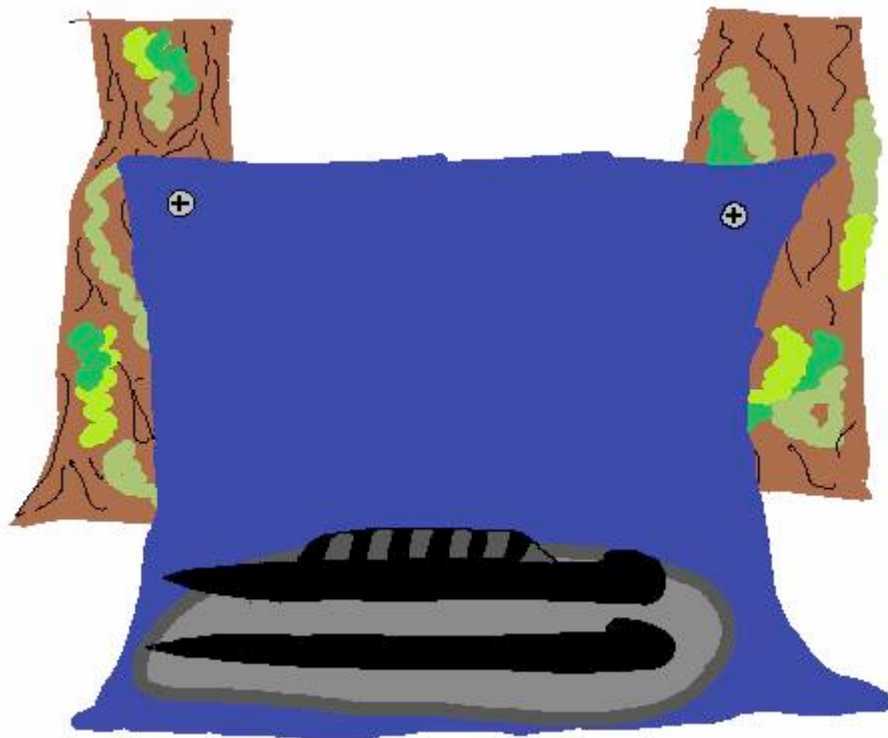


The blanket could easily be replaced by the tarp, and the snowmobile would definitely be heavy enough to act as the chair to the right. I'd tip it over on its side to avoid it falling on me in the night. But how would I attach the upper end of the tarp to something? I looked around. Trees. And snow. And more trees. I guess I'd have to attach it to a tree. But with what? I racked my brain for answers. I had tools in my toolbox I could use. Slowly I grinned.

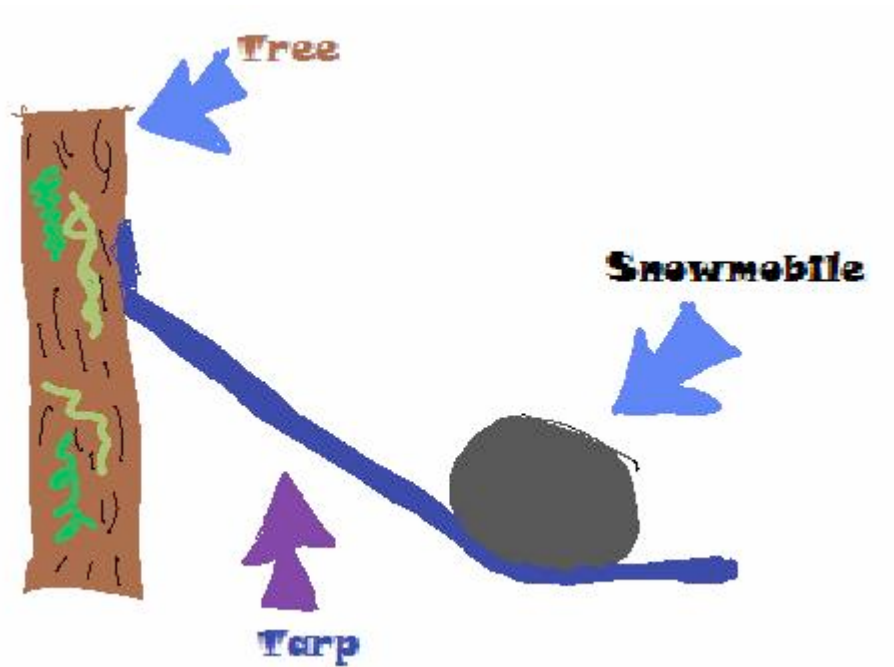
There had to be screws holding the skis on or something! I scrambled over and immediately found some screws. I grabbed a Phillips-head and got started. Lefty-loosey, righty-tighty. Soon I was holding two screws and a screwdriver: treasure in survival land. I took a corner of the tarp and popped a screw through it. I then proceeded to screw the tarp to the tree. It was difficult, but once I leaned my weight into it, I did it.



Next I screwed the other corner of the tarp into an adjoining tree. My result looked like this:



Here's a side view:



My shelter was small, but I fit snugly. This was perfect because I needed to fit, obviously, but a smaller shelter will keep you warmer. I learned *that* from Survivorman! For the finishing touch I piled snow between the two trees and to the sides. Snow – an amazing insulator and more than abundant in this weather! It was almost as if this place were made for survival.

☁ = snow

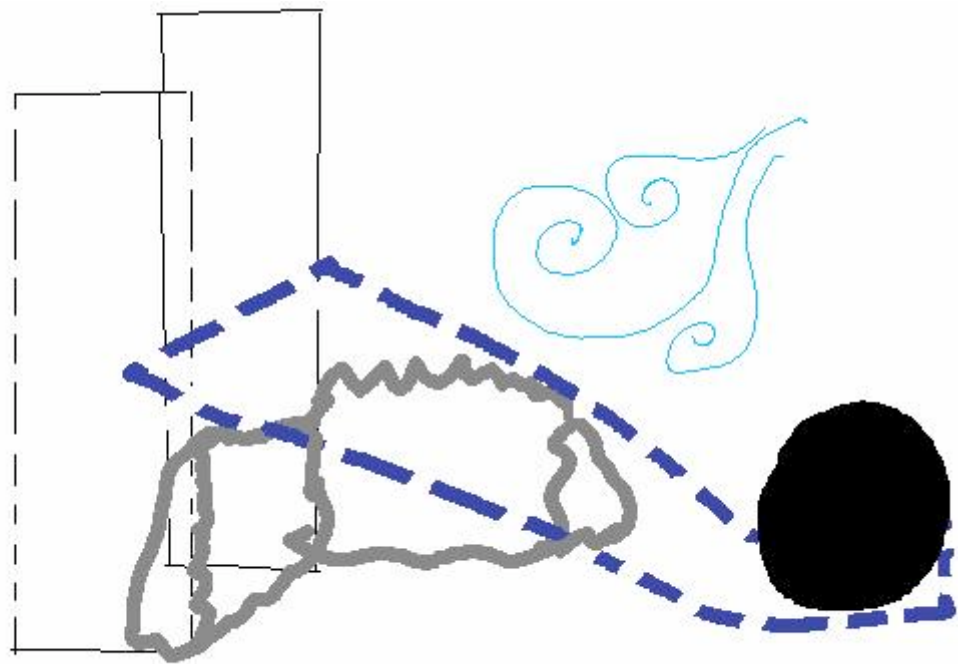
● = snowmobile

----- = Tarp

□ = Tree 1

□ = Tree 2

☄ = wind



The snow kept me warm, and since I made sure that the shelter faced the wind, the tarp protected me from the wind. : )

Okay, I had a shelter, but what about a fire? My visibility was limited, so going to collect kindling was out of the question. I didn't want to get lost on my way back! I would have to use what I had right here...

The wind was starting to really howl. First I collected some rocks that were laying scattered near my tent. A fire pit would be a nice start. Then I thought about what would burn. I had thermal pants and a thermal shirt on, and over that I was wearing cotton pants and a t-shirt. As a final layer I wore my parka and snow pants. I could burn one layer of clothing, which would still leave me with one layer of clothing, plus the parka and snowpants. I'd burn the cotton pants and t-shirt, seeing as the thermal set would probably keep me warmer. But what would I light it with? I thought about ways Survivorman lights fires. *What could I use?!?!?* Then I had it. A faint, flicker of an idea, but an idea nonetheless. Would it be possible, I wondered, to strike my knife against one of my tools? A wrench, or a screwdriver maybe? I grabbed my screwdriver and flipped out my knife. I started striking them together. Sparks flew, but none caught. If only I had something flammable that would catch quickly! Suddenly a picture flashed through my mind: *a flaming cocktail!* I shuffled towards the scotch. With a little effort, I got the cork off. Luckily it didn't spray everywhere. I carefully drizzled a tiny bit on. Then I started making sparks, aiming for the scotch. *Come on, come on!* I thought. Suddenly a spark caught and flared up. Fire!

I tore my gloves off and warmed my hands. So warm ... I sighed. I was going to be OK. In the morning, I would collect firewood and light a fire using the embers of my previous one. That's a favorite camping pastime of mine, and a handy skill, too! I push a stone right up close to the fire. I would stick it inside my jacket to keep me warm while I slept. And trust me, they are warm!

*Three days later...*

I shuffled towards my tent and dropped logs, sticks, pine needles, and various types of dry leaves into a pile. It would be dark soon. I was lamenting about the half-read book on my desk back home that I might never know the ending to, when, like a beacon of light in darkness, I saw the headlamps of a pickup truck appear a couple yards away! I ran like I'd never run before, all the while screaming and waving my hands high above my head. The ranger in the pickup stopped the truck and rolled down the window.

"Are you Emily Rose?"

"Yes, yes, yes!" I cried. She unlocked the door and I hopped in, being sure to buckle my seat belt. The ranger handed me hot cocoa in a thermos. Best darn hot cocoa I ever tasted.

By Emily Rose Pazos, age 13