

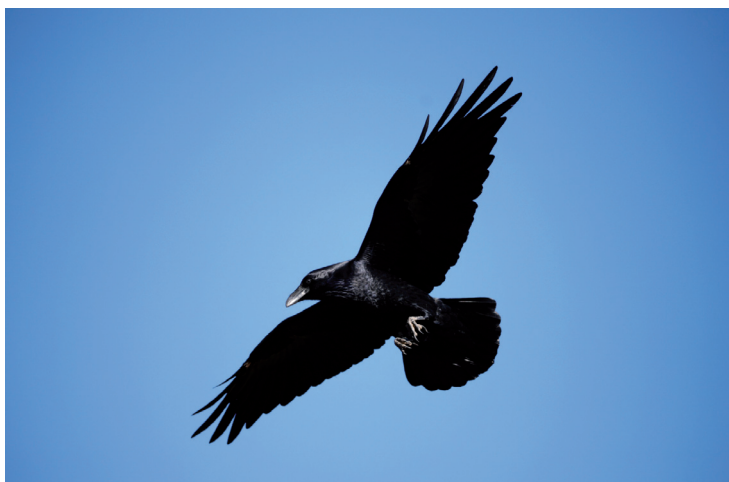
CHAPTER 5

A sad message



23 hrs 30 mins

8.15 am I am feeling optimistic. The sun is shining into the canyon and a raven has just flown across the blue sky above my head. The sight and sound of the bird fills me with hope.



I hold my leg in the sunlight. It feels warm against my skin. But I need to do something. It's time for plan two. I will use my ropes, webbing and carabiners to try and lift the boulder and free my hand. I look up. There's a sharp piece of rock above my head. If I can throw the rope around this, it might hold everything in the right position.

After many tries, I finally succeed. I tie the other end of the rope around the boulder. But when I pull, nothing happens. Everything holds, but the boulder doesn't move. I put more weight on the rope, but it still doesn't work. The rope is not tight enough.



28 hrs 15 mins

1.00 pm I've spent four hours trying to lift the boulder, but nothing has worked.

Suddenly, I hear voices.

'Help! Help!' I shout.

I stop and listen. At first, there's nothing. But then I hear a sound from above and realise my mistake. It's just a small animal moving in the rock. I'd imagined it was people.

The sound of my voice shouting for help frightened me. It made me feel lost and alone. I make a promise that I won't do it again. The optimistic feelings of earlier in the day have disappeared. No one is going to save me. That leaves only the third, and worst, plan: I will have to amputate my right arm. What will I need for the job? The knife, that's certain, but also a tourniquet to stop the blood. The plastic pipe from the CamelBak seems best for that. I take it off and use a carabiner to make it tight. It works well and I feel a bit better.

As soon as I put the knife against the skin of my arm, I feel ill. I can't do it. It would be like killing myself. I drop the knife and lay my head on the boulder. None of my plans have worked. I can't free my hand. I can't lift the boulder. I can't amputate my arm. My only hope is rescue, but I'll die before help arrives.

I feel angry with the boulder, but it's not the boulder's fault – it's mine. Everything about this stupid adventure was a mistake. I didn't tell anyone where I was going, I didn't go with Kristi and Megan to the west canyon, and I didn't get off the boulder when it moved.



30 hrs

2.45 pm It's exactly twenty-four hours since the accident. I decide it's time to film a message for my family and friends. I place my camcorder on the boulder, turn it on and start speaking.

'My name is Aron Ralston. It's just after three o'clock on Sunday, April the 27th, 2003. I have been trapped in Blue John Canyon for the last twenty-four hours. My parents are Donna and Larry Ralston of Eaglewood, Colorado. If anyone finds this, please give it to them. Thank you.'

I describe all that has happened in the last two days. As I reach the end of my story I feel very sad. I know this could be a final goodbye to my parents and sister, Sonja.

After telling them how much I love them, there is only one more thing to say. 'Mum, Dad, Sonja – I'm sorry.'

I turn off the machine. All I can do now is wait for someone to find me.