

in, thumb up, fingers extended; the rock slides another foot down the wall with my arm in tow, tearing the skin off the lateral side of my forearm. Then silence.

My disbelief paralyzes me temporarily as I stare at the sight of my arm vanishing into an implausibly small gap between the fallen boulder and the canyon wall. Within moments, my nervous system's pain response overcomes the initial shock. Good God, my hand. The flaring agony throws me into a panic. I grimace and growl... My mind commands my body, 'Get your hand out of there!' I yank my arm three times in a naive attempt to pull it out. But I'm stuck.

Anxiety has my brain tweaking; searing-hot pain shoots from my wrist up my arm. I'm frantic, and I cry out... My desperate brain conjures up a probably apocryphal story in which an adrenaline-stoked mom lifts an overturned car to free her baby. I'd give it even odds that it's made up, but I do know for certain that *right now*, while my body's chemicals are raging at full flood, is the best chance I'll have to free myself with brute force. I shove against the large boulder, heaving against it, pushing with my left hand, lifting with my knees pressed under the rock. I get good leverage with the aid of a twelve-inch shelf in front of my feet. Standing on that, I brace my thighs under the boulder and thrust upward repeatedly, grunting, 'Come on... move!' Nothing.

apocryphal Doubtful, untrue.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

This extract from *Between a Rock and a Hard Place* describes the place where the accident occurred and the event itself. Aron Ralston describes the events in great detail. He recreates the scene of the accident effectively. As he is writing for a general audience, he explains the terminology related to climbing as well as the reasons behind the different things he does. His clearheaded and analytical thinking pattern is effectively brought out as well as his ability to react quickly and to take action in the face of an unexpected problem.

As this is an autobiography, it is written in the first person and has many factual details that makes it feel authentic. Because it narrates a stressful situation, the present tense is used. This gives it a sense of immediacy and makes the reader feel as though they are there with the writer as the events unfold.



▲ 'Another chockstone is wedged between the walls...'