

Monologue

(Coughing and loud sniffs)

"Are you alright, Joshua?" I turn to look at my little brother. He does not answer but just stands still. I cannot see his expression, just the outline of his small fragile body. We have been trapped under the rubble for three days and the only access we have to the outside world is a speck above us revealing air and a crack of sunlight.

(Clippety clop of heels, light footsteps, thud of heavy boots from above)

"You know where the food is, Joshua. In my rucksack - there are still the cheesestraws I made in my food tech lesson and about half a sandwich from my lunch on the day we first ended up - you know."

(Noisy fumbling)

"You still have your squash as well. And I've filled my bottle up with water which came through that little hole when it rained."

(Rucksack slides across the ground)

(Unzipping of rucksack, loud gulps and munches)

"Don't eat and drink too much at once, Joshua. We need our supplies to last as long as possible."

(Wails) "Eve, I'm starving! For God's sake!"

A lump rises to my throat and tears spring to my eyes. I have to get us out of here. My throat is raw from screaming and shouting for help. Surely that little speck - but I must be so careful - the whole thing could cave in and crush us and I can't see that well. No one can hear us and we can only survive down here for so long. Our supplies will not last forever. If this is the only chance of escape I have to take it.

(Chatter and laughter from above)

I feel the rubble above. It is damp and slippery from the rain last night. I squint at the sunlight coming through the speck and notice that a stone next to it looks a little loose.

(Long deep breath)

I place my hand on the stone.

(Smooth sliding and a rough creak)

(Sigh of relief)

I gawp with amazement at the stone in my hand and gaze up at the hole which is now wide

enough for me to put my hand through. More sunlight is pouring in.

(Whisper) "Eve?"

"Hold on, Joshua. I'm going to get us out of here."

My hand soars up through the hole and I wave wildly.

(Squawk and flutter of birds from above)

(Chorus of screams and gasps from above)

(Running, pounding of footsteps from above)

Someone takes hold of my hand.

(Urgently) "Are you hurt?"

(Tearful) "No, I've been stuck here for three days. My little brother is with me. Can you get us out?"

The person holding my hand squeezes it comfortingly.

(Calmly) "Hold on, sweetie, someone is calling 999 and we are going to help you out. How much room have you got? Can you move about easily?"

(Fumbling and light footsteps beneath the rubble)

I now feel Joshua beside me, leaning against my body and shivering. I put my other arm around his shoulders.

I know we have about one metre, just by going from one side to the other. We are very confined but it could be much much worse. But I am not going to tell them this. They will be afraid to remove the rubble. I was at first. What if the police, ambulance, firefighters or whoever is coming thinks it is too dangerous to move the rubble? They could hum and hah over it and eventually tell us the risk and ask if we are okay with it. But the rubble – especially the stones – above us must be removed while they are still damp and slippery from last night's rain. I feel the heat from the sun on my hand sticking out of the hole as well as the warmth of the person's grasp. The rubble stands more chance of caving in if it gets dry.

(Confidently) "Loads. About 3 metres, I'm sure."

(Seriously) "Okay, I need you to move well away from this hole, as far as you can go and we are going to remove this rubble and make the hole wide enough for us to pull you both out. Some of this looks a little loose from the rain so it will be easier to move."

The person holding my hand lets go.

(Soothingly) "Give us a shout when you are ready."

I pull my hand back in and place both my hands on Joshua's shoulders, steering him towards the other side. We press our backs up against the wall of rubble.

(Shout) "Ready!"

(Loud rough creaks, heavy sliding)

(Gasp)

All this sunlight pouring in seems like a stranger to me. I cry with relief, hugging Joshua hard, as several hands take stones, concrete and wood from above us. The hole is getting wide enough for me to stick my head through. A few moments later, I don't just see hands removing the rubble, I see faces, smiling down at us. I smile back and Joshua grins like a cheshire cat, waving enthusiastically.

(Clapping and cheering)

"Right. Lets get the little man out first."

(Sirens)

I lift Joshua up through the hole and a delicate looking pair of hands take him.

"Now, be very careful, put your arms through first and we will lift you out."

I stick my arms up through the hole and a strong firm pair of hands haul me out from under my armpits.

(Gasp)

I am shocked as I find myself in the arms of my boyfriend Max. As I gaze up into his cloudy blue eyes I realise they are full of tears. He gently takes my hand and kisses my knuckles. I instantly recognise his touch. The person holding my hand was him.

(Whisper) "Max. I love you. Thank you."

"Well, sweetie, I'm so glad you are safe now."

I turn my head and realise the voice that has been talking to me belongs to a woman in her forties with dark hair and green eyes. She smiles warmly. "I'm Andrea."

"I'm Eve, thank you so much, Andrea."

I look around and see Mum, Dad and Joshua in a giant bear hug, buried in each other.

The police have arrived and they look absolutely gobsmacked but really impressed. Touched,

even.

There are crowds surrounding me and Max and Mum, Dad and Joshua. People are videoing us and taking pictures. Me, Max, Mum, Dad and Joshua smile at each other and then at the cameras, knowing that these will be the most precious memorable moments frozen in time.

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