

# Grand Canyon Rescue

C. R. Fulton

THE CAMPGROUND KIDS

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*Grand Canyon Rescue* by C. R. Fulton

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*For everyone who loves solving a clue,  
don't forget to use the map  
to see if you can discover the answer  
before **The Campground Kids** do!*

## THE CAMPGROUND KIDS

No. 1

*Grand Teton Stampede*

No. 2

*Smoky Mountain Survival*

No. 3

*Zion Gold Rush*

No. 4

*Rocky Mountain Challenge*

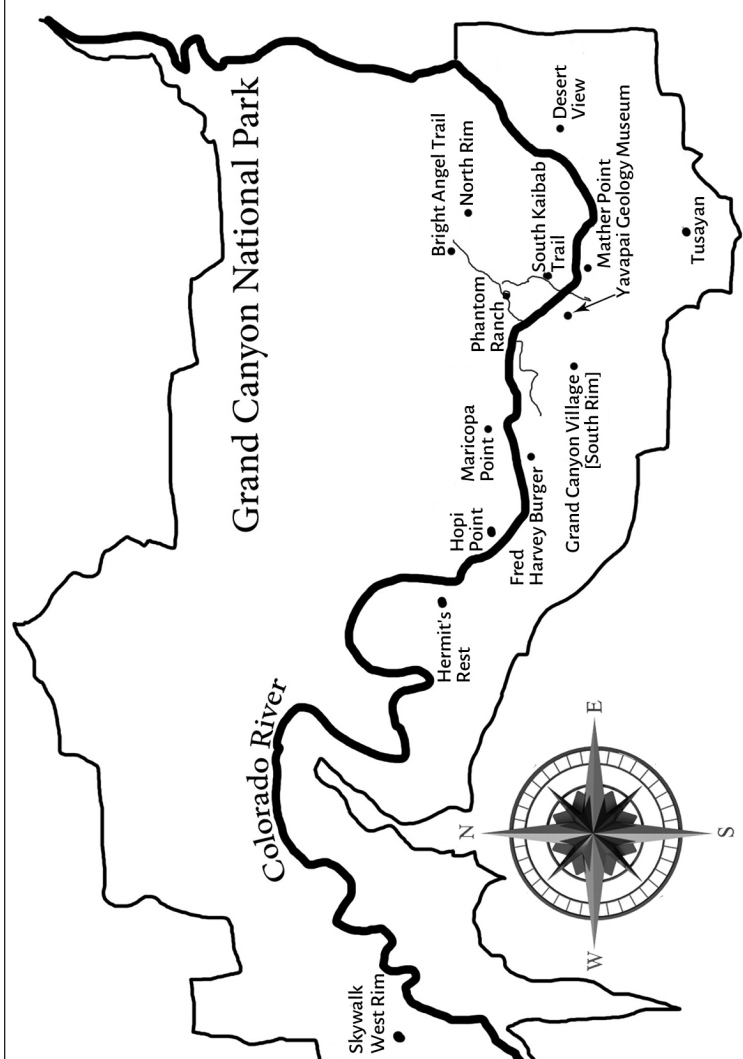
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# Follow the Steps of the Campground Kids...



# - 1 -

If a 13-year-old boy could ever fly, it would be me, with this hot wind climbing the cliffs before me, rippling my shirt. *The Grand Canyon!* I catch my breath as I see it for the first time. *The Grand Canyon!* With my stomach pressed against the railing and the mile-deep drop-off below, I spread my arms wide. Nothing could have prepared me for the sheer size of this national park!

“Mama, look! It’s a California condor!” my ten-year-old sister Sadie exclaims, as she swipes back some of her long brown hair from her face.

I keep my arms extended wide; my fingers tingle as I watch the bird cruise over the canyon.

“It’s so wide!” my older cousin Ethan exclaims. *I’m glad he finally has his nose out of the video game he’s played the entire way here.*

“Yeah!”

The overlook is crowded. Thankfully, I’m not yet tall enough to block anyone’s view, but at 15, Ethan is nearly as tall as my dad. I turn my head when I hear a familiar whistle.

“Dad!” I wave to let him know I see him as he motions us over through the crowds.

“Mom, come on!” I run a hand through my blond hair. The Grand Canyon is hot at the top and even hotter at the bottom, so I’d gotten it cut as short as possible.

Sadie slips up next to me. “It’s amazing!” she exclaims as she shakes my elbow.

“Sure is. Hey, got any ideas on why Mom and Dad have been so secretive about this trip?”

“No, but I know they’ve got something up their sleeves. Have you gotten the name of the campground where we’re staying out of them yet?”

“No such luck. Something is going on.” I scowl as Mom grins wide when Dad flashes her a quick thumbs up. “See?”

We sidestep a large group and reach Dad.

“I found a great spot for a picture; come on,” he says. As he leads us over to some boulders, my heart slams into my toes because the rock just ends. The drop-off seems to last forever. I guess the management of the Grand Canyon doesn’t believe in too many railings other than those at the main lookouts.

“Careful!” Dad’s wide hand grips my shoulder. “I think that’s close enough.”

“I’ll set up the camera over here.” Mom is ready in a few seconds, and we line up in front of one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

While I’m still trying to blink the flash from the camera out of my eyes, Ethan says, “Hey! I bet this boulder would make a funny shot.”

Ethan lays down behind it so only his head and hands gripping the rock are showing. And from



this angle, it really looks like he's falling into the canyon.

He makes a horrified face, Mom snaps the picture, and then he quips, "What's that?"

"Looks like a...box."

Sadie and I reach for it at the same time.

"Why does it have my name on it?" she asks.

"And mine..." I add. It's a wooden box with strange grooves across it. I take it from Sadie's hand and find it fits in my palm easily. Ethan quickly snatches it from my hand.

"It's got my name on it!" he says happily, as he inspects it.

"Ugh!" Sadie rolls her eyes. "It's got ours too! Let me see it again." Ethan reluctantly hands it over.

I turn to Mom and Dad. "It's from you, right?"

Dad just shrugs, smiling at me.

"It's got to be. No one else in Arizona knows us."

"Isaiah, look! I think it's a puzzle box." Sadie is shifting a section, but it jams against another. I take it from her and start testing the sides.

“Hey, I was working on that!”

I sigh and hand it back. “Let me know when you want help.”

Ethan pulls his *Race Tron* game from his back pocket. Soon, his thumbs are flying, and he’s leaning around turns that don’t exist.

I shake my head then pepper Mom and Dad for details. “What *is* the box for?”

Dad’s grin just grows, which propels my already burning curiosity to a higher peak.

“Mom, come on!” I beg, but she simply shrugs.

“Oh! I give up!” Sadie cries.

“Excellent!” I take the box, hungry for answers. Turning it over shows our names are engraved on every side. “*Hmmm.*”

I shift the only piece that’s loose, but I can’t slide it far before jamming.

“See?” Sadie says, leaning close. “It’s stuck.”

“Give me a minute.” Just when I’m about to admit that she’s right, my pinky finger hits a panel on the other side, and the first section shifts farther.

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“Oh!” Sadie leans so heavily on my arm I can’t continue working.

“Sadie, give me some room, will you?”

“Okay, but hurry! I can’t wait to see what’s inside!”

I think about the Rubik’s Cube I’d received last Christmas. “Maybe if I press here, and twist there...”

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One side of the box slides open an inch. “Almost got it!”

Ethan plops back against the rocks. “*Ugh!* Dead battery? Come on!” He tucks the game into his pocket, unfolds his lanky form, and comes over.

“What’s in it?”

All three of us lean close as I finally convince the panel to slide all the way.

“It’s a...” Ethan drops his voice down low, holds his hands high, and throws back his head before announcing, “Nooote!”

I shake my head at his antics, pull out the slip of paper, and hand it to Sadie. She clears her throat

and reads: “*Riddle me this, riddle me that, here’s a riddle for you...*”

*Dear Isaiah, Sadie, and Ethan,*

*Your mather (or aunt in Ethan’s case) pointed out that the best way to keep you out of trouble this trip is to keep you busy. Perhaps with a nice Desert View. Now begins a new adventure, a treasure hunt with a pot of gold you’ve all been longing for at the end. Follow the mules, I mean clues, but don’t expect any help from your mother and me; you’ve got to figure these out on your own.*

*Love, Mom and Dad*

“Um, Dad, you do realize you misspelled *mother* in the message.” I look over at my parents, only to see them whispering and giggling like blissfully happy teenagers.

“*Hmmm*, what? Oh, no help, remember?” Dad says happily.

“Wait...” Sadie says, pointing to the note. “He spelled *mother* correctly the second time...see?”

“Maybe it was on purpose,” Ethan takes a guess. “What else is in the box?”

“Nothing.” I shake the box, which clunks. “Or maybe something...” I reach in and feel glossy paper. “It’s a map of the Grand Canyon National Park!”

Ethan unfolds it.

“Plus...” I dig my finger into the box, feeling a small hole. “...what might be a keyhole!”

“So...” Ethan says, “we’ve got a keyhole with no key and a note with a misspelled word. Not very much to go on, especially without the help of the *lovebirds* over there.”

“Heard that,” Dad says over his shoulder from where he and Mom are holding hands as they enjoy the incredible view.

Sadie adds, “It’s a grammatically incorrect note too. He capitalized both Desert and View.”

“Plus, he went out of his way to mention mules.”

“Wait,” Ethan cries, studying the map. “Here’s a place called Mather Point!”

Sadie pulls Ethan’s arm lower so she can see the map too. “You’re right, and there’s a campground called Desert View!”

“Yes, but what could the pot of gold be?” I question, tapping my chin.

Sadie chews her lip. “Well, I sure hope we’re smart enough to figure it out!”

“Let’s head to Desert View first. It’s a longer drive, and my game will get charged in the truck by then.”

“Seriously, Ethan? Who cares about some game?”

“I do,” he says, faking hurt.

“Anyway, we can’t do that because the first clue is Mather Point, then Desert View, and then the mules. *Eeee!* Do you think we will get to ride mules into the canyon?” Sadie asks.

A smile grows on my face. “I’m up for it.”

Mom turns to us. “Do we have a direction yet?”

“Mather Point!” we declare in unison.

“But, Mom, you’ll tell us if we’re going to the wrong place, right?” I ask.

“Not a chance!” she says joyfully. “Come on!”

Sadie and I frown at each other. “We had better be at the top of our game with Mom and Dad acting so weird.”

“Yeah,” she agrees.

Mather Point proves well worth the visit. After exploring the visitor center where Sadie gathers every available brochure on the park, we take the short trail to the overlook. Somehow this view is even more impressive, and I feel so small gazing out over the depths of the canyon.

“Eighteen miles wide!” Ethan breathes. We had barely gotten him out of the car because his game had charged just enough to turn on.

“I knew it would be big, but this puts big to shame,” Sadie says as Mom and Dad walk by. I catch a sound with a metallic ping to it. The sun glints off something on the ground between Ethan and me. Ethan picks it up.



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“Number 22...” He reads the block letters and number stamped on a small metal disk.

“Is it our campsite number?” Sadie asks.

Dad whistles a happy tune.

“Yep!” she says.

“What’s happening at that table over there?” Ethan points to the right. We inch in that direction through the crowds.

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“The Society of Egyptian Preser...Preservation.”  
Sadie reads the sign. “What does that mean?”

Now we’re trapped in the flow of people moving toward the table, so we shuffle past, looking at pictures of a cave entrance and hieroglyphic writing. A man is selling shirts that say, *Grand Canyon—Egyptian mummies, caves; I saw it all!* I pick up a sheet of paper the man is handing out and begin to read a reprint from a 1909 newspaper:

## **ARIZONA GAZETTE**

Friday, March 12, 1909

G. E. Kincaid was the second man ever to

navigate the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon.

“Well, who was the first?” Sadie says, reading over my shoulder.

“I don’t know! It doesn’t say, but this Kincaid claims to have found a cave that contained mummies, Egyptian artifacts of gold, and many hieroglyphics.”

“No kidding?” Ethan comments. “What is a mummy’s favorite kind of music?” Ethan wiggles his eyebrows while we think about the answer.

“Um, silence?” Sadie finally says shrugging.

“No, *wrap* music, ha!”

I fold the sheet of paper and slip it into my back pocket. The man at the table tells someone that the T-shirts are only \$22.99. The amazing part is that a bunch of people are buying them!

“Well, we saw Mather Point and got the campsite number. I guess it’s about time to head to Desert View,” I say.

“Yes! I am going to conquer level nine!” Ethan rubs his slim stomach. “But...” he sniffs the air. “What is that delicious odor? *Mmm*. I smell subs. Aunt Ruth, it’s been like two hours since we ate. What do you say to a sub? Nice soft bread, crispy lettuce,” he kisses his fingers like a French chef. “And hot sauce!”

Mom smiles, shaking her head. “When you put it that way, I say yes—except for the hot sauce.”

“Oh, yeah! Yum-yum in my tum-tum.”

By the time we get into the truck with the subs, my mouth is watering.

Ethan takes a bite, throws back his head, and groans. “What did I tell you? It’s heavenly!”

I inhale mine at nearly the same rate as Ethan, but Sadie only gets half of hers eaten. I pull out the park map. It looks like nearly 30 miles to drive to Desert View, and Ethan is deep in his game after he wipes his mouth. I lean over to Sadie.

“Hey, are you gonna eat the rest of that sub?”

She looks at me flatly. “Yes. Just not right now.”

“Bummer,” I say sadly and watch Sadie take one more bite.

“Ouch!” She holds her lip. “Something hard is in my sandwich!” I lean over and look as she opens the top roll of her sandwich.

“It’s a key!” I shout.

“What’s it doing in my sub?”

“Hiding!” Ethan snorts.

I pull it out and wipe it off, finding I can’t move fast enough to get it into the little box. It slides into the keyhole perfectly.

“No way!” Sadie breathes. I turn the key, and the inside of the box snaps open. “What’s in it?”

“It’s...” I peer inside. “...a postcard?” I need a few tries to remove the slick, shiny thick paper. The postcard is of Wyoming, and it’s been cut into a heart shape.

“Mom, Dad, what *is* going on?” Sadie asks.

Mom just shrugs but then adds, “I would keep it safe if I were you.”

That’s all we can get out of them on the subject.

So, I sift through the brochures Sadie had grabbed at the visitor center.

“Wow, we could probably spend three full days just seeing everything in Grand Canyon Village.”

“Look at this! Phantom Ranch is the only official place to sleep in the bottom of the canyon, and the mule ride stops there! I wonder if we’ll get to sleep at Phantom Ranch,” Sadie says.

Excitement tingles down to my toes. *What are Mom and Dad up to? And what is the pot of gold? I can’t wait to find out.*

“Do you think there actually were Egyptians living in the Grand Canyon? I wonder if we’ll find any artifacts,” Sadie says.

“I don’t know, but are you gonna eat the rest of that sub?”

She moves it off her lap and to her other side—out of my reach. Then she points and exclaims, “Desert View Campground!”

Sadie and I strain to see everything out of the window at once. I look over to find Ethan still glued

to his game, missing everything. Huge, sharp-edged boulders are strewn everywhere amid short, scraggly Ponderosa pines.

“Nearly everything is rocks and sand,” Mom says.

One side of my mouth pulls back, remembering how the glitter in my sleeping bag at Rocky Mountains survival week had felt so sandy. Sadie and the girls in her cabin had pulled a prank involving glitter on all the boys in my cabin. Their practical joke is funny to me now—especially since I have a new sleeping bag from the deal. But I must admit, it wasn’t funny then. A mischievous grin tugs at the corner of my mouth as I recall that week.

I elbow Sadie, “Hey, Sadie, are you gonna finish that sub?”

She reacts exactly like I knew she would. “Oh, Isaiah!” She makes an angry face, but I see a twinkle in her eye.

“Where are we going now?” Dad asks as he drives past the half-moon-shaped tent site and then a rectangular RV site.

“22,” Sadie and I say together, and I elbow Ethan in the ribs.

“What, oh, site 22 it is,” he adds, then grimaces, “Nooooo!” He mashes the buttons on his game. “How could I lose after all that?” He slams his game down onto his lap and then sniffs the air. He looks at Sadie. “Oh, Sadie, are you going to eat that sub?”

“Eeeehh!” she yells, then stuffs a huge bite into her mouth.

Clearly, she thinks she’s going to get away from the question by eating the sub. I smile. *Not by a long shot!*

We pull into site 22, and I rush for my tent sealed tight in its bag in the back of the truck. Setting it up is one of my favorite tasks. When I have it just so, I finally allow myself to pull out my new hydration pack. I finger the double-insulated Camelbak water reservoir that holds 10 cups. I slide my arms into the straps and pull the hose up to my mouth. It’s so fun to bite the end and sip cool water from it. It’ll be perfect for the Grand Canyon’s searing heat, plus it



fits over the top of my trusty bear-slashed pack with four Junior Ranger badges affixed to it.

“Isaiah,” Sadie giggles, pointing at Ethan.

He’s perched on a big red-and-tan streaked boulder, scowling at his game with his long legs folded up Indian-style. A blue jay is screaming at him, scolding him from a branch not far away. When he doesn’t move, it dives at him, pulling up at the last second.



Ethan swats at it without looking up, completely absorbed in his game. The bird rockets toward him again, grabbing his hair this time.

“Ouch!” Ethan shouts, holding his head where a

spike of hair is pointing skyward. He looks around but doesn't see anything and goes back to his game.

Sadie and I take a seat to watch the show. The bird is joined by another with less vibrantly colored feathers. They chatter at each other on a branch for a while and then dive for our unsuspecting cousin. The female grabs more hair with her claws and flaps wildly at Ethan's forehead. He drops the video game, screaming at the top of his lungs. He's slapping and flailing, but the bird is faster, and she is as angry as a hornet.

I'm laughing so hard I can't move. Mom rushes over. "Hey, you crazy bird, go away!"

The female jay flies up to a branch, but she doesn't stop scolding. Mom leans over Ethan, finds him whole, and heads back to finish setting up her camp kitchen.

As Sadie leans against me, tears of laughter roll down her face. But we soon discover the show isn't over yet.

As Ethan searches for his game, both birds dive

again. This time he's ready for them, karate chopping like wild.

"Wwwhhhaaaa! Ha! I won't leave without my game!" he shouts.

The birds fly skyward, Ethan snatches his game and starts to run. The female tucks her wings, gaining speed. At the last second, right over his head, she swoops up, opens her rear hatch, and lands a bird-sized bomb on Ethan's back. *Splat.*

"Eeehhhaa! I'm hit! I'm hit!" he screams, ripping off his shirt as he runs to shelter.

I can barely breathe, but Sadie squeaks out, "Run faster! She's coming again!"

Ethan launches for the unzipped tent door. *Splat.* The jay misses this time but not by much.

"That was better than a movie!" Sadie declares.

Later, after Ethan has advanced two more levels from the safety of the tent, Sadie suddenly freezes.