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SKILLS



THE PREDICAMENT Lost In The Desert

START

Just after noon on a dayhike in Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, you realize you're lost—with only 1.5 liters of water left. You...

A) Strike out cross-country in hopes of intersecting the trail. **B) Rest in the shade and drink half a liter of water.**

Add 1 liter of water. Water—even if it's muddy or scummy—is exactly what you need. But now you're shivering as the sun sets. Check your pack: Is there an emergency blanket (or large garbage bag) inside?
A) No B) Yes

Subtract .5 liter of water. It must be 100°F, you're feeling nauseated and achy, and your skin is clammy. You...

A) Drape your jacket over a bush, rest in the shade, and chug half a liter of water. **B) Press on, taking only small sips to save H₂O.** **C) Stop and eat the rest of your beef jerky, washing it down with one gulp.**

Subtract .5 liter of water. The gulp hydrates your brain and vital organs as you wait out the midday heat. Now you need more water. Where do you look?

A) Build a solar still by spreading a plastic bag across a hole in the ground. **B) Cut into a barrel cactus and chew the moist pulp inside.** **C) Search rock formations and ledges for shaded potholes.** **D) Drink the scummy, green sludge from an abandoned cattle tank.**

Subtract .5 liter of water. Solar stills are unreliable, and eating cactus can lead to intense vomiting and diarrhea—and further dehydration. Flip a coin to see if you'll survive.
A) Heads B) Tails

Overexertion leads to heatstroke, seizures, and a quick death. Lunchbox The Cadaver Dog sniffs out your remains a few weeks later.

Weakened and lacking fluids (protein takes lots of water to digest), you collapse, finally succumbing to severe dehydration after a few days. Three years later, a tenderfoot scout from Troop #12 finds your sun-bleached bones.

Sustained by enough water, you backtrack to a familiar spot and find your way to the trailhead. A posthike beer never tasted so good.

Too bad—surviving another day in the desert requires luck and enough water. What's left in your bottle?
A) Less than 1.5 liters. B) 1.5 liters or more.

Sleeping on a sheltered rock bench, above the cold ground, keeps you warmer. You wake up to the sound of a small plane overhead. You...
A) Frantically start gathering tinder to start a signal fire. B) Signal with a mirror, piece of metal, or hologram on a credit card.

Saved! You tell Matt Lauer all about your amazing ordeal on the Today Show.

ILLUSTRATION BY HEADCASE DESIGN. TEXT BY JASON STEVENSON