



CRAIG HOSKING

The pilot who crashed inside a volcano (Hawaii, 1992)

Craig Hosking works as a Hollywood camera pilot and has filmed many famous action scenes for blockbusters featuring characters such as James Bond, Batman and Indiana Jones. It's a dream job for someone like Hosking, who has been passionate about flying and photography for as long as he can remember – he was only sixteen years old when he qualified for a licence to fly helicopters.

In 1992 he was hired to fly cinematographer Mike Benson and camera technician Christopher Duddy. They needed to film scenes of boiling lava for a movie called *Sliver* and had chosen Kilauea, the most active of the five volcanoes on the island of Hawaii. The two men planned to spend one Saturday recording a large plume of smoke from a vent called Pu'u 'O'o, and a pool of glowing lava nearly a hundred feet inside the crater.

Hosking flew the camera crew down into the six-hundred-foot deep crater several times, but on the third low-level pass the helicopter seemed to lose power. A warning light flashed on the control panel but the malfunction was so sudden that the three men were instantly plunged into a dense cloud of smoke and steam from the volcano. Emerging from the cloud moments later Hosking realised he had no choice but to land the helicopter immediately.

Find and copy one word which tells us Hosking loves flying and photography.

Where is Kilauea?

The three men were instantly plunged into a dense cloud of smoke and steam from the volcano

In the sentence beginning 'The two men planned...', which word could be a synonym for 'cloud'?

Choose an adjective which describes the cloud? Google the definition if you're unsure what this word means.

With just seconds to act before the loss of power became catastrophic, Hosking's professional experience told him that flying clear of the volcano was out of the question. He also knew that he couldn't land too close to the pool of boiling lava. If he did the steep gradient would cause the helicopter to roll over, which would almost certainly kill all three of them. The only option was to aim for a flat area close to the centre of the crater.

Hosking's plan was far from ideal but he thought it might work as long as he could avoid the bubbling lava and another large area strewn with

During the helicopter's rapid descent, the main rotor struck the crater wall

rocks. Unfortunately, during the helicopter's rapid descent, the main rotor struck the crater wall and broke free of the fuselage. Hosking

managed to get the machine down in one piece, but the men were now stranded inside the volcano and at least 150 feet below its rim.

When they emerged, dazed and in shock, from the crumpled wreck of the helicopter, they saw what looked like a scene from one of the disaster movies they helped create. The air was thick with choking, poisonous fumes, and the sound from the molten rock bubbling up to the surface added to the fearsome display. At times it made ominous gurgling noises, at others it was like waves breaking on shingle. In the gloom of their rocky prison they witnessed a terrifying lightshow from the eerie glow of the boiling lava pool.

All three realised that the gases surrounding them were extremely dangerous. These included hydrogen sulphide (which is poisonous, highly corrosive, flammable and explosive) and a toxic irritant called sulphur dioxide. A little fresh air seemed to be coming down from the rim, but suffocation was a very real prospect unless they got out of the volcano soon. There was no sign of a rescue party yet, so Duddy and Benson decided to scale the walls of the volcano in the hope that they might find a way out. Hosking, meanwhile, chose to remain with his wrecked helicopter, believing he could repair its damaged radio and call for help.

Duddy and Benson quickly found that climbing up the inside of a crater was a nerve-wracking challenge – neither had any experience of this sort of thing, let alone any expertise. The brittle walls of the crater were crumbling,

Why did he have to land in the centre of the crater?

"Hosking's plan was far from ideal." What does 'far from ideal' mean in this sentence?

Find and copy one word which means 'quick'.

How does the author appeal to the senses?

Give two examples.

Name two reasons, from the text, why the group split up?

Which words show how dangerous the climb up was?

and any careless move could easily start a landslide that would carry them deeper into danger. Treading very slowly and carefully they made their way up the crater, but soon became separated, stranded on ridges at least sixty feet short of the rim.

The men were hurrying to escape, so why were they 'treading very slowly and carefully'?