

Vail Daily



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Glenwood Canyon tragedy spawns new family and a book

'Out of the Canyon' tells a story of loss and love

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A supportive Roaring Fork Valley community and a flood of sympathy letters helped ease Arthur Daily's pain following a tragic Feb. 26, 1995, accident on Interstate 70 in Glenwood Canyon that claimed the lives of his wife and two boys.

That afternoon, as the Dailys were driving home to Aspen from a youth hockey game, a boulder tumbled from the canyon wall and smashed into the passenger side of their Chevrolet Suburban. Kathy Daily, Art's wife, died at the scene. Their children, Tanner and Shea, ages 11 and 6, respectively, later died at the hospital.

Art, who was driving, came away unscathed. But his life was shattered.

It was one of those sympathy letters, however, that brought him out of despair and allowed him to open his heart to new beginnings.

The story of Art and Allison Daily and their journey of reawakening love and healing is told in their newly published book, "Out of the Canyon — A True Story of Loss and Love." The couple will read selections from the book, followed by a discussion and book signing this evening from 4-6 p.m. at the Pour House Restaurant on Main Street in Carbondale.

It all started with that letter.

"All of the letters I received were really supportive, and the people of this community really pulled together and supported me in amazing ways," Art Daily said in an interview this week.

"It was heartwarming to receive that outpouring of support, and from people whom I'd never met who told of experiences they had that they thought might resonate for me in my experience," he said.

But one letter in particular struck a chord.

"It was really different," he said. "It was amazingly kind, and thoughtful, and very personal."

Though signed simply "A friend," he guessed by the way it was written that it was penned by a female.

"I just thought, I want to meet this person who could write me such a letter, and put this piece of herself out there like that," he said.

So, he wrote back to the P.O. box number on the return address and asked to meet.

"Honestly, as I describe in the book, I was disarmed," Allison Daily said in the same interview about her reaction to receiving a letter in return from Art.

Allison herself had been dealing for two years with the loss of her brother, Rod, to suicide. When she heard of Art's tragedy while vacationing in Colorado she said she felt compelled to reach out and offer what comfort she could.

Along with the letter, she included a tape of songs that she thought might also help. "Music had helped me in my grieving process," she said.

Art said he was amazed when he listened to the songs, and many of them had been Kathy's favorite songs.

"While I was very surprised to hear back from him, I really felt comfortable with it because of that shared grief," she said.

Although she was getting ready to move back to Texas at the time, she agreed to meet. It was an encounter that they now describe as one that "would begin a chain of experiences that awakened a recognition of true soul mates."

They eventually were married, and now have two sons of their own, Rider, 12, and Burke, 11.

The "Out of the Canyon" story alternates between Art's and Allison's perspectives based on their individual experiences, and how their relationship grew from the commonality of those experiences.

"I now know there is a connectedness, a force that only strengthens with time and guides each of us in our lives," Allison writes in the book.

Art said the book was a way to preserve his former life and family and connect it to his life and family today.

"We really wanted our kids to know what happened to me, and how their dad and mom came together," he said. "We also realized our story might have a broader meaning and value to other people who have experienced losses of their own."

At the end of their dual narrative, the authors share some of the lessons they've learned on surviving the loss of a loved one.

This evening's event will include a reading, followed by a question-and-answer session and a book signing. It's the last of a series of book signings since the May 12 release, including appearances at the Tattered Cover in Denver, as well as at book stores in Boulder, Aspen, Vail and Austin, Tex.