

Clinging to the edge

Paris is part of an expedition to the Himalayas to find the legendary yeti. She is helped by her friend Tahr and Geng-sun, the creature she was hunting.



1 The rope ladder went **taut**, and after a moment there was a little hissing in the air, and the end of the spare rope **snaked** back down. Tahr caught it and gave it a firm tug. “There,” he said, as if this was a plan they’d already discussed. “We tie this round
5 you. . . so. Then she can hold you if. . .” He stopped. Just the word *fall* might be too much for her.

Easy. All she had to do was. . . trust the **yeh-teh**. With her life.

Tahr had **looped** the rope around her, more than once, just in case, and three or four extra knots at the end to be sure. “Now,”
10 he said gently. “You climb.”

“Only if. . . if you climb too. If you. . . talk to me.”

“Talk?” Tahr said. “About what?”

“Anything. Please!” said Paris. “I just need to know you’re there.”

Twice she nearly **blacked out** – she almost wished that she
15 could – and she found herself **clamped** to the ladder, her arms through the rungs and **hugging** it with all her strength. Eyes shut, she felt the rung against her cheek and it was all right, it would be all right as long as she could stay right here and never move again. Except her **calf muscles** were starting to **ache** and
20 tremble. But when she tried to shift her weight at all, the rope ladder swung away and she **froze** and **clung** again.

From *The Lastling* by Philip Gross

Understanding

Answer the following questions.

1. How does Tahr try to help Paris to make the climb?
2. Paris has to trust the ‘yeh-teh’ to keep her safe but why might this be a problem for her?
3. In the first paragraph, how do you know that Paris is frightened by the climb?
4. How is the author successful in creating suspense in the last paragraph of the extract?

Word cloud

ache	hugging
clamped	looped
clung	snaked
froze	taut

Glossary

blacked out became unconscious

calf muscles the muscles in the lower leg area

Lastling the author’s term for the last of its kind

yeh-teh yeti, a legendary creature of the Himalayas