**4c Page 51 READING TEXT**

Pre-Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

The right decision?

In May 1985 two climbers, Joe Simpson and Simon Yates, left their base camp by a lake and started climbing the north face of a mountain called Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes. This climb was incredibly dangerous but the two men were experienced climbers and physically fit. On Day 1, the weather was good and the climb began well. At night they made a snow cave and slept on the side of the mountain. Three days later, after some very difficult climbing and bad weather, the two men stood at the summit. Unfortunately, the weather was getting worse so they didn’t stay long. As they were going down a mountain ridge, a disaster happened. Simpson fell and broke his knee. Quickly, Yates tied a rope to himself and then to his friend. He began lowering Simpson down the mountain and, for hours and hours, Yates helped Simpson get down the mountain. They were getting close to the glacier at the bottom of the mountain but suddenly Simpson slipped. This time he went over the edge of a cliff. He was hanging in mid-air. Simpson shouted up to Yates, but the wind was blowing loudly and Yates couldn’t hear him.

Yates didn’t know what was happening below. He waited for an hour but the rope was too heavy and it was pulling Yates down the mountain towards the cliff. He had two choices: hold the rope but then both of them might die, or cut the rope and survive. It was an impossible decision for Yates but, at the last second, Yates cut the rope and saved himself. Immediately, Simpson fell thirty metres into a crevasse. The next day, while Yates was desperately looking for Simpson, he found the crevasse. He called for Simpson but he heard nothing. Sadly, he decided that Simpson was dead. Yates didn’t know it but Simpson was – unbelievably – still alive inside the crevasse. Simpson waited for hours but when he realised Yates wasn’t coming, he decided to take a risk. He had some rope so he abseiled to the bottom of the crevasse. He managed to find a way out. For three days, Simpson drank water from the snow and ice. He crawled back towards the base camp and at four o’clock in the afternoon of Day 7, Simpson was very near.

In the middle of that night, Yates was sleeping in his tent at base camp when he woke up. He was sure someone was shouting his name. Excitedly, he ran outside and looked around. Finally, after searching and searching he found Simpson. He was lying on the ground, not moving, but he was still breathing. After a few days, the two men returned home and their story became famous. Unfairly, some climbers criticised Yates for cutting the rope. But, in 1988, Simpson wrote a book about the events and defended Yates. Simpson believed Yates made the right decision.

Life

edge (n) /edʒ/ the place where something stops

abseil (v) /ˈaebseɪl/ to lower yourself down a mountain on a rope

crawl (v) /krɔ:l/ to move on your hands and knees