

The Man Who Bought a Mountain

“Everyone: stick together, look out for each other and stay on the trail, please. The path is really rocky and steep. It’s mostly uphill from here – but I suppose you’d all guessed that! As the elders say, the longest journey begins with a single step.”

Yash finished his speech and smiled at the weather-beaten faces looking back at him. He had spoken loudly and clearly to the group of nine men and women, most of whom shuffled from foot to foot, adjusting huge rucksacks as they listened.

“Jeez! How old is this kid, eleven?” muttered one man towards the back.

“Actually, I’m twelve.” Yash gritted his teeth.

Twelve years living at the base of this mountain, he thought to himself, compared with the twelve hours since you got off the plane.

A wise voice then echoed in his head.

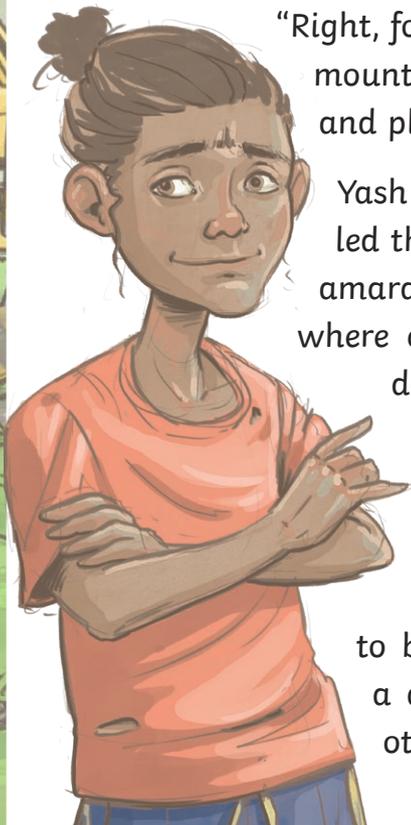
Always be welcoming to friends but be even more welcoming to visitors.

He forced another smile and then fastened his rarely brushed brown hair into a messy knot with a plain elasticated band which he took from his wrist.

“Right, follow me. It’s a few hours to the base camp. The Jagurdwa mountain is home to thousands of different species of animals and plants...”

Yash began his ritual of information and storytelling as he led the trek. He weaved his familiar route through the fields of amaranth crops, up a steep slope and past the Spring of Hope, where clear, cool ground water pooled gently before tumbling down the mountain rocks.

The area around the Spring of Hope always reminded him how much new life came from even the tiniest nooks and crannies on the vast Jagurdwa mountain. Cracks and crevices along the side of the steep path were home to beetles and spiders and, behind the cascading waterfall, a damp, shallow cave served as a perfect hiding place for other small creatures who preferred the darkness. The river



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that cascaded from here with its streams and pools provided homes for fish and other creatures, and food for people.

Some visitors squealed or jumped in fright at the sight of the many animal species living on its slopes, but Yash loved to see them and took pleasure in trying to identify one set of distinguishing features from another. He knew that some animals lived only in this mountain region and nowhere else.

The group wound their way along the rocky track which led to the path of yaks. Yash's scratched and faded boots glided deftly over each section of the rough ground. He gripped a finely crafted stick with his right hand, made by his grandfather. The tip of it reached shoulder height and he planted it into the ground with every alternate footstep. Yash knew this – and every – path up the mountain like the back of his hand, and he adored every inch of the familiar landscape.

Behind him trudged the group, each kitted out with walking boots and hats and weighed down with their heavy bags. Sometimes, the groups were chatty and asked lots of questions; sometimes, they marched silently as though they had been sent as a punishment. Thankfully, this lot seemed like a fairly interesting bunch.



Questions

1. Look at the first paragraph.

How does Yash describe the conditions of the path?

2. Look at the sentence beginning 'He had spoken loudly and clearly to the group of nine men and women...'.
What does this sentence tell the reader about Yash? Explain your answer.

3. Complete the table below. Tick **True** or **False** for each of the statements.

	True	False
There were nine men and women in the group.		
The group had only been off the plane for ten hours.		
The trek to base camp was a few minutes long.		
Yash had lived at the base of the mountain for twelve years.		

4. What does the word **rarely** suggest about Yash's hair?

5. Look at the paragraph beginning 'The area around the Spring of Hope...'.
Give **two** different uses for the water described in this section.

6. *Yash's scratched and faded boots glided deftly over each section of the rough ground.*

(a) What does the reader learn about the condition of Yash's boots?

(b) What do the words 'glided deftly' suggest about Yash?

7. Look at the final paragraph. Find and copy two different words that are synonyms for **walked**.

8. Using evidence from the whole text, do you think that Yash is a good guide? Explain your answer.

Yes

No

Answers

1. Look at the first paragraph.

How does Yash describe the conditions of the path?

rocky and steep (mostly uphill)

2. Look at the sentence, beginning, 'He had spoken loudly and clearly to the group of nine men and women...'

What does this sentence tell the reader about Yash? Explain your answer.

Accept reasonable inferences, such as: Yash is confident because he speaks loudly which shows that he isn't nervous; he is experienced as he knows that it is important to speak clearly.

3. Complete the table below. Tick **True** or **False** for each of the statements.

	True	False
There were 9 men and women in the group.	✓	
The group had only been off the plane for 10 hours.		✓
The trek to base camp was a few minutes long.		✓
Yash had lived at the base of the mountain for 12 years.	✓	

4. What does the word **rarely** suggest about Yash's hair?

'Rarely' shows that he doesn't brush his hair often/it is not done regularly or frequently.

5. Look at the paragraph beginning, 'The area around the Spring of Hope...'

Give **two** different uses for the water described in this section.

Accept: The water provided homes for fish and other creatures, and food for people.

6. *Yash's scratched and faded boots glided deftly over each section of the rough ground.*

(a) What does the reader learn about the condition of Yash's boots?

Accept: the boots are old; worn; well used.

(b) What do the words 'glided deftly' suggest about Yash?

Accept any answer that suggests that Yash is confident, expert, knows the region well or that he moves quickly and easily.

7. Look at the final paragraph. Find and copy two different words that are synonyms for **walked**.
trudged, marched
8. Using evidence from the whole text, do you think that Yash is a good guide? Explain your answer.
- Yes
- No

Accept either yes or no as long as a full explanation is given with reference to the text, e.g.

- I think that Yash is a good guide because he tells the group stories to keep them entertained and he knew the route like 'the back of his hand'.

- I think that Yash is not a good guide because he gritted his teeth and had to force a smile when he first met the group and he seems to keep walking quickly while the group 'trudged' behind him.