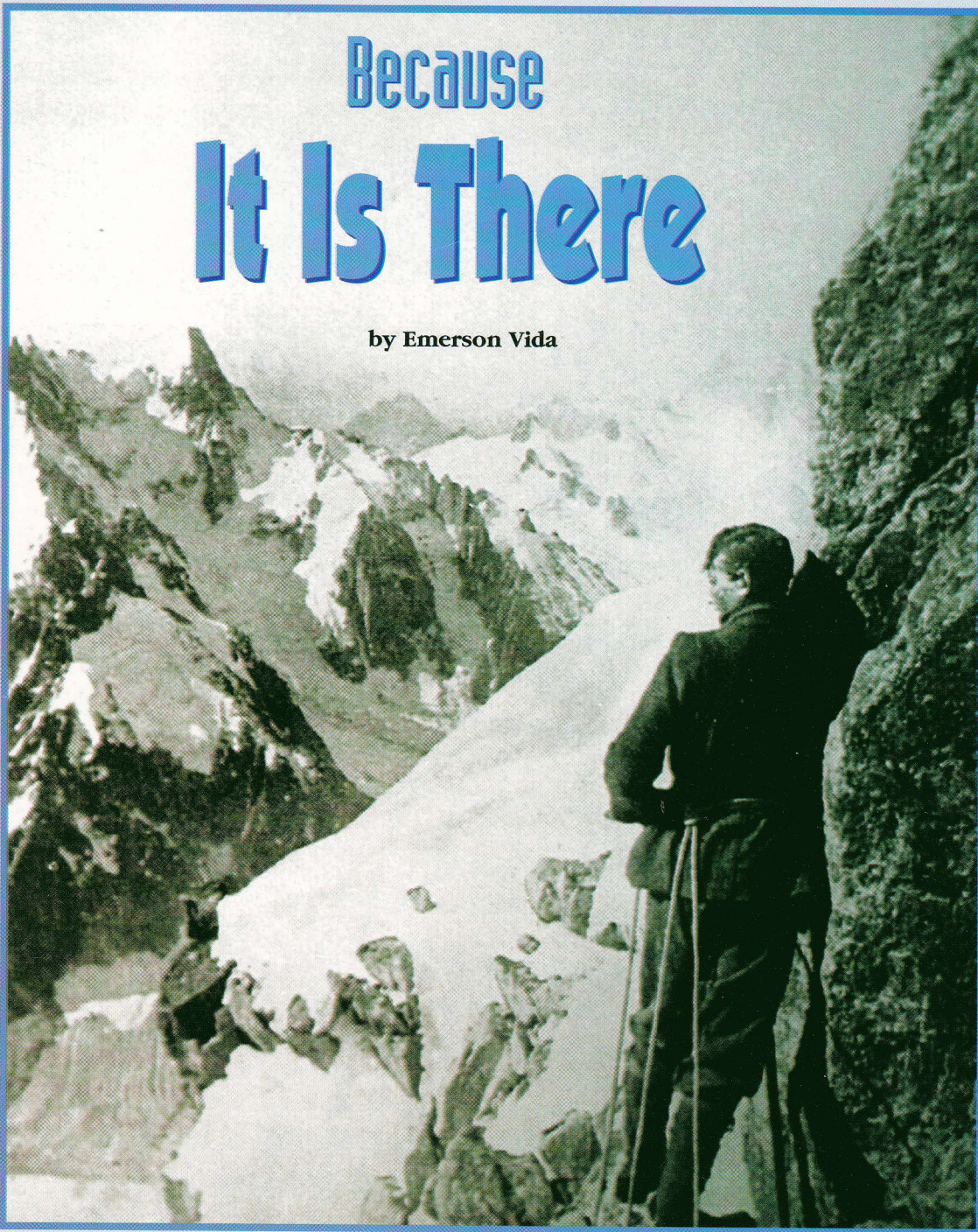


Because It Is There

by Emerson Vida



1 At 29,028 feet, the summit of Mt. Everest is the highest point on Earth. It stands roughly five miles above sea level. Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay were the first people to scale the mountain. This happened in 1953.

2 At the top, they looked down on the world from a unique point of view. But they knew the glory was not theirs alone. Below them lay traces of all the past expeditions that had paved the way for their eventual triumph.

- 3 Among the explorers in these expeditions, one man stands out. If he is not the most famous, then he is at least the most intriguing. This man is George Leigh Mallory.
- 4 During his lifetime he had been associated with the Bloomsbury Group of writers and artists. He had served as a gunner in the First World War. He was a married schoolteacher with three young children. Because he was willing to risk his life, he was considered the most audacious climber of his day. In many ways Mallory seemed to be the type of man who could conquer Everest.
- 5 Mallory knew that reaching the summit would be an impressive achievement. But he understood that it would serve no real use for humankind. No precious metals or minerals would be found. No new land for farming would be unearthed. However, he believed the struggle to overcome Everest was "the struggle of life itself upward and forever upward." More to the point, the daring Mallory saw Everest as "sheer joy. And joy is, after all, the end of life."
- 6 Mallory was the only person to take part in each of the first three British Everest expeditions. These occurred in 1921, 1922, and 1924. At the time Everest was like a final frontier. Little of the world still seemed unknown.
- 7 The initial trip in 1921 was historic. It was the first time foreigners were allowed to visit Tibet. Mallory was one of the first Westerners to see the Everest region.
- 8 This trip was a fact-finding mission. Mallory and his friend Guy Bullock did the majority of the exploring. The group would use this information in their next visit to the mountain.
- 9 In 1922 Mallory and the team made their way along the Northeast Ridge of the mountain. They reached a height of 27,000 feet. This was higher than anyone had ever climbed. But it was still 2,000 feet short of the summit.
- 10 This feat was impressive, but it came with a tragedy. In an attempt to reach the summit, Mallory and his team set off an avalanche. The flood of snow killed seven of the Sherpa guides. Mallory blamed himself for their deaths.
- 11 A third attempt to reach the summit was planned for 1924. Mallory was reluctant to go. He wanted to stay at home with his family, but the attraction of Everest was too strong. He decided to try again.
- 12 This time the climbers made it as high as 28,000 feet. They had topped their previous record height. However, they were unable to go any farther. They needed a different approach.
- 13 Mallory and his team pulled back and rethought their plan. They decided to use oxygen tanks for the first time. Everyone believed that the tanks would help the men finally conquer the mountain. The artificial air would assist them as they climbed higher and higher.
- 14 On June 6, Mallory and Andrew Irvine left from the top of the North Col (about 23,000 feet). They strapped on the oxygen tanks. They hoped to reach the peak of Everest in a few days.
- 15 Team member Noel Odell last saw them on June 8. He later reported that he felt they were on the right path for beating Everest.
- 16 George Leigh Mallory and Andrew Irvine were never seen again.
- 17 Did Mallory make it to the summit? This question was debated for years afterward. In 1999 his frozen remains were found at 26,800 feet, but this discovery did not end the debate. The camera that Mallory and Irvine took with them has never been found. This camera might contain pictures taken from the top of Everest. Such pictures would be proof that Mallory and Irvine were the first to see the view from the "top of the world."
- 18 Mallory once was asked why he wanted to climb Mt. Everest. He replied, "Because it is there." This sounds like a shallow answer. Shouldn't there be a greater reason to risk lives? But Mallory's answer speaks to the spirit necessary to accomplish a seemingly impossible task. It was this type of spirit that made the climb to the top of Everest possible.
- 19 Hillary understood this. He knew the importance of Mallory's legacy. As he descended from the peak of the mountain, Hillary remarked, "Wouldn't Mallory be pleased if he knew about this." He was acknowledging the role the adventurous climber had played in the story of Everest.

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 People still wonder if Mallory and Irvine reached the summit because
 - a explorers found Mallory's backpack on the top of Everest.
 - b their camera has not been recovered.
 - c Hillary found their oxygen tanks at 28,000 feet.
- 2 The 1921 expedition was famous because it was the first time
 - a foreigners came face-to-face with Everest.
 - b anyone had reached 28,000 feet.
 - c artificial air was used by Mallory.
- 3 Mallory believed scaling Everest was of no real benefit outside of mountaineering because
 - a no useful materials would be discovered.

b no useable farmland would be discovered.

c Both **a** and **b**

- 4 Mallory decided to join the 1924 expedition because
 - a his family was permitted to join him on the adventure.
 - b he was promised the use of oxygen tanks.
 - c the chance to finally reach the top of Everest was too tempting.
- 5 Hillary probably mentioned Mallory during the descent from the summit because he wanted to
 - a give Mallory a bad name.
 - b pay tribute to Mallory.
 - c prove that Mallory was wrong.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a selection. The other words in the selection give you clues.

Find the word in the selection that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 top; apex (1)
- 2 bold; daring (4)
- 3 found; discovered (5)
- 4 dreadful event; disaster (10)
- 5 unwilling (11)
- 6 made by people, not nature (13)
- 7 showing a lack of thought or feeling (18)

C **too** = also

two = the number after *one*

Words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones. *Too* and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type** below.

Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone. Which of the two words fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

8 feet (10)

It is quite a _____ to make it to the top of Everest.

9 peek (14)

The climber tried to _____ around the edge of the rock.

10 roll (19)

The snow began to _____ fiercely down the mountain.

THINK ABOUT IT

- D** A pronoun can take the place of many types of words.

Read the sentences. Which pronoun in parentheses () makes sense in each sentence? Write the pronoun.

- 1 The climbers were on a trip up the mountain. It was (his, their) first trip.
- 2 People have looked for the missing camera. They think (it, he) could answer some questions.
- 3 Sir Edmund Hillary climbed Mt. Everest. (It, They) is a large mountain.
- 4 Noel Odell saw Mallory in the distance. (He, They) had an oxygen tank.
- 5 The oxygen tank was a new invention. (They, It) had some flaws.

- E** unused = **un** + used
reused = **re** + used

The letters *un-* and *re-* are called prefixes. A prefix is added to the beginning of a word. It changes the meaning of the word. *Un-* means "not." *Unused* means "not used." *Re-* means "again." *Reused* means "used again."

Read each set of sentences. Choose the word in parentheses () that makes sense. Write the word.

- 6 It is not known whether Mallory reached the summit. It is (unknown, reknown).
- 7 The climbers tried to secure the rope again. They tried to (unsecure, resecure) it.
- 8 Some people are not curious about mountaineering. They are (uncurious, recurious) about Mt. Everest.
- 9 If they have not gone climbing for a long time, climbers have to learn the process again. They must (unlearn, relearn) the process.
- 10 If the camera is ever found, people may have to examine their ideas about Everest again. The may have to (unexamine, reexamine) their ideas.

- F** A writer chooses words carefully to help the reader understand the story.

The climbers *picked* at their lunch.

This tells you that the climbers did not like the lunch.

The climbers *devoured* their lunch.

This tells you that the climbers very much liked the lunch.

The climbers *ate* their lunch.

This does not tell you whether the climbers liked the lunch or not.

Read each question. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 11 Which sentence tells you Everest is large?
 - a Everest towers over the region.
 - b Everest is located in the region.
 - c Everest fits nicely in the region.
- 12 Which sentence tells you that the climber had difficulty getting air?
 - a The climber breathed the air.
 - b The climber sucked in air.
 - c The climber blew out air.
- 13 Which sentence tells you that Mallory was *not* frightened?
 - a Mallory ran away.
 - b Mallory scurried away.
 - c Mallory ambled away.
- 14 Which sentence tells you that the explorer thought the discovery was scary?
 - a The explorer shivered at the sight of Mallory's remains.
 - b The explorer smiled at the sight of Mallory's remains.
 - c The explorer scowled at the sight of Mallory's remains.
- 15 Which sentence tells you that the climbers were interested in the equipment?
 - a The climbers saw the equipment.
 - b The climbers bypassed the equipment.
 - c The climbers examined the equipment.