



Read the text and match each sentence (1-8) to each gap (A-G). There is one sentence that you do not need to use.

Against all odds

Imagine having to make a life-or-death decision, but one that affected not only your own life, but someone else's as well! **A.** When he was just twenty-one years old, Simon found himself faced with an agonising decision: save his own life but in doing so send his friend, Joe Simpson, to almost certain death, or try to save his friend, but almost certainly die in the attempt to do so. The story of Simon's choice, and the result of his decision, is a truly incredible tale of survival!

In the summer of 1985. British mountaineers Joe Simpson and Simon Yates set out to climb *Siula Grande*, a 21,000-foot peak in the Peruvian Andes. **B.** So, for two adventurous and bold young men it represented an irresistible challenge.

Joe and Simon chose the most difficult way up the mountain for their ascent. Nevertheless, they reached the summit without any problems. For their descent, however, they decided to take an easier path. **C.** Joe slipped and broke his leg in three different places. In severe pain, he was completely crippled unable to go on. Both climbers knew what this meant. **D.** So, against all odds, Simon decided to try to get his injured friend down to safety using a rope. He began lowering his friend down the mountain...one hundred incredibly painful metres at a time.

At first, things went well, but then, after one particular drop, Simon got no sound or signal back from Joe. Without knowing it, in the pitch black of the night, Simon had lowered his friend over the edge of a deep crevasse¹. Hanging over the cliff. Joe's fingers were so frostbitten that he was unable to climb back up the rope. **E.** Both climbers were too far away from each other to communicate. Simon held on to the rope for over an hour, trying to hold Joe's weight on the other end. But his strength grew weaker and weaker, and he felt himself being slowly pulled down towards the edge of the crevasse.

Simon knew he could not hold onto the rope forever without being pulled to his death himself. So, shaking with cold, he made the painful decision - later strongly criticised by some other mountaineers - to save his own life. He took a knife and cut the rope that tied him to his friend. **F.** But miraculously, Joe was not killed by his fall! He was badly injured, close to death in fact, and he had no food or water... but he was alive! And he was determined not to die alone! **G.** It took him four days. Joe's great courage and extraordinary determination saved him.

If you want to learn more about Simon and Joe's extraordinary tale of adventure and survival, you can read Joe Simpson's book 'Touching the Void'. A film of the same name has also been made based on Joe's book!

- With no food or water left and a real threat of hypothermia, they simply had to get off the mountain quickly.
- This is exactly what happened to Simon Yates.
- Simon's amazing courage and determination stopped him from giving up.
- In an unbelievable display of willpower, Joe managed to crawl seven miles down the mountain to safety.
- The mountain had never been conquered before.
- But it was on this supposedly simpler route that disaster struck.
- Then, believing his friend would never have survived the fall, he continued down the mountain alone.
- Neither could he grab hold of the cliff, because he was too far away from the rocks.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G