Daring, Defiant & Free

It's a bright Saturday morning in September and a young man is standing on a small ledge high up on the north-west face of Half Dome, a sheer 650-metre wall of granite in the heart of Yosemite Valley in California. He's alone, far off the ground and without aids. Most climbers take two days to climb the face, using ropes and carrying up to 20 kilos of equipment and bivouacking for the night half-way up. Not Honnold. He is attempting the pure free-solo, which means climbing with only a chalk bag and his rock shoes, and is trying to reach the top in less than three hours. But less than 30 metres from the summit, something potentially disastrous happens. He loses the smallest amount of confidence. 'What am I doing here?' he says to himself, staring at a greasy bump on the rock face. 'My foot will never stay on that.'

For two hours and 45 minutes, Honnold has been in the zone, flawlessly performing one precise athletic move after another, and not once has he hesitated. In free-soloing, confidence is everything. All you have is belief in your own ability. If Honnold merely believes his fingertips can't hold, he will fall to his death. Now, with mental fatigue and a glass-like slab of rock above him, he's paralysed, out of his comfort zone. He hadn't felt like this two days before when he'd raced up the same route with a rope. For a few minutes, he stands there, staring out at the sky, unable to look up or down for fear of falling. Then suddenly, he's in motion again. He steps up, planting his shoe on the smooth stone. It sticks. He moves his hand to another hold, repeats the move, and within minutes, he's at the top.

'I rallied because there was nothing else I could do,' Honnold says later, with a boyish laugh. 'I stepped up and trusted that foothold and was freed of the spot where I'd stood silently for five minutes.' Word of his three-hour free-solo of Half Dome flashed around the world. Climbers were stunned, and the blog writers were buzzing. On that warm autumn day in 2008, a shy 23-year-old from the suburbs of Sacramento had just become a climbing legend.

That is the magic of Yosemite: it creates heroes. But for the climbers, they are just doing what they love and – if they're lucky – get paid for as a bonus. One such person is Jimmy Chin, who took this photograph. He is also an accomplished mountaineer; the difference between him and Honnold is that Chin always works closely with other climbers, taking photographs as he climbs. He was actually brought up in the flat countryside of southern Minnesota, but rock climbing has been his passion since Glacier National Park first blew his mind on a family vacation as a boy. Photography came later, when an outdoor clothing company bought one of the photos he had taken on an expedition. As a photographer, it isn't easy to get your foot in the door with a good client, so Chin, encouraged by their interest, bought his own camera. He hasn't looked back.

Combining a natural gift for photographic composition with his mountaineering skills, Chin has become one of the leading photographers in what has been called 'participatory photography'. He is able to carry a camera to places no other photographers can reach and works as part of the climbing team. For Chin, that is the definition of success.

Bài tập trắc nghiệm – Reading (12 câu)

1. **What is the main idea of the passage?**
A. The dangers of climbing Yosemite Valley.
B. Alex Honnold's free-solo climb and Jimmy Chin's photography career.
C. The geological features of Half Dome.
D. How technology supports extreme sports.

2. How long did Honnold take to climb Half Dome free-solo?
A. 2 hours
B. 2 hours 45 minutes
C. 3 hours
D. 5 hours

3. What happened when Honnold was less than 30 metres from the summit?
A. He injured his hand.
B. He lost confidence for a moment.
C. His rope broke.
D. He decided to give up.

4. Why did Jimmy Chin become a photographer?
A. His family encouraged him.
B. An outdoor clothing company bought one of his photos.
C. He wanted to be famous.
D. Honnold inspired him.

5. What does "participatory photography" mean in this passage?
A. Photography in which the audience participates.
B. A type of photography using advanced technology.
C. Photography done while taking part in an activity like climbing.
D. Street photography involving random people.

6. The word fatigue in the passage is closest in meaning to:
A. A trip made for exploration
B. A place on the rock where you can put your foot
C. Very tired / extreme tiredness
D. An experienced and highly skilled person

7. The word foothold means:
A. Very tired
B. A place on the rock where you can put your foot

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C. A trip made for exploration
D. A temporary camp without a tent
8. **The word accomplished is closest to:**
A. Very tired
B. A temporary camp without a tent
C. An experienced and highly skilled person
D. A natural gift
9. **The word expedition means:**
A. A temporary camp without a tent
B. A trip made for exploration
C. An experienced and highly skilled person
D. Very tired
10. **What does the pronoun "it" in the sentence** "That is the magic of Yosemite: **it** creates heroes" refer to?
A. Yosemite
B. Rock climbing
C. Honnold's climb
D. Photography
11. Why does the author call Honnold a "climbing legend"?
A. Because he won a climbing competition.
B. Because he free-solo climbed Half Dome successfully.
C. Because he taught others to climb.
D. Because he invented a new climbing technique.
12. How is the text mainly organized?
A. Problems and solutions
B. Comparing different climbers
C. Chronological narration (events over time)
D. Causes and effects
Exercise 02: Điền từ/cụm từ thích hợp vào chỗ trống.
(Chọn từ trong khung dưới đây, có thể biến đổi dạng từ nếu cần)
Word Bank:

- **ledge**
- **summit**
- **fatigue**
- **foothold**
- **comfort zone**
- **expedition**
- **accomplished**
- **legend**
- **in the zone**
- **get your foot in the door**
- **hasn't looked back**
- **participatory photography**

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1. The climber rested for a while on a narrow _____ before continuing the ascent.

2. After three hours of climbing, he finally reached the _____ ____ of the mountain.

3. Extreme mental and physical _____ can make free-soloing even more dangerous.

4. Without a secure _____, it is almost impossible to climb a steep rock wall.

5. Trying something new often requires stepping out of your _____.

6. The team prepared carefully for their Antarctic _____.

7. He is an _____ mountaineer, known for his flawless technique and experience.

8. Alex Honnold became a climbing _____ after his Half Dome free-solo.

9. During the climb, he was completely focused and "_____," performing each move perfectly.

10. It's very hard for young photographers to _____ in such a competitive industry.

11. Once she opened her own business, she _____ and became very successful.

12. Jimmy Chin is famous for his _____, combining climbing and photography.

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