

# [Saturday climbing by valgardson](https://assignbuster.com/saturday-climbing-by-valgardson/)

At first, after reading Saturday Climbing, I found it just to be a simple plainstory. A story about Barry climbing a cliff and having flashed back about hisdaughter. But when I went over the story a several more times, I notice thecliff is actually representing the relationship between Barry and his daughter, Moira. It was a story that shows a single father perspective towards hisdaughter. W. D. Valgardson uses much symbolism in his story, Saturday Climbing, to help reader gain a greater understanding of his message. He uses symbolism intwo important areas: objects that have symbolic value, and setting, whichrelates the relation between father and daughter. Many object in SaturdayClimbing have important symbolic value. For example, the “ chock nut, thewire loop, the carabiner, the rope”, represents the relation between Barryand Moira. “¡Kfragile as they looked, would hold ten times hisweight.” Like a rope although their relation seems fragile, but it’sstronger then it seems. The cliff itself is another important symbol. It showstheir relation, as time pass by. “ Then, unexpectedly, the surfacessmoothed; the places where he could get a secure hold were spread farther andfarther apart.” This quotation reflects the difficulty Barry encounters inhis role as a working, single-parent of a teenager. Barry’s secure hold on therocks, symbolise his monitoring of his daughter. As Moira becomes moreindependent, it is harder and harder for Barry to keep watching her and makesure she’s safe. Moira is going out late to parties and on dates. Barry can’t bewith her all day, and therefore can’t maintain her security. The secure holdscan also symbolise the direction the relationship between Barry and Moira isheading. It seems that they are distancing themselves from each other. Barry hastrouble keeping track of what Moira does, and Moira is willing to let Barry intoher world by telling him what’s going on. “ At the same time, the numerouscracks dwindled until there was no place to set any protection.” Thisrefers to the dwindling of the relationship. It is beginning to crack, or breakapart under the stress and pressure. It also symbolises the aspect of growing upthat one becomes more independent. Barry will be able to protect Moira less andless, as she starts to find her own way. When Barry is stuck half way up thecliff, it represents that Barry has encountered a problem with Moira. “ Ifhe fall, he would drop twenty-five feet to the piton, then twenty-five feet pastit before his rope came taut and held him. There was, because of the elasticityof the rope, a chance that he would ground out.” This is alsorepresentative of the risks Barry is willing to take for his daughter in orderto salvage their relationship. Barry would go to extremes for his daughter. Theexert also shows that one fall and it could be all over. This is the case in theclimb and it is the same in parenthood. A fall could prove fatal, and would leadto failure. In each situation, Barry is under enormous pressure to succeed.

Barry,” ¡K set his foot on rough patch that would provide thenecessary friction to hold his weight.” The relationship between the maincharacters is tested throughout. It is often pushed to the edge, on the brink ofdisaster. Even though it may seem bleak, the relationship prevails. Just asBarry seems to be able to get himself out of the predicaments on the climb, thefather-daughter relationship has overcome its own obstacles. “ His daughter, eighty feet below, seemed so small that Barry felt he could lift her into hisarms.” Barry still views Moira as being his little girl. She appears smalland innocent. She seems too young to be out in the cruel and harsh world. Thisview of her may never change, but Barry’s level of acceptance of Moira’sindependence will. “ From time to time, she paused to pull loose the chocknuts and pitons her father had left behind.” By pulling out the pitons andchock nuts, Moira is saying metaphorically, that she doesn’t require herfather’s protection. She wants to handle things on her own, and take onobstacles (such as school) by herself too. “ For a moment, he sufferedvertigo, and the cliff seemed to sway as if in an earthquake.” This issymbolic of the fact that Barry is afraid to go on because of the uncertaintythat surrounds the future (especially concerning his daughter). He is fearful ofchanges that my come as a result of his daughter’s independence and its impacton their relationship. Barry doesn’t want his daughter to become like the“ frizzy-hair girl”. The swaying of the cliff could also represent theshakiness, and precariousness of their relationship, like when they fight andargue. The frizzy-hair girl represents a child who ran away from home. “ Forthe first time, he had seen how much younger she was than he though.” Fromthis quotation we know that she’s not mature enough. She wasn’t prepared to beindependent. Her situation is for Barry to see as an example. The girl is like abird trapped in a cage. The more the owner wants to contain it, the more it willwant to rebel. And for the girl, her father has tried to trap her so much thatshe ran away, keeping herself from him. Barry is faced with an epiphany, asudden realisation when he really sees the girl. “ Once, when she deviatedfrom the route her father had taken, she became stuck at an overhang. Not havingdealt with the obstacle himself, Barry could not help, and had to leave her tofind her own solution.” This part of the story signifies the moment thatMoira breaks off from her father and tries to go her own way. As expected, shehad some problems but she was able to conquer them, and reached her goal. Thisis true in real life as well. It is essential for Moira to learn to solve theseproblems on her own, because she can’t rely on her Dad forever. This new routeis evident where Moira has decided not to attend the local university. By goingto one out of state, this is a new world that Barry knows little about, and willleave Moira figuring out her problems on her own. “ The climb seemedagonisingly slow, as if it would never be completed. “ The ordeal takes whatseems like an eternity for Barry. He sees his daughter in trouble andinstinctively he wants to help her, only he can’t. He is forced to sit and waitand see if she makes it. When Moira is all right, Barry sees that he’s raised adaughter that can take care of herself. He becomes more accepting of the idea ofhis daughter moving on in life. “ They sat side by side, sipping orangejuice, their feet dangling in space.” Barry begins to see his daughter asan equal and as an adult. They’re now levelled with each other, seeing eye toeye. They’ve opened up and are expressing what’s on their minds. “ Sittingside by side”, they are both independent individuals with their own ways.

“ Below her, her father ever watchful, full of fear, smoothly paved out therope, determined to give her all the slack she needed while, at the same time, keeping his hands tensed, ready to lock shut, ready to absorb the shock of anyfall.” This final paragraph shows the new approach to parenting Barry has.

He is now willing to be a spectator, rather than an active player in Moira’slife. Barry is willing to give her space and freedom, but he will always bethere to save her should she fall. Barry is ready to let Moira continue thisclimb solo. The story examines the relationship between parents and theirchildren as they grow up and become independent. Furthermore, it is a storyabout change of attitudes concerning when it is time for the kids to move on.

Saturday Climbing specifically focuses on two characters, the first is the maincharacter Barry, and his daughter Moira. Throughout the story, we are told therelation between Barry and Moira. Early in the story, we notice that Barry isclimbing up a cliff. Barry is a father who must learn to deal with his daughtergrowing up and wanting her independence. Moira, the teenaged daughter, seeks toescape from her father’s protective grasp and explore the world on her own. Shewishes to be able to face her own challenges in her own ways. Moira wants totake on more responsibility and freedom – two wishes her father is wary to giveher. Barry feels that Moira is too young, and not ready to handle this newpower. Moira, on the other hand, craves these things and believes she is up tothe task. In Barry’s eyes, Moira will always be his little girl that he’s underno circumstance willing to part with. It is this image that Moira is trying tochange, and replace with her own personal view of being an adult. However, as isthe case with most other parents, Barry is reluctant to let his baby grow up tooquickly. To him, it was just “ last year” Moira lost her first tooth, and started kindergarten just “ six months” ago. Barry has troubledealing with the fact that his daughter is all grown up and looking to leave the“ nest”. What fears Barry the most is the diminishing need for him tohelp his daughter. Barry feels that he’s losing his daughter because she nolonger needs in him in certain aspects anymore. For example, rides to activitiesmake her dinner, etc. He wants to hang on to his daughter for just a little bitlonger to prolong her childhood. Barry does not want to be left behind. Thisfear of being left behind and forgotten is amplified by the fact that Barry issingle. When Moira goes off to college, Barry all by himself. It is because ofthis outcome that Barry realises how much he depends on Moira for companionship.

Barry, despite being a working single- parent, makes a lot of time for hisdaughter. With the absence of Moira’s mother, Barry tries to compensate as bestas he can to fill the void. He puts a lot of effort in finding an activity theycan both share an interest in. Through rock-climbing together, they have madegreat strides in strengthening their relationship. They are forced to rely andtrust one another. It also gives Moira that responsibility and freedom shewants. The use of a controlling metaphor of the climb representing thedevelopment in the relationship between Barry and Moira provides and insightfullook at their progression. As they climb the cliff, one can see the transitionin parenting Moira. At the beginning of the story, we find Barry “ sixtyfeet up the cliff”, with Moira safely down on the ground. This idealsituation if Barry’s mind. Later we see Moira begin her climb and she chooses totake some routes not taken by her father. She is proclaiming her independence, and proves to Barry that she can make it on her own. When she reaches him, they’re now levelled with each other. Both equal, both adults. This is the firsttime, Barry realises that his daughter is grown up and no longer his littlegirl. At the end of the story we watch as Barry cautiously lets Moira go off toblaze her own trail. Barry remains ready to save his baby should she fall. Barryaccepts Moira’s independence and realises he can’t continue on holding her back.

Another important aspect of the story is the use of flashbacks with the“ frizzy hair girl”. This character seems strange at first, but it isnot until her significance to the events in the story does it become clear howimportant she is. Her two quotes lead Barry to change his attitude towards hisapproach to raising Moira. “ The caged bird proves nothing but the power ofthe captor”, and “ The world seeks balance; extremism begetsextremism”, help Barry realise what he must do. By caging the bird, anddenying it its freedom, it only feeds its hunger for it. When the bird isfinally let out, it will try to get as far away as possible. The girl withfrizzy hair was this bird. She had an over-protective father, and she decided togo across the country to get away from his control. This helped Barry understandthat the more he tries to keep Moira in the “ nest”, the moreresentment there will be. The other quote says that extreme actions have extremereactions. The more Barry tries to control Moira, the more likely she is torebel. If Barry continue on controlling Moira’s life, he would fall like Ron. Hewould fail to be a father and end up like the frizzy hair girl’s father. Thebest thing Barry can do is to minimise his “ protection”. The“ frizzy hair girl” represented what could happen to Moira, thistriggered a turnaround in Barry’s ways. In a sense, the “ frizzy hairgirl” acted as a catalyst. The last bit of the story is demonstrative ofthe fact that Barry has a different role as a parent from now on. Barry is nowthere to provide a safety net should Moira fall. He will be there ready to catchher. Other than when his help is asked for, Barry is now and observer watchingwhether or not he did a well enough job in raising his daughter. Moira beginssetting off climbing a new section of the cliff, and this time she will lead.

She starts out boldly up the unknown cliff, ready to tackle the next section ofit. As she climbs, she begins her journey through adulthood, and perhaps one dayshe will be leading her own child on this rock. At this point, Barry no longersets the protection for Moira. She is expected to do that for herself. As aloving father, he dreads the day that it seems he is no longer needed. By theend of the story, Barry reaches the realisation all parents must come to intime. He realises that it is time for him to let his daughter go. He will remainthere next to her supporting, but his job is limited. When there is a need he isready to step in and resume his role as a caregiver. Until that time comes, hewill give Moira “ all the slack she needs while, at the same time, keepinghis hands tensed, ready to lock shut, ready to absorb the shock of anyfall.” In conclusion, I think this story refers to most family. Childrenwill always grow up and leave their parents some time in life. Parents shouldsupport them and be happy instead of holding them back. For example, my brotherjust came back from Japan. When he left Calgary, my parents were pretty worriedabout him having trouble being independent, but my parents supported by brotherall the way. But if my parents have held my brother back, he might have lost achance to work in Japan. Indeed, a parent caring for child is important, but howmuch they are caring is even more important. Too much might not give them achance to mature, but too little might ruin their life. So parents have greatresponsibility in looking after their child, so much responsibility that itmight give them stress which might effect their life.