

Jagged Crag (solution)

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There are two given sets of 25 clues, which suggests that the answers need to be matched and paired up in some way. However, the second set of Jagged Crag clues are intentionally worded quite broadly, so the starting step is to solve the first set of Cliff clues, which are much more specific, providing an entry point for this puzzle. The answers are also in alphabetical order, and are all 5-letters long, which further help the solving for this part.

After solving all the Cliff answers, the next step is to try to list down the possibilities for some of the Jagged Crag clues which are less broad. Possible entry points here could be the clue “Dune’s Oscar” and “Princess accessory”, which are likely to be ISAAC and TIARA, which also happen to be similarly 5-letter words. Observing these potential Jagged Crag answers in relation to the specific Cliff answers, one might be able to spot pairs of answers that appear quite close in terms of letters and positions. E.g. ISYNC and ISAAC, and TIERS and TIARA. The differences between these pairs of answers are a transformation of letter/s in various position/s of the word into the letter A. Indeed, another observation is that all the Cliff answers lack the letter A, and that the capital letter A has a sharp jagged protruding point at the top, as hinted in the flavortext. Therefore, the aha and pairing rule is that each of the Cliff answers should be transformed into one of the Jagged Crag answers by transforming letter/s in certain position/s into the letter A. This then helps to disambiguate between the possible Jagged Crag answers and narrow down to the intended ones.

The 5-letter answers and transformed letters at certain positions clue interpreting these as 5-bit (as hinted by the word “bit” in the flavortext) binary numbers, and then taking the corresponding letter of the alphabet. The table below summarizes the answer pairs (with the Cliff answers reordered in matching pairs with the Jagged Crag answers), and letters obtained from the 5-bit binary changes:

Cliff clues	Cliff answers	Jagged Crag clues	Jagged Crag answers	5-bit binary number	Convert to letters
Employing; exploiting	USING	Yoga pose	ASANA	21	U
Other similar puzzle events	HUNTS	Relatives	AUNTS	16	P
Fatigued	TIRED	Broadcasted	AISED	16	P
Lion pack	PRIDE	Designer bag label	PRADA	5	E
What a shallow person lacks	DEPTH	Final stop	DEATH	4	D
Meal extras	SIDES	Helpers	AIDES	16	P
Classic arcade coin	TOKEN	Unavailable	TAKEN	8	H
Constructed	BUILT	Long animal sound	BAAAA	15	O
Apple synchronization application beta released in 2002	ISYNC	Dune's Oscar	ISAAC	6	F
A wedding cake may have many	TIERS	Princess accessory	TIARA	5	E

Cliff clues	Cliff answers	Jagged Crag clues	Jagged Crag answers	5-bit binary number	Convert to letters
Army doctor	MEDIC	News agencies	MEDIA	1	A
Common winged insects	FLIES	Handle	ALIAS	18	R
Uttered expletives	SWORE	Mindful	AWARE	20	T
Shoe bottoms	SOLES	Transactions	SALES	8	H
Odyssey sorceress	CIRCE	Around the time	CIRCA	1	A
Say hello	GREET	Remarkably skilled	GREAT	2	B
Cloudy-looking	MILKY	Asian ethnic group	MALAY	10	J
Cite a passage	QUOTE	Target	QUOTA	1	A
Toddler's cube	BLOCK	Color	BLACK	4	D
Arrival of a baby	BIRTH	Political party	BAATH	12	L
Place for a pitcher	MOUND	Polynesian heroine	MOANA	5	E
Sudden growth	SPURT	Not together	APART	20	T
Danger for Damocles	SWORD	Decoration	AWARD	20	T
Double whole note in music	BREVE	Diva's accolade	BRAVA	5	E
Iron a shirt	PRESS	Geometric findings	AREAS	18	R

The extracted letters in order of the Jagged Crag clues spell a two-part clue phrase – UPPED PH OF EARTH and ABJAD LETTER. These are again paired clues following the same rule as before, i.e. the answer to the second clue can be transformed from the answer to the first clue by changing the letter/s in certain position/s to A. The first clue is similarly more specific, and resolves to LIMED. Using this answer and the rule to help narrow down the possible answers for the second clue gives the only viable answer LAMED. Hence the answer to this puzzle is **LAMED**.

Constructor's notes:

For this puzzle, I made use of the imagery of “jagged crags” to shape its theme – which is word/letter transformations. But I also wanted a recursive final step, so needed a pre-transformation answer that is a valid word. LIMED is the only possible word here, but it is not a very commonly used word, and more importantly, has some challenges with coming up with a clue for it. While there are a number of crossword clues for this word, the clearest ones reference “soil”, and unfortunately, this word and its synonyms all require letter/s that are outside of the usable set. Because the extraction method looks at the 5-bit binary positions of the letter A in the transformed answer, there is a limited set of possibilities for these, which constrains the usable set of extraction letters. So in the end, I had to use the word “earth” as a less than ideal substitute in the clue, though the rest of the clue should suffice to help solvers figure out the right word.