

THE AQUA VITAE PARALLAX

Written by

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Based on, *The Aqua Vitae Parallax*
by Austin Ross.

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EXT. KHUMBU GLACIER, HIMALAYAS - DAY

At an altitude of 8000 meters, bright sunshine is reflected off the snow on the mountain range. A YOUNG MAN, in his early twenties, begins his ascent across the glacier and toward the highest peak. A roughly sewn and ragged bag is slung across his shoulder. He is the only living, moving being on the range. All around him fierce winds blow, swirling the snow. The Young Man walks on.

As he approaches a blocked passageway, he slows his pace and looks pointedly at the obstacle. An minor avalanche begins. It clears a pathway where none existed before. The man climbs on. He's making his way toward the top of Mount Everest.

He stops at a mountain outcropping and takes in the view. He's only a few metres away from the peak. His visage and expression are serene. He takes in the view and a small gentle smile appears on his face. He sits down cross legged in the snow. He pulls the bag off his shoulder. From inside the bag he extracts a ragged, faded woolen shawl. His breath is cloudy as it leaves his mouth. He gently unfolds the shawl and drapes it around his shoulders. A gust of wind buffets the snow around him and the Young Man pulls the shawl tighter around himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. KHUMBU GLACIER, HIMALAYAS - TIME LAPSE SEQUENCE.

The sequence shows the Young man in the same pose barely moving.

He occasionally picks up a corner of his shawl to wipe some perspiration off his face. It's always only the one particular corner.

A circular cycle of day and night occurs numerous times. All the while the Young Man sits in the same pose, meditating.

The snow and ice around him gradually begins to melt away as time passes on. The brown earth beneath the snow eventually begins to show.

CUT TO:

EXT. KHUMBU GLACIER, HIMALAYAS - DAY

By the time his immediate vicinity is devoid of snow, the Young Man opens his eyes. Much time has passed. He looks around at the scenery. He slowly stands up. The shawl slides off his shoulders and gently falls to the earthy ground.

The Young Man glances at ground where the shawl lies. He then turns from it and walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. KHUMBU GLACIER, HIMALAYAS - TIME LAPSE SEQUENCE.

CLOSE UP of the shawl lying on the earth covered mountain outcrop.

SLOW ZOOM OUT as the wind picks up. Slowly the snow and frost return to the area once again. A fine covering of snow begins to encrust the shawl. Eventually layer upon layer of snow buries the shawl until it is completely hidden from view.

WIDE SHOT of the outcropping covered in snow, no different from the rest of the mountain range.

CUT TO:

INT. RAINBOW TEN TENT, BASE CAMP - EARLY MORNING

Altitude: 7,970 Meters.

Fifteen sleeping bags lay about the ground of a large camping tent. Five of the sleeping bags are in a separate corner. Ten sleeping bags, some paired up, are spread across the remaining space. One of the campers, STEVE LEISURE, a blond 35 year old man is the only one awake. He's standing at the entrance of the tent poking his head out into the early morning darkness. He turns away from the entrance, letting the flap fall back to cover the opening.

STEVE
(slightly hoarse voice)
You guys.

CAMPER 1
(GROANS)
Shh!

STEVE
Come on sleepy heads, we've got to start climbing soon!

CAMPER 2
It's not even 4 o'clock yet!

CAMPER 3
C'mon Stevie. Come back to bed.

STEVE
We've got to start moving at first light! We won't make it to the top in time if you sleep in.

CAMPER 3

I'm still exhausted from yesterday.
Please Steve. Come back to bed.
Just a bit longer.

STEVE

(sighs irritably)
Fine.
(mutters huffily)
If there's a storm and we don't get
to the peak in time you'll be
wishing you'd listened to me.

Steve makes his way across the tent and stops at an empty sleeping bag. It's placed close to where CAMPER 3 is snuggled in his own sleeping bag. Steve, still seeming huffy climbs in to his accommodations and snuggles up to Camper 3.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE CAMP - TWO HOURS LATER

Early morning sunlight shines on a cluster of eleven tents, their surrounding landscape covered in snow.. Ten of these are small two-person tents. Outside the largest tent, nine puffy eyed men are eating power bars and sipping steaming beverages from thermos flasks. They wear brightly coloured soft-shell mountain jackets.

Steve exits the large tent, fully geared up. He has his goggles on and an oxygen tank strapped to his back. He's dressed like the others in a bright soft-shell jacket with the hood up. He stops when he sees that his friends aren't fully ready to go.

STEVE

(groans)
You'll are still eating?

CAMPER 4

(rolls his eyes)
Jeez Steve, relax. This is supposed
to be *fun*.

Steve opens his mouth to retort when a SHERPA exits the tent and walks up to the group.

SHERPA

(accented English)
Ok. Everyone has to get ready now.
No more time to waste.

Steve's friends and fellow climbers hurriedly chomp down on the rest of their power bars and gulp down their beverages. All the while they briskly walk over to their large tent and enter it to retrieve their gear.

STEVE
(mutters)
Sure. Take *him* seriously but call
me a killjoy.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIMALAYAS - LATER

EXTREME WIDE SHOT of a large portion of a steep side of a mountain. The nine climbers and Steve make their way up the side of the mountain. Snow covers much of the mountain and falls lightly on the group. The light is cloudy and gloomy. Eleven people are dressed warmly in contemporary clothes suitable for climbing. They carry the necessary mountain gear. They are making their way up the mountain. WIDE SHOT of the group of climbers. The SHERPA at the top trips and begins to fall. All the climbers below him/ her also begin to fall as a result. Track the falling climbers, keeping them in frame as they are swept away with the avalanche.