

Michê

By

HG Holladay

EXT. HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINS - DAY

Colorful, battered pendant banner flaps in the wind over village at base of Everest looming in the distance.

A blurred, dark shape flashes by.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bedroom filled with yeti memorabilia: figurines, pictures, maps, drawings, Himalayan artifacts.

BOY, 10, bushy hair and crooked glasses, sits in bed reading. FATHER, bushy eyebrows, mustache, serious, KNOCKS, opens door, taps watch, shuts off lights.

Boy turns on flashlight, fixes glasses, keeps reading.

BOY'S POV

Book is filled with ancient drawings of yetis.

Drawings animate swift creatures with sneaky, secretive existence. Flipping pages reveal different yeti renderings, footprint pictures, and Himalayan legends.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The gleam in Boy's eyes prove he is a believer.

ZOOM OUT to small boy reading in his bed surrounded by an enormous yeti collection.

INT. FATHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Father enters bedroom and rubs his eyes. He walks sleepily over to his bed, sits down, picks up the picture frame on the bedside table

CUT TO

Picture of WIFE in climbing gear smiling huge in front of Everest base camp sign.

Father wipes a tear away. He looks toward the dresser which has even more pictures of Wife climbing and their family and a wedding photo. More tears fall.

He walks over to the cardboard box sitting by the door. He pulls it open to reveal old hiking clothes and boots and gear and on top sits the Seattle Times newspaper with a

(CONTINUED)

headline reading "EVEREST AVALANCHE KILLS LOCAL WOMAN" with the same smiling picture of Wife centered below. Father places the framed picture on top of the other gear.

BOX'S POV

Father peering into box, tear slides down his cheek, folds up the box.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Door swings open, lights flip on, awakening boy. Father stands in frame holding cardboard box.

Boy sits up in bed, wipes his eyes. Father starts putting relics in box as he walks it over to Boy and sets it on the bed in front of him. He motions to pack it all up, then leaves.

Boy pushes box to end of bed, puts his head into his hands, sobs, but then rises, knowing what he must do. He slowly adds all memorabilia into box. Bedroom become bare and plain, nothing special anymore.

He draws a small yeti on the side with permanent marker, and it looks up sadly at him, just like the pictures from his storybook.

BOX'S POV

Boy peering into box, tear slides down his cheek, folds up the box.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE:

"TEN YEARS LATER"

Door clicks open, Boy enters in suit, same bushy hair and crooked glasses, now in early twenties, looking tired and defeated.

Apartment is nice, untidy, nothing special. A sparsely decorated bookcase stands by door with a calendar hanging above. A coffee table sits in front of couch. Nicest part of apartment is floor to ceiling window in place of far wall. A few old food containers sit on end tables and counter.

(CONTINUED)

He sets keys and funeral program for his Father on the counter, then sinks into couch. He rubs his face, grabs remote, settles back into couch. He CLICKS on T.V. and loosens his tie.

TIME CUT TO:

SAME SCENE - EVENING

Boy is asleep on couch, still dressed. A KNOCK on the DOOR awakens him.

He gets up and opens door to find nothing there but an old cardboard box.

He brings it back to the couch, places it on the coffee table unassumingly. When he spins it around to face it head on, the little hand-drawn yeti appears. It peaks around the corner at him, but he doesn't notice.

He is shocked when he opens the box.

INT. APARTMENT - BOX - EVENING

Everest and yeti memorabilia fill the old box. His mom's picture is on top.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Boy slowly pulls items out of the box like he is greeting an old friend.

He unpacks the whole box, redecorating as he goes. His blank living room walls and empty shelves now become the display of all his evidence. A fire reignites in him.

He is most fascinated with a map he had marked yeti sightings on. He climbs on couch and pins it in center of the wall, surrounded by other pictures. He stands back amazed to see his collection again.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Books and papers scattered in a semi circle line floor. A single lamp lights space. He walks back in from kitchen with a bowl of cereal and sits down cross-legged on floor.

He takes a bite, flips through the pages of opened books around him, takes another bite, eating it all up.

A book on the bottom of a stack catches his eye. He sets down cereal bowl and pulls his old favorite book towards him (the one from the beginning). He opens it and the yetis are as life-like and animated as before. He flips through entire thing, remembering.

Then a long, slender piece of paper falls out of the book. He picks up a plane ticket for Kathmandu, Nepal. Everest.

He doesn't believe it. He flips the ticket over in disbelief and on the back is written, "I'm sorry, love Dad." His father's final gift to him.

He stands, walks to calendar, circles date he flies out.

PREPARATION - MONTAGE

As he prepares, Boy's excitement builds as he receives multiple packages containing a backpack, new jacket, beanie, travel guides to Nepal and Everest, a tent. He reads, studies new maps and adjusts his old one, walks on treadmill with backpack on, marks trails and camping spots, takes a few tries setting up his tent, tries on new hiking boots, is underwhelmed at the food he is packing and the size in which he has to pack it, walks on treadmill more.

Ends on him loaded down in new outdoorsy attire, beanie, strapped into his hiking backpack ready to go, thrilled.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY OF FLIGHT - DAY

Strapped into his gear, he takes the map off the center of the wall, folds it, and places it inside his favorite book with his plane ticket.

He takes a final look at his collection then heads out the door, ready and inspired.

EXT. TRAVEL AGENCY - HIMALAYAN VILLAGE - DAY

Boy stands in the village at base of Everest staring at a travel agency named "YETI EXPEDITIONS" covered with yeti posters. All around him colorful, pendant banners flap between old Himalayan shops and homes.

He looks down at the book in his hands. The yeti on the cover winks at him.

A group of 4 other hikers stand waiting at very base of the trail. Tourists. Yeti enthusiasts. His people. He walks over and joins them, waves awkwardly but excitedly at everyone, who wave back just as excited. Everyone's life is being made by this adventure.

LEAD SHERPA, traditional older man, takes his registration papers, and then finding his whole group ready, begins leading them up the mountain towards Everest Base Camp.

A younger female SHERPA, similar age to Boy, runs up behind them, clearly late and unprepared. It's her first time joining her family on the expedition. She carries only a tiny pack and a book - the same book as Boy. When Boy points it out, Sherpa freaks out and tucks it into her jacket pocket. She motions for Boy to keep it a secret, then runs up to join and learn from Lead Sherpa.

Lead Sherpa gives her a stern look and rope for YAK, endearingly lazy, loaded with supplies. Sherpa and Yak follow the group.

EVEREST BASE CAMP TRAIL - MONTAGE

The group treks past villages, Hindu temples and monasteries, boulders with Buddhist prayer inscriptions, stunning views of Everest, herds of yaks, over dramatic bridges, rocky terrain, past river basins on skinny ridges. Everyone kindly helps each other climb, over rocks, up steep stairs, across bridges, fill water bottles, take pictures, all while becoming friends, especially Boy and young Sherpa, who always walk together. Yak meanders the whole trip, not especially helpful, but lovable. They have to tug at his rope often to keep him from eating.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - DAY

The tired tourists arrive at the infamous base camp, full of exhaustion and excitement.

Different groups of actual Everest climbers immediately notice them, some laugh, everyone watches.

The Yeti Expeditions tent is clearly off to the side from the rest of the tents, but tourists don't seem to mind or even notice. They start pitching tents.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - NIGHT

Group sits around a campfire, all excitedly sharing and comparing different books and maps and pictures and stories. Boy and Sherpa sit together, comparing their books while Lead Sherpa is away in his tent.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - DAY

Lead Sherpa BANGS POTS together to awaken the campers, the last ones asleep at camp. Boy and team peak out of their tents, sleepy. Lead Sherpa, a quiet man, motions they have five minutes.

INT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - TENT - DAY

Boy repacks pack: granola bars, extra jacket, camera, binoculars, canteen, notebook, and finally his old favorite book. He straps on his boots, grabs a granola bar for breakfast, and is ready to finally explore.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - DAY

Boy is the first ready and outside. He eats his bar. Pets Yak. Decides to enter

INT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - YETI EXPEDITIONS TENT - DAY

Lead Sherpa's WIFE sits behind a desk, running camp. She smiles when he enters but goes back to her work. Supplies like oxygen, food and climbing gear litter tent. Table and chairs take up the main portion of tent. Large map hangs in the back, marked with several Xs but only three trails.

Boy pulls out his own map. Their trails don't match at all. Lead Sherpa and Sherpa enter arguing but stop immediately when they see Boy. He scrambles to put his own map away, but young Sherpa notices. Boy exits tent to wait outside with team.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - DAY

Sherpas exit tent and hand out maps marked "TRAIL ONE." They head down the mountain, below the snowline, past a marker for trail number one. Everyone is ecstatic.

EXT. EVEREST TRAIL ONE - DAY

Trail is rocky and close to the river. Boy finds large footprints and follows them closely. Young Sherpa follows. They find a bear. They run away.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - DAY

Sherpas exit tent and hand out maps marked "TRAIL TWO." They head down the mountain, below the snowline, past a marker for trail number two. Everyone is pleasant.

EXT. EVEREST TRAIL TWO - DAY

A forest. They walk and walk and walk and find nothing.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - NIGHT

Everyone returns exhausted, and slightly defeated. They all go to bed as soon as they return. Snow falls.

INT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - TENT - NIGHT

Boy studies his map against the two he's been given with a flashlight. He starts tracing his against the Lead Sherpa's. There is one that branches off of trail one. Someone starts unzipping his tent. Sherpa shows her own maps and a copy of trail three. Boy waves her in. They spend the night creating a master map combining all their research.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - NIGHT

Everything is dark except the outline of two people talking animatedly in Boy's tent, sharing a map, and the falling fresh, white snow.

EXT. EVEREST BASE CAMP - DAY

Sherpas exit tent and hand out maps marked "TRAIL THREE." They head down the mountain, past a marker for trail number three. Everyone is tired. It still snows.

EXT. EVEREST TRAIL THREE - DAY

Everyone trudges down a snowy path. They don't descend as far today. Boy and Sherpa walk together in the back, waiting for their true path to emerge. The trekkers pause by a frozen stream where the trail splits in two. They break the ice to get fresh water.

When group continues, Boy and Sherpa choose the other path, abandoning their group.

They climb back up the mountain into a snowy forest. Boy holds the map, Sherpa holds their book. They both point out different tracks, memorials made of stacked stones, pause to evaluate their location, continue.

Oxygen begins to thin. They breathe hard, the snow falls harder. They reach a clearing. Sherpa closes book, giving up. Boy nods agreeing, they turn back.

A RUSTLING in distance behind their backs. A low WHISTLING noise. They freeze, then turn slowly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

8.

Their eyes grow larger than Everest.

ZOOM IN on Boy, eyes filled with fear, or maybe wonder.

He smiles.

CUT TO BLACK.