

SEARCHING FOR THE SNOWMAN

an original screenplay by

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EXT. ICEWALL TEMPLE - OUTSKIRTS - MORNING

Softly-falling snow drifts down a jagged mountain wall,  
alighting on --

Spencer, climbing his way up. Almost to the top of the ledge,  
clouds drifting in the gap behind him.

STEVE (O.S.)

If you don't tie a rope on for the  
next one, I'm walking off the job.

Spencer looks down the wall to see Steve climbing some  
distance below --

SPENCER

I'm fine -- just about to make the  
ledg--

He suddenly loses a foothold -- slips --

Almost. As he looks up to see Jake holding his wrist.  
Spencer exhales sharply --

JAKE

Long way to go below, huh?

Jake pulls him up over the ledge.

SPENCER

Yeah. You're right. Long way to go.

Steve follows shortly after. Glaring at Spencer. Everyone else is already assembled on the ledge. Before them --

A massive SPIRE, nestled directly against the serrated edge of the mountain.

STEVE

That doesn't look like it leads anywhere. Dead end to me.  
(turns to Jake)  
You sure that map is right?

SPENCER

It has to be. There's nothing else around here for hundreds of miles.

Tak motions to Tashi for a quick chat. She turns to face the party --

TASHI

He says that we're wasting our time here. The monks are very distrustful of strangers.

Steve starts to trudge ahead --

STEVE

Well, only one way to find out, eh?

Jake and the rest of party linger a moment, then follow suit.

EXT. ICEWALL TEMPLE - MORNING

Above them, the spire looms impossibly high. From each level, hundreds of streamers descend to the ground, brightly-colored triangular flags attached along their length.

Behind the spire -- an enormous vertical wall of granite and snow -- hidden by clouds at the top.

STEVE

Yep. No climbing that with this lot.

He turns to Spencer --

STEVE (CONT'D)

Now what?

Axel walks forward to the huge wooden door at the base of the spire.

AXEL

We knock and see if anybody's home.

Axel reaches the door -- POUNDS hard --

AXEL (CONT'D)

Hey! Daily Lah-mer! You in there?  
Hello? Americans here -- open up  
please!

Erwin cringes. Tak and Ang Dawa narrow their eyes --

Axel turns back to the party --

AXEL (CONT'D)

Nope. Nobody hom--

Creaking in protest, the massive door swings open. Axel jumps a few feet back -- waiting as a --

Wizened OLD MAN walks out.

Red robes draped across his gaunt frame. He looks the party over -- then mutters something in Nepali.

Tak and Ang Dawa raise their eyebrows. Spencer looks to Jake --

SPENCER

What did he say?

JAKE

I didn't get it. A different type  
of dialect or something.

Tashi walks over to Spencer.

TASHI

He said that we're trespassing.

AXEL

Please. It's one old man. What  
is he going to do?

The old man flashes a crooked grin as above him --

A host of RED-ROBED MONKS appearing in succession from each level of the spire. In short time, a veritable army is silently gazing down upon them.

The old man speaks again --

TASHI

He's not fooling around. I think we need to leave.

SPENCER

We'll see about that --

Spencer starts to walk over to the old man.

STEVE

Save your money, mate. They won't take it.

Jake looks on in dismay --

JAKE

There's got to be a way --

STEVE

Not through here, mate. C'mon. Let's head back and we'll figure out our next steps, eh?

The sherpas start trudging back. The rest of the party stalls a bit, then follows. Jake sighs, picks up his ice axe and turns to join them when --

A VOICE barks out a command, from within the Spire's entrance.

All of the monks above take notice -- and immediately withdraw back inside.

The party stops and turns around. Jake, in the rear, is the last to notice what the commotion is --

The old man looks back towards the spire's entrance as another set of commands issue forth. His eyes widen in response.

Tashi walks over to Jake --

TASHI

Someone wants you to enter -- I think it's the Lama.

JAKE

The Lama?

TASHI

The leader of this Temple. A  
holy man to many people.

Spencer and Axel join them.

SPENCER

Nice work, Jake. Let's head in.

Spencer walks towards the entrance, but stops as another set of commands ring out from within.

Tashi gestures towards Jake.

TASHI

He only wants him.

Jake turns to Spencer.

JAKE

I'll go. Just give me a few  
minutes.

Spencer pauses for a long beat --

SPENCER

Hurry up.

Jake looks back at Tashi, then heads towards the entrance. Pausing only for a moment to marvel at the massive door before stepping inside.

INT. ICEWALL TEMPLE - MORNING

Musty stone and wood comprises the first floor. All around are tattered white scarves, worn, chipped statues of Buddha and garish patterns in fading reds, oranges and yellows.

Jake starts to walk up the stairs, but a GRUNT from the old man turns him around. Standing by a heavy iron gate, the old man swings it open -- slowly -- to reveal a set of stone steps leading downwards.

JAKE

Fooled me.

Jake walks over to the stone steps, past the gate and descends.

### STONE STAIRWAY

Any trace of wood or man-made construction, now gone. The stairway itself, hemmed in by rough stone on all sides. Noticing the enclosure, Jake's breaths come a bit more rapidly as he navigates the steps.

Finally, he reaches what appears to be the bottom, a soft yellow glow lining the entrance into another chamber.

INT. ICEWALL TEMPLE - CAVE - MORNING

Rock formations hang from the ceiling, and also jut out from the uneven dirt floor. The soft glow, now revealed to be from hundreds and hundreds of candles, their spent wax pooled everywhere.

At the back of the cave -- an enormous golden statue of Buddha. Smiling silently ahead. Seated before it, a diminutive figure, shrouded in red robes, it's face hidden.

Jake looks back for the old man -- he's gone. He turns his attention to the cowed figure before him. Pauses for a moment --

JAKE  
(in Nepali, subtitled)  
Uh, hello, sir?

The figure raises its arms to take off the hood. Jake sucks in a breath as the figure is revealed to be --

A young Tibetan boy. TENCHIN (13). Smooth stubble covering his scalp. Bright, inquisitive eyes.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
(in Nepali, subtitled)  
Who are you?

Tenchin smiles.

TENCHIN  
(with a moderate accent)  
A friend. Please, take a seat --

Tenchin gestures next to him -- an embroidered rug in orange and yellow patterns.

Hesitantly, Jake complies.

JAKE  
You're the Lama here?

Tenchin nods.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Aren't you supposed to be older?

TENCHIN  
How old do I need to be?

JAKE  
Oh. It's that whole "reincarnation"  
thing, right?

TENCHIN  
You say it like you don't believe  
in it.

JAKE  
Well --

TENCHIN  
I'm only talking to you now because  
you carry a bit of your grandfather  
within you. Isn't that  
reincarnation?

Jakes pauses for a moment --

JAKE  
What does this place have to do  
with what he was looking for?

TENCHIN  
What does it have to do with what  
you are looking for?

Jake considers the question, then pulls out the silver tube from within his jacket. Opens it, takes out the map and carefully lays it out.

JAKE  
I want to find the Snowman.

Tenchin considers the map -- then suddenly springs to his feet. Walks over to the Buddha statue --

TENCHIN

I shall delay you no more. Your  
intent is pure -- as was your  
grandfather's.

He shifts something behind the statue -- it RUMBLES -- then  
slowly swings outward, revealing --

A MASSIVE ICE TUNNEL, frosty vapors pouring out.

TENCHIN (CONT'D)

But remember this. We all search  
for the Snowman at one point or  
another in our lives --

(beat)

Yet, do we really want to find  
him?

Tenchin steps aside, smiling. Jake looks at him -- then at  
the ice tunnel as --

INT. ICEWALL TEMPLE - CAVE - AFTERNOON

The whole party is assembled before the tunnel. In awe.

STEVE

Impressive. Makes a bit more sense  
now.

SPENCER

Nice work, Mr. Reese.

Erwin moves next to Jake --

ERWIN

You really ready for this?

He points at the tunnel -- specifically, the narrow corridors  
of ice which seem to stretch on forever --

JAKE

Yeah. Yeah, I am.

He grips his ice axe -- and steps forth --