

THE SUPER-SMARTPHONE MYSTERY

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BLACK SCREEN

We HEAR the shaky but jovial voice of an ELDERLY WOMAN (70s).

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

What would you tell your wild 21-year-old self from over 50 years in the future? Would I even listen to myself? Ha! I doubt it. But looking back, there was one particularly dangerous weekend in my past when I wish I could have warned myself to be more careful, Goddamn it! Just be more careful!

FADE IN:

EXT. TRAILHEAD PARKING LOT - MORNING

It's a cold but sunny day in a snowy forest. A small parking lot carved out by a snowplow contains two late-model SUVs as AUDREY (21) RACES up in an old pickup truck with a battered camper shell and skids to a stop. PAUL (23) is not wearing a seatbelt and is thrown forward and awakened by the sudden stop with his head barely missing the windshield.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

(worried)

You see, the scariest times that I can recall in my very long life occurred when the people and events of the day were not who or what they seemed.

Audrey laughs and swings her door open.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

(yells)

I'm talking to you, Audrey Christie.

AUDREY

We're here! Let's go!

PAUL

Jesus, Audrey. Are you trying to kill me?

Audrey unbuckles her seatbelt and leaps to the back of the truck. She is fully outfitted in winter hiking gear.

AUDREY

You should've worn your seatbelt.

(laughs)

If I was trying to kill you, I
would have used an ice-climbing
tool.

Audrey pulls out a fully packed ice climber's backpack. We see an ice-climbing tool, carabiners, climbing rope, and helmet.

Paul slowly exits the truck with a Hawaiian shirt visible under his unzipped winter coat. He changes into hiking boots from his tennis shoes and joins Audrey.

Paul pulls out his climbing pack (like Audrey's). He inventories his equipment as Audrey strolls around, looks up and out, and smiles.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

This is Heaven. I mean, real
Heaven.

She turns to gaze at Paul who stares at his cell phone and shakes his head in disappointment.

PAUL

Well, it's Hell for cellphone
service. One bar.

Paul shows Audrey a bottle of Jack Daniels in the outside pocket of his backpack.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We'll just have to take the one bar
with us to the cabin.

A Park Ranger vehicle drives up the road and looks to be going past the parking lot when it suddenly pulls in. Chief Ranger, Alden STEVENS (40s) rolls down the window and yells to Paul.

STEVENS

Hey, Pauly. I recognized your
shirt. Are you going to work with
us again next summer? The bears
were asking about you.

Paul laughs and strolls to the Ranger vehicle.

PAUL
Hey, Chief Ranger Stevens. Yep.
I'll be returning for my third
season. The plants and animals are
calling me back.

Stevens eyes Audrey who waves politely.

STEVENS
Are you taking another rookie ice
climber up the Queen Diamond?

PAUL
(turns to Audrey)
She's no rookie. She works the
climbing wall at the gym twice as
fast as me.

STEVENS
It's a little different on the ice
sheet with the wind.

AUDREY
(smiles sarcastically)
I'll be fine.

PAUL
We had the cabin stocked with three
days of food. We'll be okay as long
as the three strangers we're
sharing it with aren't serial
killers or Donner Party
enthusiasts.

STEVENS
Be careful up there. We had a B&E
in a summer home outside the park
entrance: stolen clothes, gear, and
canned foods, but get this, the
homeowner claims he had dozens of
prime diamonds in his safe.

AUDREY
Sounds like insurance fraud to me.

PAUL
That's my new friend, Audrey. She's
had one class in criminology. I'd
listen to her.

STEVENS
(laughs)
Insurance fraud!
(MORE)

STEVENS (CONT'D)

She might be right, but we gotta BOLO for this mystery thief who simply disappeared.

Stevens and Paul glance at the vehicles in the parking lot.

PAUL

I'll bet these belong to the electronic engineers who we're sharing the cabin with! Good luck catching the thief. I'll see you next May for work.

STEVENS

Okay, Pauly. Be safe out there!
(to Audrey)
Keep an eye on him, Ma'am. He's everyone's favorite park mouthpiece.

Stevens waves and drives off. Paul and Audrey wave back.

PAUL

That was "ranger talk."

AUDREY

I got B&E? Breaking and entering.
What's BOLO?

PAUL

Be On the Look Out.

AUDREY

And, Park mouthpiece?

PAUL

Park Interpreter. We give nature walks, campfire talks, and man the visitor centers in the summer.

(laughs)

We call Stevens and his kind, Park Cops. Police Officer wannabes, but some do Search and Rescue work, backcountry patrols, and snow surveys -- the really fun jobs.

They pull hiking poles from the truck. Paul is clumsy with his poles, but they are both in great moods.

AUDREY

Let's get going. Our lunch, or dinner, awaits in the cabin depending on how slow you hike.

PAUL
Try to keep up!

AUDREY
Catch me if you can.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Audrey is ahead of Paul on the trail.

She spots an overlook and a great place for a photograph.

She drops her pack and begins to wander over to the overlook
(a steep cliff).

She takes her smartphone from her pants pocket and moves the
phone around slowly to capture the perfect photo.

Paul sneaks up behind her and pushes her forward a bit where
she loses her footing until Paul pulls her back.

PAUL
Gotcha!

Audrey is fuming in anger.

AUDREY
Asshole. That's not funny.

Paul is laughing and defensive.

PAUL
Just fooling around. I promise not
to do that to you on the Queen
Diamond.

She glares at him.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'll go ahead while you take your
Ansel Adams.

Paul is clumsy as he hikes on the icy trail.

AUDREY
(still angry)
You do that. Wait for me at the
next trail sign.

Paul speaks but doesn't turn around.

PAUL
Okay. Okay. Sorry.

Audrey turns to the overlook and looks out with her smartphone camera setting the frame.

She takes one photo in one direction and then studies the vista for another photo.

She takes another photo and turns back to the trail to see an ELDERLY WOMAN (70s) hiking slowly up the trail. She wears a well-worn blue hooded coat, brown tattered hiking pants, and an orange wool cap with hair sticking out like white straw. She wears wrap-around sunglasses and a bright yellow scarf. She leans on two sturdy hiking sticks like they were canes.

Audrey is startled by the sight of the woman.

AUDREY

I didn't see you there.

The Elderly Woman laughs and looks away avoiding eye contact.

ELDERLY WOMAN

I'm kinda hard to miss.

AUDREY

I mean, my hiking partner and I were making good time on the trail but we didn't pass you on the trail.

ELDERLY WOMAN

The hiking partner who tried to push you over the edge. Don't trust him.

Audrey looks around perplexed and worried.

AUDREY

How did you see that? We would have seen you!

(suspicious)

Did you park at the trailhead?

Audrey sees that the Elderly Woman still avoids eye contact.

The Elderly Woman speaks softly.

ELDERLY WOMAN

You can never be too careful. Could you call out if you were hurt?

Audrey checks her phone.

AUDREY

No service.

ELDERLY WOMAN

I thought as much. Sometimes things
are as they seem, sometimes they're
not!

The Elderly Woman searches several of her pockets for something, with Audrey looking on curiously.

AUDREY

What are look...?

The Elderly Woman finds and pulls out a much thinner and shinier, futuristic-looking smartphone of some kind, nothing that Audrey has seen before.

The old woman hands it to Audrey who declines the offer sweetly.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I couldn't possibly...

The Elderly Woman forces it into Audrey's hand with an angry voice.

ELDERLY WOMAN

You are in grave danger! Take it.

AUDREY

I'm sorry, I can't...

ELDERLY WOMAN

Tell no one that you have this! No one! Understand?

Audrey stares at the strange device.

AUDREY

You may need to get back...

ELDERLY WOMAN

There is no going back for me. Take
it, damn it. It will save your
life, not once, but twice.

(ominous)

Tell no one! No one!

Audrey closely examines the device that has no buttons or ports.

She turns toward the overlook. She slowly and suspiciously brings the device closer to her face, and it pings quietly and lights up.

The device scans Audrey's face and the keypad appears with a banner that reads, "Facial Recognition and DNA match," but it disappears before Audrey can fully understand what's happening.

A tag in the corner of the screen shows 10 bars and the battery at 100%.

Audrey turns the shiny device around and the keypad shows up instantly.

Audrey shakes in fear and spins back to the Elderly Woman but she's gone.

AUDREY

Who are...?

She looks up the trail and sees no one.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Where...?

She RACES back down the trail, with a cliff on one side and heavy forest down the other. After a few minutes of frantic searching, she runs back up the trail to her backpack.

Audrey stares at the device.

AUDREY (V.O.)

I have to show this whatever-it-is
to Paul for confirmation.

(beat)

For my sanity. What if I'm dreaming
this? Or worse, what if I'm being
delusional?

She puts on her backpack and races up the trail looking frantically for the Elderly Woman.

She sees Paul approaching her in the distance and shoves the new device into her back pocket.

AUDREY (V.O.)

What do I tell him?

Audrey ringing in sweat and jittery when Paul meets her.

PAUL

Are you okay? Looks like you've
seen a ghost.

Audrey evades the question.

AUDREY

Took a few pictures and went pee in the forest. Not a Federal case. Did you happen to see a strangely dressed old woman with a bright yellow scarf on the trail at any time today?

PAUL

No.

AUDREY

Then let's go.

Audrey stomps ahead like a woman on a mission.

Paul shakes his head bewildered.

PAUL

Wanna talk about it?

Audrey doesn't turn around.

AUDREY

No! You'd think I was crazy.

Paul looks back down the trail for a second.

PAUL

(laughs)

Too late. Agreeing to teach me to ice climb? That's crazy.

Clumsy Paul slips often while following Audrey up the trail.

EXT. TRAIL - LATE MORNING

Audrey hikes fast with Paul struggling to keep up.

PAUL

I could use a power bar and some water.

Audrey sounds happy again.

AUDREY

Good call. There's another nice overlook just up the trail.

They reach the overlook and drop their packs. Audrey smiles.

PAUL

You're in your happy place again.

They look into each other's eyes and share a moment.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Sorry again for the prank back there.

AUDREY

(half-smiles)

You can be such a boy sometimes.

PAUL

It was an impolite thing to do and I regret it. I never want you to be mad at me.

Audrey laughs, grabs a power bar from her pack, and then smiles as she looks out.

AUDREY

My mom and I would stop here on our summer hikes to the climbing rocks.

PAUL

Tell me about her.

Audrey gazes back at Paul and then out to the mountains. Her voice softens.

AUDREY

She was the greatest adventurer of all time: mountain climber, cross-country skier, skydiver, deep-sea explorer... until one trip to Mt. Everest. She was one of eleven climbers on Everest who had fallen into a crevasse and were lost forever.

Paul hugs her.

PAUL

How... How old were you... when...?

AUDREY

(sad)

I was 14. My dad died of a broken heart two years later. I lived with my grandparents who were accountants who thought adventure was balancing a spreadsheet.

PAUL

But this National Park was your mom's version of Heaven?

Audrey smiles.

AUDREY

I think because we shared it. We hiked this trail in every season of every year since I was three years old. I kept it up after she disappeared.

PAUL

Disappeared?

AUDREY

I dream of her managing to climb out of the crevasse. I've never lost hope, I guess. It's why I'm so into climbing, especially ice climbing.

Paul smiles.

PAUL

On that note, I'm going to sneak off the forest and take a dump.

Audrey laughs and shakes her head.

AUDREY

That's my new boyfriend!

Paul grabs a small roll of toilet paper and heads off.

Audrey waits until he's long gone before pulling out her new "phone."

She cradles the phone in her lap. She shivers with nerves. She raises it to her face and the phone lights up.

AUDREY (V.O.)

(scared)

How the hell did facial recognition know me? Does it turn on for everyone?

She turns it over and it remains on.

A beautiful 3-D map springs out of the device.

Audrey's face backs up, fearing the technology.

She moves the phone left and right in her lap and the map changes orientation. The map is incredibly detailed with elevations of peaks displayed, contour lines, and the trail is shown with compass headings.

She looks closely at the map to see her location is marked with a tiny red outline of a human body.

Another tiny red outline (Paul) shows up on the map. He's heading in her direction.

She secretly slips the phone into her front pocket.

She HEARS Paul walking toward her and stands.

PAUL
Everything worked out fine.

AUDREY
Glad to hear. Let's keep going.

Audrey puts on her pack.

PAUL
One swig of water and I'll eat my power bar on the trail. Somebody must be anxious for lunch!

Audrey laughs and heads up the trail.

Paul peeks at the view as he removes a power bar and his water bottle. He takes a quick drink and then follows Audrey clumsily on the snow and ice.

EXT. CABIN - AFTERNOON

Laughter exudes from the Cabin as Audrey and Paul approach the cabin.

They look at each other curiously.

AUDREY
Sounds like they cached food and drinks too.

PAUL
And the party started without us.

Paul knocks on the cabin door.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Is everybody decent? We're the two other renters.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Paul and Audrey step in and their jaws drop. Paul's eyes stay on the lockbox. Audrey's eyes stare at Shari who wears a bright yellow scarf (the same scarf the Elderly Woman wore).

The lockbox of their food cache is busted open. GUNTHER (24), a powerful German with an equally strong accent, SHARI (30s), an athletic blonde in trendy mountaineering clothes, and CHANG (24), a muscular Asian are feasting on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and Oreo cookies.

PAUL

You broke into our food stash? Un-cool.

AUDREY

Unethical and illegal!

Gunther puts down his sandwich as he stands.

GUNTHER

We apologize, and we'll pay for everything we've eaten. I'm Gunther, pronounced Goon-ter from Berlin. This is Shari, from Oklahoma, Kansas, or Nebraska which are all the same to me, and Chang, from Beijing.

Shari sadly looks down and points to Gunther and Chang.

SHARI

They said you probably heard about the approaching storm and bailed.

Chang stands and races to Paul and Audrey.

CHANG

We'll pay double. No triple what the supplies are worth. Our food cache might be delivered tonight.

GUNTHER

But maybe not.

Shari glares at Gunther.

SHARI

Or maybe because you didn't plan far enough ahead.

(to Audrey)

I'm so sorry. We'll forgo the ice climbing and hike out tomorrow.

(MORE)

SHARI (CONT'D)

(beat)

And reimburse you fully. I volunteered to come along as a "spotter" in case of an accident. All expenses paid, they said.

GUNTHER

She answered our ad on Craigslist.

SHARI

That's the last time I do something like this.

GUNTHER

We can ice climb today if we hurry before sunset.

Paul paces angrily, while Audrey softens.

AUDREY

I'm Audrey. This is Paul.

Chang races to shake Audrey's hand.

CHANG

I messed up. Sorry. The last message from the vendor was from the trailhead.

AUDREY

Those two new SUVs are yours.

Gunther and Chang raise their hands.

PAUL

That's the last time and place we had cell service too.

SHARI

The message said they would try to deliver by snowmobile today...

GUNTHER

Then reception failed.

CHANG

My last update on the storm said we had 48 hours of clear weather, but we all know how fast conditions can change.

Paul turns to Audrey.

PAUL

Audrey knows everything. How many days were our provisions?

AUDREY

Four days for two people. 24 meals total.

PAUL

(sarcastic)

Looks like four or five are gone already!

(softens)

We were going to hike out after climbing on Day Three.

AUDREY

We always pack for an extra meal or two in case of bad weather. I guess we can cut our trip short and share our food.

Paul looks at the three backpacks on the three of the six bunk beds.

PAUL

Or you could climb with us this afternoon and tomorrow, and then leave in the afternoon.

Gunther dances happily.

GUNTHER

Deal! It's downhill all the way out. You won't be disappointed. We're all good on the ice.

AUDREY

(to Shari)

It would be safer to have an extra spotter for the first two climbs.

Paul moves closer to Audrey with a smile.

PAUL

And we'd have the cabin to ourselves tomorrow night.

CHANG

(bows to Audrey)

You are so kind!

Audrey sees that Chang is sincere. They share a moment and Paul sees it.

SHARI
(to Paul)
Thanks so much for accommodating
us.

Paul smiles.

GUNTHER
Queen Diamond, here we come!

Audrey and Paul make sandwiches.

EXT. TRAIL - LATE AFTERNOON

The five people hike and talk. They wear heavy winter gear. The trail is icy, but they have boots with cleats. Audrey leads followed by Shari, and Paul. Gunther and Chang hang back a little, whispering to each other.

Shari's and Paul's hiking poles slip often on the trail.

AUDREY
Do you guys want me to slow down?

Shari looks over the steep drop on the trail and is scared.

SHARI
No, keep going. What did I get
myself into?

PAUL
(while slipping)
You're doing fine. Relax, Shari.
So, you're from Oklahoma?

SHARI
Wichita, Kansas, where the motto
is cows are our mountains.

Shari almost falls again.

AUDREY
You needed an adventure. Good for
you.

SHARI
(laughs)
My biggest adventure to date was
rollerskating. Something I could
do!

PAUL

You mean, you've never climbed on ice? Like me?

SHARI

I've never climbed anything but a kitchen stepping stool. I'm here to call for help if needed, take photos, and make hot toddies.

AUDREY

That's very adventurous of you. Where did you find such a beautiful scarf?

SHARI

At the gift store at the park entrance. Gunther bought it for me.

Audrey turns to see Gunther and Chang whispering.

AUDREY

Gunther and Chang are hitting it off.

Shari can't turn around.

SHARI

Gunther is from the Silicon Valley of Germany, and Chang from the biggest engineering firm in China, I think. They're the rising rock stars designing our smartphones of the future.

Audrey checks her front pocket for her new device.

AUDREY

(mumbles)
Small world.

PAUL

Is this a business trip for them?

Paul turns back to see Gunther and Chang showing each other their smartphones and whispering.

SHARI

I don't know. I sell textbooks to college bookstores all across Kansas and the Central Plains.

AUDREY
How has that business done over the
past five years?

SHARI
Growing every year. Printed
textbooks never get old.

Shari slips again. Then Paul slips and laughs.

PAUL
Hiking on ice gets old.

SHARI
(laughs nervously)
Exactly.

They turn a bend in the trail and see the Queen Diamond, a
steep cliff of rock, snow, and ice.

AUDREY
There she is!

Shari's eyes open wide. She freezes.

Paul turns around to Gunther and Chang.

PAUL
(yells)
We're there!

EXT. QUEEN DIAMOND - CONTINUOUS

Everyone drops their packs and begins to unpack climbing
gear.

Audrey grabs toilet paper and holds it up.

AUDREY
I'll be back.

Audrey wanders to a secluded spot out of earshot.

Audrey unbuckles her pants and her new device turns on in her
front pocket. She grabs it and quickly turns and cradles it.

A text message appears on the phone that reads, "Phone
spyware detected on two devices nearby."

Audrey panics and glances back at Gunther and Change taking
photos of the Queen Diamond with their phones.

AUDREY (V.O.)
What the Hell?

When Audrey looks back, the new phone reads, "Disable their spyware?" with a box for "Yes" and a box for "No" appearing.

Audrey shivers as she considers the options.

AUDREY (V.O.)
Damn! If I say yes, and they notice the deletions, they'll think one of us did it!

She tries to press "No" as the face of the Elderly Woman appears.

Audrey is shocked and afraid as the Elderly woman turns away and speaks softly.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)
I feel your pain. You want to trust everyone.

Audrey looks around. Her hands are shaking.

AUDREY (V.O.)
(whispers angrily)
I don't want your phone. I don't know who you are or what this is...

The Elderly Woman looks back with a sad face.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)
Trust is never a given. It must be earned.

Audrey quickly slides the phone back into her pants pocket, when she hears Shari walking up to her from behind.

Audrey pulls her underwear up, as Shari gets to her.

SHARI
I'd better go too. I don't want to have to pee under that cliff.

AUDREY
Have at it. I'll stand guard.

Shari squats behind a boulder. They can barely hear the men chuckling and whispering.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
I work part-time at the college bookstore.
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Hardcopy textbook sales are crashing and burning due to ebooks and digital textbook rentals. What are you really doing here, Shari? It's not for ice climbing. You and Paul have the agility of a bull in a China shop.

SHARI

(serious)

Funny you should mention China. Let's just say I'm protecting America's interests.

AUDREY

I bet you can't discuss it.

SHARI

(dark voice)

Don't bring it up in conversations. Is that clear?

AUDREY

Very clear.

Audrey starts to walk back slowly.

Shari leaps out from behind the boulder and joins her walking back.

Below the Queen Diamond, the men study the rock face as they brag.

GUNTHER

My favorite is the Ötztal Valley in Austria.

Paul and Chang act impressed.

PAUL

Austria. Lit!

CHANG

Sounds expensive.

Audrey and Shari join them and listen in.

GUNTHER

It's the longest glaciated valley in the Tyrol mountains. There's a sweet mix of icefalls from short ascents to nasty climbs.

Chang boasts with a softer voice.

CHANG
 Helmcken Falls in Canada. It's
 graded a WI 13, the hardest ice
 climb in the world.

Paul is suspicious.

PAUL
 And you've done it?

CHANG
 (laughs)
 No, but I will someday!

Gunther is eager to climb.

PAUL
 Audrey's the local expert.
 (turns to Audrey)
 What are you thinking?

Audrey takes an ice-climbing tool out of her pack and studies
 the ice face.

She puts both tools in one hand and rubs the ice seductively
 with her gloved hand.

AUDREY
 Never forget that the Queen Diamond
 is an unforgiving woman.

Gunther laughs.

GUNTHER
 I'll be poking her every chance I
 get!

AUDREY
 (glares at Gunther)
 Treat her gently and she'll be kind
 to you.

CHANG
 (to Audrey)
 I will.

Audrey demonstrates with her ice tool. She reaches up and
 easily punctures a patch of ice and snow.

AUDREY
 The long, thin shiny blade can be
 finessed into exactly the right
 texture and firmness of her willing
 ice.

She tugs on the ice tool and it supports her weight.

She demonstrates with the ice-climbing tool on a more solid block of ice. She strikes it and it shatters.

Everyone's eyes open up, but Paul is in awe.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Too much force, or using the wrong tool can get you killed.

Audrey holds up her crampons.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Hug her with your crampons. Solid footing; and a good harness and rope anchors are the keys to survival.

She taps her helmet.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

And, of course, the helmet, which reminds us that all climbing is mindfulness. Slow, thoughtful, cognitive moves bowing to the all-powerful goddess, the Queen Diamond.

Chang, Shari, and Paul nod in agreement, while Gunther smirks.

CHANG

Why is she called the Queen Diamond?

PAUL

I got this. Geomorphic processes and environmental conditions over thousands of years brought us this rare gem of a waterfall in the summer and an ice climb in the winter.

Audrey smiles.

AUDREY

Spoken like a true park interpreter.

Shari spins to Paul in a flirtatious excitement.

SHARI

Really? That's your job! How wonderful is that?

Paul eats it up.

PAUL

It's fun for me to do the research, identify plants, lead walks, and enjoy the history and beauty of nature at the same time.

GUNTHER

For minimum wage?

Paul laughs.

PAUL

Less when you factor in the cost of living in a remote National Park, but we call it "payment in kind." It's the kind of life that you feel fulfilled.

Shari swoons, so Audrey races in to pat Paul on the back.

AUDREY

That was beautiful.

PAUL

(winks at Shari)

Plus, Summer Park Interpreters are chick magnets.

Audrey slaps Paul's arm.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm kidding! I'm kidding.

AUDREY

Let's climb.

LATER

Gunther is ice climbing, with Paul on the belay.

Several feet away, Chang is ice climbing with Audrey on the belay.

Gunther and Chang speak and act as if they are competing.

GUNTHER

Your team is so far behind on the three-nanometer chips, that they'll never catch up.

CHANG

You might be right, but it will come down to AI chips where your team is struggling.

Paul and Audrey try to ease the tension, without being too distracting.

PAUL

Stay focused on your climbing.
(whispers to Audrey)
What are they talking about?

AUDREY

I have no idea.

Shari boils water on a small propane gas stove. She has three cups in front of her. She whispers to Audrey.

SHARI

Next-gen smartphones. Common knowledge. Lots of cheddar riding on the tech race.

GUNTHER

(yells at Chang)
30 AI models! Beat that!

CHANG

(softer)
10 Billion parameters in AI! But I have to concentrate on climbing.

Paul studies Gunther as Audrey studies Chang.

Gunther is in the lead so Audrey offers tips to Chang.

AUDREY

Remember, good feet.

Chang looks at his feet.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Look for horizontal features in the ice and kick in just above them.

Chang kicks the ice soccer-style and the boot of his toe bounces back from the ice.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Toes up on the kick. Butt out. Dig in with a horizontal spike. But get those secondary spikes in good.

Chang's next kick (toes up, horizontal spikes) lands solid. A secondary spike is in strong. He stands firm.

CHANG

Got it. Thank you so much. This could save my life.

GUNTHER

I like to look up. It's all in the tools and arms for...

Gunther's feet give way and Paul has to stop him with the rope.

GUNTHER (CONT'D)

(humbled)

Thanks, Paul.

Chang takes the lead on the ice.

Gunther regains his composure and climbs.

PAUL

It's not a competition. You're both doing great.

Audrey smiles at Paul.

Chang inches higher, but his next ice tool poke hits solid rock a few inches in and it stuns him.

AUDREY

Look for another spot. Make sure the head comes around more. Follow through.

His arm shakes, but he picks another spot and it lands solid.

CHANG

That's truck! Is my slang correct? Truck?

AUDREY

You got it.

Shari looks up.

SHARI

What's truck?

Audrey and Paul turn to answer simultaneously.

AUDREY PAUL
Solid. Solid.

Shari smiles at Paul, which Audrey sees.

As Audrey's head is turned back, Chang yells from up high on the ice face. His feet blow (losing footing), and he falls.

His lead rope anchor pops out and Chang and Audrey can't stop his fall. His second anchor (3 feet below the top anchor) is stronger and his harness keeps him from falling (temporarily).

He looks down and it scares him more.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Dig your feet in.

Chang tries to dig his feet in, but his legs are shaking and he panics.

Audrey tries to calm Chang, but his dead weight pulls at the last anchor.

CHANG
I don't know what to do.

AUDREY
Step your way down. Digging in each foot to take your weight off the rope.

Chang descends. He's frightened.

Gunther and Paul look on helplessly.

Shari races to the ice face to help if needed.

Chang's last rope anchor rips out when he's eight feet above the ground. He falls back. Audrey and Shari are there to break his fall, but falls hard to the ground and hits his head (helmet).

SHARI
Concussion protocol. Chang, are you okay?

CHANG
I'm fine.

SHARI
Checking the pupils.

CHANG

I'm fine.

Audrey puts up three fingers.

AUDREY

How many fingers?

CHANG

Three. I'm fine. Just embarrassed.
I did a horrible job setting my
anchors.

PAUL

Wait until you see me up there!
(to Gunther)
My turn next!

GUNTHER

On belay!

Gunther descends like a pro.

Audrey teaches Paul the basics.

He climbs up ten or twelve feet with Audrey spotting for him and helping all the way, but Paul is still clumsy and new at ice climbing.

The others look on worried about Paul who is constantly nervous.

Paul finally descends.

AUDREY

Good work, Paul. You'll be a pro in
no time.

PAUL

A few years maybe.

Paul hugs Audrey.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thanks for the lesson.

Paul and Audrey help Chang to his feet.

AUDREY

You all did great. I'll fetch the
anchors while you pack up.

Audrey slaps on crampons, grabs her two ice tools, and free climbs (no ropes) the ice face to retrieve the rope anchors.

Climbing is effortless for Audrey. She is methodical, steady, and strong.

PAUL
She's like a cat.

CHANG
Unbelievable.

Shari is stunned.

SHARI
Wow. Just, wow!

Gunther shakes his head and looks away.

As Audrey unscrews the ice screws, she examines them before putting them in her pocket. The ice screws on Chang's route are shorter (13 cm) compared to the ice screws on Gunther's route (22 cm).

AUDREY (V.O.)
I wonder who outfitted Chang's bag?

Audrey glares at Gunther as she descends from Gunther's route.

Gunther starts to head toward the cabin.

GUNTHER
Great day on the ice! I'll see everyone at the cabin.

SHARI
(to Gunther)
Wait for me. I have a bottle of wine.

Shari leaps without looking and YELPS out in pain.

Everyone turns to see Shari lifting her left leg and wincing in pain.

Audrey unzips an outer pocket of her backpack and pulls out an ace bandage, while Paul removes Sharie's boot to see her sock swelling at the ankle.

PAUL
Swollen ankle.

Audrey drops down next to Shari and Paul and expertly wraps her ankle.

AUDREY

We'll elevate it and ice it when we reach the cabin. Until then, lean on Paul for moral support.

Audrey winks at Paul who returns a look of affection.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I'll catch up. I'm going to study the melt for a minute.

Gunther helps Chang who is still a little woozy.

GUNTHER

I'll help Chang.
(disgusted)
We look like your American Donner Party here.

Paul helps Shari up with the ace bandage visible around her ankle. He turns to Audrey.

PAUL

Let me know what you find out.
We'll help Shari back to the cabin.

Shari manages her pain as she leans on Paul on the way down the trail.

Audrey pulls the two different-sized anchor pins from her pocket and studies them.

When everyone is down the trail, Audrey takes out her new device.

She holds it close to her face and it turns on. The 3-D map shows up. It shows the four tiny red outlines of her group hiking down the trail.

AUDREY (V.O.)

Huh.

Audrey points the phone at the ice face and the image shows a heat index in colors from blue (cold) to red (hot). A label reads "Queens Diamond, thermal index." The image is high resolution and as Audrey's eyes focus on the two climbing routes, she sees Chang's route is "warmer" than Gunther's route.

AUDREY (V.O.)

This thing gets scarier by the minute.

She hears the Elderly Woman's voice from the phone.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)
Be careful of the thief.

Her hand shakes at the power of the new device.

AUDREY (V.O.)
Who the hell are you?

She buries the device deep in her backpack and starts back to the cabin with a worried look.

INT. CABIN - EVENING

The sun is setting. Audrey hears the rustling and yelling of her traveling companions in the cabin.

SHARI (O.C.)
My binoculars are gone!

PAUL (O.C.)
So is my phone. I don't get it.
It's password-protected. It won't
do the thief any good.

CHANG (O.C.)
You didn't carry your phone with
you to the Queen Diamond?

GUNTHER (O.C.)
Dude, you should always carry
your...

Audrey enters the cabin which is in shambles. Their spare clothes and equipment are scattered around. Pots and pans are scattered and cabinets are open.

Shari has her ankle iced and elevated.

SHARI
I'm so sorry. I'll arrange for a
sled to take me to the trailhead
tomorrow morning.

Paul shrugs at the situation and pours whiskey in plastic cups around the table.

PAUL
Nothing we can do about it tonight.
It's dark and cold out there.

Gunther turns angrily at Audrey.

GUNTHER
We've been robbed!

SHARI
We should make a list of everything
that's been stolen and report it to
the Park Rangers.

AUDREY
Good idea. I need to borrow Gunther
for a few minutes outside.

GUNTHER
(suspicious)
What about?

AUDREY
Climbing equipment choices this
afternoon. It won't take long.

Audrey exits and Gunther reluctantly follows.

EXT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Audrey walks well out of earshot of the cabin, but she
whispers anyway.

AUDREY
I pulled all the ice anchors from
the Queen.

She holds out her left hand and shows Gunther the long
anchors from his climbing route.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
These were the ones you used.

GUNTHER
They held good. Truck, as you say
here.

Audrey holds out Chang's shorter anchors.

AUDREY
These are the anchors you suggested
Chang use.

GUNTHER
(defensive)
He's lighter than me. I'm much
bigger-stronger, yes?

AUDREY

Yes, but you and I both know Chang would have been safer with longer bolts.

GUNTHER

You can prove nothing! I gave him the best route for short anchors. I took the harder route with longer...

AUDREY

That was not true. You gave Chang the warmer face while you took the safer cold face.

Gunther scoffs and looks away.

GUNTHER

Engineers don't kill each other. We steal secrets from each other!

Audrey starts to head back to the Cabin. She sees Paul peeking out the window at them.

AUDREY

I'll be watching you.

Gunther pulls Audrey back, face-to-face.

GUNTHER

You should be watching Chang. I think he's after U.S. technology secrets too.

(angry)

Send Chang out for a sidebar chat with me, will you, Audrey?

Audrey breaks away from Gunther and starts back to the cabin.

Paul is no longer peeking out the window.

Gunther walks further from the cabin door and paces impatiently.

Audrey enters the cabin door. Moments later, Chang exits the cabin, shuts the door gently, and walks toward Gunther.

CHANG

You think I put a thief up to this, don't you? I knew you were not dumb enough to leave your life's work in a cabin without a safe.

Shari opens the door with a crack to peek out and listen in without being seen.

Gunther pushes Chang and whispers angrily.

GUNTHER

How do I know you didn't put a thief up to this?

Chang doesn't push Gunther back.

CHANG

We both gave away our location on the Web when we reserved the cabin and invited the textbook saleswoman to come with us as a spotter.

Gunther pushes Chang harder.

GUNTHER

Okay, that was stupid to use our real names. But only a stupid thief would expect us to leave our prototype phones behind.

Chang pauses to think.

CHANG

What if you did not bring your latest prototype as was agreed?

GUNTHER

Or you...
(laughs)
Mine is an older model.
(laughs)
Two versions behind?

CHANG

(looks away)
Mine is three versions old.

Gunther paces out and returns to Chang.

GUNTHER

Occam's Razor.

CHANG

"The simplest explanation is preferable to one that is more complex."

GUNTHER

It was a passerby.

CHANG

A stranger.

GUNTHER

No connection to anyone.

CHANG

A thief, nothing more.

Gunther puts out his hand to shake. Chang accepts it.

They walk slowly back to the cabin.

GUNTHER

My phone is better.

CHANG

I still don't trust you.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Shari gently shuts the door and limps away from the door.

Gunther and Chang enter as though nothing has transpired.

Audrey shrugs at Paul when no one is looking.

Everyone sits around the table and tries to enjoy Paul's whiskey, except for Shari who drinks red wine.

Paul has an epiphany.

PAUL

The Park Rangers were chasing a B&E suspect through the park this morning.

CHANG

B&E?

Shari doesn't look up from her backpack.

SHARI

Breaking and entering.

Everyone stares at Shari, who gets defensive.

SHARI (CONT'D)

I watch a lot of cop shows.

AUDREY

Looks like the thief or thieves
stopped here while we were at the
Queen Diamond. Paul, as a Park
Ranger, you should record
everything and report it.

Paul takes out a notepad and pen, and he laughs.

PAUL

Report it? How? By carrier pigeon?
No one has cell service.

Gunther and Chang glare at each other.

GUNTHER

No Service!

CHANG

No Service!

GUNTHER (CONT'D)

His phone is garbage! No new AI.

Gunther dives at Chang, and they wrestle and laugh!

CHANG

Germany has made nothing new since
the Volkswagen.

Paul, Audrey, and Shari ignore the harmless fight.

AUDREY

We'll call the theft in whenever we
get cell service tomorrow, and turn
our list in when we pass a ranger
station.

Paul writes, "1. my phone (password protected)."

SHARI

My binoculars. I don't know the
brand. They were knockoffs.

Gunther and Chang stop wrestling.

GUNTHER

(to Shari)

Probably from China like everything
else. Superior quantity, inferior
quality.

Chang gets in Gunther's face.

CHANG

Apple phones seem to be selling everywhere. Why don't you make a better smartphone?

Gunther turns red with anger and holds Chang by the shirt collar.

GUNTHER

We do make better phones than you!
We suffer from poor marketing.

Chang pushes back as he removes a new smartphone from his back pocket.

CHANG

Not as good as our latest prototype. You'd kill for this technology.

Gunther pulls out his prototype smartphone from an inside pocket of his shirt.

Gunther pushes Chang.

GUNTHER

Our latest 3-D feature for video calls will revolutionize the industry! You'll have to buy it like every other country!

Chang pushes Gunther.

CHANG

It's not true 3-D. You exaggerate the z-axis in the photo frame. Child's play. Where are you in image upload speed? Three years behind us!

Audrey steps between them.

AUDREY

You're like a couple of bullies in a techno playground. Nobody cares what your next phones are like! Settle down.

PAUL

Why did the thief take my five-year-old phone when you guys have the latest?

GUNTHER

We're not idiots. We carried them
with us at all times.

They see Shari has a worried face and is looking away.

CHANG

Your phone was stolen too?

SHARI

Yes, among other personal items.

PAUL

Like what?

Shari glares at Paul.

SHARI

No one was supposed to be within
ten miles of us!

PAUL

How would you know something like
that?

SHARI

I can't say.

Paul, Gunther, and Chang sneak suspicious glances at Shari.
Audrey notices the glances but doesn't let on.

Audrey uses her hands to signal that everyone should calm
down as she heads to the door.

AUDREY

Well, someone's been here, and
they're likely still around.

Audrey opens the door to see the THIEF (23), a tough-looking
female in a black hooded winter coat, snow pants, and low-cut
hiking boots. She points a pistol at the four frightened
cabin mates and stomps in confidently.

THIEF

Turn around and shut up. Put your
car keys, wallets, phones, and
passports, if you got 'em, on the
table and step to the back of the
cabin.

Paul is the first to oblige with his truck keys and wallet.

PAUL

You already have my old phone.
Don't shoot. We won't make any
trouble.

Audrey complies with her truck keys and old phone, and steps to her backpack to retrieve her wallet. She does not retrieve the new device from the Elderly Woman.

Gunther and Chang freely place their wallets and SUV keys on the table, but both hesitate to surrender their prototype phones.

GUNTHER

My phone is a prototype. It won't
do you any good. It has a retinal
AI scanner on it and...

THIEF

Shut the hell up and put your phone
on the table.

Chang shakes as he slowly puts his prototype phone down. He glares at Gunther.

CHANG

Does this thief work for you?

Gunther glares back at Chang.

GUNTHER

Or you?

THIEF

I work alone!

Shari tries to glance back at the Thief's pistol.

The Thief steps up and points the pistol at her head.

THIEF (CONT'D)

I said, turn around, Agent
Cummings.

Shari obliges as everyone stares at her.

CHANG

I knew she wasn't a textbook
seller.

The Thief tosses Shari's CIA identification badge on the table, face-up, so everyone can see it.

Gunther is angry as he stares at Shari's ID.

GUNTHER

Do something, Agent Cummings!

CHANG

(to Shari)

Were you spying on us?

PAUL

We didn't know...

THIEF

Shut the hell up or you die!

(beat)

All of you!

The Thief spots the climbing rope on Paul's backpack.

THIEF (CONT'D)

(to Paul)

You, the mouthy one, tie everyone together, hands, feet, bodies, the works or I kill you all.

Paul ties Gunther's feet, and hands (behind him), and then ties up Chang, Shari, and Audrey last.

Shari winces in pain.

Paul winks secretly to Audrey as he ties the knots to her hands.

THIEF (CONT'D)

Now tie your feet together, stand, and turn around with your hands behind your back.

Paul does as told.

The Thief grabs a second rope from Chang's pack and ties Paul's hands together behind his back.

THIEF (CONT'D)

Now, pack in together, nice and tight, with your heads in the middle and butts facing out.

The Thief circles them several times weaving the rope between their arms.

THIEF (CONT'D)

I'm a thief, but I ain't no murderer. And I especially don't want a federal agent's blood on my hands.

SHARI

In addition to assault, kidnapping,
false imprisonment, and theft of
government property?

The Thief use the butt of the pistol to hit the back of
Shari's head. She falls forward, constrained by the ropes.

THIEF

(angry)

I said, shut up.

(softer)

Look, I'll be out of the state by
tomorrow, and you're smart enough
to get out of those knots.

(warning)

But don't follow me or I'll shoot
you in the leg or something.

(softer)

I'll put your phones, wallets, and
passports, I don't want in one of
the cars I don't take, but only if
you don't follow me until tomorrow
morning. Give me a head start, will
ya?

PAUL

(angry)

What if we can't get out of these
ropes?

The Thief laughs.

THIEF

Then you're idiots. They're to give
me a running start out of here. But
I will use the gun if you follow me
tonight! Got it?

AUDREY

If you're the diamond thief the
Rangers are after, I'd get out of
the National Park now!

The Thief glares at Audrey, then bops her on the head with
her pistol.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Ow! Hell! That hurt!

THIEF

I'll be outside the cabin listening
and watching you. The first one out
the door gets shot! Got it!

The Thief exits.

Shari shakes her head and they all whisper.

SHARI

Here's what we know. She didn't hit me very hard either. She doesn't want to kill us.

GUNTHER

Do you think she has the diamonds?

PAUL

There are no diamonds. It's insurance fraud. Happens after every B&E.

Audrey gets her hands free.

AUDREY

Thanks, Paul, for the slip knots.

Audrey gets her feet free.

SHARI

Get the rest of us free.

AUDREY

I'm working as fast as I can.

Audrey gets Paul untied and together, they free the others.

They all pace and occasionally whisper. They all stop for sips of whiskey from their cups on the table. Shari gulps wine.

CHANG

I'm not going out there!

AUDREY

In low-cut hiking boots, she won't get far.

PAUL

But she won't be stupid enough to take the main trail back to the cars. The Rangers will be coming up after her.

AUDREY

She could go through the forest and reach the road.

They all stop for sips of whiskey from their cups on the table. Shari gulps wine.

Shari peeks out the back window and then grabs a kitchen knife and a small flashlight from her pack.

She limps to the window.

SHARI

Help me out. My government phone
can't fall into the wrong hands.

Paul and Audrey help Shari out the window. She moans.

PAUL

This is crazy.

Shari looks back at the others.

SHARI

Stay quiet and wait until I return.
Got it?

They all nod 'Yes.'

They all watch Shari limp away in the night.

Gunther paces frantically.

GUNTHER

It's a big forest. She'll never
find the thief on that ankle! I
need my prototype phone! I'm going
too.

CHANG

I need my phone too! I'll lose my
job. Maybe my life!

Gunther swings open the front door of the cabin and steps back.

SILENCE

GUNTHER

I'm going after the thief!

Gunther grabs a flashlight and an ice-climbing tool and races out.

Chang jumps up.

CHANG

We'll split up in the forest and
yell if we see her.

Chang races out with a flashlight and ice-climbing tool.

AUDREY

I'm not getting shot!

PAUL

Me either. But there may be a
reward for catching the Thief.

Paul races out with a flashlight and ice-climbing tool.

AUDREY

Idiots. All of them.

Audrey races to her pack and digs down to find her new
device.

She puts it to her face and it turns on with a dark map of
the area showing the faint outlines of five humans scattered
in the forest.

She hears the faint voice of the Elderly Woman.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

The scariest times that I can
recall in my very long life
occurred when the people and events
of the day were not who or what
they seemed.

Audrey stares at the new device.

AUDREY

You're the one who's scaring the
hell out of me.

Audrey shoves the new device deep into her pack.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I sure as hell don't need you!

Audrey puts on her winter coat, grabs her flashlight and a
climbing tool, and exits the cabin.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Audrey creeps through the dark forest. Her flashlight is of
little help. She listens and hears the footsteps of others in
the distance.

She hikes on for several minutes until she HEARS a GUNSHOT.

PAUL (O.C.)
Over here! Help! Shari's been shot!

Audrey RACES toward the location of the gunshot as Paul squats beside Shari's body taking her pulse.

He is frightened as he looks around.

As Audrey joins him, he seems more frightened. They whisper.

AUDREY
Is she...?

PAUL
She's dead. I may have heard someone running away toward the trailhead but I can't be sure. I panicked.

They stare at the gunshot wound in the chest in terror.

Chang joins them next.

CHANG
(loudly)
Oh, no!

Gunther joins them. Paul motions for Chang to whisper.

GUNTHER
(loudly)
Is she dead?

PAUL
(to Gunther)
Whisper, you idiot. She's dead.

CHANG
What do we do?

AUDREY
I don't think it's wise to chase a murderer with a gun, and we don't know which way she'll traverse to get to the trailhead.

PAUL
Then what do we do? We can't wait in the cabin. If the rangers are waiting at the trailhead, she'll come back to the cabin!

All eyes are on Audrey who pauses.

AUDREY

We'll climb our way out to the east side of the Park.

CHANG

(worried)

Over the Queen Diamond?

PAUL

There is a seldom-used trail out on the other side. Mainly because few climbers have made it all the way up.

GUNTHER

In the morning? Suppose she comes back?

AUDREY

Not in the morning!
(looks each of them in the eyes)
Now!

They all have a look of terror in their eyes.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

They scurry to pack their backpacks. Paul is frantic as everyone stares at a map on the table.

Audrey looks to Paul for advice as she points to the map.

AUDREY

Don't you agree? The only route to the far side of the National Park is to climb the Queen, cross over "Hands and Knees Pass...

CHANG

(worried)

Hands and Knees Pass?

PAUL

That's what it's called. You'll see why later tonight.

AUDREY

Then work our way over the pass and down the switchbacks to the road.

GUNTHER

It's that or sit here and get shot
by the lunatic.

PAUL

We'll follow Audrey, get to the
east road, and be rescued by the
first car that comes along. We have
no other choice.

AUDREY

Pack only the essentials. I hope
you all packed a headlamp.

PAUL

We can't take everything. Our packs
will be too heavy!

CHANG

We must hurry. The Thief may return
any second.

GUNTHER

We should eat a sandwich first.
We'll need the strength to top the
Queen.

Paul peeks out the front door.

PAUL

I agree! Let's get out of here! The
killer may come back!

CHANG

I'm too nervous to eat.

GUNTHER

What choice do we have?

They dress in their ice-climbing clothes while eating
powerbars.

AUDREY

Climbing at night is a whole
different ballgame. The ice will be
colder and will crack more. You'll
have to listen to me closely.

GUNTHER

This isn't my first night climb.

Audrey gets in Gunther's face.

AUDREY

But it could be your last and your climbing partner's last if you're not careful.

Gunther smirks.

GUNTHER

Who's my climbing partner?

AUDREY

You'll all follow me. I'll help Paul right behind me. Then Chang with Gunther helping him.

CHANG

(to Gunther)

We have to get our prototype phones back to our companies or it's over for both of us.

Gunther snaps.

GUNTHER

Don't you think I know that! We were stupid for taking them on this trip.

AUDREY

You'll do fine tonight, Chang. You too, Paul.

(Audrey puts an arm around Paul)

I'll get us all safely home!

Audrey hands Chang six longer anchors from her pack.

Chang studies the anchors and then turns and glares at Gunther.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Let's go! Follow me.

Audrey stomps out the door like a true leader.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

It's windy and cold. The mood is foul. Audrey is in the lead and hiking fast.

Paul clumsily hikes faster to get within whispering range of Audrey, with Chang and Gunther separated behind them.

PAUL
What's eating you, Audrey?

Audrey turns back and whispers.

AUDREY
(sarcastic)
I don't know, killer on the loose?
Trying to get three novice hikers
over the Queen? Surviving the pass?

Paul pulls Audrey's arm to stop her.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
It's not just that. Something
bothered me about Shari's death.

PAUL
(softens)
I know, right? I didn't think that
the thief was a killer. She didn't
seem the type.

AUDREY
Worse than that. Shari was shot in
the heart but there wasn't much
blood.

PAUL
You watch too many detective shows.

AUDREY
I'm serious. I think she was dead
before she was shot.

Paul sees Chang and Gunther catching up to them on the trail
and pushes Audrey ahead.

PAUL
That's crazy. Why would the Thief
shoot a dead person?

AUDREY
And how did she die before she was
shot?

Paul gets angrier as they walk and whisper.

PAUL
Look! I want us up and over the
Queen and out to the road to report
it before the killer comes back to
clean up her loose ends.

AUDREY
That's on me. I get it.

PAUL
I'm sorry. I wish I could be more
help.

Audrey stomps on ahead.

AUDREY
Don't fool around and fall off the
Queen tonight. That will help.

EXT. QUEEN DIAMOND - NIGHT

Audrey races ahead of the others to arrive at the base of the
Queen first.

She takes out her new phone and it lights up with the best
route up the Queen. It shows the ice temperature, the best
spots for anchors, and dangerous areas.

AUDREY (V.O.)
You're more useful than I thought!
I might have to trust you on this
one.

She studies the route, the ice, and the phone.

She hears the others approaching and puts the phone in her
front jacket pocket.

Paul, Chang, and Gunther arrive and study the ice falls with
their headlamps and ice tools ready. They are understandably
worried.

CHANG
There's no other way?

PAUL
No other way that doesn't have a
killer with a gun waiting for us.

Gunther looks up to the top of the Queen.

GUNTHER
What makes the Queen any less of a
killer?

AUDREY
(confident)
Experience.

Audrey jams her ice tool into the ice.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

We'll go slowly and methodically.
I'll lead. Paul, follow my every
move. Gunther, you help Chang.

(beat)

Safe distances apart.

(to the group)

We don't want one slip to take us
all out.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Stay positive, Paul. All of you. We
got this.

Audrey leads the way and screws in her first anchor.

She tests the anchor and it's too loose.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Not truck.

Paul and Chang look up from the ground, worried.

She unscrews the anchor and locates another spot.

PAUL

I... I... I can do this.

Chang takes two steps and throws up.

Gunther and Paul look worried for Chang.

AUDREY

Truck! You got this Chang. Paul,
listen to me and do what I do.

Chang regains his composure but answers weakly.

CHANG

Okay. I can do this. We can do
this.

GUNTHER

(snickers)

I hope your climbing is better than
your prototype.

AUDREY

Not helpful, Gunther.

CHANG

(smiles at Gunther)

I have a better instructor tonight.
Buddha.

(beat)

He's not trying to kill me.

Paul glares at Chang and Gunther while Audrey climbs higher then stops and looks down.

AUDREY

Cut the competition talk. We're a
team until we reach the road
tomorrow. Got it?

CHANG

Got it.

Gunther shakes his head in disgust.

PAUL

We all got it!

They all climb, Audrey with confidence and agility, while the others have little slips and insecurities. Progress is slow.

They are way up the Queen when Audrey reaches a more difficult reach.

AUDREY

This next reach is tricky.

PAUL

Tricky, how?

AUDREY

The underside of a diamond. The
Queen Diamond gave us a shiny
protrusion. All of you put in
another anchor each.

PAUL

Sounds too dangerous. Maybe we
should retreat and pick another
route.

Audrey looks down and out and sees a small flashlight beam in the distance.

AUDREY

No time. We'll have company soon.

They all turn.

PAUL

Oh, shit!

AUDREY

Anchor in truck. I'll climb up and over the tricky spot to the ledge above, and anchor in before you follow me.

PAUL

What if something happens to you?

AUDREY

(calm)

You'll catch me.

GUNTHER

Truck. Hey, Chang, I think we're both getting better at this.

CHANG

Thanks, Gunther. It's the only way our smartphone ideas will survive!

PAUL

Audrey, help!

Paul slips and struggles to get an anchor. It drops from his hands. Paul panics.

AUDREY

Stay chill, Paul. Slowly grab another anchor and pick a new spot at least eight inches to the right of your last spot.

Paul's hands shake as he grabs another anchor and screws it in.

PAUL

Truck. I hope.

AUDREY

You can do this, Paul. How are you doing, Chang?

CHANG

I'm staying calm with my yoga breathing. It helps.

AUDREY

Gunther, can you anchor in truck to your left until I reach the bench above us?

(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I'll get up there, and set a strong
belay to get us all up there.

GUNTHER

You got it. Thanks, Audrey.

Audrey free climbs the most difficult reach of the Queen.
It's treacherous.

She makes it to a safe ledge and anchors in with multiple
anchors.

AUDREY

Got it. One at a time. We got this.

Paul climbs, relying on the belay rope more than Audrey
likes, but he anchors hold strong.

Chang makes it next to Audrey on the ledge and hugs her.

CHANG

How can I thank you?

AUDREY

(smiles and whispers)
Anchor in again, and finish the
trip strong.
(beat)
And, you can teach me that yoga
breathing technique.

Paul glares at Chang.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

(to Paul)
Paul didn't even say thank you.
(louder to Gunther)
Okay, Gunther, you're next.

Paul has trouble anchoring in on the ledge.

PAUL

I've got me to worry about, Audrey.

AUDREY

Gunther, try not to rely so much on
the belay line.

Gunther turns to see the flashlight beam getting closer. His
eyes open wide and he climbs fast and clumsily relying on the
rope even more than Paul and Chang.

Gunther makes it to the ledge, but his hands and legs shake
enough that everyone notices.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Dig in. and turn your headlights
off. We have company.

The Thief stomps to the bottom of the Queen Diamond and looks
around.

She sees the anchor that Paul dropped.

She picks it up and examines it.

She looks up but doesn't see anyone.

The Thief yells.

THIEF
I know you're all up there.

SILENCE

THIEF (CONT'D)
I would have seen you if you hiked
down the trail.

SILENCE

THIEF (CONT'D)
(softer)
I could have made it worth your
while if you had taken me along.

Audrey and the climbers see her flashlight beam heading back
down toward the cabin.

They wait in silence. Audrey looks perplexed at Paul then
puts her finger to her lips requesting silence.

SILENCE

When the Thief's flashlight is no longer visible, Chang and
Gunther hug Audrey.

CHANG
You saved our lives.

GUNTHER
We'll never forget you.

PAUL
Okay, let's finish the climb and
get the hell off this ice cube.

AUDREY
Paul's right. Let's go.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS

- Audrey leads the treacherous climb.
- Paul is encouraged by Audrey.
- Gunther assists Chang over a tough reach.
- Gunther keeps looking back toward the forest (cabin).
- Audrey makes it to the top. She smiles.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - NIGHT

The Thief hikes past the cabin in her hiking boots and into a clearing where she parked her electric snowmobile. The cache of food is scattered on the forest floor.

She throws a little food and a bottle of water into her backpack.

She checks her park map (the same one Paul had). She eyes the road around the park.

THIEF

See you all on the other side!

She puts on the helmet and turns on her quiet snowmobile. The battery reads '76%.'

She RACES off. Her snowmobile is much quieter than a gas-powered one.

EXT. QUEEN DIAMOND - LATER

Everyone is safely on top of the Queen and trudging to the rocky forested area. The exhausted climbers are surrounded by snow but relieved when they drop their packs.

AUDREY

Let's rest a bit and drink some water.

Chang turns and smiles at Audrey.

CHANG

You are a gifted leader. Special thanks for all your help.

PAUL
 (hugs Audrey briefly)
 She knows her stuff.

GUNTHER
 (to Chang)
 So do you Chang.
 (to Audrey)
 Danke. You and Chang make a good
 team.

Paul glares at Chang.

AUDREY
 (to Gunther and Chang)
 I think you and Chang might make a
 good team. You encouraged each
 other on the Queen. That might have
 saved your lives.

Audrey sits on her pack, and Gunther and Chang follow suit
 and smile at each other for the first time.

Chang and Gunther fist-bump and share a moment, which Audrey
 sees but Paul doesn't.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 Paul, you know the park better than
 I do, where do we go from here?

PAUL
 How the hell should I know? I give
 my nature hikes around the low-
 elevation campgrounds. Your guess
 is as good as mine.

AUDREY
 You three study Paul's map. I'll go
 scout ahead and be back in five
 minutes. Don't leave without me.

Audrey hikes ahead up the trail.

EXT. UP THE TRAIL - CONTINUOUS

Audrey pulls out her new device and it opens to a 3-D map of
 Hands and Knees Pass. She sees the outline of three human
 figures just down the trail.

She whispers to the phone.

AUDREY

Thanks for your help getting over
the Queen.

She puts the phone in her jacket pocket, smiles, and hikes
back down toward the others.

EXT. BACK DOWN THE TRAIL - SAME

Paul pulls out a map from his backpack and then sits down.
The three headlamps focus on the map.

He points to their initial trailhead.

PAUL

To give you foreigners a sense of
distance and direction, we started
there.

His finger winds around following the trail to the cabin.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Here's the cabin.

His finger traces the trail to the Queen Diamond.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Here's the Queen.

(he smiles)

We're on top of her. We'll be
heading east over Hands and Knees
Pass, and should be out of the snow
in a few hours.

CHANG

Then what?

Audrey rejoins the group and traces the route with her finger
on the map.

AUDREY

Then, we hike the switchbacks down
to the road outside the east
boundary of the Park. We can call
for help or hitch a ride back to
Park Headquarters from there.

Gunther stares at a road (dotted double line) around the park
from near the trailhead to near the cabin, and to the east
side of the park -- their destination.

GUNTHER

What's that? A road?

Gunther looks around worried.

PAUL

It's an old fire safety road, full of snow, and a 50-mile hike.

GUNTHER

Could that thief and killer follow us?

AUDREY

We'll beat everyone to the far side of the Park by taking Hands and Knees Pass.

CHANG

(smiles at Audrey)
Hands and Knees Pass here we come.

AUDREY

Good attitude, Chang. Let's go!

They put on their backpacks and set out. Audrey leads followed closely by Paul, and with Chang and Gunther further back.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILHEAD PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Chief Ranger Stevens, in full winter gear, stares at a Park Map (the same map Paul is using) and points to the old fire safety road around the Park. He taps his revolver on his hip. He holds mugshots of the Thief and glares at it.

STEVENS

I'm bringing you and the diamonds in, little lady. And if you harmed one hair on Pauly's head, I'll drag you all the way back to Headquarters.

He hops on a gas-powered snowmobile with snowshoes strapped to the back. He revs it up (it's loud). The gas gauge reads a little more than '1/2 full.'

He RACES away. His snowmobile is LOUD.

BACK TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN CROSSING TRAIL - NIGHT

Paul and Audrey hike and whisper after turning to see Chang's and Gunther's headlamps behind them at a safe distance.

AUDREY

I'm worried about what the thief yelled out at the Queen.

PAUL

What was that?

AUDREY

She said, "I know you're all up there," like she didn't know one of us was dead.

Paul freezes. His eyes open wide.

PAUL

How could she not know about Shari? She shot her!

AUDREY

That's what I'm asking.
(in Paul's face)
And why was so little blood from the gunshot wound to Shari's chest?

PAUL

Do you seriously think her heart stopped long before she was shot? Like she had a heart attack or something?

AUDREY

I don't know. Her lips were light blue.

PAUL

Frostbite.

AUDREY

Or she could have been poisoned.

PAUL

You're crazy.

AUDREY

What if the CIA was after Chang or Gunther for industrial espionage? They saw her badge and panicked.

Paul stomps away.

PAUL

You think it was one of them?

AUDREY

Why is Gunther so worried about the Thief following us?

PAUL

Occam's Razor. The thief killed Shari for trying to escape. She killed a Federal Agent. That's life in prison. What an idiot!

AUDREY

Not to mention, poor Shari, but I'm scared there's more going on here than meets the eye.

PAUL

That's crazy talk.

AUDREY

Why would the thief think she could have come with us and bribe us to help her escape?

PAUL

I don't know! Maybe she's as crazy as you are?

AUDREY

I would never help a killer escape the law! Who the hell would? Accessory to murder? Never!

Paul shakes his head in disgust and walks on a bit.

PAUL

So, you're suggesting that one or both of the two tech geeks behind us may be a killer?

AUDREY

I'm saying we have to treat it as a possibility. I didn't tell you that Gunther gave Chang ice anchors on the first day that were way too short for the ice conditions while he took longer ones.

PAUL

Why are you telling this to me now?

AUDREY

I don't trust him. And he told me he didn't trust Chang.

Paul gets in Audrey's face and whispers angrily.

PAUL

What do we do? Search their packs
for poison and pistols?

AUDREY

No, they are probably long gone by
now, thrown over a cliff. We have
to learn more about the suspects.

PAUL

Suspects?

AUDREY

I'll gingerly ask Gunther questions
to see if Chang had a motive for
killing Shari and you gingerly ask
Chang if Gunther had a motive. Any
questions?

PAUL

(laughs)
What's gingerly?

AUDREY

Secretly, cautiously, you idiot! At
the bottom of the pass, we'll
compare notes before leading them
out to the east road to call Chief
Ranger Stevens.

Audrey slaps Paul on the shoulder and they wait for the
foreigners to catch up to them.

FURTHER BACK ON THE TRAIL

Chang and Gunther whisper as they hike slowly.

CHANG

I understand what drives people to
thievery.

GUNTHER

Simple greed?

CHANG

I mean, from an engineering
standpoint.

GUNTHER

You're right. It's something more.
It's the challenge of designing a
foolproof plan to get away with it.

CHANG

Why did the thief we met return to the scene of her crime to steal our phones?

GUNTHER

Without knowing the value of our prototype phones if sold on the black market.

CHANG

Exactly. Worth much more than a pocketful of diamonds in the long run.

GUNTHER

Exactly. Competing companies would pay many millions of Euros for the technology. And why would the thief who wouldn't harm us, take the risk of killing a CIA agent?

CHANG

That was very poor engineering of a getaway plan.

GUNTHER

Exactly. I believe the thief wanted to hinder all our communication, but then why draw federal agents after her? Zero planning skills.

CHANG

Poor management. She's working for someone else! She's not mean enough to be a ruthless mastermind.

GUNTHER

That's exactly what I think.

They fist-bump then look up the trail to see Paul and Audrey waiting for them.

GUNTHER (CONT'D)

But who?

Chang leans in to whisper in Gunther's ear as he points to Audrey and Paul.

CHANG

It could be one of them. Don't let on. They might lead us back to our phones.

GUNTHER

Brilliant! Let's see what we can learn from them.

They fist-bump again before trudging on.

Finally, Chang and Gunther catch up to Paul and Audrey.

Paul pulls Chang behind him.

PAUL

We need to talk.

After Paul and Chang move up the pass, Gunther gets suspicious about Audrey.

GUNTHER

What's that about?

AUDREY

Paul's being a Park Ranger checking on any health conditions Chang might have at high elevations. Private health information. I'm supposed to ask you too.

GUNTHER

(defensive)

I'm not worried about getting a heart attack! I'm worried that a lunatic killer is after us.

Gunther looks back.

AUDREY

I don't think she can climb the Queen alone.

GUNTHER

What if she had an accomplice waiting in the forest?

Audrey pauses, stunned.

AUDREY

That could be.

GUNTHER

I'd tie up loose ends if I was her.

AUDREY

I'll keep an eye out for her and any strangers.

(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Why are you and Chang such bitter rivals in the tech wars?

Gunther mumbles angrily as he hikes ahead.

GUNTHER

None of your business either!

Audrey turns her head at the word, "either" as she drops her backpack.

AUDREY

I need to pee. You go on ahead.

Gunther doesn't turn around. He hikes on ahead.

Audrey digs in her pack for her small roll of toilet paper. She wraps her new device with a length of toilet paper and steps off to the side of the trail.

She squats, puts her back to the trail, and puts the device close to her face.

The device lights up with a 3-D map of Hands and Knees Pass. Audrey sees the red outline of a human figure of herself, Gunther a little ways up, and Chang and Paul further up the trail.

The device automatically zooms out to see the four hikers, the Queen Diamond, and the Cabin with a purple outline of a human body in the forest.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Poor Shari.

The device automatically zooms out again to see all of the above plus two more red human figures on moving vehicles on the old fire road around the Park.

Audrey's eyes open wide.

AUDREY (V.O.)

Oh my God! The thief had logistic support! It looks like two snowmobiles heading our way.

She hears the faint voice of the Elderly Woman.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

Be careful of the thief.

Audrey's hand shakes as the device goes dark. She's frightened.

AUDREY (V.O.)
Easy for you to say! Which one is
the goddamn thief?

Audrey jumps up, leaps to her backpack, shoves the device to
the bottom, straps it on, and RACES up the trail.

EXT. HANDS AND KNEES PASS - SAME

Paul gently interviews Chang as they hike.

PAUL
So Gunther makes ten times the
salary you do?

CHANG
(laughs)
His government pays better than
mine. That's why he paid for my
trip here.

PAUL
And to pry technological secrets
from you?

CHANG
Gunther knows that engineers know
how to keep secrets. There are
easier ways.

PAUL
How?

CHANG
Direct bribery. The black web.
Getting your hands on the latest
phones and software from around the
world.

PAUL
It's that easy?

CHANG
I'm sure that's why your CIA agent
was murdered, but I can't prove it.

Chang gets in Paul's face and whispers.

CHANG (CONT'D)
Please help me find my stolen phone
and get me out of here safely.

Paul puts his hands on Chang's shoulders.

PAUL
We will, Chang. We will.

Gunther trudges to catch up to them.

They all turn to Audrey coming up from behind.

AUDREY
(yells)
Keep hiking. Let's go! We have to
get over the pass and down the
switchbacks before dawn.

PAUL
(laughs)
Now what's the rush?

They see a terrified look on Audrey's face.

AUDREY
I think we're being followed.

All are alarmed.

PAUL
By climbers?

CHANG
Improbable.

GUNTHER
But not impossible. And what about
the road...

AUDREY
(interrupts)
Around the park? I may have heard
the faint echo of a snowmobile.
Let's go! Move it!

Paul takes off and the others follow.

GUNTHER
I bet that Thief and killer are
after us.

CHANG
Maybe someone else found the
agent's body. Maybe we are the
suspects.

PAUL
If we could only call for help!

AUDREY

We'll have to help ourselves. Keep hiking!

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - SAME

The Thief stops her electric snowmobile and takes a sip of water. Her battery reads '48%.' She checks her phone.

THIEF

No service. No messages. Continue as planned.

She thinks she HEARS the faint sound of another vehicle in the distance. She removes her helmet but doesn't hear anything.

She puts on her helmet, starts up, and drives on.

EXT. FOREST - SAME

Chief Ranger Stevens slips and slides his snowmobile to a stop when he sees Shari's body in the forest.

He dismounts and checks Shari for a pulse.

He takes out his radio.

STEVENS

Dispatch, this is Stevens. I have an ice-cold dead body of a caucasian woman, approximately 30 years old, with a bullet wound in her chest. The victim does not match the description of the thief we're after. I'm a few hundred yards west of the ski cabin nearest The Queen Diamond. Call up the SAR team and check the reservations for the cabin, while I check it out. Over.

We hear the voice of a female Dispatch Officer.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)

Will do, Alden. Be safe out there!

STEVENS

10-4. Call me with those reservations. Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER

10-4.

Stevens pulls his pistol, turns on a flashlight, and sneaks toward the cabin.

He stumbles onto the food stash and sees snowmobile tracks. He studies them. He turns to his radio.

STEVENS

Dispatch. I found snowmobile tracks and an undelivered food cache. Can you hunt down the details of the delivery? I'm guessing they didn't get permission for a motorized vehicle in the backcountry but the entrance gate may have seen someone with a sled on a trailer come in. Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER

I'm on it. Over.

Stevens trudges up the Cabin. It's dark. He enters it like he's expecting a shootout.

He exits the Cabin a few seconds later and assesses the footprints in the snow.

STEVENS

Dispatch, I suspect Pauly and his three cabin mates headed over the Queen Diamond at night. Tell the SAR team to expect a higher body count by morning, and have a copter on standby. Over.

DISPATCH OFFICER

Copy that, Alden. Any sign of the thief? Over.

STEVENS

Maybe. I saw one recent set of hiking boots tracks without cleats heading up and back from the Queen. I'm guessing it was her. Over.

Stevens looks around.

STEVENS (CONT'D)

But where the hell did she go from here?

He follows the snow boots away from the Cabin to a clearing in the forest near the road he traveled.

He spots snowmobile tracks leading away up the old road.

STEVENS (CONT'D)

Gotcha!

Stevens reaches his snowmobile and slaps on his helmet.

He starts it up. His gas gauge now reads less than '1/2 full.'

STEVENS (CONT'D)

Maybe.

He RACES off.

EXT. HANDS AND KNEES PASS - NIGHT

The hikers trudge late into the night. They bicker to pass the time.

PAUL

(shouts)

It's a lie!

AUDREY

What is a lie?

PAUL

That it's always darkest before the dawn. See? It's already getting lighter.

AUDREY

It's just an axiom.

PAUL

Then that makes me an axiom murderer.

Audrey laughs. Gunther is angry.

GUNTHER

Stupid game.

AUDREY

A watched kettle always boils.

Paul laughs.

PAUL

Ha! If you give it enough time.

GUNTHER

Makes no sense.

CHANG

My mom said it too. A watched
kettle never boils. But Audrey is
right.

(turns to Gunther)

Play with something long enough and
it will break.

Gunther is defensive.

GUNTHER

That's your prototype phone, not
mine.

Audrey begins a dangerous game of "What If."

AUDREY

What if Shari was already dead when
she was shot?

Everyone stops hiking.

GUNTHER

What?

AUDREY

She could have died from
hypothermia.

CHANG

Then why would the thief shoot her?

AUDREY

To warn us not to follow her. And
we fell for it hook, line, and
sinker.

Chang and Gunther look confused.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

It's a fishing axiom.

(beat)

We all believed the Thief shot her.

PAUL

(angry to Audrey)

Why is that so hard for you to
believe?

AUDREY

Because of the legal ramifications
for killing a federal agent!

Audrey throws up her arms in disgust.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Never mind. I just don't get it.
Below the Queen, I think the Thief
believed Shari was with us.

Audrey hikes ahead mumbling and doesn't turn around.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Maybe I'm reading into it. Maybe
I'm crazy.

Paul twirls his finger around his ear like she's crazy.
Gunther's eyes open wide, but Chang looks suspiciously at
Paul.

EXT. TOP OF HANDS AND KNEES PASS - DAWN

Audrey reaches the top of Hands and Knees Pass before the
others.

Audrey hikes down a little over the edge. She has a clear
view of the switchbacks and the dry trail. It's free of snow
down to the road on the east side of the Park.

She throws her arms high in the air in celebration.

She quickly takes out her new phone and examines it quickly.

She sees a 3-D map of the park and the red outlines of Paul,
Chang, and Gunther behind her by 100 yards. They move very
slowly -- almost on their hands and knees up the steep
terrain.

The phone automatically zooms out to see only one snowmobile
on the old fire safety road with the red outline of a human
body driving it. The snowmobile moves slowly.

AUDREY (V.O.)

Someone is running out of snow or
fuel, or both.

Audrey's eyes open wide when the snowmobile STOPS about a 1/4
mile from the intercept with the main road.

She sees the red outline of a human hiking on the old fire
road.

AUDREY (V.O.)
I'd say we have about 15 minutes
until we meet our Thief or Chief
Ranger Stevens.

She sees a small grove of trees halfway down the slope.
She puts away her new phone and waits for the others.
Paul makes it over the pass next. He's breathing hard.

AUDREY
You made it.

Paul drops his pack and takes a few gulps of water.

PAUL
You're in better shape than the
rest of us, but it looks like a
cakewalk out of here.

Audrey sees that Paul is looking around intently.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Have you seen any cars or trucks on
the main road?

AUDREY
Expecting someone?

PAUL
(laughs)
Why do you say that?

AUDREY
No reason.

PAUL
I'd like to know how tough it's
going to be to hitchhike back to
Park Headquarters.

AUDREY
I suspect someone will be coming to
look for us.

Paul gets jittery.

PAUL
Why do you think that?

AUDREY

I read about CIA agents getting fitted with microtransmitters like track grizzly bears in Yellowstone. If the bears get shot, rangers know about it immediately. They can even tell the difference between hibernation, resting, and dead.

Paul looks worried.

PAUL

Maybe I'll hike down the road ahead of everyone and try to flag down a vehicle.

AUDREY

Fine idea. I'll rest a bit up here and wait for Gunther and Chang.

Paul is eager to hike ahead.

PAUL

I'll do that.

He begins hiking at a fast rate.

AUDREY

(yells)

Remember to call 9-1-1 for the rest of us.

Paul doesn't turn. He puts a thumb up and races down the switchbacks.

Gunther and Chang reach the top of the pass and stare over to see the dry trail, Paul almost running down the trail, and Audrey resting comfortably a few feet below them.

Gunther and Chang are catching their breath as they drop their packs.

GUNTHER

That's the main road.

Chang races to hug Audrey and gazes into her eyes.

CHANG

You saved all of our lives and led us to safety. You are the most courageous person I've ever met.

GUNTHER

(laughs)

Me too, but I'm not a hugger.

AUDREY

You were very courageous too!
Climbing the Queen at night! What a
story!

Chang fist-bumps Gunther then gazes at Audrey.

CHANG

We talked on the way up the pass
and realized you taught us a life
lesson.

GUNTHER

We were so competitive about our
phones we forgot how to help each
other to live.

CHANG

(gazes into Audrey's eyes)
You taught us so much.
(sees Paul way downslope)
Why is Paul hiking so fast?

AUDREY

I've been asking myself the same
question. I think he's expecting
company.

Chang sits on one side of Audrey with Gunther on the other
side.

CHANG

It's almost like he's escaping.

GUNTHER

That's what it looks like.

AUDREY

I think he's meeting someone.

Chang and Gunther take out binoculars and watch Paul as he
stands 50 yards up from road and looks around.

Audrey slips on her backpack and begins hiking down to Paul.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I think it best that you guys stay
out of firing range until help
arrives. I'm going to wait in that
small grove of trees down there.

(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I'll wave when it's safe to come
down the trail.

GUNTHER

Good idea.

CHANG

Be safe.

Audrey hikes down to the grove of trees MIDSLOPE on the trail. She puts her back to Gunther and Chang, squats down, and carefully takes out her new phone, but doesn't turn it on yet.

Audrey, Chang, and Gunther see Paul look to his right and smile.

The following shots are made from DOWNSLOPE, where Paul and the Thief are situated; MIDSLOPE where Audrey is surrounded by a few trees; and UPSLOPE, where Chang and Gunther have stopped to observe everyone.

DOWNSLOPE

The Thief, wearing a black hoodie and backpack, smiles and runs to Paul.

Paul races over to her and they hug, kiss, and lick each other's face like dogs in heat.

PAUL

Baby, baby, baby!

THIEF

(giggles)

You owe me big time, Pauly.

Audrey, Chang, and Gunther cannot hear Paul and the Thief, but they look on in anger.

MIDSLOPE

Obscured somewhat by trees, Audrey holds her new device to her face to turn it on. The device immediately zooms in the camera and begins to record Paul and the Thief. Audrey can now HEAR them.

The Thief sees Gunther and Chang far up on the slope.

UPSLOPE

Chang and Gunther use their binoculars to see Paul speaking with the Thief, but they can't hear them.

CHANG

We know who the Thief's accomplice is.

GUNTHER

Or is he kissing her before arresting her?

CHANG

That's why you are an engineer and not a detective like Audrey.

Their eyes open wide when they kiss more.

DOWNSLOPE.

The Thief sees Audrey squatting in some trees halfway down the slope.

THIEF

Where's the CIA agent?

PAUL

She didn't make it.

Paul points up the hill to Gunther and Chang who they see have binoculars.

PAUL (CONT'D)

They can't hear us.

(beat)

I think one of them poisoned her.

THIEF

Great! Somebody else will be after us.

PAUL

Somebody else?

THIEF

A snowmobile was following me. I took care of whoever it was with a neck-high rope across the trail.

The Thief holds her hand about four feet high.

PAUL

(angry)

That looks a little low for a neck on a standard sled. That'll only make them angrier!

THIEF

(laughs)

Well, I didn't hear them no more,
so they must have turned back.

Paul glances around and whispers.

PAUL

Where are the diamonds?

THIEF

(smiles)

In my pack. Let's get out of here.
Your truck is waiting. Thanks for
the keys during my second robbery.

We see a truck parked down the road, out of view from Audrey,
Chang, and Gunther.

PAUL

Where did you leave the sled?

THIEF

The battery ran out when the snow
did a quarter mile back.

PAUL

(laughs)

No worries! It's a rental. Let me
see the diamonds.

The Thief drops her backpack and searches it.

She pulls out a POUCH and tosses it to Paul.

He opens it and peeks in.

While Paul smiles at the diamonds, the Thief pulls out
Shari's CIA pistol and aims it at Paul.

THIEF

(angry)

You lied to me. You said no one
would be killed. I'll take those
diamonds back.

Paul hands the pouch of diamonds back to the thief.

PAUL

Gunther or Chang poisoned her. She
was going to rat them out for
espionage.

The Thief pulls out a small radio receiver and EarBuds.

THIEF

The park radio scanner you gave me said she was shot in the heart.

PAUL

She was poisoned first. I had to do something so Audrey and the others would feel forced to help me get to the east side! That was my plan after I couldn't find the food cache and your sled to drive us here!

THIEF

Did you shoot a dead body? A CIA agent?

Paul snatches the pouch of diamonds from her hand, pulls out his pistol from the back of his belt, and hits her across the jaw.

PAUL

No! You shot her!

MIDSLOPE

Audrey stands, puts the new device in her front pants pocket, and yells.

AUDREY

Leave her alone, Paul!

Audrey's scream attracts the attention of Chang and Gunther who see the big fight. They all race toward it.

CHANG

We have to save Audrey!

The Thief stumbles back, in pain but conscious.

GUNTHER

And call the police!

Audrey runs downslope toward them.

Paul uses his body to conceal Audrey's view.

The Thief regains her composure and points Shari's CIA pistol at Paul and pulls the trigger but it doesn't fire.

Paul knocks the CIA pistol from her hand and forces his 0.22 pistol into her hand.

Paul turns slightly so Audrey can see the pistol in the Thief's hand.

Audrey yells as she runs to Paul.

AUDREY
Stop it! Both of you!

Paul obscures Audrey's view again, forces the pistol into the Thief's chest, and forces her finger to pull the trigger, but just before the shot, Audrey screams, Paul turns his head to Audrey, and the Thief forces the pistol to her side.

BAM! They all HEAR the shot.

The Thief falls and blood is everywhere.

MIDSLOPE

Gunther and Chang freeze in the small grove of trees, midslope, while Audrey races to tackle Paul.

Gunther ducks to avoid being shot.

Chang pulls on Gunther's arm.

CHANG
We have to save Audrey!

DOWNSLOPE

Paul sneaks the pouch of diamonds into his front pants pocket as Audrey tackles Paul.

Now Gunther and Chang, still 30 yards away, race to help Audrey.

PAUL
(yells)
The Thief tried to kill me! You saw her!

Chang and Gunther reach the scene and see the bleeding Thief.

Audrey bends to take the Thief's pulse and she puts pressure on the gunshot wound to the side of the chest.

PAUL (CONT'D)
She tried to shoot me with this and it didn't fire.

AUDREY
We have to call 9-1-1!

Gunther and Chang dig into the Thief's pack to retrieve their prototype phones, wallets, and passports.

GUNTHER

(to Paul)

You caught the thief and recovered our property.

AUDREY

(to Chang and Gunther)

Go to the road where the reception is better and call 9-1-1! Now!

Gunther and Chang race down toward the road yelling.

GUNTHER

We're quitting our jobs too!

CHANG

It's time to live life!

While Paul shakes his head at Chang and Gunther, Audrey reaches into the Thief's backpack, retrieves her phone, sets in on "video," and slips it into her shirt pocket facing Paul.

Chang and Gunther are now out of sight and can't hear Audrey and Paul.

Paul stands over the Thief with Shari's CIA pistol in his hand.

The 0.22 Pistol rests in the Thief's hand.

Audrey eyes the 0.22.

PAUL

Don't even think about it.

Audrey smirks.

AUDREY

All this was your idea. You knew the house just outside the Park boundary had something of value in the safe.

PAUL

People get drunk and talk in the bar. I listen.

AUDREY

You knew that Gunther, Chang, and Shari arranged the food delivery, and you had the Thief rent the electric snowmobile to deliver the food, to help you escape to the east side on the old fire road.

PAUL

That's crazy. I've never seen this Thief before in my life.

Audrey points to the Thief.

AUDREY

But when she heard the shot that killed Shari, she panicked, hoped on the snowmobile, and took off silently.

Paul looks away.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

You knew that Shari, with a sprained ankle, was incapable of climbing the Queen and would slow you down in your escape to the east side of the park over Hands and Knees. She was a liability.

Audrey paces and has an epiphany.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

You were going to blame Gunther or Chang for poisoning Shari, but it was you!

PAUL

You're crazy!

AUDREY

And it was you who found her in the forest poisoned.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Paul stumbles on Shari's body. He checks for a pulse. And looks around.

AUDREY (V.O.)

You panicked. If your cabin mates knew she was poisoned that would narrow down the search for her killer. It would have to be one of us. Unpredictable outcome. Your escape plan would be ruined.

(beat)

But if everyone thought the Thief shot her, they'd be more inclined to head east over the Queen and over the pass to the east side of the Park as you planned all along.

Paul removes a small 0.22 pistol from his back belt and shoots Shari in the heart.

END FLASHBACK

AUDREY

That's why the Thief didn't know Shari was dead.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. QUEEN DIAMOND - NIGHT

The Thief yells.

THIEF

I know you're all up there.

SILENCE

THIEF (CONT'D)

I would have seen you if you hiked down the trail.

SILENCE

THIEF (CONT'D)

(softer)

I could have made it worth your while if you had taken me along.

END FLASHBACK

AUDREY

That's why the Thief was surprised Shari wasn't with us!

PAUL

Who is Chief Ranger Stevens going to believe, you or his favorite seasonal ranger?

AUDREY

Would you like to use my satellite phone to call yourself an Uber to Mexico or Canada?

PAUL

Sure. You had a satellite phone all along? Huh!

Audrey dips her hands in her pack, but Paul aims Shari's pistol at her and pulls the trigger but the weapon doesn't fire.

SILENCE

Paul scrutinizes the CIA pistol.

AUDREY

(snickers)

Only her fingerprints are recognized for firing the weapon.

Paul is furious.

PAUL

This is where we sever our ties.

Paul grabs the 0.22 from the Thief's bloody hand.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I guess my ex-girlfriend is going to shoot all the others before turning the weapon on herself.

Paul slaps Audrey with the butt of the pistol. She falls back in pain but eyes her ice-climbing tool attached with a strip of Velcro to her pack.

PAUL (CONT'D)

But thanks for getting us all over the Queen. I couldn't have done it without you.

AUDREY

Of course, you couldn't. That's why you invited me along this weekend.

PAUL

So you knew...

Audrey hands Paul the new device but he can't figure out how to turn it on. He's puzzled.

AUDREY

Don't shoot me. It's facial recognition but it opens for anybody.

Paul slaps Audrey with the pistol again.

Paul holds it close to his face and nothing happens.

TENSE MOMENTS

The device lights up an incandescent red and then shocks Paul's face like a stun gun. He goes into convulsions and collapses to the ground.

Audrey retrieves the device and uses it to call for help.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

You don't know me, but I'm in need of police and medical assistance.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

It's already on the way.

Audrey stares at the strange new device as Paul regains consciousness but remains disoriented.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

You figured it out by yourself. You don't need me anymore. You know what you need to do.

They HEAR SIRENS approaching.

Paul takes out the pouch of diamonds.

PAUL

I'll... I'll split them with you. I gotta get out of here!

Paul stands and stumbles slowly away.

Audrey unhooks her ice-climbing tool and slams into one of Paul's thighs. Paul screams.

AUDREY

You're not going anywhere.

The SIRENS get louder.

Audrey grabs the ice-climbing tool and slams it into Paul's other thigh. Paul screams again.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

That's for deceiving me.

Gunther and Chang race to Audrey.

CHANG

We heard screams.

AUDREY

Paul fell on my ice-climbing tool.

GUNTHER

Really?

AUDREY

I'll explain everything when the rangers and ambulance get here.

Paul screams in pain.

EXT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Paul is being loaded into the ambulance with both legs bandaged. He's wincing in pain, handcuffed, and strapped to the gurney.

The Thief sits on the bench seat next to him glaring down at him. The Thief is bandaged on her side. She's weak but in much better condition than Paul.

THIEF

You're going down for this, Pauly.
I'm telling 'em everything.

An EMT (30s) is dressing Audrey's facial wounds, while Chief Ranger Stevens is reviewing Audrey's recording, glaring at Paul, and shaking his head in disgust.

STEVENS

Nice work, Ms. Christie. Your mom would be proud of you. I'm not sure she was half the ice climber and mountaineer you are. And there'll be a huge reward for recovering the diamonds.

AUDREY

Thanks, Chief Ranger Stevens. I had a good team.

STEVENS

That was some feat leading three novice climbers over the Queen and over Hands and Knees Pass, one of them being a killer.

Audrey pats the new device in her back pocket but doesn't reveal it.

AUDREY

(smiles humbly)
I had a little help.

STEVENS

I'm afraid I'm gonna have to borrow your phone for evidence. I got the CIA waiting in my office back at headquarters. They extracted the agent's body after their CSI team did their job. Are you sure I can't give you a ride with the two foreigners? We need to get their statements too.

Audrey sees Chang and Gunther staring at their prototype smartphones in the back of the Chief's car. They are laughing, smiling, and talking like old friends.

Chang gazes at Audrey from the back of the Chief's car. He waves and smiles. Audrey waves and smiles back.

AUDREY

I'll meet you there in an hour.
Thanks for having my truck brought around by your maintenance staff.

Audrey glances around as if looking for someone special.

STEVENS

No problem.
(looks at his watch)
They should be here in five minutes.

The ambulance leaves and Stevens follows it with Chang and Gunther.

Audrey's truck arrives, driven by the Dispatch Officer, with a Park Maintenance Vehicle right behind it.

The Dispatch Officer exits Audrey's truck holding up one key.

DISPATCH OFFICER

The key was in the air filter as you said.

AUDREY

Thanks for bringing it around.

DISPATCH OFFICER

My pleasure. Sorry to hear about Pauly.

Audrey smiles weakly as the Dispatch Officer hops in the Maintenance truck and drives off, right past an Elderly Woman, dressed as before with her distinctive wrap-around sunglasses, bright yellow scarf, and hiking sticks.

Audrey holds up the new device.

AUDREY

I suppose you want this back.

ELDERLY WOMAN

The Gunther-Chang Super-smartphone?

AUDREY

Gunther-Chang?

ELDERLY WOMAN

Interesting story. They claim that after an adventurous weekend, almost 50 years ago, they quit their jobs and developed a start-up company in Silicon Valley called Gunther-Chang.

AUDREY

Those two? Imagine that!

ELDERLY WOMAN

They became quite famous and quite rich. Everyone has a Gunther-Chang super-smartphone these days. Their AI hologram PhaseTime app is the best-selling app of all time.

(very serious)

You'd better prepare yourself, dear.

The Elderly Woman reaches out to touch Audrey but her hand goes right through Audrey's arm.

Audrey is alarmed and steps back.

The Elderly Woman chuckles.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)

I warned you.

Audrey reaches out to touch the Elderly Woman, but she can't grasp the hologram.

Audrey's eyes open wide.

AUDREY

That's why my face opened your super-smartphone.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Uh huh.

AUDREY

And that's why when Pauly grabbed it from my hand, the super-smartphone acted like a stun gun.

ELDERLY WOMAN

It's the anti-theft app that Gunther-Chang installs on all their Audrey-21 model phones.

Audrey is confused to the point of anger. She sits the phone on the ground.

AUDREY

Take your futuristic phone back, I don't want it!

The Elderly Woman picks up the phone. It recognizes her and starts up.

ELDERLY WOMAN

(sadly)

I should take it back with me.

Audrey turns brave and confronts the Elderly Woman.

AUDREY

That phone opens for both of us because we are closely related, aren't we?

The Elderly Woman puts the phone down on the ground and Audrey stares at it.

ELDERLY WOMAN

You may keep the super-smartphone if you take a few more university classes.

AUDREY
(snickers)
In what specialty?

ELDERLY WOMAN
How should I know? What have you
taken so far?

AUDREY
Biology, Botany, Evolution.
Wilderness studies. Mostly classes
about nature.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Classes about nature serve everyone
well. But there is more to life.

Audrey reluctantly picks up the phone, not taking her eyes
off of it.

The Elderly Woman's voice is now uplifting, but fading away.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)
Maybe add a few classes in human
nature, more criminology...
(beat)
and creative writing. Pay for the
classes with your reward money. Ha!

When Audrey looks up, the Elderly Woman is gone.

FADE OUT.

THE END