

The Hill  
by  
Chuck Dudley

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

A magnificent creation, except the peak is not covered with snow, it's covered with green grass. Taller than Fescue, richer than Kentucky Blue.

Two BLACK HAWKS rumble overhead, disappear over the mountain.

EXT. BASE CAMP - DAY

An infantry of hundreds. SOLDIERS move equipment, COMMANDERS bark orders. All this activity nestled along the base of the mountain. Major General JOHN CAMPBELL, 65, gives orders to a LIEUTENANT. The Lieutenant nods, moves off.

OFFICER NATE MCKINLEY, 35, approaches.

MCKINLEY  
It's confirmed, General.

The General gets out binoculars, scopes the mountain summit.

GENERAL CAMPBELL  
Sweet Jesus.

He turns to Mckinley.

GENERAL CAMPBELL (CONT'D)  
So what are we waiting for? Get a damn team up there, YESTERDAY!

Campbell moves off. Mckinley slighted, there's more to say. He catches up to him, follows on the General's heels.

MCKINLEY  
General with all due respect, I've been ordered to secure the area--

A CONVOY of ARMY CARGO TRUCKS! Mckinley halts. The General doesn't flinch. He storms across the road. The convoy stirs up a haze of dust, The General never turns around.

The dust settles. Mckinley looks. The General gone.

INT. MILITARY TENT - DAY

A wreck room, soldiers at leisure, a huddled group plays Texas Hold'em, others laugh and debate "America's Got Talent" on a flat screen television. A group around a game of beer pong. Specialist JILL TORRES, 25, tosses the ping pong, it plops in the red cup.

JILL  
 Drink, bitch.

On the opposite side, Staff Sergeant JACK MANN, curses under his breath, downs the red cup. Now it's his turn. He aims...

SOLDIER (O.S.)  
 TEN-HUT!

Jack drops the ball. The entire room immediately stand to attention. Mckinley approaches. MASTER SERGEANT behind him.

MCKINLEY  
 At ease soldiers.

The room stands down, the leisure continues.

JILL  
 Your reinforcements, Jack?

Mckinley and Master Sergeant not in the mood, step to Jack.

MASTER SERGEANT  
 (to Jack)  
 You're going up the hill.

Jack taken aback. He tries to contain his excitement. He shoots Jill a look. Her eyes plead like a kid who wants to be picked next. Jack tosses the ping pong. It goes in. Jill quickly chugs down the beer. Wipes mouth. Eyes still plead.

EXT. TENT CITY - DAY

Rows of green canvas and vinyl structures. Tent city bustles. Jack and Mckinley navigate through. Down the road, Jill exits the leisure tent, spots them.

MCKINLEY  
 ...and if the hydrologist team's  
 measurements are correct--

Mckinley stops, turns to him.

MCKINLEY (CONT'D)  
 Well you don't need me to tell you  
 how significant a find this is,  
 Sergeant. The world will do that  
 for us.

JACK  
 I'm honored, sir.

MCKINLEY  
Who you taking--

JILL (O.S.)  
Take me!

Jill approaches. Eager and willing. A little nervous too.

JACK  
Specialist Torres. This isn't the  
time--

JILL  
My gear's packed. Take me.

JACK  
This ain't a drinking game, Jill.  
That's a real mountain--

JILL  
--one year developing a tactical  
team in mountain warfare--

JACK  
Those are real dangers!

JILL  
--another two years training them!

BEAT. Mckinley eyes Jill, impressed. Turns to Jack.

MCKINLEY  
I think you got your team,  
Sergeant. May God be with you both.

Mckinley moves off. Jill returns a devious grin. She got her way. Jack turns to the mountain, turns back to Jill.

JACK  
Get your pail. We're on a hunt for  
water.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

A crag. A steep rugged mass of rock that projects outward. A grappling hook snags into the crag's crevice.

Jill, all geared up, hoists herself and balances on a ledge just two feet wide. She stands, exhales. Fifteen thousand feet above the world! She peers over. Jack just five feet below. He strains on a heave. Air up here thin. He struggles.

Jill turns back to the mountain. Notices it -- on her left, three feet up: A simple DRIP. She reaches, puts a finger under the drip. Tastes it. Whips around, looks down to Jack.

JILL

WATER!

Jack's FOOT. Rock CRUMBLES underneath. Jack JOLTS, FALLS.

JILL (CONT'D)

JACK!

Jill shoots a look -- safety rope quickly uncoils! Quick and professional, she CLAMPS. Braces! JACK IN A FREE FALL! Slack gone, a violent tug! Jill yanked off the edge...

...and TUMBLES behind Jack down the face of the mountain!

FADE OUT: