

“The Mountain Between Us”

By Helen Lutz

Are you ever aware of the tiny guys sitting on your shoulders whispering into your ears? One is dressed in white with a little halo telling you how good you are eating that lovely salad; while the other, dressed in red sequins, explains you ate a salad which should now be topped off by that scoop of Java Mocha Chocolate Chunk ice cream. Most of us have an evil twin dressed in red tempting us to stray from doing angelic things – mine is named Pamela. When my husband and I were in Colorado, I hiked to the top of the Continental Divide in the Rocky Mountain National Park. The walk to the top was glorious – beautiful blue sky, crisp weather and breathtaking views. Arriving at the top I took in the scenery and noticed the huge storm on the “other side” of the mountain. Being at a perfect spot to act as a lightning rod, I hurried back down the path to join our group, covered in snow, slightly damp from the sleet and seeking hot cocoa.



Mother Nature also has her angelic side which provides us beautiful fall days, radiant sunsets and perfect afternoons on the beach. She also has an evil twin I have named Bathsheba. Bathsheba is winning the battles this year with her many hurricanes, wind, water and fires. While living in Colorado we learned just how fickle Mother Nature can be; unfortunately, Dr. Ben Bass (Idris Elba) and photo journalist Alex Martin (Kate Winslet) don't understand her potential fury in the latest fight for survival playing out on the big screen, “The Mountain Between Us.”

The “The Mountain Between Us” tells the story of the two strangers as they try to make their way home to New York for important life events (a child's brain surgery for him and a wedding for her) they are told that an incoming storm has grounded all flights and that they are stuck. Unwilling to take ‘no’ for an answer, Alex looks for another way; it would not look good for the bride to miss her own wedding. Finding a rather eccentric pilot, Walter (Beau Bridges), who is willing to brave the elements – storms don't scare him, Alex suggests to Ben that they go together and off they fly with Walter and his dog – what could possibly go wrong?

Mother Nature's evil twin, Bathsheba, has other plans for the little plane and its passengers as the storm rears its ugly head. To make matters worse, Walter succumbs to a massive stroke causing the plane to crash high atop a mountain in the middle of nowhere without a flight plan having ever been filed. First responders have no idea that there is any kind of a problem and the dog is the only one to survive the crash unscathed. Ben's ribs are in pretty bad shape and Alex will definitely need a leg cast for the wedding; of course, there's no cell service. Living a nightmare the two make the most of a bad situation living on snacks and melted snow for water hoping against hope for a rescue.

Ben, the sensible one, and Alex, the hot head, don't see eye-to-eye when it comes to a survival plan. The story behind “The Mountain Between Us” tells about their fight against all odds for survival. The main word to describe their efforts is ‘predictable.’ She moves pretty darn well with a busted leg and broken ribs don't slow him down a bit as they search for help. Both Elba and Winslet sell their characters, but the story leaves little to the imagination and even the tense parts, like an ice cliff, don't cause us to worry. I also wonder, what's with the dog? I guess he comes in handy when a mountain lion thinks Alex may make a tasty lunch. Beautifully shot, “The Mountain Between Us” mixes survival with an unlikely love story. No surprises and a little slow the film does deliver good performances and gorgeous scenery but fails to hold our attention. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats ... I give “The Mountain Between Us” TWO HARTS. Shot on top of a mountain, Idris and Kate do look like they got mighty cold making the movie.