

Dec 16<sup>th</sup> 2008

## Original Concept

While Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay undertake their extraordinary mission to conquer Mount Everest, little do they know that another, equally epic struggle is taking place on the surface of Hillary's snow hat.

Edmund Hopper and Teensy Norgay, two intrepid fleas, are attempting to scale the lofty peaks of Hillary's ice-encrusted hat, and their struggles reflect the adventures of the two humans.

The film will depict the heroic attempts of both the humans and fleas as parallel stories, highlighting the pitfalls of sudden avalanches, unstable rocks and cracking crevices, along with extreme exhaustion and loyal teamwork.

Ultimately though, when both sets of heroes reach their respective summits, the fleas must decide who will first step foot on the top of the world, and as rivalry rears its head, the flea team must dig deep to remember that they are in it together, and not just for personal glory.

## New Concept

Following discussions in the screenwriting class, the parallel storyline has been dropped and focus has shifted to the (expanded) mountaineering insect team. The sentiment is still the same, but the message delivery is less blatant.

The new storyline concerns the efforts of a team of flea Sherpas as they accompany a bloated, pompous louse in his efforts to conquer a snowy peak. There are five Sherpas in all, two scouts and three porters who are laden down with unnecessary equipment. They are all tethered together with the louse in the middle behind the two scouts. As the climb progresses, the team encounters many hazards along the way. The first casualty is one of the scouts who disappears down a hidden crevice. One of the porters is used to bridge the gap, and is left dangling there as the climbing party moves on. The first night on the mountain is bitterly cold, although the louse is perfectly comfortable in his tent and leather reading chair. Outside the fleas shiver. The next morning reveals another of the porters has frozen to death. The reduced party (the louse, one over-laden porter and one scout) continues the ascent and is nearing the summit when the louse makes a sudden noise, which causes a small avalanche, sweeping the last porter away (tethers are hastily cut during this). The remaining scout leads the louse to the summit, where he is pushed to one side so that the louse can claim the glory. He is forced to take several triumphant photographs of the louse even though he is on his last legs, then the scout finally gives up the ghost and flips over, close to death. The louse ponders his predicament for a second – how will he get down from the mountain? Then he looks at the dying flea. The final scene shows the louse riding the feeble flea scout down the mountainside at breakneck speed like a toboggan. They flash past the scenes of previous carnage, and over the flea still bridging the crevice, before arriving at the base to the flash of camera bulbs. The final image is of the louse, resplendent in his triumph, posing with one foot on the carcass of his flea scout.