

MAY 21ST - PERICHE

CHULDEN WOKE US AT 6.30AM SAYING THAT THE WEATHER WAS CLEAR AND HIGHLY EXCITED I WAS SOON READY AND WAITING FOR THE SOUND OF ROTORBLADES. FINALLY AT AROUND 8.00AM I HEARD THE THWOP THWOP OF THE HELICOPTER AND LIKE MARATHON RUNNERS WE SPRIED TO THE HELIPAD. WE SAID GOODBYE TO CHULDEN AND LEFT ONTO THE HELICOPTER AND WE WERE SOON FLYING OVER ALL THE TERRAIN THAT WE TREKKED IN SO ARDOUSLY OVER EXACTLY TWO MONTHS PREVIOUSLY. SUDDENLY I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT THIS TWO MONTHS, THE MOST IMPORTANT 2 MONTHS OF MY LIFE WAS OVER AND I CRIED THE WHOLE WAY BACK TO KATHMANDU MUCH TO ANDRONICO'S HORROR.

WHEN WE ARRIVED IN KATHMANDU ANDRONICO ANNOUNCED COMPLETELY OUT OF THE BLUE THAT HE WAS FLYING BACK TO LOBUCHÉ TO WALK OUT WITH THE TEAM AS IT WAS MORE TEAM SPIRITED THAT WAY. I HAD BEEN SO LOOKING FORWARD TO SPENDING ONE NIGHT WITH HIM IN CIVILISATION AND I DIDN'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THE WEATHER ( I HATE FLYING) AND I REALLY DIDN'T WANT HIM FLYING BACK INTO THE MOUNTAINS IN THESE CONDITIONS. I SCREAMED LIKE A BANSHEE, HE CALLS THEM MY "PALLETAS" WHICH I THINK MEANS TANTRUMS IN SPANISH!! AND HE BASICALLY JUST IGNORES THEM. EITHERWAY, HIS MIND WAS MADE UP AND I WENT TO THE YAK AND YETI ALONE AND PLANNED TO BUY SOME PRESENTS FOR MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

AFTER I'D BEEN IN THE HOTEL AN HOUR OR SO I GOT A PHONE CALL FROM ANDRONICO SAYING THAT HIS HELICOPTER HAD MADE AN EMERGENCY LANDING IN PANGBOCHE DUE TO THE WEATHER ( FUNNILY ENOUGH!!) AND BOTH HE AND THE PILOT WERE FINE BUT UNDERDRESSED - THE PILOT WAS JUST IN A T SHIRT. FRANTICALLY WORRIED ABOUT ANDRONICO WHO WAS NOW WAITING FOR ANOTHER "WEATHER WINDOW" I TRIED TO CALL BALARAM AND NOTIFY HIM OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND TELL HIM ANDRONICO WAS FINE.

I HEADED TO THAMEL STRESSED AND NOT THAT INTERESTED IN SHOPPING WHICH IS MOST UNLIKE ME AND I STARTED TO DO ALL MY ERRANDS. I GOT MY HSBC SUMMIT SHOTS DEVELOPED, THANK GOD I TOOK MY OXYGEN MASK OFF IN 2 PICTURES OTHERWISE YOU REALLY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TELL ITS EVEN ME. I ONLY TOOK 12 PICTURES WITH MY CAMERA IN MY WHOLE 1HR 45 MINS ON THE SUMMIT CAN U BELIEVE IT - WHAT WAS I THINKING UP THERE??? ANDRONICO VERY KINDLY LET ME TAKE THE HSBC FLAG TO THE SUMMIT SO I COULD GET A PHOTO FOR MY FATHER.

I BUMPED INTO TONS OF PEOPLE IN THAMEL AND ONE BIG CO INCIDENCE WAS A GIRL CALLED MALIKA WHOM I WAS GIVEN HER NAME TO CONTACT IN CASE I HAD AN EMERGENCY ( HER HUSBAND IS WITH THE BRITISH CONSUL) SHE RECOGNISED ME FROM MY WEBSITE PICTURES AND IT WAS SO GREAT TO MEET HER AND HER HUSBAND WHO HAD JUST COME BACK THAT MORNING FROM TIBET, IN THE PHOTO SHOP OF ALL PLACES!!!! I HEADED BACK TO THE HOTEL AND WAS DUE TO MEET A JOURNALIST WRITING FOR THE LA TIMES CALLED JENNY DUBIN WHO WANTED TO INTERVIEW ME. WE HAD A FEW DRINKS AND THEN I JOINED HER AND SOME FRIENDS FOR DINNER IN A GREAT RESTAURANT THAT ONLY A LOCAL FROM KATHMANDU WOULD KNOW ABOUT. AFTER DINNER WITH SOME DELICIOUS RED WINE ALL THREE GIRLS PILED ONTO HER MOTORBIKE AND GIGGLING AND LAUGHING UNCONTROLLABLY WE WENT BACK TO THE HOTEL. I LEFT THE GIRLS AT THE NIGHTCLUB AND

HEADED BACK TO MY ROOM TO SEE IF ID HEARD FROM ANDRONICO. ID MISSED A CALL FROM HIM WHICH PUT ME IN A REALLY BAD MOOD AND ON THAT NOTE I WENT TO SLEEP.