

"into the wild" by krakauer



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

"Into the Wild" refers to a true story of a young Emory graduate, Chris McCandless, whose dead body was found in the Alaskan wilderness by moose hunters. He was only twenty four years old. The story took place in April 1992, when McCandless went to the wild carrying a small-bore rifle, ten pounds of white rice, large boots, and a large sense of idealism and adventure about living off the land. Krakauer tells McCandless' story in "Into the Wild", where he looks at his family, his life before the trip, the lives and demise of similar adventurers, as well as, the outcome of his body's discovery. Additionally, Krakauer offers an extra mediation on the inner forces that compelled McCandless to follow his path, drawing the story from texts left behind by McCandless and what Krakauer thinks to be a sensitive streak in his personal life that coerced his personal youthful adventures.

According to Krakauer, McCandless had his own reasons for going out into the wilderness in search of adventure. Firstly, he was attracted to the wilderness with its simplicity and allure. McCandless viewed the wilderness as a place that is pure; free from modernization and its evils and also free of rules and regulations. The wilderness was a place where one can discover himself, find out what is his course, live by his own rules, and be finally free from the evils brought about by the modern society. His wandering into the jungle is not mere naivete; his journal entries confirms that he indeed finds some answers to the questions he sought answers about life. He finds some key aspects of living the way he wished to live.

McCandless also describes clearly what he is seeking in his Alaska trip: ultimate freedom. To him, freedom was all about being free from people's rules and regulations over his life. In his entire life, he had learnt that the

authorities are predominantly oppressive. He resented the idea that someone could be authoritative over him for illogical reasons. Therefore, he sought to be free from all such kind of authority. He desired to live entirely alone, in a world where he would only follow the laws of nature. This, according to him, was ultimate freedom.

Krakauer is eloquent and passionate in presenting his case. Nonetheless, I was not fully convinced with his technique. Clearly, Krakauer identifies with McCandless in a strong manner. It is all evident in the chapters that depict Krakauer's personal journey to the wilderness where he almost lost his life. Consequently, I was struck with a strange note when he pleaded with McCandless cause for the Alaska Wilderness journey. His texts seem to lack the journalist technique of impartiality that should be the norm. As it appears, convincing the audience that McCandless was right in the mind while going into the wilderness was somewhat a self-exculpation on his part.

Generally, the book is captivating but somehow disturbing in the way it gives specific details. From the beginning of the story, I could almost feel that McCandless was headed for disaster, but I kept hoping that all will be well. I was also concerned with Krakauer's palpable biasness; nonetheless, he is upfront about the whole story from the beginning. I also realized that some texts were repeated to some extent. I believe McCandless's last postcard was replicated like four times in the entire book. Personally, I was affected by the interviews with McCandless's friends and family, as well as, the small aspects about his life and death.

In chapters 14 and 15, Krakauer shows his true character as more than just a narrator, interviewer, and investigator (Krakauer, 112). He draws a lot of parallels between his life and McCandless's. In reading the book, one would almost feel how he identifies with McCandless motivations without ever meeting him. They have a lot of similarities in personalities and life circumstances. This raises the question whether Krakauer can tell the story neutrally, because he might try to impose his own ideals and story onto McCandless, which can never be known with his demise.

It also raises a lot of questions about the issue of biography, that someone can actually write it, and by picking on what to include and what to leave out, how to narrate the story, and how to actually frame it, the biographer basically has total control over how the reads will identify the biography's subject. Under such circumstances, where not much is known and the central figure is dead, there is a lot of room for the biographer to employ his own ideals and perspective. Nonetheless, Krakauer does it in an explicit manner. For a fact, he admits that he may be biased, and that he feels he is somehow connected to McCandless. Furthermore, he makes it clear where he is making his own arguments or drawing conclusion that may never be proven to be true.

The issue of switching to Krakauer's story again highlights the subject of perspective and point of view. Krakauer switches from being an author, journalist, and narrator to temporary and subject protagonist. This switch and section highlights Krakauer's personal perspective and impartiality. It also points out the idea that McCandless will never tell his side of the story and how things really happened. The audience has to depend on Krakauer's

side of the story that happened to McCandless since he is dead and gone. Finally, it highlights the tragedy of McCandless's demise in the wilderness.

However, Krakauer's inclusion of his own side of the story into the book somehow complicates the whole issue. It allows the reader to see the mind of someone who had similar passions, demons, and ambitions to that of McCandless's. Krakauer's loneliness in Devils Thumb appears to be significant in *In the Wild* because it gives some insight into the mind of McCandless' life in the wilderness. Krakauer admits that he was really lonely out there despite the fact that he thought he would do without family and friends (Krakauer, 233). From that revelation, we can deduce that McCandless probably felt the same when he was in Alaska's wilderness.

Additionally, Krakauer's story helps to point out that McCandless did not commit suicide. Even though he admits at some point in the text that he might never really come out of the wilderness alive, he believes he will survive, and he is still young to think of death, especially after outliving all other adventures. Krakauer never gives up in his quest despite encountering many near-death encounters because he has sacrificed a lot in his adventure. From this, we can learn the reason why McCandless never thought of changing his Alaska adventure into the wild. In the end, however, his belief that one can do anything so long as they have the determination is not correct because he ends up suffering to the point of losing his life.

McCandless is a story that has inspired many. He is well respected for the principles he stood by and the willingness to die from the consequences. He points out how people, including his parents, are materialistic and even goes

ahead to live a life that is completely anti-materialistic. He gave away all his savings to charity and kept only a few things that would push him for some days on end. Nonetheless, McCandless comes out as a selfish character especially when he does not care about those who love him: his family and friends. The fact that he goes out into the wilderness on his own without contacting any friend or family member is selfish.