

Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer
Study Guide

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences on a separate piece of paper. Be complete in your answers, including page numbers where you found the information.

1. Briefly describe McCandless.
2. How do the quotes at the beginning of each chapter contribute to the narrative?
3. How do the maps help the reader?
4. Who is Jim Gallien and how is he important to McCandless' journey?
5. When Gallien drops McCandless off at the head of the Stampede Trail, what supplies does McCandless have with him?
6. What is McCandless' real full name? What name does he go by while on the road?
7. Describe in detail the Stampede Trail.
8. What did Ken Thompson and his companions discover when they entered the Fairbanks 142 bus in September 1992?
9. In what condition was McCandless' body when it was found and subsequently autopsied?
10. How did Wayne Westerberg come to know McCandless?
11. How does Westerberg describe McCandless?
12. Describe McCandless' childhood and education.
13. What did McCandless do with the money he had saved during high school and college?
14. What was McCandless' view of his parents?
15. Where was McCandless' yellow Datsun found and what did it end up being used for?
16. What appears to be McCandless' view of federal and state laws, such as trespassing, licensing, and border crossing?
17. When McCandless arrived in Bullhead City, where did he work?
18. Describe the relationships McCandless made on the road.

19. Name the authors who inspired McCandless.
20. Why did McCandless refuse to take basic supplies from those who offered?
21. Explain McCandless' relationship with Ronald Franz.
22. What advice does McCandless give to Ronald Franz?
23. What kind of relationship did McCandless have with his father?
24. What is Krakauer's theory about McCandless' sexuality?
25. What can be learned about McCandless from his last letters to friends (Krakauer 68-69)?
26. What is the prevailing opinion of Alaskans about McCandless' journey into Alaska?
27. Why did Krakauer include the stories of other adventurers (Gene Rosellini, John Waterman, Carl McCunn, Everett Ruess, etc.)?
28. What family secret did McCandless discover that made him unable to forgive his father?
29. What signs were there in McCandless' childhood that he would eventually go on the road?
30. How did McCandless view his parents' worries over his dangerous behavior?
31. Why do you think McCandless didn't say goodbye to his family, even his sister, when he left?
32. Describe McCandless' relationship with his sister Carine.
33. Why did Krakauer include the two chapters about his experiences as a young man?
34. How did McCandless travel through Alaska, and indeed most of the United States?
35. What was the challenge of the weather in Alaska when McCandless arrived on the Stampede Trail in late April 1992?
36. What type of food did McCandless eat in the wild?
37. What happened when McCandless attempted to return to civilization in early July 1992?
38. If McCandless had had a map, what would he have realized?
39. Do you agree with Krakauer's assessment that "engaging in risky behavior is a rite of passage in our culture" (182)? Explain your answer.

40. What is Krakauer's theory of how McCandless died?
41. What do you make of the fact that McCandless was smiling in the last picture he took of himself, despite his obvious emaciation?
42. Some consider Christopher McCandless idealistic and courageous; others say that he was a reckless lunatic. Explain your opinion of this argument.

Bonus for music lovers: Listen to Roger Miller's song "King of the Road" (see Jukebox section of <http://www.rogermiller.com/>). Why did McCandless quote this song in some of the graffiti he wrote?