***INTO THE WILD***

**Chapter 2 Summary:**

Late September 1990, Carthage, South Dakota. Chris McCandless is a hitchhiker in Alaska and he is found on the street and picked up my Mr. Wayne Westerberg. He uses the name Alex once again. Shortly after picking Alex up, Mr. Westerberg arrives at a friends house and there Alex is fed and falls asleep immediately.

Alex tells Westerburg that his destination is to Saco, which is 240 miles away, but Westerberg says he can only take Alex 10 miles up the street. When they arrive 10 miles down, it’s raining extremely hard, so Westerberg requests that McCandless stays with him at his trailer. He stays for three days. Before McCandless departs, Westerberg tells him to come back if he ever needs a job, and just a couple of weeks after, McCandless returns.

Alex is describes as a hard worker, but very deep in his thoughts. When a tax return comes in, Westerberg discovers that Alex’s real name is Chris, but he doesn’t worry enough to ask him about his family and why he changed his name. We find out that Westerberg spends four months in jail for making a black box which gets people cable without paying for it.

After some time, McCandless becomes very comfortable with the house and the people there. Then it flashes back to when Chris is graduating from Emory University, also describing his family a little bit. Shortly after, they describe the relationship between Chris and his parents and also Chris and his car.

Lastly they explain the months and weeks before McCandless’s departure. The letters his family sent him were all returned, his family hadn’t heard from him and they were worried, and he had now changed his name: Alexander Supertramp.

**Chapter 3 Summary:**

**When:** Sept 10th 1990, left October 23 1990-end of June 1990. Leaves Atlanta without telling anyone.

**Who:** Chris McCandless, Wayne Westerberg, Walt and Billie McCandless

**What:**Wayne gives him a ride, doesn’t want to leave him in the rain so he stays with him for 3 days, comes back a few weeks later to work for him. Find out he has 8 brother and sisters (6 half siblings) Went to Emory University, donates all of his money to OXFAM America- charity to fight hunger. When graduating from Emory he didn’t want the new car his parents offered him. He loves his Datsun. Gives himself a new name; Alexander Supertramp.

**Where:** Cut Bank, Montana, Chris wants to go to Saco Hot Springs (240 miles away) Carthage is where the grain elevator job was

**July 6th 1990- February 24th 1991- Chapter 4 Summary:**

**Who:** Bud Walsh (botanical surveyor), Crazy Ernie, Walt and Billie, Peter Kalika, Jan Burres.   
**What:** Chris abandons his car in the Wash, burns his money, stripped it’s plates, buried his Winchester deer-hunting riffle. July 10th hike around Lake Mead. Gets a ride from Crazy Ernie and worked on his ranch for 11 days without getting paid. Leaves to Arcata, CA where he gets a ride from Jan Burres to Orick Beach, OR stays with them for a week. August 10th was ticketed for hitchhiking. That ticket showed up when Walt and Billie received the back mail from Chris and hired a private investigator Peter Kalika. October 28th Chris paddles down Colorado river. By end of November he paddled through Yuma. December 2nd he reached Morelos Dam/Mexican border, gets lost had to carry his canoe to the new canal. Duck hunters dropped him in El Folfo de Santa Clara. December 14th he beached for 10 days. January 11th 1991 almost capsizes decides to return north- goes to the boarder on Jan 18th (Houston to Pacific coast). Feb 3rd goes to LA to get and ID and job but felt “extremely uncomfortable in society now”. February 24th returns to Detrail Wash, Hitched to Las Vegas found a job at an Italian restaurant.   
**Where:** Detrital Wash near Lake Mead

**Chapter 5 Summary:**

**Who:** Jan and Bob Burres, Charlie, Chris McCandless

**What:** worked at McDonalds as Chris. Didn’t like to wear socks or work fast, bad hygiene. Told people he wasn’t a drifter. Lived with a man named Charlie. Goes to visit Burres in Nilands (the Slabs) help them at their flea market book table. Burres likes him because her son left. He put her gift (swiss army knives, belt knives) and of long underwear and warm clothing under the seat of her car when he left.   
**When:** Left Las Vegas in May 1991, spent July and August on the Oregon coast

**Where:** Bullhead City, Arizona October 1991until December Lots of fast food restaurants, high rise hotels and casinos near the Mohave Valley Highway, leaves off at Salton City, fifty miles away from Niland.

**Jan 1992-Jan 1993 Chapter 6 Summary:**

**Who:** Ronald Franz- eighty years old, son and wife were killed on new years 1957   
**What:** Franz picks Chris up going back to his camp on the bajada. Chris lectures him on his sedentary lifestyle urges him to sell his belongings and live on the road. Franz teachers Chris how to make a leather belt. McCandless leaves for San Diego in early February, calls Franz to say happy birthday on Feb 19th (he had turned 24 on Feb 12th). Sends Jan a letter on Feb 28th saying he hates San Diego and it’s missions, Another one on March 5th saying he was riding the rails. Wants to make it to Alaska by May 1st. Calls Franz to pick him up in Coachella after serving time for jumping trains. They eat lunch together and he drops him in Grand Junction on March 14th. Franz wanted to adopt McCandless but he refuses him. Franz takes McCandless’s advice from his letter in early April and lives on the bajada for 8 months. Franz finds out about Alex’s death from two hitchhikers on December 26th 1992. Becomes an atheist.   
**Where:** Salton Sea, near Palm Springs , OhMyGod Hot Springs, San Diego, Grand Junction, Coachella, CA

**Four weeks from March to April 15th1990 --Chapter 7 Summary:**

**Who:** Westerberg, Gail Borah- his girlfriend  
**What:** Chris works for Westerberg weeding, mucking out warehouses. Gets invited to Gail’s house for dinner, talks about his sister with her. Chris thinks a lot about the hypocrisy of his fathers lifestyle, tyranny of their conditional love. Learn that he hasn’t had many girlfriends (nor boyfriends). Reference to Walden. Westerberg says Chris intended to write a book about his travels. Doesn’t want to fly, wants to hitchhike north. Chris used to love to talk about books and be hungry for knowledge. Final night in Carthage he partied hard, played piano, told about belt. Said a tearful goodbye that may have been a warning about his fatal end. He now “walks into the wild”   
**Where:** Carthage, ND

**Chapter 8 Summary:**

**Who:** **Countercultural idealist**- communing with nature, **Vietnam Vet-** get away from people, **Wayward Genius**- **Gene Rosellini-** Krakaer met him, live like a neolith, knife through his heart, **John Waterman-**friends committed suicide, solo ascent of Mt. Hunter, ran for school board, attempted Denali-145 days in March 1978, in 1979 tries again but cabin caught fire and his notes were burned, committed self to Psychiatric Institution, Lost on Denali, **Carl McCunn,**- 35 years old amature photographer, forgot to arrange a flight back at summers end, March 1981- late Nov, made the wrong SOS sign, shot himself when wasn’t rescued.   
**What**: Krakauer hears many critiques of Alex’s advendures (Jans Letter) Krakauer offers a collection of stories about other adventurers like him. K compares Chris to *Rosellinin and Waterman= impractical fascination with the harsh side of nature*.

*Waterman and McCunn= didn’t assume someone would save him.***Where:** Alaskan Odysseys- Denali, Fairbanks, Mt. McKinley

**Chapter 9 Summary:**

**Who:** Everett Ruess

**What:** born Oakland, CA 1914, when 16 hitchhiked through Yosemite and Big Sur, After high school tramped pushed his body, stint at UCLA, lives life on the edge, a romantic, suffer philosophically, Used the pseudonym Nemo-latin for nobody, assumed fell to his death, murdered by cattle rustlers? Drowned? At least McCandless and Ruess tried to follow their dreams. Krakauer mentions Irish monks known as *papar* who find lonely places to dwell in peace in 5th and 6th century A.D.  
**Where:** Davis Gulch

**Chapter 11 Summary:**

**Who:** Samuel Walter McCandless, Billie McCandless, Loren Johnson (grandpa) Eric Hathaway, Kris Maxie Gillmer, Carnie McCandless

**What:** Samuel Walter McCandless Jr. 56 years old, kid that had so much compassion could cause his parents so much pain! Billie says she spent more time with Chris than with any of her other kids. Walt is accustomed to calling the shots, with an undercurrent of nervous energy. Walt was in a band in college played piano. 1957 gets a job Hughes aircraft, marries, 4 kids. 1965- gets divorced, 1968- Chris is born by his secretary Wilhelimina Johnson (Billie) 3rd grade Chris was classified as a gifted students but didn’t want to be. When he was 6 he moved to Annandale. Parents often fought and worked long hours- brought Chris and Carnie closer together. Chris is a lot like his maternal grandfather- doesn’t like to shoot animals, did oddball hobbies like raise chickens sold horse rides, self taught musician, woodsman. Chris’s first overnight camping trip when he was 8 with dad to climb Old Rag. Chris only failed physics because the formatting of his labs wasn’t to par. Chris competes with Carnie at playing French Horn- she’s better. He’s very protective of her. Tried to learn golf but resisted instruction. Attacks challenges head-on. At age 10 entered his first running competition. Close to Buckley the family dog- Eric Hathaway, Kris Maxie Gillmer recall Chris as cross country captain. On weekends Chris spent time with prostitutes and homeless people and was obsessed with racial oppression. Andy Horowitz says he has trouble with the whole idea of parents (forcing him to go to college). Billie tells us that Chris was good at making money even though it didn’t interest him. Offered a job working construction and paying his tuition instead of going to school right away—Chris says no way.  
**Where**: Chesepeak Beach, MD, Annandale, MD, Woodson High School

**1986-1988- Chapter 12 Summary:**

**Who:** Chris McCandless, Walt and Billie, Marcia (previous wife), Eric Hathaway, Quin McCandless

**What:** Chris graduates from high school Left on a trip cross country. Got lost in the Mojave Desert. Chris goes to Emory University- got grades good enough to get into law school. Took a job as a delivery boy- made a lot of money working hours no one wanted. Chris discovers his father’s previous marriage- and out of wedlock son Quin McCandless. He admired London and Tolstoy who were hypocrites in their own rite, but couldn’t see past it with his father. Chris co-founds the College Republican Club at Emory (Civil Disobedience). College classes end 1989- takes another road trip. Disappears to Alaska. Billie hears her son calling her name to help in July 1992.

**Where:** Emory University, Annandale, Woodson High School.

**September 17th 1992-Chapter 13 Summary:**

**Who:** Carnie McCandless, Walt and Billie, Chris McCandless, Buck the dog, Chris Fish,

**What**: Picture of Chris as a child. Carnie talks about how things might have been different if he took Buck with him, he wouldn’t have taken so many risks. Carnie works 14 hour days at C.A.R. Services Inc with husband Fish in hope of making first million early. 10 months after his death Carnie still cries everyday. Fish told her about Chris’s death when he got a call from Sam- Walt’s oldest child. Carnie and Sam flew to Fairbanks to bring home Chris’s remains. Chris was cremated and his urn had the wrong initial on it- Chris would have thought it was funny. Carnie and Billie have lost a lot of weight and are grieving.

**Where:** Virginia Beach

**May 1977-Chapter 14 Summary:**

**Who**: Jon Krakauer, Kai Sandburn, Maynard Miller (his picture of The Thumb),   
**What**: Krakauer forwards his opinion that Chris wasn’t suicidal and that his death was an accident by describing his own near death experience on a mountain. 1977 he first wanted to climb the Devil’s Thumb. Krakauer quits his 3.50 and hour job framing condos in Boulder. Hitches a boat ride from Gig Harbor to Petersburg on the Ocean Queen. Spends the night with Kai Sandburn after she invites him for dinner, reminds him how lonely he will be. Begins his journey but is three days behind so the helicopter won’t be able to pick him up in the spot he instructed. Almost makes it to top of Devils Thumb, can’t find a good way up.   
**Where**: The Stikine Ice Cap, Petersburg, Gig Harbor, Seattle

**May/June 1977-Chapter 15 Summary:**

**Who**: Jon Krakauer, Jim Freeman, Lewis Krakauer   
**What**: Krakauer tries to decide to leave or stay on the Thumb to make it to the top. He smokes a marijuauna joint and lights a section of his tent on fire. We hear about Krakauer’s family. Father had a brash demeanor that masked deep insecurities, bought him first ax and rope when he was eight. Had a relentlessly competitive nature, loved Stephen Potter, wanted Jon to be a doctor at Harvard Medical School, had four other children. Post- Polio Syndrome drove his father to self-administer painkillers, sterioids, amphetamines and mood elevators. Attempted suicide—psychiatric hospital in Portaland. The Stiking Ice cap was like medical school for Jon. Climbs down a bit more, then back up again after a storm. Makes it to the peak. Was alone for 20 days on the mountain. Gets a ride back from Freeman- timber faller from Petersburg. Krakauer claims nothing changed after his climb and that if he had not returned from the ascent and descent people would have compared him to McCandless. He suffered from a great hubris. The point is, wanting to be terrified and push your limits it a very different thing from wanting to die.  
**Where**: Thomas Bay, Stikine Ice Cap

**May 1992- Chapter 16 Summary:**

**Who:** Gaylord Stuckey, Jim Gallien, Chris McCandless,

**What:** McCandless arrives in Alaska at Laird River in hot springs. 63-year-old Hoosier Stuckey who is on his way to deliver an RV in Fairbanks at first denies his hitchhiking request but then accepts. After three days the men get to Fairbanks discussing Chris’s sister and debating the earliness of Chris’s arrival. Stuckey worried there was too much snow on the ground. Stuckey gives him his credit card number and requests a postcard.

McCandless buys a book on edible plants called *Tanaina Plantlore/Nena’ina K’et,una: An Ethnobotany of The Dana’ina Indians of Southcentrail Alaska,* and a gun. Then he walks found miles west of town and his picked up by Jim Gallien as we saw in the beginning. Heaviest item in back was 9-10 books. Because of a big thaw in early April and then a cold twist the Teklanika River’s volume was quiet low when he crossed the first time. As the river thawed again it would multiply 9-10 times its volume. Chris finds the bus, notes he has been living like this for 2 years.

Tries to go further on his journey but turns around on May 19th, less than 30 miles east is the George Parks Highway, 16 miles south is Denali Park, 6 mile radius there are 4 cabins. Alex kills a moose, hard time keeping it, feels guilty for waste. When tries to return to the highway he realizes he’s rained in, lonely and scared. Probably thought it patient the water would lower again so he returns to bus.

**Where:** Stampede Trail, Fairbanks, AL, Carthage, SD

**July 1992- Chapter 18 Summary:**

**Who**: McCandless, Ken Kehrer Forsberg, Carwile  
**What**; Reestablished at the bus Chris was still hunting and gathering but his meat was very lean and he was working hard so he ran up a sizable caloric deficit. Reading Doctor Zhivago, writes “HAPPINESS ONLY REAL WHEN SHARED”. After July 30th physical condition goes to hell, August 19th he’s dead. Theories about his death: Potato seed can be toxic but he would have had to eat pounds of them. Not likely since he didn’t carry much. Wild Potato root as the Dena’ina relied on until late spring. Chris starts eating the seeds because the roots are becoming too tough to eat.

A related species is the Wild Sweet Pea, very easy to confuse, much more toxic to eat it’s seeds (as noted by Sir John Richardson the Scottish surgeon from the 19th century, arctic exploration). Not likely Chris confused these because he’d been eating the right seeds for three weeks prior. More likely it was wild potato. The seeds of the potato are susceptible to alkaloids-chemical compounds that have powerful pharmacological effects on humans and animals. No alkaloids in samples of seedpods. THE ANSWER IS THE FUNGUS. *Rhizoctonia Leguminicola-* grows on legumes in soggy climates is a mold that produces a potent alkaloid called swainsonine. Chris ate these seedpods in damp, unclean Ziploc bags- a good culture for mold.

In *Journal of the American Veterinary Medicine Association* livestock that eat these seeds are depressed, emaciated, uncoordinated, difficulty eating or drinking. Body is prevented from turning what it eats into usable energy; sugars must be present to mop up poison. August 5th marks day 100; DEATH LOOMS AS SERIOUS THREAT TOO WEAK TO WALK OUT, HAVE LITERALLY BECOME TRAPPED IN THE WILD.

Forsberg reports suspicions that McCandless destroyed his cabin, Kehrer, chief ranger of Denali doesn’t think so- he would have boasted in his journal. Signs his SOS note as Chris- abandons his nickname Alex. Wouldn’t dream of burning down a forest to call attention to himself. Starvation is the ultimate killer- hallucinations, dies in the sleeping bag his mother had sewn for him. Last thing he did was take a picture of himself on day 112, smiling.   
**Where**: Stampede Trail, Bus 142