**Reading Accountability *Into the Wild***

I wrote this R.A. on Chapter 1 of *Into the Wild*. This is just an example. You are writing your R.A. on what chapter or chapters you were assigned.

1. **Summary**—write a 10 sentence summary (avoiding use of simple sentences) on the reading. Use 2 or 3 transitions and **highlight** them.
2. **Connection**—Write about how you connect personally with this reading. You can write about how you relate to some specific detail in the text, or the overall message of the text. 8 sentences.
3. **Analysis**—Analyze something in the text with regard to one of the themes of the book (1. McCandless’ relationship with his family 2. The impact that McCandless has on the people that he meets on his journeys 3. McCandless’ ideology, his thoughts about life and how to live it, especially through the references to literature 4. McCandless’ behaviors and character 5. The author’s personal connection to McCandless). 8 sentences.
4. **Evaluation/Assessment**—Evaluate or assess something from the text. 8 sentences.

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1. **Summary**

In Chapter 1 of *Into the Wild* Krakauer introduces the reader to the subject of the book, Chris McCandless (Alexander Supertramp), and shows us some of Chris’s character, i.e. his insistent self-reliance, independence, and determination. The author relates how native Alaskan Jim Gallien picked Chris up hitchhiking and drove him to his destination, Denali National Park near the town of Healy. The author reports that Gallien thought Chris was a nutcase for doing what he said he was going to do, but after talking to him for a while he developed a more positive view of the young man. However, Gallien was concerned about Chris because he seemed to be unprepared, lacking the kind of equipment and provisions he would need to survive away from civilization for months. He wanted to help Chris out, offering to take him into Anchorage to buy him some proper gear, but Chris refused. Gallien finally got Chris to agree to take some food and a pair of boots. The author wants us to see that Gallien grew fond of Chris over the short time that he knew him, and didn’t want anything bad to happen to him. Gallien said he thought of alerting the state police about Alex being out there by himself, but in the end he didn’t, because he reasoned Chris would be OK. He decided that if he couldn’t find food he would just come back. Gallien would come to regret that decision.

1. **Connection**

Chris doesn’t want to accept anything from anyone, the reason being (Krakauer guesses) he wants to feel like he did everything himself: his ideology of extreme self-reliance and independence prohibits him from taking help. I am similar to Chris in being reluctant to take help from people, but my motivations are different from Chris’s. I am hesitant to accept help from others because it makes me feel like people will judge me as a dependent, immature kind of person if I take help, and also because accepting assistance makes me feel like I’m going to owe that person something, and it seems awkward. For example, today, as I waited in line for the bathroom at Nutrition, another teacher offered to let me go ahead of him. I declined, and I always decline these kinds of offers, because I don’t want anyone to do anything nice for me. It makes me feel almost like I’m less-than, a charity case. Interestingly, I commonly try to do nice things for others, like letting someone go in front of me at the grocery store check-out line, or let other cars in front of me on the road. Probably I learned this early in life, from my family, that if someone gives you something, or does something nice for you, they’re going to own you from that time on, and they’ll expect something back or they’ll treat you as less worthy.

1. **Analysis**

Chris went out into the Alaskan bush without the equipment or provisions a person would need for that length of time: this may mean that he was overconfident, that because he had survived this life this long, he could take on anything; or it could mean, as some people have surmised, that he had a death wish. Chris had a lot of romantic, idealistic notions; he was dedicated to living a completely independent life and he wanted to prove to himself that he could survive with the bare minimum of stuff. He felt like if he took help from people, or if he had a lot of gear to help him on his journey, it was like cheating; he wanted to do everything completely by himself. Some people believed Chris planned to die out in the Denali National Park, and that’s why he went out there so ill equipped, but other evidence argues against that: for example, he was asking Gallien about game he could shoot and other things he could find to eat—if he meant to die he wouldn’t have been concerning himself with things like that. In addition, Gallien reported that Chris was excited and happy about going on this adventure in the wild, which is not the mood you would expect a suicidal person to be in as they embark on their final journey. Chris may have been naïve about the kinds of conditions he would find in the Alaskan wilderness, but he also didn’t expect that he would find, as the author puts it, “a land of milk and honey” (Author’s Note). He knew it was going to be difficult and the conditions would be harsh, and that he could even die, but for Chris, that was the whole point. To him, it wasn’t really a challenge unless there was a real chance he could fail and die.

1. Evaluation

Chris was an exceptional young person, to be sure, but at the same time he exhibits characteristics that are common to most people in their teens or twenties. He is very idealistic; he adheres to his ideals with passion and he lives by his principals: he never lies, he always does exactly what he says he’s going to do with no shortcuts. He lives a life of austerity and deprivation that most of us couldn’t even imagine, and he does it voluntarily. At any time he could have gotten on a plane and gone back to his comfortable life in Virginia, he could have gone to law school and lived a successful life, but he eschews material comfort and society’s accolades. I feel like if he had survived his Alaskan adventure he would have matured and could have tempered his idealism with realism: he would have learned you can live by your principals and still be a part of society and not have to live by yourself in the wilderness. Chris, like most people in their teens and twenties, sees the world in black and white, and thinks the gray areas are compromise and laziness. It is common for young people to be reckless and extreme, but usually they calm down and gain a more nuanced way of looking at life. Furthermore, Chris’s tendency to keep people at arms-length and his reluctance to get involved in non-superficial relationships is probably not, as he would say, a principled position, but just a fear of getting too close to people. I think he probably would have gotten over his fear of closeness with people as well.