

The Man Who Walked Through Time Study Guide

The Man Who Walked Through Time by Colin Fletcher

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Plot Summary

The Man Who Walked Through Time by Colin Fletcher is a work of non-fiction detailing the author's trek through the Grand Canyon during a two month period. The book divided into four main parts. It begins with the first part, "The Place." In this short chapter, Fletcher begins by telling some facts about the Grant Canyon. Fletcher states, "The Grand Canyon of Colorado is a chasm that slices through the plateau country of northern Arizona like a gigantic and impossible desert crevasse" (p. 3).

Geologists once believed that the Grand Canyon was formed by the Colorado River over a period of millions of years. The author explains how the Colorado River's course was disrupted, and instead of diverting its path, the river stayed its course and burrowed into the soil and rock. This process continued for about seven million years until the Grand Canyon was formed. The Colorado River still runs through a large portion of the canyon, although in many if not most parts, it is calmer than it was during the height of the process.

The book begins with the first part, "The Place," in which Fletcher details valuable and informative information about the Grand Canyon and its formation.

The second part, "The Dream," describes an impromptu side trip made to the Grand Canyon during a cross country journey with a friend. Fletcher had never seen the Grand Canyon and felt it was imperative to do so. That side trip would spark the dream that would change Fletcher's life. It also details Fletcher's plans and study regarding the Grand Canyon and the trip he planned to make alone.

Fletcher gives some background information on his lifestyle as a "compulsive walker." Fletcher's only real concern was if the trip was physically possible. The author was in great physical condition, but it was imperative to know if there were places that would block his path, such as the Colorado River, which is impassable in some parts, or the hanging terraces, as Fletcher calls them, narrow sloping ledges impossible or at least highly dangerous to climb or traverse. The questions asked by Fletcher at the Grand Canyon National Park Office were practical and did not reflect anything beyond the most necessary information regarding trails, weather, and existence of water sources. Fletcher shares some of the information gained from Park officials.

The third part, "The Journey," is the longest. It details Fletcher's trip from the Grand Canyon National Park Office to the other side and includes a great amount of rich detail of the canyon and its inhabitants as well as Fletcher's own personal journey.

The fourth part, "Epilogue," regards the present and future of the Grand Canyon. Fletcher believed that the Grand Canyon may change drastically for the worse, due to proposed projects by the government, making the book a requiem for what it was at one time. To date, that has not happened, but the possibility remains.



Parts 1 and 2

Parts 1 and 2 Summary and Analysis

The Man Who Walked Through Time by Colin Fletcher begins with the first part, "The Place." In this short chapter, Fletcher begins by telling some facts about the Grand Canyon. Fletcher states, "The Grand Canyon of Colorado is a chasm that slices through the plateau country of northern Arizona like a gigantic and impossible desert crevasse" (p. 3).

Geologists once believed that the Grand Canyon was formed by the Colorado River over a period of millions of years. The Colorado River's course was disrupted by an upheaval of earth. Instead of diverting its path, the river stayed its course and burrowed into the soil and rock. This process continued for about seven million years until the Grand Canyon was formed. The Colorado River still runs through a large portion of the canyon. During the time the book was written, the depth of the canyon from the Rim to the deepest section was one vertical mile. Fletcher does include a reference to updated thinking made by geologists that refers to a more complicated process of formation; however, Fletcher does not feel that those updates and changes affect the book in any way.

Fletcher is careful to point out that the changes in the earth were excruciatingly slow, that there was never any giant eruption, explosion or cataclysm. In fact, the canyon is still changing every day and along with it the rest of nature must change to adapt.

The second part, "The Dream," details Fletcher's plans and study regarding the Grand Canyon and the trip he planned to make alone. It is also in this part that Fletcher describes an impromptu side trip made to the Grand Canyon during a cross country journey with a friend. Fletcher had never seen the Grand Canyon and felt it was imperative to do so. That side trip would spark the dream that would change Fletcher's life.

Fletcher talks about the first trip to the Rim and how the immenseness and timelessness of the place put him into some kind of shock. There was a new awareness of how things were and could be. Fletcher says that he knew at that moment that the way he saw things had to change.

The author says, "It happened quite unexpectedly, the way the big moments often do" (p. 5).

Fletcher also states some facts about the beauty and appearance of the canyon and various rocks. The birth of the dream was almost instantaneous. The author claims that the only thing that came to mind was the soul deep urge to hike the canyon. The only reason to pause was to wonder if it was possible. Fletcher gives a hint at the level of his



awe when he states, "Once the idea had crystallized, no hideously sensible doubts reared up to plague me" (p. 6).

In a footnote on page 6, Fletcher gives some background information on his lifestyle as a "compulsive walker." This adds to the thrill of the potential of making a solo trek that had never been made before. Many people had traveled across the canyon, by hiking or in boats, but never solo and never in one fell swoop. Fletcher reiterates that his only real concern was if the trip was physically possible. The author was in great physical condition but it was imperative to know if there were places that would block his path, such as the Colorado River, which is impassable in some parts, or the hanging terraces as Fletcher calls them, narrow sloping ledges impossible or at least highly dangerous to climb or traverse. The questions asked by Fletcher at the Grand Canyon National Park Office were practical and did not reflect anything beyond the most necessary information regarding trails, weather, and existence of water sources. Fletcher shares some of the information gained from Park officials. Still, after learning some of the possible pitfalls that awaited him in the canyon, Fletcher says, "I do not think I ever really considered that things might go seriously wrong" (p. 12).

After detailing the plans to procure food and water Fletcher decided to stick around in the Grand Canyon Village for nearly 2 weeks because his heel was infected. The dream of traversing the Grand Canyon became a reality in mid-April.



Part 3, Chapters 1-5

Part 3, Chapters 1-5 Summary and Analysis

Part three begins with a map of the simplified profile of the geology of the Grand Canyon. The map includes a schematic of the eight layers of the canyon from the top of the Rim to down below the Tonto Platform and the Inner Gorge. It is important for the reader to understand how the canyon was formed. The author includes a great amount of detail in the text regarding the layers and their unique characteristics. The reader can also see how the differences in the layers affect Fletcher's journey.

Layers 1-3 are referred to as the Rim.

The first and youngest layer, which is comprised of Limestone, is approximately 400 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 225 million years.

The second layer, which is comprised of Sandstone, is approximately 350 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 250 million years.

The third layer, which is comprised of what Fletcher refers to as the Supai Formation of Shale and Sandstone, is approximately 1,000 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 275 million years.

Layers 4-6 are referred to as the Esplanade.

The fourth layer, which is comprised of Redwall Limestone, is approximately 600 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 300 million years.

The fifth layer, which is comprised of Muav Limestone, is approximately 200 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 450 million years.

The sixth layer, which is comprised of Bright Angel Shale, is approximately 600 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 475 million years.

The area above the seventh layer is the Tonto Platform.

The seventh layer, which is comprised of Tapeats Sandstone, is approximately 225 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 500 million years.

Directly underneath the seventh layer is the Erosion Surface also referred to as The Great Unconformity.

The eighth layer, which is comprised of Schists and Granite, is has an unknown thickness and holds the current age estimate of 1,000-2,000 million years.



The third part of the book, "The Journey," is the longest. It details Fletcher's trip from the Grand Canyon National Park Office to the other side and includes a great amount of rich detail of the canyon and its inhabitants as well as Fletcher's own personal journey.

Chapter One, "Entrance," discusses Fletcher's journey, which began at sunset in mid-April starting at the Hualpai Hilltop. It seems somewhat puzzling to the reader is that such a journey would be started at sunset rather than in the early morning, especially considering the potential for cold and unpredictable weather during the springtime. As an experienced hiker Fletcher obviously had a good reason for this choice, although it is not explained.

One of the first things the author noticed was the vast silence and emptiness of the canyon that lay ahead. Lorenzo Sinyala, a Havasupai Indian, drove Fletcher to the parking area at the edge of the Rim from the Grand Canyon Village. Together the men that looked down to the floor of Hualpai Canyon, which lay 1,000 feet below. Lorenzo offered sound advice regarding the downward trail and also relayed information about the Supai village in which he was born.

The author describes the Hualpai Hilltop and the trek to the Hualpai Canyon. Along the way, Fletcher stopped to take note of the wind as well as the silence, a topic which would be featured prominently throughout the book.

Because the sun was about to set, Fletcher began to prepare the camp where he would spend the night. The author details the process of lighting a fire and setting up the sleeping quarters. Some of the necessary items Fletcher took with him into the canyon included a sleeping bag, portable stove, water, dehydrated rations, and an air mattress. Fletcher also discusses the process of cooking the rations and the limited amount of water.

Once again, Fletcher refers to the antiquity of the canyon down to the vast emptiness and silence down there. It is nearly impossible for the author or the reader to mentally grasp the immenseness of the surroundings and the fact that the canyon itself may be as old as 1,000 to 2,000 million years old. The author asks if it is even possible to understand such a large number and to put it into any form of relatable context.

Chapter two, "Reconnaissance," details Fletcher's track from the Hualpai Canyon to Havasu Canyon and onward to the Supai Village.

One of the major adjustments for Fletcher was changing his mindset from a workaday life to a new and more simplistic existence. Fletcher says, "You know, of course, that you are going to renounce the complexities of civilization and embrace the simple life. And you know that the simple life can lead to insight: even our brusque Western tradition sometimes admits that it is so" (p. 27).

Fletcher becomes concerned about the physical challenge of hiking through the gorge. On the first night in the Canyon, Fletcher begins to observe the geology which helped him to better grasp the formation of the canyon. Fletcher decided to spend the first week in a tourist-laden area just outside the Supai Village. The week would consist of a



shakedown cruise, getting used to the climate, and reconnaissance. Fletcher also describes the Supai Village and the only inhabitable location in the canyon outside the village - Phantom Ranch, a small tourist hotel, located midway on the trail leading from Rim to Rim.

Fletcher states that the first week was a lot harder and more involved than he intended. For the first three days, the author moved farther into the canyon and into the Supai Village, where he would pick up necessary supplies and condition his body for the long physical trek.

There are plenty of stories about what a hiker might see along the trek through Havasu Canyon, including the notion that there were still parts that were virgin territory. Fletcher describes in detail the scenes along the way. At this point, Fletcher had reached the Redwall, which he found to be friendly looking. The trip confirmed Fletcher's earlier assumption that the reconnaissance of the Inner Gorge would be extremely important. Fletcher makes several references to the trek made by John Wesley Powell, a civil war major who is credited with making the first trip through Grand Canyon.

Fletcher speaks of realizing the insignificance of man in comparison to the canyon and nature as a whole. The author also details the physical elements of the canyon, including what he refers to as hanging terraces, jutting rocks and ledges, the weather and various bodies of water and layers of rocks.

Chapter three, "Interlude," begins with Fletcher discussing the Havasupai Indians that live between the Inner Gorge and the Rim. The only links between the Havasupai, often referred to as the Supai, and the outside world were the telephone and the well-traveled trail to Hualpai Hilltop.

Fletcher is fascinated by the lifestyle of the Supai. The tribe can be compared to an island lost in time. Once Fletcher stopped being preoccupied with his own needs, he began to realize that perhaps the Supai lived in Shangri-La, as Fletcher had once been told. Even though this was a populated area and well-traveled by tourists and hikers, Fletcher was surprised by the presence of people on horseback, dogs, and other travelers. Unfortunately, a large number of people hiking the area meant that the dust got kicked up and covered everything from cacti to flowers and foliage.

Because of the location of the Supai Village, the tribe was able to adapt to the presence of the white man more gradually than other newly inhabited spaces. Fletcher talks about the tribe's perseverance and ability to survive in an area that was often referred to as being dead for lack of water and vegetation. Fletcher also discusses his meeting with Neil Ukwalla, a cheerful man who served as the tribal tourist manager who kept an office in the Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a government agency established to protect the rights of Native Americans.

Fletcher begins to worry about the possibility of bad weather.

Chapter four, "Challenge," details Fletcher's arrival at the Esplanade. The arrival was a welcome sight and would present no trials for Fletcher's spirit. The area was wide open,



a welcome respite from closed in spaces. The author details the wide open space and red rock that lay before him and the amazement at the long distance he could see with the naked eye.

Fletcher says that almost all of the credit for the things he knows about the Grand Canyon can be attributed to his contact with Dr. Harvey Butchart, a mathematics professor at the Arizona State College in Flagstaff. Dr. Butchart, a jolly schizophrenic, had spent seventeen years studying the canyon, its geology and challenges. Butchart was happy to share this information with Fletcher and even invited the author to his home. The men had long and involved conversations about the canyon, and Fletcher found that many of his assumptions were confirmed.

Fletcher continued to traverse the Esplanade and approached Mount Sinyala and Sinyala Canyon, presumably named after at least one member of Lorenzo Sinyala's family. The author reiterates that forging a trail is one of the most difficult and important tasks. However, it was easy to be distracted by the juxtaposition of the smooth sky and the rough textures of the rocks below. The openness thrilled Fletcher, particularly after spending some time in the cramped side canyons. Fletcher is amazed how the eye can see for many miles but the mind remembers those cramped spaces in which one could not see very far at all.

Although there is peace in the silence and surroundings, the author cannot help but feel some fear about what lies ahead; comparing it to stage fright. There is a big decision to be made regarding the route to take. There are two choices: the rock terraces or the talus. The rock terraces are erratic, and in this part of the Esplanade they are not always concurrent. Often times they simply disappear or are too dangerous to climb. The talus is basically scrub and gravel, which in some ways is easier but it takes longer to cover ground. Fletcher reiterates that in hiking it is not the number of miles that count but the hours.

Fletcher surpassed the site of the first air drop and nearly missed the shipment. The Cessna that delivered the rations traveled over many times before noticing Fletcher's signal.

Chapter five, "Transition," begins with the Cessna going off into the distance. Fletcher was pleased that he was able to cover so much ground ahead of schedule and felt better about the physical aspect of the trip. Even though he had contact of sorts with the outside world, the author did not feel any interruption in the solitude.

The rations delivered by the Cessna were welcome and Fletcher treated himself to a small feast.

A big dilemma came before Fletcher in the shape of Fossil Canyon. Fletcher spent a couple of days on recon to attempt to figure out which route to take - the one he had pre-planned or the one through the canyon. Eventually Fletcher decided that transitioning to the route to Bass Camp would be smarter and less dangerous.

Bass Camp was the site for a drop off. Fletcher had found a note in the care package from Jim Bailey stating that he had to be in Bass Camp about the time Fletcher was due to arrive. Surprisingly, the men met at the camp.



Part 3, Chapters 6-10

Part 3, Chapters 6-10 Summary and Analysis

Chapter Six, "Rock," is devoted to Fletcher's attention as it analyzes and describes the rocks of the canyon. In the beginning of the chapter, Fletcher notices these things while chatting with Jim Bailey, who for Fletcher was a sight for sore eyes. Fletcher had not spoken to anyone in two weeks.

One of the outcroppings that caught Fletcher's eye was the white limestone inside the cave where Fletcher's first cache was stored. As Fletcher followed the trail, the author focused more on the red sandstone. Fletcher also talks about the beauty of a juniper beside the Redwall, the perfect place to set up camp.

As Fletcher goes deeper into the canyon, he describes the effect of seeing all of the layers, strata upon strata, from the top of the Rim. The sight is something that Fletcher never would have seen in everyday life, the magnificence of precarious rock platforms that look as if they were going to crash down at any minute. Fletcher surmises that the observation was made long ago and will be made again many years hence.

As Fletcher continues to travel, he claims to be able to hear the rhythm of the rock.

Chapter Seven, "Rhythm," continues Fletcher's musing about the rocks. It took the author a week to cover the distance between Bass Trail and Phantom Ranch. Looking back, Fletcher says that the distance traveled showed his physical ability, which was pleasing to note. There was much progress made.

The trip was not one of constant motion. In fact, Fletcher outlines how he spent many of his days when he was not on the trail. Fletcher spent two days resting at Bass Trail, one day doing recon at the Inner Gorge, and four days walking along the Tonto Platform, 1,000 feet above the river. Fletcher compares thought and presence to walking and modulation, adapting to one's environment. At the beginning of the trip, all of the parts and sights were fragments, some illusory. As time went on, those things began to mesh, crystallize, and become cohesive in a way that Fletcher had ever experienced.

Aside from the realizations of the oneness of nature, Fletcher also shares details of daily activities, including chores, fishing, and days of nothing but rest.

Fletcher continues to describe many separate things in detail and helps the reader to weave them together as one might in the canyon. Mentioned are plants, blood bowls and other insects, a lizard, a rattlesnake, and so on. The author is careful not only to note these items in passing but to stop and truly study them, allowing himself the time to do so. Fletcher also talks about the fact that the area past the head of Forester Canyon had been wild burro country. The creatures were hardy and Fletcher pays homage to them for their creation of various trails. At times, the trails became networks which could be both a benefit and a curse, particularly if the hiker chose the wrong arm to take. The



trails went on for days through canyon and side canyon and Fletcher traveled from dawn until dusk.

Fletcher devotes a large portion of this chapter to the life of William Wallace Bass, a wanderer who had traveled west to find better climate for his tuberculosis, hoping for a cure or at least a respite. The move was a wise one for Bass, who did live a long life. Unfortunately, Bass was no luckier than many of the prospectors and did not make a fortune off of copper or gold. In order to keep food on the table, Bass opened up a small ranch where tourists could hire him as a tour guide to host hunting and traveling expeditions. Bass Camp was born.

Bass lived in the canyon for forty years until his retirement at age seventy-six. His ashes were spread atop a butte known as Holy Grail Temple.

Fletcher applauded Bass for his knowledge of construction. Nearly one hundred years after Bass Camp was built, at least one of the houses was still in existence. Although Fletcher would learn about many things he had in common with Bass, there were some significant differences. Although it was not clear how much the landscape had changed in the short amount of time since Bass lived in the canyon, Fletcher was not fond of the location in which the man chose to build. Additionally, the calm portions of the river and sparkling pool beds in Fletcher's day were nothing like the turbulent Colorado River described by Bass.

The burros that are an integral part of the canyon are often considered to native to the area but are in fact accidental importations into the canyon. Some of those imports are attributed to Bass. Somewhere along the way, Fletcher connects the canyon to the Celts, without ever stating if Bass was a Celt or even Welsh, another connection made by the Welsh author.

The rhythm of the rocks continues to speak to Fletcher. The schematic and geology discussed earlier in the book becomes even more important in this section as Fletcher describes each, how the layers correlate and form the unique structure. Fletcher also discusses the gap between the ages of two layers, often referred to by geologists as "The Great Unconformity."

Fletcher approached Phantom Ranch and began to notice signs of man. The first real signs appeared after Hermit Ranch, which was dilapidated and decaying back into the earth. It was just past the Hermit Ranch that Fletcher saw the first Park Service sign since he had visited the Supai.

The presence of man and his trappings is almost a complete annoyance to Fletcher, who had become used to the open space and absence of mortals.

Chapter Eight, "Life," begins with Fletcher stating: "I should have known, of course, that the Phantom Ranch would drag me back into the present" (p. 149). Phantom Ranch was a tourist hotel on the Rim of the canyon most used by tourists. It borders a paved highway so that the canyon can be viewed from the top. It is also a place where people may arrange hikes, burro rides and other activities.



Although the more urbane tourists saw the Canyon as being the edge of wilderness, the end of the line, Fletcher saw it as nothing more than padded civilization. The canyon was the same at this part of the Rim as the others, but in Fletcher's mind it was completely different. Even reconnecting with the various layers of rocks and sights, the entire experience felt nothing like what Fletcher had witnessed earlier.

It is interesting to see that Fletcher's previous discomfort with the silence is the one thing he now covets. The silence has become such a part of the journey that everyone at the Phantom Ranch and in the surrounding area seems to be invading his personal space. The people are loud and their actions chaotic, they leave behind messes and do not have the same reverence for the canyon and nature as the author.

Fletcher discusses his time at Phantom Ranch and how he still attempted to enjoy the rocks and the silence where he could find it, something was markedly different. Suddenly, there seemed to be a barrier between Fletcher and the canyon, one that had not existed since the very beginning of the trip. Fletcher wonders if the presence - or absence - of his camera had anything to do with the feeling of disconnection. Because Fletcher's camera was long gone, he stayed at Phantom Ranch long enough to have one sent from San Francisco. Playing with a new toy, particularly one Fletcher knew he would enjoy, would certainly rekindle that passion and oneness.

One of Fletcher's favorite scenes during this time was a cliff that he had originally tried to avoid. The cliff turned out to be in various colors, blues and reds. The face of the cliff was decorated with rock formations that jutted out like a snaggle tooth sculpture that took millions of years to form. Fletcher was enthralled by the structure. Nearby, on what is known as Beaver Sand Bar, Fletcher took note of the presence of some creatures in the water. There were six beavers. Fletcher took the opportunity to observe them without making any move to disrupt their routine. The beavers were amusing to Fletcher and the author takes delight in describing their activities and noises. The scene also reminds Fletcher of experiences he had had five years earlier on the trek from Mexico to Oregon during what has been referred to as the Thousand Mile Summer.

At this point in the expedition, Fletcher realized that he was no longer in awe of the vastness and magnificence of the canyon. There was obvious life, more life, on the sandbar and Fletcher became very interested in the activities of the beavers. Fletcher also began to take notice of other subtler forms of life on the sandbar. The more Fletcher watched the more he noticed the unity of the animals, plants and insects that shared the area. It seemed to be the perfect union and would leave a distinct impression on the author.

Chapter Ten, "Man," begins with Fletcher on the eight day after leaving Phantom Ranch. The author was headed to the next air drop site. During this time, Fletcher finally had a clear vision of where he should go after leaving the Beaver Sandbar.

Fletcher only had two more weeks left in the canyon. Those two weeks would be spent at the museum, learning all he could about the artifacts, history that he had not studied



before the expedition and discovering various interpretations of various items and happenings drawn out of the canyon.

Doug Powell, a geologist, was Fletcher's friend and a direct descendant of John Wesley Powell, the first man to cross the canyon. Powell had agreed to meet Fletcher at the museum to give his take and input on the various items Fletcher was interested in studying.

Powell met Fletcher after recovering from a bout with dysentery. The men spent four days together, and after having spent so much time in solitude, Fletcher found the constant companionship hard to take. Because Powell had such a tight schedule, he was forced to return after giving Fletcher some of the much needed insight he desired.

After Powell left, Fletcher continued to study artifacts. The book also includes a journal entry written by John Wesley Powell shortly before starting on the trek into the canyon. In addition to the physical trappings, Fletcher once again comments that there were much bigger realizations, including one's purpose and place in the world. Fletcher writes: "Now, no matter how often we tell ourselves that there is no intellectually discernible purpose in life I think we most of us tend, at some deep level, to keep on attempting our reconciliation - our search for meaning - in terms very close to 'purpose'" (p. 217).

Chapter eleven, "Exit," details the egress of Fletcher from the Grand Canyon where he had spent two months. Fletcher gives a quick review of the major finds and of what he had hoped to find or uncover during the journey. The author was able to assimilate the information and experience so that when it was time to return to the civilized world he could do so with greater wisdom and a smile on his face.



Part 4, Epilogue

Part 4, Epilogue Summary and Analysis

The Grand Canyon may change drastically for the worst, making the book a requiem for what it was at one time. After returning from the journey through the Grand Canyon, Colin Fletcher went to a conference regarding the Pacific Southwest Water Plan. Fletcher was horrified at the proposed water plan. The author details the group's intentions on making drastic changes within the canyon. The engineers and others involved were fascinated by the challenges the changes would make, and the author believes that it was also an effort to safeguard their jobs. The Pacific Southwest Water Plan included creating three large-scale projects in the Grand Canyon, a tunnel and two dams. Fletcher claims that the US Bureau of Reclamation has spent a great deal of time soft pedaling the total project, but if Congress were to sanction the two dams, it is inevitable that the subject of the tunnel project would come up once again. The author also points out that there are limits to the proposals, including the fact that none of the three structures would actually be present inside the canyon.

Although the canyon might not look different from the top of the Rim, the author believes that the heart of the canyon would no longer exist. Fletcher also states that while some objectors believe the dams would flood out the canyon, it was not true. There would be a reservoir which would often leave pools of lifeless water. Evaporation would waste much more water than it would conserve. These are the most obvious issues with the project; however, Fletcher details many other issues which are far less evident. One of the things of great concern to Fletcher was the pollution and graffiti that would surely mar the ancient cliff dwellings. Although the canyon may look the same, the magic will no longer be present. Fletcher says, "The story of the earth will still be there, written in the rocks; but the canyon will no longer be a huge, uninterrupted, and developing world of space and solitude and silence" (p. 238).

Fletcher goes on to say that men have no right to vandalize such a natural museum. Even the reasons that were given by the engineers were flawed. There are also many intangible items that don't be measured or assigned with a dollars per capita value. Fletcher refers to a comment made by President Theodore Roosevelt, who said that the Grand Canyon could not be improved upon and should be left as is.



Characters

Colin Fletcher

Colin Fletcher (1922-2007) was a well-known author, environmentalist, and backpacking enthusiast. Born in Cardiff, Wales, Fletcher went to school in Britain before joining the Royal Marines during World War II. After leaving the military, Fletcher traveled to Kenya, where he farmed for four years. In the 1950s, Fletcher relocated to Canada where he became a prospector and then moved to California in 1956.

Fletcher's career began with his first book, *The Thousand Mile Summer*, published in 1964 after Fletcher had walked the entire state of California. Fletcher's next two books, *The Man Who Walked Through Time* and *The Complete Walker*, both published in 1968, sealed Fletcher's destiny as a sort of spiritual godfather to hikers worldwide. *The Complete Walker* was revised several times, often with input from readers, and is often referred to as the "Hiker's Bible."

In 1963, Fletcher and a friend took a side trip to the Grand Canyon going across the US. When Fletcher saw what lay beyond the rim, he knew that the trek had to be made. The journey ended up being the very first accomplished by anyone in a single trip. Along the way, Fletcher gained great spiritual insight and an even deeper love for nature.

Fletcher published ten books in all. He was working on his autobiography when he died in California in 2007.

John Wesley Powell

John Wesley Powell (1834 -1902) was a geologist, anthropologist, scientist, and noted explorer of the American West. Throughout *The Man Who Walked Through Time*, Fletcher makes several references to Powell and the famous 1869 Powell Geographic Expedition made via John Wesley Powell, a civil war major who had lost an arm in the war. Powell is credited with taking the first group through the canyon on a three-month-long expedition, the first to cross the canyon. Not all of the men survived. Three of the nine were lost and presumed to have been killed by Indians.

Fletcher states doubts about the trek, comparing himself to Powell. Powell had forced his way down the river and was a tough and rugged man. Would Fletcher be able to do the same?

The Powell Geographic Expedition also included traveling down the Colorado and Green Rivers with Powell's group of European passengers. This experience would eventually lead Powell to a second expedition in 1871 and the publishing of "Report of the Exploration of the Columbia River of the West and Its Tributaries," which became known as "The Exploration of the Colorado River and Its Canyons."



In addition to his travels, Powell served as the second director of the US Geological Survey, the director of the Smithsonian's Bureau of Ethnology, and the Professor Geology at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Lorenzo Sinyala

Lorenzo Sinyala, a Havasupai Indian, drove Fletcher to the parking area at the edge of the Rim from the Grand Canyon Village. Lorenzo offered sound advice regarding the downward trail and also relayed information about the Supai village in which he was born.

Havasupai Indians

The Havasupai Indians, often referred to the Supai, were the only tribe to settle and survive in the Grand Canyon.

Neil Ukwalla

Neil Ukwalla was a cheerful man who served as the tribal tourist manager and kept an office in the office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

William Wallace Bass

William Wallace Bass was a would-be prospector turned guide and dude ranch owner. Bass Trail and Bass Camp were named after the nineteenth century explorer.

Jim Bailey

Jim Bailey was a park ranger and Fletcher's main contact throughout the course of the expedition.

Dr. Harvey Butchart

Dr. Harvey Butchart was a mathematics professor at the Arizona State College in Flagstaff. Dr. Butchart, a jolly schizophrenic, had spent seventeen years studying the canyon, its geology and challenges. Butchart was happy to share this information with Fletcher and even invited the author to his home. The men had long and involved conversations about the canyon and Fletcher found that many of his assumptions were confirmed.

Tourists

Fletcher went from being a tourist to being a part of the Canyon itself. As a result, Fletcher began to resent the tourists, their ill manners, lack of reverence and manners.

Pioneers

Fletcher makes references to several pioneers that traveled throughout the west in the nineteenth century. Two of those pioneers played large parts in the world of the Grand Canyon - William Wallace Bass and John Wesley Powell.



Objects/Places

Grand Canyon

The main setting in *The Man Who Walked Through Time* is the Grand Canyon. The experiences regarding the canyon belong to the author, the first man to traverse the Grand Canyon on foot in one fell swoop.

Fletcher states, "The Grand Canyon of Colorado is a chasm that slices through the plateau country of northern Arizona like a gigantic and impossible desert crevasse" (p. 3).

Geologists once believed that the Grand Canyon was formed by the Colorado River over a period of millions of years.

In 1963, Fletcher and a friend took a side trip to the Grand Canyon going across the US. When Fletcher saw what lay beyond the Rim, he knew that the trek had to be made. The journey ended up being the very first accomplished by anyone in a single trip. Along the way, Fletcher gained great spiritual insight and an even deeper love for nature.

This two month-long journey gave Fletcher material to write this book, which encompasses the physical journey as well as one involving spirit. Much credit is also given to the pioneers who went before Fletcher, namely William Wallace Bass, after whom Bass Camp and Bass Trail were named, and John Wesley Powell, the first man on record to ever take tourists into the canyon while serving as their guide. The main differences in the trek Fletcher made in comparison to Powell's expedition is that Powell did not make the entire trip at one time; Fletcher did. Also, Powell tended to stay on the river while Fletcher chose to stay mostly on land.

Colorado River

The Grand Canyon was formed through erosion created by the mighty Colorado River. Geologists once believed that the Grand Canyon was formed by the Colorado River over a period of millions of years. The Colorado River's course was disrupted by an upheaval of earth, which created a type of dome. Instead of diverting its path, the river stayed its course and burrowed into the soil and rock. This process continued for about seven million years until the Grand Canyon was formed. The Colorado River still runs through a large portion of the canyon. During the time the book was written, the depth of the canyon from the Rim to the deepest section was one vertical mile. Fletcher does include a reference to updated thinking made by geologists that refers to a more complicated process of formation; however, Fletcher does not feel that those updates and changes affect the book in any way.

Fletcher makes comparisons to the Colorado River of his understanding to the descriptions left by John Wesley Powell. Powell referred to the river as rough and wild,



not easily traversed or tamed. While the river could be those things, many of the parts Fletcher saw and recorded were calm and created the serene pools that refilled his canteens.

Bass Camp

Bass Camp was the settlement erected by William Wallace Bass in the late nineteenth century. The man also gave his name to Bass trail. Bass Camp is one of the places used by Fletcher as a rendezvous point for obtaining rations.

Tonto Platform

Tonto Platform is the shelf that rests atop the Great Unconformity. The area is large and Fletcher spends a great deal of time walking along the platform and explaining the differences in relation to the other layers of strata.

Hualpai Hilltop

Hualpai Hilltop is the starting point for Fletcher's journey. The hilltop is at the rim of the canyon and eventually leads down into the first major canyon of the trip - Hualpai Canyon.

Forester Canyon

Forester Canyon was the place at which Fletcher had to make a major decision regarding which route to take toward Bass Camp. Fletcher also talks about the fact that the area past the head of Forester Canyon had been wild burro country.

Phantom Ranch

Phantom Ranch was a small tourist hotel located at the rim of the canyon. The area sees a great deal of foot traffic and is the place where many people arrange for tours and burro rides.

Rock Terraces

Rock Terraces were mentioned frequently throughout the book. Fletcher often refers to them as being hanging terraces because they look as if they are practically suspended in the air. The terraces, although beautiful, could pose a great deal of danger to hikers and tourists.



Havasu Canyon

Havasu Canyon is one of the other major canyons traversed by Fletcher at the beginning of the expedition.

Havasupai Village,

Havasupai Village, also known as Supai Village, is the only inhabited settlement inside the canyon. The Supai are a hearty tribe whose only contact with the outside world includes occasional tourists and the telephone.



Themes

Travel

One of the main themes in *The Man Who Walked Through Time* by Colin Fletcher is travel. The theme covers many different types of travel, physical and metaphysical as well as emotional and spiritual.

Fletcher began to travel shortly after a six year stint in the Royal Marines in the UK. After leaving the military, Fletcher traveled to Kenya, where he farmed for four years. In the 1950s, Fletcher relocated to Canada where he became a prospector and then moved to California.

Fletcher's career began with his first book, *The Thousand Mile Summer*, published in 1964 after Fletcher had walked the entire state of California. Fletcher's next two books, *The Man Who Walked Through Time* and *The Complete Walker*, both published in 1968, sealed Fletcher's destiny as a sort of spiritual godfather to hikers worldwide. *The Complete Walker* was revised several times, often with input from readers, and is often referred to as the "Hiker's Bible."

It was after Fletcher moved to California that he began to get the traveling bug again. The book details Fletcher's travels around the US, which typically included remote places and interesting cultures far removed from the life of a typical person living in California. Fletcher brings concise and vivid details to the telling of his trek, which makes it even more interesting for the reader.

Along with outward travels, Fletcher also travels inward. The author departs from his workaday life for two months and begins to delve into his inner being, becoming intensely interested in various areas of metaphysics. The two areas of the author's life mesh in many ways to provide Fletcher, and the reader, with an interesting journey.

Rock Formations

Because of the nature of the book, Fletcher's main theme focuses on the rock formations as well as the specific layers of the canyon itself. In the beginning of Part 3, Fletcher includes a map to show specifically how the canyon was formed. It is imperative that the reader know and understand how the canyon was formed, the length of time it took and how each layer differs from the others.

The map includes a schematic of the eight layers of the canyon from the top of the Rim to down below the Tonto Platform and the Inner Gorge. It is important for the reader to understand how the canyon was formed. The author includes a great amount of detail in the text regarding the layers and their unique characteristics. The reader can also see how the differences in the layers affect Fletcher's journey.



Layers 1-3 are referred to as the Rim: The first and youngest layer, which is comprised of Limestone, is approximately 400 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 225 million years. The second layer, which is comprised of Sandstone, is approximately 350 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 250 million years. The third layer, which is comprised of what Fletcher refers to as the Supai Formation of Shale and Sandstone, is approximately 1,000 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 275 million years.

Layers 4-6 are referred to as the Esplanade: The fourth layer, which is comprised of Redwall Limestone, is approximately 600 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 300 million years. The fifth layer, which is comprised of Muav Limestone, is approximately 200 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 450 million years. The sixth layer, which is comprised of Bright Angel Shale, is approximately 600 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 475 million years.

The area above the seventh layer is the Tonto Platform. The seventh layer, which is comprised of Tapeats Sandstone, is approximately 225 feet thick and holds the current age estimate of 500 million years.

Directly underneath the seventh layer is the Erosion Surface also referred to as The Great Unconformity.

The eighth layer, which is comprised of Schists and Granite, is has an unknown thickness and holds the current age estimate of 1,000-2,000 million years.

Silence

One of the first things the author noticed upon entering the canyon on that first night was the vast silence and emptiness of the canyon that lay ahead. Although there is peace in the silence and surroundings, the author cannot help but feel some fear about what lies ahead, comparing it to stage fright.

Fletcher talks a lot about silence and solitude in conjunction with being separate from the great emptiness that exists in parts of the Grand Canyon. At first the silence seemed to be overwhelming and foreign. Fletcher quickly realized that the silence is actually a valuable gift - one that he many never have found in every day life when one is surrounded by noise, work, and the accoutrements of one's own existence.

It is interesting to see that Fletcher's previous discomfort with the silence is the one thing he now covets. The silence has become such a part of the journey that everyone at the Phantom Ranch and in the surrounding area seems to be invading his personal space. The people are loud and their actions chaotic, they leave behind messes and do not have the same reverence for the canyon and nature as the author.

In the end, it is the silence that allowed Fletcher to transform his thinking and to find his place in the immenseness of the natural world.



Style

Perspective

The perspective used in *The Man Who Walked Through Time* is unique in that it belongs to the author, the first man to traverse the Grand Canyon on foot in one fell swoop. This two month-long journey gave Fletcher material to write this book which encompasses the physical journey as well as one involving spirit.

Colin Fletcher (1922-2007) was a well-known author, environmentalist, and backpacking enthusiast. Born in Cardiff, Wales, Fletcher went to school in Britain before joining the Royal Marines during World War II. After leaving the military, Fletcher traveled to Kenya, where he farmed for four years. In the 1950s, Fletcher relocated to Canada, where he became a prospector and then moved to California.

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Tone

The Man Who Walked Through Time by Colin Fletcher has a unique tone for a memoir. Fletcher is well known for being an adventurer and free spirit, a straightforward soul. This book reflects that same tone without being overpowering or biased to the point of being viewed as the work of a zealot who has converted from the workaday world to one that has stronger roots in the metaphysical realm.

Since this is a work of non-fiction and therefore relies on the perspective of the author, Fletcher is able to present many facts objectively. The overall tone is one of a man who is always in search of a new place to hike, an adventure, and something new to learn. Fletcher's *The Man Who Walked Through Time* is not only a tale about the physical presence and statistics surrounding the Grand Canyon, it has a great deal to do with enveloping oneself in silence, nature, and spiritual growth.

In the beginning of the book, Fletcher comes off as being a bit frivolous in not researching more than the basic necessities regarding those that traveled the canyon



before him. As the book progresses, the reader can see how Fletcher may have made a mistake in ignoring some of the documentation in exchange for the experience and objectivity. Therefore as voice of the book, Fletcher progresses as well and begins to develop the voice which has served to inspire several generations.

Part of the tone and effectiveness of Fletcher's work undoubtedly comes from years of travel, independent study, hard work and determination. In the early years of Fletcher's metamorphosis, the reader can grasp the man's points of view and go along on the journey that allows him to become an enlightened and open person.

Structure

Colin Fletcher's *The Man Who Walked Through Time* is a work of non-fiction detailing the author's trek through the Grand Canyon during a two month period. The book is comprised of 242 pages broken down into four parts. The first part, "The Place," is comprised of one chapter containing two pages. The second part, "The Dream," is comprised of one chapter containing ten pages. The third part, "The Journey," is the longest. This part is comprised of ten chapters. The shortest chapter is comprised of nine pages; the longest chapter is comprised of forty-three pages; the average number of pages per chapter is twenty-one. The fourth part, "Epilogue," is comprised of one chapter containing ten pages.

Overall, the book contains 242 pages. The average number of pages for the four parts combined is seventy-eight.

The book begins with the first part, "The Place," in which Fletcher details valuable and informative information about the Grand Canyon and its formation.

The second part, "The Dream," describes an impromptu side trip made to the Grand Canyon during a cross country journey with a friend. Fletcher had never seen the Grand Canyon and felt it was imperative to do so. That side trip would spark the dream that would change Fletcher's life. It also details Fletcher's plans and study regarding the Grand Canyon and the trip he planned to make alone.

The third part, "The Journey," is the longest. It details Fletcher's trip from the Grand Canyon National Park Office to the other side and includes a great amount of rich detail of the canyon and its inhabitants as well as Fletcher's own personal journey.

The fourth part, "Epilogue," is self explanatory.



Quotes

"The Grand Canyon of Colorado is a chasm that slices through the plateau country of northern Arizona like a gigantic and impossible desert crevasse." Part 1, Chap. 1, p. 3

"It happened quite unexpectedly, the way the big moments often do." Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 5

"I do not think I ever really considered that things might go seriously wrong." Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 12

"Soon I was feeling grateful too for the familiar rewards of simple living - for the cleansing primitive habits and precautions." Part 3, Chap.1, p. 17

"No one, it seemed, had ever attempted the Gorge on foot." Part 3, Chap. 2, p. 30

"The discovery of this airy and open and quite unexpected world left me feeling surprisingly well informed about what I could expect to find during the week that lay ahead." Part 3, Chap. 4, p. 56

"Partly because of this doubt (and partly because the second day out nearly always seems the hardest on feet and muscles), I had planned something close to a rest day." Part 3, Chap. 4, p. 69

"Such moments held the promise of progress. Of real progress." Part 3, Chap. 4, p. 76

"Yet the turning point that I had sensed did not immediately materialize." Part 3, Chap. 5, p. 88

"Yet because of the size and beauty and the brilliance of this unexpected view I felt in that first moment on the lip of the terrace something of the shock that had overwhelmed me when I first stood, a year earlier, on the Rim of the Canyon." Part 1, Chap. 5, p. 98

"The poised boulders and fragments were indeed waiting to crash down at any minute." Part 3, Chap. 6, p. 110

"Walkers and mountaineers and the like can be divided into two distinct breeds: those who put on the clothes and think they are about right, and then stick it out hour after hour, without apparent discomfort; and those who peel and restore in response to every variation of effort and environment." Part 3, Chap. 7, p. 129

"I should have known, of course, that the Phantom Ranch would drag me back into the present." Part 3, Chap. 8, p. 49



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the preparations that had to be made by Fletcher before taking off on the trek across the Grand Canyon. How would those preparations be different than ones you might take? How does physical prowess fit into the picture?

Fletcher faced many hardships along the way, from physical ailments to dwindling supplies. What might Fletcher have done differently to make the trip easier on himself? What different items might Fletcher have taken?

Compare and contrast Fletcher's concept of spirituality and sanctuary inside the Canyon compared to other hikers and tourists, e.g., the blond woman from New York.

According to Fletcher, what was the most difficult part of the trip? Discuss difficulties as they relate to body, mind, and spirit. Physically speaking, which part of the Canyon was the toughest to navigate?

Discuss the dynamic of making such a trek alone versus making it with another person. How did Fletcher react to the company of others along the journey? How might you have reacted in his place?

Examine the most dangerous misconceptions and assumptions involved with hiking in Colorado and Arizona. How would you prepare for the drastic changes?

The author refers to the Grand Canyon as being "mystical." What did he mean by that? How was the place mystical? Was that Fletcher's opinion alone or was it shared by others? Is it possible for a place to be mystical?