

Death in The Grand Canyon by Ryan Dube

In the summer of 1996, a group of college students from Phoenix, Arizona decided to take a road trip to the Grand Canyon. The Grand Canyon is an amazing natural wonder - however, in the summer it is a giant bowl that collects solar radiation from the sun, catapulting temperatures to well over 105 degrees Fahrenheit. Every summer, dozens of tourists fall victim to dehydration, heat exhaustion and sunstroke. Unfortunately, this particular group of college students knew very little



about the Canyon. In total, they brought along only four bottles of water each, and were wearing nothing more than shorts and t-shirts. The group arrived at the South Rim at around 8:30 a.m. on a Saturday morning. The temperature was a mild 80 degrees Fahrenheit, so they felt comfortable and positive about the hike. The group consisted of three boys, Tom, Henry and John. There were also two girls, Sandra and Elizabeth. By 8:45 a.m., the group was standing at the edge of the canyon, soaking in the hypnotic view of the far-reaching vista. By 9 a.m., they were headed down the trail.

The hike down was uneventful. However, once the students made it to the bottom of the canyon, temperatures had already reached 95 degrees. After exploring the inner canyon briefly, all five students were perspiring heavily, and more than half of their drinking water was already gone. By the time they decided to leave, temperatures were already topping almost 115 degrees. No longer able to handle the heat, the group decided to hike out as soon as possible and get back to the car. However, about halfway up toward the South Rim, it became very clear that the hike out was going to be impossible. Due to dizziness from heat exhaustion, Sandra stepped poorly on a rock and tore her ankle so badly that she couldn't walk on it. Tom and Henry tried to help her along, but all three were becoming too exhausted to even stand.

Horror struck the group when Tom, attempting to peer out over a ledge to see how far they'd climbed, became dizzy, slipped and tumbled over the edge to his death on the rocks far below. Once the reality of this accident sunk in, panic ensued. John and Elizabeth decided they wouldn't wait on the trail to die, so they continued on up the trail, only to pass out from heat stroke less than a quarter of a mile later. Henry, who had stayed behind with his injured girlfriend, eventually succumbed to the heat, as did she. Once the Rangers discovered the members of the group hours later, they found four dead from the elements and one killed by the impact of the tremendous fall.