

Torrents as Yet Unknown: Daring Whitewater Ventures into the World's Great River Gorges

Wickliffe W. Walker

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Wickliffe W. Walker's *Torrents as Yet Unknown* shares the awe and thrill of exploring remote canyons via the pioneers who've run their rapids.

Walker is a champion whitewater paddler who's led expeditions in Bhutan, Pakistan, Mexico, and Tibet. His enthusiasm and deep understanding of paddling's challenges, as well as his reverence for the beauty of nature, come through in these true adventure stories.

Walker selected the focal expeditions for their magnitude and diversity, featuring two in North America, two in South America, one in Europe, two in Africa, and eight in Asia. The explorers he profiles are also diverse: they include rugged loners eager to experience mastery and discovery; national teams who feel the weight of their countryfolk; and documentary filmmakers and photographers who long to capture the experience of adventure in remote regions for a wider viewing audience.

Walker enumerates the complex logistical details that can make or break an expedition. Choices like the condition and type of craft used, the skill of support teams, and volatile geopolitics can doom an effort. He also shares the decisions that must be made during an expedition and covers the sometimes deadly consequences of a poor choice or an ill-timed maneuver. Action-packed descriptions convey the drama that participants experience and their fears, hopes, and wins.

Tension and uncertainty are palpable throughout. The book covers the risks of getting to remote locations and scouting upcoming rapids; threats from bears, alligators, and unknown depths; and interference from hostile locals. Walker's descriptions are visceral, depicting the crushing power of whitewater, the heady atmosphere of adrenaline and nervous anticipation, and photogenic surroundings in turn. There are maps, illustrations, diary excerpts, and quotes to complement this work.

The riveting adventure stories gathered in *Torrents as Yet Unknown* capture the dangers that paddlers survive while navigating rivers.

WENDY HINMAN (September / October 2023)

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