

River Tour Rampage

Story Guide

Project Background

“River Tour Rampage” (RTR) is a log flume ride situated in a theme park based on the different National Parks in the United States of America. Each land of the park is themed to a different region, highlighting their specific geography and culture. RTR ride would be a part of the area themed to the Colorado Plateau and designed to resemble the Grand Canyon. The backstory of the attraction explains that the fictional rafting expedition company, Grand Canyon River Tours, was created by two locals: Ma and Pa Witwoter. RTR is the official name of the attraction. The park is meant to be family-friendly and features rides of various thrill levels. RTR is specifically designed to be a mid-point ride that offers a higher level of thrill, but in a way that is still accessible to families with elementary-aged children.

Key Pillars

Project Goals

- Instill a sense of adventure and desire for exploration within the guest
- Deepen the guests’ personal connections to nature
- Provide a thrilling and fun experience that a family can participate in together.

Creative Promise

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Storytelling Approach

- Focus on Authenticity – “River Tour Rampage” is a fictional story in a real-world setting. The details should create an authentic representation of the culture and geography of the Grand Canyon.
- Focus on Fun – The tone of the ride is lighthearted and fun. Guests are on a chaotic but safe adventure.
- Focus on the Audience – The audience is an integral part of the story. Without them, there is no tour. Without the tour, there is no adventure.

Story Elements

High Concept

Objective: To create a thrilling yet family-friendly log flume ride based on the natural geography of the Grand Canyon.

Longline: After a particularly intense monsoon season, a rockslide has cut off the regular river float path, forcing unsuspecting rafters down the whitewater route and ending in a huge splash!

Synopsis: Ma and Pa Witwoter have lived in the Canyon Valley longer than anyone can remember. They opened their business Grand Canyon River Tours to share the beauty of their home with those who came to visit the canyon by leading gentle river floats. But as the Witwoters have aged, they haven't been able to raft the canyon river as frequently.

Now, guests board their rafts by themselves, with only the sound of Pa's pre-recorded narration to guide them. As the raft makes its way down the river, guests learn about mule tours, river camping, and the features of the Grand Canyon through Pa's radio spiels.

But what no one knows is that this particularly heavy monsoon season has caused a rockslide into the river, diverting the gentle currents of the river float toward the whitewater section of the river. The serene calm of the tour turns to chaos as the raft begins to approach the edge of a roaring waterfall.

Are you ready for the adventure of a lifetime?

Backstory

Ma and Pa Witwoter have lived in the Canyon Valley longer than anyone can remember. During the 1890s, prospectors began to settle in the Grand Canyon Valley to mine copper deposits. Among these prospectors were the families in Ma and Pa. Ma and Pa grew up as neighbors. They fell in love as they explored the river and canyon together, and their betrothal was inevitable. Ma and Pa dedicated themselves to each other as well as to the preservation of the canyons that served as their home. This shared love for the geography and fauna of the canyon inspired Ma and Pa to begin offering river float tours. These gentle river excursions were led by Pa and Ma, who would narrate the tours with interesting facts about the history of the land. As their tours became more and more popular, Ma and Pa eventually expanded their business to become Grand Canyon River Tours. They acquired more rafts and hired other locals to help run the business.

But Ma and Pa are getting older now. They can't get out on the river as often, and the tours just aren't the same without their famous narration. They tried to hire enough employees to meet the demand for the tours, but it was just getting too difficult to keep up. To solve this conundrum, one of the local teenagers, Eugene, helped Pa create a timed narration that could be played over a small radio installed in the rafts (those teens and their newfangled technology!). With the installation of the radios, Ma and Pa decided that tourists could take the rafts to float on the river on their own. After all, the river is shallow enough and it's not like they're going to be hitting any rapids... It's a straightforward path from the Witwoter homestead to the final river embankment and the current is strong and true.

What could go wrong?

What no one seems to realize is that after a particularly intense monsoon season, a rockslide has blocked the main river path. The blockage has caused the currents of the river to change. Now, instead of a gentle river float, the path of the tour intersects with a section of the river popular for its whitewater rapids. Without Ma or Pa or another guide on the rafts, it's impossible for anyone to know that the tourists are headed straight toward a huge waterfall, turning their gentle river float into the adventure of a lifetime.

Characters

Ma Witwoter: The quintessential, stereotypical grandmother – sweet, kind, and voice dripping with honey. Married to Pa Witwoter. Ma was born in the canyon valley. Her family moved to the area to take advantage of the tourism industry that sprouted from the mining industry. Ma always had a sense of adventure, often going out on the river alone even as young as seven years old. Ma represents the spirit of adventure for Grand Canyon River Tours. It was her idea to start offering the tours in the first place. Now, even as a successful businesswoman, she still prides herself in creating a one-of-a-kind experience for her guests. Ma can either be played by a live actor or represented through a voice recording in the queue section of the attraction. She also has recorded dialogue that plays at the end of the attraction as well.

Pa Witwoter: The quintessential, stereotypical grandfather. Not great with technology, but willing to try and learn new things. Married to Ma Witwoter. Pa grew up in the canyon valley after his family relocated to try their hand at copper mining. Always more enamored with the natural beauty of the area, Pa spent his childhood studying the local plants and wildlife. Now that Pa is getting older, he doesn't raft the river as much but still works hard to ensure that his rafting business is both relaxing and educational for their guests. His primary goal is to preserve the natural beauty of the canyon and inspire others to do the same. Pa is not seen in the attraction other than in photos. He is played by a voice actor only.

Eugene: A bit of a local celebrity after the OBGYN misread an ultrasound and declared Eugene would be a boy. Her parents decided to keep the family name and name her "Eugene" anyways. Eugene is in her late teens or early twenties. She has grown up in the area and now works at Grand Canyon River Tours. She is essentially the manager, working right under the guiding hand of Ma and Pa. She isn't seen in the attraction, and she does not have any dialogue. She is only referenced in other character dialogue and signage but serves as an important character in the attraction.

Old Man Pike: Old Man Pike is the leader of the mule tour that is seen from the river expedition. He also offers one dollar to every child who can say "The Rubber Rabbitbrush is a bushy, broom-shaped shrub," ten times fast. Pike is similar in age to the Witwoters and they have been friends since childhood. He is terrified of whitewater, which is why he built his

business on land. Old Man Pike is referenced in signage and is physically represented by an animatronic. He has no dialogue.

Employees: The employees working at the attraction are acting as the employees for Grand Canyon River Tours. They're local "river rats" who live for rafting and nature. The primary role of the employee is to make sure guests are safely situated in the ride vehicle and operating the ride mechanics.

Scene-by-Scene Walkthrough

Entrance: A Canyon Welcome

The entrance of the attraction is marked by a homemade sign made from old driftwood and paddles. After passing under the sign, guests will enter the queue themed to the orange, high canyon walls often found in the Grand Canyon. Some sections of the canyon are covered in pictographs that relay the history of the settlement of the area.

Queue: The Desert Prairie

After a short while, the canyon opens into a desert prairie. There is a variety of desert foliage that is being preserved by the Witwoters. They have gone to the trouble of installing educational yet "punny" placards that can be read from the queue. The placards offer true information about the flora so guests can learn more about the desert landscape and features while enjoying a laugh:

[GUEST-FACING COPY]

"The Prickly Pear is one of the most easily recognizable types of cacti in the desert due to its pear-like shape. However, we don't recommend eating this variety if you are a prickly eater due to its tough skin and bitter taste."

"The Beard-lip Penstemon is a common wildflower in this area. Just look down – there is probably one right under your nose."

"The Cotton Top Cactus gets its name from the tiny flowers that bloom on the plant and resemble cotton balls. But don't be fooled, there's nothing soft about this cactus variety. If you don't believe me, give it a feel. You'll get the point."

"Gambel Oaks can grow up to 40 feet tall! It is believed that the highest concentration of Gambel Oaks can be found in Las Vegas, Nevada."

"The Rubber Rabbitbrush is a bushy, broom-shaped shrub, and Old Man Pike will give a dollar to any youngin' who can say that phrase ten times fast."

"The Brittlebush has stems that easily break under pressure much like a graduate student during finals week."

Queue: The Witwoter Homestead

The guests then reach the Witwoter homestead, which features a simple yet well-maintained log cabin and sheds full of rafting equipment. As the guests walk through the property, they can hear Ma's voice ring out from an upstairs window:

[RECORDED OR LIVE DIALOGUE]

MA

Hello! Welcome, everyone! Welcome! My, isn't the weather lovely today? It's a beautiful day to get out on the river. Oh, I wish I could be coming out there with you today. But no matter! Why don't you come on inside? I'm sure the river guides will have your rafts ready shortly. Come to think of it, I really need to send Eugene out to check the river route, just to make sure everything is in order. Eugene? Eugene? Eugene? Eugene? My, I wonder where she must have gone off to. Probably out back patching up the rafts that came in yesterday. She mentioned they were a little beat up around the front. Maybe they're scraping the bottom of the river near Horseshoe Bend again. We tend to have trouble with the water levels there. But come to think of it, it's been awfully rainy the past few days. Probably some of the local kids pulling the rafts up on shore again. I thought I told Pa to call those kids and tell them to knock it off... but look. Here I am just rambling on when we have guests! Hello! Welcome, everyone!

The inside of Ma and Pa's cabin is simple but well-maintained. The walls are decorated with a variety of black and white pictures and framed yellowed newspapers. These pictures and newspapers relay the story of the town's development from a mining town to the tourist destination it is today. There are several pictures of Ma and Pa growing up through the years, as well as their wedding pictures. One section is dedicated to the development of Grand Canyon River Tours specifically. Some articles and headlines about the local community stick out more than others:

[GUEST-FACING COPY]

"FARMER DAN DISCOVERS NEW METHOD OF CACTUS HARVEST – SAFETY GOGGLES REQUIRED, GLOVES OPTIONAL"

"SOIL ANALYSIS REVEALS HIGH CONCENTRATION OF SAND"

"LOCAL OBGYN RUN OUT OF TOWN AFTER THIRD CONSECUTIVE INACCURATE GENDER DETERMINATION – Tammy and John Billstock were shocked when their baby boy, who they intended to name "Eugene" after John's grandfather and town founder, was a girl. While John struggled to regain consciousness from the ordeal, Tammy told reporters that they intended to keep the name for their daughter. Local minister Reverend Adams frowned on the decision, declaring that the name "Eugene" was steeped in a heritage that could only be continued by a male, but walked back this statement after John Billstock appeared at the church with a pitchfork."

Loading Area: The Raft Shed

As the guests exit the cabin through the back door and cross the yard, they come to the raft and equipment shed that serve as the loading station. “River guides” assign the guests to different raft groups and rows. As the guests load into their empty rafts, the river guides check to make sure that they are properly secured. Right before exiting the loading station, the river guide explains that the radio mounted to the front of the raft will play an audio recording made specifically by Pa to narrate specific points of the tour.

[SAMPLE DIALOGUE]

RIVER GUIDE

Alright there, it looks like you are all secure in your raft. Not that you have anything to worry about – these river floats are pretty gentle. You’re in for a relaxing time. Oh, and see that radio up there? Pa and Eugene have rigged it up to play a narration on your float today. It’s kind of like your own personal tour guide!

Beat 1: Beginning the Tour

As the river tour begins, the raft floats with the current out into the Grand Canyon River. The radio in the front of the raft cuts on with a small burst of static, followed by the voice of Pa Witwoter:

[RECORDED DIALOGUE]

PA

Is it on?

(short pause)

Are you sure it’s working?

(short pause)

Why is that red light blinking at me?

(short pause)

You say it’s already recording? Oh, well, ahem. Howdy, rafters! This is Pa Witwoter. As you float down our beautiful Grand Canyon River today, I’ll be telling you all about the local history and features of our canyon. So just sit back and relax while we take you on your Grand Canyon River Tour.

Light folk music plays from the radio as your raft continues its float down the river. After a short while, the raft passes a mule tour standing on a trail on the canyon wall. Most of the riders

seem annoyed since none of the mules are moving. The leader of the tour is frantically trying to get the front mule to stop eating the bushes and start walking again. Pa cuts in over the radio:

[RECORDED DIALOGUE]

PA

John Hance was the first settler in these parts to offer mule tours all the way back in 1887. Now, Old Man Pike has taken over the business. The mule tours are usually about two hours unless they got Fedrick leading the pack. That mule has a bad habit of getting distracted and snacking on the foliage. If he's in front, well, you better just settle into that saddle. You'll be there awhile.

The raft continues to float down the river.

Beat 2: Happy Campers

Around the next bend, a settlement of campers is set up on the bank of the river. Their rafts are docked on the river embankment. Further away, their tents are pitched and their fires are lit. The smell of the smoke and hotdogs drift along the edge of the river, and the sound of the campers chatting about their journeys bounces off the water. Pa begins to narrate:

[RECORDED DIALOGUE]

PA

The canyon riverbanks are a popular spot for rafters to camp along during longer expeditions. The Grand Canyon River is 277 miles long and can take two to three weeks to navigate, so rafters will set up for a night or two to rest on these banks. But here's something crazy: the Grand Canyon River is just one section of the Colorado River, which stretches a whopping 1,450 miles. You'd have to be out of your mind to try to raft that whole stretch. Or Lewis Packerton. He told the whole town he was gonna take the river all the way down to Mexico. He made it to Mexico alright – five years later when he flew down there with his wife for their honeymoon.

As the raft passes the edge of the camp, a few rafters wave their arms like they're trying to get your attention, but you can't hear what they're saying over Pa on the radio.

Beat 3: Rockslide

The next section of the river is split by a tall rock wall. The rock splits the main river into two, one section passing to the right of the rock, and the other to the left. Large signs for the Grand Canyon River Tours point down the route to the right. However, the remnants of a large rockslide have completely blocked that section of the river. The current of the river begins to carry the raft toward the left distributary. Pa's voice comes over the radio:

[RECORDED DIALOGUE]

PA

Right about now, you should be coming up on the Rock Island split. Rock Island is the local name for the butte that causes the fork in the river. Our tour will flow with the

current to take you down the river on the right. Good thing too! The left river is notorious for its whitewater. Only experienced rafters and kayakers are allowed on that section of the river. Crazy adrenaline junkies.

As the raft drifts farther down the left distributary, it passes a warning sign:

[GUEST-FACING COPY]

WARNING! DANGEROUS, CLASS FIVE RAPIDS AHEAD! INEXPERIENCED RAFTERS SHOULD EXIT THE RIVER NOW!

Beat 4: Whitewater

The speed of the river quickly increases and transitions into the churning rapids of whitewater. The rapids speed the raft along, throwing the guests from side to side and up and down. Water from the cresting waves occasionally sprays into the face of the guests. Pa's calm voice comes over the radio again:

[RECORDED DIALOGUE]

PA

While many tourists associate the Grand Canyon River with whitewater, adventure, and excitement, we here at Grand Canyon River Tours pride ourselves on exposing tourists to another side of the river. Here, where the calm current is just strong enough to propel your raft, you can experience a moment of rest and peace during what might otherwise be a hectic vacation. Right now is a good time to just relax, maybe even close your eyes, and take in the sound of the gentle river.

Kayakers and other whitewater rafters along the river shout toward the raft, rooting the guests on and encouraging them as the raft continues to cut through the rapids:

[SAMPLE DIALOGUE]

KAYAKER

Alright, dudes and dudettes!

RAFTER

Look at these tourists taking on the Big Water!

But as the raft moves downriver and the rapids become more intense, their shouts turn from those of encouragement to those of warning – they urge the guests to slow their raft down or to pull off along the shore:

[SAMPLE DIALOGUE]

RAFTERS

Might want to be careful – things start to get pretty hairy past here.

RAFTER

Watch out for the sleepers! They'll capsize you for sure!

KAYAKER

Hey! You're starting to get too far downstream!

KAYAKER

Head to the sandbar! You're headed straight toward some gnarly falls!

Beat 5: The Drop

As the raft continues to pick up speed, the river ahead suddenly disappears. Multiple signs line both sides of the river:

[GUEST-FACING COPY]

DANGER: WATERFALL

WARNING: 50-FOOT PLUNGE AHEAD

DO NOT APPROACH THE EDGE OF THE FALLS

SERIOUSLY. YOU NEED TO TURN BACK NOW

WE TRIED TO WARN YOU

Pa continues to narrate the tour as the raft approaches the drop:

[RECORDED DIALOGUE]

PA

By now you're nearing the end of your raft tour with us. We'd like you to end your tour with the sounds of our local musician, Eddy Clef. Eddy picked up the banjo at age three and has been strumming ever since. He currently plays at the town bingo hall on Friday nights. We hope you fall head over heels for his rapid syncopated rhythms. Here's his song, "Dropping over the Falls."

Rapid banjo folk music blares from the radio as the raft tips over the crest. The raft pauses as if frozen in time and then drops across the edge into the spray and mist of the falls.

Beat 6: The Finale

The raft lands at the bottom of the falls with a huge splash, still upright, with all of the guests intact. Cheers erupt from onlookers as the raft begins to float away from the base of the falls.

The current and whitewater have subsided, and the river is peaceful once again. To the right, Rock Island ends, and the two distributaries join into one again. The music playing through the radio comes to an end, and now it is Ma's voice that comes over the radio.

[RECORDED DIALOGUE]

MA

Are you sure it's working hun?

(short pause)

Yes, I see the red light!

(short pause)

And I just talk right into here?

(short pause)

Hello, everyone! Thank you for joining us today on our Grand Canyon River Tour! We hope that you have enjoyed your relaxing tour of the Grand Canyon River. We love being able to share our beautiful landscape with visitors. We hope that you will help us preserve this land by treating it with kindness and respect. If you enjoyed your trip today, we hope that you will recommend our tours to friends and family in the future! The gentle degree of our tours makes them ideal for young children and the elderly... Elderly? ELDERLY?!? Why are we referring to people as "elderly?" Just because someone might be on in years doesn't mean they don't like to have a good time! Who wrote this script? Eugene? Eugeeeeeeeene?

The radio cuts back to the music as the current slows and the raft approaches the end of the route. Colorful flags stretch across the river and signs point toward the unloading zone. The current of the river guides the raft toward the riverbank.

Unloading: Land! Solid Land!

Upon arriving at the unloading station, the river guides assist the guests out of the raft and check to make sure no belongings are left behind. The guides ask how the trip was and if the guests enjoyed their time on the river, oblivious to the adventure they just experienced.

[SAMPLE DIALOGUE]

RIVER GUIDE

Welcome back! How was your trip?

[Option 1 - Guest says nothing about the waterfall:]

Well, that's great! I'm glad to hear it! I hope you'll come back and visit us again!

[Option 2 – Guest does say something about the waterfall:]

You said what happened? How is that possible? The only way to go over the falls is by taking the left river at Rock Island. Eugene is supposed to check the route every morning!

(calling to other river guides)

Has anyone talked to Eugene today? We need to get her on the radio. Can someone call up to Ma and let her know something is going on? No wait, their phone line is down.

(talking to the guest again)

Well, don't worry about it. We'll get it taken care of. Thanks again for coming!

As guests leave the unloading zone, they pass through the Canyon Welcome Center where they can find souvenirs from Grand Canyon River Tours and their River Tour Rampage.

Design Considerations

- Architecture
 - The rafts must arrive at the loading station empty, and the guests cannot encounter the lift hill during the ride. Either one of these elements will break the immersion and remind the guest that they are just “on a ride.” It would be best if the lift hill was between the unloading and loading areas. This would allow the rafts to arrive at the loading station empty, float through the beats with a gradual descent, and then rapidly descend the major hill at the climax of the ride. Guests would then exit the raft before it is carried up the lift hill, after which the next guests would load.
 - We will need to use forced perspective heavily to capture the height of the canyon walls.
- Landscape design
 - The landscape should be authentic to the flora of the Grand Canyon. Different regions of the canyon are hospitable to different flora, so the design of the landscape will aid in establishing the specific geographic location of the ride.
- Graphic design
 - Graphic design for anything related to or branded as being part of the Grand Canyon River Tours should reflect the “homemade” style of the Witwaters. The idea is that the Witwaters are local, regular people who built this business from the ground up because they want to share the beauty of their home with others. They don't have degrees in graphic design, so whatever they have made as far as signage and merchandise should have a very “handmade,” non-professional look.
 - Graphic design related specifically to the advertisement of River Tour Rampage can be done with a regular level of professional polish.
- Audio design
 - Ma can either be represented through an audio recording or a live actor. The audio recording should be clear as if Ma is speaking directly to the guests.

- Pa has recorded a voice-over narration that is played over a radio mounted to the raft. These audio recordings should also reflect the “homemade” quality of the attraction.
- Set/Prop Design
 - The name of the game is “homemade.” Again, the idea is that Ma and Pa, two regular people, have built this business on their own. They take pride in their homestead and their business, but they are not professional designers or architects. The set and prop design should reflect the idea that things were made with whatever materials were on hand, but not in a way that looks sloppy or unsafe.
- Music
 - The music in the attraction originates from the radio mounted in the raft. The context for the music is that the guests are supposed to be enjoying their calm, scenic river float and listening to the folk stylings of a local musician. However, they have diverted from their intended path and are traversing whitewater before falling over a waterfall. The score for this section would reflect easy bluegrass stylings that eventually intensify to be in sync with the major drop.
- Retail
 - Guests will exit the ride through a themed gift shop. The products in this store can be themed to the ride (River Tour Rampage) and Ma and Pa’s business (Grand Canyon River Tours).
 - The overall design of the store should reflect something like a sundry store where guests can buy supplies for the rest of their day on the river (or in a theme park). It should also continue the story through the “homemade” design elements.
 - There will be an opportunity to purchase on-ride photos with a themed border in both letter and postcard sizes, as well as clothing and souvenirs themed to both Grand Canyon River Tours and River Tour Rampage.
- Employee Role
 - Employees are more than ride operators – they are part of the story and have a significant part to play especially at the end of the attraction. Employees in this attraction should be able to ensure the safety of the guest while also preserving the authenticity of the experience through their interactions with the guest.
 - Costuming for this attraction can be casual but should still be uniform to reflect the tone of the experience while also still distinguishing employees from other guests.

Useful Resources

- [Grand Canyon National Park Lodges](#): This website includes information about local places to eat and stay, as well as other tourist activities such as tours and mule rides.
- [National Park Service – Grand Canyon](#): The “Learn About the Park” tab on the homepage contains a wealth of information about the Grand Canyon including information about the white-water rafting expeditions, the history and culture of the area, the natural geology, and the wildlife in the area. The website also has an extensive photo gallery, through a link to the “100 Years of Grand” Digital Archive compiled by Arizona State University.

- [Grand Canyon Conservancy](#): This is another site managed by Arizona State University. It breaks the Grand Canyon up into different regions, which may make future research easier. This website is also home to an extensive archive of audio, video, digital art, digital documents, and photographs.
- [Colorado River & Trail Expeditions](#): A list of the top ten waterfalls in the Grand Canyon that includes both pictures and written descriptions.

Appendix

Concept Origin

“River Tour Rampage” began as a project for an Introduction to Concept Art class taught by Morgane Keesling. During the class, I felt like I needed to create a story for my project to help dictate my artistic details and decisions. I first developed a basic backstory for the attraction, which I then expanded into a full beat sheet as an extracurricular project. During my playwriting class under Dr. Claudia Barnett, I decided I wanted to expand on the beat sheet to include more detailed scene descriptions, guest-facing copy and signage, and character dialogue. After reading Margaret Kerrison’s *Immersive Storytelling for Real and Imagined Worlds* as part of my directed reading class with Dr. Eric Detweiler, I have decided to expand the ride concept once again into a more detailed story guide as part of my final portfolio.

Beat Sheet