

My Time in Pine Creek

by Hannah Potts

On a lovely morning in Zion National Park, my dad and I were on our way to Pine Creek Canyon. I remember it like it was yesterday, the long twisting road and the glorious view. We arrived in the cramped little parking lot and prepared our gear. We headed down a steep slope and into the canyon.

The twisting sandstone walls are carved by the rushing torrent of water that once flowed through them. As I trudged across the shifting sands I wondered about the mysterious and spectacular beauty of the canyon.

We stood on a rock and the next step was 20 feet below us. We prepared a rope and I was lowered down. Half way my hair was caught and tangled. Pushing down a sense of panic rising in my chest, I untangled it and was lowered to the ground. The rest of our hiking was ~~was~~ uneventful.

We emerged from the canyon into daylight for a moment and changed into our wetsuits. Now we were ready for the next part of our adventure. Once again we headed into the bowels of the canyon.

The content of this paragraph is not intended to gross you out, but is a part of canyon life, the gray swim. Yes, the water is slate gray and yes, you are expected to swim in it. When I reached the other side I could see transparent fish coming up to the surface.

Then come the repels. To repel is to be lowered down or lower your self down a rope. We went through

'til we came to it, the 100 ft. free ropel. 100 ft. feet of hanging in space. So there I was fighting back tears, on a little outcropping of rock trying and failing to be brave. I clipped in and told myself what I still tell myself, Just push your self off the edge. I took the leap of faith. I squeezed my eyes shut and do not remember that push, but the scene that greeted my eyes lives in my memory today. The beauty of the canyon was all around me and far, far below the clearest spring and pool of water you can imagine.

I landed on the ground, unclipped, and Dad was soon beside me. We got into dry clothes and hiked out. We caught or hitchhiked a ride in the back of a rust red pickup to our car. As we drove home, I knew I did not leave the same as I had come. The wonder of the canyon always remains.