

A Chill Wind

VZZZZZZZZZZZZ! Two counselors of Pali institute casually zipped on a wire across the light blue sky filled with a meager couple of clouds. The forest in the ravine below, an ocean of green and orange tilted in in the wind which stung my face. The trees had started dropping leaves, leaving a carpet of orange on the forest floor. I slipped my harness on and had it tightened, before grabbing a carabiner and a mechanism with small steel wheels lined up in a row from a cracked wooden shed. Besides the humming of the zipline, it was loudly quiet out in the open with not more than the occasional chirp of a bird resting in a tree. The metal gear weighed down on my shoulders and slipped off every step I took, forcing me to throw it back over my shoulder over and over again. The dull brown dirt crunched under my feet as I walked and as I stepped onto the stairs leading to the zip platform, I looked around, taking in my peaceful surroundings.

I inhaled the crisp, stinging, air and closed my eyes, extinguishing every doubt and stress in my body about what I was about to do. I opened my eyes and looked in the distance. I could make out a small wooden platform where the zip ended, and was able to see the wellness center and some cabins.

Finally, one of the counselors said, "You may go now.", and my zip partner Jake and I trekked up the stairs to the start of the zip. Each step was carved into the dirt and encased by wooden planks forming a frame around the dirt and stone. The frame was held in place by 2 metal spikes per step which were dented with wear. On each side a smooth, crooked wooden railing stood, leading to the top of the stairs where a platform matching the one across the ravine stood. I observed the slick, glistening wire which sagged at the median of the two platforms.

"You may step onto the platform now," one of the counselors said. Jake and I stepped onto the wooden platform that hung over the drop into the ravine. We were quickly connected to the line and as I stepped onto the metal step ladder that would get me high enough for the zipline, I could feel the wheels attaching me to the zipline roll over the smooth, fibrous metal wire. We were given a final countdown before we stepped off.

The speed took me by surprise and I was stunned by the wind that tore at my face. The cold stinging wind. I zoomed past the field, past the tall trees and saw everything behind me get farther and farther away. The sharp, frosted peaks of tall mountains stood in the distance, looming over the great expanse. The cold air stung my face and I smelled the sweet scent of nature. My feet dangled below me and I spun around in my harness. The end of the line came nearer and nearer, and finally I jerked to a stop. I detached from the line and hiked back to the start of the zip.

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