

An Arizona adventure

1 Before you read

Are deserts and canyons places you would like to visit? Explain why or why not.

“But Mom, I don’t want to. All you’re going to do is shop all day. That’s *sooooo* boring,” Adam protested.

“Well do you have a better idea?” his mother wanted to know.

“I told you already. I want to go to Antelope Canyon.”

Adam had read everything about Antelope Canyon that he could find. It isn’t anything like the Grand Canyon. It’s very, very narrow<sup>1</sup>, almost like a tunnel. He had read about the fantastic colors in the canyon when the sun shines through the small openings at the top. He knew about the soft sandstone that the wind and water had turned into interesting shapes. And he knew that the canyon is like a cathedral to the Navajo<sup>2</sup> Indians. The canyon is on their land, and they treat it with respect. Adam loved everything that had to do with Native Americans.

Adam and his family were on vacation in Arizona. Today, they couldn’t decide how to spend their day. Adam’s mother and his younger sister Becky wanted to stay in Page and look at all the little gift shops. His dad wanted to relax on the beach at Glen Canyon’s Lake Powell.

An hour later...

“All right, son. Here you are at your Antelope Canyon. Call us on your cell phone when you’re done,” his father said.

“Thanks, Dad. This is *so* much cooler than going shopping for stupid souvenirs!”

“But be careful, Adam. And don’t get into any trouble,” his mother warned from the car window.

“Bye, guys!” Adam shouted as his family drove away. He was alone – *finally!* – and could do what he wanted.

Adam paid his five-dollar entrance fee to some Navajo Indians who were sitting at a table, and an extra \$10 to ride in their truck to the canyon. Adam was really excited during the 15-minute ride in the back of the truck. There were six other tourists, but Adam didn’t want to walk through the canyon with them. He wanted to go off on his own as soon as he could.



Antelope Canyon in Page, Arizona

Finally, they arrived and the truck let everyone out.

“...so please, be careful in the canyon. If it starts raining, come back here right away and we’ll drive you back. The canyon can fill up with water quickly because the ground is sand and the canyon is so narrow. It’s called a ‘flash flood’ and can be very dangerous,” Rick, a Navajo Indian, explained to the group. But Adam was only half listening. He wanted to start looking around the canyon.

Being inside the canyon was even better than he had imagined from pictures. It all felt so... *mysterious*. The beautiful red sandstone was so soft you could have scratched your name into the canyon wall. The canyon was a quarter of a mile long, quite high, and much narrower than Adam had imagined. And when the sunlight came down from above, the colors really *were* fantastic; the sunlight gave everything inside the ‘tunnel’ a magical glow<sup>3</sup>. At the end of the canyon, he even found lots of little lizards. What a cool place, Adam thought. And best of all: It was all his! He was all alone.

Adam had walked quite a long way from the end of the canyon when he felt the first raindrops...

<sup>1</sup>narrow [ˈnærəʊ] = with very little space between two sides • <sup>2</sup>Navajo [ˈnævehəʊ] •

<sup>3</sup>gave everything a magical glow [geɪv ˈevriθɪŋ ə mædʒɪkl ˈgləʊ] = tauchte alles in ein zauberhaftes Licht

**2 Stop and think**

Should Adam be worried about the raindrops?  
Why/why not? Do you think he is worried? Explain.

70 There were only a few raindrops, so Adam ignored them. He continued playing with a lizard he had caught. Suddenly, he saw lightning and heard a loud clap of thunder. Then big, heavy raindrops began falling and started coming down faster and  
75 faster.

What had Rick said about the rain? Adam couldn't remember. But he knew he didn't want to get wet so he started running back to the canyon as fast as he could. It was hard to run on the soft sand and Adam  
80 was out of breath when he got to the back entrance of the canyon. He was glad to be out of the thunderstorm. He walked a few feet into the canyon and stood against the canyon wall to catch his breath<sup>4</sup>. He was still breathing heavily when he noticed that  
85 his shoes felt wet. He looked down and saw a few inches<sup>5</sup> of water on the canyon floor.

Adam climbed up a rock to wait for the storm to pass. It didn't look like it would rain very long and now he was in a dry place. But the water in  
90 the canyon kept getting higher and higher. Adam panicked. Hadn't Rick said something about flash floods? But what did that mean exactly? Adam looked around but saw no chance of getting out. He couldn't climb out the top because the walls were  
95 too high. He didn't want to try swimming – would he be able to find his way back to where he had come from? Or would he swim into one of the many side tunnels?

**3 What could happen next?**

Think of two ways the story could continue.  
Write down your ideas.

**4 What happened?**

If you were Adam, what would you tell Rick? Or would you decide not to tell anybody what happened? Explain.

**5 Creative writing: Finish the story**

With your ideas from ex. 4, think of how the story could continue for Adam.



“H-E-L-P!!!” Adam shouted, again and again. It  
seemed like the only thing to do. Where were the  
other tourists? And Rick? Would anybody hear him?  
Suddenly Adam thought he heard something. He  
looked down and saw that a tall Indian man was  
walking toward him through the water. The water  
was almost up to the man's shoulders. He had long  
black hair and was wearing a leather headband  
with colorful feathers. His face was painted blue  
and white. He looked like he had just walked out  
of a Hollywood western! He didn't say a word, but  
made a sign that Adam should get on his back.  
Adam got down from the canyon wall and onto the  
silent Indian's back. The man started fighting his  
way through the deep water toward the entrance  
to the canyon. Adam didn't say a word or ask any  
questions.

It took some time, but finally they made it out  
of the canyon. The Indian let Adam get off his  
back just as they heard the sound of a truck. Adam  
turned his head to look where the truck was coming  
from. He saw it and then turned to tell the Indian,  
but he was already gone. Disappeared. Adam  
looked all around. Nothing. Just then the truck  
arrived and Rick got out.

“There you are! We were already on the way back  
when one of the others in the group said someone  
was missing. So we turned around to look for you.  
What happened? Where were you?”

<sup>4</sup>to catch one's breath [ˌkætʃ wʌnz ˈbreθ] = to be able to breathe normally again • <sup>5</sup>inch [ɪnʃ] = 2.54 centimeters