



## AAC Publications

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### **The Thing, Wonder Woman**

California, Sierra Nevada, Little Slide Canyon

**In early October 2023, Brandon Adams and I put up a new route in Little Slide Canyon on a formation called the Thing, which is down-canyon from the Incredible Hulk.** This was the first first ascent of which I've been a part, so I was stoked. The route starts about 100m to climber's left of Gambit (800', 6 pitches, III 5.10c)—another route that Brandon put up in 2023, with Miles Fullman—and 150m left of Causative Striations (900', III 5.11-, Fasoldt- Finkelstein, 2015). [The 2016 AAJ report for Causative Striations incorrectly referred to the Thing as the "Incredulous Bulk."]

I led the first pitch, a neat hand crack inside a chimney. Brandon led pitch two, another hand crack up a corner, which exits around a roof to tackle an off-fingers and thin-hands crux. On pitch three, it only took about 50' for me to discover the fine line between badass and dumbass. After the crack fizzled out, rather than place a bolt on the delicate face-climbing section, I committed to another body length of moves, planning to reach a stance where I would be able to place some small pro. Before I got there, I pulled off a large block and, before I realized what had happened, was airborne. Luckily, Brandon was able to dodge the plummeting block at the last second. I pushed that pitch another 50' and placed a few bolts before we both decided that we'd had enough excitement for one day. We rapped, stashed our gear, and made a plan to return the following week.

On that next trip, at the base of the route, I ignored my numb hands and feet and started climbing, but every move felt impossible. I later learned that the day's forecast—which I'd intentionally avoided checking, so as not to be deterred—had called for highs in the 40s and gusts up to 65 mph. And we were climbing in the shade! Between the cold and wind, only a single puffy jacket between us, and the long belays as the follower trundled and cleaned each pitch, I'm not sure I've ever been that uncomfortable on a route.

Brandon completed the unfinished third pitch by placing some beaks and bolts. The result was a beautiful face pitch through a band of crystals. At the anchor, we got our first sun of a very cold day, and a beautiful finger crack invigorated us. After climbing this fourth pitch, we descended in the setting sun.

The next day, after patiently waiting for the wind to calm and the sun to warm our camp, we set off. Each pitch seemed to go down effortlessly as we swapped leads to reach our high point. Brandon took the last pitch—another phenomenal hand crack to finger crack. We reached the summit with daylight to spare, and reveled in the canyon's solitude. Several routes on the Thing, as well as the formation itself, are named after male superheroes; we decided to name ours Wonder Woman (700', 5 pitches, III 5.11c).

— Trish Matheny

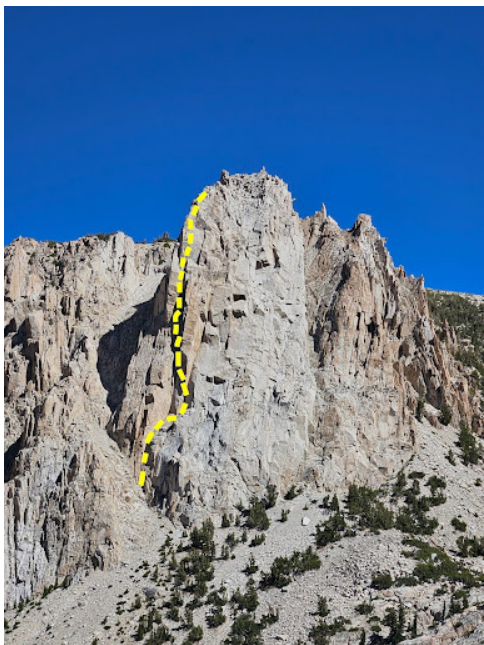
## Images



Trish Matheny near the top of pitch two (5.11c) during the first ascent of Wonder Woman (700', 5 pitches, III 5.11c).



Trish Matheny climbs pitch four (5.10b) on Wonder Woman.



Wonder Woman (700', 5 pitches, III 5.11c), on the Thing, Little Slide Canyon, Sierra Nevada, California. Other routes not shown.

Article Details

Author	Trish Matheny
Publication	AAJ
Volume	65
Issue	98
Page	126
Copyright Date	2024
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions