

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

A skit by Gayatri Batra (Class V, Sariska)

Backdrop: A hot and humid day in July

Dad: I hope everyone is ready to go. I don't know about you guys, I am really excited. This is the first time I am traveling beyond Rohtang Pass to Ladhak.

Gayatri: I packed enough chips to last us for months! by the way what is Rohtang Pass? Is it a test?

Mom: Rohtang Pass is a place beyond Manali, which we have to cross to get to the other side of Himachal Pradesh. From here we enter Jammu and Kashmir. I hope we don't get stuck there as it snows a lot over there.

Gayatri: Wow, I can't wait to feel cold and the soft snow. It is going to be so awesome!

Dad: I hope so too. Once we reach there we need to take tablets to make sure we can breathe. You know? There is less air pressure and less oxygen for us to breathe. We may get headaches. Gayatri, I have just loaded the car... can you check again if we have packed torches, extra blankets, camera, rope, and the extra large can of water and some dry snacks?

Gayatri: Yes, I think we are all set can we pack some more packets of maggie and chips?

Mom: We will pick these on the way in case we need. There is enough in the car to feed an entire army!

Scene 2

Just before the Rohtang Pass crossing

Dad: Uff! Nearly there. It has taken us nearly a full day to reach Rohtang Pass. I can't believe that it took us almost an hour in Manali to get permission.

Gayatri: Look at all the snow and the slush. We are going to be stuck here for a long time, I think.

Dad: Imagine, I thought we would be surrounded by wilderness by now, and instead we're caught in a traffic jam!!

Gayatri: Don't talk of jam, dad, I'm starving! The only thing edible I see is Maggie. See there – those *thela walas* making cup noodles... Can I have one???

Dad: Looks like the traffic may start moving anytime now, so get your Maggie fast before it clears out. Be careful of the slippery slush on the road! Remember, you're 13000 feet above sea level.

Mom: Wow! Look at these bikers on those bullet motorcycles! They look like they're having fun.

Gayatri: I'll quickly fetch some Maggie for all of us, but mama what are those colourful tents where those people are selling Maggie?

Mom: Those are not typical tents Gayatri. Those are parachutes which have been converted into tents.

Gayatri returns with the cup noodles

Gayatri: So expensive! 100 rupees for a cup noodle!

Dad: OK guys, lets get going now. The traffic's finally moving.

SCENE 3

Moore Plains, towards Tso Moriri Lake

Mom: How can this be called a highway? There's no road! It looks so dry and parched. And I've got a massive headache!

Gayatri: I'm feeling pucky.

Dad: Must be altitude sickness. We're at 15,500 feet here, you know. You guys have taken Diamox tablets, right? It's already getting dark and we need to get to our hotel quickly. Need to drive faster... Whoa! The Scorpio gears are stuck. I can't change gears any more!

Mom: What!

Dad: Seriously. Gayatri, look if anyone's coming behind us.

Gayatri: I can't see a single person here. Only some donkeys. They look like wild donkeys.

Dad: those are called Wild Asses. OK, stop laughing. We're in trouble here. Let me try to drive the Scorpio in 1st gear.

Noise of gears being roughly changed

Mom: Hey, I see a motorcycle guy behind us. Stop! Ufff. He drove past us. I guess he thinks we are only saying hello.

Gayatri: Dad, I'm feeling more pucky now. Mom says her headache's getting worse.

Dad: OK, we really need to get help. The road has disappeared and I don't know where this kuchha track leads. There's no on here. Gayatri, look at the sky. Have you seen bigger stars anywhere?

Gayatri: Awesome. But seriously, we can't enjoy the scenery. We need to get to our hotel. Warm food, warm blankets.

Mom: Hey, what are those lights? I think we've reached.

Gayatri: That's not a hotel. Just tents.

The Scorpio arrives at the tented camp

Hotel manager: We were waiting for you. We almost sent a search party.

Dad: Yeah, it's been an adventure getting here. First we were stuck in traffic trying to cross Rohtang Pass, and then the Scorpio clutch plate broke. My wife and daughter have massive headaches.

Manager: You mean you drove here with a broken gear?! Ohh. We didn't know you have a little girl with you!! Get inside your tent immediately, and don't move from there. We will send food and water to your room. You need complete rest now.

Gayatri: I'm not a little girl!

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