

Description



It was a cold, windy winter morning that seemed perfect for our snowboarding trip at the Big Bear Mountain. When we planned for the trip a few days before, I was given the responsibility to drive the car. Though my experiences in driving were insufficient, the car was small enough to be handled and hence I had agreed to drive them. My friends and I woke up at about 7 a. m. and got ready for the trip and since it was our first snowboarding trip of the season we were really excited and enthusiastic. When we were ready I steered the car and slowly drove away onto the freeway. The trip started out smoothly and nobody felt even a tinge of tiredness. On the way to the Big Bear, we halted at Seven Eleven to grab some energy drinks and continued our trip singing out loudly. The freeway that led us to the mountain was nearly empty and the view was enchanting. We were surrounded by nature with both sides of the freeway covered with mountains and trees. As we neared the mountain, I noticed a sign board that read, “ Snow Chains required beyond this point” and Highway Patrols were blocking the entrance of the mountain. Upon enquiry, they told us that as it had snowed all night the road ahead was covered with snow and ice and that we would require tire chains to move ahead. On hearing this, however, our excitement did not wane and we drove back to the city below the mountains and bought some tire chains. We then pulled over just before the blockade, to put on the chains. The weather outside was freezing cold as we got out of the car which was a black two-door coupe model with a long hood, a short trunk and big tires. I had previously encountered problems with the tires as they had a tendency to slip when the ground was wet. But now I was not worried as the snow chains looked powerful and reliable, though it was quite a challenge to fix them. After struggling with the chains for about 30

minutes, my hands began to feel cold and sensitive due to the freezing weather. The effort was in vain and we finally engaged a mechanic to fix the chains and paid him \$50 for the job. Another problem also lay ahead as I had never driven on icy roads. Though I took pride in my driving skills I was a bit apprehensive at that moment. As I resumed driving, the mountain road seemed fine from where the Highway Patrols stopped us, but once we reached the first curve, the true reality of the situation dawned on us. The road ahead was completely snow covered with only a few sections of the road visible. There were curves once after every 300 feet with the mountain on the right side of the road and a cliff on the left which stretched down for what seemed like miles. The fence that was erected between the cliff and the road was more like a puppy fence and the only thing that was visible below were trees covered in white snow.

I began to drive slowly through the mountains and the snow that lay ahead had become grey due to the moving vehicles and the pressure and heat from the tires melted the snow in to ice. Though I felt my car slipping once awhile, I was confident that if driven carefully, we could safely reach our destination. Half way through the mountains, we saw 2 car accidents. I however, did not panic as I believed that we would not be left to face such a problem. A little deeper into the mountains the roads were almost fully covered with snow and the curves were sharper and narrower. I slowed down my car to the first gear and drove ahead. Everything seemed fine and as we neared our destination, which was a few miles away, I saw a very sharp curve that turned to my left. I then stopped the car as we neared the curve and then accelerated slowly so that we would not slip. However, I soon realized that this curve was different and I hesitantly followed the shape of the curve; all

the time sensing that something was not right. After I completed the curve, I turned my wheel back to follow the road, but to my dismay I found that my car was still following the shape of the curve. The car began to make a full 360 degree turn and at this split second my friends and I panicked. The car turned and moved towards the cliff, when we saw a truck coming down the mountain in the same lane and since our car was shifting to the left, we were literally facing the truck. I realized that the truck would not halt in time to avoid contact with us. By now a train of thoughts crossed my mind and I began to slowly tap the accelerator as I recollected a tip from my father to tap on the brakes or the accelerator in case I slipped on icy roads. This action swayed the car out of the trucks way, but left us facing the deep white cliff which literally looked like a white hell. As the car slid towards the cliff and the fence I felt helpless as the brakes could not stop the car. At that moment I thought we were all going to fall off the cliff and was pretty sure that my friends were also thinking the same. But as luck would have it, a huge chunk of boulder that was sticking out from the ground stopped the car. To my eyes the boulder looked like an ogre sized sneaker chocolate and I was amazed to see how it was perfectly shaped to go under my bumpers and also sharp and strong enough to stop my car tires.

As we got off the car to see exactly what had happened we found that the front bumper and the fence had only enough room for a cockroach to crawl through. The truck driver had also pulled over to find out if we needed any help while we all heaved a big sigh of relief. If it weren't for that boulder we all realized that this would have been our last trip. It was then that I realized that driving was not about pride, confidence or being skilled it was only about being careful and prepared.