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Traveling up a mountain on a crazy donkey in the Himalayas

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I have starred death right in the face and death could sure use some breath spray.

It was August 2014, and I was about 16-and-a-half.

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Shimla could've actually been quite a nice town, advertised as a “smoke-free city” – it receives fresh, clean air from the mountains that it is nestled around. However the city stinks of diesel fumes from all the cars that travel around it, and litter from cigarettes is still an issue in certain parts.

With a population of just over 170,000, it is one of India's smallest cities. The architecture is superb, with beautiful buildings such as The Christ Church, the second oldest church in Northern India, and a stunning Public Library.

We decided to travel up one of these mountains. I personally wanted to walk, but this wasn't allowed. Apparently, this was too dangerous.

The only alternative was to ride a donkey. I was sceptical before I even got on, as these donkeys looked really skinny. In some, you could see the bones around their stomachs.

However, looking at the path to the mountain, the floor was littered with donkey turds. So, I didn't really have much say in the matter.

What I wasn't prepared for is how absolutely loopy the donkey I was riding was going to be. Not long after I got on, he started tilting to one side, causing me to become unbalanced.

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By the end of the journey, I had nicknamed my companion “Eeyore” after The Winnie The Pooh character. For those of you who don’t know, Eeyore is a donkey, who is very depressive, gloomy and pessimistic. Bit odd for a children’s television character, but there you go.

I nicknamed this donkey Eeyore because of the amount of times he tried to run off the ridge.

He kept on speeding up right to the edge before turning around at the last minute. I lost count of the amount of times he did this. I don’t think I could count them all on my two hands.

Honestly, it was absolutely terrifying. Say he got it wrong or actually went through with it. I wouldn’t have survived the fall.

Obviously, I couldn’t communicate with Eeyore to ascertain his intentions. I didn’t know if he was trolling me or if he genuinely was considering leaping off.

Annoyingly, once we got to the top of the ridge, there was not much to look at. The ground had been dirtied by visitors and I can’t even remember the view, so it couldn’t even have been that great. This was sad as the city itself was the cleanest I saw during my time in India. The town bustled with bright colours but up here, there was desolute grey.

Then it was time for round two.

Eeyore took me down the mountain. He did the same again but as he got the bottom, he decided to have a fight with another donkey just to the left of us. He bit him on the cheek. Twice. This other donkey then tried to take a chunk out of the back of my ankle. I was sitting there thinking: “Dude, I’m just an innocent bystander!”

I was glad to get back to Shimla.

Visit it if you can but don't go up the mountains. The ride was not worth it. The views from nearby at the hills are spectacular and there are lots of cute red monkeys walking around, so there's little wrong with the town itself.

If you want to go up the Himalays, however, it'll be better finding somewhere else to ride up a mountain.

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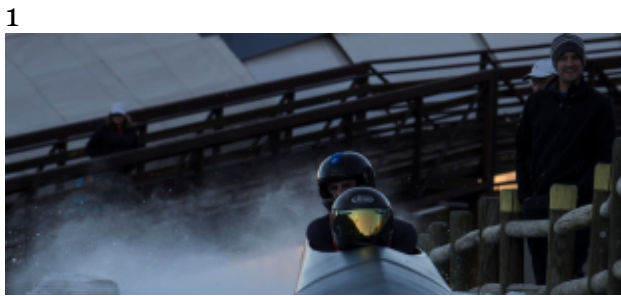
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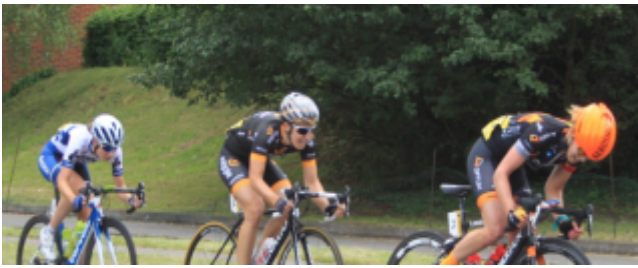
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