



Road tripping

Last Thursday my entire family was awake at 5 a.m. Maybe in some households this wouldn't be such a strange occurrence, but in our house it was downright weird. We are not morning people by any means, and the sight of all of us fumbling around like zombies was probably hilarious.

Of course, we wouldn't be up that early unless something really special was happening, and it was. My dad, my sister Becca and I were preparing to embark on a most epic road trip from Colorado to Massachusetts.

None of us had ever made such a long trip before, and the three-day journey promised to be an exciting experience. Many have already heard my tales of traveling to and from Amherst College via airplane, and to be honest, that mode of transportation was really getting old.

It was time for something new, so I decided to drive back for my last semester at Amherst. Maybe they didn't trust me to make it all the way to Massachusetts without getting distracted and stopping in Ohio indefinitely, or maybe they just wanted to be a part of a grand road trip, but whatever the reason, my dad and Becca joined me.

In the weeks leading up to our departure, I spent many hours thinking about what the road trip would be like. Before I knew the other two would be coming along, I envisioned myself showing up on campus, my voice completely hoarse from hours upon hours of singing in the car.

Once I found out they were coming with me, I began to picture every family road trip movie scene I had ever seen. I fluctuated between being delighted about all the adventures we would have and being scared that we would all kill each other after three cramped days in the car together.

Drumroll Please

Written by Jes-c Brandt

In my imagination the possibilities on this road trip were positively endless. Maybe our car would break down and a tour bus full of rockstars would stop to help us. Perhaps we would make a wrong turn and end up in a top secret location, learning secrets we could never keep and then be forced to stay forever.

On Thursday morning, as we made our final preparations, my mind was hardly functioning at such an early hour, but that didn't stop me from rethinking all the possibilities of adventure that the coming days would hold.

We said our goodbyes and were on our way. As we saw Holyoke fade behind us, I felt like an intrepid explorer. That feeling lasted for all of one hour before we made our first stop in Ogallala, Neb. It was there reality hit me. Movie scenes in my head were replaced with memories of all our previous family trips.

Yes, that trip was a bit different from the others in that there were only three of my family members instead of the usual eight, but I knew that otherwise, this road trip was going to be essentially the same as the others.

We wouldn't be meeting rockstars, only overworked, sleep-deprived gas station attendants. And the hotels we would be staying in wouldn't be nearly as glamorous as the tour buses I had hoped to catch a glimpse of.

For about a minute, I was sad that the road trip wasn't going to be all I had thought it would be, but then I had an epiphany. We three Brandts are some funny people. Putting us in a car together would inevitably lead to days of corny jokes and bad puns—just the sort of thing I love.

As I sit now in Amherst, our road trip is over, classes have started again and my dad and Becca have flown back to Colorado.

Looking back, the cross-country journey was definitely a memorable experience. We went through 11 states, covering 1,925 miles, but most importantly, we have added a number of inside jokes that I know the three of us will continue to laugh about for years.

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