

Carry On Camping – Day 3

‘La-dee-dah-de-dah!’ sang Hardy tunelessly, but loudly, as the minibus rattled over the bumpy road.

‘Ooh-la-la-lee-la!’ sang JoJo, tunefully, but annoyingly.

‘Hmmm....!’ said Jimi, looking round at the slouching players around him.

They were on their way to the Derby Road ground for their crucial league match, and although the opposition were thought to be quite weak, the players were clearly nervous.

‘I’m nervous’, said Wil.

‘Clearly’, replied Freddy.

See? Clearly nervous.

Jimi who, since he had joined them the previous summer, was now the unofficial mascot and cheerleader for Lancaster Road FC, was trying to keep them occupied. Although Derby Road was only two streets away from Lancaster Road, Mr Andrews had decided that it would be good for team spirit if they travelled in a minibus.

‘Mr Andrews?’ asked Freddy, as the coach drove the bus (or should that be the coach drove the coach, or....oh...never mind).

‘Yes, lad?’ said Mr Andrews, temporarily halting his whistling.

‘Are we there yet?’

‘No, lad, be patient. I’m trying to get you to feel what it is like to travel to an away game’.

‘Well...’ stammered Freddy.

‘I feel sick’, said Wil.

‘Nearly there now!’ cried Mr Andrews cheerily.

‘Listen to this, guys!’ said Jimi, ‘and do what I do!’

Jimi had taken up a position on the back seat of the bus, and had moved Alec from where he was sitting, so that Jimi could relax across three whole seats, his guitar resting elegantly on his knees. His cap, which bore the logo of Lancaster Road FC, with the slogan ‘Lancaster Road – Jimi’s JoJolly Crew’ on it, was tilted at an angle, casting a dark shadow over the left side of his face as the sun streamed in from the right.

Jimi struck a chord on the guitar.

‘No hang on, maybe I prefer this one’. He hit another combination of notes.

‘No actually, this one will do!’ The third chord resonated through the grubby minibus. Everyone looked up.

‘Running, running, running...No!’, sang Jimi.

‘Walkin’, walkin’, walkin’...nah...that won’t do man!’ Jimi stared at his guitar. The others all stared at Jimi.

‘This is better’, said Jimi, talking partly to himself and partly to his instrument. He was oblivious to the half-dozen mystified stares facing his way.

‘Rollin’, rollin’, rollin’ along...We’re on our way, we’re singin’ our song...We are tough and we are strong...We play our way, we can’t go wrong

Jimi strummed a big heavy chord on the guitar. There was a little ripple of applause from the three people sitting closest to him. He looked up momentarily and grinned from under his cap.

‘Now, everybody...the chorus!’

‘Rollin’, rollin’, rollin’ along...’We’re on our way, we’re singin’ our song...

Within a few minutes, everyone was singing along to the chorus as Jimi made up more verses, although Hardy and Barry insisted on singing the bit about being tough and strong.

‘We play our way, we can’t go wrong!’ thought Freddy happily to himself as Mr Andrews swung the rickety minibus into the car park.

The previous day had been spent preparing for their Bank Holiday camping trip.

‘We’re all going on a camping holiday...!’ Hardy had tried to sing.

Nobody had joined in.

‘I think right...here...’ said Jaz, pointing to a dot on the map he had stretched out in front of him, ‘just on the fold there. There seems to be some water there, so there must be a lake or something. We could camp on the beach’.

‘What, in this weather?’ said Clara.

‘Yes, why not? It would be perfect! We can walk there from here, and the forecast for Monday is good!’

‘Right. Sorted!’ said Hardy, ‘Let’s do it!’

As Hardy and the others went in search of rucksacs and tents, Freddy smoothed out the old map and peered at the location they had just chosen. Although the words were indistinct, if he screwed up his

eyes in a certain way, he could just make out the microscopic writing above the little blue smudge which represented the lake or pool they were heading for.

He screwed his eyes to the left.

He screwed his eyes to the right.

Whichever way he looked, the result was the same. The tiny writing clearly said Lake Cauchemar, and whichever way he thought about it, however he translated it, the word cauchemar always translated, from the French, as,

Nightmare Lake!

And they had just arranged to camp there.
