Chapter 6
Omana's Journey

Omana and her best friend Radha were very excited. They were going on a train trip to Kerala. Omana was going to her grandmother's house and Radha was going with her family for a holiday. Omana's father had gone to book train tickets for both the families.

Then, just two days before their journey, Radha fell down from her bicycle and fractured her right leg. Her leg was put in plaster. The doctor said that she should not move her leg for six weeks. Radha's family had to cancel their tickets. The two friends were very sad. They had made so many plans about what they would do together on the trip. Then Radha's Amma had an idea. "Omana, why don't you write down everything about your trip in a diary? Then when you come back Radha can read all about your trip. This way you will not forget anything and it will also help you to pass the time on the train."

Both the friends thought this was a good idea. Omana went home and found a notebook with blank pages to write all about her journey. Here are some pages from Omana's diary for you to read.

Omana's Diary

16 May

As soon as we had reached the station we checked our names on the reservation chart. Soon the train reached the platform. We saw that the coach was already full. The train had started early in the morning from Gandhidham, in Kutch. When the train came, there was so much confusion. People were getting off and others were pushing and trying to put their luggage inside, all from one door.

We somehow managed to get in, find our seats and put our luggage under them. By the time the train started, most people had found their seats and arranged their luggage. After some time the ticket collector came and checked our tickets to see that we were in our proper seats. *Amma* and *Appa* had the lower berths. Unni and I have the middle

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berths. There are two college students who have the upper berths. On the other berths, there is a family with two children. They seem to be about our age. I will go and talk to them later.

Now I am sitting near the window and I have started writing about our journey, just as I had promised you. I will stop now because *Amma* has opened the tiffin box. *Amma* had packed a lot of food – *dhokla* with *chutney*, lemon rice, and some *mithai*. My mouth is watering. I will write more later.

- Why was it so crowded at the door of the coach?

  _____

  _____

- Have you ever travelled in a train? When?

  _____

  _____

- What food would you like to take with you when you travel? Why?

  _____

  _____

- What does the ticket-checker do?
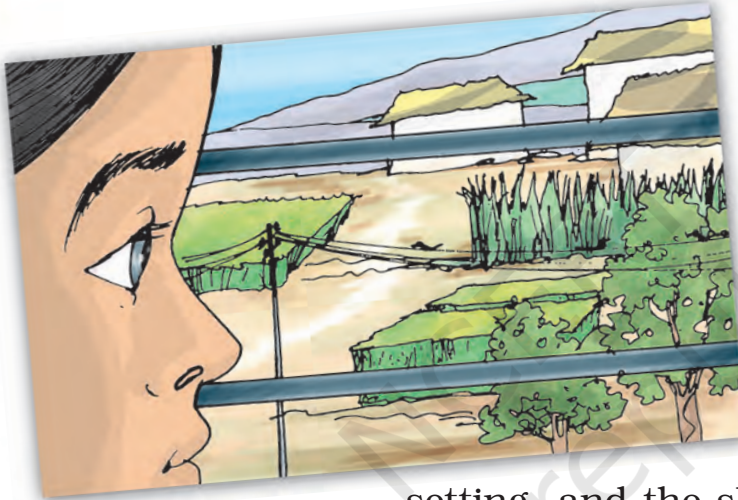
  _____

  _____

- How will you recognise the ticket-checker?

  _____

  _____

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16 May

After lunch some people slept. But I was not sleepy. I kept looking out of the window. I saw many fields, but they all were brown and dry. Sometimes we passed small villages. They seemed to be flying by. Do you know that when the train is at a very high speed things outside seem to be running in the opposite direction?

Earlier it was really hot. Now that it is evening, there is some breeze.

The sun is slowly setting and the sky has become orange. I have never seen it look like this in Ahmedabad.

We have just passed a station called Valsad. The train stopped for only two minutes, but even for the short time, there was so much noise. "*Chai! garam, chai!*" one man was calling, "*batata vada! batata vada!*

Omana's Journey

puri-shaak!, doodh-thanda-doodh!." People were selling and buying food on the platform. We quickly bought some bananas and *chikoos* through the window itself.

◉ What did Omana see from the window?

_____

_____

◉ What are some of the things that are sold at Railway stations?

_____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____

16 May

I have made some friends. They are Sunil and Ann. They are going to their grandmother's house in Kozhikode. Sunil has given me some story books to read.

A little while ago, I went to brush my teeth, but there was no water in the bathroom. Somebody said that it will only be filled at the next big station.

For the teacher: Gandhidham, Ahmedabad and Valsad are in Gujarat. Kozhikode is in Kerala. Show these states to the children on the map to help them realise what a long journey it is.

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- Why do you think there was no water in the bathroom of the train? Discuss.

- Imagine that you are going on a long train journey. What are the things that you will take with you to help pass the time?

- Can you recognise who are these people shown in the picture? What work do they do? Discuss.

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