



1. *Eastward Bound*

"Meet at Maccas at 8am" announced Red. He lied. The meeting time was actually 9am, but Dog was always running one hour late. "Try and get some shut eye" continued Red, "it'll be a long day in the saddle tomorrow."

Devil was like a cat on a hot tin roof, "I can never sleep before a long ride" he mumbled and took another swig out of his large tin mug. Devil liked big things. He had a couple of big things of his own - big eyes, big paws, but he also collected big things - big bike, big car, big boat.

Bat wasn't listening at all, he was trying to remember Red's acronym, which should be executed, according to Red, whenever you get back on the bike. "Now what was it" mumbled Bat, "BEST? No. EAST? No. O' that's right, it's WEST - Wallet, Ear Plugs, Saddlebags, Trailer." Red was the only one towing a trailer, and Bat had asked for the "T" to be removed from the acronym. Red pointed out, "if I have to explain it to you, you will never understand" and the "T" remained.

They were all sitting on the veranda at Dog's house and it was only 8pm, but Dog was agitated and checking his watch every two minutes. This was the familiar signal to nick off, as the bitch on the side would

be arriving soon. "You'd think he'd want an early night" quipped Red. Bat and Devil made no comment, just saddled up and roared off into the night.

Now Dog surprised everyone and arrived at Maccas at 8:30am - only half an hour late. This meant, for the first time in his life, he was the first to arrive at the meeting place. But Dog is the ultimate cool dude and was completely unphased by his new circumstances. He just hopped off his HD and proceeded to put the final touches to his bandanna, while admiring his raw good looks in his rear view mirror. Dog knew they would never leave without him. The four of them had been inseparable since they were orphaned, while travelling between wildlife camps, some years ago.

Red, Bat and Devil roared into the car park ten minutes later. "Nice one Red," sniggered Bat, gesturing towards Dog who was standing with his hands on his hips and pretending to look annoyed. Dog, as cunning as a fox, knew exactly what had happened and immediately sensed that Red could be embarrassed, by his own deceit, into shouting a flat white and a double chocolate muffin for everyone. "What's this then?" asked Dog, tapping his

genuine HD watch, careful not to tap it too hard in case the glass fell out again! "Sorry" said Red blushing, "I guess it's my round!"

Dog picked a table where they could gaze upon the things they love the most. Although Dog likes the ladies, he rides a mono. He always said "I don't want no bitch on the back." No one believed him of course, until he bought The Rocker - the model without the passenger perch. However, it should be pointed out, Dog is not adverse to some slinky chick clinging to the rear fender for the short run between the tavern and home!

Red just wanted a reliable "down to business" traveller so he settled on a Road King. It is turquoise and pearly white, with white walled tyres to match. According to Red, "she's the prettiest thing he ever laid eyes on." Red has not personalised his HD at all, it just isn't his way. Even the pipes are stock standard and the HD sound is nowhere to be heard.

Devil knew it wouldn't be practical or comfortable but his heart ruled his head and he bought a V-Rod, together with a personalised plate which reads "DEVIL" of course. There is no doubt that Devil and the V-Rod are a match made in heaven but you can't help but wonder if his haemorrhoids have returned when you see him walking after only two hours in the saddle.

There is no other way to describe Bat's Fat Boy than to say it is a work of art. Fully customised and polished to within an inch of its life. It's a head turner and a show stopper at every Show and Shine. The ladies like it too but Bat couldn't care less. He would rather spend an afternoon tinkering with his Fat Boy than trying to please some whinging wombat!

With two vegetarians and two meat lovers in the gang, meal times are contentious and awkward. Red introduced a fairer system where they take it in turns to pick the place to eat. The only stipulation is, if Red or Bat are picking, there has to be a meat dish on the menu for Dog and Devil. Likewise, if it's Dog or Devil's turn, there has to be a vegetarian option for Red and Bat - baked beans excluded! Luckily they all like cakes, so morning and afternoon tea is never a problem.

"What's for lunch?" asked Bat with half a muffin stuffed in his mouth and chocolate dribbling down his chin. "It's my turn to pick" said Red "and I'd just like to see where we are at noon." "Let's get the hell out of here before Bat eats another muffin" snarled Devil. "Don't forget to go through the WEST system" added Red. Red needn't have worried, he was a compulsive checker anyway and it wasn't uncommon to see him check his saddle bags half a dozen times before selecting first gear. Devil just rolled his eyes and mumbled under his breath, "to think we're going to have to put up with this 100 times a day." Still mates are mates, you gotta take the good with the bad with the ugly. "We'll sit on 120," quipped Red. Then they set off, leaving Perth behind for the open road, wind in their fur and not a care in the world.

They never even made it around the first corner before they were all stopped on the side of the road. Bat had forgotten to put his sunglasses on. From that moment, the "S" in WEST stood for sunglasses too!

Stay cool,

The Skink



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