



## 6. *Bush Tucker Man*

Bat was very excited. For the first time in his life he had a real secret to keep. He began practicing, to make sure he didn't sound guilty if asked about Bald Bob. "I have never met anyone matching that description," Bat mumbled to himself. "Red, go on, test me. Pretend you're a copper and ask me if I've seen Bald Bob." Red knew it was easier to humour Bat than to say no, so he found a piece of paper and drew a round head with big googly eyes, and an alcoholic's nose. Red presented the picture to Bat and said in a stern voice "excuse me, have you seen anyone matching this description?" Bat rolled on the ground in fits of laughter and chortled "no sir, I have never met anyone matching that description in my life." Red replied "just goes to show, you've still got a lot of work to do!"

It was a cold day for riding and they were all pleased to arrive at Nullarbor Roadhouse. They kept their genuine H-D jackets on their backs and sat in the sun on the veranda; drinking coffee and watching the world go by. An Aboriginal Elder was sitting on the veranda too; he was wearing a T Shirt which said "Want to know about Bush Tucker? Ask me." "I want to know about bush tucker" said Bat, who always showed an interest whenever the

subject of food came up. The Bush Tucker Man didn't need to be asked twice and so the lesson began.

The Bush Tucker Man laid down two dirty handkerchiefs. One handkerchief was for things you can eat, and the other for things you can't eat. Then he emptied his trouser pockets, which were full of seeds and petrified insects, spiders, reptiles and birds, onto the two handkerchiefs.

"I'd like to see those little birds migrate to the can be eaten pile" said Devil. "It would take a few of them to make a pie" quipped Dog. "Just be quiet and learn" said Bat. Red watched and listened and said nothing at all. All the boys had said they wanted to learn more about their heritage and their natural instincts, which had been eroded away when their domestication was complete.

"Bat can you stop thinking about food for five minutes" snapped Dog, eager to get back on the road. But The Aboriginal Elder had Bat's ear and there was no way he was going to get kitted up anytime soon. So Dog lay down, in ear shot, with his paws over his eyes and Red and Devil reluctantly joined the bush tucker lesson.

"Check this out" said The Bush Tucker Man when the lesson was over. He grabbed his didgeridoo and played a few soulful bars before launching into a six minute recital. Bat was in his element as he didn't mind performing his party piece himself. Red grabbed a couple of stones and started tapping on the offbeat. Bat jiggled where he sat and patiently waited his turn.

When The Aboriginal Elder completed his piece on the didge, Bat, without any shame shouted "it's my turn." Bat took his place on centre stage, gave a little bow, and then performed the Tennessee Wig Walk. His enthusiasm made up for his lack of talent and the crowd loved it.

*TENNESSEE WIG WALK  
(Larry Coleman / Norman Gimbel)*

*I'm a bow-legged chicken, I'm a knock kneed hen  
Never been so happy since I don't know when  
I walk with a wiggle and a giggle and a squawk  
Doing the Tennessee wig walk.*

"Do it again" shouted one of the local kids who had come over to see what was going on. So Bat began again, this time accompanied by The Bush Tucker Man on the didge. "God help us" said Dog. "Looks like we'll be staying the night" added Devil. By now Red was in on the act and was coaching Bat so he could give his best performance. By the time they had finished, everyone knew how to do The Tennessee Wig Walk.

"Come on" said Red, "it's time to hit the road." "Brother's" said The Aboriginal Elder, "I'll be waiting for you when you ride this way again." As they pulled away from the pot holed forecourt, Bat looked back. There was The Bush Tucker Man waving his didgeridoo and for the first time Bat felt homesick.

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The Skink



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*Devil and his V-Red Muscle*