



15. To Tassie We Will Go

*To Tassie we will go,
To Tassie we will go,
Heigh ho, the dairy-o, to Tassie we will go!*

"Listening to you sing that song is enough to make me loose the will to live" snarled Devil as he crawled out of his tent. "I thought you wanted to go home?" said Bat. "I'd be happy to quit on the Tassie tour if you'll stop singing that song" said Devil. Bat took no notice at all and continued to sing away as happily as can be.

"We can take our time today" said Red, "the ferry doesn't sail until this evening." "Bat, I hope you're right about not taking a cabin" snapped Devil. "Look, it's only one night" insisted Bat, "a reclining seat will be more than adequate."

It was a cold miserable day with not a speck of blue sky anywhere. In the final flurry of activity before leaving their camp site Bat forgot to pee. Within half an hour they were all stopped in a beach side car park in Pioneer Bay. "O' no" said Bat, "it's one of those new-fangled automatic toilets. It's like the Tardis in there!" Bat had a life changing experience with one of these dunnies some time ago. It had taken Bat so long to read the instructions that before he had finished his business an electronic voice announced "flushing in 10 seconds." Bat had come screaming out of the toilet, without wiping his bum, with his trousers tangled around his ankles. "Just get

in there, pee, and get out" snapped Devil. So Bat went inside and reappeared one minute later. "I never knew it was that easy" said Bat. Red, Dog and Devil just rolled their eyes in disbelief.

"We might as well hang out in St Kilda" said Dog, certain of some classy pavement entertainment. By lunch time their H-D's were parked, in formation, outside Topolinos Pizza Bar on Fitzroy St. Red was reading a newspaper, Dog and Devil were perverting at the local babes through their dark sun glasses, and Bat was making a nuisance of himself asking "what's the time?" "Ten minutes later than the last time you asked" said Devil. "This is nearly as bad as killing time in an airport lounge" said Bat. "Not if you're sitting where I'm sitting" said Dog who was indulging in one of his favourite pastimes. Nearby a busker was testing out a new tune called Purple Poodle and Bat threw her a dollar just for something to do.

Purple Poodle

*There 's a purple poodle on Fitzroy Street
You gotta get out, you just gotta meet.
Sure to make you smile it's a fancy treat
If you catch a purple poodle on Fitzroy Street.*

"Dog, you should know, what's a purple poodle?" asked Bat. Dog thought for a moment and said "here on Fitzroy Street it could be anything, but it sure ain't a poodle because no poodle was ever born purple!"

By 4pm even Dog and Devil were bored, "let's get the hell out of here" said Dog, "there's only so many cappuccino's I can drink in one sitting." Unfortunately the boys got caught in the peak traffic, and the rain, and by the time they arrived at the ships marshalling yard no one was smiling. "There's no easy way around this" said Red, "let's just get in the queue and get on with it." The queue of cars inched forward bit by bit. Unfortunately the boys were caught behind an oil burning tin top. When the queue stopped altogether Devil called out "turn that bloody thing off." Luckily the guy never heard him as he was built like a tank and the outcome might not have ended in Devil's favour.

Fortunately they were undercover as it continued to drizzle with rain. When the undercover area finally ran out Red said "sit tight a minute, no point getting wet if we don't need too." This tactic was not appreciated by the guy in the car behind and the driver called out "scared of getting wet are we?" Devil was off his bike in an instant and the guy in the tin top was quickly apologising, "only joking dude, stay as long as you like!"

"Nearly there now" said Bat, as they edged forward to the steward barking the orders. The steward signalled for Bat to "go ahead" and then he put his hand up and stopped the others. "Ok, deck three's full" said the steward. "You guys are going to deck five." "But we are all together, and I've got the tickets" said Red. "Sorry dude" said the steward, "that's the way it works out sometimes."

Bat rode to the motorcycle tie down point amid ship and patiently waited for the others. Of course they never arrived. After 10 minutes Bat conceded he was alone. He looked around at the other bikers laughing and joking with their mates. Bat felt like he had been cast adrift and for a moment he stood in a daze. At times like this Red was usually around to make sure everything was ok. A steward wandered over to help Bat tie down his Fat Boy. "Take it easy" said Bat when the steward yanked hard on the strop attached to the handle bars. When Bat was sure that his H-D would make safe passage,

he forlornly made his way to the upper deck.

All Bat wanted to do was find his seat and curl up and go to sleep, but Red had his ticket so Bat started to look for the others. There were lounges and cafes and restaurants everywhere but no sign of Red, Dog or Devil. Bat walked around and around, carrying his helmet and his little overnight bag, for what seemed like an eternity. When he had nearly given up all hope of finding them, Dog tapped him on the shoulder. "Where've you been?" asked Bat in a high pitched voice. "Calm down" said Dog with a smile, "we're having a beer in the Voodoo Lounge. Saw you walk past a couple of times. Red said it was time to put you out of your misery." Bat looked at Dog with sad eyes and said nothing at all. "Anyway, why didn't you go to the purser? All you had to do was show your id and they would've re-issued your ticket." "Never thought of that" said Bat trying not to laugh. Dog was nearly hysterical by now and said "must admit, you do a good job acting the sad little dude."

The ship sailed while they were finishing their beers. "I know it's early but it's been a long day, I'm turning in" said Bat. "I won't be far behind you" said Red. Dog and Devil had other ideas.

The ships dormitory was decked out with rows of allocated seats. "Just as well I remembered my ear plugs" said Bat once he had tuned into the unsynchronised snoring. Before long Bat had settled into his seat and joined in the chorus! When Red arrived, Bat was sound asleep. "O' no" said Red "I've forgotten the ear plugs." Red, Dog and Devil had their worst night's sleep in living memory. When dawn finally broke, Red said "There you go, Bat had the last laugh." To which Devil replied, "I knew I should've taken a cabin. Next time I try to save a couple-a-bucks just shoot me!"

Stay Cool
The Skink



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