



18. Showtime

It was Royal Show time when the boys arrived in Hobart. Red, Dog and Devil tried to keep the show a secret from Bat, but Bat was paying more attention than usual, and overheard an advertisement on breakfast radio. "Guess what" said Bat, "the show's on, how lucky are we?" "You can go on your own" snapped Devil. "He'll probably get lost on the way there" mumbled Dog. "I suppose I could come along for the ride" said Red. "O' alright then" said Dog. Devil wandered off in disgust. When he came back, Red, Dog and Bat were ready to leave. "It's the quick or the dead around here, wait for me!" said Devil.

Bat knew his way around a Royal Show like the back of his hand. "Just follow me" said Bat. They arrived at the cattle yards just in time to see Bartholomew, a prize winning bull, being pampered and photographed. "What a life" said Dog, "only 18 months old and got the best job in the world." Red had forgotten his glasses and said "look at the size of his old fellow!" "That's his balls" said

Dog. "Bloody hell" mumbled Devil. Unfortunately a strong gust of wind whipped Devil's H-D cap right off his head and by the time he caught up with it, the cap had wafted over a fresh cow pat. Devil sniffed his cap and sighed. "It didn't touch the poop" said Bat. Devil wasn't convinced and said "I'll meet you in the food hall at lunch time." Then he walked away, shaking his head and wondering what the hell he was doing there.

Red and Dog trudged around the show, behind Bat, like doting parents looking after a spoilt child. When they caught up with Devil he was in a better mood. "I've just spent the last half an hour, in side show alley, shooting coppers off motorcycles. Cost me \$25 but worth its weight" said Devil. "Look at all my show bags full of pop chocolates" said Bat. "I'm not interested" said Devil, "in any case, what the hell are pop chocolates?" "Pop chocolates, my little buddy, are to the chocolate world what pop music is to the music world!" said Bat as he poured a whole

packet of maltesers down his throat. "I hate pop music" mumbled Devil, "me too" said Dog. "Won't touch maltesers" said Red, "they always remind me of a pile of kangaroo poop!"

Bat bought everyone an avocado at the 2 fruit and 5 veg stand. "You know I don't like avocados" snapped Devil. "Eat up, it's good brain food" said Bat. Devil gouged the pip out of his avocado and said "what am I supposed to do with this?" Before anyone could answer, he grabbed Bat and shoved the pip down Bat's T Shirt. The four boys stood and looked at each other for a moment and then Devil ran. "I'm going to fill your boots with stewed apple" called Bat. But Devil didn't hear him, and they didn't see him again until they were back at camp.

After lunch, Dog retired to the fashion show venue. "Things are looking up" thought Dog, while ultra thin babes paraded in slinky underwear and light weight nighties. Bat begged Red to ride the Dodgems with him, but Red's car proved to be a dud and he was left stuck in a corner while Bat whizzed past a dozen times. After the fashion show, Dog spent 10 minutes feverishly forcing 20 cent pieces into a machine which paid out less than the average pokie. Fortunately Red managed to rescue him before he broke into another \$20 note.

They didn't leave the show until just before sunset. "Never again" mumbled Red. "Yeah, I should have left with Devil at lunch time" said Dog. Bat waddled along, barely able to move under the weight of the show bags and the extra large stuffed animal he'd won on the wheel of fortune. "You know I'm sure I saw Bartholomew wink at me" said Bat, as he struggled to find room on his handlebars for all the show bags. "When we get home, we should run a cattle stud. I'm going to call my bull Bob and my slogan will be "Bob a Job"" Bat continued. "Good idea" said Dog, "only thing is, I'm going to make more money than you because I'm going to call my bull Buck!" Without thinking Bat replied, "But Buck doesn't rhyme with anything." Red and Dog roared with laughter.

On their ride home they made an unscheduled stop for a large bag of cooking apples. When they arrived back at camp, Devil was sitting there, twiddling his thumbs. "I've had the billy on and off since 3 O'clock" said Devil, "where've you been?" "Having fun" said Bat. And while Red and Dog mused over the afternoon's events, Bat was peeling apples!

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