

The Adventures of Red Dog & Bat Devil



21. Alpine Country

"I'm looking forward to the ride over the mountain" said Devil as he crawled out of his swag on a warm summer's morning. "Mt Hotham here we come" said Dog as he slurped at his coffee. "They forecast a hot day here in Bairnsdale" said Red, "but it should be nice and cool up in the mountains." By 9am the boys were enthusiastically making their way along The Great Alpine Road.

The ride was enjoyable and uneventful all the way to the ski resort of Dinner Plain. Red, who was leading the way, pulled over to the side of the road and said "I don't like the look of this" and he pointed at a big black cloud rolling in from the east. "She'll be right" said Dog, and then he roared into the distance without giving anyone a chance to procrastinate. Five minutes later they were being lashed by a 40knot thunder squall. As the wind died, the fog swirled in. Dog stopped at the Mt Hotham ski resort and before Red had chance to launch into him he said "sorry matie, I never thought that was going to happen!"

"We'll just have to wait until it clears" said Red. "You'll be waiting a while" said the caretaker, "latest forecast says snow above 1500m." At about this time, a bunch

of local riders appeared out of fog. They gave the boys the nod and then continued on down the mountain as if it was a bright, sunny day. The boys just looked at each other and without a word, four Harleys roared back to life.

Before they left the car park, Red called out above the roar of their exhaust pipes, "only stop if you absolutely have to." "No worries" said Bat, but he wasn't really listening and was more concerned about the amount of sludge collecting on the underbelly of his bike. Dog led the way, Red, towing his trailer, brought up the rear.

With visibility down to only twenty meters, Bat soon lost sight of Devil's tail light. "They must have stopped, they must have stopped" said Bat, and he kept repeating this mantra to himself. Then all of a sudden a parking bay materialised out of the mist and Bat parked his Harley. "No doubt they'll come and find me" said Bat, while he rummaged around in his saddle bag for a muesli bar.

Bat was surprised to find himself sharing the parking bay with another biker; a Mexican dude,



hacking around the country on a KLR650. "Hello amigo, my name is Gonzales" said the Mexican, "come, I will make you some tea and you can share my Jalapenos." So Bat crouched under an old tarpaulin, with Gonzales, and devoured a make shift afternoon tea. For a moment, Bat completely forgot about the others!

Red, Dog and Devil stopped further down the mountain. Dog heard Red honking his horn and pulled over at the first opportunity. "O for crying out loud" said Devil as soon as he realised Bat was missing. "I told him not to stop" said Red. "Never trust a wombat" said Dog. "I'm not going back for him" snapped Devil. "Anyway, what's up?" asked Dog. "I've boiled my rear brake fluid" said Red while he played with his flaccid brake pedal. "Nice one" said Dog after a long silence. "I knew I was tail braking a lot; I was trying to keep up with you guys" said Red. "Don't blame us!" said Dog. "I'll put the billy on while we decide what to do" said Devil. So the boys sat around, drinking tea and contemplating the meaning of life. Then all of a sudden Red's ears pricked up and he said "checkout the sound of those pipes, Bat's on his way." Everyone cheered.

Bat pulled into the lay-by as if he was running late for Sunday lunch. "I got held up by this Mexican dude" said Bat. The boys gave Bat a puzzled look and then Bat whipped out the fold up Sombrero Gonzales had given him. "What the hell....." said Devil. By now Bat was wearing the Sombrero and performing The Mexican Hat Dance while he hummed



the little tune. "Great hey!" said Bat, "Gonzales taught me." Dog called out "Watch where you're going, you crazy dude." But it was too late. Bat tripped over his Fat Boy and way lying face down in the dirt. Everyone laughed long and hard. "Here, let me try it on" said Dog. Dog paraded around in the Sombrero, then Red had a turn and even Devil got in on the act. "I say we go Mexican tonight" said Bat, "my shout."

Red nursed his Road King all the way to Wangaratta. They set up camp in the caravan park right in town and wandered up to the Mexican bar and grill just on dusk. "Hard to believe it was so cold up on the mountain" said Devil, wringing wet with sweat. "Yep, like nothing I've ever seen before!" said Dog.



Everyone ordered Chimichanga, with a double helping of Jalapenos on the side. It was a merry evening with too many Tequilas consumed by everyone.

By the time they sauntered back to camp, Red was ready to have a moment on his own, but Bat was still riding high on his Mexican encounter and continued to make a nuisance of himself, singing, "Me and my fold up sombrero" over and over again. "Red" said Bat, "remember when we lived in the orphanage and they used to let us watch The Cisco Kid on a Friday night?" and without waiting for a reply Bat continued, "for old times sake, let's pretend to be Cisco and Pancho again!"

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The Skink



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