

The Adventures of Red Dog & Bat Devil



22. Hoppers

"Sush" said Red when the news started on breakfast radio, "I'm trying to find out where the locusts are today." "Keep your fur on" snarled Devil, and then everyone went quiet. "They're everywhere we are" said Red. "And everywhere we want to go" said Dog. "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em" said Devil.

Just as the boys were about to leave the camp ground, a couple of foreign backpackers pulled up in a Wicked Camper, with bug splat all over the front bumper. "Looks like you've just been through a plague of locusts?" said Red making polite conversation. "No, no we are not locals" said the blonde bomb shell, "we are from Sweden." "I mean locusts" said Red, in a slightly raised tone. Then Red pretended to be a grass hopper, flapping his wings and making a buzzing noise as he hopped around. The girls looked at him as if he was a super freak and quickly drove away. "You've sure got away with women" said Dog, and then he revved his Harley and roared out of the caravan park, howling at the top of his voice.

They didn't even make ten kilometres down the road before the first swarm appeared. "This'll teach 'em" said Red as he sat snugly behind his Road King's large touring wind shield. At morning tea, Bat was almost proud of the large grasshopper that was wedged firmly between his two front



teeth. "Check this out" said Bat, and he showed everyone before spitting the hopper to the ground. "Have you seen the state of your front end?" asked Red. Bat took one look at the front of his bike, threw his head in his hands and said "Oh no, it's the Hungarian Goulash all over again!" A local dude, sitting in a rusty old ute, pipped up "the only thing that'll take it off is Spruce Jus and its all sold out this side of the border." Then he zoomed off leaving the boys standing in a cloud of dust. The boys wandered over to a truck driver who was cleaning his windscreen with a paint scraper. "Here" said the truck driver, "take my Spruce. It breaks my heart to see a bunch of Harleys look like that."

"We won't get to Wagga Wagga just standing here" said Red. Reluctantly they all got back on their bikes. "I feel like a fighter pilot preparing for combat" said Dog as he pulled on his riding gloves. As soon as they pulled out of the truck bay they came across a group of emus, feasting on the hoppers that were lying dead and dying in the middle of the road. Dog

pulled up next to Red and said "I guess there isn't much room for a brain in there!" Red called out to the cock of the flock "Get off the road, you crazy dude." "Give us a break" said the emu, "this is like liquid gold." Devil didn't mind the unscheduled stop and joined in the feast. "What?" said Devil,

when he noticed the others looking at him, "this is a delicacy to us Tasmanians!"

When the dishes were finally cleared away, the boys sat around, musing over the day's events. "What I don't understand" said Dog,



"is why the hoppers explode if you hit them at 80km hour but they bounce off when you're only doing 60?" "Ah" said Red with a wry smile, "you need to understand the theory behind force to understand why!" Then Red took a moment to look his audience in the eye before he went on, "you see, you need enough force to overcome the surface tension of the locust's

As soon as they set up camp, Bat sprayed Spruce Jus all over the front of his bike. Then Red read the small print - "not to be used on polished surfaces!" Devil arrived in a good mood and said "I'll make dinner tonight." So while Red, Dog and Bat cursed and cleaned, Devil stirred a large pot of sweet corn soup. When the damper was golden brown Devil called out "come and get it!" "This is the best sweet corn soup I've ever tasted" said Bat as he put down his spoon and started drinking the soup straight from the bowl. "Sweet corn isn't one of my favourites" said Dog, "but this one's pretty good." Bat was just about to take the last slurp when he noticed a set of beady little eyes peering at him from the bottom of his bowl. "What's this?" said Bat lifting the debris out with his finger. Then bat looked a little closer and said "You didn't?" "I did" said Devil, "payback time!" "That's below the belt" said Bat, heaving and choking at the thought of it. Devil rolled around in fits of laughter and said "come off it Bat, one bowl of locust and sweet corn soup won't kill you!"

body. What you have to remember is force is applied over an area and not a point. Therefore force is the square of the speed!" Dog rolled his eyes and yawned deeply but Red continued "you see, if you're doing 60k's, you take the square of 60, which is 60 multiplied by 60 to give 360 units of force. But if you're doing 80k's, that's 80 multiplied by 80 to give 640 units of force. As you can see, 80km hour creates basically twice the force of 60km hour....." Dog wished he'd never mentioned it and reached for a Sudoku puzzle which he kept in his top pocket. Devil decided it was a good time to cut his over grown toe nails. Bat snuggled down into his large camp chair and said "just what I need, a bed time story."

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