

The Adventures of Red Dog & Bat Devil



3. *Vegetarian Hungarian Goulash*

Dog was out of his swag at sunrise. He tried to be as quiet as he could, mainly because he fancied another hour in bed himself. But he disturbed Red and by the time he returned from his toilet stop, the billy was on, Devil was spooning coffee into four mugs and Bat was looking for the "Just Add Water" pancake mix in the food box which was kept in Red's trailer.

After a dozen buttery pancakes and several cups of coffee, Bat began titivating his Fat Boy. First he used a bucket of water, with a thimble full of his magic potion, to wipe her clean. Then he started with his can of "show and shine," which took up more room in his saddle bag than a couple of T shirts, but the polish was more important. The others, from the comfort of their king sized camp chairs, offered encouraging banter. "You've missed a bit of road kill on the left fork" quipped Devil. "Those pipes are looking a bit streaky" added Dog. "I'll give you ten bucks if you clean mine too" called Red. Bat didn't mind, it was all part of performing in front of the others.

Once Bat was satisfied that his baby was ready for the road, they saddled up and headed into town. Dog and Devil found cruising along the main drag with Bat a bit of an embarrassment. Dog and Devil were riding in front, side by side, with no helmets and their bandannas fluttering fashionably in the wind. Passersby were pointing and staring but Dog and Devil looked straight ahead, trying to be

cool and pretending not to notice. Unfortunately Bat can't play the cool dude, not even for five minutes. He likes to wave at the kids and check out his reflection in shop windows. These extra activities take his attention and several times he was caught in the wrong gear and fumbling with the controls to prevent stalling. Thankfully they managed to park without incident. Dog mumbled to Devil, "just goes to show, you can only be as cool as the un-coolest dude!"

One reason for the trip into town was to buy the ingredients for the Vegetarian Hungarian Goulash they were planning to cook for their evening meal. It was an old recipe belonging to Red's aunt, passed down from generation to generation. Even the meat lovers, Dog and Devil, had enjoyed it many times. It was one occasion when they wouldn't have to cook two meals.

That afternoon, Dog noticed a pressure cooker in an Op-Shop window and said to the others, "Now that's what we need to speed up the cooking process." It was only five dollars, Dog offered the assistant four, they all chipped in a dollar and walked out of that shop as if they had found a pot of gold.

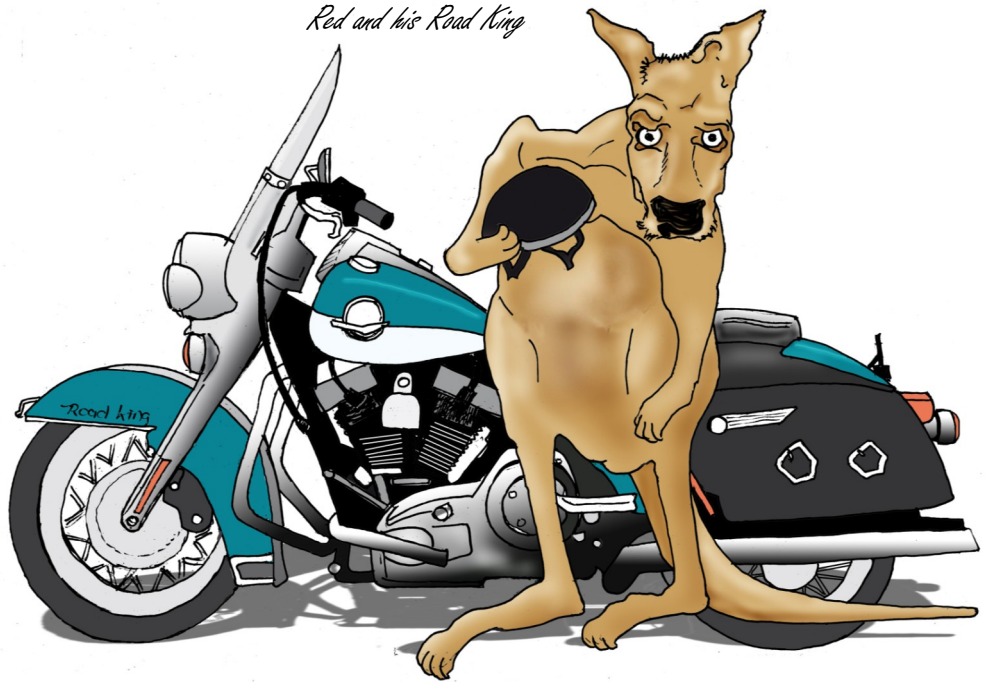
They were so excited with their new find that they bought the ingredients and headed straight back to camp to cook an early dinner. None of them had experimented with a pressure cooker before and they all stood

around, as if it was a witch's caldron, waiting for instructions from Red on how to construct the brew. Bat peeled and sliced the potatoes, tomatoes and onions. Devil used a four pound hammer to pulverise the garlic cloves. Dog spent ten minutes looking for the can opener and opened the can of peas and Red remained in charge of the spices and the stirring spoon!

When all the ingredients had been added, the lid and the pressure weights were securely placed on top of the pressure cooker. Then they watched and waited. "O' no!" said Red, noticing the unopened jar of paprika sitting on top of the trailer, "I've forgotten the paprika." "No worries" said Dog, "the pot hasn't started to whistle yet, so let's just remove the lid and add it now." It sounded like a good idea at the time. Dog grabbed the pot from the stove, said "stand back" and then forced the lid from the cooker. It was too late to say "if it doesn't come off easily, don't do it." Boom! The pot exploded and one spotless Fat Boy became a Fat Boy covered in Vegetarian Hungarian Goulash! "Bloody hell!" shouted Dog. Then there was silence and sheer disbelief.

"Quick, get a hose" called Bat, but there wasn't a hose anywhere in sight. Instead, they used their bucket and cast iron pots to throw water over the bike. The water helped clean up the mess, but it also served the purpose of swilling the brew, especially the peas, into hard to reach places. "I told you" said Red, "if it can happen, it will happen. Now can we please go back to using the iron pot?" No one answered.

Red and his Road King



When the worst of the mess had been washed away, Bat asked to be left alone to attend to his beloved Harley. So Dog and Devil bade a hasty retreat and headed into town. Red cleaned the pressure cooker and placed it by the bin with a message "free to good home." Then he settled into his camp chair and watched Bat take his Fat Boy apart, bit by bit, and then put it back together again. At times Bat broke into fits of laughter and then he went quiet again and polished some more. Red gave him the space he needed and not a word was spoken between them. No one felt hungry.

When Dog and Devil returned from their night on the town, all the lights were out at the camp. They could hear Bat snoring, but it didn't seem to be coming from the direction of his tent. Then they saw him, curled up next to his Fat Boy, can of polish still in his left hand. Red had covered him with a blanket before turning in himself.

Stay cool
The Skink



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