



## 9. Zen and Salt Water

Bat and Devil cruised the main street of Port Lincoln looking for entertainment and fun. This was a big ask for a small town on a Monday morning, so Bat made his own entertainment. "Just wait for me here while I go to the loo" said Devil, deliberately pointing at a blade of grass. Bat just smiled his whimsical smile. When Devil was out of sight, Bat moved to a less conspicuous place, not far away, and enjoyed watching Devil emerge with an irritated expression. When he thought Devil had had quite enough he called out "Devil I'm here!" Bat loves playing games.

In a second hand book shop, Bat stumbled across a copy of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. Bat had never heard of the book but he felt certain that in the depths of the pages he would gleam creative ways to spanner his Fat Boy.

Bat is not an avid reader; the only way he can get through a book is to become obsessive and intense about it. So it was no surprise that he was the first out of his swag the following morning. When Red surfaced for his morning constitutional, there was Bat, sipping coffee and reading by torch light.

"Red, what's this book about?" whispered Bat, showing Red the front cover. "I'm already up to page 50 and there's nothing about motorcycle maintenance." "Ah ha" said Red wiping sleep from his eyes. "I suppose it's about everything and nothing at all." "But it's called the art of motorcycle maintenance" insisted Bat. "Read on, Dear Watson, read on" said Red and then he crawled back into his tent without giving Bat the chance to ask any more questions.

On the way back from the toilet block Red had trodden in some stray dog poo. The dog poo was now all over the floor of his tent! "Now I understand why most caravan parks say no dogs allowed" sniped Red.

Dog heard the commotion and poked his head out of his tent. "What's happened?" "Red's trodden dog poo into his tent" offered Bat. Red shot Dog a look that suggested it was his fault. Dog couldn't help himself; he laughed, and laughed, and laughed, until he was horse. Then he laughed some more. "Hey Red" said Dog, "if practicing Zen means enjoying every moment, does that mean you're supposed to enjoy cleaning up that poo?" Red was

not amused. He gave Dog another contemptuous look and carried on cleaning.

As soon as breakfast was over, they packed up camp and rode out of town. They had booked a passage on the 1pm ferry from Lucky Bay to Wallaroo. Unfortunately the ferry had booked two cars too many. Instead of ushering the boys to the mid-ship, where the bikes would be kept safe and dry, they were shown to the windward side. "I don't like the look of this" said Red. "She'll be right" said the attendant, as he tied the bikes in the scuppers. Securing the bikes was such a traumatic experience, no one thought of employing the bike covers.

Bat swallowed hard and said "I think the dog poo episode was an omen to stay another day." But it was too late. The ferry was on its way and pounding into a good 25knot south easterly breeze, there was salt spray everywhere.

"The best thing we can do is grab a coffee and a muffin in the ships galley" said Devil. For the first time in his life Bat said "no" to a triple chocolate chip muffin. The two hour ferry crossing was the longest two hours in living memory. Bat could feel the salt water working its way down to the tip of every bolt and he confided in Red "my bike will never be the same will it Red?" "Don't fret little buddy, it will be ok" said Red, giving Bat a pat on the shoulder.

When they arrived at Wallaroo there was so much salt on Bats bike he couldn't think straight. "What have you got to say about all this salt?" demanded Bat. The

attendant replied, "That's the trouble with salt water, it does tend to be salty!" Red had to be restrained by Dog as he started to hiss and his paws moved to the boxing position.

When they had disembarked Red announced "we'll ride to Tanunda and clean up there." What Red had overlooked were the water restrictions; no hoses, no washing of vehicles. Once they had set up camp they went straight to the office to get permission to clean their bikes. But no matter how often Dog flashed his bedroom eyes, the old battleaxe behind the counter wouldn't budge. She was like a stuck gramophone; "sorry" she kept on saying "my hands are tied." Devil lost his temper and said "I'll show you what it feels like to....." and then he left the building without finishing the sentence. "We'll ride to a servo in Gawler tomorrow and clean up there" said Red. "Don't worry Bat, it's not as bad as it looks."

Luck shone on the boys that night. While they were eating pizza on the pavement, a guy on the next table overheard their plight and said "Come around to my place after midnight, we'll get your bikes cleaned up while all the dob-ins are asleep."

Stay Cool  
The Skink



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