



The Adventures of Harold the Mischievous Koala

by Simon Shields sshields2173@gmail.com

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Web Site
sshields2173@gmail.com

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One day in the Australian bush high up in a Gum Tree lived a very cute, furry, cuddly koala bear. Everyone in those parts called him Harold. Harold had an oval shiny black nose, and was very furry. He lived in the gum tree and ate leaves all day. One day Harold leaned over and cuffed Cyril (his best Koala bear friend) over the ear. He didn't hurt Cyril, he only did it to wake him up, because Cyril was always falling asleep. Cyril yawned and stretched. "Hey Harold, whaddiya do that for??", said Cyril. Harold replied, "Did ya ever think of leaving the bush Cyril?, did ya ever wonder whether there was anything beyond these gum leaves, anything else to eat ??". "Nah!", said Cyril "no way, I've got everything a Koala bear could ever need here.", "Sunshine, sleep whenever I want it, food all around me, why this is as close to Koala heaven as any Koala could ever hope to get". "Well, I'm mighty curious", said Harold.

Harold, grabbed another fat juicy gum leaf and started munching quietly. The wind rustled the leaves around him. The air was sweet with clean eucalyptus scent. The sky was a beautiful blue, with the occasional patch of white fluffy cloud. It was getting near the middle of the day, about the time when the mail truck from Upperfumbucka trundled past their tree. It would always stop here for a few minutes while Ben, got out to have lunch. Sometimes he would start a little fire and have a pot of tea, and some biscuits. In the distance, Harold could see the dust rising on the road. "That must be Ben, the mail man", thought Harold. He could hear the old "jalopy" trundling along the road.

Harold, and Cyril's gum tree grew on the farm fence boundary. There was a deep ditch between Harold's tree and the road. This drainage ditch was often full of water during the winter, but during the summer it was always dry and covered with thick grass and fern. Ben's mail truck stopped at the usual spot. Ben got out of his truck, walked around to the back and opened up the back of the truck. From Harold's viewpoint he could see right into the back of the truck. He saw over Ben's bald head the mail bags and boxes. He could also see that the truck was partly empty. Ben pulled out a couple of deck chairs, one to rest his feet on and one for him to sit on. He took them to the side of the truck, set them up how he liked them, so he could lean back against the truck, resting his feet on the other deck chair. He pulled out from his pocket a nice crispy apple and started to contentedly munch while he read his paper. Oblivious to the world around him, this was Ben's time of the day when he could contemplate the world in peace, without any disturbance.

Harold was slowly descending the tree, he reached the ground and made those slow, purposeful movements Koalas do. He reached the back of the truck, without disturbing Ben, who was by now half way through reading his paper, having finished his apple. He got up from his seat and went to the passenger side of the cabin for his lunch box. He was contemplating how nice it would be to eat those chocolates he was sure his pretty wife had put in his lunch, from his little girl's 8 year old birthday party the night before. He opened the door of the truck and reached inside for his green plastic lunch box with

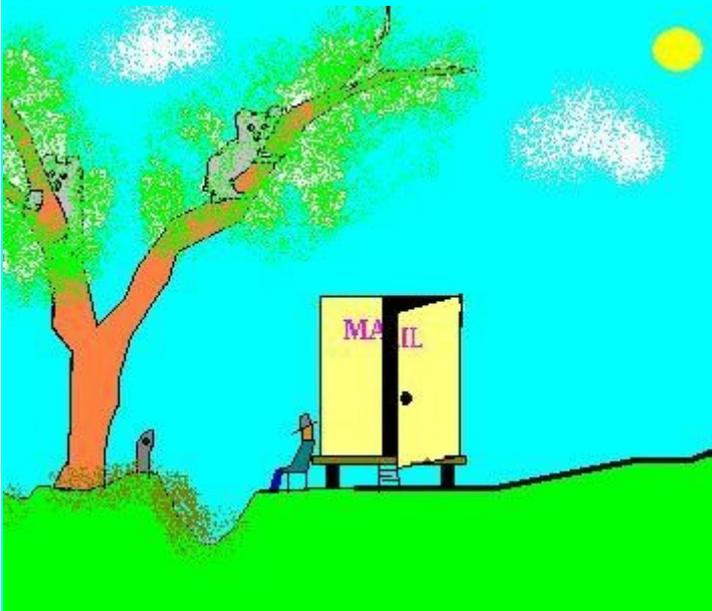
the white plastic lid, and white plastic cordial bottle. "Ah! peace" he sighed. Ben loved lunch times. He moved back to his 'possi', in anticipation of those tasty chocolates. "Maybe Alice included a piece of chocolate cake as well", he thought. She often included nice treats in Ben's lunch. Ben and Alice had only been married for five years, and Ben was sure he had doubled in size.

Harold had tried several times to pull himself up into the back of Ben's truck, each time he had almost made it, when somehow he had slipped and fallen in the long grass. This time though he moved to the road side of the truck, here he could get a hold with his paw, and use his left leg to leaver himself into the back of the truck. He crawled over the sacks of mail, blinking a few times to get used to the darkness inside the truck. It was cool inside the truck and the canvas bags made a comfortable mattress. At the back of the truck, away from the entrance towards the cabin, Harold found some pot plants. These were young eucalypts, Ben was delivering to the nursery in Dandenong, a two hour drive from Upperfumbucka. He munched on a couple of the leaves, and they were the scrum-shiest, yummiest leaves he had ever tasted. "Wow these are delicious!", thought Harold.

Ben, opened his lunch box, "Yes!", he yelled, "Chocolate cake, my favourite, and chocolate chip cookies and a family block of fruit and nut, plus 5 of my favourite sandwiches, pickles and cheese". "Oh boy, I love you Alice", thought Ben. He decided then and there to remember to buy Alice a bunch of red roses when he gets to Dandenong. Ben went back to the cabin and took out his novel, it was called "The Traveling adventures of Harry and the three cavaliers", it was a romantic, swash bucking novel, Ben loved to read. He was at a very exciting part too. He looked at his watch. Ben normally only had a half hour lunch break, but today was such a beautiful day, he thought he'd take the hour. He turned his mobile phone off, turned on the radio in the truck to some country music, and started to devour his lunch and read his novel. Ben was in heaven.

In the mean time Harold had fallen fast asleep in the back of Ben's truck.

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Ben woke with a start, held up his wrist watch to his face in alarm, it read 2:30pm, "it couldn't be", thought Ben, he had another look, it was, no denying it, he had slept way past his lunch hour, and now he may not make it to Dandenong before the Nursery closes. "Oh no!" he exclaimed. His lunch box, which has fallen on the ground was covered in ants. "Yuk!", he tried to brush the ants off, his remaining half melted chocolate, "what the heck", he thought, "can't waste good chocolate", so he shoved the remaining chocolate into his cavernous mouth, ants and all, then hurriedly packed up the rest of his things. He swung them into the back of the Van without looking, and slammed the doors shut, with a loud clatter.

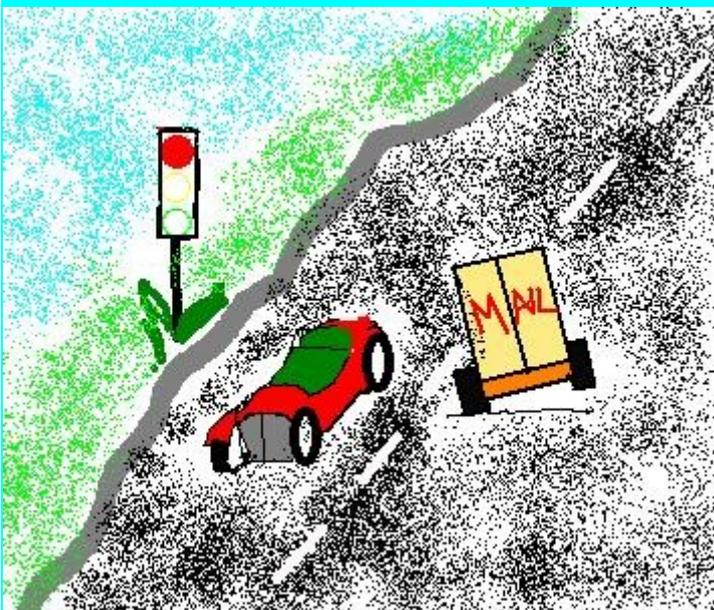
Suddenly everything was pitch black. Harold awoke with a start. He lifted up his left paw and rubbed his aching head. "Wow, that hurt", he growled. One of the deck chairs had hit poor Harold's head. All of a sudden Harold heard a terrible noise. As the van lurched forward, there was a grinding noise as Ben shifted the van into gear, and launched the vehicle down the gravel corrugated road at breakneck speed. Poor Harold, he felt like he was in a tumble dryer. Mail bags, bits of plants, deck chairs, pieces of Bens sandwiches and other assorted bits and pieces flew all around him. Suddenly Harold found himself tossed against the left side of the Van. Ben had viciously turned a sharp corner, to the right, then the Van turned left, and Harold found himself being pushed up into the right hand wall of the van. "Wow", Harold thought, "this is amazing I must be inside a giant horses belly, or maybe its a whale!!". Then Harold remembered, "that's right, I got into this metal horse myself". At last Ben's van made the bitumen road. The back of the van settled down, to the humming, low rumbling sound of tires on bitumen. Harold moved around in the darkness and discovered a partly eaten sandwich Ben had thrown in the back of the Van. "Hmmm", thought Harold, "I wonder what this tastes like", Harold tried a bit. "Aw yuck that was disgusting".

The caressing movement and soothing sound soon sent Harold off to sleep again.

Ben drove frantically, he was desperate to make Dandenong before the shop closed. He couldn't afford to pay for accommodation and he wasn't looking forward to sleeping in the back of his Van again. This has happened before. Once Ben had to stop and have a short nap, he had started to fall asleep while driving. He slept till quite late that time. It had been pouring rain, and he had had a sleepless cold lonely night in the back of his Van on top of the mail bags. Ben was speeding, 10kph faster than the speed limit. There were lots of other vehicles doing the same speed, and passing him, but Ben still felt a little uneasy because he wasn't used to traveling at this speed, and the Van had a nasty habit of shaking uncontrollably, and popping out of gear at such speeds. Oh well he thought, if others can drive at this speed he could.

Ben turned on the radio and listened to some country western music. He started to sing along with the radio as the car rolled along. It was about 4pm and it started to rain, light drizzly rain at first and then all of a sudden as he approached the township of Officer, the rain started to come down in buckets. It drummed sharply on the roof. Ben pulled over and picked up a hitchhiker. She said her name was Alicia and she was going to Melbourne and would appreciate a lift to Dandenong train station. She pulled herself up in the truck and sat down. She was shivering all over from the cold. Ben turned up the heater. He found out that she had been visiting friends at Traralgon. Her last lift had taken her as far as Officer. She was on her way home to Ballarat, 3 hours away by train. Ben had a quick look at his watch, 4:30pm, it was late, he would have to hurry to make Dandenong before the nursery closed for the night.

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Ben, was going too fast when Alicia yelled, "Stop Light!", "Oh No!", Ben retorted, he put his foot hard on the brake, the truck went into a skid, sliding up the road towards the traffic light. Luckily, or unluckily there was no-one in front of him. Ben sensed that he was not going to stop, and traffic was already entering the intersection, he took a quick look in the rear view mirror, "hold on Alicia!", yelled Ben. He pulled the steering wheel hard to the right, the truck swung wildly and they were now in the opposite lane facing in the direction in which they had come. "Wow, that was fantastic!", exclaimed Alicia, "We're not out of the woods yet!", yelled Ben. Ben took his foot off the brake and planted it on the accelerator to try to straighten up the truck. Harold, was clinging for dear life in the back of the truck. He had climbed to the roof of the tuck where he was safe from flying missiles. Ben's back wheel hit the kerb with a sickening thud, there was a loud bang as the rear tyre exploded. The truck started spinning in circles; it ricochet off a lamppost; Ben was tossed forward where he hit his head on the steering wheel and passed out. Alicia reached for the steering wheel, but before she could reach it Ben's truck careered up an embankment and rolled down a steep drop, crashing through the trees. At last it came to rest after falling onto it's side. Alicia was still awake, Ben was unconscious. The seat belts had jammed and there was thick smoke plumes escaping from under the trucks bonnet. Alicia pulled frantically at her seat belt, and yelled at Ben to wake up.

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Harold had been tossed out of the truck. He scampered off heading straight for the road. A motorist saw him just in time and pulled over. "Hey mate, what are you doing on this road, dangerous for a little bloke like you to be wandering all over the road". "Gee you look like you've hurt yourself, your coat's burnt", said Bob.

Back at the burning truck, Alicia felt sick with shock and smoke inhalation, she was feeling very dizzy.

Bob, the motorist, saw the smoke rising through the trees. He watched as the Koala scampered over the embankment at the side of the road. He followed and saw the mail van on it's side, he ran down to see what he could do. Harold climbed up a gum tree near the overturned van.

Bob, peered through the passenger side window and saw Alicia trying to escape. Alicia, was frightened; Bob, forced open the truck's passenger side door. He told Alicia to calm down, he would get her out. Bob unclipped Alicia's seat belt, and pulled her from the burning mail van. Once Alicia was free, she crawled over to the tree Harold was in and sat exhausted. Harold climbed down the tree and settled in her lap. There was smoke everywhere and the fire was starting to lick up through the cabin's console. Bob desperately tried to wake Ben up but he couldn't. He undid Ben's seat belt, and tried to pull him from the vehicle. He looked down and saw that Ben's foot was caught under the break peddle and was twisted the

wrong way, obviously broken. At that moment, Ben awoke, and started groaning, his foot was aching. Bob finally managed to drag Ben out of the burning truck and sat him beside Alicia. Ben and Alicia, took refuge behind a huge gum tree. Bob called Emergency Services on his mobile phone, and went to his car to get some water.

Alicia and Ben stroked Harold's fur. "Boom, crackle", the truck's diesel tank finally exploded, flames leapt high into the air. The rain kept pelting down in torrents, hissing as it hit the burning wreck.

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What seemed a long time passed as the three huddled at the base of their tree. Warmed by the fire and exhausted after their ordeal they closed their eyes and fell into a deep swoon. Alicia awoke first, a bright light was shining in her eyes. She stretched and blinked, "hi, hey, what's going on", she said, "you'll be alright", was the kind reply. A tall handsome guy in what looked like a rain coat, but was really a fireman's uniform, was looking down at her with a concerned look in his eye as he held out his hand. She grasped it, while she held Harold in the other, as he helped her to her feet. He looked carefully at her face which had been scratched by shattered glass from the windscreen of the truck. "You've been injured, how's your furry friend?", Alicia held him up for the fireman to study, in the poor light of his torch, "hey, little fella, looks like you've got some singed fur on your back, but other than that you look pretty good", he said. "Now what about your friend". Ben was lying on the ground only just waking up after his violent exertions. "Oh boy, hey! what's the time!, oh bother, I guess it's past 5 o'clock?, Oh, no ! I remember, my truck!!", exclaimed Ben. He turned painfully around to look at what was now the smoldering wreck of his once pride and joy. He had spent years slaving at Mac-Donald's, to earn enough money to buy that truck, and now through his own stupidity he had wrecked it. He breathed a deep sigh. "Yeah, I guess I'm ok, except I've got this terrible pain in my back, and foot", Ben said. "Can you stand up?", asked the fireman. "I don't know, I'll try". Ben held out his hand, the fireman grabbed it and heaved him to his feet. Ben's right foot was really pain-full. His shoe was partly burned, and his foot was throbbing with the pain. His ankle was badly swollen. He put his arm around the fireman's shoulder. They walked slowly around Ben's burnt out mail truck, to where the fire-engine stood. A few of the other firemen were cleaning up. There was a tow truck there, and Ben could see the blue blinking light of the police car through the trees. He put his head in his hands and began to cry. Ben was lead to the ambulance parked behind the fire engine, a couple of St. John's ambulance guys, started to tend to Ben and Alicia's wounds. Jack, the fireman who had helped them out of the bush, asked Alicia, "Hey, how did you guys get out of that truck?", "It was Bob, a passing motorist, that saved us, if it hadn't have been for him, we'd have died in that wreck"

Jack, thanked Bob for pulling Alicia and Ben from the burning truck, and got his details, he was going to commend him for a bravery award. Bob, said, "If it wasn't for that Koala you have in your arms I

wouldn't have stopped, he lead me to the accident site, I think he deserves a lot of the credit", "I'll note that", replied Jack.

He held Harold up above his head, "You are a hero, you deserve a nice long drink". Jack took Harold to his fire truck, and put him on the front seat, he took out his drink flask and gave Harold a good long swig. Harold kept drinking as if there was no tomorrow. Jack, broke a small branch off the nearest eucalypt, it was "chokka's" with gum leaves, and he held it out to Harold. Harold started to munch on those juicy succulent leaves straight away. Jack took a warm blanket from behind the back seat of the fire truck and wrapped Harold in it, then shut the door of the cabin, so Harold could keep warm in the fire truck.

Ben and Alicia, were now in the Ambulance, on the stretchers beside each other. Ben was pretty shaken up. Oh well at least he was still alive. Alicia was thinking what her Mum and Dad would say when they found she wasn't on the 7o'clock train at Ballarat. They would be beside themselves with worry. The police and the tow truck man took Ben's details. Well thought Ben, that's the end of my mail truck delivery service. The ambulance headed off into the night carrying Ben and Alicia to Dandenong Hospital. Meanwhile Jack came back to the fire truck, he looked in and found Harold, the koala bear hero, fast asleep. Well, thought Jack, what am I going to do with him?

Jack related the story of how Harold had saved the day to the other Firemen. They were all pretty impressed and asked to see the little champion. He had woken up when the firemen had sat in the seat beside him. Each of them had a cuddle of Harold. He was such a cuddly, cute and irresistible bear. The fire engine started back to the station. Harold looked out of the window. Some of the men waved Harold's paw for the people on the footpaths that they passed. Harold was indignant, fancy, as if I need someone to wave my hand for me. I'm not an invalid you know!! Harold was amazed at what he saw out the window of the fire-engine. Huge emus (trucks) and ducks (boats) and mountains so straight and tall (office towers) he wondered how they got there at all. And people, they were everywhere, like ants, giant ants. Harold, blinked twice to make sure he wasn't seeing things, when he saw the humungous crane (which really was a crane). He doubted very much whether the huge bird could fly.

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Jack and his fellow firemen were pretty taken by Harold. They watched him move about the back of the firetruck's cabin. Suddenly, the two way radio piped up. "Fire-truck 2e do you read me?", Jack responded, "Loud and clear base, we're coming home", "not so fast Jack, the police rang in there's a fire on the 55th floor of the Rialto building in Collins Street", the voice over the radio rasped out, "apparently a twin Cessna ran out of control, and slammed into the restaurant on the 55th Floor, its half in half out". "That's incredible, do you know if anyone survived the impact?", asked Jack, "No we don't know, best get up there as soon as possible to see what's going on". Jack responded, "OK mate will do ", "Get there as quickly as you can, five other units are on there way there as well". Jack started up the siren, the men

started donning on their helmets.

They soon arrived, Jack's fire-engine "e1", was ushered close to the building. The commander in chief, Captain Johnson, walked over to Jack. "Well what do ya think Jack ? Have you ever seen anything like it?". Jack's eyes drank in the scene. Looking up at the Twin Towers, almost at the top of the south tower, Jack's eyes spotted it. Flames leaping out of the side of the building and the plan was hanging precariously. It had been in a tight left turn when it had wedged the right wing and tail section into the side of the building. It was being held there by its tail and what looked like the tip of the right wing. It had obviously set off the sprinklers, and started an electrical fire in the building. They had a helicopter and several professional climbers they could rely on to climb the building. "Has anyone gone up there Johnno?" asked Jack, "Yeah we've got a couple of guys, they should be due back anytime now", said captain Johnson. "We've got the biggest airbag we could find in case the plan falls, but I wouldn't give much hope for the inhabitants of that plan if it does get loose and fall", said the captain. Ten minutes later the firemen and other rescue crews heard that the tail shaft of the plan had wedged itself at the end of the window frame. They could see the people waving to them from inside the plan. They had managed to put the fire out, but now they had the problem of getting those people out of there safely. A few ideas were thought of but they all involved a lot of risk, the risk to the rescuer or the risk of unsettling the plan. "Well", said Jack, "I've got an idea, its a long shot but could be worth a try". Just then they started, after hearing a loud crash as part of the fuselage came crashing to the ground. "Hey Johnno, Jack you better come and have a listen to this", yelled Bill, "I've got those people in the plan on the radio". The men all moved around the radio to listen, "Hey, please, please hurry, this plan is starting to break up, we can smell gasoline fuel leaking, a spark could easily set us ablaze". Jack grabbed the radio transmitter and yelled back, "stay calm you guys, your doing fine, we'll be there as soon as we can, don't worry we'll get you safely on to terra firma as soon as possible".

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The men moved away from the transmitter, "well what is this idea you've got Jack?", they all asked. Jack explained how the koala bear had saved the victims in the car accident they had attended in Pakenham. "Wow that Koala, is some bear!", they were all pretty amazed. "Well I reckon its worth a try to let our Koala friend take a rope to the people in the plan". "Once we get the rope in there, we'll get them to fasten it to one of the seats, then we'll slide a harness over the rope and take them out one at a time". "We could also send a chain over the rope to connect to the plan to secure it to the building in case it comes loose", explained Jack. They all agreed to give it a try.

The men prepared, once they were ready they made their way to the lift. Jack held Harold and fed him lots of gum leaves that had been gathered at the crash site in Officer. Up the lift they went, higher and higher. They reached the 55th floor and the elevator doors opened. The cold wind blew in from the broken

floor to ceiling windows. There was the acrid stench of burning plastic and carpet. The sprinklers were still on, sending sprays of water over the floor and all around them there were black-end pieces of furniture and debris. Thankfully this floor had been almost empty when the accident occurred, a minor miracle, as normally someone would have been working late at restaurant. One of the men turned the sprinklers off, while the others cleared the debris and prepared the equipment for the rescue attempt. Ropes and chains had to be attached to immovable solid columns in the room. The people in the plan were addressed via loud speaker by Captain Johnson. He explained what they would be attempting to do.

Firstly a rope was tied around Harold's waist, Jack placed Harold on the tail section of the plan that was inside the room. The people in the plan called out and whistled. Harold stepped gingerly out onto the plan. He moved very slowly as Koala's do, moving towards the cabin of the plan.

The people in the plan waved and shouted to Harold. "I wonder what all the fuss is about", Harold thought. Soon he was inside the cabin of the plan. All the people in the plan made a great fuss over Harold. The ladies cuddled Harold and patted him. The men took the rope around Harold and tied it to the plan. Harold was put back out onto the wing of the plan. He crawled back to the rescuers, who gave Harold another rope, which he delivered to the people in the plan. Soon the plan was secured to the building by ropes. The people inside the plan felt much more secure. The rescuers gave Harold a harness to take to the people in the plan. Now it was time for the people in the plan to escape one by one they would put on the harness which was secured to the building by ropes. At last they were all rescued. Three cheers for our hero koala, shouted Jack, and everyone joined in to salute the koala, who had been so brave.

8. Harold is rescued [\[Previous\]](#) [\[Next\]](#)



When they had all come out of the building, the news reporters were taking photos of everyone and asking lots of questions. 'Was it really a koala, that rescued the stranded crew and pilot?', 'Where did this koala come from?', 'Who owns this wonderful koala?', questions stormed colonel Johnson. 'Yes, it was really a very special koala, who rescued the stranded passengers and crew?', 'The koala was found at the scene of an accident', 'No-one owns the koala', responded Johnson. The ambulance officers took the distressed passengers and crew to the ambulance where they were attended to and made ready to go to hospital. Harold again found himself inside the fire-engine, with extra gum leaves as a reward for his heroic effort. Outside the cabin of the fire-engine, reporters continued to take flash photographs of Harold as he sat contentedly chewing his leaves.

All of a sudden the door to the fire-engine opened, a pair of arms reached forward, and grabbed Harold firmly and carefully. The lady who held Harold, cuddled him. Her name was Marie, and she was a

Wildlife Sanctuary Officer. She had come to rescue Harold from all the attention and to take him to a setting that would be more to his liking.

Harold liked Marie, she was wearing a very warm woolen jumper and she wore a nice perfume that Harold liked. He snuggled into her arms. She caressed Harold and carried him quickly past all the excitement, and reporters, to her four wheel drive jeep. On the back of her truck was her pet dog, ruffles.

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Harold looked at ruffles and ruffles cocked his head on one side and looked at Harold. Ruffles wagged his tail, and gave a short sharp woof! If you translate this woof into human language it means, 'Hi Harold, welcome to my truck'. Marie put Harold in the cabin at the back of her truck. Harold looked out the back window at Ruffles, whose tail was still wagging wildly. Marie told the reporters that Harold was going to spend some time at the wildlife sanctuary, to recover from his ordeal. Soon the truck was on its way, Harold was enjoying the ride. His view of the city was intriguing. Huge buildings, traffic and people. One of the things that Harold found most intriguing was the small gum trees that had no branches, no gum leaves either. They looked terribly sick, and some of them emitted a curious glow from their top most branches. Some of them even had three different coloured lights. These gum trees always occurred on street corners.

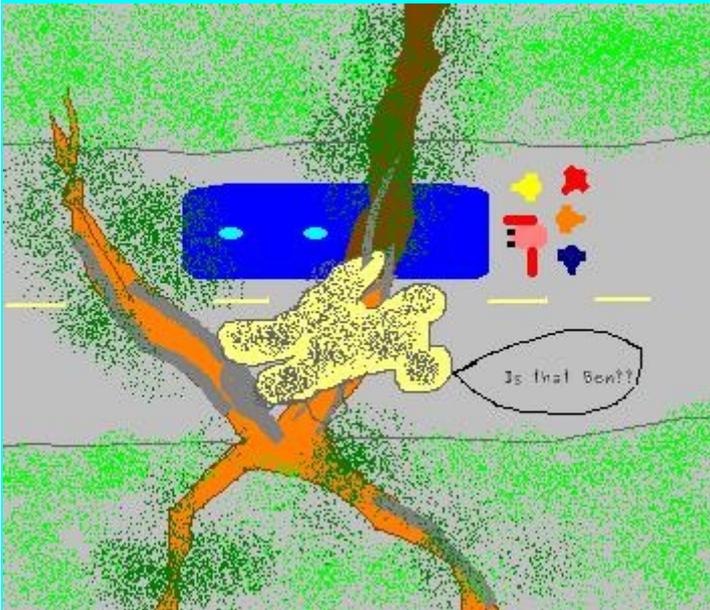
Harold started to nod off to sleep, when he noticed the trees started to take on a familiar shape, and it was longer and longer between stops. Inside the cabin it was warm, and quiet, the view outside started to become a blur. Harold silently drifted off to sleep.

The next morning Harold awoke to the sweat smell of eucalypts and the trill sound of Currawongs and magpies. Harold smiled, he was high up in the branch of a high mountain ash. Mists were slowly raising above him, below he could see people walking around tending their early morning duties of feeding the animals. Harold looked about him in the adjoining gum tree was another Koala. "Hello, I'm Harold", "Hi I'm Candice, welcome to our sanctuary". "This looks like a great place", said Harold, "Oh it is, Koala Heaven I reckon". "Where did you come from?", asked Candice. "From Upperfumbucka, I used to live with my friend Cyril", "Our trees weren't as tall as these, but they had plenty of leaves". "We lived near a paddock of sheep and a road", said Harold. "Well there are no sheep around here", said Candice.

Harold spent many months at the park. He enjoyed life here very much. He soon forgot about his harrowing experiences. It was a beautiful place to live. He made lots of friends. Every now and again

Harold remembered Cyril and Ben. He often wondered how Cyril was, and although his new life in the Sanctuary was idyllic, he missed his home. The danger of the foxes, the occasional traffic on the old dirt road. The sheep, and his occasional dip in the local dam. He also missed the farm children who used to feed him by hand and give him rides on their push bikes. He used to be fed peanut butter sandwiches from the children as they came home from school. Although Harold had everything he could desire and he was in total safety, he missed the excitement of his old home and started to contemplate ways he might try to get home.

10. Harold finds Ben [[Previous](#)] [[Next](#)]



On a hot January day, down below, Harold saw a certain bald head. His memory stirred, and he thought, could that really be Ben, the mail man from Upperfumbucka ?? He watched the man opening the back of a blue bus and taking luggage out for the Japanese tourists, who were visiting the park. Harold decided to go down and take a closer look. As he got down into the lower branches, Harold saw Ben, take out a couple of deck chairs from the side of the bus, unfold his paper and lean against the bus. Ben was in the shadow of the bus. Harold walked past Ben and pulled himself up into the luggage compartment. Harold had brought along with him a branch full of gum leaves, he knew he would get hungry on this journey. In the baggage compartment it was nice and cool, and there were some blankets neatly folded toward the back of the compartment. Harold curled up on these and promptly fell fast asleep.

The Japanese tourists completed their tour and filed back into the bus. Ben stacked all the luggage into the compartment and got back into the bus. After the accident Ben had taken a week or so to come to grips with the loss of his mail truck. It was a little while after that that the Upperfumbucka Bus Company had heard of Ben's sorry tale and had offered Ben employment in driving their Buses of tourists around the sites of Melbourne. This was the last site Ben had to visit for the day. He now had to drive the Bus back to Melbourne, drop the tourists off, and drive back to Upperfumbucka.

He reached Upperfumbucka about mid-night. He undid the luggage compartment under the bus to see if any luggage had been left behind. He peered in with his torch, and wow, did Ben get a shock. "What the heck!!, what in blazes are you doing here, little fella??" Harold, who was pretty groggy after his long trip moved towards Ben. Ben and Harold stared at each other for a bit. Ben suddenly remembered another Koala, not so long ago, who had saved himself and a fellow passenger from the wreck of his burning truck. The memory swept back and tears flooded his eyes. He picked Harold up and cuddled him. He looked closely at the fur on his back, and yep it was Harold, because there before his very eyes were the same burn marks he had seen on the Koala of that accident 6 months ago. "Well I'll be!, this is amazing!

How did you get into my Bus without me knowing, and for that matter how did you get into my mail truck without me knowing?". "Well I don't know how you did it but I'm sure glade you did!!".

"And you know what", Ben said, "I'm going to take you right back to that old spot where I used to park the mail truck, beside the old gum tree, at the side of the old dirt road, where that other Koala lives, cause I bet that's exactly where you would like to be".

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Ben put Harold in the front seat of his Ute, beside his dog Scruffles. Scruffles was his sheep dog, part lab part blue heeler. Scruffles and Harold took a liking to each other straight away. Scruffles wagged his tail wildly, and Harold sat back and watched him. Ben started up the Ute, turned on the radio, turned down the window, and watched the scenery as they sped towards Upperfumbucka.

Half an hour later, after traveling through some exquisite scenery, the roads started to become familiar. Harold started to get excited, they were approaching the last hill, once over that hill Harold would be in view of the old gum tree where he once lived. And yes there it was, as stately as ever. The magpies, flying high in the sky, the cockatoos squawking, the kookaburras laughing and the sheep sedately munching the grass, paying attention to nothing else. Harold was home at last, he could hardly wait to get out of the Ute, and head up the gum tree to see Cyril his old mate.

Ben pulled up beside the Gum Tree, and said goodbye to Harold, he thanked him again for saving his life, gave him a last hug, then placed him on the ground. Harold waved goodbye and headed straight for his favourite tree.

Cyril, was watching the commotion from above. When he saw Harold, he immediately hastened towards his old mate. They met about mid way up the tree. "So, mate, what was it like?? did you meet with some adventures ?? Did the food of the Melbournians taste any different ??", Cyril poured out question after question at Harold, who could barely get a word in. At last Cyril started eating another leaf. "So what is going on Cyril, where did all these new Koala's come from ??". "Well Harold, I've had a few adventures of my own, in fact I've become a Dad!", exclaimed Cyril. "You don't say, wow, that's fantastic", "And all these little cubs are yours ?", "Yep", said Cyril proudly. "So where did she come from, I don't remember seeing any females around this neighborhood?", asked Harold. "Well she came from yonder tree", Cyril pointed towards a whole in the ground, where obviously a tree had once stood. Harold in fact, remembered that old tree. "What happened to the ghost gum?", asked Harold in alarm. "There was a big

storm, lightening flashed and thunder rolled, anyway in the middle of it, when it was really bad and all us Koalas were holding tight to our branches, lightening struck the old Ghost gum and down it came". "Doreen, escaped and ended up our tree". "It wasn't long before we became great friends, then hey presto, all these little bears turned up. Doreen says they're mine, and I reckon they're great, don't you Harold?".

Harold was a great uncle to Cyril's little family, in fact a year later Harold ended up with a family of his own. He did eventually get to answer all of Cyril's questions. Harold never hankered for adventure again. And he and Cyril lived a long Koala life, and were always the best of mates.

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by Simon Shields sshields2173@gmail.com