

## AND WHERE TO NOW

### **Excitement of life inspired this book**

In her first book, the writer wrote about the time when they came from another land, from the other side of the world. From a life that was so, different and uncomplicated compared to the life here in Australia.

Unable to speak the language, the loneliness and the adventures found.

Trying to hold on to the customs of the old country and, trying to learn and accept the ones of their new country.

Holland was a small country compared to the vastness of their new, which was so big that it was frightening at times.

The hunger and pain they endured.

Of the great love they found in each other and what they did to get it and keep it.

Two decades have passed since, their first arrival here and how they have grown to this point.

They are different people now, better through all that they faced and overcame. Their journey continues with as much drama and diversity.

How their strength conquered their weaknesses.

Their zest and taste for life was as a thirst never stilled.

The need for fairness for all that crossed their path.

**By**

**JANNIE**

**BONT**

This book, is dedicated to those people who helped her grow.

To those who passed through her live and made it what it is now.

To the many friends she, was blessed with.

To her husband, his patients and his knowledge he always shared with her.

To her two boys, who turned out to be better men then she ever could have wished for.

Love to all.

**Jannie**

## CHAPTER 1

It had been months since Jannie sat on the porch reminiscing. She had spent that whole day recalling the good and the bad, as well as the sad. That day had made her realise how much had happened in her life. She could not believe that people have nothing to talk about to each other, when everyday really present itself with another story. She had realised that her life has been far from boring, and every surprise or disappointment had been another challenge to deal with, or to enjoy to its fullest.

She could not believe that people were so dissatisfied with their lot; it seemed to her that bitching is not worse it, if you stay on your backside and do nothing about it. She realised that we cannot all be Einstein's, doctors or lawyers, great models or outstanding beauties. All men are not and cannot, look like the Hollywoods make believe hero's, and just as well, for then we would be faced with too many phonies.

She learned that if you want something in life, if you have a dream, pursue your dream. Even create one yourself if necessary. Dinner does not come automatic on a silver platter; you have to cook it first, and then find the platter. Yes she had learned a lot and seen a lot, enjoyed so much, and cried endless tears, but all in all this life was well worth the effort so far. With a smile on her face, she drifted off into a daydream of her past and recalled so many occasions that made it worth the while. She carried on where she had left her memory a few months earlier and picked up the day they all drove out of Nottingham Avenue, now were, on the way back to NSW, to start a complete new and exciting episode in their life.

She recalled Marco and Rick both driving around the block once more, saying farewell to the good times had by all, and this was their way of saying thanks for the memories. She saw them both come around the corner side by side, blocking the whole road as they did and Jannie saying to herself, just as well that it is early in the morning and most people were still in bed, instead of on the road. Rick had Polos little dog Sheena, in the back of his car with him and even this small dog knew that life was never going to be the same again.

They stopped their cars in front of their house just one more time, and now it was Jannie's turn to get in. They had previous decided, that Jannie was to take turns riding with Marco and Rick. She started with Rick, Marco had told her the night before, that way she could keep an eye on their son, and help him get over the sadness of leaving their home, their surroundings and most of all their friends, not to forget South Australia, as it had been a great place to grow up. She would then change cars as they stopped for petrol and something to eat. It was going to be a hard trip, for both cars and trailers were loaded to the hilt and this would slow them down tremendously, but that she did not worry about as Jannie really hated speed. As far as she was concerned, slow was ok. Marco had lined Rick up several times over the past few weeks, telling him how important it was to take their time that they could not afford any breakdowns or accidents, he trusted Rick to do the right thing by himself on the road by now. He had to point out to him once more the difference of driving a car only, or driving a car while pulling a loaded trailer. I have learned a lot on the last trip Dad. That is good then, he looked at his son with a great smile

on his face. When they had (loaded) Mum in Rick's car, they took off ever so slowly, both drivers sounding their horns all the way out the street, and Marco doubled up with his fancy sounding horns, that played the tune of Colonel Boogie. Both men having a lot of fun doing that, knowing that they were waking up the whole neighbourhood. It was just one more way of saying goodbye to them all. Besides, they just could not wipe their smiles of their faces knowing what they were doing. All Jannie could do was shake her wise head, but she thought that it was funny and could not hide this.

Marco had underestimated Rick; he had gone over the sadness of leaving his home about five kilometres up the road, it showed in every move the lad made. He talked so excited about his plans to Mum, she understood the importance of dreaming, and Mum knew that Rick had to have a dream to aim for. The excitement of the whole aspect of dreaming was the essence of life, to see your dream unfold before your very eyes that was the magic of it. They did not all work out right, or even developed into anything worth talking about, but the main secret was to have a dream. Mum had told him many a time how important it was for her as well; to always have something in front of her to aim for. She said that she could not have coped many a time without a dream and if she had relied on the present only. Life would have driven me stark crazy, she'd say. The past and the present, you cannot do anything about, but the future, no matter how small or simple the dream, look ahead, it is out there.

Yes, Mum understood this better than Dad, but Dad always seem to know where he was going or aiming for, way before he got there. Dad could guess Rick's dreams even before he mentioned them, and more often than not, would warn him about them, the fore and against, the good and the bad. Many times he had walked away feeling devastated, for Dad would have destroyed something before it started. It was for his own good, Dad always said. Mum would have let him make his own mistakes and decisions, he would learn more that way, and he did not have to come up with new ideas so often. He smiled to himself, and Mum asked if he would care to share the joke, he said it was just the good feeling he had, that made him smile. Fair enough, and on they went. Sheena was very nervy in the car for some time, poor dog; she had not travelled much at all, but soon relaxed and settled down for a big sleep. Her bosses had gotten her up at some unholy hour that morning; she was exhausted, and deserved this sleep. Every now and again Marco or Rick would overtake each other, sounding their horns and giving each other the thumbs up, a sign to let them know they were doing fine. They were very close Marco and his boys, and most times did not need to communicate with one another. Rick put on some rock music, and Jannie was sure that about this time Marco would put on a country Western tape, and they both settled down to listening and singing along to their favourite songs.

The countryside was, burned dry by the sun; it was amazing that anything at all survived on this continent. The rainfall seemed to be less every season and what did fall made little impression for the soil was so hard and dried out and hot in daytime, and still warm at night. When a bit of rain did reach the earth, it would vaporise or run off, neither scenario doing any good at all. The few trees along the way never managed to grow tall. It was the Mulgoa tree, which grew in SA, never getting much taller than three to four meters. They all looked twisted and curved in agony, trying their hardest to survive; most of them

looked painful in their effort. They had planned to stop in Waikerie to say goodbye to little Remo. This was the first time Rick could remember going to the graveside of his little brother, whom he never had met. M&J had taken him there before, but he was too young to remember. Jannie had picked out two bright stars in the sky, and named them Remo and Tony, and pointed them out many a time to the boys, saying that on a clear night they always are up there to keep an eye on them. Mum had told the boys that if they misbehaved, the stars would let her and Dad know, so whatever they do in life admit it and don't lie about it, because sooner or later they would find out. The boys never knew if this was a story or the truth but they decided to play it safe at all times and, when they were in trouble they always admitted it and told the truth, just in case.

They turned on the road to the cemetery; Jannie heart always ached at the idea that her little boy lay buried in the middle of nowhere, on his own with only the odd visit of their Dad, usually when he did his job on the river. Dad always called in at Remo and had a little talk with him. It would leave Marco ever so sad, but it was something he had to do for Jannie and himself, after all it had been little Remo that had brought them together for life. They were so sorry that he was not here to share it with them. Mum and Dad stood there with their arms around each other's shoulders, tears building up uncontrollable. Rick saw his parents like he never saw them before, they looked so small and vulnerable, so deeply in pain. They both talked to Remo as if he was standing in front of them, they pulled Rick into their hug, and he felt their pain, as he never had done before. He had not realised that this pain called grief, had never gone away for them, and never would leave Mum and Dad. After a few minutes they let go of him, and asked each other if they were ok, they dried their eyes, took a deep breath and said, goodbye for now little fellow, we will keep in touch. Slowly they walked back to the cars, Jannie would sit with her husband until Renmark, were they would fill the cars with petrol, and have an enormous breakfast of ham and eggs and chips and toast and that would be the entrée Rick assured them.

With that in mind, they drove back onto the main road towards Sydney. No more than, two hours later they were putting in their breakfast order, and conversed on how the trip was going so far. The meal was good. For the last few days, they had eaten a lot of rubbish, and this meal hit home in all the right places. Quick to the loo and they were ready to roll. Jannie went back with Rick, she had travelled the longest stretches with him and this was good for they had a lot to talk about, mother and son laughed a lot, and sang many songs. One thing Rick knew from firsthand experience was, that his poor mother could not sing one note in tune. However, he had to give her credit for trying. She knew all the words of every song and they forgave her for not singing them as they should have, been sung. She could not care less whether she could or not, or they liked it or not she just would and that was all there was to it. It did her heart a lot of good to bellow out a song, especially a Dutch song. Then she sounded totally different, Rick noticed she was happy with every word that rolled out of her mouth, he did not understand one word of the songs but she usually explained to them what they meant each time she got hold of a new one. Yes, Rick thought his parents were a complex couple, that tried more than hard enough to be good Aussies, and at the same time their hearts could never forget their beloved Holland. The country they were born in, their motherland. It made sense to him all of a sudden, the word

(Motherland), your heart and soul. The love for it flowed through every inch of every vein in their body. He was seeing his parents in a very different way at times, it was as if he was looking at two different identities of each and maybe he was.

It was now well past midday and the sun was so hot and high in the sky, it was making them sick. They had decided before to pick up a few cold drinks when they get to Mildura, when travelling in the heat of the day it was very important to keep up the liquids. Mildura was a nice place and sure had grown a lot since they came through the very first time in ninety fifty-eight. It was a very pictures little town, and it showed the improvement made by the immigrants which had settled there since WW 2. It looked very southern European; everywhere you looked it showed Italian influence, in its shops and restaurants, the many trees that been planted and the general layout of all the smallholdings around the area.

The Italians had a sure way to use all their land, not wasting one single square meter of it, the many grape vines and the olive trees were visible whichever direction you looked, their houses were much bigger than the average and their cantinas half behind their homes, showed that was really the hub of their family get together. They were the places where the salami, cacciatore and other meats and sausages were stored. The place with the wood ovens, were the dried tomatoes were in olive oil and dried fruit of all descriptions in all sort of jars. All the other produce of their land preserved to see them through the winter. The Italians were, known for their skills in preserving, to be able to eat and share the fruits of their labours the whole year around. Both M&J loved the Italian people. They were, known all over the world as number one in family orientation. A survey had been, conducted by the Americans and it gave the Dutch number two place. It was something to be rather proud off secretly. Nevertheless, M&J would never forget their first encounter with Mildura; they remembered it as if it was yesterday when they both, walked up towards this huge farmhouse and ask for a job. The Lady that lived there did not like their accent and being a number Uno wog basher; she was so scared of immigrants that she did not even give M&J a chance to explain why they had knocked on her door. She had set the big dogs unto them, she must have seen that Jannie was pregnant at the time, but that had not stop her. Both M&J had to, literally run for their lives, with two huge dogs in pursuit. They had only just made it back to the car when the dogs retreated.

M&J remembered that as if it was yesterday and wondered if she were still alive, they would recognise the place, they had done so each time they came through Mildura. We should pay her another visit Marco said; then again, best we do not, with a bit of luck the bitch died a horrible death hey, looking at his wife. They both wished that to be true. They passed that horrible place pepping their horns, fat lot of good that is doing, she thought. It is funny all the things you do remember, it is mostly the good things, but every now and again something unusual comes back which is worth a thought but not the hater that once was felt. The place did not look very grand anymore, so maybe she did die, god willing. He took the young and innocent, why not the mean and nasty ones. As the Murray snaked through the countryside, one could see from a distant exactly where it was and where it was going. There was a bank of green surrounding the water, giving food and shelter for the mighty, big ghost gums and red river gums. The contrast from the dead brown hot earth to the healthy greens of those majestic trees was indescribable. It gave you a sort of

safe feeling, knowing that in this god forsaken inland, you could always see where to get some water if you got stuck or your car broke down, or if you just wanted a few days rest away from society. And talking this over with Marco he had warned her not to kid herself, just because you can see the threes from a long way away, that doesn't mean you could make it in case of an emergency. That might be ten or fifteen kilometres away if not more, and I would not like to walk it in weather like this. I suppose not but it is still nice to see there was water out there somewhere. They now had a long boring straight road ahead of them to Balranald and then onto Hay, where they were going to spend the night. That would put them approx half way into their trip. So far, they had no problems except for the heat. Those days the cars in Australia did not have air conditioning, except for the very expensive, mostly imported cars. Dad had told Rick that driving at a reasonable speed will get them there just as quickly, and this way they will not overheat the engines. It was a good idea that Jannie shared her time between the two of them; it gave them all something to talk about and a break for some peace and quiet. She really enjoyed her time with her son on a one to one basis it was always, nice for a parent to have just one child on their own for a while. It gave you a chance to see what they were, made of their dreams and aspirations, and as said before dear young Rick had many a dream. This boy was the all time champagne drinker on beer money. His dreams carried him further than anyone could dream, and she thought it would be interesting to see where his life would lead him and what he, would do with it. She will be looking through a window for sure. Looking, at this boy of hers she could not help thinking of how much he looked like his father when she first met him. Rick was dark skinned, with brown hair, and that was maybe the most noticeable difference between them. His eyes were not as light blue as his fathers, but apart from that, he was his father's son for sure. His sense of humour, as well as his intellect was pretty even, and the worst thing for Rick was that his Dad read him like an open book. He almost could tell him what he was up to before he even thought about it. Rick always wondered who had dobbed him in, or how Dad had found out. Jannie had asked her husband many a time how did you know this or that, and the answer was always the same, that is what I would have done if I were in his shoes. Poor Rick, he did not have a hope to deceive them even if he wanted to. When they got to Hay, it was well after three pm. By the time they filled up the cars and stretched their legs a little, they asked each other if they felt like going on to West Wyalong, that should get them there around six pm. Yeah why not said the young lion, who thought himself pretty good, having done such a long stretch driving himself. They could make it easy, and so they went back into the furnace they called their cars. About one hundred or so kilometres to go would be a piece of cake, according to the man folk. Jannie had enough but her opinion was not, asked for only the drivers had a say. Ah well what is a couple of hours more or less sitting on your bum in a hot car. But then again it was equally uncomfortable for everyone. She decided to keep on smiling and do some more singing, which did not impress her men one way or another. They were too used to the howling of her voice sadly enough. When she reached a crescendo all they could do is smile, and sometimes burst out in full laud laughter, it was that bad. One thing for sure, you could not fall asleep when she was singing, so she was really a blessing in disguise to have with you on a long trip. Every time they felt tired, they

asked her to sing us a song, what a reputation to have. The last leg of today's trip went fast, and it did not seem long at all and they were on the outskirts of West Wyalong. Marco was in front at this stage and for no known reason came to an abrupt stop, hardly having enough time to use the indicator. Rick pulled up behind him and they all got out their cars to see what was wrong.

I think I broke an axle on the trailer he told his son, and an inspection proved Marco right. What the hell, do we do now we cannot move to go to a garage unless we empty the trailer? What here on the footpath, Rick and his mother hollowed in fear? Seems the only way, oh shit what is next. Thank god, it was cooling down a little as the sun starting to set in the west. Marco looked very worried and wondered if someone in the street could tell him where there was a garage, and maybe let him use his or her phone. Stay here he told his wife and son, I go and ask at this house, pointing to the place where he had broken down, in front of. It took about five minutes and a man came out with him, an old man at least fifty, he came to see for himself if this person was telling the truth. After inspecting the problem, he told them he had a welder, if that is any use to him. Marco checked it once more and decided that he could jack the trailer up with his three-point jack here, and another couple of jacks under different points of the trailer. That would give him a chance to weld the break, He told the man that he would highly appreciate it, and would pay him for lending his tools and power. Father and son got busy securing the trailer on the jacks, and by that time, the man came back with welder and several different sizes and sort of rods, as well as a cleaning agent etc. to do the job.

Once they got the part cleaned up it took them no time at all to fix the problem, they packed away the jacks, cleaned the tools of the man and Marco payed him generously for his assistance, that Marco could not have done it his kindness, he said gratefully. They shook hands and moved to the motel, which the man advised them was the best in this little town. Marco, was still the leader of the pack, and thus moved onto the drive of the motel ahead of Rick, they all got out and booked in, they had a nice spacious family unit, the first on the right, nice and easy the girl behind the counter said. Yes, they could park side by side lengthways, for they had very few guest that night. All of them let out a sign of relieve, knowing a cool shower was only meters away now. Marco and Rick went back in their cars, and it was lucky that Rick was behind Dad, for just in time he got his father's attention to stop. Rick got out his car quickly to tell Dad that, the top of the load of his trailer was almost touching the beam of the carport, come and have a look Dad. He came out and was flabbergasted that he had not hit the top of the load. He looked around and noticed that the right side of the double drive was slightly lower than the left side they were on, and told Rick to back up so he could do the same, and told him to come out and check the other side, as he would slowly give it a go. He made it this time, with about a centimetre to spare, remember me to watch it in the morning, no worries Dad. Jannie got the motel room open, got them each a well deserved cool drink to settle down with for a while, and took Sheena for a walk. They all had a cool shower and hours rest before they went out for dinner. The man who had lend them his tools had also told them the best place to eat, and no wonder, the chef in that restaurant was the same man who used to cook in the truckies stop. Once the chef realised that, he said, your folks are after a real

meal, not a fancy one, ok leave it to me, I will cook you up a storm, and he did. It was one of the best if not the very best meals they ever had in a restaurant. They felt worn out when they got into the restaurant, but after this excellent meal, they felt completely refreshed and even enjoyed the walk back to the motel. The night was balmy warm, with not even a whisper of a breeze, it was a cloudless dark night, and the stars were at its best. Jannie looked up at the two brightest stars, and so did Rick. They noticed of each other a nod of acknowledgement. Yes, the babies were keeping an eye over them at least, that is what they wanted to believe. Once, back in the motel, they took another shower and collapsed into bed, they had not set a time to rise, but hoped they would get up early again, if their poor tired bodies allowed them to. They woke at seven, and by eight were on the way again, all feeling refreshed and fit, and the acknowledgement that today was the end of the trip, with a bit of luck. They set out at a very easy speed, for they had to take care of themselves and more importantly, the heavy loaded trailers.

All thou they were all pretty fit, the thought of being homeless started to hit home, the weariness of selling the house and packing up ones belongings had been quite a task, and at the time it was done without any hassles, but the strain was now beginning to show on them all. Marco decided to tell his son that we are going to make a nice day of it, let us take it easy son, for once we hit the Blue Mountains we will need all our wits to get over them. Then get ourselves through the heavy Sydney and suburbs traffic is no mean feat. Like always, when they would get to the central coast it was going to rain, according to the weather bureau, so enjoy a good drive while we can. Mum and Rick would be together most of the trip with only for a short spell with her husband, for they both thought it best to be near Rick, and get him through all this. After all, it was the lad's second big trip since he got his licence some three months ago. The day started of slow and the scenery was still boring, it would be until they get about halfway Cowra and Bathurst, then the hills started to flow, slowly and gracefully at first, and gradually increasing in height and density, until in the distance before you got into Bathurst you would start to see the outline of the Blue Mountains. The world's famous mountain range, that just about every tourist to this country makes a point of visiting. They had many a nice holiday in the Blue Mountains, and usually when they came to the Central Coast, they would stay in Bathurst, in a motel on top of the hill just outside the little town. The Wheels ran it; they had built it from the bottom up, with the kids while they were young. Later it was, called the Pan Handler; it had a statue of a miner washing gold on the front of the lawns facing the road. It amused them always that they advertised central heating, and soon realised this was not a gimmick, because even summer nights at this altitude it could get bitterly cold, and you were grateful that you choose the motel that had central heating. The service was friendly and the view was superb, what we call a real treat and more than value for your money. When they stayed there they would go into town and have a delicious Chinese meal, there were a few excellent Chinese restaurants in Bathurst.

However, at this very moment, they were still a long way away from there, and they would not stay there this time, they were going to go straight through to Wyong. They planned to have lunch in Bathurst, which was a good five to six hour trip. Jannie changed cars in Cowra, but planned the rest of the trip from Bathurst on, to stay with Rick. The closer they

got to Bathurst the darker the skies became, and Jannie promised faithfully not to sing past the other side of Windsor. It was almost embarrassing how her singing was used for many a reason. They reached Bathurst and lingered over lunch, and got going again about two thirty pm. The sky's were black by now, and the light was getting very dim, before they got to Lithgow the first rain fell and they knew that the trip through the mountains would be hazardous to say the least. Jannie did not tell her son how to drive, but read all the road signs for him, as they came up to them. It was hard to read them at times, because of the rain, as she read them out loud, he usually said ok, or some little acknowledgement, and when he did not, she asked did you hear that Rick, a sharp bend or a steep decline, or whatever, and made him answer her to make sure he knew what lay ahead.

Marco had told her to do that and to keep Rick behind his car, that would automatically slow him down to a save speed, Marco would see to that, he had told her to keep Rick behind him until they were well and truly, trough the Sydney traffic and past Hornsby. Then he could take the lead for a little while. The rain got heavier and denser, as they travelled deeper into the mountains, at times the cars could barely pull the heavy loads on the slippery road, for the brakes combined with the gear changes, had a job and a half to slow down enough to hold the cars and their loads safely on the road.

Jannie always hated the mountains by car, and sitting next to her very eager young, and inexperienced son, did not make her like them any better. However, she stayed calm and collective as not to make him nervous, for one in that stage was bad enough. It took hours to get over the mountains and by the time they hit Windsor and the heavy traffic, the sun was already under. The only good thing was that it seemed the rain had eased a little, which was excellent. At times, they lost sight of Marco ahead of them, but thank god, his car was canary yellow, and every now and again, they saw it manoeuvre through the mess of moving vehicles. It was wet all the way through the suburbs and the city itself. They finally could give a sign of relieve, when they got to the Pacific highway, the main road through to Brisbane and up to Cairns. Rick now would overtake Dad, who could keep an eye on him. Rick settled himself into his seat a little more, all thou he could not relax as long as the rain, was falling. The night was almost black and ofcourse not a star to be seen. It was raining heavier again and Rick, who was warned by you know who, to stay on the bitumen, no matter what. Rick did but also kept the car as much as possible to the left hand side of the road.

When all of a sudden, out of nowhere, for they could only see about five meters in front of them, appeared the figure of a man, and just as sudden this man, who was walking against the traffic towards Sydney, jumped sideways into the ditch on the side of the road. Rick missed him by a hair. They were both perplexed for a moment, and then burst out laughing loud, from nerves I dare say, because it looked so comical that you had to laugh. One moment there was nothing, the next moment a man walking towards you and the very, next moment he jumped into the ditch. All this took less than three seconds. Jannie and Rick settled down a little, they asked each other if they really saw what they thought they saw. After another bout of laughter, they asked if this Guy, was out of his mind to walk on the side of the road, of a dark freeway in the pouring rain, and the affects of the lights made this all the more a ghostly appearance. They burst out laughing again, all the way

over the Brookline Bridge, which spans the Hawkesbury River, and until they saw a sign of a turnoff to Gosford in the distance. The freeway turned slightly to the right and the turnoff went straight ahead, very deceiving in the dark and in the rain, and so Rick went straight ahead, followed by many cars that he had held up because of the slow speed he was doing in the heavy rain. Rick and every car behind him realised that very moment they did that they were on the wrong road. This whole assemble behind Rick slowed down and looked for a way to get back on the freeway. As Rick was first in line on the very stretch that went straight ahead, he made a U turn, and so did everyone else still following him, they could not stop laughing, the pair of them. It was so comical to see many cars do the same; Rick could not believe the chaos he had created. However, they were both aware that this was not a laughing matter on these dark rainy nights on a freeway, but really, it was funny.

In between time, Dad had passed them, unbeknown to them, and now Dad was looking out for them, and they for him. Until they got to the Entrance turn off, and saw Dad in the right turnoff lane to go across the railway at Tuggerah. Marco could not believe his eyes when he saw his son behind him, how the hell, did he manage to do that, never thinking that they were the silly buggers that made all the cars turn onto the wrong road, which was a right mesh up, he had told himself. With only about ten more minutes in the car before they pulled up in front of their block, he had to wait for their answer. They just pulled up in front of the place to survey the situation, when he asked Rick, how did you get behind me, when in fact you were in front of me? They tried several times to tell him but once again, they were so hysterical, that they ended up resting on each other's shoulders to keep upright. You are both crazy, he told them. They did not need any encouragement, they started all over again, and they were now laughing and crying at the same time, they were literally too ridiculous for words. Dad said he was going to say hello to Mum and Dad, whom were already looking through the curtains, and had seen them pull up in one piece. They were not going outside in the rain to greet them, but had the door half open to let them know they knew. Marco turned to look over his shoulder and told them they could follow, when they settled down. It took several minutes, and then they promised each other not to mention it again if possible, for Dad would never see the joke in it anyhow. You really had to see and experience it to get the full picture. Marco had rung his parents from Bathurst, and told Mum loud and clear, not to worry about something to eat for them, for they will stop for tea somewhere. She had not argued as she hated cooking, and this let her nicely of the hook. Both Marco and Rick had upset stomachs for several days after their last home cooked meal from Oma, her famous nassi goring, thank god she did not insist. They were only to stay for one night with Mum and Dad, and that was enough, still the same dirty floor to sleep on and the same dirty linen and blankets, but luckily they brought their own pillows. The unloading was to be done in the morning, and then they would sort out some way to have sleeping facilities amongst the furniture and boxes, at least they knew it was and would stay clean, Jannie would make sure of that for the next two or three months. Surprisingly enough, they had a good sleep, but did not use the outdoor dunny once. That was the most offensive part of all to Jannie and her family. Mum and Dad had taken that in their stride. They did not want breakfast claiming they had

too many things to do; they would have to come across the road if they wanted to see them, for they had no end of unpacking in front of them. In the afternoon they were going to meet the people at the council and at Wyong hardware, they had helped Jannie so much only a few short months ago. Marco was going to talk about a few changes they had made, but nothing mayor, and he was going to place the order for the house, etc, etc. They also were going to find a place where they could go to the toot. To their surprise, it had stopped raining overnight, the sun was out and the skies were blue, with not even a little cloud to disturb its blueness. It all smelled fresh and clean, and the ground was drying up quickly because there block was on the side of a hill. They had no problem levelling the driveway, so they could get on and off the block without too much hassle. Marcos, car was in front of the garage first, for it had the biggest items on his trailer. It took a lot of discussion to work out how they could possible fit all the stuff in the double garage and still, make a little room for cooking and sleeping and with a bit of luck put the TV somewhere, so they could sit on the bed or whatever, after a hard day's work, and relax a little. Jannie, did not think it was at all possible, but Marco being the innovator he always was, soon worked out that the big steel workbench, would make a good cook top, and a steady place to set the frying pan and deep fryer. Having a steel top he said, would also be saver in a cluttered area like this.

They placed that against the far end, and then set out to divide it a little with the fridge, electric-organ, boxes and cases, all around it and on top of it. On the side where the two roller doors were they put the double bunks, the bottom of that would hold all their cloths for the next several months. They put their queen size bed and mattress upright against the wall, for M&J were to sleep on the lounge, which made up into a double bed. The lounge was about two feet in front of the bunks and that left enough room to get to bed for Rick and get to the cloth, etc that was stored there. The lounge would give them all a comfortable place to sit at night and watch TV, which found its place on top of the refrigerator, there was little or no room to move, but they knew that before hand, and reminded each other many times during their planning stages in SA. Seeing the weather was good in daytime they could open the roller doors, and this would give the place a nice chance to breath and air out. They would manage, as this was all part of the adventure that was to take place over the next few months. After both cars and trailers were unloaded, they washed in a new garbage bin, a nice red one, with two kettles of hot water and halve bin of cold, you could give yourself a good sponge bath and you could even stand in the hot water, they laughed, counting their blessings. The simplicity that was to become their way of life for months to come, oddly enough it did not seem to bother any of them. The main part was that they could cook, wash-up and sleep. The washing they were going to take to the Laundromat. The main concern was to see if they could get a portable toilet delivered today, and a second one, in which Marco would lay a concrete floor as soon as it arrived, and poke the hose through the wall and connect a showerhead. Then they would be in business. They went down the street to make their acquaintance, and Marco agreed with his wife, that the people that helped her were indeed a fine bunch of men.

Ken P who was in charge of the building materials and all the hardware, told them to come and see him for everything they needed, and he would send them to the right sections and people. They were to have ten percent

discount on everything they needed for their house, until the place was completely finished, and then they had to come in and negotiate for every single item, he told them with a smile on his face. What was it they needed today, two portable toilet buildings, set behind the garage on the high site, also a two hundred feet long water hose plus connections for taps and a showerhead? He wanted a long heavy-duty industrial electric extension cord for when connected, to the temporary power pole, hopefully today or tomorrow. Bags of sand and cement mix. We want to order the frame for the house etc. Hang on Ken said, is the power pole on the block already, yes it is. Ok, I will ring someone I know maybe they are not busy. Ken did and talked for a few minutes and finished that conversation, with a thanks mate I own you one. Done he told Marco, they are going to connect it, in the next hour or two.

Hang on a minute I see what our boys are doing, back on the phone, Jim, we have an urgent delivery what can you do for us. Fire away the other end said, Ken told him what was needed and had to be delivered as soon as possible today, done, thanks mate and he put down the phone. All that, will probably be there before you are. The agreement was that every order would be, delivered the next day. Marco told him that everything would be cash, if they haven't got it in the house they will get it at the latest the next day; Ken told them that if they leave a one thousand dollar deposit on their books until the very last job was done on their house; the ten percent will stand that distance. What more can we expect, Marco told the man, they all shook hands, and Ken told Marco he was a lucky man, to have a wife who was so capable. They found out where the toilets were in the store, and planned to use them each time they came here. Ken had rung the store once more before they left to make sure they had the complete order it was to be, delivered in the next hour. He also took them to meet several main people in the different departments, and told them to make sure to look after those people. Then at the sawmill they went to meet a man called Ron. Ron was to build the frames for the house and told them that he would complete the frames in two weeks, maybe a little early, for them. Marco said not to worry, for we have not started on anything yet, we have plenty of room to store them until you are ready, Ron assured Marco.

By the time they got back to the block, the two ablution buildings stood exactly where Marco wanted them, and on a pallet next to them were the bags of sand cement mix, and all the other items that Marco had ordered. They checked the two buildings out, and Marco and Rick set about mixing the cement in the good old wheelbarrow, and laid the floor in both little buildings. That would be dry in the morning, he told his son, then we can get a can delivered by the council, we go there first thing in the morning. They found out from Mum and Dad that the council comes to collect them twice a week and leave clean pans. You have to be kidding Dad, Rick wondered, we really are going to use a bucket, with so much distaste in his voice. Surely it is not, done anymore in this, day and age. He really thought his father was pulling his leg, when they had talked about that, but he had been dead serious. Dad told him how twenty years ago when he came to Australia they were on buckets in most places in Australia, and some places in NSW are still on them now. We will get rid of them as soon as we can; I believe they are starting to put in the main sewerage in Berkeley Vale now, so by the time the house is that far it will be, connected

immediately. I hope so said the disbelieving young man. Buckets, his Dad heard him say as he walked away. Marco and Rick, laid out the long hose from the front where the water meter was to the back where the second toilet building stood. Then cut it and put a connection fitting on it, why Rick wondered aloud, simple son, then we can connect another hose to it and leave the shower hose and fittings where they are, clever dick Dad, he said with admiration. The hose of the shower they put under the corrugated iron roof and into the building, with some heavy gage wire they made up a double hook and put the hose and shower head onto that, presto, one working shower. It was, hooked up to cold water only off course. They agreed between the two of them that Mum could have the first shower, as the hose would have enough water in it to give her a warm one, late in the afternoon, while the water was hot from the sun. The hose hung onto the side fence and copped the sun all day. They were tuff man folk, and could handle cold showers without any problems, or so they thought. This was to be the first night in the shed, between all the boxes and furniture. Jannie cooked her first, one pot meal, and it tasted not bad at all. While they were at Wyong hardware they picked up one of the new, slow cook pots, electric off course, it was a three in one, deep-frying, steaming and slow cook. They decided to get one, for she could put on a meal (stews, casseroles) and the likes, before they started to work on the house in the mornings. The slow cooker would take about eight to nine hours to cook a meal, and that was exactly the time that jannie, worked out-side. She was to cook for Mum and Dad across the road as well. So this was a real timesaver, besides they did not need to unpack too many boxes, which was maybe more important. It was kind of cosy sitting on the lounge with a plate on your lap eating, and after the meal, Rick grinned and lay on the bed watching TV. This is the life isn't Dad, he asked hanging his head over the rail of the bunk. Sure son, if we survive this episode, than we will be able to handle everything that comes our way in future. Keep the noise down in the kitchen, Rick yelled at Mum from the top bunk, and he was told, just because you are on the top level right now, don't let it go to your head. They all laughed, and knew for sure they would be able to cope; they were that sort of a family. They owned an antique table, a round one, which was, divided into three sections and both side panels, lowered by swinging the legs inwards, and then you were, left with a nice narrow sort of a hall table. They had set this up such way, that when Jannie was finished in the kitchen, and everyone was washed up or whatever, Marco could use this to layout the plans of the house and start working out how to go about it the best way, for the next day's work. He was the architect, engineer, builder and boss man, and the rest of the family were, told what to do, they best remember that. Jannie had no problem with that, for all thou she knew she could learn to do anything Marco requested, he was to have a few problems with Rick from time to time, because he was his father's son, and would love to order everyone about a bit as well. On odd occasions, this would become a challenge but nothing serious. This for Marco was the first night of many that he laid out the plans and studied them, he had taken on a tremendous task and deep inside hoped, he had not taken on more than he could handle. Just working out were to begin, how to set the house out, measure it up and square it to each other, and then get the levels right in the land. The house was to be, built sideways on the block; with the back of the house facing the hill behind, the front of the house would

be facing the lake they were hoping to get some real panoramic views. They would see what they get at floor level for sure. He was pleased with Wyong hardware, they always knew exactly what he wanted, and the changes he wanted away from the drawings were, taken in consideration. Marco wanted ten, centimetre frames, so he could double insulate them. His plan was to put siselation against the outside, before the weatherboards went on, and on the inside, he would put fibreglass bats, nine cm thick, and another layer of siselation that all together would work like a thermos, it will keep the heat in during winter, and out in the summer. It was no problem for Ron the frame builder he was happy, as he was the only one that would do something on the house. First Marco was going to built the frames on site, but they told him that would work out more expansive if he bought all the timbers at length, then cut them up, he could have them all assembled for hundreds of dollars less, they looked at each other, and Ron had convinced them there was no glory in building frames. Besides he had said, they had all the work benches and tables at the right height, all the jigs to square them and make them tight, and when we need a bit of extra timber or brackets etc, it was all on hand. They had a marvellous numbering system, and it would save so much time and hard work. Do not let me talk you into it; it is your money and your plans. Give us a few minutes Ron and we talked this over, they all went for a little walk in the timberyard, and found some shade under the only tree that stood there. They all lit a cigarette, and took one big draw. Marco asked them what they thought of the idea of getting the frames readymade. Both his wife and son were all for it, for it was just beginning to dawn on them what a big task laid ahead, and deep down she thought they could do with every bit of help they could get. Don't you feel, that if we get them made, that we are not building the whole house ourselves, that is what we set out to do. Yes, that is true but, the frames would be, made on your plans, you are still the one that builds the house. Yes that is also true, and as Ron said there is not much glory in building a frame, they lit another cigarette and pondered some more. Finally mother and son said the decision is Marco's, they were fine with whatever he decides, a few minutes later he said in that case we get them made by Ron, good for you Dad, his son said with relieve, and Jannie answered it was a good idea. So they had given Ron the job, and Marco hoped he was as good as Ken in the front office said he was. Tomorrow, he said to his offsiders, we set the house out, bear with me for all this is new for me to. I think I know how to do it, but I might change my mind along the way. He said he will inform his offsiders every night of the next day's job, and all we can do is improvise from there on. Ok boss. Right now, we are a family sitting here at night. That was all right for you two to say, but someone had to work out how to go about it. The family was up early again and were, greeted by a crisp morning, blue skies and the morning choir of birds singing in full glory with a kookaburra leading it. It was one of those mornings, when you were grateful to be alive. After a good look around, they asked Marco where, do we start. What we do is layout all the tools in the open, lay them somewhere that when we need something we all know where they are, and we should always put them back in the same place when we are finished. Ok where? They selected a place that made everyone happy and it would not be in the way of the proposed building. Then we should clear the area where the house goes, so we can see what we are doing. Rick was to be on dad's side all the time, and he would