

'Calypso Summers'

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Dedication

For the Nukunu and all Indigenous people in our quest to reclaim and maintain culture. May we continue to speak our truths, define our identities, imagine and create our future.

Calypso Summers

Calypso was drenched in sweat and feeling absolutely devastated as he walked home from work. It was obvious that Australia was going to beat the West Indies in the test match he had followed for days. Australia only needed to make a couple of runs with a few overs remaining. Once he heard of the West Indies defeat, Calypso turned off his transistor radio, zipped it away securely in his bag and walked down Lexington Road, sloping toward his street. As commentator Richie Benaud announced, "That's it folks, the Australians have won this test match in very impressive style," Calypso struck the branch of a giant Norfolk Island pine that marked Adelaide's coastline.

With his muscular dark brown limbs and mass of messy black dreadlocks Calypso was often mistaken for a West Indian. When the West Indian cricketers visited Adelaide, many people stopped to ask him if he were with the team. Today he was wearing red Adidas running shorts with the three stripes down the side, a pair of sneakers, a chest hugging Bonds tank top and his faithful old faded blue terry-toweling hat with its top cut out and his dreads poking through.

Shane, one of the neighborhood kids, was sitting out the front of his mother's yard and made his way to the gate as soon as he saw Calypso.

„Hey Calypso, I've got some good gear man.“ Shane was a stringy seventeen year old boy with white shaggy hair and pale freckled skin. He tried to look tough in his desert boots, faded tight blue jeans and a loose black tank top.

„Yeah, so what?“ said Calypso.

„Oh man, don't you want to get wasted?“

„No Shane.“

„Come on man, have a smoke, see what you think!“

„Na Shane, I“m right,“ answered Calypso as he sped up the walk to his flat.

Shane jumped his mother“s small picket fence in pursuit of Calypso.

„Come on Calypso, just have a little smoke?“

Calypso turned around and stopped in his tracks.

„I don“t smoke ganja no more, Shane. I told you that already. Leave I alone.“

„Oh Calypso, what type of dreadlock Rasta don“t smoke grass?“

„I, I guess,“ Calypso responded.

„Oh man, you“ve lost it Calypso, you“re a fake,“ Shane said with disgust as he made his way back to his mother“s doorstep.

Although Calypso hadn“t smoked weed for many months, its musky scent wafted from his flat as he turned his key. As usual Calypso“s cousin Run was trying to smoke away his worries. Calypso entered his flat, welcoming the satisfaction that being home brought after a hot day at work. He liked the way he“d set things up there. A huge Bob Marley poster on the wall that could be seen as soon as you entered the living room, a yellow color television, a VCR player, new wall paper in the kitchen area, two green bean bags, a coffee table, and his favorite piece of furniture, the cane lounge with bamboo print cushions. He threw his backpack on his couch, opened the second floor living room window and made his way to Run“s room.

Calypso gave a gentle knock on Run's door. When there was no answer he waited a moment and then entered. Run was lying on his mattress on the floor, flat on his back, wearing only tight faded blue jeans. His hands were folded beneath his messy knots of black hair that was also beginning to dread like Calypso's. Run and Calypso looked like brothers but Calypso was a couple of inches taller, thinner and darker. And although Run was a couple of years younger than Calypso, Run looked older with small scars across his forehead and cheek and a stocky build. Run also had very intense cat like green eyes that constantly made him look angry or suspicious, even when he smiled. Calypso's brown eyes spotted the water bong beside Run, the water inside blacker than Run's own dark colored skin.

„You right, cuz?“ asked Calypso.

Run didn't answer, he just stared at the ceiling.

„Come on, you got to pick yourself up.“

Run had been down in the dumps for months because his girlfriend, Kelly, had left him for a parking inspector. She told Run that she liked a man in uniform and kicked him out of her house and life just like that. Run had taken it pretty badly. Calypso knew what it felt like to be depressed, still often finding himself miserable from Bob Marley's death several years earlier. So he had let Run move into his place out of sympathy and because he thought some company might cheer him up. Now Calypso was getting sick of always having to lift his spirits.

Calypso picked up a book that Run had taken from his room to see what he was reading. It was his treasured copy of Kevin Gilbert's „Because a Whiteman Will Never Do It“. Before he turned a page he spotted two dirty coffee cups and a plate with grease and a half eaten sausage stuck to it. Agitated, he gathered the dirty dishes.

„Run, I know it’s been hard to deal with but you’ve been down for too long cuz. You know, you’ve just got to get out a bit, do the things that you used to do. Sooner or later man, another girl is gonna come your way and you’ll kick yourself for wasting time.“

Run sat up and looked at Calypso in confusion. „Calypso, what the hell you talking about?“

„Kelly mahn,“ he said in his best Jamaican accent to diffuse the seriousness of the conversation. „I know you’re stressed out about her cuz but you’ve got to move on.“

„I’m not worried about Kelly...well I am, but that’s not what’s worrying me right now! Haven’t you heard Calypso, the West Indies lost the test... mahn!“

Calypso sighed, slapped Run on the shoulder and said, „I know cuz, the Australians got lucky but our brothers will conquer.“

Both of them stared down at the carpet in disappointment.

„You know cuz,“ laughed Calypso, „I thought you were just down about Kelly again.“

„Well why shouldn’t I be?“ Run bit back in protest.

„Cause you and „er finished ages ago bruz.“

„So?“ said Run.

„Well you’re only nineteen you’ve got your whole life to live.“

„I ain“t got shit. I ain“t got no woman, I ain“t got nothing,“ Run sulked.

„You“ve got to go out and get what you want Run.“

„Like what Calypso?“

„Well, while you“re on the subject cuz, for a start, I reckon you could get a job.“

„What for?“

„You“ve been staying here for the last six months and you haven“t paid me a cent of rent, Run. We“ve got electricity, phone bills, the whole lot owing and you haven“t said you“re gunna pay shit.“

„Well you“re the rich one Calypso, you like working so much.“

„You could help out.“

„Oh piss off Calypso, you“re the only blackfella that I know with... you“ve got a video machine and all!“

„You know that girl I was seeing ages ago left that with me, she didn“t want to pick it up, she didn“t want to see my sorry arse no more.“

„Well, you“ve even got color T.V.! And just cause you“ve got a job you think that everyone else can get one.“

„Well you can find a job, just start looking.“

„Why, so you can take my money? What you need my money for?“

Calypso considered Run's question for a moment.

„Well cuz," said Calypso, „I'ma young fella and young fellas are supposed to be looking for their woman right?... And when I find my woman, I want to treat her right."

„Why you need money for a woman Calypso? Your idea of treating a woman right is a day at the cricket and fish and chips on the beach, a rich fella like you can afford that, easily."

„Yeah, but this time I might want to treat my woman fine."

Run propped himself up into a cross legged sitting position and asked Calypso, „How would you treat your woman fine?"

Calypso had to think about it, he'd never give it much thought before.

„Come on, what would you do?" Run asked again.

Calypso let his mind wander to the dream he'd held since he'd first seen an image of the P&O Fair Star upon the turquoise waters of the Caribbean. „I'd take my woman on a cruise, he finally declared."

„A cruise? But you ain't even got no car, bruz!"

„Na, not that type of cruise Run, I'd take my woman on a cruise to Jamaica, like on the Love Boat, mahn."

„Love Boat," Run repeated, laughing at the suggestion. „Love boat! You've lost it Calypso."

„Nah, I'm for real. True as God that's what I'm going to do," Calypso said as he turned to leave Run's room.

Run chuckled to himself, bemused by Calypso's dreams. Calypso, refusing to be insulted by Run's teasing, made his way to the shower.

I'll show you, Calypso thought to himself.

2

The next morning, Calypso arrived at work at 7:30, an hour and a half before opening, to stack the shelves of Mystic Dolphin Health Foods and Products Store. He sat on a Coca-Cola crate, placing containers, bottles and packets of garlic tablets, eucalyptus oil, lavender extract, dried seahorses, and shark fin powder on the shelves and hooks. True to his daily ritual, Gary, the owner and Calypso's employer, lit incense sticks and watered the many pot plants that lined the shop, mostly palms, before sitting behind the counter to drink a cup of coffee and read the newspaper. Before opening the shop door for business, Gary took his thin and oily shoulder length grey hair and pulled it back in a ponytail.

Calypso was getting into the swing of things, going about his task just fine, but he couldn't help thinking about his cousin Run, his own predicament, and Run's comment about Calypso thinking that any Aboriginal person could get a job, just because he had one. It was a comment that Calypso certainly didn't agree with because finding a job had been one of his biggest challenges and ideally, he wished he didn't need one at all. Although Calypso had done pretty well at school, he'd had real problems finding employment when it came down to it.

When he finished school, with his good finishing report card in hand, he had set off to find a job, any job! He really prepared for his job search too. He bought clothes to suit the occasion, a shirt, some slacks and some tidy black shoes. Instead of buying them at the second hand store, he even made the extra effort to buy the new, more expensive clothes from K Mart.

He felt confident about the prospects of securing work, and when he telephoned prospective employers they sounded encouraging. But as soon as they met him in the flesh, they wouldn't even give him the time of day.

Calypso continued to seek work for a good while until the knock backs got the better of him. One day after an unsuccessful interview for a sales job, he resigned himself to the fact that no one in Adelaide was going to employ him... Calypso, the blackfella. Calypso went home and drank the better part of a bottle of rum that night, and the next morning, with the first hangover of his life, he called the dole office and said groggily, „Just let me know if anything comes up.“

While Calypso waited for whatever came up, he fell in love with reggae music and ganja. He grew ganja between his Mum's tomato bushes and sold it to his friends, cousins and people in his neighbourhood for some extra cash. With his profits he bought all the albums and tracks by reggae and dub artists that he could find. In his collection he had works by Third World, The Ethiopians, Desmond Dekker, Jimmy Cliff, Toots and the Maytals, Burning Spear, Linton Kwesi Johnson, and of course Bob Marley.

He spent a lot of time down the beach, often swimming with his young niece and nephew Millie and Vance. Sometimes he imagined Adelaide beaches like Henley Beach, Grange and Semaphore were the Jamaican beaches of Negril or Montego Bay. With their white sands and sun hitting the water just right, they occasionally looked a brilliant turquoise he believed to be similar to Caribbean waters. He taught himself Bob Marley songs on an old nylon stringed guitar.

Mostly though, Calypso followed the cricket. He listened to cricket on the radio, he watched cricket on T.V., he watched cricket wherever he could find a game being played.

Although hardly anyone outside of his family knew it, Calypso's name came from a cricket series, the test match series of 1956 between Australia and the West Indies. The test match was said to be the finest of all played in Australia with the famous tie beginning the West Indies march towards being a force in world cricket. The test match series went on to be called the „Calypso Summers“ series. Although Calypso wasn't born until six years after this famous test, he soon gained the nickname because of his fascination with cricket. At birth his mother had given him the name Kyle.

„Hey Calypso.“ Calypso looked up, startled by Gary's voice breaking into his thoughts. „Did you hear that the Australian selectors reckon Australia will shit all over the Windies this series after last night's win?“

„No way, Gary,“ Calypso protested.

„Well, whatever you think, you've got to hand it to them Calypso, they were in good form this test.“

„Good form! It was a poor wicket and you guys just had luck on your side.“

„We'll see,“ said Gary, who liked to stir up Calypso.

„When Joel Garner is in the attack man, your batsmen won't be seeing anything... only their wicket falling down!“ Calypso retorted.

With the up and coming 1983-84 Benson and Hedges One Day International cricket series and the test in full flight there was plenty for Calypso

and Gary to taunt each other about. Gary loved the Australian cricket team almost as much as Calypso loved the West Indies. Never could any teasing cause offence though. As Gary always said, „You and I are best of mates, Calypso, we’re just like Vegemite and toast.“ Calypso thought about how much he hated Vegemite.

Gary may have said that he and Calypso were like Vegemite and toast but Calypso wasn’t so sure; he still felt he was trying to get to know Gary. Apart from Calypso’s father who died when he was nine, Calypso hadn’t really spent much time with white blokes. They didn’t seem to trust him. Teachers, bus drivers, sport coaches, they all looked at him like he was about to steal or break something at any second. In turn, Calypso didn’t trust them. He felt no warmth from these men. Gary however was like no other white man he’d ever met. He didn’t look at Calypso’s clothes or his dreads with disgust but actually encouraged him to be himself, to play up the Rastafarian image he’d learnt so well. Calypso realized this was all for the good of Gary’s business and for the first time, it got him wondering if looking and acting like a Rastafarian was what he wanted. It took the fun out of it.

The day that Calypso met Gary, he remembered as a dreary day, the type of weather that drove him mad when he was unemployed. He had awakened and looked out of his window to see rain spitting down from Adelaide’s autumn sky. When he opened the front door of his flat he could see the Henley Beach Primary School children gathered beneath class room verandas rather than playing on the oval and he knew the rain wouldn’t stop all day, or even for the next few days. He sat on the edge of his bed, rolled a joint, smoked it and lay back down. He couldn’t think of anything better to do. It was too wet for fishing, too cold for swimming.

But after a while he thought of a video that he wanted to watch: *Herbie Goes Bananas*. He knew that watching a video would be the only relief during the

cold boring day ahead, so he put on some track pants, a jumper, a red, green and gold crocheted beanie, slipped on his thongs and made his way down to Gary's Showtime Video Store. The walk to the store down Seaview Road wasn't a long one from Calypso's place but he cursed the drizzle that froze his toes. He looked at the grayness around him with the colonial style brick cottages lined up along the right hand side of Seaview Road. Some of them were stately with a fresh lick of brown, maroon, or cream paint while the rusted bull nose verandas of others retreated into cold cracking brick and splintered and peeling window frames. Calypso thought it strange that the stretch of road was named Seaview as the houses positioned along it, while facing the direction of the sea, didn't provide the occupants any sight of it, unless the house was elevated. Rather, the occupants of the homes looked onto rows of mismatched garages. These garages belonged to the houses on the esplanade, homes that did provide their owners with a view of the sea. In the distance beyond the garages and the houses with their frangipani and agapanthus, Calypso could see the Ramsgate Hotel through the drizzle. It sat on the edge of the Henley Beach Square, towering like a beacon.

The Henley Beach square was hemmed with businesses: a deli, a launderette, a couple of hairdressers, a restaurant and some cafes. It was a hive of activity, particularly during the summer. Families would picnic in the square and take a stroll along the jetty licking ice cream. The Henley Beach Life Savers Club on the esplanade offered assurance to swimmers and shade to parents watching their children bounce around in the shore break. As Calypso walked beneath the veranda of a row of shops he looked at the air conditioner units poking from above each shop door, certain that the likelihood of life on the esplanade was as limited as the need for air conditioning on such a day.

When Calypso walked into Gary's Showtime Video Store, Gary was taking videos from two trolleys and stacking them on the shelves. Calypso stood for a while and observed what Gary was doing. Basically he was just grabbing the

videos and placing them on the shelf in alphabetical order according to their release date or weekly hire status. Calypso thought that he'd give Gary a hand, and started stacking the shelves too.

Calypso could tell that Gary was surprised by his action. After all, Gary barely knew him. He had been a customer for a few weeks only. But Gary did know his name. When Calypso filled out his membership form, Gary had said, „Calypso Summers, hey? I won't be forgetting that name in a hurry,“ and he never did.

Gary stopped what he was doing to watch Calypso. „You're pretty good at that, you've got it already.“

„It's not rocket science, mahn.“

„Well no, but I didn't even tell you how to do it, Calypso.“

„You didn't need to, I've been seeing you stack these shelves for weeks.“

„Why you helping me out anyway, son?“

„Basically... I'm bored and you look like you could be stacking these shelves all day.“

„Haven't you got anything else to do?“

„I wish,“ Calypso responded as Gary made his way over to the counter.

Calypso continued to place the videos on the shelf.

„Well, if you want to make yourself useful, there is something that you

could do to help me out," said Gary finally, looking up from his race form.

Calypso stopped placing the videos upon the shelf and took a band from his wrist. He pulled his hair back with one hand and placed the band over his long dreads to hold them in place.

„What is it?“ Calypso asked with interest as he took the remaining two videos from the trolley and placed them on the shelf.

„Well, I need to step out for a while. Do you reckon you could look after the shop?“

Calypso couldn't believe it. „Really? You'd trust me to do that?“ A smile spreading across his face.

Gary hit the button on his teledex and it sprang open. „Well, I've got your name and address, remember!“

„Okay,“ said Calypso, „So what do you want me to do?“

Gary explained to Calypso how he had to charge customers according to the color code on the video covers. Gary held up three video covers, one with a red dot, one with a blue, and one with a white dot on the edge of the cover.

„The red dot means it is an overnight video, you charge three dollars. Blue is a three-night hire video; you charge two dollars. And white is a weekly video; you charge one dollar. Is that clear?“

„I overstand it,“ said Calypso.

„What?“ asked Gary.

„All clear boss,“ Calypso quickly corrected himself realizing that of course Gary wouldn’t understand what he was saying. Calypso, tried to speak in way that he thought sounded Jamaican or Rastafarian. Basically he’d try to copy the accents of West Indian cricketers and take words from reggae and dub songs and throw them together.

„Okay, so do you know how to work a cash register?“

„Well I can add and subtract. It can’t be that hard, can it?“

Calypso watched intently as Gary demonstrated how the cash register operated.

„Alright, so I’m just going to duck out for a tic, I won’t be too long.“ With that Gary was out of the door with the race guide tucked beneath his arm and crossed the road on his way to the Ramsgate Hotel.

Calypso looked around the video store in awe. He couldn’t believe the responsibility that Gary had given him, and he just hoped that someone wouldn’t come in to hold up the store, or worse, that he would make a mistake. He was like a child in a candy shop, admiring the many shelves stacked with movies in crisp new covers and the walls adorned with posters of movie stars. There was John Wayne posing with his six-shooter, Marilyn Monroe in the white wind swept dress, Elvis Presley with guitar over shoulder, Roger Moore, James Dean and his favorite, Sidney Poitier. He liked the Sidney Poitier poster because his mum loved watching films with Sidney Poitier in them and she had made him watch every one when he was a small boy.

Mesmerized by the thought of Sidney Poitier’s fame and fortune Calypso suddenly realised that Gary had forgotten to tell him how to record the names of

customers hiring the videos, but that was okay because he knew where Gary kept the record book behind the counter. To settle his nerves, Calypso went back to stacking the shelves.

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Barry, the barman, poured Gary his usual schooner of Southwark as soon as he laid eyes on him.

„Well, you“re looking your usual miserable self today, Gary,“ he said as he handed him some change.

Gary made his way to a table at the front of the hotel, where he could be alone to think, but more importantly to keep an eye on Calypso across the puddle filled street as the rain began to subdue. He took a sip of his beer, casting a quick look over to his shop. He could see the outline of Calypso from his table, still busy placing videos on the shelves, so he lit a cigarette and turned his attention to his race form.

Gary decided to back a few horses running at Randwick. Skywalker on the nose in race two, a win or a place for She“s A Dish race three, Yodelling Yelp, on the nose again in race four, and a trifecta of Flashing Light, Hop-Scotch and Perfect Storm in race five. He circled the horse names and waited for his bookie to come in for his usual arvo drinks.

Looking up from placing his bets Gary saw a young couple step out of Estia Restaurant and then immediately enter his shop next door. He watched Calypso greet the customers and wait for them to make a selection. When the customers finally presented the videos to Calypso, he served them in seconds flat. Gary turned his attention back to his race guide when he had seen Calypso place the money in the till.

Gary's bookie, Bill, had been poured a beer and was now sitting on the barstool beside him. Gary handed him the race guide with fifty dollars between the pages.

„Well, I hope one comes in for you Gary. Haven't had much luck have ya? I reckon that if you bought a duck it would drown, Gary," Bill said with a chuckle.

„Every dog has its day. Twenty on the trifecta, ten on the other races," Gary instructed.

The two men drank in silence for a while, watching the rain again fall lightly on the road and puddles splashing on the footpath as cars sped by.

Suddenly Bill sprang from his chair knocking the table as he stood. His beer glass started to tip and some of the liquid poured onto the ledge.

„What is it, Bill?"

„Who the hell is that Abo standing at the counter of your shop?" Bill pushed his face hard up against the pub window. „You're not being robbed are you mate?"

Gary considered the question. „I'm not being robbed and that's no Abo," he finally said, „That's my mate Calypso, he's... West Indian, Jamaican... or something."

„Jamaican hey. Hard workers aren't they... banana boats, sugar cane and stuff?"

Gary just shrugged his shoulders and drank his beer. Bill finished his beer

and patted his sleeve on his gob. „I see you at about three“, he said as he left.

Gary watched two seemingly satisfied customers walk out of his shop and he smiled as he saw the hazy outline of Calypso, through the drizzle, sitting patiently at his counter. Calypso's nationality didn't matter to Gary, Calypso just looked the part for his next business venture. After watching the program Beyond 2000 and seeing that little disks that play films would replace videos, Gary thought it was time to get out of the video game. He had read that health food products were the next big thing.

Calypso was feeling very comfortable in the store by the time Gary returned. Gary wasn't feeling too bad himself after several beers and an extra thirty dollars in his pocket from a win.

„Things alright Calypso?“

„Good,“ said Calypso, with satisfaction.

„Let's check the till, son!“

The till was good. Twenty-four dollars had been made during the afternoon.

„Calypso mate, you've done well,“ said Gary. „Any videos that you want, take 'em for a week. What's more... I've got an offer for you.“

Calypso was over the moon, free videos for a week! He tried to keep the grin off of his glowing face as he asked, „What kind of offer?“

„Well I'm going into business and I need a partner.“

„A partner?“

„Yeah, like Batman and Robin, Lone Ranger and Tonto...“

„Lilly and Marsh?“ interrupted Calypso.

„Yeah, that“s right.“

„What type of business?“

„Health food, health products.“

„But I“ve got no bunda.“

„No what?“ asked Gary.

„No money, mahn. And I don“t know much about health food and them things.“

„It doesn“t matter, what matters is that you look the part, I“ll teach you the rest.“

„Look the part?“ asked Calypso, a little confused.

„Yeah, you“re tall, fit, and you“re, what would you call it... exotic looking. I mean look at me. Do I look like the type of person you“d take health advice from?“

Calypso looked at Gary“s yellow teeth and washed out face, his thongs, stubby shorts and skinny little white hairy legs. He watched Gary draw deeply on his cigarette like there was no tomorrow.

„I see what you mean, mahn.“

„Well all I need to know is that you“ll give it your best... and of course, that you“re not a drug addict or thief or anything, and I“ll give you the work.“

The opportunity that Gary was offering was exactly what Calypso had wanted for so long. He had found the responsibility of spending the afternoon in the shop dealing with customers satisfying. So it was then and there that Calypso“s career was set in motion. He decided to try and stop smoking ganja.

4

By winter 1982 Gary“s Showtime Video Store had been transformed into Mystic Dolphin Health Food and Product Store and now that the summer of 83/84 was fast approaching things were really humming. The posters of Hollywood stars had been replaced by a fresh coat of lime paint and where the white laminex video shelves once stood there were simple metal shelves like the ones in an Asian grocery. The shop front had also been refitted and it resembled an Italian fruit and vegetable store with several large windows that retracted to the ceiling to create one big entrance. Some sunflowers and potted palms decorated the shop. Gary even looked different. Calypso was in disbelief when one morning Gary came into work wearing Kaftan and his hair pulled back in a plaited ponytail. „Gotta look the part,“ said Gary before Calypso could say anything. Then he stuck a tape in the stereo and began to play it. On one side of the tape was Cat Stevens, the other Indian sitar music. It was all Gary allowed to be played in the shop day in day out and it drove Calypso nuts.

On a perfect spring afternoon Gary whispered as he brushed past Calypso, „We“ve got a customer.“

Calypso placed one more container of fish oil on the shelf, got up from the

crate he was sitting on and approached the customer. It was a middle-aged woman. She was wearing a colorful summer dress, a wide brim hat, big sunglasses and sandals. Calypso took a deep breath and set himself in the frame of mind to speak with his best Jamaican accent, as Gary had encouraged.

„Anything, I cyan help you wid today, miss?“ Calypso asked in a relaxed low voice and just the right measure of enthusiasm.

The lady continued gazing at the small containers of powders before her.

„I have hay fever, perhaps from drinking dry white wine... very distracting.“

„Hay fever is nuh good fa I?“

„Well, is there anything you recommend young man?“

The lady peered through her teary eyes at Calypso and took a tissue from her bag, holding it against her sniveling nose. Calypso cast his mind back to Gary’s teachings. What had he taught him again? He noticed Gary sitting behind the counter, peering over the top of his newspaper and pointing to a packet of grated orange rind.

„I has just the right remedy for ya miss.“

Calypso walked toward the packets of ground orange rind and the woman followed him. He took up a packet of the pale mixture and handed it to her.

„What is this?“ she asked with interest.

„It is the extract of the finest orange, orange so big and juicy it fill carton wid jus one squeeze“.

„And how will it help?“

Calypso crossed his arms and looked down at the ground, contemplating the question. He looked up to see that the lady was growing impatient and he responded, „Mi mother have hay fever so bad that she couldn't sit still in church for so much sneezing. The congregation grew tired of her so! She added the powder to water and take the orange for three day straight, and she rid dat fever for good“.

Without hesitation the lady said, „I will try it, thank you. How many packets are required?“ she asked before sneezing.

Calypso could now see Gary standing behind the woman, holding up three fingers.

„Three packets miss, one fa each day.“

The lady took two more packets of the mixture from the rack and followed Calypso to the counter. He took her ten dollars and returned three dollars change.

„Good day to you young man,“ she said as she left the store.

„Good day ta you mi lady,“ said Calypso with a smile.

Calypso looked over to Gary with a cheeky grin, waving the ten-dollar note.

„You're good,“ praised Gary, pointing a finger at Calypso, „you're very good!“

„I just hope the stuff works mahn, what if that stuff makes that woman

worse?”

„It won’t.”

„How do you know? Those orange skins come from a tree in your very own garden.”

„Like I’ve told you a million times, mate, it’s not what you put in our clients system, it’s the idea that you plant in their mind. Believing is half the remedy,” Gary tapped his index finger on his forehead.

„Yes, I know, like you keep saying, Gary.”

„That’s right, and don’t you ever forget it, son. That stuff that you told that woman was brilliant. She has every reason to think that it will work, and because she thinks it will work, it bloody well will. Anyway, even without the orange rind, her hay fever will be gone in a few days and she’ll hold the rind responsible for making that happen.”

„I just worry that someday we might poison someone.”

„Don’t worry about that ever happening Calypso.”

„Well how can you be certain it won’t happen?”

„Well, for a start, everything we sell in this store is natural. Secondly, I do read up on things you know,” said Gary tapping a finger on his forehead.

„You read up on the horses a lot, I know that much.”

„It’s me hobby,” Gary said defensively. „Can’t a man have a bloody

interest?"

Shocked by Gary's reaction Calypso decided to stay quiet and not push the issue. But Gary was back on the subject of the medicine.

„Just the other day Calypso, I was reading that the Aztec Indians used to run for miles and miles each day, and still had plenty of energy to build their temples, attend ritual sacrifices of virgins and that type of thing. Do you know why Calypso?"

„You tell me, mahn."

„Because they ate lots of maize."

„Maize?"

„Yes, maize, like corn, Calypso" he said extracting a cob of corn from beneath the counter. „It gave those buggers energy all year round. All the amino acids in it, is what it is."

„Don't tell me you're going to start selling corn in here when you can just buy it at any old greengrocers mahn?"

„Well, why the hell not Calypso? We might be back on to something."

„What are you going to say this corn does then?"

„Energy deficiency, any type of energy deficiency, it fixes it, that's what it does."

„Maybe the Aztecs were just fit, mahn?"

„Look, I tell you what we’re going to do. We’re going to get some corn and we’re going to have it dried out and made into a powder. People can mix it in their drinks or with their food like a concentrate. We’ll put the packets right here,“ said Gary pointing to a shelf in the center of the store. „We’re going to fill it with corn concentrate, and do you know what Calypso?“

„What Gary?“

„We’re going to tell people, particularly women,“ at this Gary winked at Calypso, „that if a man drinks a pint of liquefied raw corn at midday, he will be raring to go, if you know what I mean, come sundown.“

„Do you really think people will buy that?“

„Mark my words they will son, as long as you tell them that it works.“

Just then a customer walked through the door, a fit looking bloke that must have been in his late twenties. Calypso shook his head as he got up from the counter to greet him.

„I’m looking for something to help me sleep, mate,“ the young man told Calypso.

As Calypso directed the customer to various products said to induce sleep and waited for him to choose, he reflected on his time spent working with Gary over the last year and a bit. Business had been good. People entered the store at a steady rate looking to ease blocked noses and high temperatures. There were things that Calypso recommended to people like Eucalyptus oil and Vitamin B that made sense to him, but many of the other products, shark fins, goji juice and the like, just seemed absurd. Sometimes he wished that he could sell things that

came with a guarantee or a warranty, like television sets and vacuum cleaners. He had read about people whose heads blew up to double the size after eating something simple like a peanut. He was genuinely concerned that he'd kill someone.

But there were the regular customers who helped Calypso develop faith in his work, especially when they happened to be wealthy businessmen or women. When they returned to the store again and again with praise for the products and Calypso, he started to think there might just be something to the products and that Gary wasn't just making it all up.

This time Calypso's customer finally settled on buying a small bottle of lavender oil. He was sold on it as soon as Calypso told him, „Jus put a little in ya tub mahn, burn a little in ya room. You will sleep like a baby mi friend.“

When the customer left the store, Gary said, „I'm going to get some cigarettes and a coffee, you want anything mate?“

„I'mokay thanks Gary,“ replied Calypso as he walked to the counter to sit and read the paper.

Calypso enjoyed it when Gary left him alone to work in the shop. He felt more relaxed with the customers. He liked not having to put the hard sell on them in order to show Gary that he was doing his work.

Calypso looked up from the sports pages to the shelf in the center of the shop where he knew that sooner or later, there would be packets of corn concentrate. He chuckled, shook his head, and went back to read about the West Indies up and coming game against Australia.

The phone rang shortly before midday when Calypso was alone in the store. „Mystic Dolphin Health Food and Product Store,“ he announced as he nodded a hello to some old ladies dressed in crisp tracksuits and comfy shoes walking their tiny dogs past the shop.

„Hello, my name is Andre, Andre George,“ the man said in what Calypso thought to be a very sophisticated or at least unusual foreign voice. He couldn't place it. „I am the owner, and manager of Andre's Sydney Spa Palace.“

„Okay... how can I help you mahn?“

„I am looking for some particular herbs.“

„This place is full of herbs, what problem you want to fix, mahn?“

„I am looking to enhance relaxation. “

„I, mahn, I'm hearing you?“

„I look for Aboriginal herbs.“

„What you mean Aboriginal herbs?“ Calypso asked, with great interest.

„Aboriginal! You know Ayers rock, dot painting, and beautiful brown colored people of Australia.“

A knowing smile spread across Calypso's face. „Yes, I know what you're talking about. What do you want with Aboriginal herbs?“

„You know, one of my best customer, she come back from safari in Africa and she ask me for this type of herb. Some witch doctor or something, I don't know, he put it in bath for this lady, in her massage oil and she say it make her feel twenty year younger!”

„I doan think we have African herbs here, mahn.”

„No, no! Not African herbs! How can I pay for African men to be eaten by lion and tiger when they collect the herbs, put them on ship and send them to Andre's Sydney Spa Palace? Too expensive! I need to find some herbs like the African ones here, in Australia. I heard that there was an Aborigine that works at your shop that might know something about herbs like this, no?”

A thought flashed through Calypso's mind. What if Run were to help me search for some Aboriginal herbs with relaxation properties? It would give him something to do and he'd be able to pay him some long overdue rent.

„Just wait, I will get him,” Calypso said before placing the telephone on the receiver on the bench and picking it up again to speak to Andre without the Jamaican accent.

„G'day bruz, this is Calypso, how can I help?”

„Like I just told your friend, I am looking for Aboriginal herb that I can put into a spa bath to help relaxation.”

„Easy, I can fix you up with that,” said Calypso calmly, not knowing anything about how his people use plants. „How much of this herb are you looking for?”

„Three pound is suitable for creating samples.”

„And what do you usually pay for three pounds?“

„Hmmm, two to three thousand dollars.“

„How much, bruz?“ Calypso asked in disbelief.

„Three pound, two or three thousand dollars worth,“ Andre replied coolly.

Calypso searched the counter top, looking anxiously for a ballpoint pen. When he found it he said as casually as possible, „You give me your number and I’ll see what I can do.

Calypso and Andre exchanged numbers and when Calypso had hung up the phone, he grabbed a broom and started sweeping the floor, abuzz with excitement about the possibility that Andre had alerted him to.

He really wanted Run to help him take up Andre’s offer but Calypso realized that Run would be resistant to the idea. It was just Run’s way. He didn’t seem enthusiastic about anything. But Calypso really did want his young cousin to be happy. After all they had been inseparable for most of their lives. Their mothers were sisters but when Run’s Mum Elsie died from diabetes, Run became an even closer part of his family, a little brother. Run had only become a burden since his girlfriend left him and he’d taken up smoking dope like babies drink milk. Sure, Calypso acknowledged that at times he used to get agitated when smoking so much weed, but Run was just too much.

Calypso knew that he’d have to raise the subject of Andre and the herbs delicately and convince Run that taking up the proposal would be something positive for him, not something that Calypso just wanted Run to do so that he could contribute to the rent and bills.

When Calypso got home from work Run was sitting in front of the television watching Wheel of Fortune. Calypso walked passed him, placed his knapsack in his room and returned with his cricket bat and tennis ball in hand.

„Do you feel like a hit, Run?“

Run looked at Calypso. „It’s doody hot out there Calypso“.

„You reckon kids in India worry about the heat when they’re playing all day long on a patch of dirt. Come on, you can bat first.“

„You’re a cricket addict,“ said Run as he got up out of the couch and stepped into his thongs.

Calypso and Run made their way down the steps of the flat to the driveway that made a good pitch. Calypso grabbed his aluminum rubbish bin for wickets and Run took his position at the crease.

Calypso slipped out of his thongs and placed them at the bowling end to serve as a crease. Then he took ten long strides to measure his bowling run-up.

The first ball that Calypso threw down was just to loosen up but it did have a bit of pace on it. Run simply stepped forwards and blocked out the ball. It bounced back to Calypso slowly and he paced back to his bowling mark. Calypso ran in a little quicker this time and the ball was blistering fast. Again, Run blocked the ball out and it bounced back into Calypso’s safe hands. Run was trying to be composed at the wicket, cool like Vivian Richards but secretly he always feared that the tennis ball that Calypso hurled at him would clip his body and leave a sting, as it sometimes did.

„Doan goa losin your wicket Run,“ Calypso said, doing his best to imitate the West Indian fast bowler Joel Garner.

When Calypso made his way back to his mark, he considered that although he’d love to get Run out as soon as possible and have a bat himself, the whole purpose of getting Run to have a hit of cricket was to get him in a good mood, so that he could discuss Andre’s proposal with him. So when Calypso sent down the next ball, it was slow, short and well outside off stump. As Calypso expected, Run’s eyes lit up, he stepped onto his back foot and cut the ball. The tennis ball raced to hit the brick wall of the flat, which signaled the collection of Run’s first two runs to his tally.

„Nice one mahn,“ Calypso commented.

Again Calypso sent down another slow ball to Run. Run stepped forward and drove the ball past Calypso. It raced down the drive way and onto the street, signaling four runs.

When Calypso made his way back to his mark with tennis ball in hand, he said, „This interesting fella from Sydney called the store today.“

„Oh yeah, what did he want?“

„He wanted to buy some bush herbs, three pounds for two or three thousand dollars!“

The expression on Run’s face showed that he was also amazed by Andre’s offer. Never in Calypso’s wildest imagination did he think that someone would pay so much for some plants you could just grab from the bush.

„Yeah mahn, two to three thousand dollars he offered,“ Calypso continued.

And what did you say to him?”

„I said I’d give him a call when I sort something out. But, the thing is Run, where am I going to get three pounds of the herb?”

„I imagine there’s plenty of people that we know that could put us onto something easy enough,“ Run announced.

Calypso had heard his Mum talk about bush medicines before, and she was always going on about how bush tucker was so healthy, especially her kangaroo tail soup. Calypso had figured his Mum would be the best place to start.

„Maybe you should ask Mum,“ Calypso replied.

„Mum? What for?”

„Maybe she knows someone in the family that can help us out.”

„Whose family?”

„Our family!”

„I don’t want anyone in our family to know that I’m trying to scrounge up three pounds of ganja!”

„Ganja!? Who said anything about Ganja?” Calypso asked.

„Isn’t that what you were talking about, some fella wanting to score three

pounds of herb.”

„Andre doesn’t want ganja. He doesn’t want that type of herb at all. Andre wants Aboriginal herbs, you know, natural plants that grow in the bush, things our old people used to make them better, cuz.”

„While my pot plant grows up in my room, it’s an Aboriginal herb, Calypso.”

„Shhh, don’t talk so loud about that stuff out here. Let’s go inside”.

Calypso scampered up the stairs to his flat. As soon as Run stepped inside he told him, „Andre called Mystic Dolphin wanting some Aboriginal herbs, he didn’t say anything about ganja at all. I thought it might be good for us to sit down with some old people and find out about this stuff.”

„You sure he don’t want ganja?”

„Yes,” responded Calypso, „he told me he wanted these herbs like one of his customers had tried in Africa. His customer said that she had these African herbs mixed into her bath and massage oils and they made her feel twenty years younger”.

„Well where in Africa did these herbs come from?” Run smirked.

„I don’t know, what does it matter?”

„Well, Ethiopia is in Africa and Ethiopia is the home of King Haile Selassie, it is the home of Rastafari. Of course the herb this woman had was ganja!”

„Andre runs a business, a proper business.”

„What’s it called?“

„Andre’s Sydney Spa Palace... see... it’s a Palace... a big business Run! No way would he be wanting ganja and why would you add ganja to bath water and massage oil anyway?“

„Well, said Run, „Surely you’ve heard about people getting stoned when harvesting big crops, Calypso, just from the ganja penetrating through the pores of their skin?“

„Yes Run, of course I know that.“

„Well, why wouldn’t the same thing happen if you mixed ganja with massage oils and bath water?“

Calypso realised that Run had a point. It was just how he envisioned the special properties of Aboriginal plants and herbs infusing water and bath oil to produce a soothing effect.

Still, Calypso didn’t want Run to get stuck on the argument so he tried reasoning from another angle.

„Run, you’ve heard Mum talk about how good bush tucker is for you hey?“

„All the time.“

„...and how plants and things were used by our old people for medicine,“ Calypso continued.

„Yeah, but that was ages ago,“ responded Run.

„But the plants are probably still there, so wouldn't it be cool if we could find out about these things, and sell them to someone like Andre.“

„It would take us ages to learn about that stuff, I don't even know any Dreamtime stories bruz.“ Run seemed ashamed when he said this. Although Calypso and Run didn't know many Dreamtime stories they knew that they were the umbilical cord connecting their people to land. The stories told them how the land and animals were created and how to look after them, the earth and people. Run threw himself onto the lounge like a schoolboy with the sulks.

„We could learn,“ Calypso appealed.

„We could“, said Run and Calypso's face lit up. Until Run added, „but I'm going to get Andre the ganja, it will take me a month at the most, and then I'll sell it to him“.

Calypso was really pissed off and he felt like throwing the tennis ball that he still had gripped in his hand at Run. Instead he said, „You know that ganja just makes you feel old and lazy.“

„You're just stressing out man because you haven't had a smoke in so long.“

„And you don't know a thing because you're always stoned, Run!“

„No, it's you that don't get anything because you're trying to be a big shot now that you've got a flash job and all.“

„Well I'll show you Run, I'm going to find these bush herb things and I'm going to sell them to Andre.“

„Go ahead man, because I“m gunna get me some ganja and give it to Andre and get me all his bunda!“

„Well you“d better get some money from somewhere to pay some rent or else you“ll be finding your black arse out on the street.“

„Just you wait and see.“

„No, you just wait and see,“ Calypso challenged.

Run didn“t seem to be troubled at all by Calypso“s challenge or his threat to kick him out onto the street. He turned his back to Calypso and walked into his room, shutting the door behind him in order to smoke up. Calypso turned on his television and fell back on his cane lounge chair, trying to let his anger pass. Although he didn“t want to admit it, he was so stressed that the thought of smoking a joint did play on his mind.

Calypso's mother, Audrey or Aunty Audrey as everyone called her, even all the white people in the neighborhood, set her long glass of chilled water on her porch side table and greeted Calypso with open arms when he arrived at her place shortly after finishing work at the store. Calypso was Aunty Audrey's only son and the youngest of her two children. She had also raised her nephew Run from when he was a small boy.

„Where's is Evelyn and the kids?“ Calypso was surprised by the quiet of the house.

„She's at the doctors dear. She thinks she might be coming down with something.“

Calypso's sister Evelyn often teased him about the special place that he held in their mother's heart but she also spoilt him. Calypso achieved even greater golden child status after he received his first paycheck and stocked every cupboard in his mother's house with food. Not just any food but all of her favorite things. Aunty Audrey couldn't believe it and neither could Evelyn who had waited on Calypso hand and foot since he was born without ever any sign of payback.

On that occasion, Calypso had brought a whole bag of Kit-Kats, a huge tin of Milo, and a can of strawberry flavored Quick for Evelyn and her kids. For the whole family he brought just about every type of fruit and vegetable, and seafood; oysters, prawns and crabs. To top it off he brought a side of lamb and had bought some credit from Fry's Butchers that was conveniently nestled between his mother's street and Henley Beach Road. His mother and sister were amazed. „This is even a bigger feed than we have at Christmas,“ Aunty Audrey said and Evelyn remarked, „True Calypso, you put Christmas lunch to shame big time.“

Since that day Calypso enjoyed arriving at his mother's place bearing gifts. While his mother had her humble cottage it had been a real struggle for her since the death of Calypso's dad, he could barely remember him. Calypso's mother's pension bought her little comfort but she always said, „at least your father left me this house.“ She seemed happy as long as she could remain living in it.

This day was no exception for Calypso's gift bearing. He presented her with a rock melon, an iced carrot cake, orange juice and a jar of Ovaltine.

„Oh, thank you dear,“ said Aunty Audrey before kissing Calypso on the cheek. „Go and grab yourself a glass.“

The postman arrived shortly after Calypso had gone inside. „G'day Aunty Audrey,“ he called over the sound of his noisy little red motorbike. Aunty Audrey slipped her feet into her white summer sandals and made her way to her front gate to collect her mail. She moved quickly so as not to keep the postman waiting and her long black hair and floral summer dress swished and floated in the breeze behind her.

„You don't have more bills for me do you? If you do you can take them back“ Aunty Audrey joked.

„I hope not, Aunty Audrey, I don't want to get on the wrong side of you!“

„Well just bring me good news and you'll be fine dear.“

The postman rode away on his little red motorbike giving a quick wave and a beep of his horn and Audrey returned to her porch deciding not to open her mail until the next morning. Whatever it was it could wait until then she thought.

Aunty Audrey returned to her drink and watching the world go by as she waited for Calypso. Aunty Audrey loved nothing more than sitting on her front porch during summer days and sipping ice-cold water with a slice of lemon from a long glass. She always made a point of saying she had first started to do it to calm her nerves when Calypso left school, because it was then that she started to find Calypso's marijuana plants among her tomatoes. He had sunk into a kind of teenage hibernation. All she ever wanted was for Calypso to be happy and she didn't like the path he was going down. She knew the capabilities of her own son, that he was smart, talented and generous. It broke her heart to see him wasting his time getting stoned and living without hope of anything better happening in his life. She also didn't want his ways to rub off on Run. Aunty Audrey thought a change might force Calypso into reaching his potential.

When Evelyn had her second child, a daughter Millie, it gave Aunty Audrey the opportunity to ask Calypso to leave home. Aunty Audrey's house was getting too crowded and noisy for him anyhow. His first nephew Vance, though he loved him, was beginning to irritate him; he stuck to him like chewing gum to a shoe, always jumping on him and wrapping his arms around his neck when he least expected. With his mother and Evelyn preoccupied with newborn Millie, Calypso didn't really blame Vance for seeking the attention. As Aunty Audrey wished, Calypso moved without hesitation, into a flat just around the corner not far from his mother's, the cheapest he could find. It wasn't long after that Run followed his lead.

Calypso returned with a glass. Aunty Audrey asked proudly, „A nice day at work dear?“

„Pretty good.“ Calypso's response was automatic because he couldn't wait to ask his mother about what had been on his mind all day. As she poured him a drink he just came out with it.

„Mum, I want to learn more about the bush medicines and things that you’ve told me about“.

„Good stuff those bush medicines,“ said Audrey, pleased that Calypso was at long last taking interest in a subject close to her heart. „Sometimes I don’t know how those old people knew all that stuff you know, how to take this and that from an animal or a plant to treat a graze or a cold and things.“

„What do you know about it Mum?“

„Not much, not any more. I was only a little girl you know when Aunty Elsie and I was brought to the city.“

„Well what can you remember, Mum?“

„Just basic things I guess.“

„Like what Mum?“

„Well you know I’m always saying that Kangaroo is the best meat on earth. Hardly no fat at all, and the biggest mobs of iron in it. Witchety grubs, they’re full of protein. Give you a protein overdose if you’re not used to eating them.“

„Yes, I know that Mum but what about plants and things?“

„Well eucalyptus oil, that’s blackfella stuff of course. Thousands of generations of blackfellas have been treating breathing problems with it. But there are other things: berries that can take away headaches, plants for stings and seeds that keep insects away. They reckon they used to heat up water and put it in rock pools with old fellas and plants and stuff to take away their arthritis.“

„Who reckons?“

„Why you suddenly so interested in this stuff anyway?“

„Well, you know, at the store people are always buying natural things to treat their problems with and I want to know about the things that our people used“.

„Is that so?“ Audrey asked coolly.

„Yeah.“

„Well, I“ve got no more to tell you right now, my memory“s not that good anymore you know. Like I said, I was only a child when I came to the city.“

„Is there anyone you know that could tell me about these things?“

„Maybe your Aunty Janet knows something. She and her mob are still living out bush there.“

„Aunty who?“ asked Calypso.

Aunty Janet, you know, your grandfather“s sister“s daughter... my cousin.“

„Nah, don“t know her.“

„When you were a little fella she used to bounce you on her knee. We used to visit her with your Dad on our way to his fishing on the west coast but we haven“t seen them in years.“

„Why not?“

„Why you reckon, Calypso? Your Dad was swept to his damn death off of those rocks fishing for salmon... and we haven't had a car since. And besides, they don't visit us, do they?“

„What you reckon about me visiting Aunty Janet and finding out about these plants and things?“

Aunty Audrey took a long sip of her water. „You could try.“

Calypso tried to pry more information out of his mother about bush remedies. He was certain she knew more, in fact he'd heard her ramble on about the subject lots of times before, he just hadn't bothered to really listen. He thought that his Mum was just distracted with wanting to put the chops on before her daughters and grandchildren got home. Aunty Audrey stood from her porch seat, grabbed the jug and poured the remaining water on a pot full of colorful snapdragons.

Calypso left his mother's place with Aunty Janet's number scribbled on a piece of paper and the hope that he might be able to present Andre with just what he wanted.

Run and his friend Robbie sat in Run's bedroom with the radio turned down low and joints between their fingers. When Run explained Andre's proposal, Robbie was bowled over, middle stump.

„No way could a brother want to buy three pounds of weed for three thousand bucks, man. That's just crazy!“ „Ard he just wants leaf... maybe some buds. Three pounds isn't even worth a grand, man!“

Run shook his head in agreement and explained, „Yeah, I know but that's what the brother told Calypso... three grand. He's probably just rich or stupid.“

„Maybe he's rich and stupid,“ said Robbie as he patted his hands on his big mop of curls. „There ain't no way we could find three pounds of weed, not even in a life time bruz.“

„Yes there is,“ Run said. „And anyway, we've got to.“

„There ain't nothing you have to do in life,“ said Robbie philosophically with reddened eyes, the ganja taking effect.

„Na man, there is. Calypso says he's gunna kick me out on the streets if I don't start paying him rent.“

„So what? Come live with me,“ offered Robbie. „Mum cooks better feeds when you're around. In fact, it's the only time she ever cooks.“ There was a hint of sadness in his voice.

„That's cool but have you always got chops in your fridge? Have you got a colour TV or a video recorder? Run asked. „No! Where we going to find another

place like this to hang out?"

„Oh man," exclaimed Robbie in agreement. „And he"s always got Milo, and heaps of milk. „That"s deadly stuff when you"ve got the munchies."

„Well we won"t have Milo or any of that stuff when Calypso kicks me out. We need the money."

„But three pounds man, where we gunna find that?" asked Robbie.

„Well you know, we got to buy some of it."

„With what? asked Robbie.

„We"ve just got to save heaps of cash, get the gear some how bruz."

„It sounds stressful bruz."

„We"ll find a way."

Robbie turned up the radio a little louder. Both the boys loved the Credence Clear Water Revival Song, „Looking Out My Back Door."

„Maybe we better make this our last spliff for a while," said Run, looking at the meager pile of weed on his bed side table."

„Oh man," sighed Robbie.

„It will be worth it when we"ve got four thousand bucks bruz."

Run sat in silence for a while as Robbie mockingly mouthed the words to

the song. Run started to get the giggles and then he said, „Maybe you could start singing on Count Down to make us some money bruz.“

„No worries cuz! Ah, but the womens would go too nuts watching me shake me murntu Run. Too much stress bruz, you know I hate it when biggest mobs of women are chasing me.“

„You“re looking a bit like Chubby Checker Robbie, I reckon any woman could catch you if they tried,“ Run teased.

Robbie looked down at his pudgy little gut and wobbled it in his hands. „That“s me love handle.“

„Well, you“re going to have to stop eating all them pies you love so much, put the money towards the stash.“

„Bulshit!“ Robbie protested.

The boys sat thinking for a while as the Eagles „Life in the Fast Lane“ played on the radio.

„We“re going to have to do all crazy type of shit to get the gear together aren“t we?“ asked Robbie.

„Anything, bruz. Can you pass me that paper and pen there and we“ll start to write a list of things to do. We better thinking of some people that might help us out too.“

„Good idea.“ Robbie, reached for the pad and pen.

Calypso was restless at work leading up to the weekend. He desperately wanted to make plans with Aunty Janet to visit her and find out about the healing properties of native plants and animals known to her. He didn't know how to approach the whole business but finally called her from work on Wednesday and was pleased to hear the voice of a wise old woman at the other end of the line.

„Is this Aunty Janet?“ he asked cautiously.

„Yes, this is Aunty Janet dear, who is this?“

„Calypso, I mean Kyle,“ Calypso answered.

„Oh, Calypso, I've been waiting for you to call me.“

„Really?“ asked Calypso in surprise.

„Yes, I knew you'd want to visit me sooner or later.“

„Really?“ he asked again.

„Of course, all the mob come home sooner or later.“

There was a brief pause between the two and then Calypso asked, „Is it okay if I come visit Aunty Janet?“

„When will you come dear?“

Calypso made plans to meet Aunty Janet on Saturday midmorning at her home just out of Port Germein, almost three hundred kilometers away from

Adelaide. Calypso hadn't even thought about how he was going to get there or how he could afford the trip but he knew he'd have to work something out.

Gary listened with interest to Calypso's conversation, as Calypso had never made a personal call at work before. Hearing that Calypso was speaking to his aunty he immediately thought that someone must have died or something. „Everything all right Calypso?“ Gary asked when Calypso got off the phone.

„Didn't know you had Aunties, Calypso, what are they like?“

„I haven't met this one before.“

„Well make sure you introduce her to me sometime if she's alright.“

„You wish,“ Calypso joked.

„Well anyway, there will be more women in this shop than you can poke a stick at by the time we start moving this stuff,“ declared Gary, standing before the shelf full of corn concentrate.“

„No one is going to buy sweet corn from us when they can just buy it from the supermarket, Gary.“

„Yes they will.“

„Why?“

„Because we're going to tell people why they should buy it, Calypso.“

„And why should they buy it again, Gary?“ Calypso asked.

„Well, remember the other day when I told you about the Aztecs and how they used corn or maize for energy?“

„Yes.“

„Well we“re going to tell people, especially married middle aged women, how it provides energy.“ Gary winked.

„Whatever you think man,“ agreed Calypso before grabbing a copy of the newspaper to read the sports pages.

„Mark my words,“ Gary warned.

Later that afternoon a nicely dressed, very stylish woman entered the store. She wore loose white pants and shirt with red beads and earrings. As Calypso sat on a small crate stocking shelves with vitamins he observed her stylish haircut, short around the back and sides but bouffant on top with streaks of blonde through it. Gary had been out of the store for most of the afternoon without explanation and now he sat as he usually did with his head stuck between the pages of the news paper. Frustrated with Gary“s lack of interest in his own business Calypso did not move, refusing to speak to the woman in order to see if Gary would respond.

Gary suddenly looked at Calypso and Calypso simply pointed his chin at the shelf before him to indicate that he was busy. With a sigh Gary got up from behind the counter and walked towards the woman who had now put on a pair of glasses in order to read the labels of powders positioned toward the back of the store.

„Is there anything I can help you with? Gary asked cheerfully.

„I'm actually looking for something that provides energy, a bit of a kick I guess," said the woman.

„Ah, we have just the thing," said Gary with a smile of the Cheshire Cat as he looked toward Calypso.

Gary grabbed his corn cob from behind the counter that was now looking old and withered and directed the woman to the shelf full of corn concentrate in the centre of the store. „You see," he said pointing his finger to all the shelves in the store, „there are many pills and powders that we have here that can provide energy but at the end of the day, nature, in its pure essence always provides the best." He held the shabby piece of corncob in front of the woman.

The woman seemed surprised and held her wedding ring between her thumb and index finger while asking, „Corn is good for energy?"

„Absolutely," Gary informed. „But it is important to eat it in its pure form, dried and then ground to a powder. You can mix it with water or food, lots of it."

„How much?"

„Perhaps a packet a day to give you a spark."

„Does it take more for men?" asked the woman.

Gary let the piece of corn droop between his thumb and index finger. „Yes, it takes a bit more for men," replied Gary, „because men naturally are bigger and we pump more blood through our veins and to our appendages." Gary was slowly

swiveling the piece of corn so that it pointed vertically to the roof.

„Do you have many customers buying it?“

„Yes, especially this one bloke, who before buying it was very fat.“

„Fat?“

„Yes, huge. He said he needed energy to exercise.“

„Did it work?“

„He"s now very thin and boasts about being able to do two hundred pushups.“

„Two hundred?“

„Yes, two hundred... without stopping.“

„I" take a dozen packets," said the woman without hesitation.

Gary winked at Calypso as he stood behind the woman when Calypso took care of the sale at the cash register.

„You know, I just work down the street, I own the hair salon," informed the woman.

„Oh yeah, what"s the name of it again?“

„Cleopatra"s Mirror and I"m Steph," said the woman holding out her hand for Gary to shake.

„Nice to meet you,” Gary said as he shook her hand with a nod of his head and a suave smile on his face. „I’m Gary and this is Calypso.” Calypso waved politely at Steph.

„If the corn works, I’ll make sure to come back again.”

„Yes, please do Steph, and tell your friends about Mystic Dolphin Health Food and Products Store.”

9

On a Saturday morning Calypso boarded a Greyhound bus at seven o’clock to travel to Aunty Janet’s place near Port Germein. He carried nothing more than a small bag that held two bananas, a bottle of water and some garbage bags, for collecting the herbs and a jumper in case it got cold. He wore a pair of sneakers, track pants and a flannelette shirt over a t-shirt and pair of shorts, thinking it would be warmer in the north.

Calypso enjoyed the journey through the outer suburbs of Adelaide, watching the car yards and industrial areas pass him by. The masses of secondhand car lots along Main North Road made him think about buying a car one day, now that he was working and with the possibility of making even more money if his work for Andre paid off.

Eventually the car yards, the suburbs and industrial areas were replaced by small market gardens as he reached the fringes of the city. The market garden greenhouses made him think of Run. He had known that a lot of the ganja sold in Adelaide had been grown by market gardeners but couldn’t remember having seen the rows of greenhouses as they stood. He had only been a small child when he last ventured out of the city and like a child, now took great

pleasure in seeing horses and sheep from the bus window.

He pondered why it had been so long since he'd traveled into the countryside. He craned his neck to look up through the bus window to the big blue sky above and felt glad that he had given up smoking ganja and could really enjoy the little pleasures of life as he turned his attention to some big fluffy meandering clouds.

Calypso noticed the changes that occurred in the landscape as the bus moved along. Paddocks speckled with salt bush, malley shrubs, the slight reddening of the earth and the emerging Flinders Ranges. At first he noticed just a few small rolling hills springing up from the earth, out the right side of the bus window, the northeast. They gradually gained in size, until he soon saw that they were giant, stretching for hundreds of kilometers like a swelling wave about to break. When he was a little boy his Mum had told him a lot about this country. Stories of fishing, deadly snakes, gentle lizards, roos in the valleys, emus on the plains, people hunting and children, including his own mother and Aunty Elsie, swimming and playing in the creeks.

Calypso grabbed his bag and looked at the notes he had scribbled down with directions to Aunty Janet's.

Take the Blanchtown Road just out of Port Germein and then take the third left. The house is at the end of the dirt track.

Calypso stepped off the bus at the Highway One and Port Germein intersection. The bus stopped only to let him off and then he was on the road by himself. He wasn't sure if the Blanchtown Road was to the north or to the south so he decided to walk into Port Germein, grab a sandwich and ask for directions.

Calypso was pleased that he'd worn so little. It wasn't a long walk to the

centre of town, only a kilometer or two but enough to raise dripping sweat in the dry heat of midmorning. A few hundred meters from the outskirts of the town he could hear a car behind him and turned to watch it approach. It was an old gold, rusty and dirty van that traveled at a very slow pace.

When the van pulled to a stop in front of him, the driver opened the passenger side door. An Aboriginal man with a rock hard protruding stomach looked Calypso up and down and asked, „Where you heading?“

„I“m looking for Auntie Janet...“ Calypso responded.

„Well, jump in and I“ll take you to her. I“ve just got to grab a few things from the shop.“

Calypso jumped in the van and he was surprised that the driver knew who he meant. What is more, he didn“t ask his name or make an effort to strike up conversation.

So Calypso asked, „What“s your name?“

„Al,“ said the old black man, his rock hard stomach rubbing against the steering wheel.

Al pulled into the Port Germein service station and jumped out of the car without saying a word to Calypso. Calypso jumped out of the vehicle a moment later and went into the store to grab a sandwich.

Al grabbed a carton of milk, and eggs, went up to the attendant and simply handed over some money. Not a word was said in the transaction. Al walked out of the store before Calypso had even asked for the sandwich.

Al had the van running when Calypso exited the store. He jumped into the van and slipped the sandwich out from the brown paper bag to take a bite.

„Shit sandwiches eh?“ asked Al.

„It’s alright,“ said Calypso as he took another bite and Al went up through the gears as they traveled to Aunty Janet’s.

„So how you know Aunty Janet?“ asked Calypso.

„She’s my niece,“ answered Al.

„No way, she’s my grandfather’s sister’s daughter,“ said Calypso.

„I know,“ said Al without any hint of sentiment.

„So that makes you my uncle,“ said Calypso.

„Yeah, I know that too,“ said Al. Then after a moments silence between the two he said, „There’s a meeting going on at Aunty Janet’s, you’ll have to wait on the porch until it’s over.“

Calypso didn’t want to ask what the meeting was about, how long it would take or anything like that. He gathered that Al wasn’t the talkative type and he was just glad that he had caught a lift to his Aunties place.

The van rolled through an old farm gate, up the drive to Aunty Janet’s house. The house was set on a large block of land, ten times bigger than any city block. Some geese crossed the dirt drive just before the van came to a halt. There were plants everywhere in the yard. Calypso didn’t know what type of plants they were but thought they must be important as they were set in rows.

Again Al jumped out of the van without saying a word and Calypso watched him walk into Aunty Janet's house.

Two old, really old, stately Aboriginal men were sitting on Aunty Janet's porch sipping tea. Calypso thought they might have even been ninety years old. He'd never seen Aboriginal men that old before. He said „hi," when he opened the picket gate to enter. They simply nodded politely. Calypso took a seat on the edge of the veranda and looked around at the many trees spread across the property.

The house had a large wooden front veranda, the floorboards unpolished and splintery. Calypso assumed the tattered and stained mattress was the bed of the few dogs he could see beyond a fence at the side of the property. Despite the carefully set out plants and nice garden with garden statues to the right of the house, the house was a fibro transportable, nothing flash about it at all. Prints from dirty hands smeared the lemon exterior and in some places there were holes, perhaps made by a ball, even a fight, thought Calypso.

After a few minutes Calypso started to wonder why no one, particularly Aunty Janet, had not come to greet him. He turned his attention to the old men. Looking at these men reminded him of looking at pictures of King Haile Selassie, wearing his regal hat and uniform. These old men looked royal like Selassie, even in old worn slippers, simple slacks, shirts and cardigans. With their white beards and walking sticks, Calypso thought they looked like they held the secret of life itself.

Calypso was relieved when someone suddenly stepped out of Aunty Janet's front door. It was a young woman, not much older than Calypso, maybe in her late twenties. The woman looked agitated, and she hurriedly lit a cigarette and turned to focus on the landscape spreading before her from the porch.

Calypso waited for the woman to take a few drags of her cigarette before saying hello. She was very beautiful like his sister Evelyn, slender with long black hair and radiant brown eyes; only her skin was darker than his and Evelyn's.

„Hello, I'm Calypso," he said.

„Calypso!" Mum told me your name was Kyle!"

„Yeah, that's my real name but everyone calls me Calypso."

„True? You don't look like a Kyle, you look like a Calypso."

„So you're Auntie Janet's daughter then?"

„Mel," she said moving over to place a kiss on Calypso's cheek. „Long time no see cuz."

„So what's going on in there?" asked Calypso nodding to the house.

„Big meeting," Mel replied, „The Aboriginal Lands Trust wants to return some land to us."

„Land?" asked Calypso.

„Yeah, Baroota, over there," Mel indicated with her chin, pointing in the direction of hills.

„What's Baroota?" asked Calypso.

„It's the old mission, where your grandfather and all the old people were born and lived. Baroota means place of good tucker you know?"

„Oh yeah, Mum told me about it.“

„Where you been anyways cuz?“

„City,“ replied Calypso. He cast a look at the old men on the porch and was again struck with the annoying realization that he knew so little about his family and his culture.

„Yeah, you look like you come from the city too,“ said Mel reaching out to touch one of Calypso’s dreads. He sensed that the old men were chuckling at him but when he turned to look at them they were only sipping tea.

„When you reckon I can see Aunty Janet?“

„When the meeting’s over,“ Mel replied. She went back into the house without saying anything more to Calypso.

Calypso sat on the porch feeling very awkward. He didn’t really want to make eye contact with the old men as he’d already tried to spark up conversation with them without any luck. They simply nodded without response when he asked them a simple question about the weather. He cast his eyes to the horizon, across the gulf and then back to the plants and trees on Aunty Janet’s property. How far would he have to search for plants with relaxant properties? Did Aunty Janet or anyone else know anything about them? Would they tell him today? Occasionally his thoughts were interrupted by the scraping of chairs across floors and the raised voices of people arguing. This made him feel even more uncomfortable to be there.

After about an hour and feeling like a hole was being burnt into the back of his head by the gaze of the old men, Mel and two men stepped out onto the

porch.

„This is your cousin, Calypso,“ Mel told them before walking back inside the house again.

Calypso got up from his seat on the edge of the porch to shake the hands of the men.

„Howdy, I“m Bruce“, said the older and larger of the men, „Gday, I“m Vic,“ said the other.

„They“re nearly finished up in there, be able to meet the mob in a minute,“ Bruce informed Calypso. He immediately turned and launched into discussion with his brother.

Calypso thought that they must be at least fifteen or twenty years older than him. Bruce was a very thick set man with a protruding gut and grey hair. He wore a collared t-shirt, jeans and a pair of brown soft leather shoes. Vic was also grey but more athletic looking and dressed more casually than Bruce in a pair of jeans, a t-shirt and sneakers. Calypso guessed Vic must have played Australian Rules football due to his physique and could see the family resemblance between himself and both of the men.

„Don“t get me wrong,“ said Bruce, „I“dbe a fool to be complaining about having our land handed back to us but the terms are worrying.“

„What“s there to worry about brother, we“re getting our land back? We can start making money from it,“ said Vic, „the biggest mobs of money.“

„You“re starting to sound like that lawyer, you don“t get it either,“ Bruce interjected. „The problem is the government will expect us to set it up like a

whitefella farm...with cattle and that... and what's the use of having our land back if we have to run it like that?"

„Well I wouldn't mind running a bit of cattle on the property... that would be all right. Make plenty of cash and we can have a good feed too.“

„But it fucks up the land and aint blackfella way,“ said Bruce almost tearing out his hair in frustration.

„But it's easy bro, we can just lease it to the farmers around the area and take a cut. If we don't start making some money and looking after it, the government and everyone will say we've failed... again,“ Said Vic. „That's just the way it is.“

„Yeah, so much for self-determination. They still determined to make us like them is what they're determined to do,“ Bruce said with a sigh.

Calypso listened intently to the conversation. He didn't exactly understand all that they were saying but understood that they didn't want the land that they were being given back to be run like a farm. Although Calypso hadn't been raised with his mob in the bush he knew that the whitefellas had taken his people off of their land to raise their sheep and cattle. He realized that it would be like adding salt to the wound if his family had to treat their land like a cattle station and couldn't work out why Vic didn't seem too fussed about the prospect.

The front door of Auntie Janet's opened and Mel walked out again, this time with several other people. There was a middle aged man in a western shirt, cowboy hat and boots, with a bushy salt and pepper moustache, sideburns and hair, a very skinny dark man not much older than Calypso who wore a truckers cap and drank beer from a long neck bottle, and an older lady in a t-shirt, long skirt and thongs. The cowboy looking man handed out cigarettes to the

others and then Mel introduced Calypso to them.

The Cowboy was Uncle Ray, the bearded teenager cousin Will, and the older lady Auntie Val-May.

Uncle Ray shook Calypso's hand firmly and said, „I've been waiting long time to see you again neph". Will simply nodded a shy hello. Aunty Val – May held her cigarette to her side and gave Calypso a hug and a kiss on the cheek and said, „I'm Aunty Janet's sister, your mother's cousin. I used to give you smacks when you were little, so don't get cheeky now."

Then an old burly woman wearing glasses walked through the front door, looked at Calypso and held her arms wide open. He walked to her and she gave him a huge hug and kiss on the cheek, then she took one of his dreads in her soft wrinkled black hands and said, „what in the buggery is this Calypso?" Calypso simply smiled at her and said, „Nice to meet you again Aunty Janet." „You too, Kyle. Now come out the back, have a feed and meet all the mob".

10

All of Calypso's family was starting to sit down at two large wooden trestle tables following some hectic preparation of food. Just about everyone seemed to have a part to play in the preparation. The children gathered firewood and piled it next to a fire pit freshly dug by Will. Once the fire was lit, Uncle Ray made his way to the fire with a few kangaroo tails and began singeing the fur off of them, readying them to be placed beneath the coals. When it was time to place the tails in the ground, Mel was ready with a damper to place beneath the earth with them. „Can I have some roo tail Uncle Ray?" one of the kids asked. „No," said Ray pretending to be angry. „How many times do you need to be told only old fellas can eat this stuff. It makes your hair turn grey you know". He took a scoll of beer and then winked at Calypso who observed what he was doing with great interest.

Uncle Ray manned a four burner BBQ that sizzled, the hot plate covered with sausages, chicken and steak that spat oil. The dogs took care of the fatty bits of meat that Uncle Ray threw to the ground and the sausage that rolled off the hotplate.

The women however prepared food inside with things boiling in pots, salads being made and bread being buttered. When people had started to fill their plates Bruce's wife Shanti placed the final dish on the table, a huge pot of curry crab. She then served some of the curry crab to Bruce's plate and then to Calypso.

„Calypso doesn't eat crabs, Shanti.“

„Why don't he eat them?“ Aunty Janet asked, „Will only caught them this morning.“

„Because he's a Rastafarian, Mum,“ Vic answered.

„A rasta what?“ asked Aunty Janet.

„A Rastafarian, a Rasta man, it's like a religion like Buddhism or Christianity. There's a fella who's like Jesus, they grow dreadlocks and they believe in certain things.“

„Well I can see they grow funny hair but what type of things they believing in then?“

„Well for starters,“ said Vic, „they don't believe in eating crustaceans, that's crabs and crayfish, or pork because they reckon these animals are scavengers.“

„Is that what you is?“ Aunty Janet asked looking directly at Calypso in disbelief „A fella that don“t eat crab or pig?“

Calypso thought momentarily about the question. He wasn“t really a Rasta. He didn“t have any friends from the Caribbean apart from the Jamaicans he met at the cricket. It was the cricket that got him interested in Caribbean things and Bob Marley“s music of course. He knew that just because he liked these things, and had dreadlocks it didn“t really make him Rastafarian.

Even though Calypso didn“t smoke gunja anymore he still thought of himself as a Rasta so he replied, „I“m just too lazy to comb my hair.“

The whole mob laughed at his remark.

„Proper black fella hey,“ Mel joked.

„Our old fellas used to have hair like that way back and I reckon it looks pretty neat,“ Aunty Janet declared.

„Ta, Aunty Janet.“

„There“s certain food they didn“t eat too – us mob still don“t eat them things.“

„But I eat crab though,“ Calypso quickly added enticed by the delicious smelling food that Shanti was dishing out to the mob.

„Thank you,“ he said when she placed some on his plate.

„Don“t thank me, thank Will, he“s the one that caught them.“

Calypso looked at Will and gave him the thumbs up. He couldn't believe the flavors of the crab dish when he finally got to taste it. It wasn't too hot and spicy and the coriander and lemon mixed together complimented the taste perfectly. He'd never thought of eating hot crabs and especially not in a curry. He knew that even without the curry, if you ate them directly after you cooked them they gave you the shits. All of the barbequed stuff and all types of salads and some sweets, trifle and lamingtons looked and tasted great too. Calypso was also enjoying meeting his family, well... some of the members of his family anyway. He realized that all of his family had gathered at his Aunt's place for business and therefore might have had their minds on things other than socializing but some of his relatives didn't seem like they would ever warm to him. Sure Mel was great, introducing him to other relatives and sparking up conversation but some of his cousin's eyes, especially Vic's looked upon him with distrust... and he couldn't work out why. It was like they thought he'd steal the ground beneath their feet if they dropped their guard...kind of like how whitefellas looked at him but a little bit different. The old men sat in their silence during lunch, continuing to make him feel awkward. He wasn't used to being around people that didn't speak. Will was quiet but Calypso could tell that he was just shy, that once they spent some time together and got to know each other they'd be yabbering on like old buddies.

Calypso didn't have a clue about the way he should approach Aunty Janet to ask about herbs and plants with relaxant properties. Maybe they were her secrets.

„So you staying here tonight, Calypso?“ asked Vic.

Calypso hadn't considered staying at Aunty Janet's overnight; he intended on catching the late afternoon bus back to Adelaide. But when Aunty Janet looked at Calypso and said, „You're more than welcome, dear,“ and Bruce told

Calypso that he could grab a ride back to Adelaide with him, Calypso smiled and said „Irie“.

„I what?“ asked Mel. „Irie,“ responded Calypso, „it means alright, like good, excellent, great.“

„Us Nukunu mob say narku for yes and wandu good.“

„Narku... wandu!“ Calypso said enthusiastically with a smile. He then wiped his mouth on the inside of the collar of his t-shirt, the after taste of his lunch burning his mouth a little.

„Good feed, hey bruz?“ Bruce asked Calypso.

„Excellent,“ Calypso replied.

„You should go to one of Shanti’s family feeds, Calypso. Indian mob know how to cook a feed that’s for sure,“ boasted Bruce.

„They do proper tandoori style and all,“ Vic added.

„Alright, who’s up for a game of cricket?“ Ray asked.

Bruce remained sitting comfortably with his legs stretched out in front of him and his hands folded across his protruding stomach. Vic moved slowly from his seat but the kids that were sitting at the other end of the table to Calypso were already scouting around the yard. Two little fellas dragged the bin to the middle of the back yard and one of the older boys was walking to the wicket with a bat. Calypso walked slowly behind Vic and Bruce to join the game.

Aunty Janet’s back yard, like her front yard was huge but it wasn’t covered

in plants or lawn for that matter. The dirt was flat and made a good wicket and the high fences made good boundaries for a cricket match. The only things you had to watch out for was some farming equipment, a rusted car body and the fire pit.

Calypso found that the batsman was his cousin Mat, Vic's son, the bowler his cousin Josh, Mel's son, and the two girls in the field were Bruce's daughters Shae and Brea. Calypso figured that Mat was about eleven and seemed too old to be Vic's son and Vic too young to be his father. However, it didn't take him long to realize that Mat had outstanding sporting ability.

Josh ran his own commentary as he bowled, pretending to be Pakistani fast bowler Imran Khan and for a young boy he wasn't doing a bad imitation, whipping them through to Mat. Occasionally one of the balls slipped through to Vic who was wicket keeping, and Calypso standing at slip could hear and see the whiz of the tennis ball. Very few balls did pass through to Vic however, as Mat mostly pummeled the balls all around the yard. If shots didn't hit the fence on the full Shae, Brea, Josh and Bruce were in hot pursuit of them. Calling himself the Master Blaster, the nickname of huge hitting West Indian batsman Vivian Richards, Mat commentated each shot made. „A beautiful drive through the covers," he called, „Unbeatable... the Master Blaster hooks another six," he boasted. After Lisa and Tracey had bowled and Mat was tallying close to fifty runs, Vic decided to bowl himself. He set Shae, Brea, Ray and Calypso deep in the field and Josh behind the wicket and proceeded to deliver high arching spin. Mat managed to place a couple of balls on the fence but before too long he mistimed a ball, it lobbed up to Bruce and he caught it with little difficulty.

Shae and Brea batted next and although not as accomplished at stroke play as Mat, they too were a challenge to get out. Calypso's sister Evelyn was good at sport and still joined in on a family game of backyard cricket but she wasn't half as good as Shae and Brea. They positioned themselves at the wicket

as well as any boy their own age and although their swing at the ball was not very stylish, they gave the ball an effective slap that shot the ball racing along the ground.

When both of the girls had been bowled by Vic's cunning spin Bruce called out, „give Calypso a bat“. Shae handed Calypso the bat when he walked in from deep in the backyard field.

„I have to warn you, I'm more of a bowler than a batter,“ Calypso told his cousins in preparation of getting bowled immediately.

„Quack, quack,“ Vic teased from the sidelines as Bruce tossed Mat the tennis ball.

Mat swaggered up to the crease as if he were going to bowl a spinner but released the ball with real gusto. The ball swung inwards, bounced and met Calypso at belly button height. Calypso played the ball down and Brea who was fielding in close caught it in one hand. Her sister Shae and all of the other kids jumped up and down in jubilation with calls of, „How'z that!“

Calypso looked to Vic and Bruce for assurance that one hand one bounce was not within the rules. „Quack, quack,“ came the call of Vic from the boundary. Bruce was buckled over in laughter.

„That can't be out can it?“ Calypso asked.

„It is if one of the kids catches you,“ Vic told him. „But don't worry, you can't get out on the first ball.“

Calypso smiled at the kids and then took his position back at the crease. This time when Matt fired the ball at Calypso he was prepared and whacked the ball to the fence on the full.

„Better watch out Mat,“ said Vic, still sitting back relaxing while watching the game, „looks like someone“s out to get you.“

After a few balls Calypso could see that his cousins were fiercely determined to take his wicket so Calypso became equally determined to make as many runs and stay at the crease as long as possible. Calypso proceeded to hit all of his cousins, including Bruce, Matt, Josh and the girls around his Aunt Janet“s back yard.

„He“s playing for sheep stations,“ Vic said when Calypso hit several fours in a row off of Shae“s bowling.

„Do you reckon we should pull out the big guns?“ Vic asked, directing the question at Bruce as he walked back into position behind the wicket.

Bruce could see that the kids were starting to tire and he was content that his food had well digested so he slowly walked in from the field to take the ball. Calypso was pretty tired himself, wiping away sweat from his brow and squinting at the sun. He was thirsty too.

Calypso watched Bruce“s first delivery with intense concentration but after the first ball had met him, he didn“t feel like there was much to it. Vic simply came off of one step to the bowing crease and let the ball approach Calypso in a gentle arc. „Big guns,“ Calypso thought, „more like big guts“. Bruce“s second delivery was similar and after Calypso struck it past Bruce he asked, „is that all you“ve got?“

„Yep, that“s all I“ve got,“ Bruce replied.

The third ball looped beautifully and Calypso could tell that it was going to drop at a very short length. Calypso felt a rush of blood and he waltzed up to the

ball to straight drive it for six over Bruce's head. Vic stood close to the wicket in his wicket keeping position in preparation to stump Calypso. Sure enough the ball dallied straight past Calypso but there was no need for Vic to stump him as Bruce's delivery landed directly on off stump.

„Hooray, about time,“ Bruce, Vic and all the kids called.

Calypso shook his head in disappointment. Shame job he thought, getting bowled that easy in front of my mob.

„Now give us a bat,“ ordered Bruce.

Calypso passed Bruce the bat and Bruce said to him, „Don't worry, you faced more of my balls than most. Better get yourself a drink cuz, looks like I tired you out.“

Calypso could think of nothing better now that he was out after having so much fun, and remembering the reason he had traveled to Aunty Janet's in the first place.

When he stepped into Aunty Janet's kitchen Calypso was pleased to see Aunty Janet having a cup of tea and playing the card game patience. Uncle Ray and the two other old men were sitting off the side of the kitchen watching a news program on television.

„Can I grab some water Aunty?“ Calypso asked.

„Sure dear, the glasses are just there,“ she said momentarily diverting her eyes from the cards laid in neat rows before her.

As Calypso poured the glass of water, Aunty Janet said, „You better

introduce yourself to your uncles over there".

Calypso hadn't the chance to be introduced to them as they ate inside when the others were having lunch and hadn't got a word out of them when he attempted earlier in the day. Calypso took a sip of his drink and walked over to where the old men were sitting. One of the old men had a thin bony old hand gripped on the top of his walking stick. He held out his hand and the old man took it to shake. As Calypso took his hand Auntie Janet told the old man without diverting her attention away from her game, „This is Kyle, he's your nephew, Audrey's son, the youngest of her three. He's Jack's grandson". With the mention of his grandfather Jack's name the old man produced a gentle smile and without fully letting go of the top of his cane lay his other hand to rest atop of Calypso's.

„That's Uncle Edward," said Auntie Janet, " and that's his brother Joseph, Uncle Joseph."

Joseph was already holding his hand out limply with all the strength he could muster to shake Calypso's hand. Calypso shook it and said, „It's an honor to meet you both. „They're your great grandfather's brothers, you know Calypso?" said Auntie Janet.

Calypso was moved meeting these old men, and being told that they were his great grandfather's brothers. He realized that they had experienced a world that very few living people could imagine. The men didn't speak but Calypso was satisfied that they had made the connection between him and their brother.

„Now what did you travel all this way to speak to me about dear?"

Calypso walked to the kitchen table and took a seat near Auntie Janet.

„Well, I have come to see you because I want to find out about some

things”.

„And if I can’t tell you?” asked Aunty Janet.

„Well that’s okay because it has been really nice meeting you and everyone.”

„You too,” said Aunty Janet, „and now that you know where I am you better come back to visit”.

„I will, Aunty.”

„Good dear. So what is it you want to know?”

Calypso didn’t want to come straight out with telling Aunty Janet about his wanting to find out about Aboriginal medicines so he told her, „I work at a health food store, Aunty Janet and at the store we sell all these things to fix people’s sickness or things that just make people feel better”.

„Mmmm, that sounds nice dear,” Aunty Janet said before placing a card on the table.

„It is. And we don’t really sell things that the chemist sells. We sell things that people wouldn’t think of trying to make you better, or as my boss Gary says, things that people have forgotten about that make you better.”

„What type of things? Aunty Janet asked.

„A lot of herbs and things, plants in their natural form mixed together with others and grounded down to be taken with water.”

„And do they work these things?“

„Well... people keep coming back for more so maybe they do.“

„So how can I help?“

„Well Mum was always telling me about how bush tucker and stuff is really good for you and then the other day this man called me up wanting some Aboriginal herbs that help people relax. Mum said that you might know more about it.“

Aunty Janet laid down her cards and looked directly at Calypso over the top of her glasses. He was sure that he had done something wrong and was worried.

„Yes, we’ve got medicine, proper good medicine but there’s medicine for mans and there’s medicine for womans, see?“ Calypso nodded his head and Aunty Janet continued. „ And you can’t just learn about these things without knowing about where you’re from. And that might take time „cause you’ve been living in the city all that time.“

Disappointed and not trying to push the issue, Calypso asked, is there anything you can tell me at all?“

Aunty Janet picked up her cards again and said, „It’s best that you speak with your uncles about these things first, the men. Maybe later I can tell you something.“

Calypso was satisfied, satisfied that he had a starting point and that while he couldn’t find out immediately about the medicines of his people, Aunty Janet had told him that knowledge of these medicines exist.

„Thanks Aunty Janet,“ he said before finishing his drink and walking outside to join the cricket game, hoping that later in the evening he would get the opportunity to speak with his cousins about bush medicines.

11

After a dinner of leftovers from lunch and the Kangaroo tail and all of the children and women had gone to bed, Calypso sat beneath the starlit sky with his cousins Will, Vic and Bruce and his Uncle Ray who belted out tunes on his guitar between the chatter. He was an old rocker Uncle Ray. He played and sung some Elvis, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones songs. Calypso found it funny that for a cowboy looking fella Uncle Ray didn't play much country apart from some Johnny Cash songs.

Will just sat listening, quietly drinking beer and looking into the embers of the fire but Vic was quite boisterous, doing a jig whenever he moved from his seat to grab a fresh beer and singing with gusto during choruses, especially when he knew a good percentage of the words. Bruce, despite his big guts, and Uncle Ray didn't drink beer. They seemed to be in their element, sitting around the fire, singing and sharing yarns, yarns about family members, neighboring farmers, accidents and peoples comical misadventures.

Calypso really enjoyed hearing his uncle play and the mob sing. It was relaxing, that and looking up to the sky. He'd never seen the stars so bright, speckled with millions of stars, some large and many spread like a sheet of powder; the Milky Way.

During a rare moment of silence Bruce asked, „So Calypso, what made you come to visit us after all these years?“

„Why do you reckon?“ Vic said with an animosity that Calypso didn’t understand.

Uncle Ray lent his guitar next to his seat and said, „Let the fella speak.“ Vic looked into the fire, himself smoldering.

Calypso explained how he didn’t know much about his family. He then went on to talk about his work with Gary at the health food store and told them, „I want to find out about our medicines so that we might be able to put them in lotions and oils, that you can add to a bath to help you relax. We could sell these things.“

Vic suddenly jumped up from his seat. „Sell these things!“ Whitefellas are selling our things all the time. Problem is, they don’t pay us for these things.“

„But what if we sold them for ourselves?“ said Calypso.

„If a whitefella knew we had something to sell, he’d steal it from us,“ Vic responded.

Sensing the agitation among the men Calypso didn’t think it was worth pushing the issue further, not now anyway. Uncle Ray picked up his guitar again and began to strum. Just before he was about to break into song he suddenly stopped and said to Calypso, „Neph, you know you’re really putting me in a hard position here“.

„What do you mean, Uncle Ray?“

„Well it’s an uncle’s business to teach his nephew things. It’s real shame job having a nephew not having any nindee.“

„Any what?“

„Knowledge,“ Bruce interjected, „Nindee,“ he said pointing at his forehead.

„You can’t tell him nothing Uncle Ray. We don’t even know the bloke. He’s only stepping foot on munda now after all these years. Last time he was here he was just a baby, still crawling,“ Vic protested.

„But he still comes from this munda, he still Nukunu. Even though he’s been away for a long time, he might live to be a hundred and live to learn more than all of us.“

„No disrespect brother“, Vic said looking directly at Calypso, „but I don’t reckon you could even live a week away from the city.“

Before Calypso could respond Vic said, „Anyway, I’m going to bed... all this talk of white men stealing things has made me tired“.

Both Vic and Bruce made their way into the house and Calypso just sat staring into the flames of the fire, feeling angry, disappointed and embarrassed. He hadn’t realized that asking about bush medicine would be such a big deal and he couldn’t work Vic out. Earlier in the day he seemed happy to run sheep on the property, now he was accusing Calypso of stealing when what he was doing was trying to offer something that would help them all.

When Vic and Bruce were out of earshot, Uncle Ray turned to Calypso and said, „Kyle, don’t worry about those boys. They just don’t know you yet that’s all. Spend a bit of time around here, come when you can and I’ll teach you a bit here and there about this country and so will others, even your cousins there“.

„Look, I just want to know where I’m from Uncle,“ said Calypso looking at

Will who had dozed off still holding his bottle of beer.

„I know that. As soon as we knew you were coming that’s all your Aunty Janet and I have been talking about... how do we bring you back to this place.“

„But I’m here.“

„You’re here but you don’t really know what being here means yet.“

„I don’t understand.“

„Exactly. See that ring around the moon there,“ he asked, leaning his guitar on the chair beside him, „what does that mean?“

Calypso looked at the moon dumfounded. He could see the rabbit in the moon but had no idea what the ring around it like a rainbow meant. He shrugged his shoulders.

„That moon can tell the biggest mobs of stories, right now it’s telling us that it will rain tomorrow.“

„True?“

„Yep. And what do those clouds over yonder mean?“

„What, those wispy ones?“

„Well they’re the only clouds there aren’t they? Yes, the wispy ones, what do they mean?“

„I don’t know but I know they’re not rain clouds.“

„No they“re not. The rain clouds are coming tomorrow remember, the moon told us that already. Those ones they“re telling us that the wind is pushing this way. In about twenty minutes now the breeze will pick up.“

„Handy if you“re a sailor.“

“Handy if you“re a black fella and you want to know what“s going on in your country.“

Calypso thought about what Uncle Ray was saying for a second and said, „I see what you mean.“

„Well that“s good because that“s only kindergarten stuff I was telling you then. And you“ve still got to learn the rest of the kindergarten stuff. You need to learn what“s going on above, on and below the munda,“ he said stamping his foot down on the earth. „Then you“ve got to learn how all us mob think and then, maybe, you can start to learn about medicine“.

„So when I“m an old fella I might be able to find out about bush medicine then?“ Calypso said with melancholy.

„It takes a long long time to become clever you know neph, but then I don“t really know where you“re starting from. I mean what“s your Mum told you about Nukunu things anyway?“

„She talks about this place a lot. What she used to get up to with everyone. Hunting, fishing and playing games and things. The only reason I know anything about bush medicine is because she“s always saying how good this food and that food is for you and how the old people were real smart, fixing people up with different plants and things.“

„That“s good she told you that stuff. What she say about us mob, Aunty Janet and me?“

„Not lots... but good things, just like I said, how she used to have heaps of fun with everyone and grew up happy.“

„You know what happen with your Mum and Aunty Elsie hey? Why they moved to the city?“

„Yeah, they both got sick.“

„That what your Mum told you?“

Calypso nodded his head.

„She didn“t tell you anything else?“

„Not really, just that she was sick and had to go to the city to get fixed up.“

„Your Mum and Elsie just had runny noses when they was taken away. Well a little more than that, flu maybe but they was a strong girls. Twelve or thirteen and Elsie not much older when they left. See that“s what they used to do in those days“.

„Who?“ asked Calypso confused.

„The authorities, the so called Aboriginal protectors“ answered Uncle Ray before he spat into the fire. „They told your grandmother they were taking Audrey and Elsie to get fixed up. Thing is, they never meant to bring them back. They just kept them in that home there with all the other black kids so that they couldn“t

mix with their mob. That's why your Mum's got the shits with us, because the whitefellas told her not to like her own mob. And because she reckons we abandoned her maybe. But I know that your grandmother was always trying to get Audrey and Elsie back, they just wouldn't let her."

"I don't think Mum's angry with anyone, least she hasn't said anything to me."

"Yeah, she's angry... that's why she don't come visit us no more."

"Nah"... laughed Calypso. "She'd be here tomorrow if she could but we aint got no car no more. Not since Dad died."

"True, that's why she aint been here?"

"Yep."

"Hmmm," said Uncle Ray before picking up his guitar, adjusting his cowboy hat, and then strumming the Rolling Stones *Beast of Burden*.

Calypso didn't really want to leave Aunty Janet's place as he'd really enjoyed meeting his family and wished that he could stay with them longer. He did however feel uncomfortable to be traveling home with his Cousin Bruce given Bruce and Vic's protest about his request to be told something about bush medicine. As they set off on the beginning of their journey, their family stood out the front of Aunty Janet's, waving and then rushing under the veranda as it started to rain. Even Uncle Edward and Joseph seated on the front porch slightly raised their hands to say goodbye.

As Calypso jumped into the passenger seat of Bruce's Toyota Land Cruiser he just hoped that Bruce wouldn't launch an assault on him, especially not in front of his young cousins Shae and Brea who sat next to their mother in the back.

„Dad, can you put on this tape?“ asked Brea.

„Alright, but we're keeping the volume down low right.“

„Yes Dad,“ Shae and Brea responded in unison.

The first track off of the girl's compilation of 1983 pop songs began to play, Billy Idol's, Rebel Yell.

„Do you like Billy Idol Calypso?“ asked Shae.

„Yeah mahn, but mostly I like Reggae.“

„Reggae?“ Brea asked.

„Yeah mahn, you heard „Bob Marley?“

In the rearview mirror Bruce could see Brea considering the question.

„I shot the Sheriff,“ Bruce sung in a high-pitched voice that made Calypso and Shanti laugh.

„Yeah, I know that song,“ Brea said enthusiastically.

„Everyone knows Bob Marley,“ said Shae, looking at her sister with a raised eyebrow.

„That“s why he“s got those dreadlocks,“ said Shanti to her daughters,
„Because he likes Reggae.“

„Can we feel them?“ Shae asked.

Calypso gathered a few of his dreads and pulled them behind him. The girls and even Shanti pinched them between their fingers.

„Cool,“ said Brea.

„When I finish school, I“m going to grow some,“ Shae declared.

Calypso laughed at this and considered how the twelve and fourteen year olds would look with dreads. Both of the girls were very pretty and with their Nukunu and Indian heritage, very unique looking.

„They“ll suit you mahn,“ said Calypso.

„Where do you live?“ Shae asked.

„Not far from Henley Beach.“

„Your own house?“

„No a flat, I live with my cousin Run.“

„Is he our Cousin too?“ asked Brea.

„No, he“s my father“s brother“s son. He“s Aboriginal though, his Mum is from central Australia.“

„How old are you?“

„I“mtwenty.“

„Do you have a girlfriend?“ asked Shae.

„Alright, that“s enough,“ Bruce interrupted before Calypso could answer the question. „If you“re going to ask Calypso so many questions he can do the same and you girls wouldn“t like being asked questions about your boyfriends would you?“

Shae and Brea both sat back into their seats smirking at each other.

„Gee you girls are nosey,“ Shanti said. And then there was silence.

For the remainder of the journey the girls mostly talked among themselves, sometimes telling their parents about things that had happened at school or at netball. Bruce talked with Calypso about Australian Rules Football and told him about his work with the Aboriginal health service. Calypso wasn“t really interested in Australian Rules Football, not since he was a kid. His mother thought it might be good for young Calypso to play some sport following the death of his father. So Aunty Audrey had taken Calypso to training and to the game early on chilly Saturday mornings. More often than not, Calypso sat on the bench. Not because he lacked ability or desire to play well, but because his father wasn“t available to flex some muscle and make sure he was included in the team.

It had been a very different story when he went out to play soccer the following year. It wasn“t white Australian men pulling the strings around the club as administrators and coaches but mostly Italian and Greek men, immigrants,

new Australians. They gave Calypso a fair go.

Calypso's ears really pricked up when Bruce asked, „Do you like fishing?“

„Yeah mahn, love it!“

„Where you go fishin“?“

„Mangroves around Torrens Island... mostly just down Henley Beach or Semaphore Jetty.“

„You catch much or what bruz?“

„Whiting, gar, sometimes sharks.“

„Sharks?“ Shae asked in surprise.

„Yeah but only „bout this long,“ Calypso explained stretching his arm out before him.

He turned back to Bruce to finish answering his question. „The best thing is catching a feed of crabs when they're running.“

„They're just starting to run now.“

„Yeah I know, that's what I was going to do this weekend, go crabbing. So much for a Rasta looking fella not liking a feed of crabs.“

„Well what you reckon,“ Bruce said turning back to face his girls, „should Calypso come crabbing with us next weekend or what?“

„Next weekend?“

„Yeah, in the estuaries there near home, biggest mobs of „em. So what you reckon... you want to come or what?“

„Yeah, course man...of course,“ Calypso said with a smile spreading across his face.

When they neared Calypso’s suburb Bruce asked, „Does Aunty Audrey live nearby?“

„Yeah mahn,“ Calypso responded. „You know my Mum?“ he asked with surprise.

„I remember her from when I was a little kid, and your sisters too. It’s a pity we haven’t seen them in so long.“

In case Bruce was under the impression that his Mum hadn’t visited his mother due to some bad blood he told him, „Mum would visit your Mum tomorrow if she had a car but she hasn’t had a car since Dad died.“

„Well why don’t she come back home with us next week cuz?“

„True, you’d take her too?“

„Course bruz.“

„But there’s not enough room,“ said Calypso turning to look at the rear seat full with Shanti, Shae and Brea.

„No, no that’s okay, I’ll stay home. I like cooking but not the fishing,“ said

Shanti.

„Deadly, I’ll ask her and let you know. What’s your phone number?“

Shanti reached for a scrap of paper from her handbag, wrote down their number and passed it to Calypso just as they arrived at his cream-colored block of flats. After saying his thanks and goodbyes to Bruce, Shanti and his young cousins, he couldn’t wait to get into his flat and call his Mum to tell her about the invitation.

12

Later in the week following Calypso’s visit to Auntie Janet and his family, Calypso went home after work and found Run, Robbie and their friends Thongs and Patty sitting around his kitchen table with a pile of cash in front of them. Run had gained his name by running away from all types of sticky situations including running from bullying school kids poking fun and later in life running with marijuana plants that he’d jumped someone’s fence to steal. When Run was in his early teens he was an exceptionally good footballer. One day when Run was not playing football to his usual standard, his coach said to him at half time, spitting through his teeth, „Run, what do you think you’re doing, playing netball or what son?“ What’s wrong boy, were you out on the piss last night or what?“

Run hadn’t been drinking the night before the game, not because he was only fourteen but simply because he hadn’t been. So he just answered, „No.“

„Well son,“ said the coach knowing Run’s independent ways, „ I know whatever I tell you to do won’t help, but we’ve got a half left of play and we’re losing by a few goals. Whatever gets you going mate, think of it now because we really need to win this game“.

At three quarter time Run had added another two goals off his own boot to his team's total and he had assisted another two goals. His team was now three goals in the lead at three quarter time. In the three quarter time huddle his coach quickly sought him out.

„What was it that got you going, Run?“

„Stealing car radios,“ was Run's sullen but honest response.

His coach didn't want to ask any more questions.

Thongs or Thongsy gained his nickname because he only ever wore thongs. Once Thongs went to a wedding and wore a shirt, tie and jacket but at the end of the crease of his pants, there still remained his beloved thongs. Thongs was also one of the only people Run and Robbie's age that owned a car. Thongs' car wasn't flash, just an old Ford Falcon, a yellow one with spots of rust patched up with grey bog. His father, who worked in the Railways, had given him the car when he bought a new one with his retirement money. Despite its rough exterior, Thongs kept the car running smoothly. Thongs wasn't only envied for his car but for his girlfriend Patty. Patty was very beautiful, slender with gorgeous brown skin, long black hair and big inviting brown eyes. Today, she wore tight blue jeans, white slip on shoes and a bright pink sloppy joe with her hair teased out.

As soon as Calypso saw the group together and pile of cash he knew that they'd been up to mischief. „What've you mob been up to?“

„We've been beating you to the prize,“ Run replied full of cheek.

„What prize?“ asked Calypso.

„You know, the money from Andre for supplying the gear. We've being

getting on to it."

„Well, I've got plenty of time to do that Run, I spoke to him early in the week and he said I can have until Christmas to get the *bush medicine* to him."

„So we've got until Christmas too hey? asked Run.

„Well get all the weed together by then no worries bruz," added Robbie.

„G'day Calypso. Hi Calypso," said Thongs and Patty, seeing that he was just about to lose his cool.

„All right, what did you do? Rob a bank, the takeaway shop, people's homes?"

„We wouldn't rob the Chinese takeaway shop," said Robbie. „That woman there always gives us a free spring roll whenever we get a large special fried rice."

„We stole booze from the Brighton footy club and sold it. We wouldn't steal from honest people, only crooks."

„Why are the footy club crooks?"

„They got no blackfellas playing for them," said Run.

„They must be racists if they haven't got any blackfellas playing for them," said Patty. „Everyone knows blackfellas are the best players." Thongs rubbed Patty's leg in approval of her comment.

„We went there last night and stole all their booze," Run bragged.

„Used my wheels as the getaway,” Thongs explained.

„It was a real rush,” Patty said excitedly, the adrenalin again beginning to stir with the thought of the crime.”

„You fellas are pure criminals no matter who you robbed and for what reason. If any of you ever come near Mystic Dolphin I’ll flog you all with a stick... you understand?”

„Calypso, we’re doing this the smart way you know,” said Run trying to ease Calypso’s anger. We’re not ripping off plants from dope growers.”

„Yeah, they’ve all got them big bloody pig dogs,” warned Thongs as Patty popped a strip of PK chewing gum into her mouth.

„No banks, places with security cameras, cars or anything belonging to people we don’t know,” Run declared.

„So who are you going to rob?” asked Calypso bemused by the few options Run had left himself.

There was silence as the gang all looked each other in the eye with cunning.

„We’re just going to take a little from here and there,” said Run.

„From where?” Calypso demanded.

„Golf Clubs, bowling clubs and maybe some cricket clubs.”

„But why them?“

„Well how many blackfellas you know that play golf?“ asked Robbie.

„And those bowling and cricket fellas, even dress in all white,“ added Patty, „and they might even wear white hoods like the Ku Klux Klan too when no one’s looking.“

Calypso shook his head at the suggestion. He was well aware of the suspicion toward white people by Aboriginal people, but thought Patty’s thinking was too far stretched.

„We’ll just take a bit of their booze, maybe some boxes of cigarettes and then sell it to the old drinkers at the park, like we did today,“ said Run.

„You did what?“ said Calypso exasperated as he imagined Run and Robbie approaching old Aboriginal people drinking in the parks with bottles of booze and packets of cigarettes. Imagining the pack of drinkers greeting the two boys with cries of „Eh nephew, brother, cuz,“ and then their eyes lighting up as they saw the goodies they were bearing. „That’s no good giving our old mob booze, encouraging them, they’ve got it hard enough as it is“ Calypso scolded.

„We’re just helping them out. We just told them to give us what they could and some of them gave us a good price. They’re going to keep charging up anyway and better they drink the top shelf stuff than that cheep wine shit that will rot their guts.“

„We sold a bottle of Jim Beam to one bloke for three dollars, he was real happy,“ said Thongsy, very proud of himself.

Calypso sighed and tried to take stock of the situation. He didn’t like

seeing groups of his people killing themselves slowly with the drink. But he knew that some of them drank because they were depressed, didn't think there were options and saddest of all because it was cheaper than food and shelter and kept them warm and their stomachs full. „Look,“ said Calypso, „I say it one last time and then it's up to you. Andre wants proper bush medicine not weed. You can all come out bush with me and help me get it if you want. I'll split the cash. Give you the lion's share if it stops you from getting into trouble. I don't like what you're doing.“

Without giving Calypso's plea any real consideration Run replied, „Thanks but no thanks. I'll do my thing and you do yours.“

„All right then, said Calypso reaching to the middle of the table and grabbing some cash, which Run unsuccessfully tried to swipe back from him, „I'll be having this to pay some bills, and a bit of whatever else you get.“

„That's not fair,“ Run protested as Robbie, Thongs and Patty looked on dumbfounded.

„You'll see what not fair is when I kick your black arse out on the street,“ Calypso warned, stepping out of his flat to clear his mind with a long walk.

The next morning at „Mystic Dolphin Health Food and Products Store,“ Calypso observed that Gary was uncharacteristically sprightly. At least one of them was in a good mood, he thought, still riled from his argument with Run. Gary had opened up the shop doors, placed the pot plants out front and swept the footpath before his arrival. When Calypso entered the store Gary was beginning one of Calypso's duties, gathering boxes of items from the storeroom to stock the shelf.

„Good morning, did you have a good night mate?“ Gary said cheerily.

„Yeah thanks Gary,“ Calypso responded unconvincingly, taking a box from Gary and setting it down.

„What’s got you in such a good mood?“ Calypso asked.

„A win on the dish lickers.“ Calypso looked at Gary absent-mindedly. „You know, the dogs, the greyhounds,“ Gary added, realizing that Calypso wasn’t familiar with the term.

„You went to the greyhound races?“

„Do every Thursday, but yesterday wasn’t just any Thursday night, I won big time.“

„Nice one!“ said Calypso.

„Damn right mate, I was on fire. I picked me first winner, Cindy Cinder, just „cause I liked the name of her. She wasn’t even a favorite. After that, I thought it would be wise to push me luck a bit.“

„You won again?“

„Did I what mate? I placed some big money on a roughy and he came home. Unbelievable! Then I placed some on a favorite, just because I was up so much and I won again.“

„So you must of won a lot then?“

„Shit loads mate, and gee the beer tasted good after that.“

Calypso laughed, „Maybe you should teach me how to bet one day?“

Gary looked at Calypso sternly with the smile completely disappearing from his face. „Nah mate, for every good day there’s plenty more bad ones.“

Calypso was glad that Gary was in the mood to take care of business that day because although the morning had proceeded at a usual pace, business in the afternoon was hectic. Shortly after lunchtime a steady stream of people began to enter the store, mostly women. They scouted around the shop gathering a whole range of things such as balms for cuts, natural insect repellent, some basic grain foods and then they sauntered over to collect packets of corn concentrate in the middle of the store. Calypso couldn’t help but laugh and shake his head at Gary when he realized what was going on. Gary simply winked back at him, as if to say, I told you so.

Calypso thought the customers were acting like teenagers buying condoms at the chemist for the first time. Buying everyday things like a toothbrush and deodorant to conceal their embarrassment. In order to test Gary’s marketing strategy he asked some of the women that brought the corn and other items, „Where did you hear about Mystic Dolphin Health foods and products?“

„Steph at Cleopatra’s Mirror,“ they responded.

„Of course,“ he said, taking note of their freshly cut and styled hair.

Gary pulled a fresh twenty dollar note from the register and said to Calypso, „Mate, can you do me a favor?“

„Yes mahn.“

„Can you go down the road to the deli... no, no, go next door to the café, Estia"s and order a take away coffee...and a little slice of cake, banana cake or something nice. Make the coffee a um.... cappuccino...yeah, a cappuccino... Take the coffee to Steph at the hairdressers, I think it"s just down past the launderette, near the library... and let her know it is compliments of me. Oh, and get yourself something too mate.“

Calypso was pleased to get out of the shop and was delighted by the thought of Gary having to deal with customers by himself.

At the café Calypso ordered a cappuccino and a slice of carrot cake with icing. Not knowing if Steph took sugar he gathered two sachets and got himself a strawberry Cornetto drumstick ice cream. He raced to „Cleopatra"s Mirror;“ he didn"t want his ice cream to melt by the time he got to open it. He pushed the door of the hairdressers open with his bum and entered slowly. Steph was taking money from a customer but as soon as she was finished she said a big „hello“.

„Hello,“ said Calypso, I"ve just come to bring you this...compliments of Gary.“

„Oh thank you so much. Oh, cappuccino... beautiful, and what"s this?... carrot cake... tell him he"s spoiling me.,“

There was a young woman cutting a girls hair in the store. Calypso couldn"t help but notice her with scissors poised in her hand. He could also tell that she had noticed him as she circled around the girl, checking the lengths of hair that she had just trimmed. Calypso was mesmerized by this young woman with the fit figure, short dark hair pulled back in a ponytail, olive skin and gem like green eyes. He was so taken by her that he found it difficult to concentrate on his conversation with Stephanie. But he did remember to ask, „So how are dem

products working?"

„Oh my dear, please tell Gary that my husband and I owe him a huge debt," she giggled.

„That"s good Steph."

„What"s your name again love?" she asked.

„Calypso," he replied clearly, hoping that the girl would catch it too.

Not to waste the opportunity, Calypso handed the strawberry ice cream to Steph and said, „Oh, I almost forgot, this is for the young woman," he said nodding in the direction of the beautiful apprentice.

„Marie," Steph said, „this is Calypso, he brought you an ice cream."

Marie, with scissors in hand stood straight and gave Calypso a big smile. „Thank you," she said, before returning to her work.

Calypso had heard that Bob Marley, upon meeting women he liked, would give them a piece of fruit, usually a mango but sometimes an apple, pear or orange. He hoped that his offer of ice cream would leave a good impression on Marie.

„How"s business?" asked Steph.

„Couldn"t be better," he replied with a smile.

„Good because I"ve been telling everyone about your shop."

Calypso, taken by Marie, was starting to feel self-conscious. It suddenly struck him that a woman that styled people's hair for a living might find his natty dreads disgusting. He knew many people did but he had grown accustomed to their comments. He said goodbye to Steph and turned on his heel quickly to leave the shop.

„I just don't get it," Calypso declared to Gary when he entered the store. „How does an educated woman, a business woman like Steph get sucked in so easily by a conman like you?"

„She wasn't sucked in mate, psychological processes just worked as they should."

„What you mean mahn?" laughed Calypso.

„Well corn does provide energy but it's not necessarily going to improve sexual function over night. But what probably happened is that she told her old man to drink the stuff, telling him that it was good for his heart or something. He drank it because you don't want to get on the wrong side of your wife, right?"

„Happy wife, happy life," Calypso responded.

„So he drank the stuff and probably felt like it was making him feel fit. Steph probably cooked her husband a nice dinner, perhaps shared a bottle of wine, put on something sexy and then nature took its course mate."

„Ah huh," said Calypso laughing again.

„The funny thing is that her old man probably wanted sex as much as she

did.”

„So why did Steph need the corn then?” asked Calypso.

„Because she might not have been putting out the right signs. The signs need to be strong for a man to read and if he thinks he is going to be knocked back, why bother. It all comes down to communication really and us blokes can be pretty lazy and stupid when it comes to that.”

„Well anyway, she’s telling everyone about this place,” said Calypso handing Gary his change. „It going to be a busy week, mahn.”

Calypso decided to walk to the library before walking home that night, so that he could pass Cleopatra’s in order to catch a glimpse of Marie. She’d been on his mind all day and he liked the butterflies in his belly that thinking of her caused. He wasn’t one to get gushy over a girl so the feeling was very unusual to him.

Sure enough when Calypso passed the shop Marie looked up from her sweeping, smiled and gave a little wave to Calypso. Calypso tried to act cool and smiled and waved back but secretly he felt as if he were going to trip over his own feet.

As he walked in high spirits the Bob Marely song *Wait in Vain* drifted through his mind

From the very first time I place my eyes on you girl, my heart says follow through

But I know now that I’m way down on your line, but the waiting feelings fine.....

There were several reasons why Calypso had never taken any previous relationship with a girl seriously, the main one being that he never had any money. He knew that he didn't have any problems getting a girl although he had no money but if he loved a girl and wanted to stay with her it meant that they'd eventually move in together, have children at some time, perhaps get married and his wife would want certain things such as a house, a car, and money to take care of things. He'd been there before. After rolling with a girl for some time she'd always want to move in with him, want him to find work and buy a car and things. Without money he feared that type of commitment.

But now he could see a future, a way to secure things that would provide comfort. Calypso realized that as long as Gary stayed in business he would have a job, and if he decided to find work somewhere else he now could with the experience gained.

He desperately wanted to ask Marie on a date not only because he was very smitten with her but also because his circumstances had changed, he was moving closer to the point of being able to provide the things a girl would want. He hadn't smoked ganja in over a year and his savings account was even starting to build up.

But, he was going back to Port Germein that weekend so there was no way he could ask Marie out on a date. Not yet. Perhaps he'd just drop Steph some more coffee and Marie ice cream during the next week, maybe even take Marie a mango and in the meantime try to muster the courage to ask her out on a proper date, something nice like dinner at a fancy restaurant or a movie.

Calypso leapt out of his bamboo-patterned sofa when he heard Bruce's Toyota pull up in his driveway. He picked up the fishing rod and crab net that were leaning against the wall and slung his knapsack and sleeping bag over his shoulder before stepping out the door, bursting with excitement about the trip.

„How you going cuz?“ Bruce greeted him.

„Yeah good, looking forward to catching a feed.“

Bruce took Calypso's bag and threw it in the back of the vehicle then looked at the crab net and said, „You won't be needing this mate.“ Calypso quickly ran back up the stairs and left it by his door for Run to take care of.

„Hello, Calypso,“ said Shae and Brea in unison.“

„Good week at school?“ Calypso asked.

„It was okay,“ said Brea while Shae just rolled her eyes.

„Alright,“ said Bruce, „Now to your Mum's house, you'll have to direct me there.“

Bruce whistled as he drove and Calypso was pleased to see that he was obviously in a good mood. He had loosened his tie and the top buttons of his shirt were undone.

„Good week at work?“ Calypso asked.

„Not too bad,“ Bruce answered, „but working in Aboriginal health, it's a hard

gig brother, seeing your own mob sick you know, seeing people feeling sorry for them self."

„With good reason I guess?" asked Calypso.

„True. Us blackfellas all got good reason to feel sorry for ourselves, drink and take drugs and all that with all the horrible things that have happened to us mob. But if you don't try to make things better for yourself, you're letting the fellas that did all the bad shit still get at you. Worse of all is you're letting yourself down and not giving the young mob any direction."

„Too true cuz, that's a good way of seeing it."

Calypso knew exactly what Bruce was talking about. It reminded him of how he felt before he got work. Like he was stuck and things would never get better.

„Just at the end of this street here, take a left and then the first right," Calypso directed.

„Have we met your Mum before Calypso?" asked Brea.

Calypso looked at Bruce and Bruce said, „Don't think so. I was only a young fella last time I saw Aunty Audrey. She looks a bit like Nanna though."

At his mother's, Calypso opened the car door and told Bruce that he'd just be a tick. He then hurdled the front gate and shot in through the screen door. He was surprised to find his Mum sitting at her kitchen table in her slippers and dressing gown doing a crossword.

„Mum.... why aren't you ready?"

„I can't go Calypso," she said sadly.

„Why not Mum, Bruce is waiting for us."

There was silence as his Mum looked at the crossword, reading glasses balanced on the tip of her nose and her pen point resting lightly on the page.

„Mum, what's wrong?"

„I can't go Calypso."

„Why Mum?"

„Because it's been too long since I've seen that mob. They'll be wild with me."

„Mum, Aunty Janet called me only yesterday to check that you're coming. Her and Uncle Ray are real excited."

„True?"

„True as God Mum. So you can't sit here all weekend. Things will be good when you see them I promise."

„But I don't know Calypso."

„Come on Mum. How do you reckon it was for me just rocking up on their doorstep? You know you were always telling me that I should find out about my mob, culture and things. Well the only way you can do that is by being with your mob iny?"

„Well, you can go.“

„Yeah Mum but we want you to come, all of us do.“

Audrey sighed, laid down her pen and placed her reading glasses in their case.

„Alright then, if it makes you happy,“ she said, „I’ll just chuck on a little something.“

„Well, be quick then. You got anything packed?“

„There’s a bag in my bedroom there. Can you grab it?“

Calypso hurried into his Mum’s room. „Jingies Mum,“ he said when he saw an old leather case with a strap buckling the mighty contents within. „We’re only going for the weekend.“

„Never you mind Calypso, there’s things in there to show Aunty Janet. And be careful with that thing.“

„Sure will.“ Calypso was thinking that if the case dropped on his feet it would break them.

When Calypso stepped through his mother’s lounge room he noticed that all of her photos were missing. Then he realized they were in the suitcase, probably along with all of her photo albums. He laughed to himself as he struggled with the heavy bulk out to the car.

Bruce took the suitcase from Calypso to lift it into the back of the vehicle.

„Bloody hell,“ he said, „what“s in here?“

„Photos,“ said Calypso shaking his head.

„Guess Aunty Audrey and them old fellas got a lot of catching up to do?“

When Calypso“s Mum stepped out of the house she was wearing her good dress and shoes and stockings. Calypso couldn“t remember the last time he had seen her dressed up like that. It made him realize what this reunion meant for her.

She had a huge smile on her face when she saw Bruce and walked towards him with open arms. She hugged him and said, „Oh bubs, you“re a real big man now. Last time I saw you were just a young fella. You remember?“

„Course Aunty,“ he said, his face beaming. „Been long time, but really good to see you Aunty.“ He moved around to open the door, but when he tried to help her in she said, „Never mind, I“m a fit old bugger me, I could still outrun this car you know?“

Bruce laughed as he closed the passenger door, as did Shae and Brea. Audrey held out her hand to them as she introduced herself. „Which one of you is Shae and which one“s Brea?“ she asked.

The trip to Aunty Janet“s seemed to take no time at all with all of the chatter going on in the car. Audrey asked Bruce all types of questions about his Mum and Uncle Ray, how their health was, whether his mum still made quandong pies, if Uncle Ray still played the guitar. She also asked him lots of things about the land and the properties, if certain buildings were still there, if types of plants were in bloom and where they went fishing. Calypso could see that his mother had a lot of knowledge about the place that she hadn“t let on.

It was just starting to go dark when they arrived at Aunty Janet's. The porch light was on and mosquitoes swarmed around it. When the Toyota pulled up Aunty Janet and Uncle Ray come out from the house. Aunty Janet squealed with joy as soon as she set eyes on Audrey. They hugged each other and then Uncle Ray also gave Audrey a big warm hug. It was all, „Oh cuz, good to see you,“ „welcome home“ tears of joy and laughter.

Calypso grabbed his mother's heavy load and plunked it near the front door. His mother and Uncle Ray were already at the table jabbering away and Aunty Janet was making tea.

„Would you fellas like some tea?“ she asked.

„No Mum,“ said Bruce, „We“ve got to set up camp, before it gets too dark. Plus, you fellas got a lot to catch up on hey?“

„No worries, well bring us back a feed when you come back then,“ she ordered.

„Hey, I“ll see you later then Mum?“ Calypso called out.

„Yeah no worries.“

Uncle Ray realizing that he hadn't even greeted Calypso held out his hand and Calypso walked over to shake it. „Howdy neph.“

„Howdy Uncle.“

„He“s solid fella this one,“ Uncle Ray said looking at Calypso's Mum.

„We“ll catch up tomorrow hey mate?“

„No worries,“ said Calypso before dashing after Bruce and the girls.

Calypso was really happy and relieved that his Mum seemed to be having a good time with Aunty Janet and Uncle Ray. It set his mind at ease and paved the way for carefree time with his cousins.

Half an hour later Bruce pulled up the tojo, the four-wheel drive Toyota on sandy high ground overlooking St Vincent“s Gulf and a nearby estuary. The girls jumped out and began unpacking things from the rear of the car. Soon an esky, some buckets, a bag, three swags and a box full of food and cooking utensils were neatly gathered on the earth. Then they started to grab things from their knapsacks. Brea pulled on a faded maroon sloppy Joe and Shae a flannelette shirt. Then they kicked off their school shoes and leant against the car to pull on well-worn desert boots. Bruce was also getting changed, out of his work shirt, slacks and shoes and into some old jeans, t-shirt and jacket. Calypso found the girls“ transformation quite remarkable. They“d gone from cute kids wearing girly skirts and tops and their neat school uniforms to looking like rough little bush kids.

When the girls had finished getting their things from the back of the car he gathered his bag, fishing rod and sleeping bag as the girls headed to set up camp. He looked up at the stars in awe after he shut the door of the car. Again they were amazing with the Milky Way very prominent in the still night sky. By the time he“d moved to their little camp the girls had rolled out three swags and two flashlights were flashing about in the bush where they were gathering firewood. Calypso could see that his young cousins were seasoned campers.

Bruce was digging a fire pit with a small fold-up military spade.

„We“ll just get this fire going a bit before we do anything cuz. See if the girls want to eat first or fish or whatever.“

„No worries, I“m easy,“ replied Calypso.

As Calypso threw down his sleeping bag on a soft bit of ground Bruce began scrunching newspaper into balls and throwing it in the fire pit. He also shuffled around the area picking up kindling. Soon the girls were back with some bigger pieces of wood and sticks. Seconds later the fire ignited, throwing light and shadows across the area that would be their place for the night.

„Calypso, you“re not just sleeping in that are you?“ asked Shae pointing to Calypso“s old cotton mustard colored sleeping bag with a leopard print inner.

„Yeah, why not, it“s not going to rain or nothing?“

„But even in summer you wake up and the outside of your swag is a bit damp,“ said Brea.

Calypso hadn“t really considered the weather conditions and sleeping, he just assumed that all would be fine.

„Yeah mate you always get a bit of dew around here, even when it“s forty degrees“ said Bruce. It“s even worse in the desert. That“s why the old fellas used to wear their animal cloaks with the fur on the inside you know. So the moisture could run off of them, especially with the animal oils covering them.“

„Guess it makes „em water proof hey?“ said Calypso.

„Yeah, that“s right“, said Bruce.

„You know what a shelter tree is Calypso?“ asked Brea.

Calypso shook his head.

„Well you tell him Brea,“ advised Bruce. And while you“re at it, can you grab Calypso a tarp out of the back of the car bubs, to wrap around that thing there?“ He pointed to Calypso“s sleeping bag with his chin.

„Well up in the hills there Calypso,“ continued Brea, looking to the east, „There“s the biggest mobs of shelter trees. They“re like big old gum trees that the old fellas cut out, hey Dad?“

„Cut out and burnt out,“ said Shae returning with tarp in hand which she spread on the ground and tucked Calypso“s sleeping bag inside it.

„So when you stand in them, there“s heaps of space, you throw skins down for blankets and you don“t get wet, like a little house, or a teepee,“ Brea explained enthusiastically.

„That“s real solid,“ said Calypso.

„You know what“s even more solid?“ asked Bruce.

„What?“ asked Calypso and Brea.

„The inside of a tree is round.“

„What“s so special about that?“ asked Brea.

„What’s so special about it?“ repeated Bruce.

„Well, like you’re not going to tell us any way Dad,“ said Shae.

Bruce gave Shae a pretend solemn look. „The earth is round and the moon and the stars are round. Our time is round too. Past, present and future are a circle, all of these things are part of each other.“

„That’s deadly,“ said Calypso as he continued to ponder this thought before Shae asked, „Do you know what else is round Brea?“

„What?“ asked Brea.

„The hole you come out of!“ said Shae bursting into laughter.

Calypso, Bruce and Brea couldn’t help but laugh. But so as not to encourage Shae’s rudeness Bruce quickly stood up from his crouched position by the fire and asked, „All right, what you mob want to do? Fish or have a feed?“

„I’m hungry Dad,“ moaned Brea.

„Yeah me too, and look, the moon’s still rising,“ said Shae looking to the night sky.

Even Calypso knew that a full moon meant there was more chance of the fish biting, especially the garfish.

„Alright, well let’s start cooking then.“

Bruce and his kids were like a well-oiled machine. Brea buttered bread, while Shae opened the top of two baked bean cans with a can opener. Bruce

placed the bread inside of waffle irons and then cracked an egg on the bread or a few dabs of baked beans before closing the irons and putting them in the heat of the fire. Calypso could hear and smell things starting to sizzle when Bruce looked up at Calypso and said, „You see, that’s the amazing thing about our old mob. They didn’t need to cut things down or have electricity, they just learnt to live with the land in a way that made them comfortable.”

„Like the shelter trees,” said Calypso.

„Yeah, but that was kind of more short-term accommodation if you got caught traveling type of thing. In the summer they’d live down here by the coast, getting cool by the sea breeze and swimming. And you know how rich fellas have that central heating in their houses?”

„Yeah, not that I’ve been in one.”

„Well our old fellas had that in their winter homes too, their fires up in the caves there.”

Calypso sat on the ground next to his younger cousins considering what Bruce was telling him. He realized that as Uncle Ray had told him last week, he was again only learning kindergarten stuff.

„Yeah, they were smart fellas our old fellas,” said Bruce, looking contemplatively into the flames of the fire and sipping water from a beaten tin mug.

It wasn’t long after dinner that they were all sitting at the mouth of the

estuary, Bruce and the girls fishing with hand lines and Calypso with his fishing rod. The full moon shone high in the sky and the water was still pushing gently to the shore, the tide close to kissing the desert saltbush that clung to the coast. There was a feeling of electricity in the air with the olive leaves of the mangroves shining silver and the occasional splash of a jumping fish. They had all baited their lines with cockles and Bruce had decided to fish with a float, to go after the garfish. But it was Shae who first shrieked, „I’ve got one,“ as she pulled in her heavy line. A healthy King George Whiting was on the end.

„Beauty. That’s a big one,“ said Bruce as Shae landed it on the shore, unhooked it and swiftly threw it into a bucket of seawater.

Calypso shone torchlight into the bucket. „That’s a deadly fish. It’s huge,“ he said enthusiastically as Brea’s face beamed with delight as she again baited her hook.

„Your turn now cuz,“ said Bruce just as Calypso felt a strong nibble and then pull on his line. He put the torch down on the ground and then started to wind in his catch. It was another King George Whiting, again a big one.

They fished for only about three quarters of an hour but between them they’d caught almost a dozen whiting, half a dozen garfish and a couple of Tommy Roughs.

The girls boasted, „We’re real deadly fishers hey Dad?“

„Yeah, I know you are. But do you know how to make the fish come back?“

Calypso gave this question some consideration and then Brea said, „Course we do. You stop fishing them.“

„Or you just keep the big ones and throw the little ones back,” Shae added.

When they returned to the camp, happy with their fishing efforts they were in the mood for some snacks and a cuppa. Bruce put a billy on the fire and the girls grabbed a box of chicken crimpies and started handing them out. There was also a big block of chocolate, some biscuits and some marshmallows. Calypso pulled a large Tupperware container from his bag and asked, „Anyone want some bananas and grapes.”

„How many bananas you got?” asked Bruce.

„Four.”

„Can I use a few to make desert?”

„I don’t mind but what you gunna do with them?” Calypso asked.

„Oh it’s lovely,” said Shae.

„Just wait a little while and you’ll see,” said Bruce before grabbing the bananas and going to the back of the tojo with them.

„How do you want your tea?” Brea asked Calypso as she plonked teabags into four large tin mugs.

„No sugar and little milk,” said Calypso.

Shortly after, Calypso, Bruce and the girls were scraping melted chocolate and hot banana out of aluminum foil packages. „Mmmm this is lovely,” said Calypso.

„Told ya,” said Shae, like Brea lying in her sleeping bag eating and sipping tea.

„Yeah, it tastes good but you’ll end up looking like fat Elvis if you eat too much,” said Bruce with a laugh.

„Once in a while is alright,” said Calypso.

„Alright for you to say skinny young fella,” said Bruce, “your wallas not big like this yet is it?” he said pushing out and placing his hands on his stomach.

„And it never will be either,” Calypso joked.

„So you’re really into this health food thing „ey Calypso?”

„Not that much, I mean I just try to eat natural things, things that come pure from the earth and sea. Never really had much of a sweet tooth.”

„But what about the health food shop where you work? What’s that like?”

„It’s alright most of the time.”

„Most of the time...is your boss a prick or something?”

„Na, he’s good, sometimes he’s just a bit slack...other things on his mind, I guess.”

„He’s a whitefella hey?”

„Yeah he is.”

„Was he the fella that told you to try to get traditional medicines and things to use?“

Calypso was glad that Bruce was raising the question because he never really did get the chance to explain his predicament and thoughts the previous week. He looked at the girls in their sleeping bags and saw they were starting to nod off. It must have been a long day for them with school, the trip and fishing. He was glad because he didn't want them to see him and Bruce arguing if it came to that.

Calypso began his story by saying, „It was kind of unexpected how it happened.“

„How what happened?“

„How I started thinking about bush tucker and things. See I was just sitting at work, where my job is to sell people things that make them feel better, and then this fella called Andre in Sydney rang. He owns like a spa place.“

„What type of spa place?“

„A proper one, they call them... beauty spas, I think.“

„Alright.“

„Well anyway, he told me he wanted some Aboriginal herbs and things to put into his lotions and oils and things.“

„Yeah, but I bet you he didn't offer to pay for them though?“ Bruce took a gulp of his tea.

„Well that’s the thing, he said he’d give me two to three thousand dollars for three pounds.“

Bruce spat his tea into the fire. „He said how much?“

„Two to three thousand for three pounds. I thought he was bullshitting me at first but then I found out he’s got beauty spas in Melbourne and Brisbane too.“

„The bloke must be loaded.“

„I reckon.“

„So that’s what you wanted to ask us about last week?“

Calypso paused momentarily and then said solemnly, „Yes, but I didn’t know it would cause so much trouble.“

„Jingies,“ said Bruce. „Don’t worry about that. That was just stupid stuff. I’m sure once I speak to the others we can sort something out. You see, we were all a bit suspicious that you were rocking up just when the government is giving us some land back. We were expecting long lost relatives to come from everywhere, wanting a piece of it. But you, cuz, are kind of coming proper way.“

„What do you mean?“

„Well our mob always gives something to get something in return. Like you trade with your next-door neighbor. But with your own mob it’s like everything belongs to everyone. That’s why we’ve really got no word for thank you, because if someone does a good turn for you, you do the same for them, see?“

„I got no plans to rip anyone off.“

„Yeah, I can see that, cuz“. Bruce sounded apologetic.

„But Vic thinks I'm trying to rip you fellas off „ey?“

„Well cuz, it did look a bit suss you just rocking up when you did, just when we were getting some land back. But don't worry about it now.“

Calypso didn't think it would do him any good trying to defend himself. He knew he didn't know anything about land being given back so he just left it. It wasn't long before he and Bruce were in their swags anyway, laying flat on their backs ready to flake it. Calypso watched the millions of stars sparkling in the clear dark sky and he instantly began to feel very small. He liked the feeling, it suddenly becoming clear that he was such a small and insignificant component within the universe. He thought about the things he was learning about his culture and wondered how many years he'd have to spend with his family before he graduated from kindergarten level of knowledge. Then Bruce said, „See all these stars?“

„Yeah,“ said Calypso, „they're amazing.“

„They're the campfires of our old people, they're looking over us.“

„So that's where you go when you die?“ asked Calypso.

„Yep.“

„And what if you're bad, do you go to hell or something?“

„Not worth worrying about cuz.“ „If you're a good person you'll end up

there... if you think about being a bad person," Bruce yawned, "You'll probably end up bad."

When Calypso lay down to sleep, he looked up at the stars and thought about Rastafarianism. For so long he had tried to live how he thought Rasta man lived, not just because he loved Bob Marley's music, the West Indian cricket team and because he used to smoke ganja, but because living like a Rasta man made him feel good about himself. He saw himself as being the same as a Rasta, a poor black man whose people had been oppressed. He liked the way that Rastas, especially reggae artists spoke about the things that he felt. And for Calypso, being Rasta gave him a way to express his naturalness, to be in tune with nature and to show himself as being different from the white world... because he certainly didn't feel a part of it. He'd considered Rastafarianism the ultimate in living naturally and showing he was different but now he was beginning to see that Rastafarianism was a bit like Yura Muda, the Dreaming of his Nukunu ancestors. And he was starting to see that Yura Muda was an incredible thing, something that he had wanted to be a part of all along.

14

After Bruce had dropped Calypso and Aunty Audrey home on the Sunday night she made him stay for a cuppa and told him about all of the things she had caught up on with Aunty Janet.

The next day Calypso was feeling pretty exhausted following his weekend spent camping, fishing and exploring with Bruce and the girls. Despite being tired and terrified, he made his way to Cleopatra's on his lunch break to have his dreadlocks lopped. Although he agonized over the thought of getting his dreads cut, he decided that getting them cut was the best way to get close to Marie. He also thought getting rid of his locks would add to the fresh start that he was making of his life. Hoping to impress Marie he had dressed in a crisp short-

sleeved shirt, a pair of jeans and a polished pair of black shoes. He had even brought some new deodorant for the occasion. Calypso had heard stories of things being found in people's dreads when they had them cut, things such as spider's nests and bits of food. He hoped that no such thing had made itself home in his hair, though he imagined there would probably be lots of beach sand.

„No coffee, no cake?“ asked Steph when he entered the salon empty handed.

„Sorry,“ said Calypso, „I've come to get my hair cut“.

„You call that hair?“ she asked, giving a little snicker. „I'm only joking mate. Take a seat and Marie will be with you in a minute. I'm off to lunch.“

Calypso sat in the hairdresser's chair and tried not to fidget, as he was nervous about both his dreads and Marie. He took in the sight of his dreads, realizing that it would take him years to re-grow his treasured scruffy mane. When he first started working at Gary's his dreads reached only a little further than his shoulders. Now his dreadlocks reached the middle of his back easily and some of them were fatter than a piece of rope. The ends of them were even starting to turn blonde from years of sun and surf.

„Hello Calypso,“ said Marie, all smiles, when she stepped out from a backroom.

„Hey Marie,“ he said warmly.

„Are you after a trim?“

„No, all off,“ he said with false bravado.

„How long did it take to grow your dreads?“

„Three and a half years, maybe longer.“

„Are you sure you want them all off?“

Calypso nodded his head and then Marie took one of his dreads and held it in her left hand, her right hand moving scissor blades toward it. Just before she made the first cut, she suddenly said, „Oh shit, wait a minute.“

Marie walked over to a small television set, turned it on and turned up the volume. Calypso swiveled in his chair to see what Marie wanted to watch.

„Just checking the score.“

Calypso couldn't believe that Marie was watching the cricket, a replay of Clive Lloyd being dropped off the bowling of Geoff Lawson.

„You like the cricket?“ Calypso asked.

„Like it? I love it,“ Marie replied.

Calypso was spellbound.

„You must be disappointed that catch was dropped then?“

„No way! I was worried that Clive was nearly caught. The Windies are my team“.

Calypso couldn't believe it, a woman that loved the cricket and the West Indies and not just any woman... the beautiful Marie.

Calypso's dread lopping was put on hold as they both watched the cricket, talking about the way the test series was unfolding, some of the great stroke play by the likes of Vivian Richards and unfortunate Australian batsmen that were stung by the sizzling fast bowling of Joel Garner, Malcolm Marshall and Michael Holding.

„We better get on with it, Steph will be back soon,“ Marie explained, reluctantly turning off the television set.

Just before Marie had taken the scissors from the pouch in her apron Calypso asked, „How did you come to like cricket so much?“

„My dad started taking my brother and me to the games when we were little. To give Mum a break I guess. Cricket goes all day hey, not like footy. I liked it but sometimes got bored. But then when the one day internationals came along, I really started to love it.“

„But it's strange you being Australian and liking the West Indies isn't it?“ Calypso asked.

„Not in my family it's not.“

Marie placed her scissors in her hand, picked up one of her fattest dreads and just before she snipped it she asked, „Are you sure you want to cut them off? I really like them.“

„Really?“ asked Calypso pleased.

„Yes, I love them.“

Calypso breathed a sigh of relief. „That’s good, because in a way I didn’t really want to cut them... I just wanted to come and see you,” he confessed.

Marie was smiling and Calypso thought she looked so sweet, he just wanted to kiss her.

„I was hoping to speak with you too, but it’s hard with Steph around. She watches me like a hawk... she’s my Mum’s best friend, you know?”

„Well why don’t you just trim a bit off then, give me an excuse to stay here.”

„Okay,” said Marie, snapping the scissors between her fingers, „but only a little trim.”

Marie started to hack through the fat mats of hair, having to use quite some force. Watching even some of his dreads fall to the ground caused Calypso distress. He was relieved that he didn’t have to go the whole hog.

„Before Steph gets back, there’s something I want to ask you.”

„Yes,” said Marie, pausing momentarily from her hacking and leaning in close to Calypso.

„I was wondering if you’d like to roll with me sometime, go out somewhere?”

„Like a date?” Marie asked, allowing Calypso to squirm a little.

„Yeah, mahn, a date.”

„There’s the one-day games coming up after Christmas,” Marie said

excitedly, „We could go to the game. That would be great!“

„But what about before then, are you free tomorrow?“

„My lunch break is at twelve thirty, how about we meet then?“

„Yes, let me buy you an ice cream and you can eat it at the café next to where I work instead of me bringing it over to you.“

Calypso was ecstatic when he left Cleopatra’s. Ecstatic that things had gone well with Marie, even more excited that soon he would be spending a day at the cricket with Marie, watching the West Indies with her. And of course, he was glad that he had left the dreaded hairdressers with his dreadlocks still intact.

Calypso could see Marie grabbing her bag as he arrived at Cleopatra’s at lunchtime on the Tuesday. He was quite nervous on his walk there, even more so when he saw Marie as he thought she was looking particularly attractive. She had her hair pulled back in a pony tail and was wearing a denim dress, a baggy top that hung off her shoulders and climbed above her belly button and a pair of red high heels. She waved to Steph as she stepped out of the shop and Steph waved at Calypso with a cheeky smile on her face.

„Hey Marie, how’s it going?“ Calypso tried to act cool and relaxed, his insides in reality churning.

„Great, how about you?“ She pushed him playfully on the shoulder.

„Me, I feel like a sweepstakes winner... but I’m a little hungry.“

„Same here,“ said Marie throwing her handbag over her shoulder.

As they walked down Sea View Road toward Henley Square, Calypso was afraid to hold Marie’s hand so he simply walked as close to her as he could. A soft sea breeze blew and he could smell her perfume. As he turned slightly to look at her she turned and smiled at him. When she was cutting his hair she wasn’t wearing perfume so he felt pleased, thinking that she was wearing it for him.

„I like your shoes,“ he said.

„Thanks, I like „em too,“ she said and linked her arm through Calypso’s. He felt like Sidney Portier, suave and special, walking to lunch with Marie on his arm.

At the Greek café one of the waiters, Paul, said hello to Calypso and asked them where they wanted to sit. Then he pulled out a chair for Marie near the window facing the sea and the jetty.

„Busy day?“ they both asked each other at the same time and burst into laughter.

„You go first,“ he said.

„Yeah, you know, heading up to Christmas so a lot of people are trying to get in early for the Christmas period. How about you?“

„Flat out thanks to Steph, we’ve had quite a bit of business.“

Marie laughed, „So I hear. She’s told everyone about the stuff you guys sell... I bet you don’t need the corn cobs though?“ Marie said cheekily eyeing him.

Calypso didn't know what to say, he could feel his face flushing with embarrassment. He knew he wouldn't hesitate to jump in bed with Marie but he really wanted to get to know her first, he'd been thinking about her for so long.

He was glad when the waiter came over and placed a bottle of water on the table. „I have a menu with you guys in a minute,” he said. Paul was olive skinned with cropped black hair and had a hint of a Greek accent.

„Do you like hairdressing? I mean it's what most girls want to do isn't it?”

„Yeah, it's good but I don't want to keep working with Steph all my life. I want to learn more about make-up. Try to get work doing hair and make-up on films, video clips would be the best.”

„That would be too deadly. You'd get to meet lots of famous people.”

„I would also like to own my own business too. Employ Aboriginal girls.”

Marie's comment about working with Aboriginal girls surprised Calypso and it helped him get up the nerve up to ask Marie something that had been on his mind for a while.

„So where are your mob from Marie, Italy, Spain?”

„No,” she said shaking her head slowly with a smile.

„Are you Greek?”

„No.”

„Ahhhh Spanish?”

Marie laughed, „You said that already.“

„Well I give up then, what are you?“

Marie placed her right arm straight out in front of her with her fingers splayed. „I“mthe same as you.“

„What do you mean?“ asked Calypso.

„I“mblack, Aboriginal... well not entirely, my Mum“s family is English. Dad“s Aboriginal though.“

„True as God?“ Calypso said with real surprise.

„Yeah, Dad“s Arrente, from Central Australia.

Calypso was dumbfounded. He had no idea that Marie was Aboriginal, despite her olive skin and knowing many Aboriginal people of Olive complexion, like his niece and nephew. He thought of Marie as an Italian name so just presumed she was Italian. Finding that she was Aboriginal brought his mother“s advice to mind...*“don’t ever get caught up with an Aboriginal girl until you bring her to meet me, she might be one of our mob, your own cousin.”*

Calypso really started to get worried. He hoped he and Marie weren“t related. Although he“d grown up in the city he knew that in his culture, a relative was like your brother or sister no matter how distant the connection.

„I had no idea,“ he said.

„Most people don“t,“ Marie replied, „People ask me if I“m from all parts of

the world, Italy, Greece, Asia. When I tell them I'm Aboriginal they never believe me. You must know what it's like, I mean Steph thought you were from the West Indies, so did I when I first saw you."

„I just like Reggae music, and cricket."

„And what about pot, do you smoke it?" Marie enquired.

„Not any more. Haven't in ages."

„I thought you would, because of the dreads I guess."

„Nah, I just got sick of it... it didn't make me feel good anymore, just tired... to lazy mahn."

„I only tried it once and it sent me to sleep. I didn't like it..." She studied the menu then said, „You know, I think I'll have the chicken salad."

Calypso hadn't really looked at the menu, he was too interested in Marie, so once Marie had given her order to Paul he said, „I'll have the same thanks."

„And to drink?"

„Fanta," said Marie.

„I'll just have water."

When the waiter walked away Marie asked, „You don't think we could be related do you?"

Calypso sighed. „You know, hearing that you're Arrente makes me think

we're safe; Central Australia is a long way from us Nukunu mob. But you know how old people are, always saying you've got to check things out if you meet one of your own mob."

„Yeah I know, I've never been out with an Aboriginal boy before because Dad's always saying he has to meet him first, see if he's related... shame job you know?"

„Yeah I know what you mean, it's a real shame job hey? I've never gone out with an Aboriginal girl because of the same thing. Not that I've gone out with many girls," he added.

There was a silence as both of them sat there smiling at each other, watching each other's every move and expression. They were both in a position they'd never been in before. A position that their parents had warned them about. An attraction to another Aboriginal person. But Calypso really liked Marie and he really wanted to be with her so he asked, „How about we meet up after work later and we go for a drink at my Mum's?"

„Yeah, I'd love to meet your Mum," she said, „but only if you meet my Dad. Don't worry he's alright."

Calypso smiled as he knew he'd do anything to be with Marie.

When Calypso got back to work he called his Mum.

„There's someone I want you to meet," he told her.

„Who?"

„Her name’s Marie, she works at the hairdresser’s down the road.“

„A girl?“

„Yes Mum, a girl.“

„Another one! I don’t know why you bother Calypso. You’re always meeting nice girls and then letting them down. You shouldn’t be doing that you know.“

„But this is different Mum, plus how long it been since I had a woman?
Long time „ey?“

There was a long silence on the end of the line and then his Mum asked, „What’s her name again?“

„Marie,“ he said. „And there’s another thing...“

„You haven’t got that girl pregnant have you?“

„No Mum,“ he growled.

„Well what then?“

„She’s Aboriginal, Mum.“

„True?“ His Mum suddenly sounded interested. „What’s her surname?“

Calypso felt like an idiot because he hadn’t asked Marie.

„Don't know Mum but her father's Arrente.“

„Where does he work?“

„I don't know Mum, find out when I get there,“ he said, frustrated with her questioning.

Calypso worked like a madman all afternoon so that he could leave work right on five. In between serving customers he swept and stacked shelves, not wasting a moment.

„You're energetic today mate, eat your Wheetbix today did you?“ Gary asked.

„I just want to leave right at five today...if that's alright.“

„Yeah that's fine mate. You going fishing or something?“

Calypso grinned. „Nah, I've got a date.“

„Ah, that sounds like trouble... who is she?“

„Marie... she works with Steph.“

„What, Steph down the road?“

„Yep.“

„Well... make sure you bring her by for a visit.“

„And what about you Gary, you got a girlfriend or what?“

„Ha, a girlfriend. I have one for about a night or so here and there but that’s about it. Too much of a free spirit me... and too many bad habits that I like too much,“ Gary said as he ashed his cigarette.

„And you’re too old anyway hey granddad?“ Calypso joked.

Calypso stood in front of the bookshop next door to Cleopatra’s, waiting for Marie. He paced up and down a few times but then decided against it, not wanting to raise a sweat. He didn’t want to be all sticky and smelly for Marie. He leaned against the wall for a few minutes trying to keep in the shade. A group of schoolgirls from his old high school walked past drinking milkshakes. He wished he had some water, as his mouth was getting dry from nervousness and the heat. He was dreading the hundred and one questions that his Mum would ask. And if his sister was there, she’d also interrogate and annoy him. He was also feeling a little embarrassed about having to take Marie to his Mum’s on the bus... it was too hot to walk. Most kids his age had bought a car, even if it was just an old bomb and he didn’t know how to explain his lack of a car.

When Marie finally exited Cleopatra’s she apologized to Calypso for being late.

„Sorry Calypso, there’s still a client in there... Steph’s finishing things up now.“

„No worries,“ said Calypso. I only got here a second ago.“

When he began to walk in the direction of the bus stop. Marie simply stood

where she was and called after him, „Where you going?“

„To the bus stop.“

„My car is parked just over here,“ she said, pointing a little way down the curve.

„Oh, no problem,“ said Calypso feeling very embarrassed.

Marie stood at the door of her car, a little red Toyota Corolla, searching through her denim handbag. Peak hour traffic whizzed by her so she pressed her frame against the door of her car. After a moment of hectic searching she produced her keys, jumped in and then reached across to unlock the door for Calypso. It was very hot in the car so they both wound down the windows before Marie started up the car and drove off.

„I can walk to work easy so having a car seems a waste, I“ll probably get one soon though,“ Calypso tried to explain coolly.

„Hold off as long as you can, they drain your money and make you lazy.“

„I guess so, and I only really travel to and from work and sometimes down to the beach, and that“s just a quick ride when I“m in a hurry.“

„See that“s why you“re so fit and strong. Maybe you can dinky me sometime,“ said Marie as they approached an intersection.

Calypso was glad that Marie had noticed his physique and was complimenting him. „You just need to turn left here, and then it“s the second street on the right.“

„Will your Dad be home too?“ asked Marie.

„No, he died when I was a kid.“

„Sorry.“

„Thanks... Okay, just pull up there where that white picket fence.“

At the bungalow Calypso opened the gate for Marie. „Thank you, sir,“ she said.

Calypso opened the screen door and as Marie stepped inside he placed his hand lightly on the small of her back and guided her to the kitchen where he could hear his Mum’s favorite radio station. The Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton song „Islands in the Stream,“ was playing and Calypso’s Mum was singing along to it.

„Hi Mum,“ Calypso called out.

„Hello dear,“ his mother replied.

She said another big „Hello,“ when she saw Marie and turned down the volume of the radio.

„Hello Mrs Summers,“ said Marie.

„Call me Audrey dear, and take a seat.“

As Marie sat Auntie Audrey asked, „What would you like to drink dear?“
Tea, coffee, water, juice, fizzy?“

„Got any Fanta Mum?“ asked Calypso.

„Yes, and it should be cold. Would you like some Fanta dear?“

„Yes please,“ said Marie shyly.

Aunty Audrey went to the cupboard and grabbed a long glass. She then went to the fridge and grabbed an ice tray and the bottle of Fanta. She filled the glass half way with ice and then slowly poured the drink. She handed the glass to Marie as condensation rolled down the chilled bottle.

„So Calypso tells me you“re Arrente.“

„Yes.“

„East or Western Arrente?“

„I don“t know,“ said Marie as she shrugged her shoulders.

„What“s your mob“s surname?“

„Stewart.“

„Stewart?“

„Yes.“

„Is your Dad Frankie?“

„Yes. You know Dad?“

Calypso, who was fixing a drink of ice water, looked at his Mum with concern. „Oh no,“ he thought, don“t be telling us he“s some long lost cousin.

„I see your Dad at the Health Clinic when I go there. He been working there a long time hey bub?“

„Yep.“

„Your skin is lighter but you look a lot like him „ey?“

„That“s what everyone says.“

Calypso was unable to stand the suspense any longer so he asked, „Marie“s not related then is she?“

„No, she“s not dear“. Calypso and Marie looked at each other and laughed with relief. „I know some of your mob though you know,“ she said turning to Marie.

„Nukunu and Arrente used to marry up, that“s proper way you know. Your old fellas would cut across the tip of Lake Eyre there and we“d meet up just before the northern ranges.“

„I never knew that,“ said Calypso.

„There“s a lot you don“t know dear,“ she said with a little laugh.

Calypso wanted to tell his Mum that he knew she was holding back on telling him about the bush remedies but just then Calypso heard the front door open and close and the pitter-patter of his niece and nephew running to the kitchen.

„Nanna, Nanna,“ yelled the kids „we just got some ice blocks from the shops.“

„Did you get one for me?“ Calypso asked his eight year old nephew Vance as he held out his hands, pretending to grab Vance’s iceblock.“

„You wish,“ replied Vance cheekily.

„You can have some of mine Uncle Calypso,“ said Millie.

„Awww,“ murmured Marie smiling at the cute little girl.

„It’s all right Bubby. I don’t really want ice block.“

Evelyn walked into the kitchen with some bags of shopping. She looked hot and bothered and she quickly said hello to Marie as she walked to the sink to get some water while Millie and Vance gave their nana a hug.

„She’s gorgeous,“ Evelyn whispered to Calypso, „I hope she breaks your heart.“

When Evelyn had set down the bags she moved over to Marie and shook her hand. „Hi, I’m Evelyn. You must be Marie. Mum told me you were coming. This is Millie and Vance.“

„Hello,“ said Marie looking at the children adoringly. The children snuggled close to their grandmother but smiled back at Marie.

„You guys are so cute aren’t you?“

„I“m four,“ said Millie holding up three fingers.

„A big girl,“ said Marie laughing and reaching out to touch Millie on the cheek.

„You got any brothers and sisters Marie?“ Evelyn asked.

„An older brother, Jamie.“

„Better than a little one I bet,“ she said giving Calypso a playful punch in the shoulder.

„He“s all right. We get on better now that he doesn“t live at home.“

„Where do you live bub?“ asked Aunty Audrey.

„Semaphore.“

„That“s nice, you“re close to the sea too,“ said Audrey before drinking the last mouthful of tea.

„And you“re a hairdresser hey Marie?“ asked Evelyn.

„Yes,“ she replied.

„Do you reckon you could do something with my hair? It“ll look like Calypso“s before too long.“

„She likes my hair Ev,“ said Calypso, grabbing a fat dread and pointing it at his sister. „Anyway, leave Marie alone, how would you like it if someone were asking you all of these questions?“

„We“re only being friendly.“

Calypso could see that Marie was starting to get uncomfortable, sitting there playing with the ice in her glass.

„Being nose y more like it. Stop asking so many questions.“

Audrey stood up and started to clear her teacup and the glasses from the kitchen table. „I“ve just got one more thing to ask you,“ she said to Marie.

„Yes?“

„Would you like to stay for dinner dear?“

Marie looked at Calypso and said, „I“d really like that.“

„You sure?“ asked Calypso.

„Of course,“ she replied.

The questioning proceeded throughout dinner but it wasn“t so personal. Mostly Evelyn and Marie talked about the schools they went to, the type of music they liked and from time to time Evelyn would slip in some smart comment or embarrassing story about Calypso, like the time he dove off the Semaphore Jetty and lost his shorts when he was a little boy and Evelyn made him wear her skirt home and how a lady on the bus commented on how pretty a little girl he was.

Calypso thought it was better that the stories came out sooner rather than later. He mucked around with Vance and Millie while the girls talked but was

focused on Marie's every expression and movement. He also found out things from her chatting with Evelyn. For instance she was eighteen months older than he was and liked Michael Jackson, playing basketball and camping with her family.

After dinner Millie fell asleep on Calypso's lap and Vance was starting to nod off.

„I'd better get home," Marie said, standing up and searching for her car keys in her bag.

„I'll walk you out," Calypso said moving slowly from his seated position, so as not to wake Millie as he handed her to Evelyn.

Marie leaned back on her car door when they were outside and Calypso stood close to her, the night still and fragrant with jasmine from his mother's garden.

„I had a great night, I love your family."

„That's good. For a while there I didn't know how you could put up with all the questions."

„It's okay," she laughed, „That's why I came right?... To find out."

„Yeah," he laughed. „Good thing we're not related hey?"

„I reckon."

„So when can I see you again Marie?"

„Any time you want,“ she said, moving in close to Calypso.

They kissed tenderly and Calypso held his hands around her waist while Marie placed her hand softly on the back of his neck. It wasn't a long kiss but Calypso could feel the world spinning and the butterflies in his stomach again. He knew he was falling head over heels for Marie and wanted to roll with it.

„Can you meet me for lunch tomorrow?“ Marie asked when their mouths unlocked.

„Absolutely, said Calypso, „I come down and meet you.“

„And on Friday night you have to have dinner with my parents. That was the deal remember?“

They kissed again before they parted reluctantly and Marie jumped in her car. When Calypso entered his home his Mum was sitting in front of the television watching *Charlie's Angels*.

„She a lovely girl,“ she said. „You better not bugger things up.“

Calypso took a seat in the darkest part of the room to hide the joy that he knew was showing on his face. Marie's kiss lingered on his lips and while he lounged back in a pose of calm, his heart was beating like a rabbit's.

On the Friday night Calypso caught a bus to Marie's place. He'd spent a long time in the shower scrubbing up and then fussing over what to wear. By the time he had showered and started getting dressed, he'd listened to the whole of one side of Bob Marley's *Catch a Fire* album.

He ended up wearing a black short-sleeved colored shirt with flecks of pink, lime and yellow through it, a pair of new dark denim Levis jeans and his Adidas Rome sneakers.

Marie's street was just off of Military Road, the same road that his flat was on, but miles North from his place in Semaphore. Calypso figured he must have walked past her house at least a hundred times when he had gone to the Odeon Cinema or when buying fish and chips on Semaphore Road after a swim.

As soon as he jumped off the bus he broke into a sweat. It was a steamy hot summer evening, but he was also starting to get nervous about meeting Marie's parents. He'd left the bus a stop earlier than he could have, hoping the walk would settle his nerves. Crossing Semaphore Road he was aware of all of the white people in the street, some sitting out the front of the pubs and café's and others waiting out the front of the Odeon cinema with its star lit up on the sign's red glowing background and he realized that with Marie's Dad being Aboriginal, for once he didn't have to worry about what his girlfriend's Dad thought about the color of his skin. He walked with a swagger as an amazing sunset of pink, purple and orange hues floated above the jetty at the end of the road and clock tower with the angel on top in the far distance.

Marie's house was an old red brick cottage with a fancy wrought iron fence painted heritage green protecting it. There was a small aluminum dingy in the driveway and a neat garden of palms and shrubs. As he opened the heavy iron gate Calypso wiped the sweat of his brow on the sleeve of his shirt before reaching the veranda and ringing the doorbell. He was happy to feel cool air

flowing out of the house through the screen door as he waited. He could hear the song „My Sharona“ filtering through the house and although it wasn’t reggae music, he didn’t think it sounded too bad. Calypso hadn’t seen Marie since the day before and when she opened the door he thought she looked amazing. He felt all tingly. She was barefoot and wearing a summer dress. Her flicked shoulder length hair was still a little wet from a shower.

She kissed him and then asked, „Have you had a good day?“

„It was long without seeing you.“

„Tell me about it.“

She took his hand and led him through the house out to the backyard where „My Sharona“ was coming from. Marie’s parents didn’t immediately notice Calypso and Marie and he had a chance to get a good look at them. Her mum was sitting on the outdoor bench with her feet up on another and reading *The Woman’s Weekly* while her Dad had his back turned to them and had a beer in one hand and a garden hose in the other. As soon as she saw them Marie’s Mum said, „Oh hello, let me turn this racket down“. Calypso was surprised to notice that she had an English accent. As she turned off the radio, Marie’s Dad swung around. He turned the tap off, and wiped his hand on his red Stubbies scoop shorts as he walked towards Calypso. Marie’s Mum placed her magazine on the table and straightened her apricot t-shirt dress as she stood up.

„This is Calypso, Mum and Dad,“ Marie announced.

„G’day young fella,“ said Marie’s Dad as he shook Calypso’s hand firmly, „I’m Frank.“

Her Mum brushed her long blonde hair away from her face, leaned

forward and kissed Calypso on the cheek, taking him by surprise. „I'm Linda," she said.

„Nice to meet you both," Calypso said shyly.

„Same here young fella." Frank's skin was a shade darker than Calypso's and he had a bushy moustache which spread across his lip as he smiled. „Want a beer mate?" he asked.

It was Marie who answered. „Calypso doesn't drink Dad."

„Marry him," said Linda dryly.

„Sure?" Frank insisted, "I've got some light ones there, it's bloody hot, will do you good."

„Don't pressure him," said Linda, but Calypso said, „Yeah, okay, I'll have one thanks."

„Really?" asked Marie.

„Don't let him pressure you, he'll have you under the table before you know it," said Linda.

„It's alright," said Calypso thinking about the saying „When in Rome". After all he'd watched documentaries where young tribesmen in some countries had to bring flocks of goats to a man to be in the same village as his daughter. He thought that the least he could do was to have a beer with Frankie.

„Love, can you get us a couple of coldies please?" Frankie took an empty bottle from his foam holder and handed it to Marie.

Marie shot into the house as Linda said „Come sit down.“

Marie came out of the house with two ice-cold beers and slid in beside Calypso as he took a seat.

„Cheers mate,“ said Frankie clinking his beer with Calypso’s.

Although he’d only been there for a few minutes Calypso was already starting to feel comfortable. Marie’s hand was on his thigh, he was drinking beer with her Dad and the welcome had been warm. He thought it was really cool how young Frankie and Linda seemed, much younger than his mother; they must have been younger than he and Marie when they got together.

As Frankie was taking a mouth full of beer Linda said to Calypso, „So how are things down at the health food store?“

„Yeah good,“ said Calypso surprised that Linda already knew he worked there.

„Steph is my best friend, you know?“

„Yeah, Marie told me“.

„She loves you, you know, thinks you’re a sweetie.“

„Got her approval you’re in the family,“ said Frankie laughing. „I can’t do shit without her knowing.“

Calypso turned to Marie blushing a little and noticing that she looked really happy that he was there and getting on well with her parents.

„Yeah...my boss Gary sold some things to Steph and he likes me to take her coffee and things sometimes.“

„We know,“ said Linda.

Frankie chuckled, „Do you want a glass of wine, Marie?“

„Well Calypso“s having a beer so I might as well.“

Calypso and Marie laughed as Frankie ogled his wife“s bum and then tried to pinch it as she walked past.

„Good looking woman my wife,“ said Frankie. „Pity Marie got my looks.“

„Oh Dad,“ Marie protested.

Before Marie could say anything else Frankie said, „Hey, Marie told me about your Mum. She“s lovely Aunty Audrey, I“ve known her for a long time. See your sister and kids at the health clinic too sometimes. Haven“t seen you there in a long time though.“

„You seen me before at the health clinic?“ Calypso asked in surprise.

„Yeah,“ said Frankie, „I seen you grow up. What, you don“t get sick or nothing no more young fella?“

„I don“t really get sick, only colds and things but nothing much,“ he said.

„Must be working in that health shop hey?“

Calypso let out a big laugh.

„What’s so funny about that?“ Marie asked.

„I’m more worried about the things Gary sells killing me rather than doing me any good.“

„But they’re all natural and that, no chemical and things hey Calypso?“ asked Frankie.

„Yeah, but there’s weird things there like bug juice and stuff that he sells.“

„Yeah, but that’s like us black fellas, our food wasn’t just for making our guts full, it’s medicine, proper good stuff.“

Calypso wanted to ask Frankie what he knew about bush tucker but Linda stepped through the back door with a bottle of wine in a fancy wine cooler with ice in it and two glasses. As she poured white wine for her and Marie she said, „I hope you like fish Calypso. Frankie’s put a little snapper on the barbeque, should just about be done soon.“

„Ah shit, said Frankie, jumping in. „That reminds me. Come and have a nukkun at this, Calypso,“ he called from the barbeque where smoke was rising along with the sizzle and aroma of the baking fish.

Calypso watched Frankie carefully peel away aluminum foil from a good sized fish.

„How do you reckon that looks?“ Frankie asked. Calypso’s mouth was watering as he peered at the pink skin and juicy white firm meat.

„That looks deadly.“

„Too deadly,“ said Frankie slapping Calypso on the back before he started to place the fish on a tray using only his bare hands.

„Did you catch it yourself?“ asked Calypso.

„Course I did, just off the jetty down there,“ said Frankie pointing his chin in the direction of Semaphore Beach.

„Don“t let him bullshit you,“ said Linda before laughing.

„Yeah, he“s full of it,“ said Marie.

„Marie“s brother Jamie caught that when he was out on the trawler,“ informed Linda proudly.

„I could have caught it if I wanted to,“ joked Frankie as he carried the snapper over to the table.

„Let it cool off for a while love, I“ll light some repellent coils before the mozzies start attacking. The mozzies go after you Calypso?“

„Not really,“ he answered.

„They love us British,“ said Linda. „The little buggers.“

As Linda started to light some mozzie coils that were resting among the pot plants, Calypso asked, „How did you guys meet?“

„How did we meet?“ said Frankie, laughing. „She was backpacking and I

was working as a tour guide you know, around Alice Springs.”

„The bus driver and everyone else I had met in Australia told me to be careful of Aboriginal people or *Aborigines*,” she said with a mocking Australian accent. „The way they were talking,” she continued, „you would have thought Aboriginal people were starving cannibals or lepers or something.... Despicable, god it pissed me off.”

„Not handsome like me,” said Frankie, giving Calypso and Marie a wink.

„God you love yourself Dad,” said Marie shaking her head and taking a sip of her wine.

„I went for a tour to Kings Canyon and Frankie was the trainee guide, very dapper in his Khaki uniform, you should have seen him, very handsome, a real style of a man” declared Linda. Calypso was amused by her English accent and the things she said about Frankie.

„Trainee guide? I was running the show, big boss I was,” said Frankie taking a last gulp of his beer.

„Frankie was the trainee guide and I sprained my ankle in the creek bed.”

„Then I took you to bed, hey love?” said Frankie cracking up.

Linda rolled her eyes. „Frankie carried me back to the tour bus and got some ice for my ankle and was just very charming looking after me. Yes, I thought he was very handsome and so we went for dinner and then I prolonged my stay in Australia.”

Frankie raised his empty beer bottle in the direction of Calypso and asked,

„Do you want another? That“s a story I like to drink to.“

Calypso declined the beer but welcomed the food that was dished up for dinner: the snapper, some chilled oysters with lemon and some salad. Frankie put on a tape of the Bob Marley album *Kaya* as they ate, which impressed Calypso no end. The night seemed magical with the whirring of insects in the darkness, the candles that Linda had lit and relaxed conversation. Calypso was conscious that Marie wasn“t speaking much with her head resting on his shoulder for most of the time but this didn“t worry him. It was his turn to get to know her parents.

Both Frankie and Linda were pretty relaxed after dinner and a few drinks so Calypso took the opportunity to speak with Frankie about bush tucker and medicine. Frankie told Calypso how most foods consumed by his people, Arrente people, were high in different vitamins and they had medicinal qualities. Frankie told him how the seeds of some citrus type plants were ground and taken with water to fix headaches and women took others as contraceptives. He didn“t know if talk of bush medicine as contraceptive was a subtle hint for him and Marie to be careful but Frankie“s knowledge was making Calypso“s head buzz with excitement. Eventually he asked, „Are there things that you take for relaxation, maybe things that you rub on the skin?“

„Plenty of things,“ answered Frankie perking up.

„Really?“ Calypso asked leaning forward on his chair.

„The Ngarrindjeri, down the south east there used to make hot baths for their old people and put in plants that fixed up arthritis and all types of things?“

„True?“

„Yeah, and our mob had the same types of things, things that relax you.“

„Is there anything up my way?“ asked Calypso excitedly.

„I“msure there is.“ Frankie sipped his beer, „But your country“s a bit different from my country, some things the same, lots different.“

„Where“s your country?“ Linda asked Calypso, her feet again up on the bench alongside Marie.

„Flinders Ranges, Spencer Gulf,“ said Frankie before Calypso could answer.

„Beautiful,“ declared Linda, „ We used to take the kids camping there every year when they were in primary school. Alligator Gorge, Telowie Gorge, they“re spectacular, especially when the creeks are full.“

„So are there things there that can make you relax?“ Calypso persisted.

„I“msure there is, but I don“t know, your own mob will know, the best way to find out is to have a look around.“

„I“ve been trying,“ said Calypso a little disappointed.

„Well I“d head up there with you to have a look around,“ said Frankie, „but I“m a bit busy until after Christmas.“

„Thanks Frankie, that would be solid,“ said Calypso, his spirit again lifting. „I was thinking about heading up there next weekend to see my Aunty Janet. If that“s alright with Marie,“ he said looking at her.

„Why don't you take Marie with you?" Frankie suggested.

Calypso couldn't believe that Frankie was giving permission for his daughter to travel out of town with him. He took this as a sign that he had made a good impression.

„We could take my car," Marie suggested enthusiastically.

Calypso looked at Frankie and Linda.

„Don't look at me," said Linda, it's up to Marie.

„Yeah mate, same here," said Frankie, „You've met us now and we like you. Take Marie up to your country. You haven't taken a girl on a date until it's on your own country. „When a woman looks at a man's country its like looking directly into his soul." Frankie squeezed his wife's hand and laughed.

Linda, stood up from her chair. „How about we head down to the café for a coffee," she said to Frankie.

„Alright," he said standing up from the bench. „If you're not here when I get back young fella, good to meet you and have a good night," said Frankie.

Before Linda and Frankie had shut the back door behind them Linda said, „Would be nice to see you on Christmas day if you can get around. I mean, if that's okay with you Marie and you're not too busy with your own family?"

„Of course," said Marie.

„I'd love to," said Calypso before he and Marie said goodnight to them.

With Frankie and Linda gone Calypso breathed a sigh of relief, turned to Marie and said, „Your parents are too deadly,” at the same time as she said, „they love you,” before they embraced in a passionate kiss.

That night they made plans for their trip to Aunty Janet’s.

15

By Wednesday Calypso realized he hadn’t seen or heard from Run in a few days. He was preoccupied with thoughts of his and Marie’s trip. He thought that Run must have been staying at Robbie’s, so that he didn’t have to give him money for bills and rent after Calypso had simply taken money from him. He felt a bit bad about that. But on the Thursday night when he got home from work Run was there, cooking baked beans in his kitchen, dressed from head to toe in black, a black long sleeved t-shirt, track pants and shoes.

„You wearing black jocks too cuz?”

Run gave Calypso a dirty look as he stirred the beans. „Got your ticket for the Love Boat yet cuz?”

„Good to see you’re not locked away in jail...yet,” Calypso responded.

„Run never gets caught cuz, I’m just like a black panther, you should know that.” Run took the beans off of the stove and spilled them into a plastic bowl.

„Where have you been anyway?”

„Just staying here and there.”

„Where, Robbie’s?”

„Yeah, been saving my bunda, should have enough for a couple of pound of ganja soon.“

„Run,“ said Calypso with caution, „I’ve told you, you don’t have to do that shit, come on, come out bush with me!“

„I’m not jumping on a bus and heading out bush on some wild goose chase. What you think you is, black Indiana Jones or something?“ Run ate a spoonful of beans.

„I’m going on the weekend. Come on, come and meet some of our family. They’re a real deadly mob you know.“

As Run ate Calypso got the impression that Run was considering his invitation so he said, „I’m getting a lift, you can come with us.“

„Who with?“

„Marie,“ said Calypso with a shy smile.

„Who’s Marie?“

„My girlfriend,“ said Run proudly. „She’s nunga too, you’ll like her.“

„Well then,“ said Run before taking his last mouthful of beans and throwing the bowl into the sink, „I guess that means you’ll want me out of here pretty soon... so that you can treat Marie *fine...take her on a cruise... cruising on the Love Boat with Calypso,*“ he said annoyed.

„I don’t want you to move out Run,“ Calypso protested. „As I’ve said cuz, I

just want you to give things your best shot.”

„And you don’t think I am giving things my best shot? I’m trying to get that bunda from that Andre fella just like you.”

„Run, you know what I mean? Or maybe you don’t...with all that ganja you smoke.”

„I haven’t even been smoking that much Calypso, and anyway, you’re full of shit. It was all right when you smoked. You just think you’re so fucking good these days, like some of those stupid rich white kids we went to school with... everything’s a breeze, the world’s a beautiful place just for you...you’re dreaming bruz.” Run grabbed his knapsack from the bamboo patterned couch.

Calypso was seething but tried to control his anger. He did feel guilty that while things had been going so well for him, Run, who was like his brother, was still struggling. He grabbed Run by the arm as he was about to step out the door and said, „Run, don’t be angry with me cuz... come on, Run, I just want deadly things for you, I’m just trying to help you out.”

„I’m helping myself bruz,” said Run shrugging out of Calypso’s grip and stepping outside, slamming the door behind him.

Calypso threw himself on his couch and then got up to turn on the television set. The news was on. He didn’t really watch it, the images and sound just served as a backdrop to his own thoughts. Footage of the West Indies training at Adelaide Oval didn’t even catch his attention. He thought about asking Gary if he could give Run a job too but realized that was a stupid idea; although business was good, they weren’t making that much money, and Gary had even had to pay him a couple of days late some weeks. He got up to get a glass of water and tried to force himself to think positively. When he sat back down he

thought about Andre's proposal and Bruce telling him that he'd talk to their family about the idea. Andre's proposal had come out of the blue anyway, so even if he didn't find out about the bush medicine, at least he'd got to know his family.

Feeling a little calmer he realized that if he did find out about the bush medicine and Andre liked it, he'd want more. He then started to think about how many other spa and masseuse businesses there must be in the world and what if they wanted the bush medicine too. They could have a family business, Calypso, Run and all his other family equal partners. Calypso didn't have any problems sharing, he already had more than he'd hoped for.

Early on Saturday morning Marie picked Calypso up in the little red Toyota Corolla. He put his things in the boot and jumped in and kissed her. „Thanks heaps for doing this for me,” he said. You have to let me pay for petrol and anything you need okay? I've got a whole lot of food in the back for us and the mob.

„It's no problem,” said Marie.

When they hit the highway they wound down the windows to let the cool breeze in and turned the radio up. Calypso let out a crazy hoot, feeling incredibly free speeding along. It was a thousand times better than sitting in the sluggish Greyhound bus full of sweaty people and bad manners. Marie laughed at him and started to sing „Echo Beach” along with the radio. Calypso tapped his fingers on the dashboard and then jokingly boogied to the music making Marie laugh. She leaned across and kissed him while trying to keep one eye on the road.

Calypso thought Marie's driving was really deadly. Since his father died it was rare for him to travel in a car other than a taxi. And even a taxi ride was

taken only if there was an emergency, like the time he and Evelyn raced Millie to the hospital with a really high temperature.

„This is so neat, Calypso,“ Marie said. „I haven’t headed North in ages.“

„I’ll buy a car one day, a real solid one. We’ll come out here all the time. We can go anywhere,“ he declared, excited by the possibilities.

After an hour of traveling, they stopped at Port Wakefield. Waves of heat bounced off the pavement and bit into their bodies from above and below when they jumped out of the car. It was like they had stepped into a furnace.

Calypso started to unscrew the petrol cap on Marie’s car to fill up as he watched her walk toward the petrol station, admiring the way she walked, how good she looked in her skirt, tank top and thongs. An old Holden ute with a trail bike strapped in the trailer rocked slowly and squeaked until it stopped at the petrol bowser next to him. There were two whitefellas about his age in the car. One of them was a skinny bloke wearing a big cowboy hat, denim jeans, boots and a tank top. This bloke looked at Calypso like he wanted to kill him, like Calypso was his worst enemy. The bloke in the passenger seat looked straight ahead, a steely gaze, his freckled arm resting on the window ledge. Calypso noticed orange dust was fixed with sweat to the arm of the bloke beginning to fill up the ute.

Calypso’s skin started to feel a bit prickly, not because of the sweltering heat but he sensed that these blokes might have a go at him at any time. If they kicked the shit out of him, fine, but not when Marie was there. He didn’t want anything to spoil their weekend together. „Take it easy,“ Calypso said to himself, making sure not to look at them, trying to make himself invisible. Not an easy task when you’re black with dreadlocks and standing a few feet away from someone.

„Oy Andrew,” the bloke in the passenger seat called to his mate, „Come here.”

The two blokes made out that they were whispering to each other, like they didn’t want Calypso to hear but deliberately spoke loud enough so that he could.

„Don’t forget to fill up the jerry-can mate... but don’t let the nigger see it, he’ll probably flog it to sniff with all his relations.”

Andrew and the other bloke started to piss themselves laughing.

Calypso sweltered in his anger and the heat, wanting to turn around and have a go at the boys, but then he saw Marie walk out of the toilets. She looked over to Calypso and gave a little wave. Out the corner of his eye, he made certain that Andrew and his mate weren’t looking at Marie, so they wouldn’t pick on her too. He gave a little wave back, and a forced smile, as if everything was all right.

Calypso could tell though that Andrew and his mate weren’t satisfied with their insult since it hadn’t gained a response – a reason to start a fight. As Andrew made his way to the attendant his friend called out, „Make sure you tell the attendant in there that a niggers filling up out here, sure they don’t want black pricks running off without paying.”

Calypso had braced himself for another remark but that didn’t make hearing what the bloke had said any easier. It felt like someone had thumped a hammer down on his thumb. What really hurt Calypso wasn’t that these blokes were trying to intimidate him but that such people thought they had the right to say those types of things about Aboriginal people, his own mob, people like him

and Marie.

He slammed the petrol bowser back into its place and then jumped back into Marie's car, refusing to let the bloke in the ute see his anger. More importantly he didn't want Marie to know about the incident. He looked up at the pale blue sky with its wispy clouds and willed his feelings to float away with them, pushing beyond the atmosphere.

It was like Calypso was in a trance when Marie opened the car door and startled him. Perhaps it was his nerves or his heightened adrenalin preparing him for a kung fu showdown with the country boys.

„Everything all right?“ she asked as she passed him an ice block and an orange juice.

„Yeah, it's just damn hot.“

By the time Calypso and Marie were back on the open highway with the ice blocks melting in their mouths Calypso had all but forgotten about the incident. Marie said, „Shit, I almost forgot,“ as she turned on the radio and started searching for a station. Then the familiar nasal voice of Richie Benuad reminded Calypso that the test match between Australia and the West Indies was beginning.

„How could we forget about the cricket?“ Calypso asked.

Already a few balls had been bowled by Malcolm Marshall to the Australian opening batsman, Smith.

„The first few overs of a game are the most exciting don't you think Calypso? Asked Marie.

„Yeah mahn, and probably the most important. If a team can get some early wickets, the others seem to come easier. The longer a batsman is at the crease the easier it is for him to get runs on the board.“

And just then, Malcolm Marshall, as if on cue, took Smith’s wicket.

Listening to the cricket made the heat tolerable and the trip more enjoyable as they headed towards the arid lands of Calypso’s people.

As Marie and Calypso traveled along the little dirt track leading toward Aunty Janet’s with the ancient and majestic Flinders Ranges ahead of them Marie said, „God I’d like to live out here, this place is beautiful, I mean, check it out, it’s beautiful, all of the colors.“ Marie stopped the car and Calypso jumped out to open the gate to Aunty Janet’s property.

Calypso motioned Marie to drive ahead of him. He was happy to take the short walk up to the house and stretch his legs. He looked at the rows of trees planted out the front of Aunty Janet’s, wondering what they were, and then he heard a hiss. He looked down to see a blue tongue lizard with jaws wide open and arching its back in defense. Calypso shivered, gave the lizard a wide berth and sped up his pace.

Marie had parked her car under the shade of a large gum tree and when she jumped out she stretched her hands above her head, uncoiling her whole frame. Calypso grabbed her around the waist and gave her a gentle kiss. „Remember, don’t be shame,“ he said, „You’re going to love aunty Janet.“ He then took her by the hand and led her to the door of the house.

„Aunty Janet, you there?“ he called through the fly screen door.

„Yeah we“re in „ere, come in.“

Inside Calypso was surprised to see his cousin Vic sitting on the lounge chair watching the cricket. He was even more surprised when Vic stood from his seat, held out his hand for Calypso to shake and said jovially, „How you going cuz?“

„Yeah, good thanks cuz,“ Calypso replied, a little wary of Vic. He was remembering how Vic was suspicious of Calypso and didn“t want him to know anything about his mob and their traditions.

„So this is your woman?“ Vic asked looking at Marie.

„Yep, this is Marie.“

„Nice to meet you,“ said Marie shaking Vic“s hand.

Vic mucked around shaking Marie“s hand in various ways and then laughed. Marie also found it funny. Calypso didn“t like it. Perhaps Marie was the only reason for Vic“s show of friendliness, he thought.

„Come here and say hello to me, come on, don“t be shame,“ Aunty Janet called out from where she was rinsing some dishes at the sink.

„Nice to see you, Kyle,“ she said wiping her hands on a tea towel when Calypso walked over. „Well, give us a hug then,“ she demanded, and then said, „nice to meet you girl,“ as she gave Marie a warm hug too. „Let, me get you a cold drink then, it“s hot out there „ey bub?“

Calypso and Marie took a seat at the table where Aunty Janet“s game of

patience was spread out. Before Aunty Janet had even handed Marie a glass of cold water she started a barrage of questions, just as Calypso's mother had, „Where you from, who's your mob, where do you live?“ She responded with shakes of her head and „mmm"s and „aahh"s to everything Marie said. Then she took Marie by the hand and shook it. „So you're Arrente then, I know your mob, I know your Dad, and some of your old people. That's lovely dear.“

„That's proper way to marry for us mob you know cuz?“ Vic said from his position on the couch.

„Yeah, I know, Mum told us that,“ responded Calypso, and he and Marie blushed as they looked at each other.

Calypso heard a car pulling up out front and was glad for the distraction at that point. He heard the car door squeak and then slam shut, the sound of feet shuffling up to the veranda and then Uncle Ray's call, „Eh you mob.“

Uncle Ray walked into the house, took off his cowboy hat, ruffled his wispy grey hair, placed his hat back on his head and then said, „G'day Vic,“ as he approached the kitchen table. „Hello, love,“ he said to Marie with a tilt of his hat. „I'm Uncle Ray, bloody hot out there „ey, hotter than Satan's arse isn't it?“

Marie didn't really understand the whole of what Uncle Ray had said but shook her head in response to it being hot. „Nice to meet you.“

„Nice to meet you too love,“ he said before turning a seat around and straddling it. He wiped his forehead with the back of his arm. „I've been looking forward to you fellas coming up „ere all week. Vic and I will take you for a look round country when it cools down a bit“.

„That'll be solid, Uncle Ray,“ said Calypso.

„Yeah, cool,” said Marie. „I’m looking forward to having a look at the hills. Will we get up close to them?”

„Why’s that love?” asked Ray leaning forward on the chair.

„I used to go up to Alligator George with Dad and Mum from when I was little kid, I really like it up there.”

„We’ll take you up to the hills, we’ll take you to one real special one.”

Before the mob headed out to have a look around country they sat together on the couch watching the cricket with an industrial style fan whirring in front of them. Marie started to giggle and Calypso asked, „What’s so funny?”

„You and Vic, and Uncle Ray.”

„Why’s that?”

„Cause you do everything the same.”

„What do you mean?” asked Vic a little defensively.

„Well, when you think something is about to happen you all sit there shaking your left leg flat out. If one of the Aussie’s hits a four you all suck in air through your teeth, same thing if the Windies nearly get a wicket.”

„That’s no surprise,” said Aunty Janet looking up from her game of patience, „they’re all the same mob, all family.”

„All our mob seem to shake our leg like that. Calypso probably got it off his Mum. Wonder who the first fella was that started that habit? Might have been a nervous kind of bloke,” added Uncle Ray.

As soon as the cricket broadcast ended Vic asked Uncle Ray, „So you think we should get going Dad? It’s not going to get much cooler?”

„Yeah, let’s get going. These young fellas have got a lot of country to look at.”

Calypso was impressed by Uncle Ray’s old white Valiant wagon. He thought it looked more like a stingray or a bat mobile than a run of the mill car, real deadly, despite its dents and rust and dusty overcoat. Calypso and Marie sat up front with Uncle Ray on a long vinyl bench seat that Calypso thought seemed like a couch. Vic stretched out in the back as they coasted, very slowly on the highway with a Johnny Cash tape playing quietly.

Soon they had a clear view of the sea to the left, plains of salt bush ahead of them and the hills to the right. „One thing you should know about this country,” said Uncle Ray, „ a lot of stories about it are secret and sacred... but there are also a lot of stories about this country that can be shared with most people, neither women’s nor men’s stories, just stories see.”

„Yeah but remember Dad,” said Vic, „There’s still a lot of stuff you can’t just tell anyone „til they’re ready.” Calypso was again reminded of Vic’s protest about his wanting to find out about bush medicines when they first met. Despite Calypso’s desire to cut straight to the chase about bush medicines again, he decided to listen and enjoy the ride.

„Yeah „course Vic,” Ray rattled before spitting out the window. He cleared his throat and then said to Vic, „Well tell these mob something you can tell them, what about tucker and that around here?”

„Biggest mob of tucker „round here,” Vic said enthusiastically, slowly motioning his hand across the lay of the land. The sea there, „course we got kuija, fish, but then there’s yiritji, crabs, and oysters, muscles, razor fish... lovely stuff.”

„Bruce and the girls and me caught a good feed the other week, it was too good,” said Calypso.

„Then on the plains here,” said Vic leaning forward and placing his arm between Calypso and Marie’s shoulders and motioning to the plains with a slightly splayed palm, there’s meat and fruits and things like Kangaroo and Emu, quondong, yams, bush tomato, grape, and wichety grubs on the sandy parts. Rabbits too from when the whitefellas come.”

„My Dad loves all that type of food,” said Marie. „He’s always trying to get his murras on it. Hard to get in the city you know.”

„Who recks, murras hey?” said Vic. Calypso was surprised, he didn’t know Marie knew any lingo. „Does he like yabbies?” asked Vic.

„Like them, he loves them and Barramundi too,” Marie declared.

„Well, we ain’t got Barra,” replied Vic with a hint of disappointment in his voice but there’s plenty of yabbies up in the creeks there. See, we’ve got the best of all worlds here, the sea, the plains and the hills and the fresh water up there.”

Suddenly Uncle Ray swerved and Calypso and Marie rolled towards him and then bounced back upright on the springy bench seat. „Shit, I hit the poor little bugger,” said Uncle Ray. In unison Calypso and Marie swung their heads around to look back at the road. „What did you hit?” asked Marie, not able to see anything.

„Didn’t you see him? Little ant,” said Uncle Ray before he and Vic started laughing hard.

Vic pushed Uncle Ray in the shoulder while Calypso and Marie looked at each other feeling like fools, before they cracked up too.

Uncle Ray slowed the Valiant almost to a stop before veering off to a dirt track on the right.

„Are we going up to those hills there?” asked Marie.

„No, we’re just cutting across the paddock here and up to the hills closer to Port Augusta,” Uncle Ray informed. „That country ahead of us is men’s country, real potent country there, powerful place. I can’t even take Calypso there yet. Sorry neph. But you fellas, you’ll like where we’re going.”

Calypso wasn’t too concerned that he couldn’t be taken to the hills spreading out before him, but it did make him wonder what was there, what secrets it held. He knew that in order to go there he had to learn other things about his people’s culture.

„You fellas enjoying yourselves though?” asked Vic.

„Yeah, it’s deadly, real deadly,” said Calypso as Marie turned and gave Vic a big smile.

„That’s good then,” said Vic as Uncle Ray reduced the car to walking speed. Marie was the first to spot the lizards walking across the road.

„Sleepy lizard, hey?” Marie said to Uncle Ray.

„Yep, but we call them gulda. And they’re special those guldas, see they’re one of our totems. Snake is one of our totems too... we’re snake people you know... which means we can’t kill „em or eat „em or nothing, which kind of aint fair „cause the snakes around here can bite you and kill you just like that,” said Uncle Ray, with a click of his fingers.

„But the Guldas keep the snakes away see?” said Vic.

Which made Calypso realize why you wouldn’t want to kill them. He did wonder then why the lizards were walking so close together as he also spotted another couple in the distance walking across the track. „Why they stuck together like that?” he asked.

„Good eyes, neph,” said Uncle Ray flashing a smile at him. „That’s „cause they’re husband and wife. Those Guldas mate together for life, real love story stuff you know?”

Vic tapped Marie on the shoulder and said to her, „That’s why a womans can never call a Nukunu fella a lizard if you got the shits with him see... that would mean he’s a proper good fella, faithful and that.”

„Well I hope Calypso’s like a little lizard,” she said giving Calypso’s thigh a squeeze.

„If you fellas are staying at Aunty Janet’s tonight you won’t be a cozy as them Guldas, inny Dad?”

„You mean we won’t be able to sleep in the same room?” Calypso asked shyly.

Uncle Ray and Vic chuckled before Uncle Ray said, „same room, you fellas will be lucky to sleep in the same postcode. Lots of blackfellas are stricter than the Pope about that stuff, especially when it comes to your Aunty Janet. Men in one place, women in the other...”

„I’m cool with that,” said Calypso with raised hands and a smile on his face. Marie gave him a playful nudge with her elbow.

Uncle Ray had weaved through a winding gorge full of gum trees, red slate cliff faces and rocky riverbeds and then ducked back behind the hills where long shadows were cast and the sun lit the plains gold. He pulled up at the base of a large peaked shaped hill and said, „alright you fellas, we’ve got a bit of a walk now. You gunna be right in those thongs love?” he asked Marie looking at her feet.

She looked at the hill and said, „Yeah, no worries, I’d do that barefoot.”

„Hey, proper little black woman,” said Vic.

Calypso and Marie were worried about Uncle Ray huffing and puffing up that hill. But although the track was steep and narrow with sharp rocks jutting out, Uncle Ray seemed to know every foothold.

Occasionally they stopped for a quick rest. From only half way up, Calypso could tell that the view at the top was going to be amazing, especially with the sun starting to fade. Calypso almost wished he was there by himself with Marie although he was loving all that he was learning from Uncle Ray and Vic.

No one spoke once they had reached the top, not even after they had all caught their breath. The scene before them was so incredible. The sun setting with clouds in the distance lit pink, orange and purple, the hills spreading out before them and beyond the plains, joining Port Augusta where they could see the lakes and the top of the Spencer Gulf trickling into the earth like a slither of molten lava.

„I don“t know what to say,“ Calypso finally said, „It“s just too incredible.“

„Just take it all in neph,“ said Uncle Ray. He turned to Vic, „Look at Marie there, that“s freaky „ey?“ She was standing near a ledge with her arms outstretched like a bird.

„What?“ asked Marie, unwinding from her pose.

„Just you looking like a Wildu,“ said Vic.

„What“s that?“ asked Calypso.

„It“s the eagle,“ said Uncle Ray, „the number one boss of these skies here.“

„This his place,“ said Vic, „See, look this peak is shaped like his head.“

Calypso could see it... and he was suddenly struck with a chill even though it must have still been almost thirty degrees.

Nothing more was said for a little while as they all took in the scene again, Vic sitting on a rock, and Marie leaning against Calypso with her arm resting on his shoulder.

„I wish I bought my camera,” Marie whispered.

„I wanted to bring you up here so that you could get a good look at country neph. It looks beautiful from up here but you’ve always got to remember that it’s beautiful when you’re down there too.” He took off his hat and used it to point to the plains. „Us Nukunu believe this is the oldest place in the world, and this country has looked after us from the beginning of time. Our job is to look after the country, even more now with people wanting to dig it up and stuff.”

„Yura Muda,” said Calypso in almost a whisper.

„What you say cuz?” asked Vic.

„Yura Muda,” said Calypso with more confidence.

„Who recks, Calypso,” said Vic, „Your Mum teach you that?”

Calypso didn’t get the chance to answer because Uncle Ray interjected and said, „Yep, Yura Muda, people looking after country... country looking after people.”

„We say Jukurrpa for Dreaming,” said Marie.

„Who recks,” said Vic, „Jukurrpa! That’s too deadly.”

„Yep,” said Uncle Ray. „Different languages, same thing, the same lore ties us all together.”

„Hey look there, there“s Wildu now.“

„Oh man, look at how huge he is,“ said Calypso in amazement looking at the huge wedge tail eagle soaring toward them.

„Yep,“ said Uncle Ray, „He“s a big one for sure. And you know what, his grand daddy might have been watching your grand daddy the first time he came here too.“

Calypso“s mind turned to Run as he watched the eagle and the first faint star in the darkening sky and wished that Run were there with them.

Uncle Ray and Vic were right. That night Aunty Janet showed Calypso his bed, a mattress parked in the dirt at least a hundred meters from the house, while Marie was given a bed in one of the rooms of the house. They were pretty tired after the day“s events, and after eating, said goodnight on the veranda.

„Thanks Calypso,“ said Marie, taking Calypso“s hand. „Today was just the best.“

„I“m glad you had a good time.“

„It was more than good, I love your family, this place, all of it.“ She looked up to the sky. „I wish I could be sleeping under these stars too.“

„Yeah, the stars are amazing hey? At least that“s one good thing about sleeping out here while you“re in there,“ he said pointing his chin toward the house.

„It sucks I know but, don“t worry about it... there“s plenty of time.“

„At least it will keep Aunty Janet happy.“ Calypso peered into her kitchen to see her spying back at him.

„Hey Calypso, why didn“t you ask Uncle Ray and Vic about the stuff you“re after?“ Marie asked.

„Believe me I wanted to ask them but last time Vic got pissed off and anyway, my other cousin Bruce said he“ll talk with everyone about it. They all know what I want to know.“

„Do you think they“ll tell you?“

„Maybe... all the mob is thinking about what to do with the property up the road. If there“s anything that you can grow there that makes the type of money that Andre is offering, I“m hoping they go for it.“

„Well they“re telling you things and showing you around so that“s a start.“

„Yeah, I know, I“m learning heaps.“

„Well we better get some sleep hey, guess tomorrow“s another big day.“

Marie leaned into Calypso and gave him a kiss and a big hug. They broke from their embrace when they heard Aunty Janet banging around inside.

„Goodnight,“ said Marie, „Sweet dreams.“ She went into the house and Calypso shuffled toward his mattress down the back of the yard. He found it hard to sleep knowing that Marie was inside and that he couldn“t sleep with her. Once

the house got dark he thought of sneaking into her room, but with that thought came the howl of a dog in the distance. He read it as the bark of Aunty Janet warning him that he would be caught if he tried anything.

Calypso awoke with the morning sun bearing down on him, flies buzzing around his head and the squawking of crows. He tried to shield his eyes with the covers. In his drowsy state he heard the shuffling of feet in the dirt, and then loudly and close to his ear the mimicking of a crow, „Waaaarkala, waaaarkala,“ came the call. It scared the shit out of him and he sprung upright to see Vic grinning at him.

„Sorry cuz,“ said Vic, „But everyone’s up and you’ll start to fry out here in this sun.“

„What time is it?“ asked Calypso rubbing his eyes.

„Don’t know, maybe seven or something. Gotta get up anyway, we’ll go into Port Germein for a bit, have a swim and that.“

„Alright then, bloody hot isn’t?“

„Hey. Before we head off though,“ said Vic, „I’ve got something for you, something to try out in the bath,“ he whispered. „Don’t tell Dad and that I gave it to you though.“ Vic handed Calypso a plastic bag bulging with a little of what Calypso could tell were some kind of pods. He went to open the bag but Vic said, „Uh uh, not now. Just put them in your bag and when you get home, just run a warm bath and put one in with you, only one, Calypso,“ he warned. „That’s real powerful stuff there. Then chuck yourself in with it. Proper good they are.“

„Thanks Vic,” said Calypso, surprised by Vic’s gesture.

When Calypso walked into the house he was pleased to see his cousin Mel sitting at the kitchen table with Marie, Aunty Janet and Uncle Ray. Mel was wearing a simple cotton skirt over a pair of bright colored one-piece bathers. He could also see that Marie was wearing bathers beneath a sloppy white t-shirt and denim shorts.

„Sleep well neph?” asked Uncle Ray.

„Not too bad,” said Calypso although he felt like shit, his mouth dry and his back kinked.

„Well have some breakfast dear, cereal there and coffee and things,” said Aunty Janet, „and then these mob want to take you down the beach.”

As soon as Calypso had eaten and put on some shorts, Mel drove Calypso, Marie and Vic down to the beach at Port Germein. The tide was full but they had to walk along a jetty that seemed to stretch for miles until they reached deep water. The water was so crystal clear they could see the ripples on the sand below. Calypso enjoyed looking at the ranges from the sea. In the city all of the buildings blocked the view of the hills out.

When they came to deep water near some stairs, Vic ripped off his shirt and threw himself off the jetty without warning, sending a huge splash of water into the air. „Come on Calypso, show us your best bomb,” challenged Vic.

„I’ll show you, thought Calypso. He’d spent most summer days of his life jumping off of jetties and now there didn’t seem to be any trick that he couldn’t do. He kicked off his thongs and yanked off his t-shirt and positioned himself on the edge of the jetty and then launched himself into a back flip from which he

landed doing a bomb that sent a stream like a whale's spurt into the air.

„Who recks, Calypso,“ he heard Vic saying when he emerged from the salt water flicking his dreads out of his eyes.

Marie said „Show off,“ but Calypso could tell she was actually impressed. Then Marie and Mel started walking toward the jetty stairs. It was the first time that Calypso had seen Marie in bathers. He liked what he saw, „wow,“ he thought to himself.

When Mel reached the bottom of the stairs she immediately began breast stroking into open water before she stopped and began floating on her back. Marie was a little more hesitant. She stood on a step with water up to her knees.

„Any sharks?“ she asked.

„Don't worry, they'll bite my big murntu first,“ joked Vic, „but don't worry, I've never known of a shark taking anyone here before.“

„Always a first time though,“ said Marie.

„Come on,“ said Calypso, „It's lovely in here“.

Marie took a breath and then dove beneath the water, coming up just in front of Calypso. „It's nice hey,“ she said before moving in close to Calypso to let him cradle her in the buoyant water, a few meters away from the jetty pylons. Calypso loved how close he felt to Marie with her velvety skin against his.

„So you staying around for the meeting later today, Calypso?“ asked Mel, her wet black hair slick against her head.

„What meeting?“ Calypso asked, then caught a glimpse of Vic signaling with his eyes to Mel not to tell him anything.

„Jingies Mel,“ said Vic. „You don“t know how to keep a secret do you? Calypso wasn“t supposed to know anything yet, don“t want him to get his hopes up.“

„Hopes about what?“ asked Marie.

„Oh Jesus, a few of us are getting together to talk about Calypso“s herb thing. Bruce told us a bit about it. That fella in Sydney offering you a lot of bunda iny?“

„Yep,“ said Calypso shaking his head. „But, I didn“t know asking about the bush herbs would cause so much trouble.“

„It might be a good thing,“ said Mel before lying back to float.

„Yeah, we just need to talk about it,“ said Vic. „You know when so many things have been stolen from us mob a fella can“t help but get paranoid when they want something from us.“

„True,“ said Mel shaking her head and wading in the water.

„We“ll have a yarn, give people time to think and then you“ll hear from us.“

Calypso was extremely happy and Marie kissed him on his salty face. Even if the mob were just starting to talk about his proposal with no promise of the outcome, he sensed that things were going to be all right and took Vic“s words as an apology for his earlier treatment of him.

Although Calypso and Marie would have liked to stay at Port Germein and Aunty Janet's all day, Calypso thought it was best to take off just after lunch, to give his mob time to talk and also because he was keen to try out the stuff that Vic had given him. Marie also had plans to go to dinner with her parents and Stephanie and her husband. She'd asked Calypso if he wanted to join them but he made the excuse of having to do some odd jobs for his Mum.

They took it easy driving back home and because the West Indies were so far in the lead against the Australians, instead of listening to the cricket they listened to one of Marie's tapes, a mix of tape of Michael Jackson, Culture Club, Police, Madonna and U2.

When Marie dropped Calypso off at his flat she jumped out of the car and gave him a big kiss. „Thanks, Calypso, I had the best time.“

„No thank you,“ he said. „It was fun hey?“

„Don't forget to call me as soon as you hear anything from your family about the bush medicine. It's really exciting.“

„Yeah, it is, and I will.“ Calypso was already thinking about running a warm bath and trying out the stuff Vic had given him.

„Sure you can't come to dinner with us tonight?“ asked Marie.

„You know, I'd love to but I have to give Mum a hand you know.“

„That's what I love about you Calypso, you're always thinking of others.“ She gave Calypso one last kiss goodbye.

Calypso felt a bit guilty watching Marie pull out of his driveway but the anticipation was too much. He bounced up his stairs and inside the flat went straight to his bathroom and started running a warm bath, even though it felt like an oven inside. He ripped off his clothes and pulled the plastic bag that Vic had given him from his knapsack. Disregarding Vic's advice he tipped its contents into the bath and tied back his dreadlocks.

Calypso thought that the pods looked familiar, but he hadn't seen any trees bearing them on his travels to Aunty Janet's. He swirled the pods through the water with his hand and then stepped in and stretched out, his clumped dreads making a good cushion for his head against the porcelain. He closed his eyes in readiness for the pods to take their effect when he felt a burning and stinging sensation around his backside and crotch. He scratched at his arms and noticed the microscopic needles covering them. „Shit," he said. „That bastard, what is this stuff?" He quickly pulled the bath plug and stood to turn on the shower. His entire body was burning, itching and stinging and he was in unbearable pain. As he stood under the cold shower he tried to resist the scratching. He jumped out of the tub and desperately searched the rusted shelves behind his bathroom mirror for tweezers. He threw out an empty screwed up tube of toothpaste, some thick rubber bands, a dog-eared toothbrush, packets of condoms, some blunt disposable razors and some Brut 33 splash before he saw the tweezers. He raced back beneath the cold shower and tried to use the tweezers to remove the hairs that were now torturous needles. Welts were starting to form on his body, even all around his crotch.

„You fucking prick, Vic," Calypso growled, wishing he wasn't so hairy.

Calypso must have stood under that water for at least an hour pulling the microscopic needles out. When he was done he stood in front of a fan hoping it would help to cool the burning. It gave minimal relief so he knew he would have

to take a walk to his mum's, in the hope that she had some soothing cream.

He pulled on a baggy pair of shorts without putting on jocks and walked slowly and bowlegged to his mother's house. He knew he must have looked like some kind of monster the way that he was walking.

„Mum,“ he called as he knocked on Auntie Audrey's door. „Mum, quick, Mum.“

„What's wrong, Calypso?“ she asked as she tied her gown around her and pulled him into the house.

„Don't touch, don't touch,“ he pleaded, „Very itchy, itchy... ouch,“ he said trying to not let his dreads or any other body part brush against his skin.

„Stand in front of the fan,“ she ordered.

Calypso could hear his Mum frantically searching through her fridge and was pleased when she returned with a bottle of pink liquid. „Calamine lotion will have to do,“ she said, pouring a large blob of it into her hand and rubbing it onto his arm. „Careful,“ he squealed, taking the bottle from his Mum and pouring a whole lot into his own palm.

„Sorry,“ said Auntie Audrey, „we have the right bush medicine for this type of thing back home you know?“

„Bush medicine!“ he growled, „that's the reason I'm in this mess.“

„What you mean?“

„Your prick of a nephew Vic gave me this stuff to try.“

„What’d it look like?“

„Pods, pods,“ said Calypso before he sighed with relief as he rubbed the lotion around his crotch and backside. „Itchy little spiky things in them.“

„Oh Calypso, that’s not bush medicine,“ said Aunty Audrey, her expression dropping to disbelief. „Vic gave you itchy pods.“

„You bet they’re bloody itchy.“

„You wait „til I get my hands on that little bugger,“ Aunty Audrey threatened.

„Mum, I’m gunna have to stay here, I can’t walk home, it’s too painful“ said Calypso although he could feel the lotion starting to work and his breathing returning to normal.

„Of course.“

„And if you know about stuff that can stop this type of itching, why didn’t you tell me straight away?“

„Cause I wanted you to go and meet the mob, you know?“

„Well that’s good, but jeez Mum, talk about sending a fella on a wild goose chase!“ Jingies Mum, shame job!

In the morning when Calypso jumped out of bed and went to the toilet, he saw his reflection in his Mum's mirror he screamed out, „Holy shit,“ Although he wasn't itchy any longer he had welts on almost every part of his body, even running up his neck.

„That bastard, Vic,“ he thought. He now started to doubt if Vic and Mel's talk about everyone meeting to talk about his idea was even true. Vic had already tricked him once, why not again? And now Calypso was left with welts and having to walk home along busy Military Road to get ready for work on a Monday morning wearing just a pair of baggy Stubbies and looking like a freak.

When Calypso did make it to work after two cold showers and a lathering of Calamine lotion, Gary took one look at the pink paste upon his welts and said, „What in the hell happened to you mate, have a fight with a cactus or something?“

„Yeah, something like that,“ said Calypso sarcastically, as he made his way to the storeroom to grab boxes of things that needed topping up.

„Seeing you like that has got me thinking though, Calypso,“ Gary called after him, „Perhaps we should get some natural lotions or something for eczema, mozzzy bites and stuff.“

„Tell me about it,“ said Calypso, his voice muffled in the storeroom.

When Calypso walked out carrying two boxes Gary said, „That pink stuff looks shit on you, Calypso, maybe we should make stuff like that in different skin tones... it would sell like hot cakes.“

„Just do me a favor,“ said Calypso.

„Anything mate,“ Gary replied.

„When Marie drops by, tell her I'm out.“

„Out where?“ asked Gary as Calypso placed the boxes down by his feet and took a seat on a turned over Coca-Cola crate.

„Oh, I don't know, Christmas shopping or something.“

„Good idea. She'll think you're buying her a present.“ Gary walked to the counter and flicked open his copy of the paper but he kept looking up at Calypso and Calypso could sense his agitation.

„What is it?“ Calypso asked as he placed packets of whey powder on a hook.

„Talking about Christmas mate, I know I promised you a Christmas bonus mate... you deserve it you know, I couldn't run this place without you but do you mind if I give it to you after Christmas?“

„That's okay,“ said Calypso but really he was pissed off. It was bad enough that Gary consistently paid him late but now he wouldn't get his bonus before Christmas.

„The landlord has decided to up the rent on me, the bastard.“

„It's all right,“ said Calypso turning back to the boxes. He wanted to turn his mind completely to his work so that he wouldn't have to think.

Calypso made sure to call Marie first thing when he got home from work. „I missed you today,” said Marie as soon as she heard his voice.

„I missed you too baby,” he assured her. „Sorry I forgot to tell you I had to do something at lunch.”

„Christmas shopping hey?”

„What?” said Calypso.

„Christmas shopping,” she repeated.

„Oh yeah,” replied Calypso remembering that he’d told Gary to tell Marie that’s what he was doing.

„What would you like for Christmas?” Marie asked him.

„I’ve already got my present,” said Calypso.

„Really, what is it?” Marie asked.

„Just hanging out with you.”

„That’s really sweet Calypso but really, what do you want? I don’t know what to get you.”

Calypso spoke with Marie on the phone for well over an hour and when they finally said goodnight he immediately called his sister Evelyn.

„What you want, Calypso?” asked Evelyn as soon as she heard his voice.

„I need some help,“ he told her hesitantly, knowing what he was in for.

„What you done now, had another bath in those itchy things again. Yeah, I heard about it but you’re not getting me to rub cream on your arse.“

„Evelyn,“ he retorted, „It’s not that, I need some help choosing a Christmas present for Marie.“

„Oooohhh,“ cooed Evelyn. „That girl got you hook, line and sinker iny? That’s good, „bout time you started treating women proper Calypso and that girl’s lovely too. When can she cut my hair and what you going to buy me for Christmas?“

„Don’t know yet Evelyn, but it will be something nice if you help me.“

When Calypso woke the next morning, his welts weren’t visible and he punched the air before jumping beneath the shower to get ready for work. He ducked into Cleopatra’s hair and beauty on the way to work, said a quick hello to Steph and Marie and made plans to catch up with Marie for lunch. She gave him a quick kiss when Stephanie popped out the back and asked him if he’d heard anything from Vic.

„Vic,“ said Calypso trying not to show his annoyance with him. „Nah, haven’t heard anything yet.“

It was just before Calypso’s lunch break as he sat at the counter of the shop reading the paper that he picked up the ringing phone.

„G’day cuz, how you going?“ said Vic.

„You“re a fucking prick Vic, I“ve been scratching my ass off you asshole.“

„Hey wait up cuz, it was just a joke. Anyway, how many of those things you use?“

„The whole bag.“

„Jingies Calypso, you got any hide left or what cuz?“

„Nearly scratched me skin off thanks to you.“

„Well anyway cuz, I“ve got some good news for you, we decided on helping you out.“

„What?“ asked Calypso.

„We“re going to show you some proper good bush medicine.“

„Yeah right. How do I know you“re not tricking me? You already near killed me with that itchy stuff.“

„Look Calypso, I might have been a prick when I first met you... but you“re all right cuz. Plus, what you could be offering us is a good idea.“

„You“re not bullshitting me are you, Vic?“

„No cuz, but the only thing is, if that fella in Sydney likes the stuff and wants more, then we gotta share the bunda around with the whole family you know?“

„Course Vic, that’s what I was thinking anyway.“

„Course you were cuz. The other thing is though, we need to get a lawyer involved.“

„What for?“ asked Calypso.

„Just so that when we start giving that Sydney fella whatever it is we’re giving him, that we can get paid proper for it and not have any other mob steal it... you know, what they say.... precautionary.“

„Oh yeah, of course,“ said Calypso seeing the sense in what Vic had to say.

„Aunty Janet reckons we might even have to get a scientist.“

„True, what for?“ said Calypso.

„So they can tell us what exactly it is in these plants you know, that makes ‘em work.“

„Gee, never thought of that before,“ said Calypso surprised by Vic’s business mindedness.

„So maybe after Christmas you come up and we’ll show you all this stuff and you can grab some for that Sydney fella there.“

„Of course?“ said Calypso.

„And maybe you can think of some type of trick to play on me... I deserve payback „ey cuz?“

„And you“ll be getting it too,“ promised Calypso before they ended their conversation.

That day, instead of taking Marie to the deli for a sandwich and a soda can of drink, he took her to Estia“s café where they“d first gone to lunch, to share the good news with her and to celebrate. Maybe they“d sit outside so they could look at the sea while they talked.

The day before Christmas Eve Calypso made the trip to Robbie“s place to speak with Run. He walked into a dusty yard with some sparse patches of dry grass and knocked on the battered screen door of the brick duplex with the fly screen ripped and jutting out from the frame. He“d psyched himself up for his meeting with Run, he didn“t want no trouble, didn“t want to start an argument, he was just going to take things easy and not tell him what to do.

He knocked again and Robbie“s mother came to the door wearing faded black track pants and a stained white shirt. „They“re in Robbie“s room,“ is all she said. Calypso made his way across dusty floorboards into Robbie“s room. It was small with only a cupboard, some clothes spilling out of a garbage bag in the corner, two mattresses and two posters on the wall, one of Bruce Lee with nunchucks in hand, the other a picture of Bob Marley playing his guitar and flicking his mane of dreadlocks on stage.

Run and Robbie looked surprised to see Calypso. They were sitting on either side of the room with their backs against the wall and Calypso noticed their reddened eyes and the faint smell of ganja in the air. A pipe on one of the pillows gave away the whole story.

„How you fellas?“ asked Calypso.

„Iri,“ said Robbie nodding his head slowly.

Run sat there staring at his bare feet and saying nothing.

„Just come to see how you fellas are going and to see if you’re coming to Mum’s on Christmas Day, only a day away you know.“

„Course I’m coming around,“ said Run softly.

„That’s good then bruz,“ said Calypso giving Run a friendly shake by the shoulder. „Be good to see you, you know I’ve bought all this deadly stuff for lunch, even oysters, cook ‘em with bacon you know, real flash way.“

„Calypso, the rich fella,“ said Run, jeering at him.

Calypso didn’t react but said, „So why don’t you come stay home Run, then we can cruise to Mum’s together on Christmas morning?“

„Maybe,“ said Run.

„You can come around too, Robbie,“ said Calypso.

„If Run does I will.“

There was silence for a while as Calypso thought about what he could say to the boys to reconnect with them. He felt that even though Run and Robbie were stoned, there was a bigger wall between them than the ganja.

„So how’s it going with getting all the ganja together, all right?“

„Better than that,” said Robbie, „let me show you.”

Robbie got up from his mattress and Run started to grab for something from beneath the corner of his mattress. Robbie opened the cupboard to reveal a garbage bag full of weed.

„Gees, check it out,” Calypso said. „That’s about a pound there hey?”

„About,” said Run, „and check this out he said holding a large money bag full of marijuana buds.”

Calypso took the parcel from Run’s hands and gently opened it, held it to his nose and breathed in the musky sent. „Gees, that would blow your head off. Shame I don’t smoke no more.”

„You want one?” asked Run reaching for the pipe.

„Nah,” said Calypso, not tonight. I need to go do some Christmas shopping.” He was getting accustomed to using that excuse to get him out of tight situations.

Run grabbed the bag from Calypso’s hands and began packing a pipe.

„Don’t smoke it all,” said Calypso, „You’ll have none left to sell to Andre.

„There’s plenty more where this came from,” said Run before lighting the pipe.

„Yeah,” said Robbie, „we’re on a roll now, even got money to buy more,” He reached inside his pillow case and pulled out a wad of bills.

„Reckon we nearly got busted though,” said Run, as he exhaled a cloud of smoke that made Calypso take a step back as he tried not to breathe it in.

„Yeah how is that?” he asked.

„We were hitting this bowling club,” said Run. „Had it all under control but then this car pulled up. Thongsy had to split and we had to hide under the pool tables. This old bloke came in. He must have been deaf or something, good thing too „cause Robbie and I had bags full of grog and they were clinging around you know man?”

„I was shitting myself, true,” added Robbie.

Calypso hated what he was hearing but had promised himself not to preach to them. „Well you fellas better be careful you know,” is all he said.

„I’m the black panther,” Run reminded Calypso.

Avoiding Run’s fantasy Calypso said, „Well I’d better get going... before the shops get closing you know.”

„No worries,” said Robbie.

„Good to see you,” said Run.

„I see you fellas tomorrow night then?”

„Yeah mahn,” said Run jovially.

„See you bruz,” said Robbie.

Calypso let himself out of the house, passing Robbie's Mum on the way, glued to the television and drinking a cask of cheap red wine. Calypso felt very sad to see Run and Robbie in their stoned state and to hear of their crime. He felt like slapping them both, but he knew that would be hopeless. Instead he beat himself up for introducing Run to the type of life he was living. He started to doubt if he deserved his job and Marie and the opportunities before him. He wondered if it would just be best to go back to his drug smoking ways.

Calypso and Run walked to Aunty Audrey's early on Christmas morning passing children riding new bikes and playing with new toys on their way.

„Thanks Calypso“, said Run after Calypso told him the presents he bought for the mob were from both of them. „You know I'm going to pay you back for everything soon bruz, even if that Andre fella doesn't want to buy all the gear we've got, I'll sell it all anyway, pay some bills for you bruz and maybe even try to stop smoking... or at least I'll try not to smoke as much.“

„Well,“ said Calypso slapping Run on the back, „just hearing you say that is like a Christmas present.“

When Run opened the gate to Aunty Audrey's and he and Calypso walked into the yard they could faintly hear Dean Martin singing „I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas“ from Calypso's old record player. Run raised his eyebrows at Calypso. As soon as Run opened Aunty Audrey's door, the kids started running through the house to them. „Uncle Calypso, Uncle Run,“ came the cries of Millie and Vance.

„Did Santa come?“ asked Run seeing Christmas wrapping strewn around

the Christmas tree in the lounge room.

„Yeah,“ said Millie, „he bought clothes, tea set, ummm... teddy bear.“

„True?“ said Run.

„What about you Vance, what did Santa bring you?“ asked Calypso.

„A bike!“ said Vance excitedly. „And some clothes, and some cars.“

„Deadly,“ said Calypso. „Let’s see what Uncle Calypso and Run have got for you fellas then.“ They walked into the kitchen to see Aunty Audrey and Evelyn preparing food for their lunch, sweating in the already hot morning.

„Merry Christmas,“ they said kissing both Calypso and Run on the cheek. Run gave Aunty Audrey a very big hug.

„Let’s see what Run and Calypso got for everyone then,“ Calypso said as he handed a parcel to Millie and read out Vance’s name on another. Vance took the parcel and hurriedly sat on a chair to rip off the wrapping.

„This one’s for you Millie,“ said Run. Millie hugged Run and took the present before starting to unwrap it.

„Oh wow, it’s a cricket bat,“ said Vance, unsheathing it.

„Deadly, that’s a deadly bat,“ said Run.

It was a little SS Stuart Surridge cricket bat, an exact miniature replica of the bat Calypso had dreamed about getting as a kid.

Millie's eyes lit up when she opened her present, a cabbage patch doll.

„Oh would you look at that," said Evelyn.

„It's kind of ugly isn't it?" asked Aunty Audrey.

„It's a cabbage patch doll," exclaimed Millie, pouting.

„Oh," said Aunty Audrey.

„Thank you," said Evelyn kissing both Calypso and Run again.

„Don't be thanking us yet," said Calypso reaching into his knapsack and pulling out a box shaped present. „This one is from Run and me for you, Mum," he said handing her the present. „And Evelyn, this is for you," he said handing her a small parcel.

Both Evelyn and Aunty Audrey started to carefully unwrap their presents, unlike the kids.

„What is this thing?" asked Aunty Audrey when she got the wrapping off.

„It's a toastie maker," said Evelyn, still unwrapping the small box. „They're deadly... and so is this" she said when she unwrapped a walkman.

„I almost forgot," said Calypso pulling a small gift from his back pocket and handing it to Run. „These are for you Run."

Run extracted a black pair of mirrored sunglasses from the wrapping and said „Pretty," trying them on.

Vance came back into the kitchen with a ball and his new bat. „Can we try the bat Uncle Calypso?“ he asked.

„Sure,“ said Calypso and Run in unison.

„But what about your presents?“ asked Aunty Audrey.

„Oh, yeah, of course,“ said Run.

Aunty Audrey and Evelyn went into Aunty Audrey’s room as Calypso grabbed the tennis ball from Vance and began bouncing it. Aunty Audrey and Evelyn returned to the kitchen and handed Calypso and Ruth two envelope sized gifts. They unwrapped them slowly, anticipating what was inside. Once the paper was off two envelopes were revealed.

„I think I know what these might be,“ said Calypso thinking it was a voucher for the record store.

„You reckon?“ asked Evelyn.

Calypso was the first to see the contents of the envelopes. „Oh, gees,“ he said, „I wasn’t expecting these,“ waving two tickets to the West Indies versus Australia match on January 29. „That’s just the best.“

„Too deadly,“ said Run, „but why did you get me two tickets?“ he asked.

„Well I had to get one for Calypso and his girlfriend, and I thought you might want to take Robbie or someone too.“

„Thanks,“ said Calypso and Run, giving Evelyn and Aunty Audrey a kiss and hug.

„Come on, can we play cricket now?“ asked Vance.

„Only if you“re batting,“ said Run before he raced out into the backyard with Calypso, Vance and Millie close behind.

After a morning of cricket, Calypso“s family were finally seated around Aunty Audrey“s kitchen table as Calypso put the finishing touches to his Oyster Kilpatrick, a recipe he“d seen in one of Evelyn“s *Woman“s Weekly* magazines. Run and Evelyn were helping Vance and Millie to crack bon-bons as he rested an oven tray on top of the stove and gathered the oysters with tongs and placed them onto a large plate.

„Oh, Calypso, they smell delicious,“ said Aunty Audrey. She took the last sip of her iced water and smacked her lips.

„Hurry up Calypso,“ said Evelyn, „a woman“s starving „ere, look at all this lovely food.“

Calypso sauntered carefully to the table and placed the oysters amongst the food: the ham, prawns, crabs, chicken, rice, bean and tossed salads. As soon as he sat down, Evelyn and Run started dishing food onto Vance and Millie“s plates.

„Oh, I like that?“ said Aunty Audrey, after scooping one of the oysters into her mouth.

„Good hey?“ said Calypso.

„Mmmm, they“re nice,“ said Aunty Audrey before grabbing some tongs to

fill her plate with the assortment of foods, including the oysters.

„I wonder what all the rich people are doing?“ asked Evelyn as she chewed on a juicy prawn.

„I reckon?“ said Run.

„Mum, can I have some more chicken?“ asked Vance.

„Me too?“ asked Millie.

„What’s the special word?“ asked Aunty Audrey with a drumstick in her hand.

„Please,“ both of the children said, flashing smiles.

„Oh gee, nearly forgot,“ said Calypso.

„What, you got more presents for me?“ asked Evelyn.

„No, I’ve got some good news.“

„Oh, said Evelyn,“ picking up another prawn.

„Aunty Janet and the mob said they’ll get some of the bush medicine things for me.“

„True?“ asked Aunty Audrey, „And what about that cousin of yours, Vic, what’s he got to say for himself... itching you all up like that?“

„He’s alright, he reckons it was just a joke... come to think about it, he did

say to only try one little bit, I threw the biggest mob of those seeds into the bath.”

„What seeds?” asked Run.

„Oh nothing,” said Calypso.

„So when you heading up there next?” asked Aunty Audrey.

„Maybe before New Years Eve. I’ll give Aunty Janet a call tomorrow and see what the mob’s up to.”

„You should head up bush with Calypso too,” said Aunty Audrey tapping Run on the hand. „They’re your mob too you know.”

„Maybe I will,” said Run looking at Calypso gloomily.

„The other thing, Marie want wants to know if we can head around her parent’s place for a party later today, they said the more the merrier. So what you reckon?”

„Of course,” said Evelyn, „Maybe Marie could cut my hair.”

„It’s Christmas Day, Ev,” Calypso protested.

„Only joking Calypso.”

Marie and her Mum lead Calypso and his family straight out to the backyard when they arrived. Everyone was gathered there. Marie's brother Jamie walked up to Calypso with beer in hand and shook his hand.

„How you going Calypso, good to meet you bruz, gee they are some dreads you got there,“ he said as he stared inquisitively at the matted locks clumped on Calypso's head.

„Merry Christmas, good to meet you too,“ replied Calypso. „This is my cousin brother, Run,“ he said to Jamie. And when Jamie had finished staring at Calypso's dreads he shook hands with Run too.

Frankie jumped out of his chair as soon as he saw Aunty Audrey and walked up to her to give her a kiss and warm hug. „Lovely to see you Aunty Audrey, been a long time.“

Marie's Mum Linda grabbed Frankie by the arm and said, „Before you get gas-bagging Frankie, let me introduce everyone.“

Evelyn, Run and the kids stood there shyly as Linda introduced them to Frankie, her son Jamie, her best friend and Marie's boss Stephanie, Steph's husband John, and their daughter Cleo.

Calypso couldn't help but laugh to himself when his family was introduced to Cleo because it was the first time Run had taken the glasses off his face since he gave them to him. Run lifted them slowly and gave a polite nod to Cleo. Calypso didn't have any idea that Stephanie had a daughter. He just thought that Cleopatra's Mirror was just named after the Egyptian Queen, not her actual daughter. But he did know Run almost as well as he knew himself and he could tell that he was smitten with Cleo. He couldn't blame Run either, she was pretty, very pretty, with long straight jet black hair held in a pony tail held at the side of

her head with a big fluorescent pink clip. She wore blue hoop earrings, a strapless white summer dress and white slip-ons with a flower on the toe.

„Alright, you mob,” said Frankie, „Merry Christmas to you all and whenever you are here, starting now, make yourself at home. The drinks are in the esky and on the table there,” he said nodding in the direction of the outdoor table, and there’s plenty of tucker there too. Calypso, you should try the snapper under that cover there mate... proper good stuff.”

„Thanks,” said Calypso.

As Jamie started speaking with Run, Calypso was surprised to hear Aunty Audrey say to Frankie that she’d like a shandy. It was a very rare occasion when Aunty Audrey drank alcohol. Marie whispered to Calypso, „Come and meet Steph’s husband John. I’m dying to give you your present but first I’ll get Evelyn chatting with Cleo and Steph.”

John had sandy hair, a mustache, a beer belly and sun weathered skin. He stood from his chair and firmly shook Calypso’s hand. Calypso was pleased to see that Evelyn, standing with a glass of wine in her hand, was in conversation with Stephanie and Cleo. Calypso realised that as a young single mother Evelyn didn’t get much opportunity to socialize.

„Young fella, I owe you a beer,” said John, „Would you like one?” he asked reaching into his esky.

„No thanks, John, I’m alright thanks,” he said politely.

„Sure mate?” asked John surprised.

„Yeah, I’m right,” said Calypso with a smile.

„Well anyway, you know I owe you one.“ John winked.“

Calypso laughed to himself, not only because of the thought of John getting romantic with Stephanie because of Gary’s antics with the corncob obviously having worked. He wondered what Gary was doing and said to John, „Perhaps I will have just one beer.“

„That’s a good lad,“ said John, opening the lid of his esky, reaching into the ice and withdrawing a stubbie.

Calypso twisted the lid open and took a swig of the beer as John slapped him on the back and Linda turned up the Australian Crawl playing on the stereo a notch. Marie walked up behind Calypso and took him by the hand. „Don’t drink too much,“ she said. „We’re going to Aunty Janet’s bright and early remember?“ To John she said, „Can I steal him for a sec?“

„Yeah, sure. John winked at Calypso again. „Watch him though.“

Calypso placed the beer on the table and grabbed his knapsack. Marie walked Calypso through the house and into her room. He saw a present on her bed that was wrapped in red paper with a gold bow.

„I’ve been dying to give you your present,“ she said.

„And I’ve been dying to give you yours too.“

Calypso took a small package from his bag. He handed Marie the parcel enjoying the happiness spread across her face. He liked being in Marie’s room. There was a double bed with lacey bed spread; the walls were covered with posters of Michael Jackson, Prince, Madonna and the Culture Club. He also

loved the smell of her perfume that enveloped him. Then a pin board full of photographs caught his eye and he walked towards it.

„What’s this?“ he asked, running his finger over a black and white photograph of the angel on top of the Semaphore clock tower.

„They’re just some photos that I take. A bit of a hobby,“ said Marie as she began opening the gift very slowly, picking delicately at the sticky tape.

„A hobby? They look proper professional, real deadly.“

„Thanks.“

When the wrapping paper fell away from Marie’s gift it revealed an emerald green jewel case. Marie looked at Calypso and said, „Thank you.“

„But you don’t even know what it is yet, Hurry up, open it, he teased.“

Marie slowly pried open the box and when she saw its contents, a pair of sterling silver ear rings and necklace with gem stones, she hugged and kissed Calypso.

„Do you like them?“

„I love them, Calypso, they’re the best, you’re the best. I’ll wear them forever, I swear Calypso.“

„Well wait up, I’ve got you another gift,“ he said taking a thin square package from his bag and handing it to Marie. „This time, rip it open like flat out way.“

Marie took the present and ripped it open as Calypso had instructed. The present was a record, the new Wham Make it Big album. Calypso thought it a good choice because it had a song about Christmas on it.

„Oh cool,“ said Marie, „How did you know I wanted this?“ she asked as Calypso shrugged his shoulders and tried not to look at the George Michael poster on her wall.

„Okay, now let me give you your present,“ she said placing the record on her dresser.

Calypso picked up the present from the bed, teasing Marie, he began untying the golden bow very carefully.

„Oh, come on Calypso,“ said Marie, „You can do better than that, rip it open.“

Calypso ripped it open. He couldn't believe what he was holding in his hands when the red paper had dropped on her bed. It was a West Indies One-Day International Cricket shirt, grey with a maroon collar and flanks with the One-Day international logo of stumps and ball on the breast.

„I don't know what to say,“ said Calypso, overwhelmed with the perfection of what Marie had given him.

„Look at the back.“ Marie took the shirt from him, unfolding it and turning it over. Across the shoulders written in bold maroon lettering was, „Calypso,“ and down the spine beaming proudly was the number „1“.

Calypso knitted his hands into his dreads and a huge smile spread across his face.

„Do you like it?“ asked Marie pulling at the short-sleeved shirt that Calypso was wearing.

„It’s the best thing I’ve ever been given Marie. I’ve always wanted one, but with my name and everything on it, it’s just too deadly you know.“

„Well try it on,“ she said unbuttoning his shirt. „I want you to wear it, see if it fits.“

Calypso ripped his shirt over his head and Marie squeezed his exposed bicep and then his chest, saying, „wit woo.“ Calypso pulled the new top over his trunk and looked at his reflection in Marie’s dresser mirror as she sat on her bed.

„It fits perfectly,“ he said.

Marie grabbed Calypso by the shorts and pulled him toward her and on top of her. Calypso and Marie looked at each other longingly, giggling at each other a little before they kissed. She put her hands up the back of his shirt and pulled him closer. Calypso didn’t want things to end but could also hear the laughter of his and Marie’s families in the background, particularly the laughter of Frankie.

„Look, I don’t want to stop but we need to get back out there, your old man’s gunna come in and string me up by the nuts any minute now.“

„I know,“ said Marie before laughing. „I mean, he’s not going to do that, but you know, we better get out there.“

Calypso and Marie walked out into the back yard, feeling like naughty school children. As soon as Frankie looked up to see Calypso in his brilliant West

Indies One-Day International cricket shirt he put his fingers to his mouth and wolf whistled. Then he said, „Is that Calypso or Viv Richards, the Master Blaster?“

„Turn around,“ said Linda who was sitting with Aunty Audrey, Stephanie, Evelyn and Cleo.

Calypso spun around like the models he had seen on Sale of the Century. The women applauded as they saw the gold lettering of his name and the number one on his back. John leant back and let out a belly laugh. „That“s a beauty.“

Run and Jamie, with beers in their hands, gave Calypso the thumbs up. Marie said, „Look what Calypso got me,“ as she flashed her jewelry for the women to see. Evelyn held back from telling Marie that she“d helped Calypso pick them out.

Frankie handed Calypso his beer and he took another polite sip, thinking about what his Caribbean friends would think of the top when they saw him in it at the cricket.

Despite having lots of opportunity, Run didn“t get past smiling at Cleo that Christmas day. He didn“t make an attempt to talk to her despite Calypso and Jamie“s encouragement. He simply sat back and drank beer, speaking with the boys. Calypso was glad for Run though; Jamie had offered to take Run out on the fishing boat he worked on.

When Calypso and Run were back at Calypso“s flat he said to Run, „You could have just talked to her you know, said hello or something.“

„I did say hello,“ Run replied.

„You could have talked to her, made an effort.“

„Oh come on, Calypso, you and I both know she“s too good for me.“

„How do you know that, Run?“

„If you“ve forgotten Calypso, my last girlfriend took off with a parking inspector. I don“t want that to happen again.“

„That won“t happen again, that was just bad luck.“

„Yeah, just my luck,“ said Run.

Calypso could tell that Run was a bit drunk and sensed that any more discussion could easily escalate into an argument. So as he often did when he wanted to communicate something to Run he put on a Bob Marley song, this time, *Lively Up Yourself* as he got ready for bed.

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Marie picked Calypso up first thing on Boxing Day to make the journey to Auntie Janet“s and Calypso was pleased to see that Marie was wearing the necklace and earrings that he had given her. Marie had already copied the Wham album to tape and he had to put up with listening to „Wake me up before you go go“ for what seemed to him a hundred times. They didn“t stop at Port Wakefield this time and they wouldn“t be staying overnight at Auntie Janet“s either. They would collect what they needed and then travel back home so they could get some rest before the big One-Day International match between Australia and the West Indies.

When they pulled into Auntie Janet“s drive Marie said, „Uncle Ray is here,“

when she spotted his car.

„Yeah, my cousin Bruce is here too,“ he said, seeing Bruce’s Toyota four-wheel drive. „You haven’t met him yet, he’s Vic’s cousin, my cousin too.“

„Cool,“ said Marie, „I hope Vic and Mel are here.“

„Don’t worry, they will be,“ he said confidently.

As soon as Calypso and Marie had pulled up out the front of Aunt Janet’s, Brea and Shae came out to meet them.

„Hello Calypso“, said Brea and Shae. They were whirling hoopla hoops around their waists.

„Hello, girls, did you have a good Christmas?“ asked Calypso.

„Yep,“ said Brea, followed by Shae.

„Brea and Shae, this is Marie,“ said Calypso trying to be cool.

„Hello“, they said in unison, whirling their hoops.

„You’re Calypso’s girlfriend hey?“ said Shae, letting her hoop drop to the dusty ground.

„Yes, I am,“ replied Marie with a little laugh.

„And you’re a hairdresser hey?“ asked Brea.

„That’s right,“ said Marie as Calypso took her by the hand.

„Do you reckon you could braid our hair Marie?“

„Maybe later,“ Calypso interjected. „We’ve got to go in and say hello to your Dad and Nan and all of the mob first.“

„Alright then,“ said Brea.

„See you later girls,“ said Marie as she and Calypso made their way up onto Auntie Janet’s porch and through her front door.

Calypso and Marie were greeted warmly with hugs and kisses from Auntie Janet, Uncle Ray, Mel and Vic. Calypso introduced Marie to Bruce and Shanti before Bruce said, „Okay, we know what we’re all here for, let’s all sit down now and get down to business“.

Auntie Janet, Uncle Ray, Vic, Bruce, Mel, Will and even the two old uncles Edward and Joseph all took a seat at Auntie Janet’s huge kitchen table. Calypso and Marie sat next to each other, holding hands beneath the table. They were nervous, like Calypso felt when he had his very first job interview.

There was silence for a moment as Auntie Janet took a sip of tea and Calypso and Marie looked anxiously at three full plastic bags in the middle of the table.

„Now, we’ve all spent quite a lot of time thinking and talking about this proposal you have with this Andre fella. This is an opportunity for you to tell us a bit more about it,“ said Bruce.

„Sure,“ said Calypso, „whatever you want to know.“

„So what are your intentions? Vic seemed serious and poker faced. But then he smiled and said, „Only joking cuz, what you want to do?“

„Well like I’ve told some of you already, one day I was at work and this Andre fella, who owns Andre’s Spa and Masseur called me up and said he wanted some Aboriginal herbs for his bath oils and lotions. I nearly fell off my seat when he said he’d give me three thousand dollars for three pounds of the stuff.“ Marie squeezed Calypso’s hand beneath the table in excitement.

„That’s shit loads of money,“ said Mel, „and for not much stuff. That’s more expensive than dope!“

„And how would you know that dear?“ asked Aunty Janet as she raised an eyebrow.

„That doesn’t matter,“ interjected Bruce. „Thing is, this Andre fella will probably break the plants down with other things, like they make eucalyptus oil. He’ll make the biggest mobs of tubes and things and sell them for lots more than he’s buying the plants.“

„So when Andre told me what he was after I spoke to Mum, because I thought she knew lots about bush medicine; I mean she used to be always talking about it, but she wouldn’t tell me nothing, instead she told me to come and speak with you mob.“

„So you didn’t really want to come say g’day to your family at all?“ asked Vic sternly. „You just wanted to get this stuff off of us, make some quick cash?“

„Nah, not at all, I was really happy to find out about all of you mob and the best thing...“

„Don't worry about him... shut up Vic," Mel butted in. „He's only messing with you, Calypso."

„So if we give you some plants and knowledge, where do you go from there?" asked Bruce.

„Well for a start, whatever profit I make, I want to share it with everyone."

„Fifty fifty?" asked Vic.

„Whatever! You can have more even. I mean, I was broke only a year or so ago and now I've got a job and.... I don't need nothing more really," he said glancing at Marie.

„Thanks cuz." Vic was smiling.

„I hope that if Andre likes the plants that he wants to keep buying more and that we can all be involved in growing the plants and harvesting them, making like a bit of a business."

„Oh, there will be no worries with growing the plants," said Aunty Janet before everyone laughed. „But this Andre fella, we'll have to find out a bit more about him. Uncle Ray had a look in the phone book the other day and reckons there's Andre shops all over the place."

„Andre spa, book, food and even didgeridoo shop. Yep... the Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane phone book reckons this Andre fella been everywhere," said Uncle Ray with a slow nod of his head.

Calypso shrugged his shoulders. He didn't think Andre could be the owner of all of the places Uncle Ray mentioned, and if so, didn't see a problem.

When everyone stopped laughing Bruce said, „Even though you“ve grown up in the city, you“re thinking like one of us cuz, you“re happy to share, have us all involved, therefore, we“re happy to share. The other thing is, as you“re aware, we need to start making some money with the property, to pay the bills, the land rates and things, to look after it.“

„Yeah, we don“t want no fucking sheep fucking it up,“ Vic protested.

Everyone shook their heads in agreement with Vic, even the two old Uncles, Edward and Joseph. Calypso was confused, he thought Vic wasn“t too fussed about the sheep. He was full of contradiction thought Calypso.

Then Bruce said, „See I spoke to a doctor at work about this thing and he said we need to get a scientist to pinpoint what is in these plants that make them work, what they call the *active ingredient*. Then we need to copyright them, so that we don“t get ripped off.“

„Too right,“ said Vic, „Did you know that just about all the medicines in the world are taken from people like us and they never get any credit or bunda for it?“

„Well that“s good if we can do it. I don“t want anyone to get ripped off,“ Calypso agreed. „And I understand what you“re saying, my boss Gary and I are always talking about what“s in the powders and stuff we sell at the health food shop that makes them work.“

„Well.... we“ve got our lawyer onto it, but until he helps us to organize a scientist and the copyright, we can only show you the plants, we can“t tell you their names. You have to promise that until these things are done, you can“t give Andre any more than what we“re supplying now,“ informed Bruce.

„Of course,” replied Calypso.

„Same here, I won’t say a thing.” Marie was getting excited, carried away with the business talk.

„Just show Calypso the plants and things,” growled Uncle Ray. „He’s your cousin, not the Devil.”

Mel, Vic and Bruce poured the contents of the bags onto the table. Three different types of plants were revealed along with four containers of liquid that looked like oil.

„They all work?” asked Calypso in surprise, thinking there would only be one type of plant.

„They all do different things, dear,” said Aunty Janet. „Some make water kind of bubble like fizzy drink, one relaxes you and smells nice.” She rubbed some leaves between her fingers and held them to her nose.

„Even make you horny too,” said Vic laughing before the other members of the family, including Calypso and Marie laughed along with him.

„And one releases all of these minerals that make you float in the water and clean all your skin. You can even make tooth-paste out of that one Vic is holding there too,” said Mel. „Lots of different things you can do with all of them really.”

„When you mix them all together they’re proper good for you, Calypso,” said Uncle Ray. „See, we cooked them all up in big pots and extracted their oils and things, that’s what is in the bottles there see? Sometimes we even mix it with emu or kangaroo fat to make it go further.”

Calypso could see some flagons full of the stuff on the kitchen bench. He took one of the bottles from the centre of the table and held it up to his eyes to see its consistency.

„This Andre fella is probably best to try the oils just as they are rather than the plants, but take the plants too,” said Aunty Janet. „I’ll show you how to make it like that one day.”

There was silence for a while as Calypso took the different samples and examined them, smelling them and rubbing them on his skin. Then he just sat there, looking at the plants and extracts very intently.

„What’s wrong, Calypso?” asked Aunty Janet.

„Oh nothing, everything is fine,” he responded. Secretly he was suddenly really worried that perhaps Andre wouldn’t want to buy the plants, and now he had to try to organize a way for Andre to test them out. „Are these plants hard to grow?” he asked.

Calypso’s family members began laughing, Vic and Mel so much that tears were welling in their eyes. When they had all calmed down a bit, Bruce said, „Come outside bruz and have a look.”

Calypso, Marie, Vic and Mel followed Bruce out of Aunty Janet’s house, through the backdoor and into the yard. As soon as they had taken just a few steps onto the parched dusty yard Mel said, „There’s one of the plants there see, just growing like weeds.”

Calypso and Marie tiptoed around the plants, careful not to damage them.

„Yeah, but look over the fence here,“ said Bruce motioning Calypso and Marie toward him with urgent waves of his hand and a huge smile on his face.

Calypso and Marie stood peering over the fence, Calypso with his arms resting on top of the corrugated iron sheets of Aunty Janet’s fence. He couldn’t believe what lay before him. An entire paddock stretched back for miles toward the hills full of two of the types of plants he’d been shown. Just as Mel had said, they were growing like weeds.

„My god,“ Calypso announced in disbelief.

„It’s everywhere,“ said Marie throwing her arm around Calypso’s waist and cuddling into him.

„If Andre, likes this stuff, we’re sitting on a gold mine, you realize, Calypso?“ said Bruce.

„I reckon,“ he said, his anxiety rising.

„And the other plant you showed us, where’s that?“ asked Marie.

„Oh there’s plenty of that too,“ said Vic enthusiastically. „It grows everywhere up near the hills. If we tried to grow it, harvest it, it would grow like wild fire.“

„It grows like wild fire anyway,“ said Vic.

Calypso couldn’t wait to put his plans in motion.

It wasn't until Calypso and Marie were in Marie's car and out of Aunt Janet's drive that all of the bottled up excitement came out. Marie rubbed Calypso's leg as if it were a lucky charm. „You're going to be rich, Calypso!”

„We're gunna be rich!” he said laughing and punching the air. „All of us, the whole mob!”

„So when you going to call Andre?” Marie asked.

„First thing in the morning, first thing, bright and early.” And then after thinking about the call that he would make to Andre he asked, „But what if he don't want it no more, what if he found something else?”

„Nah, he'll want it alright, if he was offering so much money for it, he'll want it real bad.”

„What if the scientist fellas can't find those active ingredient things, what if that don't work out?” asked Calypso.

„That will be a cinch for them, they do it all the time,” said Marie adjusting her rearview mirror. „It's like the shampoo that we sell at work, companies are always getting scientists to say what's in it. Shampoo is just made out of plants and things too you know? Imagine if we made shampoo out of some of those plants? You could you know, they smelt pretty good.”

„Yeah, we could call that shampoo, „Calypso Curls,” joked Calypso.

„You call them curls?” Marie pulled one of his locks playfully.

When Marie and Calypso reached the outskirts of the city, all the city lights spread out before them like a mirror of an ancient night sky. Calypso started to

think about how heated things had been getting with Marie in her bedroom on Christmas day. He knew she wanted him and thought that it was perhaps time to ask her if she wanted to stay the night. He wanted to be closer to her, to wake up with her beside him. He could no longer try to quash his desire for Marie for the sake of being gentlemanly. They'd been dating for a while now, and he knew he was in love with her, in love like he'd never been before. He watched Marie's mouth as she sang along to the Bananarama song *Cruel Summer* and then he traced her shoulders with his eyes, and her arms, to her hands resting on the steering wheel.

Marie turned to Calypso and placed her hand on his leg. „What's wrong?"

„Nothing, why?"

„You've just been quiet for a while, that's all."

„Just thinking," he said with a smile.

As Calypso and Marie got closer to his suburb, Calypso could feel his skin becoming prickly with heat and nervousness. He grabbed his bottle of water and had a swig to quell the dryness of his mouth.

Nearing Calypso's street Marie said, „You'll have to call me straight after you speak with Andre okay?"

„Of course."

„I'm sure he'll have good news for you," Marie assured him.

„We'll see," he said as Marie pulled the car into the driveway of Calypso's block of flats.

When Marie stopped the car they sat in silence until Marie said, „I hate it when I have to say goodbye.“ Calypso didn’t say anything. He simply leaned over and began kissing her. Marie wrapped her hands around his neck and he began to pull her towards him. After a while Calypso asked, „Do you want to stay the night?“ Marie kissed Calypso again and he took this as a „yes“. But then Marie drew back and said, „I’d love to but I can’t, not tonight.“

„Sorry, I don’t mean to be rushing you.“

„No, you’re not rushing me at all,“ Marie assured him. „It’s just not right time tonight, not the right time of the... you know...“

„Oh,“ said Calypso understanding.

„It’s a bummer, I know,“ said Marie.

Calypso kissed Marie on the forehead and said, „Well I’ll dream of you then.“

„And I’ll dream of you,“ said Marie.

Calypso leant over to grab his knapsack and plastic bags full of plants. There were also some full garbage bags on the back seat, making up at least five pounds of the plants. Calypso opened the door and let Marie’s hand slide out of his. He grabbed the full garbage bags off of the backseat and then walked around to Marie to give her one last kiss.

„Remember, call me straight after you’ve talked to Andre.“

Calypso began hauling the garbage bags full of plants up his stairs. He

stopped to watch Marie reverse out of his drive. The „Resident Parking Only“ sign annoyed him, written in bold red writing and positioned in the centre of his block of flats. He was keen to put the plants securely in his wardrobe. When he reached the top steps he could see a neighbor peering through her curtains at him. When she realized that Calypso had spotted her, the curtain snapped back into place. „Nosy old bugger,“ he thought, „Get a life.“

Calypso sat eating coco pops with the phone right in front of him on his coffee table. He watched the clock on his kitchen wall as he waited for nine o'clock to roll around. After his breakfast he busied himself with washing dishes. Then he drank a glass of water. And then he simply paced up and down in the living room, staring at the clock as it slowly nudged closer to nine. At five past nine he opened up his phone directory and dialed the number he had written down under A, for Andre.

The phone rang for a while and Calypso started to wonder if he had calculated the time difference between Adelaide and Sydney correctly.

„Andre“s Sydney Spa Palace,“ finally came the very professional voice of a young woman.

„Hello, it“s Calypso Summers, is Andre George there?“

„Mr George is busy with a client at the moment.“

Fuck, thought Calypso.

„Would you like to leave a message?“

„Yes, please, can you let him know that Calypso Summers called and that I have the supply for him?“

„Of course, would you like to leave your number?“

Calypso gave his number and hung up the phone. He went to his kitchen sink to grab a can of Ajax. He thought he'd give the bathroom a bit of a scrub in case Marie stayed the night after their day at the cricket.

Shortly after sprinkling a generous amount of Ajax in the bathtub and basin, the phone rang. Calypso placed the can of Ajax on his washing machine and raced to his phone. He took a few breaths before he picked it up.

„Hello, Mr Calypso, it is Andre George. How are you?“

„I'm good thanks, Andre. I was calling to tell you that I have the plants that you are after, the Aboriginal ones.“

„The herbs, with relaxation enhancement?“ Andre sounded excited.

„Yes, those ones, the plants,“ said Calypso thinking himself too nervous to say the word enhancement without stuttering.

„Three pounds of it?“

„More, more than that,“ Calypso said coolly.

„More?“

„Yes, I have about five pound here but I can get more, much, much more.“

„This is very good Mr Calypso, I look forward to trying it.“

„Yes, I was thinking about that Andre, what would you like me to do? Do you want me to send it?“ Calypso tried to conceal his nervousness.

„No no no Mr Calypso, I will come to Adelaide in three days, to travel to the Barossa Valley to buy some wine before flying back to Sydney to celebrate the New Year.

„Where would you like to try the plants, the herbs? I guess you would want to try them in a spa?“

„I will be staying at the Hilton, you can meet me there. Are you knowing where it is?“

Of course Calypso knew where the Hilton was, it was right on Victoria Square, where small groups of Aboriginal people could often be found sitting and drinking and whom he enjoyed speaking with when he met them. They were the annoyance of the city council, the police, any white person that claimed ownership of the city, especially the business owners surrounding the square, especially the staff of the Hilton. He doubted if any Aboriginal people had been inside, not even as maids, and if they had, he imagined them being tossed out on the street. He decided his chances of being let into the Hilton were slim if not impossible but asked anyway, „When can I meet you there?“

„In the afternoon, perhaps one o'clock is a nice time. Is this okay?“

„Yes, of course.“

„Just get the reception to call me, okay?“

„Okay, I will.“

„I look very forward to meeting with you Mr Calypso,“ said Andre.

„Hello, Marie.“

„Yep, hello. What did he say?“

„Andre said he“s coming to Adelaide.“

„When?“

„He wants me to meet him on the 30th.“

„Gees, that“s quick!“

„Yeah, I know, he“s coming to Adelaide to buy some wine or something.“

„True, he must be really rich that fella.“

„Do you reckon you and your Dad could come with me? He wants me to meet him at the Hilton.“

„The Hilton, that“s pretty flash. Yeah I“ll come for sure! I“ll ask Dad. I“m sure he will.“

„Deadly,“ said Calypso. „Hey, Marie, would you mind if I dropped around?“

„You know I want you to Calypso, but I’m not feeling great, you know?“

Calypso remembered what Marie had told him the night before. „No worries then, just give me a call when you’re feeling up to it.“

„For sure Calypso, and, oh Calypso, congratulations, you’re such a champ.“

When Calypso got off the phone he rinsed out his bath and basin and jumped on his bike to ride down to the beach for a swim.

Calypso and Marie decided to catch the bus to the cricket so that they wouldn’t have the hassle of looking for parking and could avoid the traffic when trying to leave the oval after the game. Other cricket fans had the same idea. When Calypso and Marie waited for the bus to roll down Henley Beach Road they were joined by teenagers wearing green and gold caps and Dennis Lillee T-shirts. There were kids with their cricket bats and balls and a couple of old men wearing socks and sandals, shorts and fifties style hats pressing their transistor radios up to their ears to hear the pre-game commentary.

Calypso knew that all of the people were looking at him in his West Indies One-Day International shirt and his red, green and gold tam pulled down over his dreads, with some of them jutting out the back.

One of the old men looked at Calypso from his seat in the bus shelter. With a smirk on his face he asked, „You look the part, do you reckon you fellas will bat or bowl if Lloyd wins the toss?“

In his best Jamaican accent Calypso said, „Lbyd will have to send dem in to bat first mahn, for dare to be some type of competishon“. Calypso could see that Marie was trying to hold back from giggling but he continued, „It would be marder for Australia to bat first. Our bowling is tap natch mahn. De will have little opportunity of makin any ruhns. It will be gayme over very eearly“.

„Yep, I hope you guys bat first too, or else it might be a short day at the cricket.“ The old man pressed his transistor radio back to his ear.

When Calypso and Marie lined up at the Victor Richardson gates waiting to enter the Adelaide Oval Calypso began to get a lot of attention from cricket fans on the outer of the famous ground. A little girl came up to Calypso and noted, „Can I feel your hair?“ Calypso bent down and said, „De tek a long time to grow yu nuh,“ as she pressed one of his dreads between her fingers. The little girl’s mother, dressed in tight long shorts, a wide brimmed hat and big sunglasses spotted her daughter and walked over. She took the girl by the hand saying, „Leave the man alone.“

„It’s okay mahn,“ said Calypso with a smile as the mother whisked her daughter away.

„I thought you had another girlfriend for a while there,“ said Marie before they heard boisterous calls of „Calypso.“ A small group of men around Calypso’s age had obviously already had a few beers. They came up and patted him on the back. „You should be playing out there today mate,“ said one of them. Another lent in closely and said, „Hey Calypso, you know where I can get some ganja?“

„Yeah mahn, Jamaica! But I got noting,“ said Calypso to the laughter of the group before they moved on.

„I’ve finally got my own West Indian cricketer,“ said Marie as they pushed

forward in line, tickets in hand to be stamped. „More importantly,” she whispered as she squeezed his hand, „I’m going to have my own rich Nukunu Rasta.”

This comment made Calypso nervous, He tried not to think too much about it. He liked it better when Marie was happy with him not having a car and content with having a dinky on his bike down to the beach.

Marie couldn’t help but laugh hard at the attention that Calypso received as they walked around the boundary to the spot where his Caribbean friends would be, sitting near the boundary in line with the historic scoreboard. Some of the men on the „hill”, the place close to the bar where men spend more time drinking than watching the cricket, saw Calypso. They sang out in unison, „I don’t like cricket, oh no, I love it.” This had happened on the last few occasions that Calypso had been to the cricket.

„It’s usually only girls in bikinis that cause so much of a fuss, you know Calypso,” said Marie.

„What can I say,” said Calypso, „they love me.”

„I love you too,” Marie said.

Calypso set down the small foam esky full of water and fruit he was carrying and looked and whispered „I love you” in Marie’s ear.

When he kissed her, calls of „get a room,” and wolf whistles came from the hooligans on the hill.

Calypso took Marie’s hand and picked up the esky. „I’ve never told anyone that before you know,” he said as they walked towards Calypso’s spot.

„Hmm hmmm,“ replied Marie, „I know what you mean.“

As Calypso expected, his Caribbean friends Liston, Cephus and Mardi were down by the boundary in line with the scoreboard. Liston beat on his steel drum when he saw Calypso and then they all hugged and there was lots of „How you doing mahn?“ Calypso introduced Marie to his Jamaican friends. Calypso had met the Jamaicans at the cricket during a One-Day International game in 1980. They were a few years older than Calypso and lived and worked Australia. They always told Calypso that if he ever wanted to go to Jamaica, to let them know, so that he could stay with their families. Calypso hoped that he would one day take them up on their offer. He knew that the Jamaicans all had really good jobs but still couldn't work out why these guys would want to leave Jamaica to live in Australia.

A roar went up around the ground when the West Indies, led by their captain Clive Lloyd, walked onto the oval for a warm up. „Look, there's Viv Richards,“ said Marie, bouncing on her toes and pointing in his direction. „Yeah, I see him,“ Calypso said, watching him walk along side of Michael Holding and Jeoff Dujon.

„I better get some shots,“ said Marie, taking a camera from her bag.

Calypso thought the camera looked pretty flash with a big lens and all. He was impressed watching Marie snap away at events taking place on the oval before turning and taking a shot of him.

Liston again began beating out a tune on his steel drum to the delight of the crowd. „I can't wait for the game to start,“ said Marie, rubbing her hands together. „Neither can I,“ said Calypso looking into the gathering crowd for Run and Robbie.

His efforts to spot Run and Robbie were fruitless as the Australian side stepped onto the oval and the Australian fans rose to their feet and began cheering. „Come on Aussie, C“mon, C“mon.“

„Look there“s Kim Hughes,“ said Marie, tugging on Calypso“s shirt. „Do you reckon he will make some runs?“ Marie was doubtful, given Hughes“ recent string of ducks.

„Well, like I said to that old man, if they win the toss and bat first, let“s hope that one of the Australians makes runs or we“ll be home well before dinner time.“

To the despair of Calypso, Marie and their Jamaican friends, Allan Border won the toss and sent Australia in to bat first. There seemed to be a hush around the ground that Calypso read as apprehension on the behalf of the Australian crowd.

As both of the teams made their way into the change rooms Calypso turned and peered up into the crowd on the hill. After a while Marie asked, „You looking for Run?“

„Yeah, I thought he would be here, I mean Evelyn bought him his ticket for Christmas,“ he replied shaking his head.

„He“ll be here, I“m sure,“ said Marie.

Liston held out his drum sticks to Marie and asked, „You want to have a hit sister?“ Marie looked at Calypso with uncertainty. „Go on,“ he said,“ play some Madonna.“

Marie took the drumsticks and asked Liston, „What do I do?“

„Yuh jus hit di drum in difren sections to get difren tones,“ he replied, taking one stick from Marie and demonstrating.

Marie hit the outer of the drum softly with her right drum stick and to her delight a rich and vibrant tone emerged. She hit the drum again, followed with a strike of her left, and then continued hitting different parts of the drum to produce what could almost pass as a melody.

When Marie stopped, people sitting around her clapped. She had a huge smile spread across her face as she handed the sticks back to Liston. Calypso was laughing and Liston, Cephus and Mardi laughed and shook their heads in appreciation. „Yeah mahn,“ cheered Cephus. „Are you sirtion you“re nuh Jamaican,“ joked Mardi. Marie couldn“t help but giggle.

The West Indian team and the two Australian opening batsmen Steven Smith and Kepler Wessels made their way out onto the oval with the umpires and again a huge roar came from the crowd. Calypso watched some small boys scampering through the throng of spectators, collecting the plastic beer cups scattered beneath people“s feet. It took him back to when he was a boy, collecting cups to stick in the chain fencing on the outer of the ground to spell out the name of his cricketing hero. Calypso wondered which cricketer“s name the boys had selected to emblazon with beer cups across the fence.

As a boy in a white slouch cricket hat scampered away from beneath his feet with a plastic beer cup to add to his stack, Calypso felt someone poke him in the right shoulder blade. He turned around to his right to only see Marie standing beside him. Then he turned to his left to find Run and Robbie, giggling with reddened eyes. „Nice to see you boys made it, where have you been,“ said Calypso, shaking their hands in clasped handshake style.

„We just had some business to take care of,“ Run smirked.

„Yeah, some business to take care of,” mimicked Robbie, dazed by the crowd and atmosphere.

„I can see you fellas have been taking care of business,” said Calypso leaning in close to them and peering into their reddened eyes.

„Don’t do that,” said Run, „Like we’re not the only blackfellas here, everyone will be looking at us as it is.”

Calypso knew what Run meant. Other than the West Indians on the field and their Jamaican friends, they must have been the only black people at the ground and it was unwise to draw attention to themselves, particularly when Run and Robbie were stoned out of their minds.

„Robbie, this is Marie,” said Calypso, grabbing Marie by the hand.

„Oh, hi Robbie,” she said, preoccupied.

„Hi, Robbie, I’m Marie,” he said to Run and Calypso’s amusement. Marie hadn’t even noticed Robbie’s slip of the tongue; she had already turned her attention back to the West Indian cricket team who were limbering up and taking their positions in the field.

Calypso could see Robbie looking Marie up and down. She was wearing a bikini beneath a pink boob tube dress. There were thongs on her feet and her hair was tied back in a pony tail. Calypso didn’t know whether to give Robbie a playful jab in the guts or just be happy that his girlfriend was so spunky. Calypso wrapped his arm around Marie and rubbed her shoulder tenderly as Malcolm Marshall took his mark in preparation for his first delivery to Smith. Calypso started to think that maybe it was a blessing that Australia were batting first; the

game would be over in no time and he could take Marie back to his place sooner than expected.

Applause built as Malcolm Marshall strode toward the crease to release his opening ball. And then an oooohhhh from the crowd as the ball beat the batsman and met the safe hands of the wicket keeper Dujon.

„This is the most exciting part isn't it Calypso,?“ said Marie. „Anything can happen.“

„Yeah, it is, but let's hope the Windies are having a bad day.“ Then Calypso whispered into Marie's ear, „or else I'll have you home in my bed in no time.“

Marie jabbed Calypso in the ribs with her elbow. „There's plenty of time for that Calypso, come on we're watching the cricket.“

Calypso found it hard to concentrate on the cricket, Marie staying over and meeting with Andre the next day. Sure he enjoyed seeing his beloved West Indies, especially when Gabriel launched two huge sixes. But as expected, things went the West Indies way just a little too easily. The only Australian batsmen that performed were Smith with 55 and Rodney Marsh with 34 runs not out, bringing the Australian's score to 165. For the West Indies however Gabriel, Gomes, Lloyd and Augustus Logie all performed. The West Indies won by 6 wickets with 29 balls remaining.

„Viktry,“ announced Calypso, when Logie hit the winning run. Calypso, Marie, Run, Robbie, Liston, Cephus and Mardi all gave each other high fives. They applauded the West Indies as they waved at the crowd in appreciation. Liston began packing away his steel drum in a cardboard box. The Australian fans began their depressed exodus from the ground and Calypso and Marie took

each other's hand and turned to Run and Robbie.

„So what you doing now bruz?“ Calypso asked Run.

„We're going back to Robbie's for a smoke, I guess,“ answered Run. „You want to come?“

„It noh funny,“ said Calypso imagining himself as Linton Kwesi Johnson.

„So what are you going to do,“ asked Run, „Fish and chips on the beach or a cruise on the Love Boat?“

„What?“ asked Marie.

„Nothing,“ said Calypso coolly, „We'll see you guys later, hope you had a good time, make sure you thank Evelyn for your ticket and the day.“ Calypso picked up his things and turned to leave.

„Nice to see you Run, and to meet you too Robbie. See you soon,“ said Marie before Calypso led her out through the crowd.

When Calypso and Marie had left the foot traffic pouring out of Adelaide oval like a gushing tap they walked over to a quiet spot beneath the palms of the outer of the ground in the dusk and embraced passionately. Calypso really didn't want to let go of Marie, he couldn't believe how lucky he was, having this beautiful girl. Finally, Calypso held Marie's hips close to him and asked, „What do you want to do?“

„I want to get back to your place of course, quickly,“ she said and kissed him again.

„We should catch a taxi.“

„Yep, let’s go, there should be some up at parliament house,“ Marie said, pulling him along by the arm.

Calypso and Marie were almost jogging as they made their way down King William Road, crossing the Torrens River on their way toward Parliament House, in hope that a taxi would be awaiting them at the rank. Their pulses were racing, and they turned and laughed at each other, realizing how urgent they were to get back to Calypso’s flat. There were still lots of cricket fans surrounding them on the footpath and traffic banked up on King William Road. Three men with Australian flags draped over their backs blocked the path as they staggered drunkenly and singing Waltzing Matilda.

As they approached the Adelaide Festival Theatre Calypso saw wealthy white people coming out of the theatre.

„Man I’m worried that we’re just going to get kicked out of the Hilton.“

„Don’t worry about that Calypso, Dad will be with us. He used to be a tour guide remember? He’s used to that type of place. Anyway, don’t worry about that, let’s just get a taxi.“

When Calypso and Marie reached Parliament House and turned down North Terrace they saw a lineup of people waiting to catch a taxi at the rank. „Fuck it,“ thought Calypso, „if only they knew, they’d let me jump to the front of the queue.“

„Don“t worry,“ said Marie sensing Calypso“s thoughts, „we have all night.“

They sauntered to the back of the taxi queue, smiling at each other, watching each other“s every move, dizzy with anticipation.

Looking for a distraction Marie said, „The Windies were brilliant today weren“t they?“

„Certainly were, but imagine if they batted first, there would have been a lot more action hey? But I guess we wouldn“t be here right now would we, we“d be waiting even longer to get out of here,“ said Calypso.

Three taxis pulled into the rank and it seemed like half of the queue were carried away in them.

„You know, when Australia went in to bat first, that“s what I was thinking, at least I could be alone with you sooner.“

Another couple of taxis pulled up to the rank and customers were opening their doors before they“d even come to a halt. Calypso and Marie liked the way things were speeding along. They were now at the front of the queue. Calypso stepped out onto the road whenever there was a break in the traffic, watching the road ahead like a hawk, waiting for a taxi to come his way. He started to wish they had taken Marie“s car to the cricket. Even if they had been caught in the traffic, at least they“d be rolling toward their destination.

When a cab finally approached Calypso returned to the curb to gather his things. When the cab stopped, Marie jumped into it immediately and Calypso slid in next to her in the back seat. The driver turned to say, „where you going?“ Calypso, Marie and the driver got the shock of their lives. It was as if a bomb had

gone off in their living rooms. The driver realized his passengers were Calypso and Marie and they realized their driver was Gary. Calypso stared at Gary in his fawn taxi driver shirt and slacks.

„What a bloody day to see you,“ said Gary. „I guess you two enjoyed the game?“

The taxi in the rear beeped its horn and Gary pulled into the traffic on North Terrace.

„What are you doing Gary, driving a cab? When did you start doing this? And why?“ asked Calypso.

„Sorry Calypso, I thought I could get through this without telling you.“

„Telling me what?“ Calypso, looked at Marie, reclined in her seat and looking impatient.

„Things haven“t been going so well so I“ve had to do a bit of moonlighting.“

„What do you mean things haven“t been going so well?“ asked Calypso as Gary pulled up a red traffic light. „Business has been great.“

Marie shook her head in agreement with Calypso. „Yeah, most of the women that come to the salon visit your store these days.“

„It“s not really the business, it“s something else... „

„What?“

„I“ve got some gambling debts, Calypso.“

„But what about the Christmas bonus you gave me?“

„I had a win... a good day.“ Gary reached into his shirt pocket to grab a cigarette before turning onto King William Road. „Where we going to anyway?“ he asked as he lit the cigarette.

„My place... so how bad is it?“ asked Calypso.

„I’ve been down about six weeks rent since September.“ Gary sounded like he’d just been kicked in the guts.

„Explains why you’re always late to pay me.“

There was a silence as Calypso looked at Marie despondently. Apart from worrying about Gary, he was also sure that any desire that Marie had for him had now faded, the moment was lost. Calypso leant back in the seat and watched the people waiting at bus stops and walking down the busy city footpath. He couldn’t believe he was feeling so low only moments after watching the West Indies win and the urge he and Marie had to get home.

Gary stopped at another set of traffic lights on the verge of Victoria Square. Marie clipped Calypso on the thigh a couple of times to get his attention and pointed to the hotel across the road: the Hilton, tall and white and cold. Calypso didn’t even want to think about meeting Andre at that moment. He was too pissed off with Gary.

„If I don’t pay the rent in the next fortnight, I’ll probably have my legs broken... and worse... lose the business. I’m sorry mate, I thought I could get us through this.“

„You don“t think you“ll have enough money by then?“

„I“ll be a few hundred short, and I hope that if I just beg a bit, they might give me another few weeks. Problem is mate, I“ve got an addiction... and who knows what I could lose in a few weeks?“

Calypso felt an inkling of pity for Gary. He could see that he was obviously upset and embarrassed and for a moment it crossed his mind that if he got the money from Andre for the gear he could probably help Gary clear his debts. But as quick as this thought had come he resigned himself. No way could he attempt to save Gary. The understanding crashed down on Calypso like ice water; Gary had no respect for him or for himself. He“d treated Calypso like his puppet and Calypso saw that his kindness wasn“t genuine. It was all for the sake of profit, just a simple business transaction. No longer was he going to do the whole „Cool Mahn“ Jamaican thing for Gary, practically running his business.

„I“ve been thinking about going to this alcoholics anonymous thing for gamblers you know? It“s not like I don“t want to change, it“s just hard mate...very, very bloody hard,“ explained Gary.

„It“ll be alright,“ said Marie reaching over the seat and patting Gary on the shoulder.

Calypso knew that Gary was probably going to have to hit rock bottom before he learned a hard lesson and took the first steps to recovery. If Gary didn“t lose his business in a couple of weeks, it was only a matter of time. Calypso took a deep breath as he contemplated the hassle of finding another job.

Trying to hide his anger Calypso asked, „Do you reckon I should start looking for another job then?“

Gary didn't say anything for a long while. He simply sucked deeply on his cigarette. „So what do you reckon boss?“

Gary exhaled. „If it wasn't for you mate, we wouldn't have got this far. I mean look at me, I'm just a burnt out old punter.“

Calypso held back from kicking the back of the taxi seat. Although Calypso wasn't sure that Marie understood the full scope of his dilemma he saw that her face was ashen.

„Gary,“ said Calypso, without a hint of apology, „I'm going to leave work early tomorrow.“

„Do what you have to do,“ said Gary downheartedly as he pulled into the driveway of Calypso's block of flats.

Marie grabbed Calypso's hand just before the taxi pulled to a halt but it didn't help to reassure him. Calypso broke free from her gentle grip and reached for his wallet. Marie jumped out of the taxi, taking Calypso's backpack and esky with her. Calypso pulled his wallet from his pocket in a rush to find the right change. When Gary saw what Calypso was doing he waved his hand. „Put it away, don't worry about it mate, it's the least I can do.“

„You sure?“ asked Calypso, watching Marie racing up the stairs to his flat.

„I'll see you tomorrow. Looks like Marie's in a rush.“

Marie had pulled Calypso's keys out of his bag by the time he reached the top of the stairs and was trying to open his door. „Do you want me to do it?“ he

asked. „Think you better,” Marie said. The mood between them was now a little tense.

Calypso’s head was in a spin from Gary’s news. Marie dropped Calypso’s esky and backpack on the floor, wrapped her arms around Calypso and kissed him on the forehead.

„It’ll be alright,” she whispered.

„I don’t think it will be,” he said breaking free from Marie to turn on the light and grab a glass of water from the kitchen.

„Do you want one?”

Marie shook her head.

„I knew it was too good to be true,” said Calypso.

„What?”

„The work with Gary, I knew I couldn’t trust him. He was always sneaking around or just being damn slack.”

„It’ll be alright Calypso,” said Marie as she sat on his bamboo print cane lounge and patted the spot beside her.

Reluctantly Calypso sat beside her. His confidence had disappeared. Marie put her arm around his shoulder and Calypso felt some comfort breathing in her scent. She pushed Calypso back into the cushions and straddled him, kissing him but Calypso gently pushed her back.

„Can you smell something?“

„No,“ she whispered, kissing him.

With Marie straddled over him Calypso couldn't believe that he was distracted but he was really feeling defeated.... and he definitely could smell something and it certainly wasn't Marie. Marie broke away from Calypso.

„What's wrong, can you smell it too?“ he asked.

„Calypso,“ she said, „don't worry about it.“

But Calypso had too many worries.

Suddenly there was a knock on the door. Calypso thought it might be Run and Robbie back from the cricket. Marie pulled away from him and shook her head.

„It's the police.“

„Oh shit,“ said Marie, getting up and straightening her dress. „What do we do?“

„Fuck,“ said Calypso aware now of what he could smell...ganja, Run's ganja.

„Marie, „I have to open the door, but you have to believe me that it's not mine, it Run's ganja, not mine okay... but I can't tell them, I just can't“

Marie nodded her head. Calypso opened the door with Marie clinging closely behind him.

Two police officers towered over them and one of them said, „Mr Kyle Summers, I am Constable Williams. We have a warrant to search your property for drugs.“

„Jesus Christ,“ said the other Constable. „Can you smell that?“ The officers brushed past Calypso and Marie and entered the flat.

Calypso was struck with fear. He had heard more stories than he could remember about police officers nearly killing Aboriginal people for the smallest offence. Most of all he was afraid for Marie. He’d heard stories about young Aboriginal women being strip searched without reason, raped even.

He couldn’t tell the cops that the drugs were Run’s but insisted, „It’s not mine!“

„Sure,“ said the other police officer, Constable Wilmot, „and we haven’t received reports of a black bastard with dreadlocks hauling garbage bags of dope up to this flat.“

„But it wasn’t dope. It was something else.“

The Constables didn’t listen. Wilmot turned to Williams and said, „I’ll grab the gear. Keep an eye on these two, we’ll get their details down at the station.“

„Down at the station?“ Marie began to cry. Calypso placed his arm around her, but Constable Williams separated them, pulling Calypso by the shoulder.

„You’re under investigation, this isn’t no hippy love in, mate.“

Calypso could hear things being ripped and smashed and banged around

in his room and then Run's room. After a few minutes Constable Wilmot dragged two cardboard boxes of ganja out of Run's room.

„Nah mate, you weren't stashing dope at all were you?“

Calypso protested, „I don't know anything about it.“

Constable Williams paid no attention. He walked into Calypso's room and returned immediately with Calypso's garbage bags full of plants and the bottles of liquid extract from the native plants.

„What are these doing in your room then?“ asked Constable Williams.

„That's not dope, look at it.“

Constable Williams opened a garbage bag and plunged his hands into the leaves. „What is it then?“

„It's native plants, we're going to use it for bath oils.“

Constable Williams and Wilmot looked at each other.

„I've got to hand it to you mate, that's the most original load of shit I've ever heard, you little black bastard,“ said Constable Wilmot.

„It's true,“ sobbed Marie.

„Whatever it is,“ said Constable Williams, „We'll be checking this out too.“

„But I need it,“ said Calypso, raising his voice.

„I“msure you do,” said Constable Williams, „but if you haven“t noticed, you“re in deep shit. There has to be kilos of cannabis here.“

Constable Wilmot shook his head. „You can tell your story down at the station,” he said.

Calypso and Marie were lead to the patrol car with Wilmot forcefully pushing Calypso as he walked.

„Fuck off,” Calypso protested.

A neighbor peered at them through their windows as Calypso and Marie were shunted into the back seat of the police vehicle. Calypso felt like yelling abuse at them but his focus was on consoling Marie. „It“s going to be okay,” he said, as Constable Williams opened the boot and shoved in the mother load of cannabis and native plants.

„How can you be sure?”

„I“msure. We“ll get them to call your Dad when we get to the station.“

As the police car pulled out of Calypso“s drive he began to explain his business with Andre George but Constable Williams turned to him and said, „Save it for the station, you little wannabe Bob Marley prick.“

As the police vehicle passed by the familiar houses on Calypso“s street he sat there cursing Run, thinking that he“d have to hold himself back from killing him the next time he laid eyes on Run.

Calypso and Marie were pushed into an office when they arrived at the Henley Beach Police Station. Williams prepared an ink-pad and pulled out a folder from his desk drawer.

„I want to call my Dad?“ Marie insisted.

„Why?“ asked Constable Wilmot.

„We“re allowed one call. I want my Dad with me when you take our statements.“

„I tell you what you can and can“t have, this ain“t television you know girl.“.

„How old are you?“ asked constable Williams.

„Nineteen.“

„You“re an adult, no need for a parent to be present.“

„What about a lawyer?“ asked Calypso.

„Does Bob Marley here have a lawyer does he?“ Constable Wilmot sneered.

Calypso wished he could take a swipe at them.

„I want my Dad here... now!“

The two officers looked at each other and Constable Williams said to Constable Wilmot, „Get him down here, he might be involved too.“

„My Dad works in a health clinic.“

„Yeah, right, and your boyfriend Bob here is in the massage lotion business,“ said Constable Williams. The two police officers laughed.

„Fucking arseholes.“

„It's alright Marie, don't let them get to you.“

Constable Williams grabbed Marie's hand and pushed her thumb down onto the inkpad and then onto paper. Calypso gritted his teeth.

When Marie and Calypso's fingerprints were taken Constable Williams began taking their details.

„Nationality?“ He didn't wait for Calypso to answer.

„Abo... little wannabe Bob Marley prick.“ He wrote on his note pad and then looked up at Marie.

„Nationality?“

„Aboriginal.“

„Yeah, right and I“m Bill fucking Cosby.“

„You“re too hot to be a nigger, love.“

Not far from the desk where they were being questioned Calypso could see a police baton resting on the edge of another desk. He desperately wanted to grab it and swing recklessly at the officers.

Williams hooked the tip of his pen under the strap of Marie“s bikini top. She flinched as the tip of the pen scraped her skin. Calypso couldn“t tolerate it any longer.

„Fuck you,“ he exploded jumping to his feet.

Constable Wilmot grabbed Calypso“s arm and twisted it behind his back and pushed his head into the table. „You calm? Are you calm?“ he repeated.

„I“mcool, I“m cool,“ said Calypso, letting his body go limp.

Constable Wilmot released his grip on Calypso slowly and pushed him into his seat. Calypso, catching his breath, looked at Marie. „Just tell them what they need... don“t worry about what they say, and don“t worry about a thing, it“s all going to be alright.“ But he didn“t know if anything would be alright, and he didn“t think he had a hope in hell of helping Marie through what was ahead of them.

Frankie entered the interview room. In his leather thongs, pastel green

tropical shorts and short-sleeved shirt, he looked like any other working class Aussie bloke.

„Mr Stewart,” said Williams jumping from his chair and holding out his hand for Frankie to shake.

Calypso could see that Frankie was extremely pissed off with him.

„What in the bloody hell were you thinking Calypso, getting my daughter into this situation?” Frankie growled.

„You alright love?”

Marie wiped her cheeks. “I’m okay,” she said. „It’s not Calypso’s fault.”

„So why you got these kids here?”

„We found a large amount of cannabis in Mr Summers apartment and other suspect material.” Constable Williams taped his notebook.

„What suspect material?”

„The native plants for Andre,” Marie blubbered.

The expression on Frankie’s face changed. „Come on fellas,” he pleaded, „that’s native plants that Calypso has been collecting for his business.”

„There was cannabis there too,” Calypso said. „But it’s not mine and I’m not telling them whose it is. What do they expect treating us like dogs.”

Frankie took a seat at the table between Calypso and Marie.

He looked steadily at the two young Constables.

„Look there“s obviously been a mix up here. I know Calypso looks like your man, but he“s a good kid. I mean I can“t even get him to have a beer with me. There“s no way he“s a drug dealer. My daughter here, she“s my only daughter. I wouldn“t let her spend her time with some young punk. He“s a good kid,“ he said gripping Calypso by the shoulder.

Constable Williams tapped his pen against his chin as Wilmot simply stared down at the note pad before him. „Is it someone else“s cannabis Mr Summers?“ asked Constable Williams.

Calypso sat there as if there was no one else in the room, as if no question had been asked of him.

„Calypso,“ said Frankie, „you might as well tell them, they“ll find out anyway.“

Calypso could tell that Frankie was furious with him. He looked up at Marie“s red face. „I“m sorry I“ve got Marie into this mess, Frankie, but there“s no way I“m telling them anything. When you find out how they treated us you“ll know why.,“

„Well we“ll just have to put you in a cell until we find out who this gear belongs to,“ Constable Williams barked.

„Is this what you want?“ Frankie asked.

Calypso shook his head.

„You“re free to take your daughter home Mr Stewart but we“ll have to keep Mr Summers in custody until we get to the bottom of this. Constable William“s opened the door.

„Look Calypso,“ said Frankie gathering up Marie, „just hang in there and I“ll see what I can do about your meeting tomorrow.“

Calypso felt like being sick as Frankie and Marie left the station.

„How long do I have to stay here?“ Calypso asked when Constable Wilmot pushed him through the door to the cell.

„As long as I want or until we find another suspect.“ The officer slammed the door.

Calypso had never been in a police cell before although he“d anticipated it happening when he smoked and sold ganja. Being there now he felt powerless beyond belief, like an ant waiting to be trodden upon. Calypso sat on the edge of the cell bed as he watched the Constable lock the door and walk away. He would be waiting there until Run was detained and questioned and he didn“t know how long that would be, perhaps days. There was nothing that he could do. He began to sob.

He couldn“t stop thinking about the way Marie had been treated and the way it made him feel useless. He couldn“t help thinking that he would be without a job with no prospect of ever finding another. He doubted that Marie would want him. He leant forward on the bed and his left leg shook up and down. He couldn“t break free of his thought.

It felt like an age when Constable Wilmot finally came to the cell and turned a key in the lock.

„Grab your gear from the office Mr Summers, and then you“re free to go.“

Calypso stared at the Constable. Was he telling the truth? Was he being sarcastic or playing some nasty trick on him?

The Constable walked Calypso down a white corridor towards a heavy locked door. Just before they reached it, the door swung open and Calypso saw Run and Robbie with their arms cuffed behind their backs.

„You“re a fucking snitch arsehole,“ said Robbie.

„Shut up,“ said the officer escorting him and pushed him toward the cell Calypso had just vacated.

If the police officers weren“t there Calypso and Run would have swung punches at each other. He could only imagine what the police officers had told Run and Robbie to make them confess. Run spat at Calypso“s feet.

Calypso looked at the clock on the wall of the police station entrance as he was handed back his wallet and shoes. It was very close to quarter past three in the morning and he felt completely drained. He took his keys and left the station feeling that not a lot had been achieved. He breathed the air of the cool summer night but felt only his misery as he walked back to his flat.

Calypso woke to someone knocking at his door. He remembered the news

from Gary, the visit from the police and the way they had treated him and Marie. He thought the knock could be the police wanting to further harass him, or maybe his Mum or Evelyn. Frankie might have called his Mum to let her know what had happened. He knew she would be distraught and quick to blame him for Run's circumstance too.

When Calypso gingerly opened the door he was not prepared for the image before him. It was Uncle Ray with his hair slicked back across his head, wearing a shirt with a pointed open collar, a purple vinyl jacket, a pair of slacks and polished cowboy boots.

„Had a rough night neph?“ he said pushing past Calypso into his flat.
„Where's your coffee?“ he asked as he walked toward the kitchen bench.

Calypso grabbed the coffee and handed it to Uncle Ray who grabbed a mug from the sink and switched on the kettle.

„How did you find out?“

„Frankie called your mother and your mother called me... You kept me up you little shit and I had to leave Port Germein at the crack of dawn to get here. Old fella needs a good sleep you know?“

„So Mum knows that Run and me was arrested?“

„Yeah, but that's okay. What happened is over and we've got things to do today.“

„Nah, I can't Uncle... I'm not up to it. „

Uncle Ray poured hot water into his mug. „You're not the only fella that's

been locked up before Calypso. Want a coffee neph?"

„Might as well," said Calypso, „I feel like shit."

„You'll get over it."

„How would you know? Have you been arrested with your woman before? Have you been told the business you work for is going to sink on the same day?"

Uncle Ray paused for a long time, as if he were trying to remember. Finally he said, „Locked up, losing your job. Let me tell you a story about losing your job and being locked up." He handed Calypso the coffee. „Just sit down and listen."

Calypso sat down on his lounge exactly where he had sat with Marie only moments before being arrested. Ray sat at Calypso's kitchen table. „Did you know that our country, our traditional lands, at that little town Melrose, was the first in South Australia to have coppers outside of Adelaide?"

Calypso nodded, sipped his coffee and looked at the clock. It was near ten.

„Also had the first brewery there too in Melrose. Those brewers tapped into our sacred water hole to brew their beer. The police set up a rations depot, making Nukunu dependent on their charity because... well, just about all the land was taken for their bloody cattle and Nukunu had no bush tucker to eat, all the bush gone, see?"

As the hot sweet coffee started to hit the spot, Calypso could feel his stress leaving his body and Uncle Ray's voice soothing him.

„Having coppers in town and a brewery, well they had to build a police station and a lock up didn't they? Who you reckon built those lock ups?“

„You,“ said Calypso.

„Come on, I'm not that bloody old neph... no it wasn't me, it was Nukunu though, our relations. See they had to build that police station and those lock ups just to survive, for protection, to stop getting shot and poisoned by the authorities and whoever else thought it their business to do away with us.“

Calypso nodded.

„But see, it wasn't the authorities and people that really did the most harm poisoning our old people... it was the brewery and all that grog. Our mob seen all the whitefellas drinking and thought it was okay for them to drink too, after all, they were making that drink from our sacred water hole. And long story short, the fellas started getting thrown in the lockups they'd built with their own murras. And a black fella back then would die in those prisons. A man couldn't live without country.“

„That's unbelievable Uncle Ray.“

„No, that's a true story neph. So don't go complaining about losing your job and getting chucked in prison for a few hours... now that you know this story.“

„Yeah, but it just makes you angry Uncle Ray, all of this stuff, like how they just treated me like a dog last night.“

„Well use it,“ said Uncle Ray.

„What you mean use it? Use what?“

„That fire in your gut boy. Not to burn yourself up, but to do what you need to do, whatever it is that makes you happy.“

„Like what?“

„Well today we got to go sell these things to this Andre fella. Come on, you better clean yourself up.“ Uncle Ray looked at his wrist watch. „I told your Mum I’d be picking her up soon. Come on, get cracking. That sign down there says Resident Parking Only, I don’t want a parking ticket neph.

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Calypso stepped out of his bedroom wearing the clothes he’d bought for his many unsuccessful job interviews; the black slacks, long sleeved shirt and polished black shoes. He had shaved and his dreadlocks were pulled back and held tight with a red, yellow and black band.

„I thought we were going to see this Andre fella today, not the bloody Queen, Calypso. You look proper deadly boy,“ said Uncle Ray, winking at him.

„Well it’s a pretty flash place we’re going to, Uncle Ray,“ said Calypso. „They’d better let us in.“

„I’ll have every black fella in Adelaide storm that place if they don’t let us in.“ He jingled his car keys. „Let’s get going.“

Calypso walked down the steps of his flat behind Uncle Ray toward his old white Valiant. When he sat on the front bench seat his slacks were slippery on the vinyl covering. Uncle Ray turned the key in the ignition, revved the motor and pulled out of the driveway like a young hoon.

When they arrived at Aunty Audrey's, Ray swerved into the driveway. Calypso pulled on the seat belt to stop himself from shooting forward as Uncle Ray slammed the breaks.

Aunty Audrey was sitting on her porch, clutching her handbag and dressed in her very best dress and heels. She was wearing a fancy hat that Calypso hadn't seen before, like the kind ladies wore to the races. Calypso jumped out of the car as his mother walked toward him. As she approached she held her arms open. „You've got a lot of explaining to do". She hugged and released Calypso. „Come on, we don't want to be late now." She stepped carefully into Uncle Ray's car, fussing with her dress, handbag and fancy hat.

As soon as Uncle Ray started to reverse the car Aunty Audrey asked, „It wasn't your stuff that Run has been arrested for Kyle?"

„No Mum, I haven't smoked that shit in ages, almost a year."

„Well where did Run get it?"

„I don't know, he just got it. I've been trying to tell him to stop."

„But you got him into it didn't you," said Aunty Audrey pointing her finger at Calypso.

„Mum, he makes his own choices. I've been doing everything short of tying him to his bed to get him to stop."

„Really?"

„Yes, Mum. I tried telling him something like this was going to happen. I've

been trying to get him work and everything so that he would stop.”

„Well I don’t know. You boys. I don’t know what it takes to get through to you,” Aunty Audrey sighed.

„Maybe getting arrested is just what Run needs said Uncle Ray. Neither Aunty Audrey nor Calypso responded.

Uncle Ray parked a street away from the Hilton and they hurried to the hotel, straightening their clothes and their hair. Uncle Ray carried two TAA travel bags full of native plants and liquid extract. Despite Uncle Ray and Aunty Audrey’s earlier enthusiasm, Calypso could see that they were nervous.

They entered the hotel foyer shortly after 12.30. Calypso took a deep breath when he saw the bellboys who looked like nightclub bouncers. Stepping onto the marble floors and seeing the grand piano and indoor garden in the large open space of the foyer, his knees turned to jelly. He’d never been inside such a place. Noticing the business suits in the lounge he was glad that he’d taken the extra effort to dress well.

„What do we do now?” Calypso asked.

„We sit down like the civilized people we are and get a drink while we wait,” his Mum said. „I’ll get the drinks.”

Calypso and Uncle Ray sat on a lounge watching the white people eating their lunches and drinking wine and beers in the expansive white marble space. Calypso looked down at the TAA bags near Uncle Ray’s feet and noticed his leg shaking.

Aunty Audrey returned with a schooner of squash for Uncle Ray, a brandy for herself and a glass of water with ice for Calypso. The ice water had a colorful paper umbrella in it.

„Well this is nice isn't it.“ said Aunty Audrey.

„What if Andre forgets or something?“ asked Calypso, throwing the little umbrella from his drink onto the table.

„Just relax neph.“ Uncle Ray smirked.

Calypso couldn't relax. People would kick them out of the hotel. He watched some of the business people and holidaymakers eating and drinking; he noticed the curious glances being cast in his direction. His mother drank her drink fast and then went to the bar and ordered another for her and Uncle Ray. Calypso was surprised to see her drinking, especially brandy, so early in the day. As the time drew closer to one o'clock, Calypso could see the alcohol taking effect on his mother. She was smiley and loose and certainly much more relaxed than Uncle Ray and himself.

It was five to one. Calypso said „Should we see if Andre is ready for us now?“

„I go to reception and enquire,“ said Aunty Audrey finishing her drink.

„What's Andre's surname?“ As she stood from her chair Calypso thought she seemed a little unsteady.

„Oh shit, ah, ah.... It's George,“ said Calypso holding his palm to his forehead. „It's George, Andre George,“ he blurted, as if his life depended on it.

„Alright dear, I’ll just ask. Andre would have told them he’s expecting visitors“.

Calypso and Uncle Ray watched as Aunty Audrey in her best frock, heels and fancy hat enquired at the reception desk.

Silently Calypso, Uncle Ray and Aunty Audrey made their way in the lift to the seventh floor. Calypso had never been so nervous; he felt like he could throw up at any moment. He took a deep breath. „Be cool,“ he told himself. „Everything little thing is going to be alright.“

They stepped out of the lift onto the lush carpet of the seventh floor. Calypso nodded at a hotel staff member walking towards them down the hallway. „It’s 713, this way,“ said Aunty Audrey to the right with Calypso and Uncle Ray in tow.

Calypso knocked on the door three times.

„The bush medicine will speak for itself dear,“ whispered Aunty Audrey, reassuringly. Calypso listened intently for a response. A voice said, „Jeffery, Mr Calypso is here.“ Calypso’s Mum and Uncle Ray widened their eyes at the sound of Andre’s peculiar accent.

A short and very well manicured man wearing a tight floral shirt and white leather slippers opened the door. „Please come in,“ he said with a regal wave of his hand.

Calypso, Aunty Audrey and Uncle Ray entered nervously. Andre was

sitting at a small table, in an orange silk robe. He was very small and thin with tanned taut skin and bird like features. Enthusiastically he rose.

„Oh Mr Calypso, you have an entourage!“ Calypso didn’t know what an entourage was but he held out his hand for Andre to shake. But Andre grabbed Calypso by the shoulders and kissed him on the left and right cheeks as he had seen European people do in movies.

„This is my assistant Jeffery.“

Calypso watched Uncle Ray’s face as Andre approached him. He could also see that his mother didn’t know what to think.

„I just love your hat. Very chic. Please, please, take a seat.“

Jeffery patted the bed, indicating that Uncle Ray could sit on it. Uncle Ray set down the TAA bags and took a seat.

„So you have the Aboriginal herbs?“ asked Andre.

„Yes, we do,“ said Calypso, „they’re in the bags, along with bottles of oils from the plants.“

„Can I see them?“ Andre asked.

„Of course,“ said Uncle Ray.

„It’s proper good stuff in there,“ informed Aunty Audrey, „It fixes up all sort of aches and pains.“

„Really?“ asked Andre enthusiastically.

„Absolutely,” added Uncle Ray.

„All the old people used them,” said Aunty Audrey, now very sparked up from her brandies.

„Hmmm, you’re in demand Mr Calypso, these things must be very good no?” said Andre.

„They’re beyond description, they can make you feel like a million dollars within minutes,” said Calypso, surprised that he’d fallen so quickly and confidently into the sales jargon that he’d acquired working with Gary.

„Well, I’d really like to experience these herbs,” Andre uncrossed his legs and stood from his seat. „Jeffrey can you help me?”

Jeffery disrobed Andre in front of them to reveal a purple G-string. Calypso could hear his mother’s gasp. He looked at Uncle Ray as he mouthed the word „jingies.” He then thought his Mum was about to burst out laughing. To break the tension Calypso asked, “What would you like me to do?”

„Can you please put the herbs into my spa bath and tell me a little about them?” Andre walked through to his bathroom. Calypso looked at his mother and Uncle Ray and pleaded, „Can you help me...please?”

The white marble bathroom was bigger than Calypso’s bedroom and lined with mirrors and dazzlingly lit. When Calypso, Aunty Audrey and Uncle Ray walked in Andre was reclined in his spa bath with the jets at full power.

Uncle Ray pulled one of the bottles of liquid out of a plastic shopping bag. „Now this plant oil here has a lemon fragrance. See, you take the plant and you

boil it for a proper long time to get out the oils and minerals." Uncle Ray rubbed some of the oil between his fingers and palm and held it under Andre's nose to smell.

„Very nice," said Andre.

„It has many uses," said Uncle Ray. „It's good for the skin, helps you to relax and opens up the breathing passages.... It's ah, also an aphrodisiac."

„Oh Mr Ray, you better not give me too much then, I might get very playful.

Calypso couldn't help but laugh, as did Aunty Audrey.

Seconds after the oil had hit the hot water they could all smell its intoxicating fragrance. „Very nice," said Andre. „I can see the oil sitting on top of the water, look, it's in the bubbles, the wonderful colorful bubbles."

Feeling more comfortable Calypso stepped close to the spa and, sure enough, he could see a myriad of rainbow colors strewn on top of the water.

„I can see how this works Mr Calypso... and it even makes you frivolous. Very nice Mr Calypso," declared Andre.

Calypso, Aunty Audrey and Uncle Ray laughed in agreement. „Wherever you see this one plant in the bush, Andre, there's lots of kangaroos, you know," said Aunty Audrey. Calypso watched Uncle Ray dabbing his sweaty forehead with his handkerchief.

„I'm sure there are... horny little devils," said Andre.

Uncle Ray shoved his hanky back into his pocket and took another bottle

from the bag. He poured some oil between his fingers and palm. „This plant doesn’t have much of a fragrance but it is filled with a whole lot of nutrients. You’ll feel it soaking into your bones Andre,” said Uncle Ray, as if he and Andre were old friends.

Calypso, Aunty Audrey and Uncle Ray waited for a while as Andre closed his eyes. His body shook in the turbulence of the spa’s jets.

„Our old people used to use this plant to treat arthritis,” said Aunty Audrey. „Even the most twisted up person could bounce around like a teenager after soaking in this magic stuff.”

They watched Andre for a very long thirty or so seconds before he started to moan. „I can feel it, it’s very good. And I can smell it, all of the minerals, the salts.”

Calypso, Aunty Audrey and Uncle Ray smiled at each other, Uncle Ray asked, „Are you ready for the last ingredient Andre?”

Andre opened his eyes very widely as he looked at Uncle Ray. „Hit me with your rhythm stick Mr Ray. What are you, some kind of medicine man?”

Aunty Audrey cackled like a schoolgirl. Calypso laughed out loud.

Uncle Ray poured a good amount of the last of the oils into the spa. „This is the magic ingredient Andre. It’s effervescent and will make your skin tingle, pushing the other plants deep into your soul.”

Calypso didn’t know what effervescent meant, or that Uncle Ray had learnt this word from the label of a bottle of soda water. But Calypso did like the sounds of Andre’s pleasure.

„So you like it then, Andre?“ asked Calypso.

„I love it Mr Calypso,“ said Andre as his body slipped into another zone of relaxation.

„Can you give me a moment,“ asked Andre. „This is just so wonderful.“

„Of course,“ said Calypso, and they all stepped out of the bathroom.

Jeffrey stood at attention next to a bottle of champagne on ice and some glasses.

„Would you like a glass Mr Calypso? Aunty Audrey? Mr Ray?

Aunty Audrey accepted champagne, Calypso and Uncle Ray water. Calypso took a seat wondering what would happen next.

After a few minutes, they all heard Andre call, „Jeffery, your assistance please.“ Soon Andre was with them again in his orange robe and slippers. „What you have given me is exuberant, like champagne for the mind, body and soul,“ he said. „Jeffrey, can you get my cheque book please?“

Calypso realized he had a dumb smile on his face. He couldn't believe what was happening.

Andre began writing out the cheque. „Can you get me some more of this Mr Calypso, I suspect we will need tons and tons.“

Calypso felt like punching the air but he kept his cool and remembered the conversations he had with his other family members. „Of course I can get you more Andre but we will need a lawyer to work with you... um... on an agreement.“

„After all,“ interjected Aunty Audrey, „these herbs have been used for thousands of years by our people.“

Andre tapped his pen on the table. „Of course Mr Calypso, whatever it takes. How about I give you a cheque for fifteen hundred dollars now?“

„I thought we talked about three thousand dollars?“

„This is true. But I will send you another fifteen hundred dollars when production begins?“

„That sounds good,“ said Calypso, trying to appear confident. „And what about after that? You“ll only be able to make a small batch out of what you have here.“

„Then we“ll discuss a longer-term agreement,“ said Andre, adjusting his position in his seat. „Don“t worry, I“m very serious about this product Mr Calypso.“

„How serious?“ Uncle Ray asked with a gruff tone that took Calypso by surprise.

„Serious enough to hand over this cheque,“ replied Andre, dangling the cheque in front of him.

„Yes,“ said Uncle Ray, „but you told the boy three thousand-dollars and

we're not just going to hand our knowledge over to someone who renegotiates on a deal the first time we meet."

Andre was now squirming in his seat and not looking as relaxed as he proclaimed the bush medicines had made him. Calypso was aghast; he couldn't believe that Uncle Ray was jeopardizing his chances of walking all the way to the bank with all that money. Fifteen hundred, three thousand dollars, it didn't make a whole lot of difference to him.

„I wanted to give you a go Andre, to see what you had to offer. But all it seems you want to do is take," said Uncle Ray. „If you were fair dinkum about us, you'd be handing over the amount agreed upon and you'd have a plan, showing us what we seek to profit from this relationship".

„And what do you think about this Mr Calypso?" Andre asked.

Calypso quickly considered what Uncle Ray had said and looked to his Mum for reassurance. „If Uncle Ray isn't happy, I'm not happy. The way we do things, is together. Maybe you might want some time to think about how you want to do things and get back to us."

Andre and Jeffery looked stunned as Uncle Ray ushered Audrey and Calypso out of the hotel room so quickly that the bags of herbs remained sitting on the bed.

When the lift doors closed Uncle Ray patted Calypso on the back and said, „You did well in there".

Feeling disappointment and confused Calypso asked, „What do you mean I did well, I just let fifteen hundred dollars slip through my hands."

„Andre will call you if he’s serious,” Aunty Audrey guaranteed.

„Nah he won’t. Big black grapevine told me Andre’s been trying to steal knowledge from fellas everywhere... stealing from Kooris on the east coast, Murris in Queensland and Noongar mob in Western Australia. But Andre won’t be calling you after he tries more of the stuff I left in his hotel room.”

„Why not?”

„Cause I mixed itchy pod in with that stuff I left in there.”

Calypso covered his face with his hands as he and his mum started to giggle.

„And, anyway, there’s better ways we can go about making a business, neph.”

„What do you mean?” asked Calypso whipping tears from his eyes.

„Our lawyer reckons meeting with Andre is just a good chance to see what fellas in that racket think of our stuff,” explained Uncle Ray as they walked through the marble foyer and onto the street. „And he seemed to like it iny, and was going to hand over half the money.”

„You reckon,” asked Calypso with a glimpse of optimism.

„Of course dear.”

„But we don’t really need him neph. See, we can get some money, from the sheep on the property or plenty of other ways. Like our lawyer said, we can produce the lotions and things ourselves – all of it, meaning we have jobs and

make the complete profit from the product instead of just a cut see?"

A smile spread across Calypso's face as they approached Uncle Ray's car.

„Everything will go ahead as planned dear.“

When they were all in the steaming hot interior of the car Uncle Ray said, „We've got everything we need. Calypso, you've got sales skills. You can sell the stuff we'll make to all types of places. Marie can help out even. We don't need no bloke in funny jocks trying to tell us what to do and making millions off of us while we get nothing“.

Calypso wondered how long it would take before Aunty Audrey or Uncle Ray mentioned Andre's purple G-string.

„Shame job,“ said Aunty Audrey. Aint that fella got no shame wearing those gundies like that? Purple little gundies, shame job, you could see his bum just hanging out there.“

„Must have farted and blew the rest of his jocks off,“ said Uncle Ray.

When they reached the outer fringes of the city, the mood in the car turned somber. Calypso wondered if Aunty Audrey was thinking about Run, and whether Uncle Ray was thinking about what he'd tell his family back at Port Germein or how they would harvest more bush plants.

All Calypso could think about was Marie, or rather, making things right with Frankie and Marie. He reached into his wallet, pulled out a wrinkled note and

handed it to Uncle Ray.

„What’s that for neph?“

„Petrol,“ said Calypso.

„Thanks,“ said Uncle Ray taking the note.

„What you doing now Uncle Ray?“

„Going to your Mum’s for a cuppa I guess.“

„Yeah, that would be good,“ said Aunty Audrey.

„Do you reckon you could drop me somewhere first?“ asked Calypso.

„Anywhere neph, where to?“

„Marie’s, well Marie’s Dad’s place,“ he said.

„You’re a brave boy,“ said Aunty Audrey. „Frankie was proper wild last night Calypso. He’s a kind hearted fella, that fella, but last night I could tell he was proper wild with you. Reckon you should wait a while.“

„I’d rather face the music sooner than later.“ Calypso’s watched the outer city parklands whizz by from the back of Uncle Ray’s car. .

Calypso waited out the front of Marie’s home, not on the porch or in the yard, but sitting against the fence. He kept straightening his tie and shirt as he

waited. It must have been almost an hour before Frankie pulled up. Calypso didn't know whether to open the gate or just wait for Frankie to acknowledge his presence. He hesitated too long, Frankie idled the car and opened the gates himself. He didn't even making eye contact with Calypso.

As Frankie walked to his porch, a copy of the paper under his arm, he looked at Calypso. „Come on in boy,” he said, „it's doody hot out there.”

Calypso let himself in through the gate and walked up the path to Frankie opening his front door.

„I needed to come and see you Frankie to apologise.”

„Damn right you did,” said Frankie, letting himself and Calypso into the house. „Just go through to the back there Calypso. I'll be with you in a minute.”

Even in the shade, sitting at the outdoor table, Calypso felt sweaty and uncomfortable. He thought about the first time he'd met Marie's parents, and he thought about Christmas day. He could hear a kettle boiling and soon Frankie walked out with a cup of coffee.

„So what you got to say for yourself Calypso?

„Look I'm really sorry, Frankie.” Calypso rubbed the back of his head looking distressed. „I hope Marie explained that it wasn't my gear, it was Run's.”

„That doesn't change things for me Calypso. My girl was still in trouble. You let those cops arrest her.”

„I didn't know we'd get into trouble. I didn't know the gear was in the flat, I'd been trying to tell Run to give that stuff away.”

„You and Marie still got into trouble. Those coppers could have done anything to her Calypso and you fuckin“ know it. They could“ve fucked her up for good.“

„Seeing Marie like that was worse than anything.“

„How do you think I felt? asked Frankie. „She“s my baby girl.“

„Pretty shit, I know... but I promise I won“t let anything like that ever happen again.“

Frankie wiped the coffee from his moustache. „How do you think you“re going to keep Marie from trouble like that in the future?“

Calypso knew exactly what to say. He“d had plenty of time to think about it. „I won“t mix with trouble... like Run. He“s not living with me when he gets out of jail. And I won“t see him until he cleans up his act.“

„Well that would be a good start. What else you going to do?“

Calypso didn“t dare shrug his shoulders. He wondered what Frankie wanted him to say.

„It“s alright Calypso, I know you“ll try your best.“

„Yeah, I“ll try. You see me going wrong way you pull me up.“

Frankie seemed satisfied.

„Those cops were pricks hey, Calypso?“

„Yeah, they were. Did Marie tell you what they said?“

„She did, and that’s why I’m right pissed off with you and why you need to stay out of trouble. See, when you’re black like you and me, you can’t afford to give them any reason to pick on us. I know we should be able to dress like we want, drink where we want and whatever, but things aren’t like that... not yet anyway. So we just got to keep things under wraps see... like me. I just have a quiet beer at home. I know that if I’m drunk in the street or anything like that I’m an easy target.“

Calypso nodded and examined the messy end of one of his dreadlocks.

„I can’t tell Marie who she can and can’t go with, but for Christ sake Calypso, don’t make me worry like that again.“ Frankie slapped Calypso on the shoulder.

„I’ll make sure you don’t have to worry,“ Calypso promised.

„So how did everything work out today anyway?“

„Bit different than expected. Didn’t sell the stuff to Andre but Uncle Ray said we’re going to make lotions and things ourselves to sell to businesses. He reckons we’ll be better off doing it this way.“

„That’s too deadly Calypso,“ said Frankie. „So what you going to do when you start making good money?“

Calypso just wanted to make sure that people in his family that wanted a job had one and they could look after country too. „Well I thought I could take Marie out to dinner for starters. That’s if she still wants to see me?“

„She still wants that all right.“ Frankie chuckled. „Ever thought of going back to school? University or something?“

„You reckon I could get in?“ Calypso was surprised by the question.

„Absolutely, there’s a whole lot of bridging programs and things for young fellas like you. And using the money from your business to support you, you’ve got the perfect opportunity to learn all you want about the world.“

„I guess,“ said Calypso.

Marie’s car pulled into the drive. „Well,“ said Frankie, „You’ve got some things to sort out with Marie.“ Want a coffee or something?“

Calypso watched the clouds float across the sky as he heard Frankie say, „Calypso’s out the back.“ He heard car keys land on the kitchen table and Marie walking down the hall.

„They didn’t bash you up or anything did they?“ she asked stepping out of the back door.

„Nothing like that happened. They arrested Run but.“

„Well serves his own right.“

„Look, I’m really sorry about what happened last night,“ said Calypso.

„It’s not your fault Calypso, you just had the worst luck ever.“

„Bad luck alright... I felt like death.“

„So how did it go with Andre?“

Calypso shrugged his shoulders. „It didn“t really work out with Andre“.

„Oh, that“s no good,“ said Marie.

„Yeah, but it“s all going to work out. We“re still going to make the lotions and things but all by ourselves. Uncle Ray reckons it“s the best way. We get all the profit. Do you want to help?“

„Yeah of course, but how?“

„Maybe you could take photos for the label and see if Stephanie can help to sell some of the products too.“

„As long as you take me to the cricket again. And next time when we get home, make sure there“s no interruptions right.“

„I promise,“ said Calypso. „You got your scissors here?“

„Yeah why?“

Calypso gathered up his dreads. „These have got to go.“

„Are you sure?“

„Yeah, I“m sure,“ said Calypso. „They“re not worth the trouble.“

Marie went inside and returned with her scissors and electric clippers. Calypso watched the sun glint off the silver blades and took a deep breath.

Living like a Rasta had helped him through tough times and Rastafarianism wasn't something that he wanted to completely abandon. He knew Rastafarianism was about much more than smoking ganja, it was just that people in his world didn't see it that way. He appreciated how Rasta's respect the earth and people.

As Calypso watched dread after dread drop to the ground he thought about what it would be like to get an education. At the very least that it would mean he'd be able to get more security, a better job, not having to work for a user like Gary. He looked forward to the business with his family but realized there were no guarantees that it would last, that anything would last. Not even his love for Marie. As the final dread fell at his feet Calypso wondered when he'd next see his mob. He was happy knowing that his country and mob would always be there.