

WHO NOSE?

By Irene Absalom.

Yeah, well I know it's probably my fault. But it sucks! Big time! It's not like I'm vain, or anything. What d'ya mean, "yeah, right?" OK, so you didn't say it, but I can see it in your smirk. Guess it pays not to go swimming when you're drunk.

Sean had rung me.

"How'd ya be, mate?"

"Yeah. Sweet as. You?"

"Yeah. Y' know, mate."

"Good one, mate."

"Wanna do some shit tonight?"

"Oh yeah. What?"

"Party."

"Mate! Yeah. Where?"

"Spud's stag night. Just cruisin'. See what's goin' down. Sink some cans. Usual shit. Comin' mate?"

"Mate, try and stop me! Any chicks?"

"Stag night, mate!"

"Yeah, no, right."

"Right mate?"

"Yeah."

“See ya later, then. Meet up at Spud’s, eh!”

“Yep, yep. When?”

“Oh, I dunno. Whenever. No. Yeah. Just when ya get there, eh. We’ll go into town.”

“OK, see ya there. Thanks, Mate.

“Mate.”

I’d tell ya all about it, bro, but a lot of it’s a mystery. I remember at the start, though. There was me, Spud, Sean, Tommo, Mig, a cuppla others, and a cool guy called, um.... man, what was his first name? Uh... Na, lost it. His last name was Armand. Only remember that cos I said to him, “you a bit of a nutter then?” He went a bit red and said “yeah, yeah. Heard it all before, mate”. He was a top guy though, eh. Knew how to have a good laugh.

Now I’m gonna get all ‘kultcharal’ here and say that he looked like a Greek god. (What d’ya mean? No, ya know I’m not gay! Can tell I’ve done some Classics though, eh!) He had a profile that was a real chick magnet.

I dunno how we got onto it, but I found out his dad worked at the Art Gallery as a volunteer tour guide. “So what’s that all about, out the front?” I asked .

“All what?”

“Those poles with the shiny seed pod things on top?”

“What? Mate, d’ ya mean the canoes?”

“Canoes? They’re seed pods, aren’t they?”

“No. It’s called Reasons For Voyaging.”

“Why?”

“Dunno.”

“But they just go in circles don’t they? “

“Dunno. Never really looked”.

“Seed pods!” The guys all pissed themselves laughing. Losers. Bet they didn’t know, either.

Whatever.

We took a look at the Reasons For Voyaging (see, I learned something) on the way to The Strip and tried to chain Spud to them, but he said it was too early in the night for that and he wanted to see some action and have a chance to get smashed first. Mig tried to climb up one, but he’s way too fat, eh, so that didn’t work even though we gave him a leg up.

We must have had a look at the river cos I remember we were taking the piss out of the punt guy. It got a bit boring so we left the poor bastard alone and moved on. And then – ya know that red brick building by the punt place? The one with the woman statue way up the wall? We tried throwing some cans at her but couldn’t reach. What’s it called? Our Place or Our City or My Place or Your Place or something, or am I getting mixed up with Te Papa in Wellington?

Anyway, after taking the piss from the puntie, Spud thought this was a good enough place to give some back. Man, was he caught short! He ducked into the side doorway of this Our City/My Place/Aunty Mavis’s (whatever) and opened his zip and we slammed the wrought iron gate shut on him! Some sucker had left the padlock hanging on it so we snibbed it shut and locked him in the doorway. Man, we laughed. You should have seen him trying to do up his zip and climb out

over the gate while these Asian tourists were flashing their cameras at him. Flashing the flasher. Brilliant. While we were trying to figure out how to get Spud out of there before he hurt himself, someone came out and told us off and unlocked the gate for him.

I know we went along to The Strip after that. Must have been late. Must have been bombed out of my brain. Don't remember a lot of what we did there. Just the usual shit. Music. Cruising losers upping the finger. Girls staggering off shrieking, losing their heels. Losing their everything.

We were going to head off to SOL Square next but somehow Mig talked us into going the other way. Some chick he knew had texted him to say she was over near the Museum and maybe they could link up. Spud was well out of his head by this time. He started calling out "we're on The Strip, so where's the stripper?" I think he thought Mig's chick was going to be the goods we were heading off to see. But by the time we'd pointed Spud in the right direction and hushed him up a bit, and actually got there, Mig's chick had sent another text to say she'd changed her mind.

So there we were, pissed as newts, brains pouring out our ears, twirling around the lampposts, dancing on the seats, having a hell of a good time, when Spud said "letsh 'ave a swim!" "Where?"

"There!" He pointed to the gardens. Or, more specifically, the bird fountain. Peacock. Yeah, the Peacock Fountain.

"But it's all locked up, mate."

“Hey, I’m the man at climbing gates!”

So over the gardens gate we went. Though, thinking about it now, over the fence would have been easier. We splashed around in the water like kids.

“Too shallow, mate!”

I made a big discovery. Nothing sobers you up quicker than a broken nose. Man, that fountain was slippery. One minute I was trying to climb up a dolphin (not a peacock in sight – what’s that about??) and next thing there’s this godalmighty explosion between my eyes, and pain and blood pouring. Lucky the hospital emergency department is close, eh. The others buggered off and left me there.

Next morning, when I could tell which way was up, I looked in the mirror. Man! The monster from hell! Face like a pumpkin. Nose pointing west!

After a week or two of looking like the back of a rear-ended bus, I suddenly thought of the Greek god from Spud’s stag night. Ya know, the guy Armand whatever. I decided on the spot that I wanted a nose job like his. So after a lot of appointmenting and x-raying and this-ing and that-ing, there I was, sitting in front of the specialist.

He was trying to find out what kind of finished product I expected of him. I was doing this tough guy ‘couldn’t give a shit’ stuff, pretending I was supercool, when all the time I was scared as.

He was trying to get me to relax a bit so he could get through to me, so we started chatting about the weather and what we do in our spare time, and shit like that. Turns out he was a volunteer

tour guide too, but at the Museum, not at the Art Gallery like the Armand dude's dad. Except that I was so nervous, I got myself muddled up about who worked where. But I didn't realise that then.

I asked the specialist if he knew all the volunteer's names. He did, yes, and their families. They'd all just had a weekend barbie together.

"Right! Great! I want a nose job like – aah – Armand's son. You know, the guy at the museum." The specialist looked a bit gobsmacked (hey, that's my trick, I thought) and asked if I was sure.

"Yep. He's one cool dude and that profile of his is a chick magnet!"

So the operation went ahead. Armand's son, whatever your name is, eat your heart out, I thought as I waited for the day they would take the bandages off. I could hardly wait to see my remodelled face. As the last of the wrappings peeled away, I peered into the mirror.

HOLY SHIT!!!! I was speechless. Instead of the sniffer of a Greek god, I had a monster on my moosh! A hooter the size of the Snow Dome in the Square! Nostrils you could park a bus in!

The specialist beamed broadly. "It's a masterpiece, even if I say so myself. Yours was an unusual request, and quite challenging. My best work, though, I think. I took the precise measurements from the bust itself, to give you that exact "chick magnet" that you wanted."

“Bust?”

“That’s right. Just as you asked. The bust of Roald Amundsen, the “guy at the museum.”

.

