

The surreal moment

You are driving on the service track that follows the Indian Pacific Railway from Kalgoorlie to Adelaide, the track is in appalling condition, your maximum speed is 45km, your average is closer to 30km. You are in the middle of the Nullarbor Plain, you have not seen another person for three days. The only sign of human existence is the ever present railway track. You have been picking your way through split rocks, pot holes and broken boulders for eight hours, the driving requires the utmost concentration, you are exhausted. You have passed the longest stretch of straight railway in the world, some 477kms with out a bend. The track does not share this characteristic, it bends, it twists, it dips, it becomes almost invisible. Your patience is wearing thin, the sun is getting low, you decide to stop soon. You hear a loud bang! You feel the vehicle drop slowly. You have just experienced a blow out.

You get out and inspect the damage, you inspect the burst tyre wall, sliced like a cake. You begin to remove the jack from the back of the vehicle, look across to the west, the sun is slowly sinking. You are in one of the most desolate, lonely places in Australia, the middle of the Nullarbor Plain. You are some 200kms north of the more conventional route, The Ayre Highway that runs East West across the Nullarbor Plain. You stop to absorb the peace, the silence. Out of the corner of your eye you observe movement. You wonder - what could exist out here? There is no water, no apparent food. You see a flicker of white between two shrubs. You look again. You get the binoculars. You think you see a dog. It is a white dingo.

You and Caroline sit quietly together, exchanging glances with your newfound friend. In your previous experience with Dingos you have found them to be timid creatures, this one is incredibly inquisitive. You sit quietly together, looking. Listening. White Dingo also sits quietly, looking listening. White Dingo now trots towards you, it comes to a halt on the rail tracks, then sits. You are no more than twenty metres from each other, you are speechless. You sit some more. You listen to the silence of The Nullarbor. You return to the binoculars, you see a thick white coat, dark eyes, alert ears. You have been admiring this creature for almost forty minutes, darkness is falling, it is time to change the tyre, you assume that the noise will scare off your new friend. You are surprised when it does not, in fact your new friend seems terrible interested in the goings on with your tyre changing and the associated cursing involved with freeing up the seized jack.

You jack up the vehicle, remove the blown tyre, replace it with new and let down the jack. Your new friend only now begins to move on. You first met almost an hour ago. White Dingo slips over the railway mound like a ghost and is gone from sight. You dash up, twenty metres. You step up onto the mound. You look everywhere for the white dingo. There is not a trace. Vanished as quickly as appeared.