

## What a Perfect Kebab Tastes Like

Lipo's souva van was white with red, green and blue light bulbs flashing all round the window. It lured us in. And so did Lipo. Tall with black shiny hair, in a greased up powder blue coat, he stood next to his rotisserie cooking souvas, kebabs, hamburgers, chicken rolls, dimmies, chips; whatever hot stuff you wanted. Kebabs were the stand out, he piled on the meat, but he didn't put so much garlic sauce on that the bottom of your paper bag got wet and all the lettuce fell through.

We hassled Lipo because he didn't have a mo.

What's a Lebbo doing without a mo?

And then there was his name.

When he first turned up and plonked his van in the empty carwash yard across the road from the plant, we saw 'Lipo's Kebabs' in blue letters above the window and didn't know how to pronounce his name. I thought *Lippo*, as in *lippy* as my missus called her lipstick. George Callan, expert on everything, he reckoned it was *Leap-o*, as in jumping around.

One night on dinner break, which on night shift is three in the morning, I asked straight out.

'Howdya say ya name mate?'

He gave me my change and smiled, which always looked a bit wrong with his one front tooth missing and his face always five o'clock shadow.

'It is *Lie-poh*. What you think?'

'*Lie-poh*. Yeah, it's alright mate. It's a name.'

'No, I mean, what *you* think it is?'

'Oh, right, yeah . . . I thought it was *Lippo*.'

Lipo laughed.

'Toldja ya fucked up!'

George was standing next to me, wallet open.

'*Lippo!* My wife wear!' Lipo said.

'They can't get enough of that shit,' I said, opening my kebab bag. Smelt hearty.

'My wife, she work at airline.'

I took a bite out of my kebab and talked back with a mouthful.

'She a hostie?'

'No, a cleaner. All tables.'

I swallowed chunks of lamb. Tasted so good it was probably illegal.

‘Least she’s doin’ somethin. My missus, after the boys started their apprenticeships, she just sits around all day. Workin’ on the family tree.’

‘Family important,’ Lipo said, handing a bag of dimmies to one of the kids from the production line.

I told Lipo family were important, yep, but they could be expensive when they wanted video games and big brand sneakers.