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Scene One

Oslo and Ruthy Rogers sit together.

OSLO: Mum.

RUTHY: Mm?

OSLO: What's the most people you've ever lived in a house with?

RUTHY: Mm... good question... 120.

OSLO: No way!

RUTHY: Yes way. I was traveling through southern Bangalore with a Lithuanian folk troupe and our wagon broke down in this really strange town where everyone seemed to sleep in the day and do things at night. And so we decided we had to check into a hotel – 'cause it was day – sleep time. But the only one around was...

OSLO: Mum is excellent. You ask her any question and she gets into a huge story about it – and it's never the same one twice.

RUTHY: ...So Marek takes the bartender aside and says: 'Vot if my frens en I perform a smol show for your guests? Den may dere be a ruhm? Yes? Yes?'

OSLO: And I mean it: she never repeats a story. Like even if I say to her tomorrow:

Mum, tell me about the time you were in Bangalore with the folk troupe, she'd say:

RUTHY: Bangalore? Never been there. I have been to Botswana though! Did I tell you about the time a man called Shaky gave me a ride in his hot-air balloon. Oh Oslo – now that is a good story. We left at sunrise...

OSLO: And she's off again. Mum talks at a million miles an hour, and she lives at a million miles an hour too. She's the coach for my class's soccer team, and if any of the dads scream at us to lift our game:

RUTHY: Say it again, chump! Once more – I didn't quite catch it that time...

OSLO: And when a couple of teenagers set fire to the bus stop and everyone wanted them in jail, Mum got involved and made them do woodcarving

workshops with her instead. One of those boys is the local carpenter now and he makes something every year on her birthday.

RUTHY: Oh Rupert! Another table! Oslo, get the sledgehammer – we’re knocking the wall out to get it in the sunroom!

OSLO: Mum wears great big floppy hats that hang over her eyes.

RUTHY: *[Driving]* Absolutely no idea what’s in front of me, Oslo. Shout left or right.

OSLO: Left, Mum! Hard left!

And she can fix any car in the world.

RUTHY: There was a pigeon nesting in the muffler, Tony. That’d be the problem. Too much pigeon.

OSLO: And when my mate Pete’s mum got real sad about being single, Mum set up a speed-date night where all the single guys in town got to impress her.

RUTHY: Larry Atkinson, I know that’s you again under the false moustache – you’ve been here four times now, and always in different costumes. If you like Evie so much, why not just give her your number?

OSLO: And she did. And now they’re married and Pete’s got a dad again.

I had a dad, but he was a fisherman and one night his boat capsized in a storm, so now I don’t have a dad anymore. But that’s alright – I like thinking about the one I had, and Mum says the same thing too.

RUTHY: Allan and I had 22 years together, Oslo, and they were really great years as well. I still remember something new about him every day, and I reckon there’s about a million more memories still to come. So that’ll do me for a few years yet. You reckon?

OSLO: And I do. I agree with pretty much everything Mum says.

RUTHY: Although your teacher Mr Craig is probably the sexiest man around – might have to kiss him one day, you think? You think I should give him a good smooch? I reckon a smooch with him would be excellent.

OSLO: ...Pretty much everything.

Mum’s real name isn’t Mum. It’s Ruthy Rogers. And I’m Oslo Rogers. And we are both proud community members of a town on the coast of Australia called Mellingong.

RUTHY: *[Sings]* ‘Oh Mellingong, mighty Mellingong!
With your river long, and your culture strong!

You are all welcome, and we all belong!
To Mellingong! Dear Mellingong!'

OSLO: And Mellingong didn't even have an anthem before Mum held a competition last year. Denise from the caravan park wrote that one on her piano. And it won hand's down.

RUTHY: Bravo, Denise! That is spot on – spot bloody on!

OSLO: And now Denise takes a bow every time the Mellingong Bears win a footy match and give it a sing afterwards. And someone always buys her a drink.

Mum works as the milk delivery lady for the whole of Mellingong district, because we're the last place to still use glass milk bottles – which are heaps better for recycling, mum says, and they look nice and...

RUTHY: It just feels good to open your door to fresh milk in the mornings, yeah Oz?

OSLO: Definitely, Mum.

And I work... just at being twelve, and growing up – which feels like a pretty full-time job if you ask me. Which Mum does.

RUTHY: So I've decided to make you this 'closed' sign badge, like if you were working in a shop Oslo. And any time you want to take a break from growing up and feel like you've done enough for one day and don't want people hassling you about it...

OSLO: I just put the badge on and then Mum knows not to ask me about if I've got hairs on my chin yet, or if I like any girls, or what I'll be when I'm older. It works great.

Life's pretty exciting in Mellingong, and any time it's not Mum senses it – 'cause she's got a really switched-on Mum brain which knows what you're thinking before you do.

RUTHY: Bit bored are you, Oslo? Here, did I tell you about the time I finished a million piece jigsaw, with my eyes closed? It was the last day of Spring an...

OSLO: And pretty quickly, I stop being bored then. So basically everything in my life's going pretty good, I reckon.

Or at least it was – until...