

*Writing Howzaaaat! fulfilled my true destiny.
Writing the sequel is my moral obligation.*

The author.

Howzaaaat! II

(the sequel)

This is the story of two boys of vastly differing cultures and the friendship they forge in their quests for [identity](#).

When teenager [Ravi Balakrishnan](#) is selected to play in an inter-schools tournament to be held in Australia's Top End, his aim of becoming an International cricketer is complicated by whom to represent: India the country of his birth, England the country where he grew up or Australia, his sometimes racially intolerant new home. Moreover, with the dawn of IPL cricket and its potential riches, Ravi is also uncertain if he can remain true to his first love: that of traditional test cricket.

New friend [Billi](#) has his own identity issues, flatly rejecting his Aboriginal culture that he is embarrassed by, one at odds with the culture he wishes to embrace, one he is woefully ill-equipped for. Billi is also a fine cricketer but a highly unusual one: he is neither a batsman nor a bowler but a fieldsman, one so extraordinary he warrants selection for this one skill alone!

Sadly, cricket is a game Billi's father forbids him to play. [Akurra](#) is an angry, unforgiving victim of the 'stolen generations' and sees cricket as an elitist symbol of the white culture that ruined his life. Moreover, he is acutely aware of the dark secret behind his son's cricketing ability.

When Akurra finds out that Billi has played the game against his wishes, he banishes him from his remote Northern Territory community and with nowhere to go, Billi ends up living on the streets of Sydney. When Ravi finds him, he insists on taking his friend home but the unfriendliness of middle-class suburbia causes Billi to flee.

When he is eventually tracked down, the ever-persuasive [Uncle Sanjay](#) convinces Billi to come along for the ride to Darwin and when teenage twins [Fleur and Fifi](#) (Ravi's best friends) swell the touring party to five, the disparate mix of cultures creates a microcosm of the nation itself: one disconnected through ignorance and misunderstanding, one bereft of communication.

As the journey takes them deeper and deeper into a country that few Australians know or understand, they witness the great divide between white and black and it is starker than any of them could have imagined.

At Uluru, where tourists totally disregard Aboriginal sensibilities and literally trample over a sacred site, the general tackiness of all that surrounds such magnificence further erodes Ravi's

belief that he could ever represent such a country. Moreover, it increases Billi's rejection of his own culture, one that fails to command respect.

More problems result in the cricket when, in the first game of the tournament, Ravi decides to 'walk' against great rival Queensland. When the game is lost, Ravi is unceremoniously dumped and told that at the highest level, the game is played differently, much to his and his uncle's dismay.

But when an IPL agent comes calling and offers both boys potentially lucrative contracts and a future overseas, Ravi and Billi seem set to leave Australia behind... and this is where our story really begins.