

Jeffery

Words & Music: Pat Drummond (5.35)

For Jeffrey 'Stretch' Armstrong.

Dateline... Goonoo Goonoo Station near Tamworth, NSW

I first met Jeffrey Armstrong in Tamworth during a drinking session with a bunch of his mates at The Longyard Hotel. It was a pretty 'male' sort of event, I suppose, and, in many ways, 'Stretch' really does sum up a lot of Aussie blokes. 'Take it or leave it', no apologies, sort of characters who, though a little rough around the edges and somewhat less than 'ideologically sound', are real softies underneath. Loyal, 'fair dinkum' and capable of working every bit as hard as they play, I really do believe that it is the sheer exuberance for life that 'Stretch', and people like him, maintain, that will always be the cornerstone of this country's future. He is 'one in the eye' for all the trendy city internationalists who like to claim that the tall, laconic, practical, bush character with the larrikin sense of humour is a myth; and one that never really existed in the first place.

Now Jeffery's not just tall, he stands at six foot eleven and a half.

When he fronts up at 'The Longyard' it's for certain the patrons get a laugh.

Tellin' stories that are taller than the man himself and drinking with the staff,
till they carry him out comatose and throw him in the back seat of his car.

But you'd be making a mistake to write him off as just a drunken cattle hand;
for Jeffery works on Goonoo Goonoo, and there is little he don't know about the land.

Chorus: This bloke can put a beast into the yard, if the beast can yet be mastered;
even if he has to go and shoot the flamin' bastard
and tie it to a Landrover and tow it off the pastures.

The beast was never been bred that was so hard, that Jeffery couldn't put him in the yard.

Now he can't do that fancy kind of ridin' that you see in rodeos
but, in general, he can sit a horse and make it take him where he wants to go.
They say he came a cropper once that left his spine and spleen the worse for wear,
but he climbed back on that horse and penned the herd, and rode down to intensive care.
Now, whether I believed that, it's the story that his drinking buddies gave.
So if Jeffery ever 'carks it', it's a moral that they'll carve this on his grave.

Chorus.

**It's the land, mate, the land! God, this land has been my life!
And there's companies, I know, prepared to pay for good advice.**

I've got plans, mate, plans! I won't do this all me life!

There's this girl that I intend to make my wife.

His mates began to laugh at him, but he didn't seem to hear.

For his eyes were far awayish as he stared into his beer.

**I couldn't help but thinkin', as he grinned from ear to ear, that little lady's in for quite a start,
when Jeffery gets his beast into the yard!**

She'll have to tie him to a Landrover and tow him off the pastures!

Ah, that little lady's in for quite a start when she gets Jeffery Armstrong in the yard.

**Now there's lots of 'Will I? Won't I?' blokes, that take a 'suck and see' approach to life;
but young Jeffery, well he's different, he just bites it off in one tremendous slice.**

From his bodily proportions, to the way he drinks, and lies, and loves and laughs,

Lord, give me men like Jeffery Armstrong, blokes who never can do anything by halves.

**For they're mates who'll stand beside you when your 'pants are gone' and times are gettin' hard;
for in the end your life's a stubborn beast, and you need friends to put it in the yard.**

Yes, I rate our lives are stubborn beasts, and we need mates to keep them in the yard.