

No 2 The Mexican Pet

Early one morning, Janet Raines from the small town of La Mesa east of San Diego, California, went to Tijuana on the Mexican border to shop. The city is full of stray dogs and she was quite taken by a cute little thing that kept begging for tidbits of goodies while she ate a late lunch. Then it followed her to her car – a few safe feet away.

Janet decided to bring the cute little thing home. But since she knew that it was illegal, she hid it among a mound of packages on the floor in front of the passenger seat. And she managed to get through the border control.

When she got home, Janet bathed and brushed her newfound cutie pie and happily went to sleep with her pet at the foot of her bed. Waking up the next day, she was terrified to find liquid oozing out of the pet's eyes. Quickly she drove to the nearest vet, as her newfound pet was foaming at the mouth.

“Where did you find it?” asked the veterinarian. Janet lied and claimed to have decided to give it a home after seen it running around on the streets of La Mesa. But the vet insisted on the truth, and Janet finally admitted that it came from across the border.

“But what's wrong with my dog?” she begged.

“Wrong?” answered the vet. “First of all it's not a dog, but a Mexican sewer rat, secondly it's dying.”

Word list

border	gräns, här: gränsen mellan USA och Mexiko
stray dogs	herrelösa hundar
be taken by	förtjust i
tidbits of goodies	godbitar
a mound of	en hög av
illegal	olaglig
cutie pie	sötnos
liquid	vätska
ooze	utsöndra, sippra
foam	skum
insist on	insistera på
admit	erkänna
beg	böna och be
sewer rat	kloakråtta

Analysis

A variant of this legend long told in Europe is called "The Turkish Pet," a testament to the fact that no matter where in the world it may turn up, the story conveys a xenophobic message: beware of foreign lands and all the strange and scary things that come from them.

Death is a frequent motif in tellings of this legend — the misidentified "dog" either kills another family pet, for example, is found to be dying from some unpleasant disease, or ends up drowning in the toilet.

Word list

convey	visar, avslöjar
xenophobic	främlingsfientligt
beware	här: akta dig
foreign	främmande
frequent	vanligt förekommande
motif	motiv
tellings	berättandet av
misidentified	som identifierats fel

Discuss

1. What is the xenophobic message in this story?
2. Why do you think we are fascinated by death and rats?