SHREK and the Great Escape!

It's the year of the sheep, so to celebrate we'll look at an episode in the life of one of the greatest escape artists in New Zealand's history.

The protagonist in this story was named Shrek. Shrek lived as a fugitive determined to evade capture at all costs no matter what his misdeeds might, or might not, have been. He would never submit to an uncertain fate at the hands of his pursuers. Shrek remained free for six years before he was finally apprehended. For those six years Shrek hid in caves cautiously keeping a look-out and evading his would-be captors at every turn.

Every year he witnessed his friends and relatives being rounded up and led off only to return looking gaunt and frail, mere shadows of their former selves. Whatever was happening year after year to his friends, Shrek would have none of it and so he became a renegade cleverly evading detection while hiding in his cave.

But he was much too cleaver for his own good! Over time, Shrek grew wearier, moved slower and felt altogether weaker. He was even beginning to lose his sight! He was carrying, literally, more and more weight on his shoulders as time went on, and it was slowing him down. What was making him feel so sluggish? If this feeling continued, surely he would not be able to escape his pursuers for much longer.

And so it came to pass. In 2004 his burden had become too much to bear and, at age 9, Shrek was finally apprehended. His freedom was "clipped" and so was this fleece.

Shrek in his renegade days

When the shearers were finished with him, Shrek had yielded a world record 27kgs of wool. That was enough wool to make 20 large men's suits! As for how Shrek felt about this, who knows? At least he could see better.

After the big cut

Shrek passed away in 2011 at age 17. But he had seeded a revolution! - of sorts.

In 2005 another renegade hit the news. Shrek 2 was discovered hiding out, also in N.Z. This Shrek had been evading capture even longer – a full 7 years! And he topped Shrek 1's record for the most wool from a single sheep as well; a whopping 30kgs and measuring 3 meters in length.

Not to be outdone by the Kiwis, Shaun, an Australian sheep, from the island state of Tasmania made an attempt at the record. He was also six years on the lam, evading the shear's clips, but could only manage to yield 23.5kgs of wool. Third place to Shaun.

What made these sheep so afraid of the shearer? To be released from the burden of all that wool weighing them down year after year would be, one could surmise, a relief. Perhaps going to the shearer for a sheep is something like going to the dentist for us. Who knows?

But in this year of the sheep, let's pay tribute to the rebels and free thinkers among us and wish all a **Happy New Year!**

Net News

Some Thoughts for the Month

Joshua Says: This month it's my pleasure to welcome Mark to our teaching staff. Mark is from New Zealand. This is not the first time Mark has lived in Japan. In fact, he has been here, on and off, for a total of 8 years prior to joining us. Mark has a lot of experience to offer and we are looking forward to seeing some great results from our students. In addition to mark, I have asked Aaron to contribute regularly to this page. Aaron has been working with us for a few months now and is fast becoming an important addition on our teaching staff.

Junko Says: When some people have difficulty in going to sleep, they may start to count sheep. People say this originated in England where people say the sound of the word "sheep" is close to the sound of "sleep". One may be able to persuade oneself to go to sleep while repeating (counting) the word "sheep", which sounds similar to the sound of soft breathing. The relaxing effect can eventually send you to sleep! So, when you can't go to sleep, try counting sheep!

Mark Says: Hello to everyone, or as we often say in New Zealand – Kia Ora. I've only been working here at Crossroads for a week or two but already it has been my great pleasure to meet many of you. If we haven't yet been introduced, please feel free to approach me for a chat when you see me around the school. It's hard to believe that only a couple of weeks ago I was sitting on a summer beach in New Zealand and now I am on the other side of the world in the midst of a cool winter. Although it is not my first time in Ehime, I'd love to hear some ideas and recommendations from you all on things I should see and experience while living here in Matsuyama.

Aaron Says: Howdy ya'll! It has been great getting to know everybody in the Crossroads family, everybody is so kind. Matsuyama is quite a bit different from my native city of Dallas, Texas but I really like it here. The beautiful mountain scenery is quite different to the flat plains I grew up with. I am tremendously excited to be working with such dedicated students and supportive colleagues!

Danielle dit; Bonjour et bonne année ! En décembre, j'ai reçu des amis a la maison pour un repas de Noel traditionnel : la dinde farcie, la sauce maison, les pommes de terre. Nous avons joue au Bingo en français ! Ensuite, j'ai fait un autre repas : un gigot d'agneau et une paella ! Nous nous sommes régales ! Mes amis japonais adorent essayer de nouveaux mets. J'ai aussi prépare une sole meunière aux câpres et une quiche lorraine !

ACROSS
2 physically and/or mentally tired
5 very thin
7 being nothing more than
8 a person who cuts the wool off sheep
10 something given as an expression of esteem
11 very large
14 give in to the will of another person or thing
16 someone who become an outlaw

DOWN
1 escape from
3 take into custody, arrest
4 moving slowly
6 the main character in a work of fiction
9 someone running from the law
12 go in search of or hunt for
13 prevent from being seen
15 support or carry

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