The Smuggler

(or: What’s in those bags?)

The border between Mexico and America is a long one.

It goes on for miles and miles and miles.

On one side there is Mexico, and many Mexicans are poor.

On the other side is America, and many Americans are rich.

So some Mexicans try to smuggle stuff across the border.

Smuggle stuff into America.

Well, you get a better price in America, don’t you?

Smuggling is not easy, though.

Not easy at all.

You have to be quite cunning.

This is the story of one very cunning Mexican guy.

Can you spot what it is he is smuggling?

Bill couldn’t!

*Student: Who told you the story?*

Tutor: Bill. From Border Patrol.

*From Border Patrol?*

Yes. You know Bill.

*I think I know who you mean.*

Worked at the Little River border post.

*It’s tiny.*

Well, yes.

*Hardly anybody crosses the border there.*

*No*.

It’s funny, isn’t it?

*What is?*

All these Mexicans.

*All these Mexicans what?*

All these Mexicans trying to get into America.

*Trying to cross the border?*

From Mexico.

*Trying to get into America.*

They see America as a rich country.

*Well, it is.*

I suppose so.

*You can get rich in America.*

Well, you can if you’re lucky.

*Yes.*

If you’re lucky.

*A lot of smuggling goes on.*

All these Mexican people smuggling stuff into America.

*All sorts of stuff.*

People on Border Patrol have to keep their eyes peeled.

*Keep their wits about them.*

Well, yes.

*Trying to stop smuggling.*

Trying to catch smugglers.

*Yes.*

That’s what the Border Patrol guys do.

*Like Bill, I suppose.*

Yes, like Bill.

*He did try hard.*

Bill?

*Yes.*

He did try to stop smuggling.

*Yes.*

And it’s only a little border post.

*So you would think it was easy enough.*

But it’s funny, though.

*What is?*

The tricks people will get up to.

*Smugglers, you mean?*

Yes.

*Like what?*

Well, like the trick Bill was telling me about.

*Oh, what was that?*

It was a funny one.

*Oh?*

Made Bill look a bit silly, too.

*Oh?*

This guy was smuggling stuff across the border.

*In front of Bill?*

Right under Bill’s nose!

*Which guy?*

This Mexican guy.

*Which Mexican guy?*

Maybe I’d better go back to the beginning.

*Maybe you should.*

OK.

*There’s Bill.*

Working in the Border Patrol.

*On the Little River border post.*

Yes.

*It’s always hot, out there.*

And Bill is often alone.

*Yes.*

But it’s not that easy.

*No. I suppose not.*

Bill searched almost everyone.

*I expect he did.*

He’s very thorough.

*Yes.*

Trying to stop smuggling.

*But it’s not that easy.*

Anyway, this Mexican guy turns up one day.

*Oh, yes?*

On a bicycle.

*Right.*

Nice, new bicycle.

*Right.*

With two bags.

*Two bags?*

Of sand.

*Two bags of sand?*

Two bags of sand.

*So Bill gets suspicious?*

Yes.

*Of course he does.*

It is very suspicious.

*Why would a man carry two bags of sand into America?*

Very suspicious.

*So I expect Bill searches the bags?*

He does.

*And?*

Sand.

*Just sand?*

Just sand.

*Two bags, full of sand?*

Just sand.

*Mmmm…*

Very odd.

*But it’s just sand.*

So he waves the Mexican guy across the border.

*On his nice, new bicycle.*

Grinning from ear to ear.

*Who, Bill?*

No! The Mexican guy.

*And?*

Well, the next day, guess what happens?

*What?*

Same again!

*Same bloke?*

Same bloke.

*On his nice, new bicycle?*

On his nice, new bicycle.

*With two bags of sand?*

Right!

*So Bill searches the bags again?*

He does.

*And?*

Sand.

*Sand?*

Sand.

*Weird.*

Yes.

*And?*

Well, Bill waves him across the border.

*Into America.*

With his two bags of sand.

*On his nice, new bicycle.*

Grinning from ear to ear.

*Weird.*

Well, you’ve guessed it.

*Have I?*

The very next day Bill is on duty again…

*Don’t tell me. There’s this Mexican guy….*

On his nice, new bicycle.

*With two bags of sand.*

Exactly.

*Does Bill search them again?*

Yes.

*Why?*

Well, he knows something fishy is going on.

*And is it?*

Just sand.

*Just sand?*

Nothing but sand.

*Oh.*

Two bags of sand.

*And?*

Well, the only thing Bill can do is wave him across into America.

*I suppose so.*

With his two bags of sand.

*On his nice, new bicycle.*

Grinning from ear to ear.

*Mmmm…*

Well, this goes on for a very long time.

*Every day?*

Most days.

*The Mexican guy on his nice, new bicycle.*

With two bags of sand.

*Just sand.*

Yes, nothing but sand.

*Mmmm…*

And yet Bill knew something fishy was going on.

*Something fishy?*

Yes. Something was being smuggled into America.

*Right under his nose?*

Right under his nose.

*Annoying!*

Yes. For Bill.

*For Bill?*

The Mexican guy grins from ear to ear.

*And rides away into America on his nice, new bicycle.*

With his two bags of sand.

*Yes, with his two bags of sand.*

This goes on for a long time.

*How long?*

A year or so, I think.

*The Mexican guy crosses the border every day?*

Most days.

*With his two bags of sand?*

Yes.

*On his nice, new bicycle?*

Yes.

*Grinning from ear to ear?*

Yes.

*And Bill searches his bags of sand every day?*

Most days.

*And what does he find?*

Sand.

*Sand?*

Just sand.

*Weird!*

Then it suddenly stops.

*Suddenly stops?*

The Mexican guy stops coming across the border.

*Oh?*

Bill doesn’t see him again.

*He never comes across the border again?*

Apparently not.

*Weird.*

Very.

*Mmmm…*

Yes…

*Is that the end?*

Of the story?

*Yes.*

No.

*Well, how does it end?*

Well, Bill meets the Mexican guy once more.

*Crossing the border?*

No. Years later.

*OK.*

In a supermarket, actually.

*Oh?*

Bill was retired by then.

*Not working for the Border Patrol any more?*

Not working for the Border Patrol any more.

*Right.*

He was shopping, actually.

*And so was the Mexican guy I suppose?*

Yes.

*Bill recognised him, did he?*

Yes. He did.

*And remembered about all that sand.*

Yes.

*And?*

Well, he had to find out what all that was really about.

*And?*

So he asked.

*He asked the Mexican guy?*

Yes.

*Did the Mexican guy remember him?*

Oh yes.

*Was he still grinning?*

The Mexican guy?

*Yes.*

From ear to ear, Bill said.

*So Bill asked him the question, I suppose.*

Yes.

*What had all that sand really been about?*

Yes.

*And?*

Well, first he had to tell the Mexican guy that he had retired.

*He was not in the Border Patrol any more.*

No.

*So it was safe to talk now.*

Yes, it was safe to talk now.

*What did Bill say?*

To the Mexican guy?

*Yes. What did Bill say to the Mexican guy?*

Well, he said he knew he was smuggling something.

*Back then.*

Yes. He knew he was smuggling something.

*With all that sand?*

Yes.

*Did the Mexican guy admit it?*

Sort of.

*What did he say?*

Well, Bill said “You must have been smuggling something!”

*And the Mexican guy probably said “Maybe”.*

Probably.

*So Bill asked again?*

Yes. He said “What were you smuggling?”

*And what did the Mexican guy say?*

Well, Bill said he was grinning from ear to ear.

*Yes, but what did he say he had been smuggling?*

“Nice, new bicycles!”