

## **The Rat: Sandra Faase**

Three sheds of equipment now lay quiet. In the top shed a machine leaned inertly against the wall, whose ferocity had led to her grandfather's demise. She had been looking after her grandmother since her grandfather's death. But little did she know what looking after a large property entailed.

One thing was certain – nature was muscling its way indoors. She had decamped several antechinus nests in the bedrooms. But come nightfall, there were armies of replacements rocketing around the house.

However, this evening there was a new sign of animal activity unlike the scurrying antechinus – a boring, as if something was incessantly chewing the walls. As they sat near the fire after dinner, she banged the wall. The noise would stop; but a few minutes later, it restarted. She could not bear it and went to investigate.

She opened the cupboard under the bathroom basin, and there, frozen still, stood the offender – a rat. Its lingering stare signalled displeasure its frenetic activity had been disrupted, surrounded by pulverised wood and dislodged insulation fluff. He was sort of cute with his glossy, beady eyes. But she knew there was only one course of action.

She came back with a block of dark blue rat poison feeling momentarily uneasy about the inhumane end about to befall the rat, who had now retreated into his hole. She placed the block. She went back to the fire, and the boring noises restarted, but she was less on edge sure that the block would do its brutal work.

The next day she looked in the loo cupboard - the block had been gnawed. That night the boring resumed. The next day the block had been half eaten. That evening the boring became erratic.

The next morning she went to check the loo and there was a brown object in the toilet. Absent-mindedly she flushed it and closed the lid. Then, something made her open the lid. Very slowly, a brown object drifted back from the bowels of the plumbing. To her horror, it was the rat.

She called her mother to witness the ill-fated rat, which she fished out with a pair of BBQ tongs. Ah yes, said the neighbours, rat poison makes them very thirsty, and it would have jumped into the toilet to drink and drowned. The rat, it seemed, had thankfully cut short what would have been a cruel, lingering end.