

逃之夭夭

tao2 zhi1 yao1 yao1

Two rats the size of dogs have escaped from a Toronto zoo and a massive water-land-air search have failed to find them.

OK, these are not exactly rats, but their cousins. They are capybaras, the world's largest rodents that can grow to 45 kilograms.

The two that escaped aren't that big, but are still very big - each weighing 18 kilograms, like a fully-grown medium-sized dog.

You would think they must be conspicuous and easy to spot. But not so, experts said, for these animals can be quite hard to find because they have evasive skills like some *Rambo* character - they can remain still and submerge under water for hours with just their noses sticking out.

So even though a helicopter was deployed to help with the hunt, the escapees remained at large after three days.

A twitter account was set up, and an appeal was made to the public to help. We can say these over-

Idiom by Lon Yan

sized "rats" have "逃之夭夭" (*tao2 zhi1 yao1 yao1*).

"逃" (*tao2*) means "to escape," and "夭" is "to die young," "夭夭" does not mean to die even younger, but means "luxuriant," "blossoming." Dying young, escaping and blossoming do not have any apparent connection. The idiom "逃之夭夭" (*tao2 zhi1 yao1 yao1*) is actually a word-pun variant of "桃之夭夭," which is pronounced the same but means "the peach tree is in full blossom."

"逃之夭夭" (*tao2 zhi1 yao1 yao1*) means "escaped and is nowhere to be found," "to escape without leaving a single trace behind," "to slip away." The idiom is usually used to describe people who have successfully escaped after committing a crime.

Terms containing the character "逃" (*tao2*) include:

逃走 (*tao2 zou3*) - to flee; to escape

逃兵 (*tao2 bing1*) - a deserter

逃犯 (*tao2 fan4*) - an escaped convict; a fugitive

逃脱 (*tao2 tuo1*) - to succeed in escaping