

The Licked Hand: An American Urban Legend

There once was an old woman who lived by herself. Her children had all grown and moved away, and her husband had passed away many years before. However, the old woman was not lonely because she had a dog who comforted her and kept her company. Every night, her dog would curl up beside her bed. She would reach over the edge of the bed after she turned out the light, and when the dog licked her hand, she would go to sleep. If she ever woke up in the middle of the night from a bad dream, she would reach her hand over the edge again; the dog would lick her hand, and she would go back to sleep feeling comforted and safe.

One night, the old woman got ready for bed. She washed her face, brushed her teeth, and got into bed. Her dog lay down beside the bed. She turned out the light, and, as per her nightly ritual, reached over the edge of the bed so that her dog could lick her hand. When she felt him lick, she fell asleep. Later that night, though, a large thunderstorm emerged. The thunder and lightning woke the old woman from her sleep. As she lay in bed awake now, she could hear a dripping sound coming from her bathroom. *Drip. Drip. Drip.* Had she not completely turned the water off after she washed her face and brushed her teeth? She was not sure, but she did not want to get out of bed. *"I will turn it off in the morning..."* she told herself. She reached her hand over the edge of the bed so that her dog could lick her hand again. She felt him lick, and fell back asleep.

More thunder and lightning crashed, and woke her up again. *Drip. Drip. Drip.* She could still hear dripping coming from the bathroom. Was there a leak in the roof? *Drip. Drip. Drip.* Something about the dripping made her feel anxious and uneasy. She felt uncomfortable being alone... *"Ahhh, but I'm not alone! I have my beautiful dog here to keep me safe..."* she told herself. She reached over the bed, felt him lick, and quickly fell back asleep. She slept the rest of the night.

When she got up in the morning, she was surprised to not see her dog next to her bed, and she could still hear dripping in the bathroom. *Drip. Drip. Drip.* She groaned sleepily, still not completely awake. *"Time to go and take care of that annoying dripping..."* She walked to the bathroom and immediately tightened the sink faucet. *Drip. Drip. Drip.* No... the dripping

was coming from the shower. She reached behind the curtain and tightened bathtub faucet. *Drip. Drip. Drip.* Confused and irritated that she could not stop the dripping, the old woman ripped the curtain back and screamed.

Hanging from the shower was her dog, dead. It's blood drip... drip... dripped. Written on the shower of the wall in red were the words: Humans can lick, too.