

弱肉強食

ruo4 rou4 qiang2 shi2

Lions are the kings of the jungle. They are the predators and other animals are their prey. But there are always exceptions.

A lioness was trying to take down a female buffalo that was protecting its calf when a brave bull stepped in, put up a vicious fight and inflicted life-threatening injuries on the lioness.

The bull finished the brawl by pushing the lioness into a mud pool, from which the latter managed to climb out two days later, just to succumb to its injuries.

This dramatic scene took place recently in Okavango Delta, Botswana, and was captured on camera by photographer Wim van den Heever. Survival of the fittest is the law of the jungle. Now for once, a bull was fitter than the lioness, so the latter had to die.

What can you do but say this is just another case of “弱肉強食” (*ruo4 rou4 qiang2 shi2*).

Idiom by Lon Yan

“弱” (*ruo4*) is “weak,” “feeble,” “肉” (*rou4*) “meat,” “flesh,” “強” (*qiang2*) “strong,” and “食” (*shi2*) “eat.”

Literally “弱肉強食” (*ruo4 rou4 qiang2 shi2*) is “weak meat strong eats,” “the meat of the weak is eaten by the strong,” “the weak are the prey of the strong,” “the law of the jungle.”

This is how nature operates. It is not about fairness. There is no mercy. This is the law of the business world too.

Businesses do have ethics, up to a point. When profit and survival are at stake, the business world is still one in which the law of “弱肉強食” (*ruo4 rou4 qiang2 shi2*) prevails.

Terms containing the character “弱” (*ruo4*) include:

弱點 (*ruo4 dian3*) – a weakness

弱者 (*ruo4 zhe3*) – the weak

衰弱 (*shuai1 ruo4*) – weak; feeble

示弱 (*shi4 ruo4*) – to show signs of weakness