

Idiom by Lon Yan

不解風情

bu4 jie3 feng1 qing2

A Florida man was bitten on the tongue as he was attempting a kiss. The injury was so serious that he had to be airlifted to hospital. Though he remained conscious, he was listed in critical condition.

One might wonder what kind of person would be so vicious as to bite a lover's tongue, even if she wasn't in the smooching mood. But it is actually quite hard to give the man sympathy, as he was trying to kiss a rattlesnake – an eastern diamondback, “the largest rattlesnake species and the heaviest known type of venomous snake.”

Had the incident happened between people, it would probably be seen as a case of “不解風情” (*bu4 jie3 feng1 qing2*), especially if the one attempting the kiss was a woman.

“不” (*bu4*) is “no,” “not,” “解” (*jie3*) “to

understand,” “to solve or explain,” “風” (*feng1*) “wind” and “情” (*qing2*) is “sentiment,” “affection,” “love.” “不解” (*bu4 jie3*) is “not understand,” “to be puzzled,” “to be bewildered.” “風情” (*feng1 qing2*) is not “wind love” but “amorous (多情的; 含情脈脈的; 戀愛的) feelings,” “flirtatious expressions” or “customs.”

“不解風情” (*bu4 jie3 feng1 qing2*) means “unromantic,” “insensitive.” The idiom is used to describe a person, usually a man, who is not the romantic type, and who is “unable to get romantic hints” and does not understand a woman's heart.

The man might, in an intoxicated state, thought kissing a poisonous snake was romantic. But it proved to be quite dangerous, and daft (愚蠢的) of course.

Terms containing the character “情” (*qing2*) include:

情緒 (*qing2 xu4*) – feelings, sentiments

情況 (*qing2 kuang4*) – a situation; the state of affairs

情報 (*qing2 bao4*) – information; intelligence

情人 (*qing2 ren2*) – a lover