

# Idiom by Lon Yan

## 難逃一劫

*nan2 tao2 yi4 jie2*

Firemen in England saved some piglets from a barn fire in February. To express her appreciation, the farm owner recently sent a bunch of sausages to the firemen, which they used for BBQ and enjoyed tremendously.

But the gift drew criticisms, because the sausages were made from the piglets saved from the fire. To the poor piglets, one could only shake one's head and say: “難逃一劫” (*nan2 tao2 yi4 jie2*)

“難” (*nan2*) is “difficult,” “hard,” “逃” (*tao2*) “to run away,” “to flee,” “to escape,” “to evade,” “一” (*yi4*) “one,” and “劫” (*nan2 tao2 yi4 jie2*) “a calamity.” Literally, “難逃一劫” (*nan2 tao2 yi4 jie2*) is “hard to escape a calamity.”

The expression means “if a calamity has to happen, one just can't escape it.” It is usually used in situations when people have cheated

death, or escaped a bad accident, just to get into another one.

An idiom with a similar meaning is “劫數難逃” (*jie2 shu4 nan2 tao2*) – “Destiny is inexorable, there is no fleeing it.”

Though animal lovers and some non-farming folks found the arrangement hard to stomach, the farmer, Rachel Rivers, said she was just honoring her promise to present the firefighters with organic sausages when the animals were slaughtered for their meat.

She said, “This is just what we do – we are not an animal sanctuary. We give the pigs the best opportunity and the best life they could have for six months.”

Pigs are raised to be slaughtered. So if you a pig, the “劫” (*nan2 tao2 yi4 jie2*) – calamity – of meeting a pre-mature death is simply unavoidable.

### Terms containing the character “劫” (*jie2*) include:

劫匪 (*jie2 fei3*) – a robber

劫持 (*jie2 chi2*) – to kidnap; to abduct

劫機 (*jie2 ji1*) – to hijack an airplane

劫難 (*jie2 nan4*) – a destined calamity