

Idiom by Lon Yan

無獨有偶

wu2 du2 you3 ou3

It's bad that somebody got shot and killed in a restaurant, worse if that restaurant belongs to you. Even more tragic was that just when you are trying to repair the damage to business, a second shooting happens.

It's understandable that customers are hesitant to set foot in the establishment again. Even more understandable is when you see the restaurant owner coming out to do a newspaper interview to assure customers that there really isn't anything wrong with his shop and that it's still safe to eat there.

The unlucky owner of the Toronto shop said at the time of the latest shooting, his 26-year-old daughter was at the front desk. She was so shocked she needed therapy.

At least, the victim probably didn't know what hit him, literally, as he was seen

laughing just moment before he was shot, thinking it was a prank, and his last words were "Very funny!"

The shop owner said he "didn't think lightning could strike twice, but it did." The idiom for the situation is "無獨有偶" (wu2 du2 you3 ou3).

"無" (wu2) is "without," "nil," "nothing," "not to have," "獨" (du2) "single," "alone," "only," "有" (you3) "to have," and "偶" (ou3) "a mate." Literally, "無獨有偶" (wu2 du2 you3 ou3) is "not alone but in pairs," "not to come singly but in pairs," It means "not a unique occurrence," "it's not the only case."

A related idiom is "禍不單行" (huo4 bu4 dan1 xing2): "good fortune does not come in pairs, and disasters do not come alone."

Terms containing the character "偶" (ou3) include:

玩偶 (wan2 ou3) – a doll

配偶 (pei4 ou3) – a spouse

木偶 (mu4 ou3) – a puppet; a marionette; carved wooden figure

偶然 (v) – occasional; by chance