

Summary

Rob has a new hobby that involves the risk of getting stung, which fills Feifei with fear. But 'the sting in the tail' with this new activity has nothing to do with the insects. Find out what this phrase really means.

Transcript

Feifei

Hello I'm Feifei and welcome to The English We Speak – and joining me is Rob.

Rob

Hello everyone.

Feifei

So Rob, I hear you have a new a hobby?

Rob

Yes that's right – it's very exciting – let me show you...

Feifei

Arghh! Bees! I don't like them – shut the door! So your new hobby is bee keeping?

Rob

Yes I'm a bee keeper – and I love it - but there is a sting in the tail.

Feifei

Of course there's a sting in the tail – bees sting – and it hurts, that's why I don't like bees.

Rob

They only sting when they're angry Feifei – and anyway, when I said 'there's a sting in the tail' I wasn't referring to the bees. I meant something unpleasant comes with something that is meant to be pleasurable.

Feifei

Yes, as I said – looking after bees means you're likely to get stung.

Rob

That's true – but what I meant was bee keeping is fun but I wasn't expecting it to cost so much money – I had to buy all these hives and these special protective clothes.

Feifei

Yes, you do look silly! So you're saying bee keeping is fun but the unexpected cost of it is the sting in the tail?

Rob

Exactly. Let's hear some examples while I go and get some honey...

Examples

We had a great holiday but it had a sting in the tail – when we got home we discovered our house had been broken into.

I love her new book – the story is funny and romantic – but there's a sting in the tail when someone dies.

Yeah, we all got a pay rise this month, but there's a sting in the tail – we're expected to work longer hours.

Feifei

So that's 'a sting in the tail' – a phrase that means something unpleasant and sometimes unexpected happens when doing something good or fun.

Rob

OK Feifei, one of the good things about bee keeping is you get this delicious honey – and that's free - go on Feifei, try some.

Feifei

Hmmm honey, delicious! Oh no, you've brought something else with you... it's a bee!

Rob

Don't panic – I'll try to catch it... ouch! That hurt.

Feifei

Oh dear – it looks like bee keeping has more than one sting in the tail!

Rob

Very funny!

Feifei

Bye!