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(Helen bursts into the studio)

Rob: What's happened Helen? You don't look very happy.

Helen: Of course I'm not happy. 我刚刚看到你的电子邮件说如果我不赶快来录音室你就不等我自己主持了...

Rob: That's right.

Helen: And then 你写的是: "有我这动听的声音, 谁还会想到你呢." That's a horrible thing to say, Rob! 你太过分了!

Rob: Well, it would be horrible if it was a serious message. But haven't you noticed my emoticon at the end of the message?

Helen: Emoticon? I have the message printed out here... 对我看到了, 这不一个冒号, 一个破折号, 最后是一个后括号, 看上去吗是个笑脸儿 a smiley face... Yes没错, 是个笑脸。It's an emoticon 原来你是在开玩笑! :-)

Rob: Yes. Emoticons were created precisely for this purpose, to avoid misunderstandings like the one we've just had. I wrote my message as a joke and you took it seriously...

Helen: That's right. 最近有篇报道说 emoticons 表情符号是 30 年前由美国匹兹堡卡内基梅隆大学的一位教授首创的。Emoticon 这个英语单词是 emotional 情绪和 icon 符号合并组成, 也就是表情符号。

Rob: It also indicates if a message is serious or a joke. When you speak, you can express if you are serious about what you are saying but sometimes it is difficult to achieve this on paper. Listen to some verbal examples.

Examples

(angry) "I don't like to go to the cinema with you. You always fall asleep and end up snoring loudly."

(jokingly) "I don't like to go to the cinema with you. You always fall asleep and end up snoring loudly!"

Helen: That's right, Rob. 在你讲话的时候你可以通过语调来表达你的意思, 但是在书写时就很难以同样的方式来表达。

Rob: But it's good to point out that emoticons are still an informal sort of message. It might not look good if you use them in a message to your boss or include them in your CV.

Helen: 说的好。这点一定要记住，表情符 emoticons 是很随便的一种表达，不能用在正式场合，比如给老板的邮件或个人履历表。We should be careful when using emoticons.

Rob: Emoticons have become so popular that there are over a hundred of them. Some with a proper round yellow face.

Helen: 既然我们消除了误会 misunderstanding，我们是不是应该出去庆祝一下表情符 emoticon 发明 30 周年呢，至少应该喝杯咖啡，吃块蛋糕吧。

Rob: And let's celebrate our friendship too. A friendship saved by an emoticon and a smiley face. Bye.

Helen: Bye.

Rob: Now, Helen, your voice is really beautiful, actually.

Helen: And so is yours, Rob. 你应该去当一位歌唱家呐。

Rob: And so should you. Your voice is so melodic...

Helen/Rob: *(sing together)*

Rob: Beautiful!