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- Li:** Hi Finn. I'm so happy. I'm going to buy a brand new computer this afternoon and it's very, very cheap.
- Finn:** What a bargain, Li! Where are you going to buy it? Can I go with you?
- Li:** I'm going to meet a friend of my neighbour's cousin. He's selling it.
- Finn:** Do you know this man, Li?
- Li:** No, but he sounded very nice on the phone. He's nice but a bit clumsy.
- Finn:** Alright. Why?
- Li:** He told me the computer fell off the back of his lorry but it works perfectly.
- Finn:** It fell off the back of a lorry?!
- Li:** Yes. But it came in a very strong box and he said it was in perfect condition.
- Finn:** Li, the computer didn't actually fall off anywhere. It was taken.
- Li:** What do you mean?!
- Finn:** In English, when you say something 'fell off the back of a lorry', or if you say something is 'off the back of a lorry', what you mean is that it was received in suspicious circumstances. It was probably stolen.
- Li:** Stolen?! 原来从货车后面掉下来 'fell off the back of a lorry' 是一种婉转表达, 其真正的意思是来路不明的东西, 甚至可能是偷来的东西!
- Finn:** Yes. 'Off the back of a lorry' is today's expression in Authentic Real English. Let's hear some examples of how it's used.

Examples

The police have been looking for a local man who doesn't mind selling mobile phones that fell off the back of a lorry.

The black market was thriving when the war ended. It wasn't difficult to find all sorts of things off the back of a lorry.

Li: Thank you, Finn, for the warning. I'm not going to buy that cheap computer now.

Finn: Well, I'm sorry to have disappointed you, Li, but it's always good to know these unusual expressions in English!

Li: Well, there goes my bargain. Back to saving money to buy a computer in a real shop.

Finn: Good idea. What is cheap might end up costing much more than you expect.

Li: Indeed. I won't buy stuff off the back of a lorry. Better safe than sorry. Bye.

Finn: Bye.