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- Li:** Hi Neil. How are you today?
- Neil:** Hello Li. I'm a bit worried. All these bills to pay... there'll be no money left for my holiday.
- Li:** My problems are over and so are yours, Neil! I'll pay all my bills, and yours, and... where do you want to go for a holiday? How about Dubai? Five star hotel, by the beach, drinking champagne...
- Neil:** Well, that's very generous of you, Li, but where are you going to get the money for that?
- Li:** I won the lottery!
- Neil:** The lottery?! That's brilliant! How much?
- Li:** Yes. I won US\$10 million! It's a lot of money, Neil! They sent me an email this morning.
- Neil:** An email?
- Li:** Yes. The only thing that the organisers are asking is for me to pay them a small fee and give them the details of my bank account so that they can transfer the money. I'm a millionaire!
- Neil:** Mmmm... I smell a rat!
- Li:** A rat?! Where?! I'm terrified of rats! Where is it? I can't see a rat!
- (Li stands on her chair)*
- Neil:** No, no, no! No need to stand on the chair, Li. There's no rat, no mouse, there're no rodents at all here. In English, when we say we 'smell a rat', we mean we're suspicious of someone, we feel there's something wrong.
- Li:** 明白了，原来所谓的“嗅到了老鼠 smell a rat”意思就是起疑心，对什么事情感到可疑，感到不对头。So you think there is something wrong with this lottery?
- Neil:** I'm afraid so. Let's hear some examples of how to use 'smell a rat', today's expression in Authentic Real English.

Examples

A: I read an article about a diet which makes you lose six kilos in one week. It says there is no need for exercise.

B: Six kilos in one week?! That's impossible! I smell a rat!

Jane smelt a rat when she read a job advert for actresses in the newspaper. It said "no training or experience required", but they wanted someone "good-looking and open-minded".

Li: Oh. No money for me then... but are you sure, Neil? Maybe this one is for real...

Neil: No, it's not, Li. And you shouldn't send emails around with your bank details. It's very dangerous. Someone might steal your money!

Li: Yes. I should be careful with my email.

Neil: Think: have you ever entered the Australian lottery? Did you buy a ticket?

Li: No. I've never even been to Australia.

Neil: So how could you be the winner? It's a scam, Li. It's a dishonest way to make money by deceiving people like you.

Li: You are right, Neil. I wanted to win the lottery so much!

Neil: So let's go out and buy a proper lottery ticket. One we know is real!

Li: Maybe we will win!

Neil: Maybe we will! Let's go. Bye.

Li: Bye.