

# Dark horse

## Episode description

In this week's bonus episode, Andrew talks about a dead mic, a failed recording session, and a new technology. Plus, he and Kassy teach you two interesting idiomatic expressions, black sheep and dark horse.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Hello, and welcome to bonus episode number 53 of the Culips English Podcast. How's it going? I hope you're doing well. My name is Andrew, and it is lovely to be here with you today for this English study session. Thanks for clicking play and joining me.

Here at Culips we start each week with a bonus episode. And usually, I share some stories with you about what's going on in my life, and I also teach you some interesting and helpful vocabulary and expressions along the way. But this week, we're gonna do something that's slightly different, instead of sharing some life updates and stories with you. Instead, I'm going to share a Catch Word episode with you that I thought we'd never be able to release. But thanks to some new technology, I'm going to be able to do that, and I'm going to let you listen and learn with that Catch Word episode right here in today's bonus. I'll tell you all the details and the backstory about this in just a moment.

But before I do, I want to let you know that there is a 100% free transcript for this episode. And you can get it by clicking the link in the description or by visiting our website, which is Culips.com. The transcript comes in an interactive version, which is fantastic for studying with on your computer, smartphone, or tablet. And in a PDF version, which is best for people who like to print the transcript and study with a paper version. The transcript is a great study tool. So definitely make sure you check it out. And with that being said, let's get started with today's episode. Here we go.

If you're a regular Culips listener, then you may have heard me talk a little bit about this story before. I know I've mentioned it somewhere on Culips, but I don't remember exactly where it was. It may have been here in the bonus episode series. But it also may have been on the live stream for members that we do each month. I can't exactly remember. But I know that when I did talk about the story before, I didn't share too many details. So, I'll share the full story and all of the details now. OK, so around the end of last year, 2022, my trusty Culips sidekick and co-host Kassy had a problem with her microphone. And one

day when we were scheduled to record some new Culips content, she plugged in her microphone to her computer, turned the mic on, started to record, and nothing happened. The mic just wouldn't record any audio at all. So that day, instead of recording, what we ended up doing was just troubleshooting and trying to fix the microphone the whole time. And we didn't record anything at all together that day. And it turns out that in the end, we weren't able to fix the microphone. Suddenly and without any warning or reason the mic just died. And even though the mic was only a year or two old at that point, I guess it's time had come.

It's time had come. That's a great expression to know if you don't know this one already. Can you guess what it means? If your time has come, it means that you've died. OK? Kind of a grim expression. So, we can use this expression to talk about people or animals or objects, like cars or computers or machines that operate, but then sometimes die, right? And you have to be careful with this expression. Because talking about death can be sensitive, especially if we're talking about people, or some animals, especially animals that are close to people like pets, then yeah, be careful with this expression because it could be offensive if you use it incorrectly. But when you're talking about a microphone or a computer or something, then it's never going to be offensive. So, it's alright for me to use it when I'm talking about Kassy's mic and how it's time had come. So yes, the mics time had come.

OK, the mic died, and we had to find a replacement for Kassy's mic, we had to get her a new one. And the mic dying was of course, a disappointment and a bummer, but if it had to die, it did so at a pretty convenient time. For those of you who don't know, Kassy lives in Thailand, and I live in South Korea, but Kassy's husband is from South Korea, and so she comes back every once in a while, to visit her husband's side of the family. And it just so happened that when Kassy's mic broke, the very next week she was planning to visit Korea. And we actually had plans to meet up together as well. So, this was great because I could buy a mic for Kassy, and then just give it to her in person when I saw her instead of having to ship it to her in the mail to Thailand. And so that's exactly what I did. I went mic

shopping, I picked out a mic that had lots of great reviews, and was from a brand that I trust, and then I gave it to Kassy. When we met up last winter. Stupidly though, I didn't give Kassy a very good tutorial of how to use the microphone, I showed her how the mic works, and how to turn it on, and how to use it with headphones, the basic things, but I didn't show her the software side of things and how to set up the mic with her computer so that she can record audio from the microphone to her computer. And that was my big mistake in this whole ordeal.

So fast forward a few more weeks, and Kassy was back in Thailand with her new microphone. And it was time for us to record a new Culips episode together. Maybe you're wondering how we do record together since we're not in the same place at the same time. But it's actually very simple. We just talk to each other using a video call app, and then we record our own audio file on our own computers. And then we send those files to our audio editor who puts the two together, and voila, we have a Culips episode. Isn't technology amazing? It's so easy to record like this. Well, that day, our technology kind of let us down though. Unfortunately, when Kassy used her new mic, she had the wrong microphone selected on her computer. So, you plug the mic into your computer. But then in your audio recording software, you have to select that you want the mic input to come from the new mic and not from the built-in microphone in the laptop.

But Kassy unfortunately didn't do that. And so even though she was talking into her microphone, and I could hear her audio from that good high-quality microphone, it wasn't selected in her audio recording app. And so, the audio that was recorded by her computer ended up being from her built-in microphone, which is just a terrible, cheap sounding microphone. It's not good at all. And it wasn't until after we finished the recording that she sent me the audio file. And then I took a listen that I realized that she had recorded with the laptop mic instead of her brand-new high-quality microphone. Now, I'm not exactly sure what kind of computer Kassy uses, but unfortunately, that microphone inside of her laptop is not very good. And when I listened back to the audio file, I realized that there was just no way that we could use it for a Culips episode. The audio was really low quality, very

echoey, and you could hear a loud buzz from the air conditioner in the background and some other noises as well. In fact, I still have that original audio recording, and I'm just going to play a little sample of the original file here for you. So, you can hear for yourself what it was like. So, let's take a listen to that now.

**Kassy:** Hey, everyone, and hey, Andrew. So, I've got a question for you, Andrew.

**Andrew:** I think you probably agree with me that it sounds pretty terrible, right? Well live and learn, right? Sometimes mistakes happen, and that's fine. I didn't want to give up on the episode though. So, I tried my best to clean up the original audio file and make it listenable. You know, I worked the magic on the computer, I put a little EQ on it, and some reverb on it. And a little bit of this, a little bit of that I tried to save the audio file, but I just couldn't save it. So, we decided to just put that episode aside for the time being and we planned to rerecord it again in the future. However, recently, just around a month ago, or so, I suppose, I learned about this new audio tool that was developed by Adobe. You know that big software company Adobe? They make Photoshop, and they make the video editing program Premiere Pro as well.

Well, Adobe developed a new tool that they say uses AI to transform poorly recorded audio files that sound terrible and fix the files so that they sound amazing. And I believe that they developed this tool for exactly people who are in my situation where there's accidentally some poor audio recorded for a podcast or vlog or video. And you don't want to just throw that hard work out. So, you can try and fix the file and save it. So, I was very interested in trying out this new tool. And I went to their website, I signed up, I was in, and I uploaded Kassy's audio file to the Adobe website and let this tool do its magic. And I have to say I was stunned with the results. It was incredible. The audio file went from being practically unlistenable, I think you'll agree with me that was an unlistenable file to being almost, not quite, but almost up to the audio standards that we have here at Culips. It wasn't perfect, by any means, but it was so, so much better than the original, that I have to say I was truly impressed.

Now, despite the huge improvement in the audio quality, it still isn't perfect. And I personally didn't feel comfortable releasing this episode as a normal official Culips release. However, it does feel like a waste of time and effort just to throw it away and to not do anything with it. And now that the audio was improved so dramatically, thanks to this Adobe tool, I think it's listenable now. And so, what we've decided to do is just play the episode for you here in this bonus episode, we thought, OK, it's not perfect. It's not up to our regular standards, but it's perfect for the bonus episode series. So, that's exactly what we're going to do today. I'm gonna play you this episode that we thought we'd have to scrap, but we were able to save thanks to Adobe.

So, the episode was originally supposed to be part of our vocabulary series, which is called Catch Word. And in this episode, you'll hear Kassy and I teach you about two common animal idioms that I think are really great to add to your vocabulary. Those idioms are black sheep, and dark horse. And that's the connection between them is that they are both animal idioms, although they actually have very different meanings. A black sheep is a person who is different from the rest of their family or another group. And on the other hand, a dark horse is what we can call someone who unexpectedly finds success. So, I hope you'll enjoy this lesson. Here it is the salvaged Catch Word episode featuring Kassy and me. Let's listen to it now.

Today, we're teaching you two idiomatic expressions. One is about feeling like an outsider. And the other is about unexpectedly succeeding. So, the first expression that we're going to talk about is black sheep. The second one is dark horse. And Kassy, why don't we start with the first one? A good place to start. So, it is black sheep. OK? So usually, we would say something like, "Oh, he is a black sheep." Or "She's a black sheep." But even more commonly, maybe is to say, the black sheep of a family, right? You could say like, "Oh, he's the black sheep of his family." Or "She's the black sheep of her family." At least I feel like we use this expression a lot when talking about family members. We don't only use it

to talk about family members, but I think a lot of the time we do. Why don't we explain the meaning Kassy? What does it mean, exactly, if somebody is a black sheep?

**Kassy:** Yeah, if someone is described as a black sheep, it means that they are considered to be different, or an outcast, or kind of looked down upon by their family or group if it's not a family. And it's often due to their behavior choices, beliefs, or personality. For example, maybe if one family was super conservative, but there's one person in the family who's really colorful and outgoing and easygoing, and they're gonna be considered the black sheep of that more conservative, reserved family.

**Andrew:** I know I've seen this a lot on movies and in TV shows, you'll have like a very rich, successful family. And, you know, the father and mother, maybe they're doctors or lawyers. And they really want their children to be doctors or lawyers as well. And maybe there's like three children in the family. And the first two kids are really into following in their parents footsteps and they want to be doctors and lawyers as well. But then the baby of the family is kind of the black sheep. And they have a dream to be something completely different. Like they want to be a poet or a rock star or something. And it just doesn't fit with the goal of the family overall. In that kind of situation, you could say that that baby in the family is the black sheep.

**Kassy:** Yeah, exactly. I think this kind of trope shows up a lot in TV shows, movies, books, any kind of entertainment.

**Andrew:** Kassy, what do you mean by that word trope? That's a good one for our listeners to add to their vocabulary as well.

**Kassy:** It's a storyline or a character that is common throughout all types of creative content.

**Andrew:** Exactly. So, something that I learned when I was preparing for this episode is actually the origin of the expression black sheep. You know, it's like one of those idioms



that we learn as English native speakers without really knowing the deeper meaning behind it, I guess, at least for me anyways. And so, I was curious, why do we call that kind of person, a black sheep. And I learned that in the olden days, when sheep farming was much more important than it is now, not that it's not important anymore, but I think it was more common back in the day, probably. Anyways, way back when a black sheep was considered to be less valuable than a white sheep, because the wool from a black sheep couldn't be dyed as easily as wool from a white sheep. So maybe if you were a shepherd, somebody who farms sheep, and one of the baby sheep turned out to be black instead of white, you'd be like, "Oh, no!" because I can't make as much money off of that sheep, right? So, because of that black sheep were seen as less desirable or inferior to white sheep. And because of that reason, I guess, that entered the English language. And now we call people who don't really fit in the group, because they're kind of outcasts in the group or they're different from the group, we call that person a black sheep as well.

**Kassy:** Yeah, and I do want to take note that usually black sheep are perceived in this negative light. But it's not always the case, you could use it in a positive light as well, by saying, you know, everybody else is kind of cookie cutter, they fit this mold. But that one person, they're the black sheep, they stand out from the crowd.

**Andrew:** Exactly. It can be used in a negative way. But also, in a positive way. If we want to talk about somebody standing out in a good way, right? Not going with the crowd, especially if the crowd believes something bad. Which happens from time to time, right? Like, if you are standing out from the mob mentality of maybe your society, or some peer group that you hang out with, then being the black sheep could be a good thing. Yeah, absolutely. It just depends on the perspective. But Kassy, I think now we know what this expression means. So why don't we listen to a couple of examples, and we can hear how we use it in an everyday conversation.

**Kassy:** Sounds good.



**Friend 1:** Oh, how was your family reunion? Did everybody show up?

**Friend 2:** Yeah, it was great. But as usual, my cousin didn't attend. You know, he's always been the black sheep of the family. He's kind of a rebel.

**Friend 1:** Well, I guess every family has one, right?

**Friend 2:** : Honestly, I kind of admire his free spirit, and the way that he just does his own thing. Sometimes I wish I was a bit more like him.

**Andrew:** Let's break this example down. In this example, we hear two friends talking about a family reunion that one of the friends just attended. And at that family reunion, his cousin didn't attend. And he didn't attend the family reunion because he is the black sheep of the family. He maybe doesn't get along with a family or doesn't like his family. So, he doesn't go to the family reunion. And I think Kassy probably almost every family has a person like this. Maybe every family has a black sheep. I know my family does. Does yours?

**Kassy:** One side of the family. The other one is pretty close.

**Andrew:** Sometimes I even think that I'm the black sheep of my family. Not necessarily because, you know, I don't get along with them or I've rebelled or anything like that. But just because I don't live in Canada and I've kind of left and moved away. I think because of that maybe some people in my family could see me as maybe not a black sheep, maybe like a gray sheep.

**Kassy:** Which is not a real expression, listeners.

**Andrew:** That's my poor attempt at comedy. Anyways, why don't we listen to the second example conversation now?

**Kassy:** Yes, let's do it.

**Friend 1:** Remember your friend Mark from high school? The one that dropped out to start his own business.

**Friend 2:** Yeah, of course, people thought he was the black sheep back then. But now he's super successful.

**Friend 1:** Yeah, I just read an article about him in a business magazine and it's incredible how things turned out for him.

**Friend 2:** I know, right? We all thought he was this crazy guy. But he turned out to be right with his idea all along.

**Kassy:** In this example, we have another example of how being a black sheep could be a positive thing. Two old alumni are talking about a classmate from the past who was considered a black sheep in his school, he had this crazy business idea that no one believed in. But it turns out, his idea was fantastic. And now he's a successful business owner.

**Andrew:** So, this former classmate was the black sheep, because he dropped out of school, right? All of the other students stayed in school, studied, graduated, but he cut out early and dropped out. And because of that he was the black sheep.

**Kassy:** Yeah, this happens a lot in university. You hear it from the big tech superstars.

**Andrew:** Yeah, a lot of the tech moguls dropped out of school early and became very successful. So, this is, I guess, an example of how being the black sheep can be a good thing in the end.

**Kassy:** All right, I think we've explained black sheep pretty well. Let's move on to our second expression. Another animal idiom, dark horse. Andrew, could you please describe what is a dark horse?

**Andrew:** Yes, of course. So, a dark horse is also an expression that we use to describe people. So, if somebody is a dark horse, it means they're a person who has some kind of hidden talent, or hidden skill, or hidden potential that other people aren't aware of. Or we could also describe, you know, I'm gonna step back. Now that I'm talking about it here, I've noticed that we could also describe some things as dark horses, like a sports team, for example, a sports team could be a dark horse. So, it's a team that you don't expect to win. But then maybe they unexpectedly perform really well, better than expected, and they end up winning. And that kind of situation, you could say, oh, that team is the dark horse. So essentially, then this expression describes people, or groups of people like a team, who unexpectedly do better than expected.

**Kassy:** Unexpectedly do better than expected. I like that sentence.

**Andrew:** Now, Kassy, I explained the origins of black sheep. I'm curious, do you know what the origins of dark horse are?

**Kassy:** Dark horse, I'm sure you're all surprised, comes from horse racing. And horse racing, there could be a horse that is kind of not well known. They are either a rookie horse, new to the racetrack, or they're not really considered a favorite. However, they come to the race, and they do an amazing job, much better than the spectators would ever imagine and end up winning or getting second place, which is much better than you'd imagine this dark, unknown horse would get.

**Andrew:** Exactly and here the word "dark" doesn't refer to the color of the horse. Like in black sheep, it was actually talking about black sheep. But here dark just means that information about the horse is unknown. So, it's kind of a mystery horse. So, it's using dark in that sense, not in like the color-tone sense. Kassy, I'm curious. Have you ever been to a racetrack?

**Kassy:** I have not, but I've seen when you use the word trope again, I've seen the racehorse trope a lot in movies, and I think it looks really fun. Have you gone Andrew?

**Andrew:** Yeah, I've gone a couple of times. I've been once in Canada and once in Korea, maybe twice in Korea. Anyways, I'm not really a gamblin' man. I don't gamble very often. And I don't know anything about horse racing either. So, when I went to the horse track, all of the horses were dark horses, because I didn't know anything about them. But you can see some odds and you can see some favorites. Anyways, I did bet a very small amount of money, just a few dollars on one of the horses, and I don't think I won anything. But it was a lot of fun. And yeah, amazing animals, it's really kind of a unique experience. If you get the chance, you should try it out sometime.

**Kassy:** I will. The jockeys are really cool too, the ones that ride the horse.

**Andrew:** So just to summarize, a dark horse is someone or something that has a hidden talent or hidden potential, and it unexpectedly is revealed. And that revelation leads to success, OK? So, let's keep that meaning in mind while we listen to a couple of examples. And let's do that right now, here we go.

**Kassy:** Sounds good.

**Friend 1:** Did you catch the basketball game last night? The new player on our team was amazing.

**Friend 2:** He came out of nowhere and scored so many points. I didn't even know he was that good.

**Friend 1:** Yeah, he's a real dark horse, right? I bet the other teams will be keeping an eye on him now.

**Friend 2:** Absolutely. He might just be the key to us winning the championship this season.

**Andrew:** Let's break this example down. So, in this example conversation, two friends are talking about basketball. And one of the players in last night's basketball game that they both watched, was a brand-new player. And it sounds like he was kind of a secret weapon, Kassy, like this, he's this new player, the other team didn't really know about him. And he turned out to be a dark horse. He just was an amazing player, he scored so many points. And because of that, the team was able to win. So yeah, this kind of mysterious player that nobody has any information on, but really turned out to be amazing. That's why we can describe that player as a dark horse.

**Kassy:** Let's take a listen to another example of using dark horse.

**Andrew:** Let's do it.

**Friend 1:** Have you been following the local elections? There's this new candidate running for city council that's gaining a lot of support.

**Friend 2:** I haven't heard about them. What's their story?

**Friend 2:** Well, she's relatively unknown. But her ideas are really fresh and interesting. And she's been really well received. She might be the dark horse in this election.

**Friend 1:** Interesting. I'll have to look into her campaign and see what she's all about.

**Kassy:** In example two, we're listening to two people talking about a dark horse in the local election. In this case, it's a woman who's running for election, but she's not a well-known contender. Usually in an election, you have one or two main people gunning for the position. But this woman is relatively fresh, new, not well known. But she's gaining traction. She's gaining voters each and every day.

**Andrew:** And in that conversation, the speaker said she might be the dark horse, right? So, she might be the person who wins the election. And if she does win the election, then she'll be the dark horse. But right now, she's just gaining popularity, and she has that potential to be a dark horse. But right at the moment, I guess she's not exactly.

**Kassy:** Dark horses do not usually win, but it would be exciting in this fictional story.

**Andrew:** Kassy, just to put it into a real-life political context here, a politician that everybody knows Donald Trump. Before he got elected, would you say he was a dark horse like somebody that you really wouldn't expect to win, but then ended up winning? In my opinion, I think we could probably call him a dark horse.

**Kassy:** He was definitely a dark horse. Interesting use of dark horse though, because he was and still is super well known, but not for politics.

**Andrew :** Yeah, before he was elected president, everybody was like, there's no way this guy's gonna win. They thought it was kind of a joke, and then he won. And so that's why it was so surprising. And that's why we call him dark horse.

So, I hope you enjoyed that Catch Word episode, and I also hope that you agree with me that it was better to release it here than to not release it at all. I'm curious. Do you know anyone in your life who you could describe as a black sheep or a dark horse? If you do, why don't you tell me about it?

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So that's it for this week's episode. Congrats on completing an English study sesh with me here today. Great job. Take care, and I'll talk to you soon, bye!

## Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

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