
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

This is where...

Steal someone's thunder

Rav

In the UK, if you said that someone had **stolen your thunder**, most people would know what you meant.

Man 1

It means that someone's taken credit for something that you've done.

Woman

I guess, they did something better than you did, and they took all the credit for it.

Man 2

Stolen your ideas.

Rav

Can you give me a sentence where you would use that saying?

Man 1

I should have been promoted but someone else stole my thunder.

Man 2

I was going to make a unique presentation at work, and somebody had stolen my thunder.

Woman

If someone turned up to my wedding in a great big white dress, they've stolen my thunder.

Rav

But not a lot of people know where it comes from.

Where do you think that saying came from?

Man 2

I've not a clue. Maybe the British weather!

Woman 1

I don't know. Maybe the weather?!

Rav

What these Londoners don't realise is that **stolen your thunder** came from here.

The Theatre Royal in Drury Lane is the oldest theatre in London's West End. It's even older than the BBC.

In 1709, a man named John Dennis invented a machine that made a noise just like a clap of thunder. The thunder machine was fantastic, but Dennis's play wasn't.

Soon after its opening night, his play was replaced by a production of Macbeth.

When John Dennis went back to the Theatre Royal to see this new production he was outraged to discover that his thunder machine was being used in Macbeth, and no one had asked his permission.

The story goes that he stood up and shouted “they will not let my play run, but they steal my thunder.” And so the phrase **to steal someone's thunder** was born.

And it came from the area around here, and not from up here.

Watch the video here: <http://bbc.in/2y26jx5>