



Red Herrings and White Elephants: The Origins of the Phrases We Use Everyd

Albert Jack

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Mad hatter . . . pie in the sky . . . egg on your face. We use these phrases every day, yet how many of us know what they really mean or where they came from?

From *bringing home the bacon* to *leaving no stone unturned*, the English language is peppered with hundreds of common idioms borrowed from ancient traditions and civilizations throughout the world. In *Red Herrings and White Elephants*, Albert Jack has uncovered the amazing and sometimes downright bizarre stories behind many of our most familiar and eccentric modes of expression:

If you happen to be a *bootlegger*, your profession recalls the Wild West outlaws who sold illegal alcohol by concealing slender bottles of whiskey in their boots. If you're on *cloud nine*, you owe a nod to the American Weather Bureau's classification of clouds, the ninth topping out all others at a mountainous 40,000 feet. If you opt for the *hair of the dog* the morning after, you're following the advice of medieval English doctors, who recommended rubbing the hair of a dog into the wound left by the animal's bite.

A delightful compendium of anecdotes on everything from *minding your p's and q's* to *pulling out all the stops*, *Red Herrings and White Elephants* is an essential handbook for language-lovers of all ages.

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