
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

To drink someone under the table



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

OK Li, here it is – a nice bottle of red wine, some glasses... Let's celebrate your promotion... err... Li? ... Li, where are you?

Li

Down here, Neil! Down here!

Neil

What on earth are you doing under the table?!

Li

You have always said you can drink me under the table.

Neil

Well, yes, I did say that...

Li

Well, here I am. Give me my wine please.

Neil

Li, in English, when you say you can drink someone under the table, you mean that if you and your friend both drink the same amount of alcohol, your friend will be very drunk, but you will be fine. In other words, you're saying that you've got a much higher tolerance of alcohol than another person.

Li

Oh, that's what you meant! That's a relief! It was getting very hot and uncomfortable under the table.

Neil

'To drink someone under the table' is today's expression in The English We Speak. Let's hear some examples of how it's used.

Examples

I do like a gin and tonic after a hard day at work but Alan can drink me under the table!

When Beth realised she could drink anyone under the table she decided to stop drinking alcohol and go into rehab.

Li

Oh OK. I get it now. There are so many funny expressions in the English language, Neil. It's fun to learn!

Neil

Yes! I'll drink to that! We have loads of these expressions... loads and loads!

Li

Oh dear. Sometimes I want to drink, just to forget that there's so much to learn!

Neil

Come on, Li. You've just been promoted. Let's celebrate with a toast.

Both

Cheers!

Li

Bye!