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Neil: Hello, Helen. Thanks for inviting me here. It's a lovely cafe, isn't it?

Helen: Yes, it is, Neil. Actually, I wanted to ask you a favour. I know you play the piano and I'd like you to teach me.

Waitress: Here is your tea. Madam, sir...

Helen: Thank you. I'll pour it.

Neil: I'd be happy to teach you the piano. Are you buying one?

Helen: No. Our colleague John is giving me one.

Neil: Giving you a piano?

Helen: Yes. He said he's moving to Australia and will give me his piano. Sugar in your tea?

Neil: I'd take that with a pinch of salt!

Helen: Oh... Okay.

Neil: What are you doing?!

Helen: You said you would take that with a pinch of salt, so I am putting some in your tea.

Neil: No, I didn't mean put salt in my tea! I was talking about our colleague John. You need to take what John says with a pinch of salt.

Helen: Er, I'm confused.

Neil: In English, when we say 'take it with a pinch of salt', we mean don't believe in it completely because it might not be true.

Helen: Take it with a pinch of salt 这个表达的意思是不能完全相信,就是对某事持有半信半疑的态度。Neil 说,我不应该完全相信我们同事 John 对我许下的承诺,应该对 John 说的话采取 take it with a pinch of salt 的态度。So, John's not going to give me his piano?

Neil: John's always planning to move abroad and promising things. I'm still waiting for a sofa he promised me last year. He said he was going to Peru!

Helen: Oh, I see.

Neil: 'With a pinch of salt' is today's expression in Authentic Real English. Here are some examples of how it's used.

Examples

When my cousin says he has absolutely no money, you have to take that with a pinch of salt. He's just mean.

I take everything Mary says with a pinch of salt. She tends to exaggerate things.

Helen: Thank you for warning me, Neil. John is a good person but he can't make up his mind.

Neil: That's right. But if you ever want to learn to play the piano, I can teach you. I'm not very good at it but I can teach you what I know. And you don't need to take that with a pinch of salt.

Helen: Oh, you're such a sweetie!

Neil: A sweetie who likes his tea with sugar rather than salt.

Helen: I'm sorry about that!

Neil: Bye.

Helen: Bye.