

一念之間



暮春三月，中途島上遍地野花，毛茸茸的信天翁幼鳥獨自呆在鳥巢裏，望眼欲穿，等着父母餵哺。在藍天碧海間，出現大羣飛鳥翱翔的身影，那是從遠處覓食歸來的信天翁父母。草地上大大小小的信天翁興奮地發出此起彼落的叫聲。一隻身形較瘦小的信天翁寶寶也不甘示弱，引頸高鳴，媽媽連忙滑翔至孩子身邊，把食物反芻出來，信天翁寶寶急不及待咽了下去……

中途島位處太平洋中心，是世上距離大陸最遙遠的海島之一，也是全球超過七成信天翁的家園。每年秋天，上百萬隻成年信天翁回到這裏求偶、築巢，生兒育女。島上杳無人煙，也沒有海鳥天敵，理應是信天翁的天堂。可是，美國攝影師喬丹在二零零九年九月首次踏足中途島時，卻看到怵目驚心、地獄一般的景象：沙灘上滿布垃圾，地上到處是腐爛了的信天翁幼鳥屍體。剖開一看，裏面全是未分解的塑膠垃圾：瓶蓋、膠珠、牙刷、打火機、魚形醬油瓶、各式各樣的塑膠碎片……這些，就是信天翁飛行數千里，歷盡千辛萬苦為孩子帶回來的“食物”。可憐幼鳥無法消化這些“塑食”，不少噎死、餓死，或是被鋒利的塑膠碎片穿腸破肚而亡。無數幼鳥還未來得及展翅飛翔，就這樣悲慘地離開這個世界。

海鳥並非唯一受害生物。菲律賓科學家在一條幼鯨胃內發現四十公斤塑膠垃圾；英國一隻海豹被塑膠環圈勒斃；台灣一隻海龜因營養失衡而亡，腸道竟塞滿三十四片塑膠碎片。海洋生物的悲歌，近年不絕於耳。孕育萬物的海洋已是千瘡百孔，無數海洋生物正被塑膠殺害。這些動物世世代代以海為家，怎料遼闊的海洋已淪為地球上最大的垃圾場。世界經濟論壇警

告，到了二零五零年，海洋裏的塑膠垃圾將比全部的魚加起來還要重。

喪鐘早為海洋生物而敲響，人類能夠倖免於難嗎？隨着時間流逝，海面上漂浮的塑膠垃圾在陽光和海浪催化下，分解成微小碎片。這些塑膠微粒不易清理，並會如海綿般吸收化學物質，又容易附在浮游生物上；當小魚吃下浮游生物，大魚再吃小魚，塑膠微粒亦會隨之進入食物鏈，最終成為我們的盤中餐、腹中食。



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塑膠廢物氾濫成災，人人難辭其咎。大家想一想今天扔掉了多少塑膠用品？膠袋、水瓶、吸管、熱飲攪棒、外賣餐盒……別以為扔到垃圾桶便一了百了。塑膠無法被大自然完全分解，只會隨着時間分裂得愈來愈小，變成肉眼看不見的微塑膠。當我們以至下一代都歸於塵土之時，以前丟棄的塑膠仍遺留在地球某個角落。長此以往，地球變成無人居住的巨型垃圾堆，恐非科幻電影橋段。我們以為不值一文的塑膠用品，實際上代價高昂，只不過為我們結帳的是子孫後代。

解鈴還需繫鈴人。塑膠引起的生態災難，只能靠我們自己解決。棄用塑料吸管、少用或重用膠袋、自備水瓶和食物盒等都是我們力所能及的事。為了遠方的信天翁、海龜、鯨魚，為了這顆美麗的星球，也為了我們自己，你願意多花一點心思，忍受一點不便嗎？

蝴蝶把翅膀輕輕一扇，輾轉千里之外就刮起了龍捲風。地球最終走向荒蕪還是繁榮之路，就取決於我們日常生活中每個小小的選擇。為了一時便利而遺禍萬年，還是力行“減塑”，功在千秋？地球的未來，就在你我一念之間。



Food for Thought: *The Pig That Wants to be Eaten*

Do you know that you died last night? Well, almost. Your body was crushed in an accident, but your brain was connected to a supercomputer running a virtual reality programme. The computer is currently feeding stimuli into your brain so it seems to you as though you are still in a living body, living your old life in the real world. But everything seemingly existing around you, from the chair you are sitting in to the mouse you are holding, is actually virtual. You are no more than a pulsating grey mass kept alive in a vat, wired up to a computer.

You intuitively attempt to prove it otherwise, that you are not living in a fictitious world, but you may find that quite difficult. The “Brain in a Vat” is a very famous philosophical hypothesis and its underlying supposition has been the premise behind movies such as *The Matrix*. In *The Pig That Wants to Be Eaten: And 99 Other Thought Experiments*, Julian Baggini, a British philosopher, has collected 100 such thought experiments, each beginning with an imaginary scenario, followed by a few hundred words of thought-provoking discussion. The reader is introduced to a myriad of philosophical conundrums and ethical dilemmas covering reality, religion, epistemology, ethics and morals, logic and language, self-consciousness, and more.

The book provides not just food for thought, but a smorgasbord of the canon of Western philosophy, from Plato to Pascal, and from Russell to Ryle. Baggini rehashes some of the ideas in a more appealing way. Plato’s Cave becomes a secret sect where no one can escape; the prisoner’s dilemma is framed in terms of marital relationships; the old adage “If a tree falls in a deserted forest, does it make a sound?” is turned into a tale of aliens with unusual sense perception. Some ideas have their roots in modern fiction. For instance, the pig of the title is inspired by the talking bovine in Douglas Adams’s *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. It presents itself to diners as the main dish and makes such suggestions as this, “May I urge you to consider my liver? ... It must be very rich and tender by now, I’ve been force-feeding myself for months.” Some people go vegan because they think slaughtering animals is wrong. But what if the animal were genetically engineered to have no interest in its own survival or to want nothing more than to be

eaten? Would eating such an animal, however revolting the idea might sound, be morally justified?

Baggini points out that such thought experiments are designed to “isolate the key variables, the specific factors under examination, to see what difference they, and they alone, make to our understanding of the world”. When the laboratory is in the mind and imagination is the only apparatus, kept in check only by logic and reasoning, then floating brains and pigs that want to be eaten are only starters. Baggini’s book is as fascinating and enthralling as a fantasy fiction. Readers will encounter a demon who systematically deceives us, poor Achilles forever trying yet failing to catch up with the tortoise, a talking parrot fighting for his rights, and a computer instigating lawsuits against her owner. Most of the stories are good, some fabulous, a few of them too abstract, but without doubt all entertaining and enlightening.

Apart from the outlandish stories exploring abstract philosophical issues, there are realistic scenarios in which the reader is challenged with mind-bending questions and dilemmas with no easy answers. Would you return the extra money mistakenly dispensed by an ATM machine? If you could only save your spouse or 12 people, which option would you choose? Is it right to do something wrong if no one is hurt? What role does luck play in ethics? Is it moral to torture an innocent person in order to save a hundred? Baggini offers no firm answers. He may challenge the obvious, give hints as to where the discussion might go next or play the devil’s advocate. But in trying to come up with solutions, it is clear that what we are actually doing is questioning our own beliefs and values.

While even the existence of the physical world is called into doubt, Descartes assures us that, *Cogito, ergo sum*, or “I think, therefore I am.” Our capacity to think critically and rationally enables us to have diverging perspectives and make choices—and life is all about choices. Baggini’s book evokes introspection and provides a depth of insight, inspiring the reader to re-examine conventional wisdom, as well as one’s own assumptions and knee-jerk opinions. To quote the author, “Many lines of thought can be started from this book. But none ends in it.”

Life is a matter of choices, and every choice you make makes you.

John C. Maxwell



餘震

一九七六年七月二十八日凌晨三時四十二分，中國唐山市發生7.8級大地震，逾二十萬人死亡，十多萬人重傷，整個城市毀於一旦。

數十年過去了，唐山市的廢墟上重建起一座新城市，人們生活看似回到正軌，但破碎的心靈能夠完全修補嗎？二零零六年，正值唐山大地震三十周年，加拿大華裔女作家張翎創作小說《餘震》。書中描寫一個母親在地震後作出艱難的選擇，以及這個抉擇如何影響一個七歲小女孩的人生，藉此探究災難對倖存者造成的永久傷害。這部作品獲推許為“至今寫地震寫得最好的小說”，二零一零年由內地導演馮小剛改編成電影《唐山大地震》。

小登七歲，既是父母的貼心小棉襖，也是雙胞胎弟弟小達的保護神。她活潑、快樂、倔強，但突如其來的地震改變了一切。姊弟倆在睡夢中，被壓在一塊水泥板下的兩頭，無論抬起哪一邊，都必定犧牲另一個。

小登聽見小舅厲聲喝斥着母親：“姐你再不說話，兩個都沒了。”在似乎無限冗長的沉默之後，母親終於開了口……母親石破天驚的那句話是：小……達。

這兩個字像重錘一樣，砸在女孩的頭頂。如果就此死去，她永遠是那個不識愁滋味的小女孩。可是，她竟奇跡似地活了過來。她搖搖晃晃地站起來，邁着蹣跚的腳步，決絕地走向未知的前方，離開了那個讓她心碎的家。其後，她被人領養，改名為小燈。從這時起，小說和電影裏的女主角走上了不同的人生道路。《餘震》裏的小燈，心裏總有一扇鋪滿灰塵、緊緊關閉的窗戶。她不是電影裏那個與養父父女情深、與女兒相處融洽、與外籍丈夫婚姻美滿的方登；她是與養父恩斷義絕、與女兒水火不容、與丈夫感情破裂的小燈。她長年焦慮失眠，曾三度自殺未遂，須接受心理治療；她不是浴火重生的鳳凰，而是在苦海中掙扎求生的凡人。

小說結尾，小燈回到老家唐山，看到與她一街之隔的母親。母親已經當了奶奶，身邊還有兩個叫紀登和念登的孩子。她聽見母親罵：“紀登你個丫頭，忒霸道了些。”三十年前的記憶剎那浮現眼前，她彷彿就是那個未諳世事、無憂無慮的小丫頭。這時候，她聽見母親問：“閨女，你找誰？”終於，小燈流下了地震後第一滴眼淚，心中幽閉的那扇窗，也登時給推開了。

張翎本是聽力康復治療師。在十多年的職業生涯中，她接觸過不少軍人、災民和難民，自稱“對疼痛的感覺絕不陌生，也不願意接受一切都會過去的膚淺安慰”。她希望通過對疼痛淋漓盡致的描寫，引起人們對災後心理創傷的關注。地震中被壓在水泥板下，是小燈一生痛楚的開始。當身體的疼痛過去了，心靈的悲痛卻慢慢沉澱，恍如隨時決堤的暗流。被生母捨棄、養母病逝、遭養父侵犯，這些經歷都令小燈缺乏安全感。她試圖牢牢地掌控身邊一切，卻沒想到抓得愈緊，失去得愈多。心靈痛苦，身體會有忠實反應。小燈患有嚴重頭痛，書中把她頭痛發作時的感覺描寫得非常形象化：

是一把重磅的榔頭在砸——是建築工人或者鐵匠使用的那種長柄方臉的大榔頭。不是直接砸下來的，而是墊了好幾層被褥之後的那種砸法。所以疼也不是尖銳的小面積的刺疼，卻是一種擴散了的、沉悶的、帶着巨大回聲的鈍疼。彷彿她的腦殼是一隻鬆軟的質地低劣的皮球，每一錘砸下去，很久才能反彈回來。砸下來時是一重疼，反彈回去時是另外一重疼。所以她的疼是雙重的。

張翎說：“儘管疼痛和醜陋都讓人不安，可是書寫《餘震》的目的並不是悅人耳目。”然而，小說所強調的“疼痛”，在電影裏由溫情取代。方登雖然被生母放棄，但成長期間並不缺乏愛。養父母待她如珠如寶，雖然大學時遇人不淑，但後來嫁給了對她千依百順的外籍丈夫，更育有一個很懂事的女兒。在汶川地震中，她看到了另一個母親的抉擇，瞬間明白了自己母親當年的絕望與悲慟，終於選擇與弟弟相認，回家見母親。當她看見媽媽年復一年為她買下的一冊冊課本，不禁放聲大哭，為自己數十年不通音訊向母親懺悔。電影就在方登一句句泣不成聲的“對不起”中進入尾聲。

小說《餘震》和電影《唐山大地震》，同是刻劃人被天災推到極限時的反應。小說側重自我救贖，尋求心理輔導，面對痛楚，走出陰霾；電影則強調親情能撫平心靈創傷。正如書中所說：“天災過去之後，每一個人站起來的方式，卻是千姿百態的。”無論如何，唯有走出心中樊籠，選擇原諒與寬恕，才能平息心中的餘震。



developing, growing, increasing, escalating, on the rise, booming, ing: Trade with the Far East increase next year. incredible adj. 1. unbelievable, inconceivable, unimaginable, unrealistic, ridiculous, unreal

ROGET'S TREASURE HOUSE

Some writers have no trouble delivering the mot juste, a phrase borrowed from French which means the exact right word or phrase. If the desired word is out of reach, they simply create one. “Bedroom”, “chortle”, “muggle”—these are just some of the words invented by authors that have made it into the dictionary. Wordsmiths from Shakespeare to JK Rowling have the marvellous gift of pulling words out of thin air. Not the more mediocre of us. We tend to resort to a thesaurus in pursuit of the best word, the one that really fits. Although almost everyone has used a thesaurus at one time or another, few may know that 18 January is Thesaurus Day in honour of Peter Mark Roget, author of the seminal *Roget's Thesaurus*, who was born on this day in 1779.

Peter Mark Roget was a most extraordinary man. He was a successful doctor and delivered popular lectures on anatomy and physiology, subjects little studied then. Medicine, however, was not his only or principal calling. His life and pursuits were more of a scientist and a literary scholar than a practising physician. His invention of the “log-log” slide rule formed the basis of slide rules that were used until the age of the calculator. His paper on optics inspired the development of the zoetrope and hence the earliest motion pictures. He had been the Secretary of the Royal Society, Britain's national academy of science, and a fellow of many other august bodies. He also contributed to the founding of the medical school in Manchester and the University of London.

Philologist, theologian, mathematician, chess master, expert on bees, phrenology, Dante and the kaleidoscope, Roget was indeed an eminent Victorian polymath. Yet he is best known for making lists. Since childhood, Roget had kept a notebook, jotting lists of related words and phrases that helped his prolific writing. List making offered a welcome relief for him from a messy reality and troubled family life. His mother suffered from severe depression and lapsed into paranoia. His father and wife died young. Both his sister and daughter had mental problems. His beloved uncle slit his own throat in front of him. Sorting words into categories brought order and stability to an otherwise chaotic life, keeping him from succumbing to depression.

Retiring from medicine at the age of 61, Roget decided to use his new-found leisure time to classify and arrange these lists of words in a hierarchical taxonomy of concepts. When in 1852 this retirement project was published, he christened it “thesaurus”, the Greek word for “treasure house”. And *Roget's*

Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases, the reference book that made his name, has never been out of print since.

Roget's Thesaurus is constructed around six broad classes devoted to abstract relations, space, matter, intellect, volition, and affections, within which are sections (existence, dimensions, motion, etc.) that boast 1,000 categories of various concepts. Opposing notions are organised across from each other. For example, category 323 Hardness is next to category 324 Softness; and category 483 Underestimation is in the adjoining column of category 482 Overestimation. Words and phrases are fitted into these categories according to their meanings and parts of speech. Roget intended for his readers to immerse themselves in the orderly classification system of the *Thesaurus* so that they might better understand the world through language. Shortly before publication, Roget included an index at the end of the volume as an afterthought, listing the words in alphabetical order, along with their category numbers. The index has become indispensable for all those who wish to use the *Thesaurus* without necessarily going through its complex classification system.

Roget's Thesaurus became an instant success in Britain. By Roget's death in 1869, 28 editions had been printed. The crossword craze in the 1920s made Roget a household name across the pond as well. More than 40 million copies have since been sold and the name of Roget has become synonymous with thesauruses. Numerous editions of his masterpiece have been published, with more efficient and useful features introduced and the size and scope expanded. But Roget's time-honoured structure survives: classification according to ideas, followed by an enormous alphabetical index.

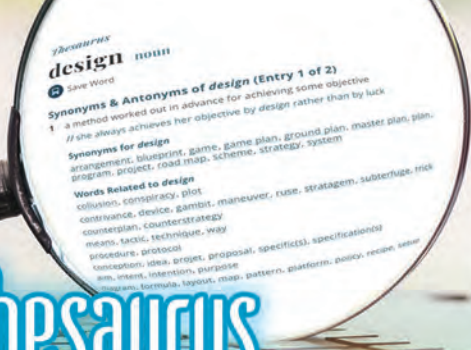
Readers unfamiliar with the shades and nuances of the potential alternatives listed in a thesaurus should look them up in the dictionary so as to make an informed choice. But if you know full well the meanings of all the words, you can easily weave through the thicket of the lexicon and find the one that is on the tip of your tongue, and probably make some serendipitous discoveries along the way. A Roget-style thesaurus is more than a compendium of synonyms. It gives you wings to fly to some other far more interesting places. It offers a glimpse into the mind of the lexicographer whose perception and understanding of the world shines through the tome. If it does nothing else, it could be the saving grace for even the nastiest villain. The vicious Captain Hook in JM Barrie's play *Peter Pan*, we are told, “is not wholly evil: he has a *Thesaurus* in his cabin”.

The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.

Amelia Earhart



Merriam-Webster's Online Thesaurus



Few words are exactly equivalent in meaning, usage, and connotation. Choosing the right word is therefore crucial to effective communication. Mark Twain put it succinctly, “Use the right word, not its second cousin.” The synonyms in a thesaurus are either cousins of varying degrees, or siblings that share a striking resemblance. Unthinking substitutions might wind up with phrases like “lacerates falling from my eyes”.

Compared with its printed counterparts, an online thesaurus offers a simple, speedy and convenient alternative to thumbing through the pages. Among the many available options, *Merriam-Webster's Online Thesaurus* seems particularly useful and comprehensive. Unlike those online thesauruses that merely offer a list of synonyms and antonyms without further elaboration, *Merriam-Webster's Online Thesaurus* has separate entries listed for each different part of speech such as verb, noun, adverb, etc. Each sense of the word is treated individually with brief yet clear definitions, alongside an example sentence and its own paragraphs of

synonyms, related words and near antonyms. If you decide to dig into a word, say, its pronunciation, meaning or origin, the corresponding dictionary page is only a click away.

“*Conduct*”, for example, has two entries under which five senses are listed as a verb and two senses as a noun. Towards the bottom of the entries are some frequently asked questions such as “How is the word *conduct* distinct from other similar verbs?”, “In what contexts can *control* take the place of *conduct*?” and “When might *direct* be a better fit than *conduct*?” A close examination of the fine distinctions among synonyms will help the reader choose the one that best suits a particular context.

A well-designed online thesaurus allows the user to drift from word to word and from concept to concept, making the search experience more enjoyable and productive. To help you get off the ground, click [here](#) to *Merriam-Webster's Online Thesaurus* and start to choose, pick, select, find, determine, decide and settle on the mot juste.

擇善固執

“擇善固執”典出《禮記·中庸》：“誠之者，擇善而固執之者也。”“誠”是萬物賴以存在的根本，而人要做到至誠，就要選擇正確的事去做，並堅持下去。

“擇”解作選擇；“善”指美好、正確的事；“固執”這裏意指堅持。“擇善固執”含褒義，多用來勉勵或稱讚別人對正確的事有所堅持，例如：

“在畢業禮上，校長勉勵同學要**擇善固執**，面對誘惑時必須堅持正確的原則，千萬不要隨波逐流。”

“父母應該向子女灌輸正確的價值觀，教導他們明辨是非，**擇善固執**。”

不少人誤以為“擇善固執”含貶義，這可能是受到“固執”一詞所影響。“固執”解作堅持己見、不肯

變通，一般作貶義用，例如“固執己見”、“性情固執”。不過，“擇善固執”這個成語中的“固執”，是取其堅持的含義，而大前提是“擇善”，即經過慎思明辨後選擇做正確的事。與“擇善固執”意思相近的成語，有“擇善而行”、“擇善而從”等。“擇善而行”指選擇好的事情去做；“擇善而從”解作選擇好的事或人去依從。不過，這兩個成語並沒有包含堅持不懈的意思。

至於形容固執己見，即使犯錯也不肯改變過來，則可用“執迷不悟”、“一意孤行”等成語。“執迷不悟”指堅持錯誤而猶不覺悟；“一意孤行”指不聽勸告，即使錯誤，也堅持隨己意而行。這兩個成語都含貶義。

人有不為也，而後可以有為也。

《孟子·離婁下》

迷信的鴿子



如果在某一瞬間，人生這座迷宮的所有大門都敞開，每條路徑一覽無遺，你是否能在生命中無數的分岔點，作出最好的抉擇，最終獲得幸福？

由比利時導演 Jaco Van Dormael 執導的電影《小國民尼謨》(Mr. Nobody)，通過主角尼謨的多重人生，審視時間、抉擇、愛情等人生課題。在二零九二年，人類以科技實現永生，一百一十七歲的尼謨是最後一個自然死亡的人。他在一次次的催眠及訪問之中，不斷回憶過去，但每段回憶迥異，究竟哪一段才是他的真實人生？尼謨發現，他人生所有的分岔，始於父母離異之際。

那年，在那個決定命運的月台上，才九歲的尼謨——一個平日連挑選蛋糕也三心兩意的小男孩，必須在短短數秒內，作出重大的人生抉擇：追上列車，與母親遠走他鄉？還是留下，與父親相依為命？

列車轟隆隆地向前飛馳，縱橫的鐵軌彷彿預示着尼謨多條或交錯或平行的人生軌跡。

假如尼謨追上了列車，跟隨母親遠渡重洋，便會在十五歲那年遇見安娜，然後因一句不經意的混帳話令這段感情還未開始便已結束。在另一個人生版本中，他沒有出言不遜，長大後和安娜結婚生子，最後在回家路上遭遇車禍喪生。還有一個版本是，尼謨與安娜彼此相愛，但被迫分開。兩人在成年之後重逢，卻因為寫了安娜電話號碼的字條被雨水淋濕而無緣再聚。

假如尼謨沒有追上列車，與父親留在家鄉，他會在十五歲那年遇見艾莉絲。兩人的遭遇會隨着尼謨是否得到艾莉絲的芳心而有不同結局：求愛失敗，尼謨會遇車禍成為植物人，又或賭氣與自己不愛的女孩珍結婚生子，雖然事業成功，卻厭棄生活；求愛成功，艾莉絲會在兩人結婚當天不幸喪生，又或在多年後離家出走。

在短短兩個半小時中，導演以令人讚歎的蒙太奇手法，敘述了尼謨可能經歷的多個人生版本，雖然情節複雜，但脈絡分明。

尼謨的英文姓名為 Nemo Nobody (Nemo 拉丁文意思是“no one”)，即“無名小卒”，似乎暗示這不只是尼謨的故事，也有可能是你我他的遭遇。在人生棋盤上，我們不就是走一步看一步、無路可退的小卒嗎？我們一生中的抉擇，有的令我們遺憾，有的給我們驚喜。站在分岔路口，既然無法得知結果如何，活在當下，隨心而行，也許就是最佳選擇。正如電影裏年老的尼謨所說：“每一條道路，都是正確的道路。”

在電影接近尾聲時，年老的尼謨對年輕記者低語：“你不存在，我也不存在，我們不過是一個九歲男孩的幻想罷了。”為了讓劇情合乎邏輯，電影假設所有孩子在出生前都能洞悉未來，但遺忘天使在嬰兒即將降臨人世時，會先把他們的記憶消除。由於遺忘天使遺漏了尼謨，所以他出生後仍“記得”未來無盡的可能性。於是，在追趕火車那電光石火的剎那，一幕幕人生在九歲的尼謨眼前掠過。尼謨發現，無論是選擇跟隨父親還是母親，之後開展的人生無不以悲劇告終。面對這盤陷於“強制被動”(zugzwang) 處境的人生棋局，他怎樣選擇才能破局？這要留待大家在電影中找出答案。

影片開首播放了心理學家史金納 (Burrhus Frederic Skinner) 經典的“鴿子迷信”實驗。箱中的鴿子每隔二十秒獲得食物，卻以為是自己振動翅膀所致。為了得到食物，鴿子開始一直揮動翅膀，變成迷信的鴿子。其實，迷信的豈止鴿子！我們小心翼翼做抉擇，以為這是幸福所繫。然而，煮一隻雞蛋產生的熱氣、一根劣質鞋帶、一片隨風飄落的樹葉，便改寫了尼謨的一生。命運真的在我們掌握之中？

也許，我們都是迷信的鴿子。

有所取必有所舍，有所禁必有所寬。

蘇軾《策別第十》



先知

明莉病了，而且病情不輕。

明莉覺得自己患上嚴重選擇困難症，說不定是童年陰影所致。明莉的父母是“直升機家長”，凡事都為她安排得妥妥當當，明莉反抗了幾次，但都徒勞無功，於是乾脆放棄，聽父母的話總沒錯吧。長大後，少了家長指引，明莉就像失去了錨的小船一樣，漂浮不定。早午晚吃什麼？放假到哪兒玩？塗哪種顏色的口紅？這些日常選擇都令她非常苦惱，心裏總是七上八下的，怎麼選都覺得自己選錯了。

自從上次在公司由於選擇困難症發作突然昏厥，明莉便辭了職，賦閒在家。除了三餐，她一天到晚都躲在房間裏玩虛擬實境遊戲。“又過關了，這遊戲怎麼這麼不經打？”她不滿地搖了搖頭，順手點開了新聞頻道。“最炫懸浮滑板登場”、“中秋節過後垃圾成為月球另一道觀光風景”、“逾千複製人遊行抗議被歧視”……熒幕彈出一個又一個全息影像，明莉卻興致索然。

“有選擇困難症的你有福了！先知系統招募試用者！”明莉的手停止了滑動。熒幕上一個笑容親切的機械人主播侃侃而談：“植入本公司的人工智能納米晶片，等於隨身帶備超級電腦。先知系統以龐大數據庫作最精確的演算，幫助你作出最佳選擇，人生勝利可期！公司現正招募一百名免費試用者，名額有限，萬勿錯過！”明莉心中一動：“這簡直是為我量身訂做的發明！”她不由自主地按下畫面上的“申請”按鈕。

經過一輪身體檢測、心理評估，明莉終於裝上了晶片。她眼前出現一個懸浮熒幕。按了“啟動”鍵後，得回答連串問題：“允許讀取記憶系統？”、“允許讀取深層意識？”、“允許連接感官系統？”，明莉全部選取同意後，腦海裏響起低沉的男聲：“您好，我是先知，很高興為您服務！”

明莉興沖沖地走到離家最近的一家餐廳。餐牌上每道菜式都令人垂涎，怎麼辦呢？差點又要昏過去的時候，明莉在腦海裏輕輕呼喚：“先知、先知，我該選哪一道呀？”接着，明莉視野右下角出現了一個小小的懸浮方框，列出每一道菜的成分、營養價值、卡路里含量。明莉看得眼花繚亂，難為情地說：“我只要結果就好了。”這時懸浮熒幕上出現了幾個大字：“凱撒沙律走醬”。

先知系統讓明莉有了勇氣重新面對人生。她不顧父母反對，從家裏搬了出去，並且按先知的建議，加入了一家貿易公司，任職營業代表，負責發掘有潛力的新品牌。憑着先知的幫忙，明莉如有神助，挑選的品牌都大受歡迎。她整個人精神煥發，走起路來颯颯生風，跟以前畏首畏尾的樣子判若兩人。

先知系統測試成功，正式推出市場。明莉立刻以優惠價購買了永久使用權限。有一天，明莉的好友阿

森愁眉苦臉地跟她說：“阿美安裝了先知系統，系統說我不是她的最佳選擇。”

“那你們分手了？”

“還沒，她正在考慮。”

“兄弟，我看你好！”明莉知道這時候說什麼都顯得無力。

原來大家都安裝了先知系統，難怪幾個先知建議關注的客戶都給人捷足先登。明莉知道，世界要變了，卻沒想到變化會來得這麼迅猛。

安裝先知系統的人與日俱增，問題亦隨之而來。教育界要求限制學生使用先知系統，以防考試作弊。社福界表示，由於先知系統按捐助效益作捐款建議，個別弱勢團體獲得的援助愈來愈少。明莉自己也有不少感悟。先知系統無疑讓她得到很多，但也不是無所不能，她和父母到現在仍然關係惡劣。

星期天，明莉在街上買東西，忽然聽見有人大喊：“着火了！着火了！”離明莉不遠的一家店鋪冒出火苗，隱約聽見小女孩的求救聲。圍觀的人很多，但沒有一個嘗試救火。火勢愈來愈大，明莉心裏焦急，便問先知：“我應該進去救人嗎？”“進去救人的死亡概率是百分之八十，強烈建議留在原地，等待消防員到場！”火場裏再次傳出女孩撕心裂肺喊媽媽的聲音。明莉不顧一切，一頭衝進濃煙繚漫的店鋪。

消防員趕到時，看見一個長髮女子抱着一個小孩從張牙舞爪的火焰中衝出來。那女子把女孩交到了消防員手上，就雙腿一軟，倒下去了。“明莉，明莉，你醒醒！”先知的聲音滿是驚慌。

“先知，別吵了！”

明莉張開眼睛，映入眼簾的是一臉驚喜的母親。

“明莉，你醒了！真是太好了！”

“我這是在哪兒？”明莉看見手上插着導管，嚇了一跳。媽媽摸摸她的頭，“明莉，這裏是醫院，你已經昏迷一個月了。”

“那個小女孩呢？她沒事吧？”

“什麼小女孩？你是在公司昏倒的。”明莉媽媽流起淚來。

明莉在心裏呼喚先知，卻毫無反應。無所不知的先知、與她稱兄道弟的阿森、炙熱的烈火、哭泣的女孩，一幕幕零碎的畫面在腦海湧現。她看着周圍潔白的病牀，一時恍惚，感覺自己做了一個悠長的夢。

明莉出院後，得到父母同意，搬出去自己一個人住，找了一份新工作。她的選擇困難症已經不藥而癒，因為她終於明白，世間從來沒有最完美的選擇，一切無非是得失取捨。自己一直欠缺的，不是選擇的智慧，而是承擔後果的勇氣。



望文生義



成語簡潔生動，運用得當，可令文章錦上添花，但如對成語一知半解，望文生義，很容易弄巧成拙，鬧出笑話。成語世界博大精深，大家不妨挑戰自己，看看以下成語，你能用對多少？

- “機不可失”的下句是什麼？
A. 失不再來 C. 失之不再
B. 時不再來 D. 時不我待
- 以下哪個是正確寫法？
A. 實是求事 C. 實事求是
B. 實是求是 D. 實事求事
- 下列哪個成語可以用來描述文思敏捷？
A. 生花妙筆 C. 文不加點
B. 斐然成章 D. 意在筆先
- 以下哪個成語比喻捨本逐末？
A. 進退維谷 C. 捨短取長
B. 捨舊謀新 D. 買櫝還珠
- 以下哪個成語含貶義？
A. 差強人意 C. 目無全牛
B. 洛陽紙貴 D. 炙手可熱
- 下面哪一句使用了恰當的成語？
A. 這些文章不但邏輯混亂，還錯字百出，都是不刊之論。
B. 身為公職人員，務必要危言危行，否則何以服眾？
C. 探險家以無所不為的勇氣，克服重重困難，探索世界。
D. 遠方的羣山鱗次櫛比，在蔚藍的天色襯托下，更覺壯觀。
- 請選出意義相反的一組成語。
A. 夜郎自大／不可一世 C. 言之鑿鑿／捕風捉影
B. 罪不容誅／罪該萬死 D. 味同嚼蠟／興味索然
- 請選出意義相近的一組成語。
A. 不易之論／不經之談 C. 休戚與共／生死攸關
B. 首鼠兩端／瞻前顧後 D. 貓鼠同眠／化敵為友

請在二零二零年十一月二十七日前，把答案連同下列個人資料傳真至 2521 8772 或電郵至 csbolrs@csb.gov.hk。答對問題者可獲書券一張，名額十個。答案及得獎者名單將於下期公布（答案以《文訊》公布者為準）。

姓名：_____ 先生／女士（請刪去不適用者）

部門：_____

職位：_____ 電話：_____

辦事處地址：_____



Not-a-Mindboggler

Solution of Issue No. 80

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1. Coop | 6. Formicary |
| 2. Kennel | 7. Den |
| 3. Warren | 8. Sett |
| 4. Pen | 9. Drey |
| 5. Mound | 10. Lodge |

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Issue No. 82 (January 2021) : A Lesson

二零二一年一月第八十二期主題：一事一智

Issue No. 83 (April 2021) : Forgetting

二零二一年四月第八十三期主題：遺忘

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