

文訊

WORD POWER

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Mask and Mastery



Imagine that your favourite writers are not who you thought they were. Those gripping science fiction books were actually written by an elderly woman, while the romance novels that made you swoon were penned by a middle-aged man. Surely all writers long to see their names on the cover of a best-seller, so why would they choose to mask their identities and write under pseudonyms? The reasons are more varied than you may think.

In the 19th century, literature by women was dismissed as sentimental, frivolous and tethered to the domestic sphere. The Brontë sisters—Charlotte, Emily and Anne—published their works under the names “Currer”, “Ellis” and “Acton Bell” respectively, keeping only their initials. Charlotte Brontë later explained, “We did not like to declare ourselves women, because ... we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice.” Mary Ann Evans became George Eliot to sidestep such prejudice, hoping that her works would be judged on merit rather than gender. The aliases allowed these women to break into a male-dominated literary world, leaving us with some of the most celebrated works of Western literature.

Even as society progresses, and women are no longer confined to writing what George Eliot once called “silly novels”, readers often carry assumptions about a genre’s style, themes, tropes, and even the gender of its authors. Joanne Rowling adopted the gender-neutral pen name “J.K.” at the suggestion of her publisher, who believed that a fantasy novel written by a woman might deter young male readers. Science fiction, long dominated by male authors, offers another striking example. In the 1970s, James Tiptree Jr. stunned the genre with a voice that was dark, intelligent and unapologetically irreverent. It was not until a decade later that the mysterious author turned out to be Alice B. Sheldon—a former military intelligence analyst, CIA officer, artist, psychologist, and a female. Such a revelation ignited heated debates about gender and voice in literature.

Interestingly, the mask has also worked the other way. Male writers in romance—a genre centred on emotional depth and relationships—have adopted feminine pseudonyms to avoid potential reader bias. Vanessa Royall was actually Michael T. Hinkemeyer. Emma Blair was Iain Blair, and Jessica Stirling was Hugh C. Rae. Tom E. Huff, writing as Jennifer Wilde, achieved phenomenal success with works such as *Love’s Tender Fury*, which went through 41 printings in just five years. In their cases, a pen

name was not a shield against dismissal but a ticket to credibility with a largely female readership.

For some, a pseudonym is not so much a matter of prejudice as necessity. James Herriot, the cherished author of *All Creatures Great and Small*, was actually James Alfred Wight, a practising veterinarian who chose a pen name to comply with professional guidelines against advertising. John Creasey, best known for his crime fiction, used an astonishing 28 pen names to publish more than 600 books of a wide range of genres. In fact, prolific authors are often encouraged by publishers to adopt multiple identities as a marketing device.

Sometimes it is the desire to write a different genre or explore a new style that drives a writer towards pseudonymity. Nora Roberts, already a giant in romance fiction, began writing futuristic crime novels under the name “J.D. Robb”. Even after her identity was revealed, she has continued to publish the series under the same name, establishing a distinct literary brand. Similarly, J.K. Rowling has adopted the pseudonym Robert Galbraith for her *Cormoran Strike* crime series. These pen names allow authors to craft separate worlds, unfettered by the expectations attached to their established reputations.

Regardless of the reason, having a nom de plume can be profoundly liberating. As Oscar Wilde insightfully observed, “Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth.” For William Sharp, a Scottish writer, novelist, biographer and poetry editor, the mask took the form of “Fiona Macleod”, a fictitious persona he maintained for years through both his writing and carefully orchestrated correspondence. As Fiona Macleod, Sharp explored mystical, Celtic-inspired themes with a lyrical and introspective style that stands in stark contrast to the more grounded and intellectual tone of his works published under his own name.

Pseudonyms, it seems, are far more than mere disguises. They can be marketing tools, shields, or even masks that allow writers the freedom to express thoughts and ideas unencumbered by societal expectations or personal identity. Yet, in the end, great writing transcends gender and identity. In the preface to *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Anne Brontë wrote, “If a book is a good one, it is so whatever the sex of the author may be.” Indeed, for us as readers, it is not the name on the cover that matters, but the story within.



女書



近年，一種有數百年歷史的神秘文字悄然走進了我們的日常生活。有人把這種文字設計成電腦字體，為古字注入生命力；有人巧妙地把它融入服裝設計，在國際時裝周的舞台上大放異彩；有人甚至把它紋在身上，彰顯女性力量。這種充滿魅力的文字擁有一個獨特的名稱——女書。

女書又稱“女字”，是世上獨一無二的女性文字，一直以“傳女不傳男，母傳女，老傳少”的方式，在湖南江永縣一帶流傳，女子方能讀懂。女書常用字僅數百個，字符呈長菱形，娟秀纖細，只有點、豎、斜、弧四種筆畫，寫在摺扇紙張之上，亦繡在花帶、巾帕等物上。女書一字一音，五言或七言成句，以當地土語吟唱，故又稱“女書歌”。

中國自古“書同文”，以漢字為主要書寫文字，為何還要另造新字？答案很簡單：男尊女卑。

在那個崇尚纏足、三步不出閨門的年代，江永的婦女大多沒有機會讀書識字，只能在紡紗織布間消磨青春。即便嫁人，世界依舊逼仄，紡車的唧呀聲、灶台的煙火氣、孩子的哭鬧聲成為她們終身的囹圄。她們無法學習漢字，於是便創造自己的文字。博學的男子稱為“君子”，精通女書的女子便稱為“君子女”。君子女胡慈珠的《女書之歌》道盡箇中辛酸：“新華女子讀女書，不為當官不為名。只為女人受盡苦，要憑女書訴苦情。”舊時女性有太多的悲苦要傾訴：所嫁非人的哀怨、婆家欺凌的酸楚、守寡無子的淒涼……這些苦難對婦女來說絕不陌生，但唯獨在江永這個荒僻之地，女子化身倉頡造字，以隱秘而獨特的密碼互相溝通，互相扶持。

江永一帶的年輕姑娘常義結金蘭，其中同年出生、性情投契的更會結為“老同”。雙方家庭為隆重其事，不但特意修書，還會舉行結拜儀式，兩人結下盟誓，一生不離不棄。當地女子以女書在手帕、信箋、摺扇上寫下私密之語，與姊妹或老同互訴衷腸。每逢四月初八鬥牛節、六月六日

吹涼節，村裏的姑娘都會聚在一起，讀紙、讀扇、習女書、做針線活，你一言，我一語，道出自己的淒楚，聆聽他人的愁苦，給予彼此慰藉和力量。凡有婚嫁，好姊妹都會在新娘婚後第三天，帶着專為新娘而寫的三朝書往婆家，交給女眷在眾人面前唱讀。執筆者用女書記下昔日情誼，道出不捨，當中還有規勸之辭、慶賀之語，亦順道一吐苦水。

到了晚年，婦女用纖巧的女書寫自傳，把一輩子的甜酸苦辣，盡寄字裏行間，當一回自己故事的主角。然而，當地有“人死書焚”的習俗，女書自傳大多成為殉葬品，不是長埋地下，就是燒成灰燼，以致存世作品寥寥無幾。

女書不僅是女性之間情感交流的重要工具，還是祭祀神靈必備的書寫和吟詠媒介。每年五月，江永的婦女把願望寫在紙上扇上，帶往花山廟祭祀姑婆神。儀式完成後，想學女書的姑娘可取一份禱文回家摹寫學習，來年祭拜時連同自己新寫的祭文一併帶回廟中。滿載人間所求所願的廟宇，漸成傳授女書的知識殿堂。

時代進步了，女性也能接受正規教育，漢字不再是男性專用的“男書”，女書難免沒落。直到上世紀八十年代，這種古字在瀕臨失傳之際，終於走出偏僻山鄉，進入國人視野。二零零四年，最後一位在傳統生活環境自然習得女書的傳人陽煥宜去世，但女書並未就此沉寂。女書不但在二零零六年榮列國家首批非物質文化遺產名錄，更成為文藝創作的靈感源泉。除了鄺麗莎的小說《雪花與秘扇》和由李冰冰、全智賢擔綱演出的同名電影外，國際著名作曲家譚盾的交響詩《女書》，以及獲提名奧斯卡最佳紀錄長片的《密語者》，都以江永女書為主題。

女書宛如從塵埃中綻放的嬌花，在困厄中茁長，象徵着女子的情誼、才華與覺醒。那如劍如柳的一筆一畫勾勒出一個時代的悲喜，亦訴說着女性如何自強自立，最終成為自己的主人。



DEFYING BOUNDARIES



Throughout history, people have concealed truths about themselves—race, sexuality, religion, and so on—not only to survive but also to thrive in a society that might otherwise reject them. Two such remarkable figures are James Barry and Belle da Costa Greene, whose extraordinary achievements were only possible because of a secret they took to their graves.

James Barry

In the summer of 1865, Dr James Barry died of dysentery, a common killer of the time. The final wish of the celebrated military surgeon was anything but ordinary: to be buried in the clothes he died in without an examination. While preparing the body for burial, a charwoman made a dumbfounding discovery: Dr Barry was, in her words, “a perfect female”.

James Barry was born Margaret Anne Bulkley in Cork, Ireland, around 1789. After her father was imprisoned for debts, Margaret moved to London with her mother, and later came into a modest inheritance from her uncle, the Irish romantic artist James Barry. In 1809, Margaret adopted her uncle’s name, disguised herself as a man, and entered the University of Edinburgh to study medicine—a discipline from which women were excluded at the time.

Barry became a qualified surgeon in 1813. Several months later, he enlisted in the British Army as a hospital assistant. Thus began an extraordinary career spanning half a century and took him across the British Empire, from South Africa to Canada. By 1857, Barry reached the rank of Inspector General of Hospitals—one of the highest army medical positions.

Barry was short-tempered, quick with argument and uncompromising wit. His relentless efforts to improve sanitation and medical care often brought him into conflict with his superiors, earning him several reprimands for insubordination and discourteous behaviour. He even challenged others to a duel over remarks about his slim build or high-pitched voice. Florence Nightingale described him as “the most hardened creature I ever met”. Despite his contentious personality, Barry’s exceptional skill and unwavering dedication to saving lives were indisputable. He advocated for humane patient care, and performed the first recorded successful caesarean in the British Empire.

Had Barry’s last wish been honoured, he might have been remembered solely as a healthcare pioneer. Instead, his legacy has been overshadowed by debates about his gender identity. Was he a cisgender woman forced to masquerade as a man, or a transgender man in modern terms? In the epigraph to his medical thesis, Barry cited a quotation from the Greek dramatist Menander: “Do not consider whether what I say is a young man speaking, but whether my discussion with you is that of a man of understanding.” Perhaps we should simply take him at his word.

Belle da Costa Greene

In celebration of its centenary as a public institution, the Morgan Library & Museum in New York opened an exhibition titled “Belle da Costa Greene: A Librarian’s Legacy” in October 2024, paying homage to its inaugural director: the woman who spent more than four decades building its world-class collection.

Greene started managing the private library of J.P. Morgan in 1905. This vivacious lady in her twenties was in charge of an invaluable collection of rare books, manuscripts, music sheets, drawings and prints. Her expertise, impeccable taste and prowess in acquisition made her an indispensable figure in the male-dominated art world. Stylish and charismatic, she defied the conventional librarian stereotype. She once quipped, “Just because I am a librarian doesn’t mean I have to dress like one!” Indeed, her curatorial triumphs at auctions were frequently chronicled in newspapers, often accompanied by photographs of her in lavish outfits and words of admiration. When the Morgan Library became a public institution in 1924, she was appointed its director and oversaw its expansion until her retirement in 1948.

Few knew that Greene’s success hinged on a carefully guarded secret: she was passing as white.

Belle da Costa Greene was born Belle Marion Greener in 1879 to an African-American family. Her father Richard T. Greener was the first black graduate of Harvard and a prominent racial justice activist. After her parents separated, her mother changed the family’s surname to dissociate themselves from Richard and hide their ethnic origin and identity, taking advantage of their relatively light skin to pass as white. By replacing the children’s middle name with “da Costa”, a Portuguese surname, she fabricated their ancestry to help explain their olive complexion.

Passing as white allowed the culturally deracinated Greene access to career opportunities and elite social circles that were closed to black women in a highly segregated America. She went on to become one of the most intellectually accomplished women of her time. Upon her death in 1950, *The New York Times* lauded her as “one of the best-known librarians in the country”.

Greene’s success, however, came at a price. Hiding a secret identity meant living in a perpetual fear of exposure. Towards the end of her life, she destroyed her diaries and personal correspondence, leaving little trace of her inner thoughts.

The stories of James Barry and Belle da Costa Greene stand not only as a powerful testament to the transformative force of intellect, vision and will, but also as an indictment of societal prejudice and discrimination that demand such concealment. They prompt us to ponder how society may need to evolve to embrace rather than exclude those who defy its norms.



國王的驢耳朵

在希臘神話裏，彌達斯王的貪婪和愚蠢人所共知。他向酒神求得點石成金的能力，結果卻幾乎餓死，後來更因為好管閒事，介入牧神潘恩與太陽神阿波羅之爭而惹禍上身，付上沉重代價。

潘恩要與阿波羅比試，看誰的音樂造詣更勝一籌。擔任評判的山神宣布阿波羅勝出，旁邊的彌達斯卻大聲反對，投訴賽果不公（另一版本是彌達斯自己當裁判，讓潘恩勝出）。阿波羅認為彌達斯蠢鈍如驢，不配有人的耳朵，於是給他一對驢耳朵。

彌達斯羞恥難堪，終日以頭巾裹住雙耳。替他理髮的僕人自知要守口如瓶，但又憋得難受，只好跑到田野挖洞傾吐，完事後把洞填好。沒想到這個地方竟長出蘆葦。有風吹過，人們就聽到蘆葦叢傳出“國王長着驢耳朵”的低語。彌達斯想掩藏的糗事，到頭來人人皆知。

有趣的是，在不同文化裏都可以看到驢耳朵的影子。十三世紀高麗高僧一然編撰的《三國遺事》中，長出驢耳的是新羅國的景文王。唯一知道秘密的人，是為他縫製襖頭的匠人。這個帽匠臨死前才敢到竹林深處說出秘密。每當風起時，“吾君耳如驢耳”的話就在林間飄揚。景文王聞之大怒，下令砍竹，改種山茱萸。可是，風再起時，山茱萸仍發出“吾君耳長”之語，只是沒提“驢子”而已。砍竹毀林之舉，終究是白費功夫。

蒙古民間傳說《驢耳汗》的情節與上文故事雷同。汗王長有驢耳，每次剃頭後就把剃頭匠滅口。有一天，這份致命差事落到一個少年頭上。少年的母親深知凶險，於是特地做了幾塊奶酪，拌進自己的乳汁。少年按照母親的話，替汗王剃頭時吃下一塊。汗王看着有滋有味，便要了一塊來吃。

少年見汗王吃下奶酪，便說：“奶酪是以家母乳汁所製。”汗王聞言，頓時懊悔不已。原來，根據蒙人習俗，二人同吃一母之乳便為“奶兄弟”，等同手足。汗王說道：“咱們已成親兄弟，我不殺你，但驢耳這事，決不可告訴別人。”少年守着秘密，鬱結難解，於是找來一個老鼠洞，對着洞

中傾吐。後來汗王路過，竟聽到洞中傳來“汗王長有驢耳朵”的話，心想此事反正已傳開，以後就不再殺剃頭匠了。

驢耳朵的故事是沿中東、中亞還是朝鮮流傳到蒙古，尚無定論。各地故事儘管細節略有出入，但道理大致相同：保密代價不輕，會讓人憋出內傷。另一個啓示，就是秘密難守，一旦外泄，就會傳揚開去，無法補救。如何防止泄密？又或如何才能兩全其美？大家不妨看看葡萄牙的版本。

國王苦無子嗣，向三個仙女許願後，終於喜獲麟兒。兩個仙女賦予王子俊俏的容貌、健康的身體、過人的智慧。第三個仙女卻認為，王子這麼優秀，容易目中無人，所以要送他特別的禮物——一雙驢耳朵。

王子日漸長大，耳朵愈來愈長。國王找了可靠的僕人替王子理髮。故事接着如何發展，相信不難猜中。國王得悉這個秘密舉國皆知，怒不可遏，要把這個理髮師處死。此時，王子當眾脫下帽子，露出耳朵，向父親求情道：“現在這不是秘密了。人不應該因為說實話而受罰。父王，求您放過他吧。”仙女看見王子宅心仁厚，大感欣慰，便把他的驢耳變回人耳。

在這個皆大歡喜的版本中，故事終於有了不同的結局。身體的異狀被公諸於世，王子非但沒有驚惶失措，反而選擇向世人坦白，並寬恕他人的過錯。王子擁有一顆寬容、勇敢、自信的心，即使仙女沒有讓他的耳朵恢復原貌，他亦定能活得自在。我們或有一些與眾不同之處，因為害怕別人的目光而極力掩蓋。與其懼怕秘密曝光，時刻忐忑不安，何不像王子般坦然接納自己的不完美，讓“驢耳朵”不再是不能說的秘密？

圖片：坦佩斯塔的版畫《彌達斯長着驢耳朵》

欲人勿聞，莫若勿言；欲人勿知，莫若勿為。

枚乘《上書諫吳王》



有人調侃說，在科技尚未普及的年代，“交通基本靠走，通訊基本靠吼”。其實，自秦朝以來，驛傳制度已頗完備，傳遞信息有一定保障。兩國交戰，對軍事通訊的要求自然更高，非但不能“吼”，還得密不透風。畢竟，一旦情報被敵方截獲，不但軍機盡失，甚或為敵所用，招來滅頂之災。在古代，秘密信息是如何傳遞的呢？

陰符和陰書

古代軍事著作《六韜》是後人依託為姜太公所著，故又稱《太公兵法》。書中提出了“陰符”和“陰書”這兩種保密通訊方法。所謂“陰符”，就是以八種不同長短の木條或竹條來代表戰況，例如：“大勝克敵之符，長一尺”；“破軍擒將之符，長九寸”；“失利亡士之符，長三寸”。陰符上並無任何記號，負責傳遞的信使對其含義亦一無所知。如此一來，即便信使不幸被俘，敵人也很難從陰符上獲取信息。不過，陰符包含的信息相當有限，複雜的軍情軍令還得靠文字傳達，於是便出現“陰書”。君主與將領之間通訊，竹簡一分为三，由三名信使傳遞，整份竹簡合起來才能知悉完整內容。除非三人都投敵，或三份陰書都被截取，否則敵方無法拼湊出完整的軍事情報。

字驗

字驗是宋代獨特而精妙的軍事通訊保密方法。據《武經總要》所述，朝廷針對行軍可能遇到的各種情況，精心制定了“請糧料”、“請添兵”、“賊多”、“賊少”、“戰不勝”、“將士叛”等四十個常用的關鍵詞。副將受命出發攻圍前，會選一首四十字詩作為密碼本，正副將各執一本。詩中必須無重字，每一個字順序對應一個關鍵詞。

假設雙方以唐代王勃《送杜少府之任蜀州》作為解碼密鑰：“城闕輔三秦，風煙望五津。與君離別意，同是宦遊人。海內存知己，天涯若比鄰。無為在歧路，兒女共沾巾。”如需增援，而“請添兵”定為第十四個關鍵詞，副將便會發送一道含有“別”字（即詩中第十四字）的普通公文，在“別”字上蓋

章。主將接到公文，看到蓋了章的“別”字，只要查對密碼本，就知道副將求發援兵。主將若答應增援，便在同一字上蓋印；若不同意，則不蓋印。

蠟丸

蠟丸，又名蠟書、蠟彈，以蠟質膜殼與內層的帛布文書兩部分構成，既可保密，又可防潮。蠟丸體積小巧，可以藏在衣服、髮髻，甚至嘴裏。軍用蠟丸始見於唐而盛於宋。南宋詩人陸游在《大雨中作》憶述昔日“屬聞蠟彈遣檄書，亟壞布裳縫褲褶”，描繪的正是把內有檄書的蠟丸夾藏於衣衫之中的情景。不過，蠟丸藏在衣服內亦非萬無一失。為確保重要消息能安全送達，有人用上更極端的手段。據南宋趙升《朝野類要》所載，蠟丸“陷於股肱皮膜之間，所以防在路之浮沉漏泄也”。南宋初年發生兵變，高宗一度被迫禪位。趙氏宗室趙不凡正是用“割股納蠟書”的方法，在大腿割開一道口子藏進蠟丸，把召兵勤王的密諭送到將領張浚手上。

礬書

礬書是肉眼不可見的密寫方式，用毛筆蘸上明礬水，在布帛上寫字，晾乾後字迹消失，再次沾水才會顯現。靖康元年，金人要宋欽宗召回擁兵在外的康王趙構。欽宗派遣簽書樞密院事曹輔迎接康王，暗地裏在曹輔衣襟上“以礬書為詔，以遺康王”，指示康王要按兵不動。當時朝廷派人出宮辦事，金人都會仔細搜身，以防夾帶蠟丸，哪會想到有人會用隱形文字瞞天過海。

在金人的眼皮底下，密詔順利送到趙構手中。在長達二十餘年的蒙金戰爭中，金國亦曾不只一次使用礬書。中都被圍，右丞相完顏承暉“遣人以礬寫奏”，向朝廷求援，可惜援兵相繼被擊潰。承暉最後仰藥自殺，中都失守，河北地區至此悉數落入蒙人之手。

神州大地歷經戰火硝煙洗禮。風雲詭譎的戰場上，古人發明種種保密工具，巧妙地把隱密的信息傳送出去，往往左右局勢，更為歷史留下篇篇傳奇。

事以密成，語以泄敗。



《韓非子·說難》



Mum's the Word

Idioms about secrecy are as colourful and varied as secrets themselves. They reflect our human impulse to conceal, and our occasional blunders in the art of discretion. Let's delve into some of these linguistic gems and explore how they describe the complexities of keeping (or spilling) secrets.

Mum's the word

In this expression, "mum" has nothing to do with a mother or an Egyptian mummy. It is imitative of an inarticulate sound made with closed lips and means "silent" in Middle English. The word can be found in some of Shakespeare's works, such as *Henry VI*, where the treacherous priest John Hume declares, "Seal up your lips and give no words but mum." By the 17th century, "mum's the word" had entered common usage as a colloquial exhortation to maintain secrecy.

During World War II, the idiom found new life in the British government's "Careless Talk Costs Lives" campaign. Slogans like "Be like Dad, keep Mum" and "Keep Mum, she's not so dumb" used wordplay to warn civilians and servicemen against divulging sensitive military information, while also reflecting broader societal attitudes towards women. Such patronising language stands in stark contrast to the reality of the time, as countless women—including the unsung heroines involved in the codebreaking operation at Bletchley Park—demonstrated extraordinary intelligence and discretion in wartime efforts, shattering stereotypes through their pivotal contributions.

Keep it under your hat

Why a hat? One theory suggests that it symbolises the head—a repository for thoughts safely concealed from prying eyes. Originating in 19th-century Britain, this phrase initially meant to keep an idea to oneself. By the time it crossed the Atlantic, its meaning had evolved to keeping confidences.

A famous practitioner of the idiom in the real sense was Abraham Lincoln who had the peculiar habit of using his stovepipe hat as a briefcase, literally keeping important documents in the lining. This historical nugget adds a touch of whimsy to the expression that continues to be a practical and poetic way to emphasise confidentiality.

On the QT

If discretion is paramount, you might urge one to keep something "on the QT", in which QT is a shortened form of "quiet". Some speculate that its roots lie in the Latin phrase *quae tacenda*, meaning "things that must not be spoken of".

Modern usage varies, with some styling it as "on the q.t." with periods and lowercase letters, while others prefer the uppercase abbreviation. Take this example from the *New York Post*: "Rich women across the world have a secret way of making big bucks: selling their castoffs on the QT."

Spill the beans

The origins of "spill the beans" are murky, but a popular theory links it to ancient Greek voting practices, where beans were placed in jars to signify choices. If someone knocked over the jar, the results would be revealed prematurely.

By the 20th century, the phrase had expanded to describe any situation where someone upset the status quo by revealing information. Today, it is often used in a light-hearted manner, especially when coaxing someone to reveal a juicy titbit, as in "Come on, spill it".

Loose lips sink ships

This phrase emerged during World War II as part of a US propaganda campaign warning that careless talk could bring calamities. Congressman Andrew May learned this lesson the hard way. After returning from a tour of the war zone in 1943, he inadvertently told the press that Japanese depth charges were set too shallow to threaten US submarines. The adversary took note and adjusted its tactics, allegedly resulting in significant American losses.

Although its wartime context is long gone, "loose lips sink ships" remains a powerful caution against reckless gossip in everyday life. These days, loose lips are more likely to sink friendships than battleships.

Secrets—whether kept or spilled—are part of what makes us human. Whether you are urged to "keep mum", asked to "keep it under your hat" or tempted to "spill the beans", remember: secrets are like toothpaste—once out, they can never be put back in.

If you reveal your secrets to the wind you should not blame the wind for revealing them to the trees.

Kahlil Gibran





我們的秘密

醫務衛生局
二級法定語文主任李綺澄

“我愛你。”

這句話，您始終沒有說出口，卻用了一輩子去證明。

對我來說，您是陌生的熟人。四年生死兩茫茫，我在忙碌的生活中已逐漸淡忘（或是強迫自己去忘記）我們相處的點點滴滴，只有聽到熟悉的話語和聲音，或是遇到一些事情，才會想起昔日某些片段。想念您的時候，我會打開手機，翻看以前拍下的影片。看着看着，便淚水盈眶，屏幕變得模糊，只聽到您說：“醫生沒說什麼。不用擔心，我走了有她陪我，在這兒有你陪我，挺好的。”您不知道的是，當時我怕日後會忘掉您的聲音（如同忘了她的聲音），所以悄悄按下錄影鍵，想必您以為我在玩手機吧。

我對您的感情其實很複雜。我很想告訴您我的想法，但您不時板着臉，使我怯於啓齒。我們都固執如牛，總是為了一些瑣事吵架，激烈爭執過後，又是連日冷戰。大家同一屋檐下，血脈相連卻互不理睬，就像硬湊在一起合住的陌生人。長期的爭吵和冷戰令我身心俱疲。我想獨個兒去歐洲旅行，您說危險不讓我去。我找到理想的工作，您說根本沒什麼好沾沾自喜，還說我除了讀書外，什麼都做不來、做不好。可是，您會在下班後拖着疲憊不堪的身軀，開着借來的車子送我去機場。您又常在鄰居、親友和醫護人員面前誇我有出息，為我找到好工作而自豪。我生日時，您給我做海鮮大餐。就連住醫院，也特意選一所離我家最近的，方便我來探望。您是愛我的，卻為何總是口不對心，把感情像秘密一樣藏起來？

時間就這樣一天一天流逝，生命亦是如此。入院頭兩天，您還在跟我抱怨睡不好，嚷着要回家，又提起我早已忘記的同學，但短短數天後，您就變得愈來愈貪睡。醫護人員叮囑我：“晚上不要關手機，我們可能會給你電話。有什麼想做的，就趕緊把握時間吧。”於是我不理會病牀前不宜拍照的忌諱，

跟您說：“我們來個‘自拍’吧！”從不喜歡拍照的您睜大眼睛，默默忍痛配合，拍下二十多年來我倆唯一的合照。

四年前的冬夜凌晨，手機鈴聲響起，我心知不妙。接過電話，我趕往醫院，在病牀前捉緊您的手，傾吐心底的秘密。您的生命快到終點，我才想到要抓緊共處的一分一秒，多年的難言之隱，竟能頃刻全盤托出。我一口氣說着一堆雞毛蒜皮的小事，生怕再沒有機會說明白。您一直閉眼躺着，默默聆聽，直到手心慢慢失去溫度。那刻我異常平靜，除了早已接受您將要離去的事實，也因為我已向您坦白說出所有秘密，沒有遺憾。您素來討厭個性柔弱的人，所以我一直強忍淚水。直到看着職員用小推車把雙頰乾癟、腳上繫着標籤的您從太平間推出來，我再也無法自控，最後一次牽起您的手，哭着跟您道別：

“我愛您，一路好走！”

您離開後，我才發現自己根本沒有好好了解您。我不清楚您做過什麼工作，也無從想像您年輕時的樣子。我不敢看自己在您住院時寫的日記，生怕徒添傷感，亦不願翻開您留下的日記，不想看您重述我們吵架的場面，更不忍知道您在療程中經歷的痛苦。

生前愛藏心底，身後人影杳杳。雖知時光無法逆轉，卻多麼希望您還活着，好好重新認識您，回饋您的愛。生離死別，是人間最難磨滅的椎心之痛。我早已習慣把痛苦藏於心底，但此時此刻，鬱結之情又再湧上心頭。不過請您放心，我已比以前成熟，能自理自處，不會再因失去家人而怨天尤人。

感謝您。我會牢記您對我的好，努力做個善良的人；更會牢記您的話，堅定前行。希望此刻您在天上以我為榮。

爸爸，我愛您。



文字光 影裏的秘密

“秘密”二字彷彿有神秘魔力，讓人難以抗拒。無論在文學還是電影中，秘密都是製造懸念和推動故事發展的重要元素。以下作品正是以秘密為引，展現人世的悲歡遺恨，再深入探討人生課題。大家回答問題之餘，不妨細味這些精彩作品，探尋其中隱秘。

1. 西西的《像我這樣的一個女子》中，“我”從事的職業使她幾乎沒有朋友，她預知當男友參觀她工作的地方後，便會離她而去。這個女子從事什麼職業？
2. 愛德華茲的小說《不存在的女兒》中，男主角出於善意對妻子隱瞞新生女兒的病情和下落，這個秘密最終卻導致家庭破碎。他的女兒患了什麼病？
3. 電影《影武者》探討人在真實與謊言之間如何抉擇。領主為免動搖軍心，臨終遺令三年秘不發喪，由替身掩人耳目。這位領主叫什麼名字？
4. 東野圭吾的小說《秘密》中，直子說：“這隻泰迪熊中藏着只屬於我們兩個人的秘密。”泰迪熊裏藏着什麼？
5. 元雜劇《趙氏孤兒》講述春秋時期的晉國大夫趙盾被誣告謀反，慘遭滅族。為保全趙氏遺孤，程嬰冒險把遺孤與誰調包？
6. 韓國電影《密陽》透過描繪女主角失去丈夫和幼子的悲愴，探索信仰和痛苦的意義。對女主角來說，“密陽”這個地名有何含意？
7. 金庸的《連城訣》中，萬震山師兄弟三人為連城訣弑師，卻始終勘不破其中玄機，後來是誰的淚水滴在書上，無意中破解了箇中奧秘？
8. 電影《不能說的秘密》講述一段跨越時空的愛情。女主角與男主角初次相遇時彈奏哪一首樂曲？

請在二零二五年五月二十九日前，把答案連同個人資料傳真至 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：_____ 電郵：_____



Not-a-Mindboggler

Solution of Issue No. 98

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. metaphors | 7. wilt |
| 2. beloved | 8. seasons |
| 3. Scottish | 9. contrasting |
| 4. emblem | 10. thorns |
| 5. rose-tinted | 11. joy |
| 6. bloom | 12. pain |

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二零二五年七月第一百期主題：一百

Issue No. 100 (July 2025) : One Hundred

二零二五年十月第一百零一期主題：似水流年

Issue No. 101 (October 2025) : As Time Goes By

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Contributions from colleagues are welcome. Please click [here](#) for details.

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