

BÓYÌ 博弈 · WEEK 11

lǐ dài táo jiāng

李代桃僵

A plum takes the peach's fall.

More than 2,000 years ago, a powerful minister wiped out one whole family in one night. One baby was left. A doctor hid him in a medicine box and carried him out of the gate, then handed over his own son to keep the real child alive. This week you'll learn to write four characters: 李, 代, 桃, 僵.

Stratagem No. 11 of 36 · one story, one lesson, four characters.

本周学：李代桃僵 · 练字：李、代、桃、僵

A PLAY, NOT A HISTORY BOOK



At the gate, a guard opens the medicine box and looks inside.

This story comes from a famous play: The Orphan of Zhao. It is set in China, more than two thousand years ago.

A powerful minister wipes out one whole family. In one night. The minister's name: Tu'an Gu.

One baby is left. He is hidden inside the palace, behind a door that is always shut.

A doctor is asked to carry him out. If he is caught, everyone in his house dies. His name: Cheng Ying.

The gate is watched. A guard searches every box. The guard opens it, looks, and lets him pass. Then the guard pays for it himself.

Outside, the order is worse. Every baby in the city will be killed, until the orphan is found. Not one of them can walk yet.

元杂剧《赵氏孤儿》(纪君祥)

HIS OWN SON



In the snow, a man carries a small bundle to a friend's house.

The doctor has a baby too. Just born. He carries his own son to a friend's house. The road is short. He does not speak. He hands his son to the friend.

Then he goes to the minister and says: I know where the orphan is. He says it in front of everyone. They find the friend, and a baby. Both are killed.

The minister believes the orphan is gone. He is wrong. The real child is still alive. The doctor raises him. In the minister's own house.

Years later, the old doctor shows him a painted scroll, and tells him everything. The case is reopened. The family name is restored. The doctor does not ask for anything.

He already paid. His own son was the price. The history books tell it differently. We tell it the way the play does.

元杂剧《赵氏孤儿》(纪君祥)

WHY IT WORKED

Step	Who vs who	中文·pinyin	Result
First	the loss is already there	李 lǐ	It starts with a loss
Second	choose the smaller thing	代 dài	The one you can live without
Third	keep the thing that has to survive	桃僵 táo jiāng	Not the thing you like most

损失一定会有；舍小的，保大的。李代桃僵 lǐ dài táo jiāng

THE ORIGINAL LINES

《三十六计·第十一计 李代桃僵》

The Thirty-Six Stratagems, No. 11 — "A plum takes the peach's fall"

1 shì bì yǒu sǔn
勢必有損，
A loss is certain.

2 sǔn yīn yǐ yì yáng
損陰以益陽。
Spend what is lesser, keep what is greater.

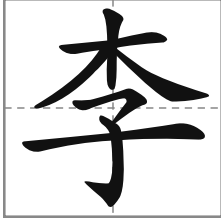
Nine characters, two clauses, nothing more. The long commentary that follows in old editions is not part of this text — and the story this week comes from a play, not from this book.

原文只有这九个字。后面那段按语是老版本的注释，不进原文框；本周的故事出自元杂剧，不出自这本书。

PRACTICE · 李 Lǐ · 代 Dài

Follow the numbers. Write each stroke in order.

先描一遍分解格，再在田字格里写 5 遍。

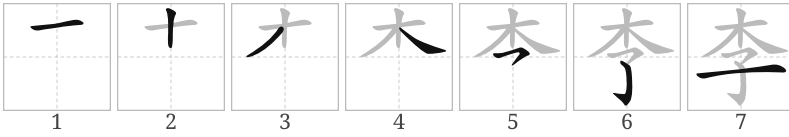


lǐ

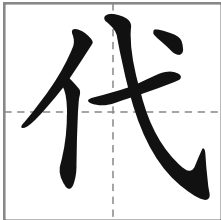
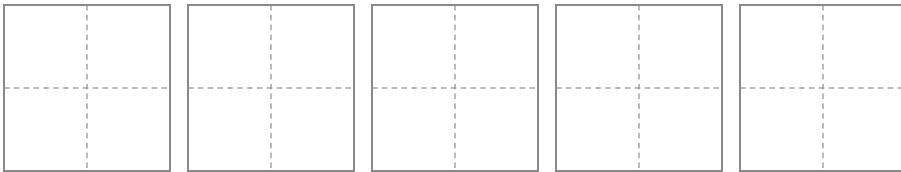
plum

7 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN

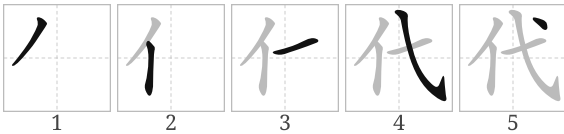


dài

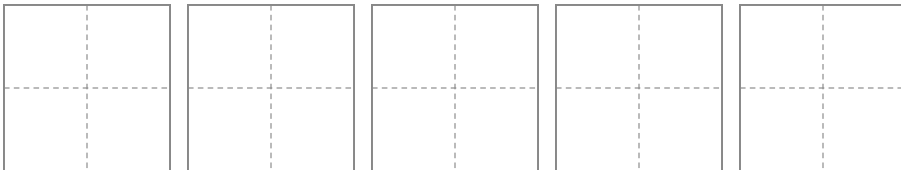
to stand in for

5 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN



PRACTICE · 桃 TÁO · 僵 JIĀNG

Same order again. Write slowly, and say the sound out loud.

写完 4 个字，再回到第 7 页连写整句。

桃

táo

peach

10 strokes

STROKE ORDER

一 十 才 木 朮 朮 朮 机 桃 桃

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

YOUR TURN

僵

jiāng

to fall stiff

15 strokes

STROKE ORDER

丿 亻 亻 亻 亻 亻 亻 亻 亻 亻 亻

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

亻 亻 亻 僵

12 13 14 15

YOUR TURN

PRACTICE · 李代桃僵 Lǐ Dài Táo Jiāng

Trace the first row, then write the whole phrase four times. Say it out loud each time.

lǐ	dài	táo	jiāng
李	代	桃	僵

李代桃僵 · A plum takes the peach's fall.

THREE MORE WORDS

qǔ shě

1 取舍

a choice; what you give up.

qǔ shě: nǐ de qián nǐ de shí jiān nǐ de míng zì. nǐ qiān de zì nǐ zì
取舍：你的钱、你的时间、你的名字。你签的字，你自
jǐ káng
己扛。

Choice: your money, your time, your name. You sign it, you carry it.

One is a decision.

dà jú

2 大局

the big picture.

zhè shì shéi de dà jú

这是谁的大局？

Whose big picture is it?

If it is drawn without you, it is not yours.

tì sǐ

3 替死

to die in someone else's place.

tì sǐ: zhǐ shàng xiě de shì bié rén de míng zì

替死：纸上写的是别人的名字。

Substitution: someone else's name on the paper.

The other is a debt.

SPOT IT · STOP IT 识破 · 防住

The paper is still there. He says it again: for the team. One line. One name. You can ask one question. Most people stay quiet.

取舍 Spend your own zì jǐ de qián 自己的 钱 Your own money zì jǐ de shí jiān 自己的 时间 Your own time zì jǐ de míng zì 自己的 名字 Your own name	替死 Spend theirs bié rén de míng zì 别人的 名字 Someone else's name bié rén de shí jiān 别人的 时间 Someone else's time bié rén de gōng zuò 别人的 工作 Someone else's job
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Two ways to spend a loss. One is a decision. The other is a debt. So, one line: whose big picture is it?
花掉一笔损失，有两种方式：一种是决定，一种是欠债。同一张纸，名字不一样。一句话：这是谁的大局？

SEVEN DAYS, SEVEN QUESTIONS

Day 1 Whose name is on the paper this week? 名字 míng zì

Day 2 What are you being asked to give up — and did anyone write it down? 放弃 fàng qì

Day 3 What is being kept, and who signs for it? 签收 qiān shōu

Day 4 Which big picture was drawn without you in it? 大局 dà jú

Day 5 Who pays if your decision goes wrong? 买单 mǎi dān

Day 6 What did you spend last month that was actually yours? 自己的 zì jǐ de

Day 7 Which loss is coming anyway — and which side will you spend? 损失 sǔn shī

WEEK 11 REVIEW



Yoko
Read the 36 Stratagems with Yoko

第 11 计 / 36

李代桃僵

lǐ dài táo jiāng

花自己的 · SPEND
YOUR OWN · 这是谁的
大局?

势必受损，损阴以益阳。
A loss is certain. Spend what is lesser, keep what is greater.

古 THEN	损失已在 LOSS COMES FIRST	→	选能舍的 CHOOSE THE LESSER	→	保必须的 KEEP WHAT MUST LIVE
理 THE LOGIC	自己承担 THE COST IS YOURS HIS SON · HIS NAME	→	别人的代价 NOT WHAT IS THEIRS	→	大局里有你吗 ARE YOU INCLUDED?
今 TODAY	我要舍什么 WHAT AM I GIVING UP?	→	要保什么 WHAT IS BEING KEPT?	→	最后归谁 WHO GETS IT?
正用 DO IT CLEAN	关掉亏损线 CLOSE A LOSING LINE	→	挪人和钱 MOVE PEOPLE AND MONEY	→	自己承担 NOBODY ELSE PAYS

李代桃僵
lǐ dài táo jiāng

The one-page summary of this week. 本周一图总结。

1. In one sentence: what did the doctor spend to save the child?

2. What does 李代桃僵 mean, in your own words?

3. Which of this week's four characters can you write now without looking: 李, 代, 桃, or 僵?

4. Think of a decision that cost you something. Who paid for it?

Whose big picture is it — and is your name inside it?

这是谁的大局? 里面有你的名字吗?

Zhè shì shéi de dà jú? Lǐ miàn yǒu nǐ de míng zì ma?