

BÓYÌ 博弈 · WEEK 14

jiè shī huán hún

借尸还魂

*Borrow a corpse to return the soul.*

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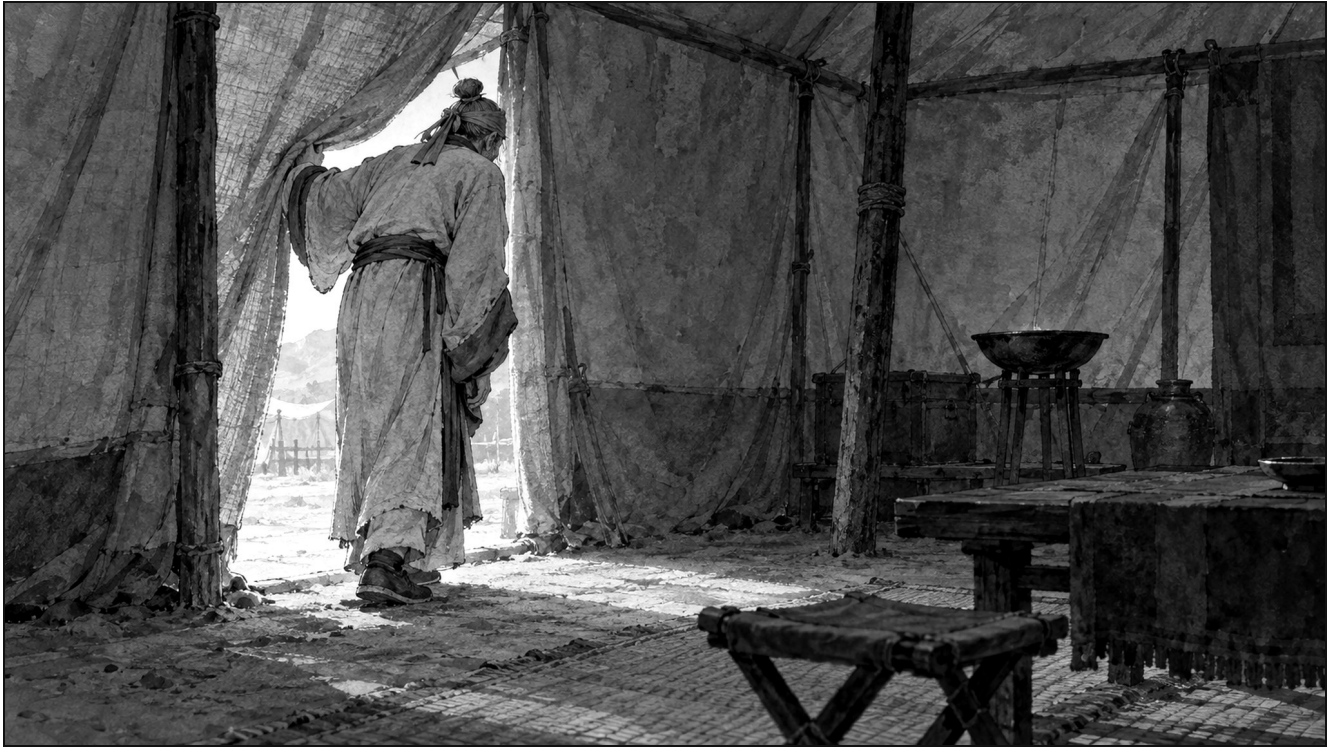
The biscuit box on the shelf still has your grandmother's name on it. You buy it for that name. Then you turn it over: the factory behind it is eleven years younger than the name. In 208 BC a general put a shepherd boy on a throne for the same reason. The name did the work. This week you'll learn to write four characters: 借, 尸, 还, 魂.

Stratagem No. 14 of 36 · one story, one lesson, four characters.

本周学：借尸还魂 · 练字：借、尸、还、魂

# THE GENERAL WHO DID NOT CROWN HIMSELF

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*An old man with no office and no soldiers came to see him.*

In 208 BC, the men who had risen against Qin had no king. Their first leader was dead. His army had melted into small bands. The strongest force in the south belonged to a general named Xiang Liang. His family had been generals of Chu for generations.

An old man came to see him. Fan Zeng, seventy years old, no office, no soldiers. He said: the first man failed because he crowned himself, and left the old house out.

Chu did nothing wrong in this war. Its king went to Qin as a guest, and never came home. People still say: three households in Chu can bury Qin.

So what did they want? Not a strong man. A descendant. Xiang Liang listened. He did not crown himself. He sent men out to look for the old king's grandson.

《史记》卷7 项羽本纪（范增说项梁立楚后）

# A SHEPHERD IN THE KING'S SEAT



*They found him in the countryside, herding sheep.*

They found him in the countryside, herding sheep. Xiong Xin, King Huai of Chu. No soldiers. No money. Not one person used his name.

They brought him back and put him in the king's seat. That was his grandfather's title, the king who died in Qin. He had never run a village. Now every man in Chu fought under that flag.

The strongest man in the south became the general of a shepherd. They did not need a new name. They needed one people believed.

The flag outlived every man who raised it. A crown is easy to borrow, and easy to lose. He never had to be real. The name was real enough.

《史记》卷7 项羽本纪（立楚怀王孙熊心）

## WHY IT WORKED

| Step   | Who vs who       | 中文 · pinyin | Result                   |
|--------|------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| First  | borrow a name    | 借 jiè       | The old name carries     |
| Second | make it real     | 用 yòng      | The thing inside is real |
| Third  | they come to you | 求 qiú       | Not you begging          |

借那个已经有人信的名字，把里面的东西做真；不是你求人，是人来求你。借尸还魂 jiè shī huán hún

# THE ORIGINAL LINES

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《三十六计·第十四计 借尸还魂》

*The Thirty-Six Stratagems, No. 14 — "Borrow a corpse to return the soul"*

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1 yǒu yòng zhě bù kě jiè  
有用者，不可借；  
*What others can use, they will not lend.*

---

2 bù néng yòng zhě qiú jiè  
不能用者，求借。  
*What nobody can use — ask for that.*

---

3 jiè bù néng yòng zhě ér yòng zhī  
借不能用者而用之，  
*Borrow the useless, then make it work.*

---

4 fěi wǒ qiú tóng méng tóng méng qiú wǒ  
匪我求童蒙，童蒙求我。  
*The last line turns it around: they come to me.*

---

Twenty-nine characters. This one is not about ghosts. It is about the oldest trick in politics: a trusted name.

原文二十九字。这一计跟鬼没关系，讲的是政治里最老的一手：一个大家本来就信的名字。

# PRACTICE · 借 JIÈ · 尸 SHĪ

Follow the numbers. Write each stroke in order.

先描一遍分解格，再在田字格里写 5 遍。

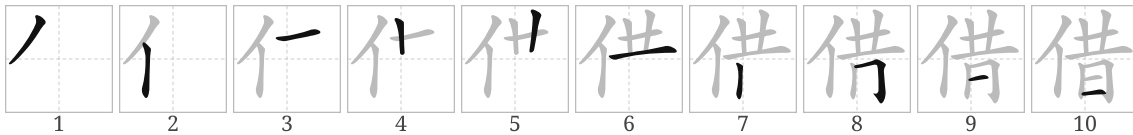


jiè

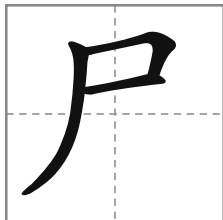
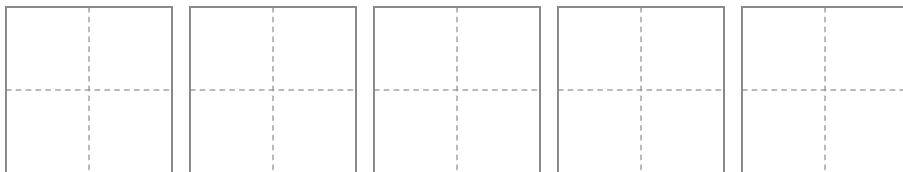
*to borrow*

10 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN

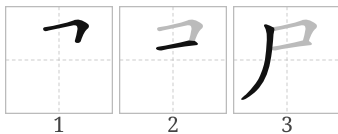


shī

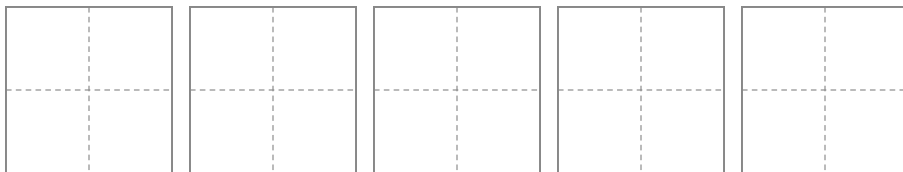
*corpse*

3 strokes

STROKE ORDER



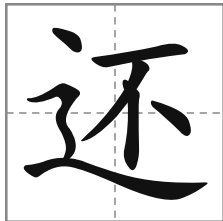
YOUR TURN



# PRACTICE · 还 HUÁN · 魂 HÚN

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。

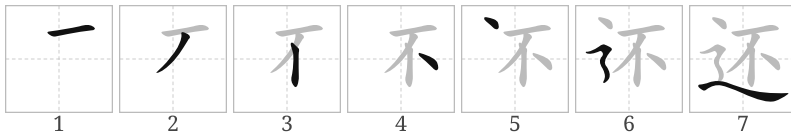


huán

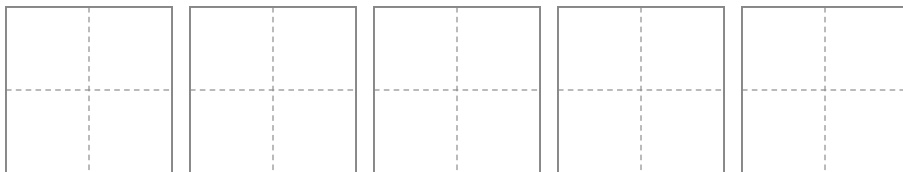
to return

7 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN

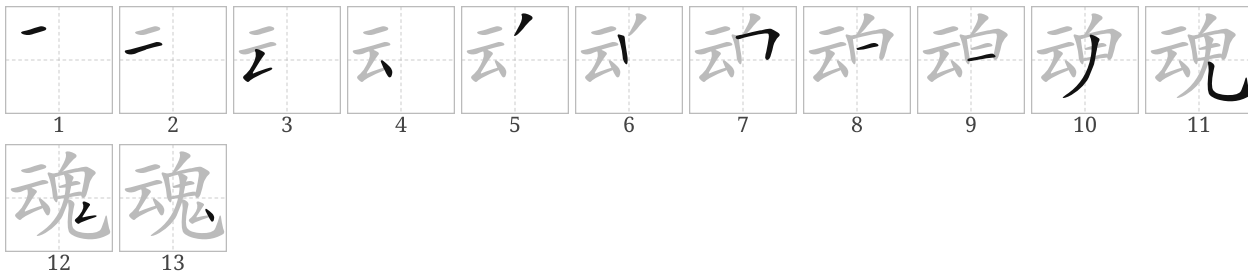


hún

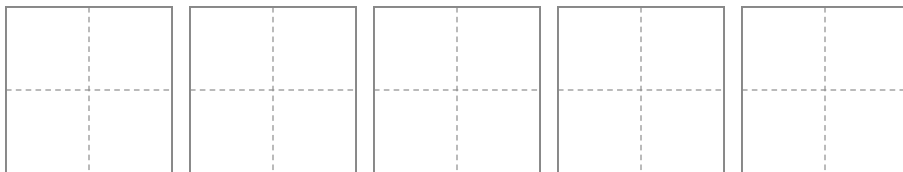
soul

13 strokes

STROKE ORDER



YOUR TURN



# PRACTICE · 借尸还魂 JIÈ SHĪ HUÁN HÚN

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

|     |     |      |     |
|-----|-----|------|-----|
| jiè | shī | huán | hún |
| 借   | 尸   | 还    | 魂   |
|     |     |      |     |
|     |     |      |     |
|     |     |      |     |
|     |     |      |     |

借尸还魂 · Borrow a corpse to return the soul.

# THREE MORE WORDS

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jiè

1 借

to borrow.

wáng guān hǎo jiè yě róng yì diū

王冠好借，也容易丢。

*A crown is easy to borrow, and easy to lose.*

Borrowing is easy. Keeping it is not.

---

ké

2 壳

shell; case.

nǐ mǎi de shì jì yì tā men mài de shì ké

你买的是记忆，他们卖的是壳。

*You buy the memory. They sell the shell.*

The shell is the part for sale.

---

zhēn

3 真

real; true.

míng zì kě yǐ jiè lǐ miàn de dōng xī bì xū zhēn

名字可以借，里面的东西必须真。

*Borrow the name. Keep the thing inside real.*

Fake inside, and it is only a mask.

# SPOT IT · STOP IT 识破 · 防住

Back to the box on the shelf. The front is old and the back is new. Nothing on the front is a lie, and nothing on the back is explained. That is the whole move: you were sold a name, not a recipe.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>借名</b><br><i>Borrow the name: real thing inside</i><br><br>jiù ké zi<br>旧壳子<br><i>Old shell</i><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>zhēn dōng xī<br>真东西<br><i>Real thing inside</i><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>hái néng mài dì èr cì<br>还能卖第二次<br><i>It sells again</i><br><br><br><br><br><br> | <b>盗名</b><br><i>Wear it: nothing inside</i><br><br>yí yàng de ké<br>一样的壳<br><i>The same shell</i><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>lǐ miàn kōng de<br>里面空的<br><i>Nothing inside</i><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>mài de kuài      rán hòu mài bú dòng<br>卖得快，然后卖不动<br><i>Fast, then never again</i><br><br><br><br><br><br> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Borrow the name: old shell, real thing inside. Wear it: the same shell, nothing inside. The second sells faster, then never again. That is the whole difference.

借名：旧壳子，真东西。盗名：一样的壳，里面什么都没有。第二条卖得更快，然后就再也卖不动了。区别就这一点。

# SEVEN DAYS, SEVEN QUESTIONS

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**Day 1** Which brand do you still trust from childhood — and what is behind its name today? 名字 míng zi

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**Day 2** What did you buy for the label, not for the thing inside? 壳 ké

---

**Day 3** Which old name in your industry is now carried by people who never built it? 借 jiè

---

**Day 4** If you borrowed a name tomorrow, what real thing would you put inside it? 真 zhēn

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**Day 5** Where are you wearing a name instead of doing the work? 戴 dài

---

**Day 6** Which trust have you kept on a front label while the back changed? 背面 bèi miàn

---

**Day 7** What would make a stranger believe your name in one afternoon? 信 xìn

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# WEEK 14 REVIEW



Yoko  
Read the 36 Stratagems with Yoko

第 14 计 / 36

**借尸还魂**  
jiè shī huán hún

Borrow, yes. Fake, no.  
No empty shells.

有用者，不可借；不能用者，求借。借不能用者而用之，匪我求童蒙，童蒙求我。

|                   |                                  |                                 |                                 |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 古<br>THEN         | 能用的不借<br>USEFUL: NOT FOR LENDING | 借没人用的<br>BORROW THE UNUSED      | 让它有用<br>MAKE IT WORK            |
| 理<br>THE LOGIC    | 壳是信任<br>THE SHELL IS TRUST       | 没用的才卖<br>THE UNUSED IS FOR SALE | 里面必须真<br>KEEP THE INSIDE REAL   |
| 今<br>TODAY        | 老名新厂<br>OLD NAME, NEW COMPANY    | 记忆换空壳<br>MEMORY FOR A SHELL     | 付钱前翻面<br>TURN IT OVER FIRST     |
| 正用<br>DO IT CLEAN | 买下老名字<br>BUY THE OLD NAME        | 真货做得更好<br>MAKE IT BETTER        | 名字带客来<br>THE NAME BRINGS PEOPLE |

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

1. In one sentence: why did the general put a shepherd on the throne?

2. What does 借尸还魂 mean, in your own words?

3. Which of this week's four characters can you write now without looking: 借, 尸, 还, or 魂?

4. Which name are you still buying, and what is actually inside it?

## Borrow, yes. Fake, no.

可以借，不能骗。

Kě yǐ jiè, bù néng piàn.