

28. The Nine Billion Names of God

【二十八】上帝之名九十億

By Arthur C. Clarke

柯阿瑟著作

“This is a slightly unusual request,” said Dr. Wagner, with what he hoped was commendable restraint. “As far as I know, it’s the first time anyone’s been asked to supply a Tibetan monastery with an Automated Sequence Computer. I don’t wish to be inquisitive, but I should hardly have thought that your—ah—establishment had much use for such a machine. Could you explain just what you intend to do with it?”

“這個要求有點特別，”魏博士自認爲適度地剋制著自己說。“據我所知，這是首次有任何人被要求去提供西藏喇嘛寺一臺自動續列性電腦。我不是多管閑事，我只是完全沒有概念貴-- 呃 - 貴單位要這麼一臺機器幹什麼。能不能麻煩解釋一下你要用它來幹什麼？”

“Gladly,” replied the lama, readjusting his silk robes and carefully putting away the slide rule he had been using for currency conversions. “Your Mark V Computer can carry out any routine mathematical operation involving up to ten digits. However, for our work, we are interested in letters, not numbers. As we wish you to modify the output circuits, the machine will be printing columns of words, not figures.”

“樂意奉告，”喇嘛回答，他一邊把絲袍子整理整理，小心翼翼地吧換算錢幣的計算尺放好。“你們的馬克五號計算機能夠進行十位數以下的任何數學運算。但是，爲了我們的工作需要，我們要的是文字，不是數字。我們期望你們修改輸出電路就是爲了它能印出成列的字，而非數字。”

“I don’t quite understand . . .”

“我不完全理解...”

“This is a project on which we have been working for the last three centuries— since the lamasery was founded, in fact. It is somewhat alien to your way of thought, so I hope you will listen with an open mind while I explain it.”

“這是我們三百年來一直在做的計劃 - 其實，這個喇嘛寺一建基我們就開始了。這個觀念有一點和你們的思維方式格格不入，所以嘛，我希望跟你解釋的時候，你能開啓心胸，洗耳恭聽。”

“Naturally!”

“這個自然。”

“It is really quite simple. We have been compiling a list which shall contain all the possible names of God.”

“講起來其實簡單不過了。我們一直在匯編一個包括上帝的所有名字的表。”

“I beg your pardon?”

“對不起，你們在...?”

“We have reason to believe,” continued the lama imperturbably, “that all such names can be written with not more than nine letters in an alphabet we have devised.”

“我們有理由相信，”喇嘛沉著地說，“所有這些名字可以用我們設計的字母系統之中的九個以下的字母拼出來。”

“And you have been doing this for three centuries?”

“你是說你們已經工作了三百年？”

“Yes: we expected it would take us about fifteen thousand years to complete the task.”

“是的；我們估量我們要花一萬五千年的時間來完成這個工作。”

“Oh,” Dr. Wagner looked a little dazed. “Now I see why you wanted to hire one of our machines. But exactly what is the purpose of this project?”

“噢，”魏博士看起來好像雪花在面前亂颺一樣。“我現在終於瞭解你們為什麼要雇用我們的機器。但是呢，你們這個計劃的目的又是為了什麼？”

The lama hesitated for a fraction of a second, and Wagner wondered if he had offended him. If so, there was no trace of annoyance in the reply.

喇嘛遲疑了幾分之一刹那，魏博士懷疑是不是得罪了他什麼。假如得罪了他什麼的話，從他的回答完全看不出任何蹟象。

“Call it ritual, if you like, but it’s a fundamental part of our belief. All the many names of the Supreme Being—God, Jehovah, Allah, and so on—they are only man-made labels. There is a philosophical problem of some difficulty here, which I do not propose to discuss, but somewhere among all the possible combinations of letters that can occur are what one may call the real names of God. By systematic permutation, we have been trying to list them all.”

“就算是一種儀式好了，但是嘛，又是我們信仰的部分基礎。所有這些用來稱呼超然存在靈性的名字--神，耶和華，阿拉，等等--都是人造的標示。在這裏，有點哲學問題的困難存在，我不想在此討論，但是，在所有的字母的排列組合之中，有些是所謂的神的真正名字。我們運用排列組合，一直把所有的可能性列出一個表來。”

“I see. You’ve been starting at AAAAAAA . . . and working up to ZZZZZZZZ....”

“我瞭解。你們從 AAAAAAAA 開始一直排列到 ZZZZZZZZ....”

“Exactly—though we use a special alphabet of our own. Modifying the electromatic typewriters to deal with this is, of course, trivial. A rather more interesting problem is that of devising suitable circuits to eliminate ridiculous combinations. For instance, no letter must occur more than three times in succession.”

“就是這樣子—只是我們用我們自己的字母系統。改變電子打字機的綫路來解決這個問題是一樁小事，當然。比較值得注意花時間的是設計適當的綫路來消除完全荒唐的排列組合。舉個例說，一個字母不能連接著自己重複出現超出三次。”

“Three? Surely you mean two.”

“三次？你必定是說兩次。”

“Three is correct: I am afraid it would take too long to explain why, even if you understood our language.”

“三次是對的；我耽心即使你瞭解我們的語言，還是要花太多時間跟你解釋。”

“I’m sure it would,” said Wagner hastily. “Go on.”

“我相信如此，”魏博士快快地說。“請繼續。”

“Luckily, it will be a simple matter to adapt your Automated Sequence Computer for this work, since once it has been programmed properly it will permute each letter in turn and print the result. What would have taken us fifteen thousand years it will be able to do in a hundred days.”

“幸運地，改造你們的自動接續性計算機來做這件事很容易，只要你們把程式設計好，字母會自動排列組合印出來。我們原來必須花一萬五千年的工作，只需要一百天便能完成。”

Dr. Wagner was scarcely conscious of the faint sounds from the Manhattan streets far below. He was in a different world, a world of natural, not man-made mountains. High up in their remote aeries these monks had been patiently at work, generation after generation, compiling their lists of meaningless words. Was there any limit to the follies of mankind? Still, he must give no hint of his inner thoughts. The customer was always right. . .

魏博士幾乎完全沒聽到低低在下曼哈坦街道微微的響聲。他身在另一個世界裏，一個自然的世界，不是人造山一般建築物的世界。在他們遠離塵世高高在上的住處，這些喇嘛一代接著一代，正在耐心地編纂完全沒有意義的字表。人類真的是這麼沒有限度的愚蠢嗎？然而，他絕不能把心裏在想什麼表現出來。顧客永遠是對的……

“There’s no doubt,” replied the doctor, “that we can modify the Mark V to print lists of this nature. I’m much more worried about the problem of installation and maintenance. Getting out to Tibet, in these days, is not going to be easy.”

“沒有疑問的，”博士回答，“我們可以改造馬克五型來印這麼一個表。我的顧慮偏向於裝置和保養方面的問題。這時候要到西藏不是那麼簡單的事。”

“We can arrange that. The components are small enough to travel by air—that is one reason why we chose your machine. If you can get them to India, we will provide transport from there.”

“這個我們可以安排。零組件夠小的能夠空運—這也就是我們選擇你們的機器的原因之一。假如你們能夠把它們運送到印度，從那裏開始，運送這些交給我們來做。”

“And you want to hire two of our engineers?”

“你要雇用我們兩位工程師？”

“Yes, for the three months that the project should occupy.”

“是的，這個工程該進行的三個月期間。”

“I’ve no doubt that Personnel can manage that.” Dr. Wagner scribbled a note on his desk pad. “There are just two other points—”

“我相信人事科能安排這個。”魏博士在筆記板上記了個什麼。“還有就是兩個問題....”

Before he could finish the sentence the lama had produced a small slip of paper. “This is my certified credit balance at the Asiatic Bank.”

他還沒來得及說完那句話，喇嘛已經拿出一張紙。“這是我在亞細亞銀行的驗證存款數額。”

“Thank you. It appears to be—ah—adequate. The second matter is so trivial that I hesitate to mention it—but it’s surprising how often the obvious gets overlooked. What source of electrical energy have you?”

“謝謝你。看起來—啊—足夠。另一件事微不足道，我不知道該講還是不講—但話說回來，有時候人就是這麼樣，擺在眼前的反而沒看到。你們有什麼樣的電源？”

“A diesel generator providing fifty kilowatts at a hundred and ten volts. It was installed about five years ago and is quite reliable. It’s made life at the lamasery much more comfortable, but of course it was really installed to provide power for the motors driving the prayer wheels.”

“有一臺五十千瓦一百一十伏的柴油發電機。大約五年前裝置好的，很牢靠。喇嘛寺爲了它蠻舒服的，當然，裝置它的目的是要用他來供電給馬達好拉動祈禱輪。”

“Of course,” echoed Dr. Wagner. “I should have thought of that.”

“當然，”魏博士共鳴似的說。“我早該想到。”

The view from the parapet was vertiginous, but in time one gets used to anything. After three months, George Hanley was not impressed by the two-thousand-foot swoop into the abyss or the remote

checkerboard of fields in the valley below. He was leaning against the wind-smoothed stones and staring morosely at the distant mountains whose names he had never bothered to discover.

從矮牆往外看，景象令人驚心，但是人總會習慣。都三個月了，韓喬治根本不把兩千呎的峭壁當一回事，山谷裏棋盤一般的田野也沒什麼。他背靠著被風蝕而平坦光滑的大石頭，心情鬱悶地望著對面他連問都沒有問名字的遠山。

This, thought George, was the craziest thing that had ever happened to him. "Project Shangri-La," some wit back at the labs had christened it. For weeks now the Mark V had been churning out acres of sheets covered with gibberish. Patiently, inexorably, the computer had been rearranging letters in all their possible combinations, exhausting each class before going on to the next. As the sheets had emerged from the electromatic typewriters, the monks had carefully cut them up and pasted them into enormous books. In just another week, heaven be praised, they would have finished. Just what obscure calculations had convinced the monks that they needn't bother to go on to words of ten, twenty, or a hundred letters, George didn't know. One of his recurring nightmares was that there would be some change of plan, and that the high lama (whom they'd naturally called Sam Jaffe, though he didn't look a bit like him) would suddenly announce that the project had been extended to approximately A.D. 2060. They were quite capable of it.

這個是喬治這輩子碰過最荒唐的事。在國內實驗室裏有個小聰明給它取的綽號是“香格里拉計劃。”好幾個星期，馬克五號已經開始擲出成畝面積的紙張，上面印滿連鬼都看不懂的鬼畫符。耐心地，絲毫沒有感情地，電腦把字母重新組合又組合，把所有可能的排列組合都用盡了，才進到下一組字母。紙張從電磁打印機送出來，喇嘛們把它們切好，然後貼到大本大本的冊子裏面。再一個星期，老天保佑，他們就該完成這個工作了。到底是從什麼靈感得來的聰明智慧讓這些喇嘛深信他們不需要麻煩把字的長度加長到十，或者二十，或者一百，只有天知道。他一直害怕又害怕的是計劃會有改變，而這位長老喇嘛（他們自然地給了他單佳飛這個雅號，只是不明白為什麼，因為他看起來一點都不像他）突然之間宣佈這計劃要延伸到西元二〇六〇年左右。他們可是做得出來的。

George heard the heavy wooden door slam in the wind as Chuck came out onto the parapet beside him. As usual, Chuck was smoking one of the cigars that made him so popular with the monks—who, it seemed, were quite willing to embrace all the minor and most of the major pleasures of life. That was one thing in their favor: they might be crazy, but they weren't bluenoses. Those frequent trips they took down to the village, for instance . . .

喬治聽到木頭的門在風裏大聲關門砰的一聲，恰克出來到矮牆這裏他的旁邊。如同平常一樣，恰克抽著一根使得他在眾喇嘛之中極受歡迎的雪茄—這些喇嘛啊，說真的，不只是六根不淨，事實上生命之中大大小小的娛樂他們都來者不拒。這算是他們的好處之一：他們可能發狂，可是並非假仙假鬼的清教徒。你看，他們常常下山到村子裏去，譬如說.....

"Listen, George," said Chuck urgently, "I've learned something that means trouble."

“喬治，請聽，”恰克有點緊急，“我知道有麻煩要來。”

“What’s wrong? Isn’t the machine behaving?” That was the worst contingency George could imagine. It might delay his return, and nothing could be more horrible. The way he felt now, even the sight of a TV commercial would seem like manna from heaven. At least it would be some link with home.

“什麼事？電腦有什麼問題嗎？”喬治能想到最糟糕的就是這個。這樣一來，他們的回程可能耽誤，這就是最恐怖的事情了。以他目前的感覺來說，連電視廣告都被比成了天賜的瓊漿玉液。至少這些能讓他聯想到自己的家。

“No—it’s nothing like that.” Chuck settled himself on the parapet, which was unusual because normally he was scared of the drop. “I’ve just found out what this is all about.”

“不是的—不是那樣的事。”恰克一屁股坐到矮牆上，這倒是很特別，因為他一向有懼高症，看不得深深的低谷。“我適才發現這到底是怎麼一回事。”

“What d’ya mean? I thought we knew.”

“你這是什麼意思？我以為我們都知道。”

“Sure—we know what the monks are trying to do. But we didn’t know why. It’s the craziest thing—”

“當然—我們知道這個喇嘛到底要做什麼。為什麼我們卻不知道。這是最瘋狂的事 ...”

“Tell me something new,” growled George.

“告訴我，我不知道什麼，”喬治像狗生氣的時候一樣喉嚨裏發出咕嚕的響聲。

“—but old Sam’s just come clean with me. You know the way he drops in every afternoon to watch the sheets roll out. Well, this time he seemed rather excited, or at least as near as he’ll ever get to it. When I told him that we were on the last cycle he asked me, in that cute English accent of his, if I’d ever wondered what they were trying to do. I said ‘Sure’—and he told me.”

“老山姆剛才跟我說明白了。你知道他每天下午來我們這裏看印表機印出表來。是的，這次他看來很興奮，至少是他最興奮的了。我跟他說我們已經到了最後一輪的時候，他問我說，用那個你知道他怪腔怪調可愛兮兮的金剛經英文，我是不是奇怪他們到底在搞什麼鬼。我說‘當然’—然後他告訴我。”

“Go on; I’ll buy it.”

“告訴我；我相信。”

“Well, they believe that when they have listed all His names—and they reckon that there are about nine billion of them—God’s purpose will have been achieved. The human race will have finished what it was created to do, and there won’t be any point in carrying on. Indeed, the very idea is something like blasphemy.”

“他們相信，在他們把神的名字列出來之後－他們估計有九十億之多－神的主意就會完成。人類就將完成人類被造成的目的，沒有必要繼續下去了。說真的，整個念頭要來是褻瀆神的。”

“Then what do they expect us to do? Commit suicide?”

“他們要我們怎麼樣呢？去自殺？”

“There’s no need for that. When the list’s completed, God steps in and simply winds things up . . . bingo!”

“這個大可不必。表單完成之後，神來把事情結清 ... 中獎!”

“Oh, I get it. When we finish our job, it will be the end of the world.”

“噢，我瞭解了。我們工作完成，就是世界末日。”

Chuck gave a nervous little laugh.

恰克緊張地笑了一笑。

“That’s just what I said to Sam. And do you know what happened? He looked at me in a very queer way, like I’d been stupid in class, and said, ‘It’s nothing as trivial as that.’”

“我就是這麼跟山姆說的。你知道怎麼了？他奇怪地看著我，好像我在教室裏面笨笨的一樣，然後說，‘不是這麼雞毛蒜皮的小事。’”

George thought this over for a moment.

喬治想了又想。

“That’s what I call taking the Wide View,” he said presently. “But what d’ya suppose we should do about it? I don’t see that it makes the slightest difference to us. After all, we already knew that they were crazy.”

“這就是我所說的從寬處着眼，”他很快又說。“可是呢，你認為我們又該怎麼做呢？我看不出來，反正半斤八兩，對我們來說會有什麼差別。不管怎麼樣，我們早就知道他們根本都是瘋子。”

“Yes—but don’t you see what may happen? When the list’s complete and the Last Trump doesn’t blow—or whatever it is they expect—we may get the blame. It’s our machine they’ve been using. I don’t like the situation one little bit.”

“沒錯－但是呢，你難道看不出來會怎麼樣嗎？表單完成，號角不響－或者不管他們預期的是什麼並沒有發生－我們可能被捉起來頂缸。理由是他們用的是我們的機器。我完全不喜歡這個景況，說真的。”

"I see," said George slowly. "You've got a point there. But this sort of thing's happened before, you know. When I was a kid down in Louisiana we had a crackpot preacher who once said the world was going to end next Sunday. Hundreds of people believed him—even sold their homes. Yet when nothing happened, they didn't turn nasty, as you'd expect. They just decided that he'd made a mistake in his calculations and went right on believing. I guess some of them still do."

"我明白了，"喬治遲緩地說。"你說的有道理。這種事以前發生過，你知道。我在路易斯安那小孩子的時候，有個狗屁不通的牧師說世界將在下星期天完蛋。成百的人相信他—有些甚至把房子都賣了。但是呢，結果靜悄悄地，沒事發生的時候，他們並沒有像預期的大大發作。他們只是這麼個了結說是他在計算的時候出了錯，還是繼續相信他。我猜想他們有些到今天還這麼相信。"

"Well, this isn't Louisiana, in case you hadn't noticed. There are just two of us and hundreds of these monks. I like them, and I'll be sorry for old Sam when his lifework backfires on him. But all the same, I wish I was somewhere else."

"是的，這裏並非路易斯安那，萬一你沒有留意到這個簡單明瞭的事實的話，我不妨再提醒你一次。你我只有兩個，他們喇嘛們可是成百的。我喜歡他們，我也要為老山姆難過，為了他畢生的成就要來斃掉他。但是嘛，反正都一樣，但願真的我不在此地。"

"I've been wishing that for weeks. But there's nothing we can do until the contract's finished and the transport arrives to fly us out."

"幾星期以來我一直這麼希望著。只是嘛，合約完成飛機來接我們之前我們無能為力啊。"

"Of course," said Chuck thoughtfully, "we could always try a bit of sabotage."

"這個當然我們可以做些什麼，"喬克想著什麼一邊說，"我們可以稍微動動手脚。"

"Like hell we could! That would make things worse."

"狗屁什麼動手脚！會把事情弄得更糟。"

"Not the way I meant. Look at it like this. The machine will finish its run four days from now, on the present twenty-hours-a-day basis. The transport calls in a week. OK—then all we need to do is to find something that needs replacing during one of the overhaul periods—something that will hold up the works for a couple of days. We'll fix it, of course, but not too quickly. If we time matters properly, we can be down at the airfield when the last name pops out of the register. They won't be able to catch us then."

"我的意思不是這樣子。不妨這麼看。以現在每天二十小時為基本來衡量，這工作將在四天之內完成。這麼—我們只要在保養時間找到一些必須更換的零件—能夠把工作耽延幾天的話。我們，當然要修理，但是故意拖延時間慢慢來。假如我們把時間估量好，最後一個名字印出來的時候，我們已經在機場那裏等了。到那時候，他們就沒辦法抓我們了。"

"I don't like it," said George. "It would be the first time I ever walked out on a job. Besides, it would make them suspicious. No, I'll sit tight and take what comes."

“我不喜歡這個想頭”喬治說。“這將是我這輩子第一次罷工。而且呢，他們會疑神疑鬼的。不，我要牢牢守住，就讓天塌下來吧。又怎麼樣！”

“I still don't like it,” he said, seven days later, as the tough little mountain ponies carried them down the winding road. “And don't you think I'm running away because I'm afraid. I'm just sorry for those poor old guys up there, and I don't want to be around when they find out what suckers they've been. Wonder how Sam will take it?”

七天過後，他還是說，“我不喜歡，”那時候小小壯壯山裏面的小小個子的馬沿著婉曲的山路搭著他們下山。“不要以為我害怕才逃跑的。我只是同情那些山上的可憐蟲，他們發現自己變成了白癡的時候，我不願意在場目睹他們。不知道杉木要怎麼想？”

“It's funny,” replied Chuck, “but when I said good-by I got the idea he knew we were walking out on him—and that he didn't care because he knew the machine was running smoothly and that that job would soon be finished. After that—well, of course, for him there just isn't any After That . . .”

“真好玩，”恰克回答，“我們說再見的時候，我意思到他明白我們要溜走—而且在他也沒關係了，因為機器完美地工作著，整個計劃就將完成。之後—這個，當然，對他來講，沒有所謂的之後這回事...”

George turned in his saddle and stared back up the mountain road. This was the last place from which one could get a clear view of the lamasery. The squat, angular buildings were silhouetted against the afterglow of the sunset: here and there, lights gleamed like portholes in the side of an ocean liner. Electric lights, of course, sharing the same circuit as the Mark V. How much longer would they share it? wondered George. Would the monks smash up the computer in their rage and disappointment? Or would they just sit down quietly and begin their calculations all over again?

喬治坐在鞍上轉身回頭看那條山路。這是能夠清楚看見喇嘛寺最後的地方。矮矮胖胖，屋簷玲瓏的喇嘛寺被落日餘暉映出黑黑的影子；好比一條大客輪的窗子一樣，這裏一窗亮燈，那裏一窗亮燈。那是跟馬克五號電腦用同樣電路的電燈。它們究竟能支持多久呢？喬治一邊這麼沉思默想。憤怒失望之餘，喇嘛們會把電腦砸得稀爛嗎？或者他們靜靜地坐下來，反正法輪常轉，這個只是另一個輪迴的開始，重新開始做他們的計算工作？

He knew exactly what was happening up on the mountain at this very moment. The high lama and his assistants would be sitting in their silk robes, inspecting the sheets as the junior monks carried them away from the typewriters and pasted them into the great volumes. No one would be saying anything. The only sound would be the incessant patter, the never-ending rainstorm of the keys hitting the paper, for the Mark V itself was utterly silent as it flashed through its thousands of calculations a second. Three months of this, thought George, was enough to start anyone climbing up the wall.

他明明白白地知道山上喇嘛們現在在做什麼。首席喇嘛和他的助理喇嘛們現正坐在地板上，身上穿著他們的絲袍子，檢視這些表單，一面小喇嘛們從印表機那裏把印出來的表單拿來，把它們貼到一本一本的大簿子裏面。沒有人會說什麼。唯一的聲響是馬不停蹄，永無止境的打字頭暴雨一般打在紙上啪啪作響，我們瞭解這個，原因是馬克五號一邊每秒進行成千計算工作的時候是默默地工作著的。在這種情況工作三個月，喬治這麼想，是足夠讓一個人發狂爬起牆來的。

“There she is!” called Chuck, pointing down into the valley. “Ain’t she beautiful!”

“她在那裏了！”恰克叫喊，指著下面的山谷。“不是很漂亮嗎！”

She certainly was, thought George. The battered old DC-3 lay at the end of the runway like a tiny silver cross. In two hours she would be bearing them away to freedom and sanity. It was a thought worth savoring like a fine liqueur. George let it roll round his mind as the pony trudged patiently down the slope.

當然是漂亮，喬治這麼想。那架飽經滄桑 DC 三型的飛機停在跑到盡頭，好比一個小小閃亮的金十字。再過兩小時，它將把他們載走，離開這個地方，回到自由與心緒正常的地方。這種想頭好比美酒一般，真正值得回味。小種馬耐心一步一步走下山坡的時候，喬治就讓自己陶醉在這個想頭裏面。

The swift night of the high Himalayas was now almost upon them. Fortunately, the road was very good, as roads went in that region, and they were both carrying torches. There was not the slightest danger, only a certain discomfort from the bitter cold. The sky overhead was perfectly clear, and ablaze with the familiar, friendly stars. At least there would be no risk, thought George, of the pilot being unable to take off because of weather conditions. That had been his only remaining worry.

喜馬拉雅山快速來到的黑夜幾乎臨頭了。幸好，路況很好，那地區的路都是這樣，而且他們都拿著火炬。沒有任何危險，除了寒冷逼得人不舒服以外。頂頭的天空完全明朗，星光閃亮而且像是知己的老朋友一樣。喬治這麼想，至少不會因為天候的關係，駕駛員沒有辦法起飛。那個倒是他原來唯一的顧慮。

He began to sing, but gave it up after a while. This vast arena of mountains, gleaming like whitely hooded ghosts on every side, did not encourage such ebullience. Presently George glanced at his watch.

他開始唱，不久又停了。這個廣大的山區，左右看去都像是戴著白色頭罩的鬼兒似的，使得他收斂起來，不敢這麼放肆。喬治不經意地看了看手錶。

“Should be there in an hour,” he called back over his shoulder to Chuck. Then he added, in an afterthought, “Wonder if the computer’s finished its run. It was due about now.”

“一小時之內就該到了，”他半回過頭向恰克大聲呼叫。接著，想了半晌之後又說，“不知道電腦做完工作沒有。該是完成的時候了。”

Chuck didn’t reply, so George swung round in his saddle. He could just see Chuck’s face, a white oval turned toward the sky.

恰克沒有回答，所以喬治轉過身回頭看。他看到的只是恰克的臉，朝著天空看的一個白白的卵形的臉。

“Look,” whispered Chuck, and George lifted his eyes to heaven. (There is always a last time for everything.)

“看，”恰克小聲地說，喬治因此跟著他也把眼睛擡起來往天空看。（每件事情總有最後的一次。）

Overhead, without any fuss, the stars were going out.

頭頂上，不聲不響地，星星一顆接著一顆地滅掉了。