

有眼無珠

you3 yan3 wu2 zhu1

Best-selling author of the Harry Potter series JK Rowling revealed that the manuscript of her detective novel *The Cuckoo's Calling* written under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith had been rejected by two publishing houses.

She recently posted the rejection letters on Twitter – to inspire writers to face rejection, not for revenge. In one, an executive predicted that her novel would be a commercial flop and advised “Robert Galbraith” to take a writing course and consult a magazine guide to writing next time.

The Cuckoo's Calling was eventually accepted by a third publisher and went on to become a number-one best-seller. The publishers who had turned down the book can be said to be “有眼無珠” (*you3 yan3 wu2 zhu1*).

“有” (*you3*) is “to have,” “眼” (*yan3*) “an eye,” “無” (*wu2*) “without,” “nil” and “珠” (*zhu1*) means “眼珠,” which is “eyeball.” Literally, “有眼無珠” (*you3 yan3 wu2 zhu1*) is “having eye with no eyeball,” or “having eyeball without pupil,” which seems to make more sense anatomically.

Idiom by Lon Yan

Figuratively, the idiom means “having eyes, see not,” “to have eyes but not see,” “practically blind.” It is a derogatory expression used to describe people who fail to see the greatness or importance of someone or something.

It is also used to curse oneself for failing to see the wickedness in a person, especially after being deceived by him or her.

Though “有眼無珠” is about a non-functioning eye, it can be used in respect to poor judgment in things concerning the ear too, like Decca Records, which rejected The Beatles, telling the group they had “no future in show business,” and that “guitar groups are on the way out.”

Terms containing the character “眼” (*yan3*) include:

眼睛 (*yan3 jing1*) – the eye

眼鏡 (*yan3 jing4*) – eye glasses

眼淚 (*yan3 lei4*) – tears

眼紅 (*yan3 hong2*) – envious