

Word games in the text “The last retort: Mad on Chemistry”

The last **retort**:

1. retorta (latin): flask (*lombik*)
2. retorquere (latin): a quick, angry or humorous reply (*visszavágás*)

The **Blessed Madonna**

Louise Veronica Ciccone
(the meaning could also be the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ)

The **divine Britney**

Britney Spears, pop singer (and physics expert!!)
(see “Britney’s guide to semiconductor physics”, <http://britneyspears.ac/lasers.htm>)

“Sadly, Gibbs didn’t so much hide his light under a bushel as take it out into the back garden and **bury it six feet down.**”

Until the bubonic plague swept Europe in the fourteenth century, bodies were buried at varying depths. During the Black Death, people became more aware of the need to bury their dead deep enough to insure that soil erosion didn't expose the remains and create a further health hazard. **The specific depth of six feet came later from an English law**, something of an early family preservation act in which the idea was to join husband and wife even after death. Six feet down allowed enough space for the coffin of one spouse, and eventually for the coffin of the other on top, and still left two feet of dirt on top of both. We've kept it at six feet for practicality: the depth is above the water table and hard rock, but not too deep for the grave diggers.

Allusions to the New Testament in the text “The last retort: Mad on Chemistry”
(citations are from the King James version)

“Sadly, Gibbs didn’t so much *hide his light under a bushel* as take it *out into the back garden and bury it* six feet down.”

Mat. 5,15-16

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Luk. 11,33-35

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

Mar. 4,21-23

And he said unto them, **Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?**

For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Mat. 25,14-28

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

But he that had received one went and **digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money.**

After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

And I was afraid, and went and **hid thy talent in the earth:** lo, there thou hast that is thine.

His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.