SEMINAR EPISODE 103

{Intro theme in background 0:00-1:08}

NARRATOR: There was once a ship called The Ark of Humanity where the last known remnants of Earth's people were instructed in the history of human civilization. Confined and categorized, none could leave...but one made a daring escape. Cut loose from all she knew, with a holographic student as her only companion, she crash-landed on a nearby planet: the planet of the Zarrak.

Now, months later, a new lifeform, half-human, half-Zarrak bursts forth from the planet, escaping the hostile native lifeforms aboard a small shuttle. They have just made contact with a brand-new species.

{Seminar main theme 1:09-1:55}

CREDITS ANNOUNCER: Seminar episode 103: "From Desperation to Luxury"

Wrapper #1 by V.C. Morrison

SPACECRAFT SHUTTLE BAY

{Energetic music}

[Door slams. Footsteps travel down corridor. Mechanical humming sound.]

K'TELERAN: (energetically) Welcome! I, K'Teleran, greet New and Thomas on this, the day of our first contact!

NEW: Wow. You're big. I mean, um...Hello. I, New, and...he, Thomas, greet K'Teleran.

K'TELERAN: Wonderful! Just wonderful! Please follow me. [footsteps continue] We have much to discuss!

[Door opens with chime sound. Footsteps travel into new room. K'Teleran sits in chair.]

[Door opens softly, footsteps as K'Teleran, New, and Thomas enter]
{Soft jazz music}

K'TELERAN'S OFFICE

K'TELERAN: Please, have a seat.

[Creak of leather as K'Teleran sits]

NEW: Okay. This is ... quite an interesting chair. Give me a moment. (grunts)

[New sits in chair]

K'TELERAN: Forgive me. I should have had new chairs made for my office. Don't worry, though. The quarters we're preparing for you are designed for your size and physical shape.

NEW: Quarters? Oh! Thank you. I...this is so strange to me. I've never met another species. I, I mean, I have. Once. Back when I was...but now I'm-

[Alien humming sound]

THOMAS: What New means to say is, they are a very recent amalgamation of two different entities with different memories. Thus, recalling events of the past is...complicated.

K'TELERAN: I understand. My lifemate and I...hm...recently made the decision to be merged. It was quite confusing at first. But now, we are...I am happy.

NEW: Oh. It wasn't a lifemate thing in my case. It was sort of a necessity.

K'TELERAN: [shifting in chair] Well, regardless, I simply want you to understand that there are similarities between our species, and indeed many species in The Great Knowledge Consortium.

NEW: [shifting in chair] The what?

[K'Teleran rises. Footsteps.]

{Upbeat music}

K'TELERAN: (voice reverberates like in a commercial) The Great Knowledge Consortium is a union of races throughout the galaxy whose goal is to create the *definitive* database of knowledge of all sentient species, including languages, cultures, fictions, histories, and science.

NEW: That's incredible! No wonder you were so interested in our database.

Wrapper #1 by V.C. Morrison

K'TELERAN: Yes! You are the owner of quite a valuable bit of data. [Music stops. K'Teleran sits.] In fact, you yourself have quite a value.

[Alien humming sound]

NEW: [Shifting in chair] Umm...

THOMAS: Excuse me! You are not implying taking ownership of New, are you?

K'TELERAN: No, no! We do not abide slavery of species, whatever their intelligence level. [Shifts in chair] I simply mean that once news of your existence was made available, many people have been curious, not only of your story archive, but of you personally and your own stories.

[Alien humming sound]

THOMAS: Oh, that's a relief.

NEW: So, what are you saying?

K'TELERAN: I am saying that we, the Consortium, have a proposition for you. [Shifts in chair] We would like for you to teach a series of lectures on humanity to a selection of our number. And, in exchange, we will expend considerable effort searching for your friends.

[Alien humming sound]

THOMAS: (concerned) New?

NEW: That is...a lot to consider. It's...it's not a decision I think I can make quickly.

K'TELERAN: [Rising from chair, walking] Oh, certainly! And I realize that I've caught you at something of a desperate moment. Take some time. Settle into your quarters. Find comfort. And then we'll talk.

[Doors chime as they open. Alien humming continues.]

NEW'S QUARTERS

[Alien door chime, humming sound]

NEW: Holy shit! It's like like a...it's like a luxury hotel room!

[Another door opens]

THOMAS: Hmm. [Chime sound] Tasteful decor in neutral colors. [Chime sound] Contrasted with bright paintings of [Chime sound] ... some sort of multi-colored flora. [Chime sound] Suitable chairs, [Chime sound] large bed with pillows and blankets. [Chime sound] Strange how it all seems so ...

NEW: Normal. {Hopeful music}

NEW: I guess they did some research. And, well, I guess the Consortium has a lot of knowledge about what a species with my genetic makeup would find comforting.

[Alien humming sound]

THOMAS: Yes. Even the smell is...pleasant. Is that lavender?

NEW: Something like it, anyway. [Puts object down] I definitely approve! Now, the real test: Is there a bathtub?

THOMAS: Perhaps through that doorway.

[Footsteps]

NEW: (From the other room) Oh my God! It's huge! I am having a bath! Right now!

[Water runs. Technological sounds]

THOMAS: Very well. I will become acclimated with the technological side of the amenities. Don't forget you have rather a heav y choice to make!

NEW: (From the other room) Ahhhhh! You had to remind me! Hey, how about a story?

THOMAS: Ah! Yes. Let me see if I can send the audio to the bathroom. Now playing "Unbury Your Gays."

{Seminar segue music 8:17}

Un-Bury Your Gays by Joshua Bridges

MAYBELL MANOR FOYER - MIDNIGHT

{Creepy music}

[Door creaks open, wind blowing in from outside. Footsteps on wood floor as Leonor and Millie enter. Door closes. Creaking sounds]

LEONOR: (sighs heavily) FUCK. Nope. Nope nope nope. We are not stopping. Get up, Leonor. We are going.

LEONOR: (quietly) Shhhh. You hear them? They're getting closer.

[Mob shouting and chanting outside in the distance: "Kill the witch!" Gregor shouts "She's my wife" "She's the devil's toy!"]

LEONOR: (cont.) They won't come in here. They're a superstitious lot. (repeats to convince herself) They're a very superstitious lot.

[Footsteps on creaking wood as they move farther into the house]

MILLIE: What was that? (whispering) Shhh. Is somebody else here?

LEONOR: (whispering, fearful) Millie. Millie . . . the ghost is real. Zephaniah's ghost is real.

MILLIE: (also whispering) Can you do something about a ghost?

LEONOR: I'm a mere mortal. I'm not actually a witch, my love. I'm just troublesome.

{Stinger}

LEONOR: What is that?

[Eerie click of a cane on wood]

MILLIE: The stories say Zephaniah walked with a cane. That sounds like- Tell me it's not a floating, uh, shadow person. With a cane. Just a trick of the light, maybe. Or a hysterical hallucination!

LEONOR: You've not been hysterical a moment in your life. That's a ghost. (under her breath) Fuck.

{Ominous, urgent music}

MILLIE: (terrified) We need a place to hide. In here! We can hide in the wardrobe.

[Footsteps on wood, heavy wardrobe door opens and they get inside. Eerie ghostly sounds as ghost approaches.]

MILLIE: (covers her own mouth as she hyperventilates)

[Click. Click. CLICK. These clicks are very close, soon clicking on the wardrobe door. Glass breaking, front door creaking open. The mob enters]

[Urgent music]

MILLIE: (stifles a sob)

MOB LEADER: (angry shouting downstairs) Millie Stover! We know you're here! We will forgive you if you repent.

[Mob speaking in the background]

GREGOR: (shouting) Come home, darling. Tell us she bewitched you and you can come back to me.

MOB LEADER: Stay steady, Gregor. We'll get your wife back.

[Clicking sounds. Mob nervous.

MOB LEADER: Steady, boys!

GREGOR: (We can do this. We can get her back.

MOB LEADER: Stop playing your tricks, witch.

[Breathless silence]

Un-Bury Your Gays by Joshua Bridges

ZEPHANIAH: (ethereal, soft and menacing) There is no witch. Just me and my house.

GREGOR: (scared) He's a ghost.

[Nervous mob showing fear, loody squelch as someone is stabbed. Random male scream]

GREGOR: (screams)

[Wind blowing. Wardrobe door creaks open.]

LEONOR: (harsh whisper) Don't do it. We don't know what's out there.

MILLIE: (whisper) We can't stay here all night.

LEONOR: (whisper) A little longer.

[Click click click of a cane.]

LEONOR: Is that the fucking ghost?

ZEPHANIAH: (other side of the wardrobe door) Yes.

LEONOR: BACK THE FUCK OFF!

MILLIE: (screams)

ZEPHANIAH: (penitent) No, that isn't...Shhhh. The mob will hear you.

MILLIE: Hear this, motherfucker.

[Millie swings the wardrobe door at Zephaniah. It passes through him and bangs on the wardrobe]

ZEPHANIAH: (hisses) Did you expect the wardrobe door to actually hit me? I'm a ghost, dammit!

[Angry mob approaches]

MOB LEADER: (down the hall) We're almost there! We've cornered her!

GREGOR: Millie! Where are you? Just come home!

MOB LEADER: (down the hall) We've got her now!

ZEPHANIAH: Which one of you is the witch?

LEONOR: I'm the witch. So if you don't back off, I will banish you to the lowest levels of hell, where whatever skin you have left will be flayed from your bones with a thousand miniature knives and Satan himself will eat your entrails for supper.

ZEPHANIAH: (exasperated) This is not helping!

[Bed slides across the floor and slams into the door. Wood falls to the ground]

LEONOR: Did you just sling the bed across the room?

ZEPHANIAH: I thought you were a witch.

[Footsteps]

LEONOR: So do a lot of people. They say it when they want to hurt a woman and don't have another excuse. Witches don't actually exist, do they? Not in the way they think.

ZEPHANIAH: Very few people exist in the way they think, my dear.

MOB MEMBER: (outside the bedroom) Oi! They're over here!

[Doorknob shakes. Mob roars, hits the door]

MOB LEADER: We got this, boys!

[Mob hitting the door]

MOB MEMBER: (outside the bedroom) Gonna need the ax!

MILLIE: What are you doing? He's a ghost, Leonor. Not on our side.

[Millie shuts Leonor into the wardrobe]

LEONOR: (muffled, inside the wardrobe) Let me out! Don't do this!

Un-Bury Your Gays by Joshua Bridges

{Ominous piano music}

ZEPHANIAH: (hurried) Go through to the sitting room. There is a secret room behind the middle bookshelf. They won't find you there.

MILLIE: Why would I believe you?

ZEPHANIAH: Because they killed me for being the same as you. For loving a man the way I was supposed to love a wife.

MOB MEMBER: (muffled through the door) Gimme that ax!

ZEPHANIAH: This will be my vengeance.

[Ax striking the door

LEONOR: Let us help. If I'm supposed to be the witch, let me play the witch.

[The axe breaks through the door with a loud CRACK. Several men strain and grunt against the bed but it barely shifts.

GREGOR: (through the cracked door) Millie? Are you in there?

LEONOR, MILLIE and ZEPHANIAH: GET. OUT.

[Boots walking on hardwood]

MILLIE: (sighs) Be careful.

[Millie leaves]

LEONOR: (menacingly) FOOLISH MORTAL MEN. You cannot stop me! I have already sacrificed many a virgin into the fires of damnation! My power grows every day and even now I command the dead. (evil laugh)

MOB LEADER: We will save Millie's soul from you! Someone give me a torch. Let's light 'em up.

[Flame comes to life. Mob breaking through door.]

GREGOR: We've got you.

ZEPHANIAH: (defiant) No!

[Wood creaking, glass breaking, mob leader screaming]

ZEPHANIAH: GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!

[Mob retreats, screaming]

GREGOR: (yelling) I didn't want this!

LEONOR: (angry) Then why didn't you stop? You turned us in and ran us out! You could have stopped at any time but instead incited this whole damn mob. You did this.

GREGOR: I just wanted my wife back.

LEONOR: Her future is so much bigger than the one you imagined for her. Millie was never yours.

GREGOR: But I love her!

LEONOR: This isn't love! (beat) People are dead! You wanted me to be one of them! You don't love her. You wanted to own her.

ZEPHANIAH: I'll take care of him.

MILLIE: (firm and clear) No.

LEONOR: Millie, he tried to kill you.

{Introspective music}

MILLIE: (voice breaking) And I hate him. I hate that he made me afraid. I hate that I had to kill a part of me and bury it deep and try to forget it ever existed because of him. And maybe you aren't a witch, Leonor, but you gave me hope, a chance to truly live. And now we're here and we're not him. We won't be. We don't get to kill him and bury him and forget him.

GREGOR: We can be happy.

MILLIE: We never were, Gregor. You can't manifest my happiness by the force of your will. So you get to live, but you live with the disappointment of knowing the thing you wanted most slipped right by you. Your ex- wife will always be the woman

who ran off with the witch. Now go. You have nothing left here. We're dead to you.

Un-Bury Your Gays by Joshua Bridges

[Gregor leaves. Door slams]

{Soft piano music}

ZEPHANIAH: Would you like me to chase him down and throw some dishes at him?

MILLIE: Let's not pay him any more mind. We need to go.

LEONOR: Thank you, Zephaniah.

ZEPHANIAH: You know my name.

LEONOR: I knew your story. I didn't think...well, I thought the stories of a ghost were an exaggeration. I thought only that maybe we wouldn't be the first to be caught here. That maybe our spirits would rest in good company.

ZEPHANIAH: Go. I'll make sure you aren't followed. You're going to be all right.

MILLIE: We have to be, for all those who came before and couldn't.

LEONOR: For those who came before.

[Footsteps fade as Leonor and Mille leave the house]

{Seminar segue music 18:54}

Wrapper #2 by V.C. Morrison

NEW'S OUARTERS

[Water drains from the tub. Alien humming sound resumes. New dries their hair.]

NEW: (voice reverberating from bathroom) You know, Thomas, when I asked for a story, I thought you'd give me something calming to go with my relaxing bath. Not a mob scene.

THOMAS: Oh, I'm sorry, New. I saw parallels between the characters in that story and our recent predicament. We did have a mob chasing us. And now we both have the chance to start anew.

NEW: Hmm. I think you're reaching. But okay. And now that I'm clean, let's see if I have any clothes to wear. Is there a wardrobe?

{Energetic music}

THOMAS: Allow me.

[Chime, closet door slides open. Closet whirs]

NEW: Wow. That's a lot.

THOMAS: They look similar to what you were wearing, but different colors.

NEW: Yeah. They even turned that long rip in my top to something that's rather...stylish. [New puts on clothes] Amazing!

THOMAS: By the way, about the Consortium's offer...

NEW: In a minute, okay? Let me get dressed first. [Continues to put on clothes]

THOMAS: I'm just wondering what your thoughts are on the idea of abandoning the search for your friends.

NEW: Oh.

THOMAS: You do see why it concerns me that you haven't brought it up.

NEW: Yeah, I see now. [New sits down] I guess it should be bothering me more. But it's...not. {Pensive music} I would guess that the Alice part of me is very concerned and desperately wants to find them. And the Alex part of me doesn't care all that much. Plus, there's that 60-year gap. We don't even know what we'd find if we did search for them. I mean, it wouldn't be them, right? It would be...their artifacts. Or...offspring. So, in general I'm okay with the Consortium doing the search. I just...I'm not sure about teaching a room full of aliens.

[Alien humming sound resumes]

THOMAS: Oh. How interesting. I didn't anticipate the merging affecting you in quite this way.

NEW: It's not always a 50/50 split with emotions and attitude. But it feels that way in this situation. Now with teaching, whatever my old selves feel about it, my new self is very nervous about the idea. In a lot of ways, I feel like I was just born. How can I teach others?

THOMAS: I'm sure it's not something you should be very concerned about. I imagine the Consortium has very much experience dealing with different species and different teaching styles. You'll just be one more.

NEW: That's not as helpful as you think it is. With that much experience they are bound to see just how inept I am at this. What if I mess up? What if I make a fool of myself?

THOMAS: Hmm. (long pause) Why don't you get dressed while I play a story.

NEW: Yeah, okay.

THOMAS: Playing "The Error Initiative."

{Seminar segue music 22:21}

THE ERROR INITIATIVE Written by Tilly Bridges and Susan Bridges

UH...SOMEWHERE?

{Dramatic music}

DELTA (dramatic voice) There is more in this world than what you perceive. Your senses are limited in ways you cannot even begin to comprehend. We exist in the shadows, in the periphery, on the edges of reality where thought blends with chance, where imagination and probability coexist and intermingle in an endless cosmic dance.

EPSILON: Wow.

DELTA: We are the guardians of The Error Initiative. We are agents of chaos and disorder, devoid of magnanimity with our extrajudicial application of anarchy.

EPSILON: So deep!

DELTA: There is more to reality than you know, we are the unseen forces that shape your life in ways your three-dimensional brains cannot begin to comprehend. [voice echoes] We are the cosmic balance and the last line of defense between you and absolute destruction.

EPSILON: So badass!

[Click]

{Music stops}

DELTA: (normal, somewhat whiny voice) You just gonna do that the whole time?

EPSILON: I can't help it. I mean like I knew the job was important, right? But not THAT important, I mean...gosh. You make it sound so cool.

DELTA: That's the idea. It's for a podcast.

EPSILON: A podcast! I love those. I listen on my commute every day.

DELTA: What commute? We exist outside of all time and space.

EPSILON: Sure, but like that's just a thing people say. If you listen to podcasts, chances are it's on your commute! If you still have one after the pandemic, anyway.

DELTA: WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

EPSILON: I hear things. The point is I didn't know it was so important, but I guess it totally is. Anyway, go ahead, finish!

DELTA: Well, now I'm self-conscious.

EPSILON: No no, you're doin' great.

DELTA: Really?

EPSILON: Oh sure!

{Dramatic music}

DELTA: (back to the cool voice) The Error Initiative. We're the fly

in your soup, the crack on your phone screen, the scrape on your knee. We're the vanguard-

THE ERROR INITIATIVE Written by Tilly Bridges and Susan Bridges

EPSILON: (quietly) Such a cool word! Oh dang.

DELTA: (ahem)...the vanguard in the war against that which would destroy us all.

EPSILON: Denise.

DELTA: No, that doesn't work.

EPSILON: It's her name though.

DELTA: But does it fit the tone?

EPSILON: I don't know, it's your recording.

DELTA: And yet you keep talking.

EPSILON: Ohhh snap.

[Magical sparkle sound]

EPSILON Oh snap. New jobs just came in.

DELTA (cool voice again) Let's get to work.

OFFICE

BOSSLADY Well Ms. Gilludugs, thank you for coming in. I must say, I've never seen someone with such...grace. You'll be hearing from us soon.

{Positive music}

MS. GILLUDUGGS Thank you so much, bosslady! I look forward to being able to officially call you that soon!

[Heels clicking on the floor as Ms. Gilludugs leaves office and enters atrium, crowd chatter, phone ringing]

MAMA GILLUDUGGS: (on the phone) Hello?

MS. GILLUDUGGS: Mom! I think I got the job!

BOSSLADY: (calling from a distance) Ms. Gilluduggs? You forgot your purse! Ms. Gilluduggs!

MAMA GILLUDUGGS: That's wonderful, sweetie! I'm so glad it went well!

MS. GILLUDUGGS: It went PERFECT. Couldn't have gone better. Not a single thing went-

[Alien sound]

EPSILON: No perfect days!

[Ms. Gilluduggs falls into the fountain, splashes around]

MS. GILLUDUGGS: (sputtering) Bosslady! Uh, hi.

BOSSLADY: (unamused) Your purse.

[Purse set down]

MS. GILLUDUGGS I...I don't know what happened. I just- I just fell! I didn't even slip, it was like somebody pushed me.

BOSSLADY: There's nobody else here. Are you suggesting I pushed you?

MS. GILLUDUGGS: What? Uh, nonononono-

BOSSLADY Forget about that call I mentioned In fact, let's forget this ever happened.

[Click of heels as Bosslady leaves]

MS. GILLUDUGGS Auuuuuuuuugh.

BOWLING ALLEY

[Sounds of balls rolling down lanes, striking pins. Conversations in the background. Hearbeat sound.]

MR. HURLYBIN: I'm so nervous.

THE ERROR INITIATIVE Written by Tilly Bridges and Susan Bridges

HURLYBIN'S FRIEND: I can't believe it. A perfect three hundred.

MR. HURLYBIN: One frame away.

HURLYBIN'S FRIEND: You've got it, Hurlybin. You've been cruising along without problem. I believe in you. Just don't overthink it.

MR. HURLYBIN: (deep breath)

[Hurlybin makes to throw the ball. Magical sound.]

DELTA: Nah.

[Soft crunch as ball falls on Hurlybin's foot]

MR. HURLYBIN: Agggghgghgh sonuvabrisket! My toes!

HURLYBIN'S FRIEND Forget about your toes, the ball!

MR. HURLYBIN: (wincing) What? [Ball ends up in the gutter]

HURLYBIN'S FRIEND: Right in the gutter.

MR. HURLYBIN What did I do to deserve this?

UH... SOMEWHERE?

{Upbeat rock music}

DELTA: (dramatic voice) The Error Initiative is here to ensure one thing and one thing only: nothing will ever be perfect.

EPSILON: were put into place when the first perfect day led to-

DELTA: (cool voice) The Unquestionable One.

EPSILON: ...Denise.

DELTA: "Unquestionable one"

[Music clicks off]

DELTA: (regular voice) is better.

EPSILON: I've been on board until now, but no.

[Music clicks back on]

DELTA: (dramatic voice) That's right, the - *Denise*. Denise had a perfect day, and then she became insufferable. And nobody could deal with it, least of all us.

EPSILON: (trying to sound dramatic) And so the Error Initiative was born!

DELTA (dramatic voice) Watch out, we're coming for you.

FAST FOOD PLACE

[Crowd chatter]

CASHIER: Here's your order!

CUSTOMER: Are there pickles on this?

CASHIER: (checking) Uh... yeah, yep! Looks like it!

CUSTOMER: I asked for NO pickles! NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

DELTA: (bad evil laughter)

EPSILON: (bad evil laughter)

DELTA: Ewww, that didn't sound cool at ALL. We should quit while we were ahead.

EPSILON: Uh...Definitely.

DELTA: Oh well, nothing's perfect.

{Seminar segue music 29:43}

Wrapper #3 by V.C. Morrison

NEW'S OUARTERS {Fast-paced jazz music} [New rapidly finishes getting dressed] NEW: Oh my God, Thomas! Why did you play me that?? THOMAS: I...I thought it would calm you. NEW: How? Now I'm more nervous than ever! THOMAS: Oh, New. I just thought that knowing that you won't be perfect, that you will mess up no matter what, would make you feel better about the idea of teaching. NEW: No! That's-that's not how that works! THOMAS: I'm so sorry! I just thought it was the logical way to--NEW: I'm not always logical! Probably less so now. Okay, okay. Let me just ... (takes deep breath and lets it out slowly) {Jazz music ends} I'm going to sleep on it. I'll make a decision in the morning. THOMAS: Yes. All right. That sounds like an excellent course of action. I'll inform K'Teleran. I believe I have figured out their communications systems. I also found a charging port for me! [New pulls back covers in bed] NEW: (Yawns) That's great, Thomas. Can you turn the lights down? THOMAS: Certainly. [Chime noise, New settles into bed] NEW: (Sleepily) Goodnight, Thomas.

THOMAS: Goodnight, New.

{Seminar outro music 31:02}

ANNOUNCER: Featuring the voice talents of: Bailey Wolfe as K'Teleran, Briar Zachary as New, and Dan Foster as Thomas.

In "Unbury Your Gays," Danny Spiller as Zephaniah, Dena Derakhshan as Mob Leader, Elizabeth Johnson as Millie, Garan Fitzgerald as The

Mob, Marissa Cabrera as Leonor, and Tommy Tesnow as Gregor. Written by Joshua Bridges.

In "The Error Initiative," Bridget Guziewicz as Ms. Gilluduggs,
Daniel N. Johnson as Epsilon, Janani Sreenivasan as Bosslady, JD
Lauriat as Mr. Hurlybin, Jillian Danielle Morgan as Mr. Hurlybin's
Friend, Karl Nordman as Delta, and Lisa Michaud as Mama Gilluduggs.
Written by Tilly Bridges and Susan Bridges.

Directed by Garan Fitzgerald. Shorts edited by Tilly Bridges. Wrapper written by V.C. Morrison. Seminar theme and outro by Garan Fitzgerald. All other music by Josh Molen at TheTunePeddler.com.

Produced by Pendant Productions. Seminar co-created by Kathryn Pryde and Tilly Bridges. This production is copyright 2021 Pendant Productions.

{Seminar theme fades out}

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