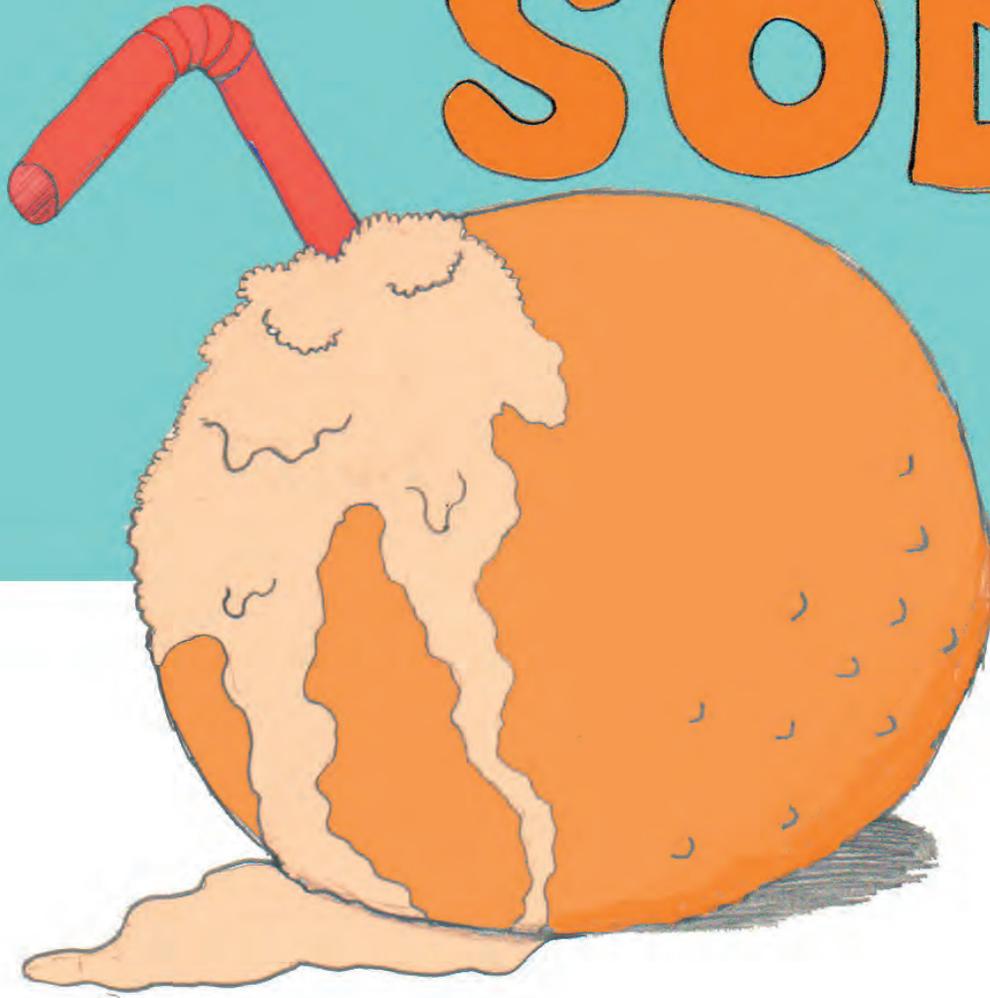


ORANGE SODA



TOBY'S GOLDEN AGE

BY
RANDY SMITH

“The Golden Age of Science Fiction is twelve.”

It's a famous quote, but is it true? At one long-ago convention I saw it at work.

Toby was twelve years old and attending his first convention. I don't know where his parents were. Perhaps they just dropped him off at the hotel to let him fend for himself. It was, after all, a simpler time. He was taking in the whole convention and experiencing the joy of it all.

I met Toby at the convention banquet. Yes, it was that long ago. Conventions still had banquets. He and I were seated next to each other along with an up-and-coming artist, his wife, an neo-pro writer, and a couple of other people (the memory does grow hazy). Throughout the meal, Toby talked about everything he had seen at the convention. He talked about his favorite movies, comics, books, and games. Some of the other folks at our table found him to be a bit annoying, but I was fascinated.

As Toby and I talked, I came to realize that he was still experiencing the sense-of-wonder of true discovery. Everything was new to him. Story plots that seemed old and tired to me were fresh and exciting to him. He told of the fun he had playing video games I had never heard of. He found everything about the convention itself to be fascinating, and he was thrilled to be meeting people—especially older people—who shared many of his interests.

I began to wonder if I had ever been like Toby. Had there ever been a time when the world of Science Fiction and fandom had seemed no new and fresh and exciting? Probably. When I was twelve and discovering Isaac Asimov, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Lester Del Rey, and Robert A. Heinlein, I may have felt the same way. If I dug back deep into my memories, I could still remember the thrill of seeing Star Trek for the

first time. I could still remember hunkering down on my bed to read the latest issues of *The Mighty Thor*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, or Superman's Pal Jimmy Olson. I could remember wanting to be involved in this thing called Fandom and attending some of the conventions written about in the back pages of the prozines.

Had I become so jaded that none of seemed as exciting to me as it had when I was twelve? Had I lost much of Toby's sense-of-wonder? Had fandom itself begun to seem too normal?

My temptation is to answer “yes” to all of these questions. Yet, I also know that my own twelve-year-old self still lives inside of me somewhere. A really good writer can still give me that “gosh, wow” feeling that I got from some of my earliest SF reading. A good conversation on a panel or at a room party can stimulate my mind and help me to see old topics in new ways. I may not quite be experiencing the thrill of new discovery that Toby was feeling that evening at a banquet at his first convention. Yet, the opportunities for discovery are there. I only have to be aware and ready for them to happen at any moment.

Toby was determined to experience all aspects of fandom while he was attending his first convention. He proudly showed me a paper sack in which he had the part of his first costume. It was Barbarian costume and consisted of a pair of shorts, a cut-off T-shirt, a pair of sandals, and a plastic sword. He planned to go to the restroom and put it on.

As he talked about his costume, he saw some other people enter the room who were wearing costumes.

His eyes widened as he said, “That guy has real chain mail!”

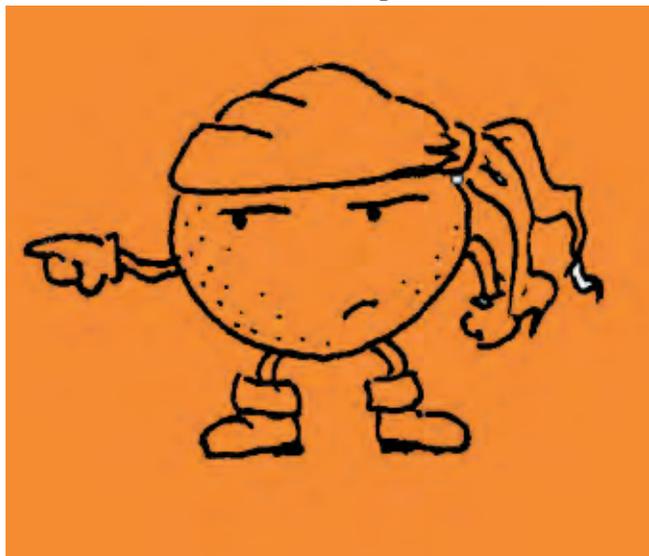
“He probably spent a lot of time working on it,”

I said, “Why don't you ask him about it?”

“Those people have really fancy costumes,” he said, as he saw the Best In Show winners from the previous year's Worldcon.

“They've been making costumes for a long time,” I said.

He suddenly decided that his costume wasn't good enough to wear at the convention. I encouraged



him to put it on. It was, after all, his first costume, and he should be proud of it. People would enjoy seeing his costume, even if it wasn't as fancy as those of much older and much more experienced costumers.

No amount of encouragement from me could get him to put on his simple, first-ever, costume. He continued to stare with a sense-of-wonder at the costumes that others were wearing. Was he simply feeling discouraged, or was he thinking of a time when he could make costumes like those he was seeing?

I may never know the answer to that question. As far as I know, I have not met Toby again. I don't

know if he is still involved in fandom, if he is still making costumes, or if he is still reading and watching SF as avidly as he was at the age of twelve.

Toby, if you are attending this convention or reading this fanzine, please make yourself known to me. Let me know that you are the man who was the boy whom I met at that convention banquet all those years ago. I want to thank you. I want to thank you for showing me what it really means to have a sense-of-wonder around this crazy world we call Science Fiction and fandom.

Somehow, Friday Night at the Fanzine Lounge, there were so many fun little bits, some strange typing and some strange drinking. It was the last of the League of Evil Geniuses party and I took a small plastic shot glass of Chipotle Vodka, raised it over my head and quieted the party room and got them to toast: To Evil!

The Awesomeness of Being and Becoming Awesome.

by
"Awesome" Bob Hole

Being awesome is an awesome responsibility. Not everyone can do it. It takes an awesome amount of patience, occasionally some patients as well, or maybe you just end up as one.

Becoming awesome is easy. All you need to do is to decide you're awesome. To do this, you do need to decide whether you're aiming for all around awesomeness or some specific type of awesomeness.

All around general awesomeness is the most difficult to maintain, but not difficult to attain. All you need is to do something awesome. Lifting a car of a struggling kid following an accident is good, as is surviving a jump off a very very tall building. This creates instant general awesomeness. Running over a kid or burning down a very very tall building, not so much.

Maintaining that kind of general awesomeness, however, hinges on being able to repeat that feat with sufficient regularity that it becomes completely associated with you.

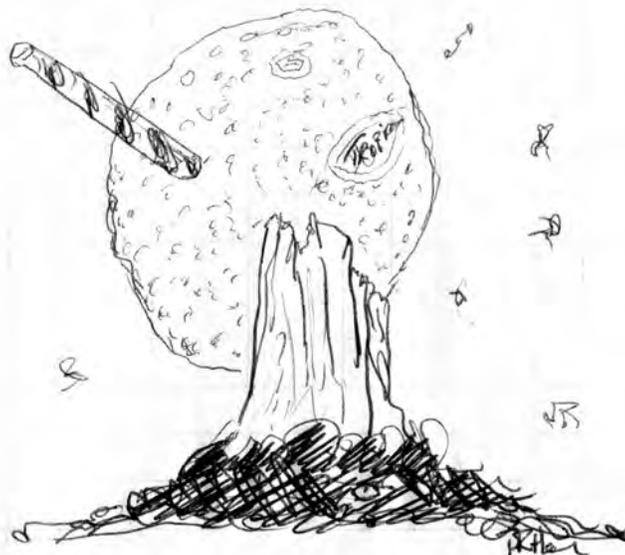
A specific type of awesomeness can be harder to get, but easier to maintain once you've got it. You do, first, have to figure out what

kind of awesomeness you want to attain. You could become, for instance, awesome in your knowledge of philately. If you know what that word means, you're half way there (stamp collecting).

This takes some time, either formal or informal education. You have to learn stuff. Alternatively you can fake it. In its own way, being able to fake awesomeness in a specific area is a greater challenge, and more awesome, than any other kind of awesome. Being a fake awesome can also make you famous. Maybe infamous if your being fake in your awesomeness is found out.

A final kind of awesomeness is not seeking out awesomeness but having awesomeness thrust upon them. Some people are just born being awesome. This can be a great burden. Growing up awesome is difficult. Your childhood peers often recognize you as awesome, and being children, will tease and bully you. They will sometimes giggle and point. They will call you names.

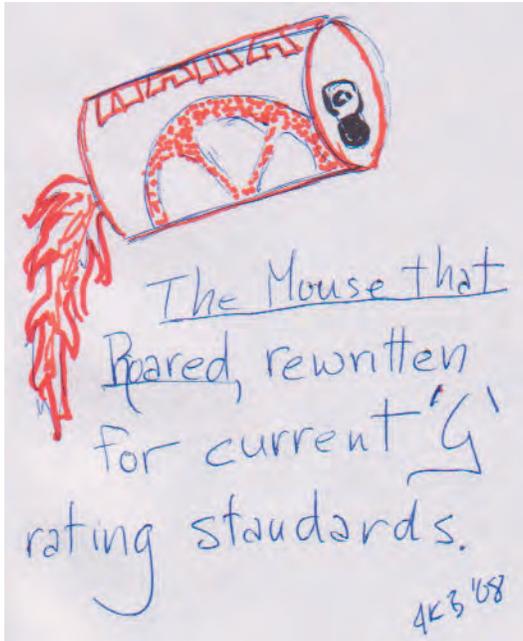
Depending on the kind of awesomeness you have been given, you choose to hide it. Some kinds of thrust awesomeness of course are not easily hidden. These usually, though, become evident at an early age and most possessors of this kind of awesomeness learn to live with their awesomeness, though some may have psychological scars for most of their lives.



The worst kind of awesomeness that can be thrust upon you hits during middle school or early high school, around the time of puberty. Sometimes this kind of awesomeness can be hidden, sometimes not. Sometimes it manifests itself in the classroom, sometimes on the playing field, sometimes somewhere in between. This often results in severe torture by your peers, awesomely unrelenting. This can often result in the bearer of this kind of awesomeness becoming either a serial mass murderer or a science fiction fan.

Eventually, though, if you find yourself being awesome, whether by default or design, you'll be happy with your decision. You'll come to accept yourself as being awesome. You'll be actually admired for your awesomeness.

And that's the point, after all.



**Orange soda and lasers
arrre the latest in space pirate
weapons. The same laser driv-
ing your innertial confinement
fusion engine may be refocused
from the deuterium pellet stream
on a stream of soda cans, leaving
your adversaries lost in a glow-
ing orange mist.
Crush your enemies!**

by Garth and JK Brown

Why is Orange Soda Orange? By George Van Wagner

Technology – it's new, it's exciting, it's constantly changing. So why is orange soda still orange? Are we so tied to the tropes of the past that we don't have the vision to step beyond the tyranny of color? After all, as fans of science fiction and fantasy, we should be accepting of worlds in which orange soda is purple, green, or even clear. But the resistance to fantastic coloration in soda seems entrenched, even in the world of speculative literature.

One of the joys of youth for many of my generation was Nehi Blue Cream soda. It had a tasty vanilla flavor, true, but it was blue – a bright, cheerful blue that brooked no argument. It was a triumph of modern petrochemical engineering bringing you flavor divorced from color. After all, we've had colorless

colas and fluorescent pink beverages full of density-neutral balls of tropical starch, but the beverage world is devoid of orange. Yet, orange soda is still orange, despite the existence of both colorless natural orange extracts and effective artificial orange flavoring.

I would draw a parallel between the decreased interest of the general public in the space program and science in general and the lack of clamor for sodas with inventive coloration. With modern education calling for 'teaching to the test' rather than training our youth in critical thinking and the scientific method, fewer and fewer of a new generation will be asking why sodas should be held to such a conservative standard. By supporting better science education, we will move towards a time when the tyranny of natural coloration will no longer be a problem.

The Briny Kumquat

By Vanessa Van Wagner

Wherein Madame Naranja dispenses advice, provides recipes, and answers any questions that may have been lingering in your mind.

Dear Madame Naranja;

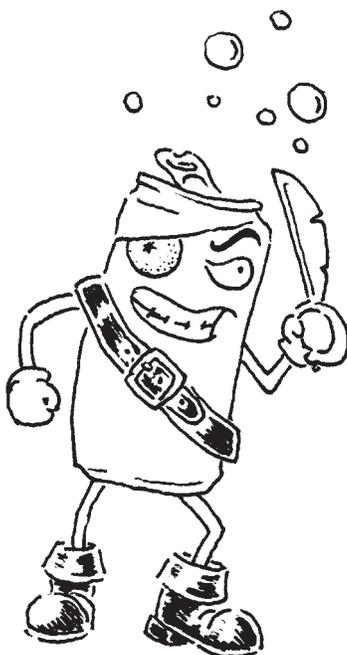
How can I make lunch out of 2 tangerines, half a cup of yogurt, 6 cloves and a small aubergine?

Why on earth would you want to? Hie down to the hotel bar and get yourself a cheeseburger or something with tentacles from the sushi bar.

Next question?

I'm trapped in small room with a lot of fanzine fans. Among the words I would use to describe them are pained, veiny, and asymmetrical. A close examination of the group reveals that no two of them have earlobes that are exactly alike! Coincidence? I don't think so! How do you explain this bizarre accumulation of humanity?

You are absolutely right - this is no coincidence. Through a complex and little-understood set of biological interactions, the proliferation of fanzine fans is related to global warming. There is a critical shortage of whimsy in the world and if we don't do something about it soon HUMANKIND IS DOOMED!



This year, many Baycon members are wearing feathers. I find this is causing me to have disturbing, unexplained feelings, including pulsing and tingling sensations in parts of my body. Why do you think this is and what do you suggest I do about it?

Why do I think this is?
Because you're a perv.

What do I suggest you do about it? Party on, Dude!

BayCon 2008: Off the Blocks

by Jean Martin

Surreal... that's how BayCon has been for me so far. The Hyatt hotel is very beautiful and modern. But it doesn't feel like BayCon... yet. I've



run into friends but it's been hard as the function rooms and other places to hang out are spread far apart. The parties were similar as in past BayCons but scaled down as the hotel rooms are smaller and furniture has been in the way. Still, the parties were fun until a fire alarm cut the festivities short after 1:00 a.m. That was surreal too! The first thing I thought was that if it was a real fire, I had lots of costumes in my room that would be hard to replace and expensive in total to boot. It was strange coming out of the hotel using the stairs and we all converged in front of the main entrance as a fire truck arrived. I hung out with friends while we waited to be let in. But once we got back to the party rooms, most of them just closed down for the evening. I suppose it was only Friday night, which are relatively slower. The last party standing was in the Fanzine lounge. Yes, us writers know how to party too! Day 1 at BayCon is over... the rest of the weekend is still to come. I hope I do get to feel the BayCon spirit as the weekend progresses.

“One of the few mixed drinks worth drinking, and I mean that in the Scottish Sense.”
-Martin Young Referring to the ‘Hot Little Thing’ drink

When Internal Narrative Regurgitates by Ric McCaw

Many say that life is what happens between your plans. That's good enough for tennis players and pirates, but it's not a philosophy you want an investment manager to embrace. Maybe that's why he's dead on the floor right now, bereft of life.

My name is Chris, I know things.

That's how I'd start my novel, it's a grabbing begging, with just enough implied violence to get you wondering. I'm not sure about using the name of Chris as the first-person protagonist, but it's easy to type (letters alternate between left and right hand evenly, which means speed in getting it down and a reduction in typos) something that could be globally replaced later. People who use names like Lilly are fools, that's all right hand work. But like I said, easy to change later.

More to the point, you've got to grab the reader up front. Readers like pirates, luckily we don't actually kill any in the introduction. The have mixed feelings about investment managers, particularly those who have paid someone to lose money for them. It's a well-known fact that most people are able to lose plenty of money on their own, with no help from professionals. Writing out a check to someone who helped you reduce your wealth by 20% is pretty insulting, even for those stupid enough to get into that situation in the first place. So killing an investment banker off right away is a good way to get some empathy.

Not sure about the tennis player either. Foreshadowing? Perhaps. It does leave things open for lots of referential puns; *lob*, *serve*, and of course *love*.

Perhaps instead I should say that love is what happens between your plans. By following this stream of consciousness, I should also say that we should also say that love is what happens between your plans. Because somewhere between paragraphs, our first person narrator named Chris actually changed writers.

Which, if you know the various people named Chris that we know, would explain a good many things. Love and life aren't the only things that happen between your plans. Sometimes someone will just walk into a lounge and be handed a computer and told to finish the narrative.

My name has been Chris; I know things. But I do not know what I do not know.

Eventually our first-person narrator may come to realize that there's a purpose to all this. If we're skillful in our concentration, he may never realize that his fate was handed over to a man with poor multi-tasking abilities, and that just as his new god sat down at the Macbook, someone put "Demon with a Glass Hand" on the HDTV just a few feet away, and his new god had never actually seen it.

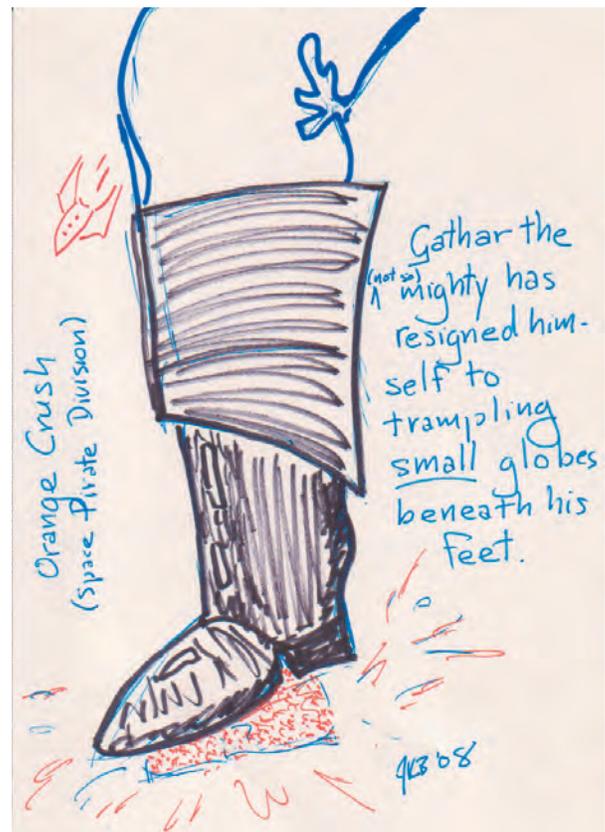
So perhaps *The Outer Limits* happens between your plans. To the best of our knowledge, John Lennon never watched the show, hence no one famous enough has ever noted that before.

For indeed, this narrative has been hijacked, boarded if you will, by tiny buccaneers of inattention, ravaging any hope of a spine to this story. All of them, by the way, have the finely cut square jaw of a young Robert Culp.

To our right, and in this case it has become the royal first person plural, the original god wrings his hands, waiting for us to return the volley to him that he may desperately try to steer this ship back to port.

My name is Chris. I do not know what I do not know, but that has never stopped me before. ^

Which, given a common guidance given to writers regarding character growth, will serve well enough as an ending.



Hey! Who let the newbie in the Fanzine Lounge? Katrina "katster" Templeton

The blank page is taunting me.

I'm in the fanzine lounge at Baycon. It's my first real time hanging out in such a place and I've decided to throw my lot into writing a piece for the fanzine in an hour. I guess we'll see if I can do it, right?

And right now, the only thought in my head seems to be that orange soda and bacon do not go together well. What an article. Think, katster, think. Well, I suppose we can't all be Chris Garcia. Just think of what a boring world that would be. The kind of world in which all of us drink orange soda.

Okay, newbie. Get yourself together. You must make an article worthy of the name. You must hold your own against the fanzine veterans...

Let's start again.

Orange soda. It has the vita...no.

Ummm...

Let's cheat and ask the virtual fan lounge. Well, they just think it's cool that I'm online from the Baycon fanzine lounge. This is what I get for trying to get other people to do my work for me.

Okay, then, let's talk about bacon. Bacon, as opposed to Baycon, is the fat and greasy tasty treat that's good for breakfast or anytime. It goes better with orange juice than orange soda.

Baycon, as opposed to bacon, is a fun way to spend Memorial Day weekend. I've only been going two years so far, but I think I'll probably make it a regular thing. But we're not talking about Baycon, we're talking about bacon.

The virtual fanzine lounge would like me to mention at this point that you can go hang out with them via <http://www.ustream.tv/fanlounge>.

But we were talking about bacon. There is rumor that bacon is bad for you. This is not true. Bacon is bad for you in excess. Moderate use of bacon has been shown to promote good hygiene and excellent breakfast habits.

Plus, according to certain writers who have big name blogs, it's fun to tape bacon to cats. Somehow, this doesn't count as cruel and unusual punishment.

You should not pour bacon grease down your

drain. If you do so, you make the sewers oily and slippery. If the sewers are oily and slippery, how are you going to escape during the inevitable zombie apocalypse?

At this point, Bill Mills would like me to mention <http://TVoF.com>, the Voices of Fanzine podcast.

But we were talking about bacon. And orange soda. I don't really like orange soda. It tastes too much like that horribly yucky stuff they give you to test your blood glucose level. After a few doses of that stuff, I've been put off orange soda for life. The last time I went in, it was root beer flavored.

I would have thought that Jones Soda makes bacon soda, but it looks like that isn't the case. The closest they come is Turkey and Gravy soda. It looks like they also have an Antacid soda for those who can't tolerate the idea of Bacon or Turkey and Gravy soda.

And now that I have been happily random through this whole article, I leave you with the wisdom of REM: "I've got my spine, I've got my orange crush..."



Art was from Jason Schachat (Cover and Page 7), Bob Hole (Page 3), Greg Vinland (Page 2 and 5), JK Brown (Page 6 and 4), Espana Sheriff (Back cover)
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