

# A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

By Edward Everett Hale.

## A TWO PART STORY---PART I.

I suppose that very few casual readers of the New York Herald of August 13 observed in an obscure corner, among the "Deaths," the announcement:

NOLAN.—Died, on board United States corvette *Levant*, lat. 2 deg. 11 min. south, long. 131 deg. west, on the 11th of May, Philip Nolan.

I happened to observe it, because I was stranded at the old Mission House in Mackinaw, waiting for a Lake Superior steamer which did not choose to come, and I was devouring the very stutle all the current literature I could get hold of, even down to the deaths and marriages in the *Herald*. My memory for names and people is good, and the reader will see, as he goes on, that I had reason enough to remember Philip Nolan. There are hundreds of readers who would have paused at that announcement if the officer of the *Levant*, who reported it, had chosen to make it thus: "Died, May 11, The Man Without a Country." For it was as "The Man Without a Country" that poor Philip Nolan had generally been known by the officers who had him in charge during some fifty years, as, indeed, by all the men who sailed under them. I dare say there is many a man who has taken wine with him once a fortnight, in a three years' cruise, who never knew that his name was Nolan, or whether the poor wretch had any name at all.

There can now be no possible harm in telling this poor creature's story. Reason enough there has been till now, ever since Madison's administration went out in 1817, for very strict secrecy, the secrecy of honor itself, among the gentlemen of the navy who have had Nolan in successive charge. And certainly it speaks well for the esprit de corps of the profession and the personal honor of its members that to the press this man's story has been wholly unknown, and, I think, to the country at large also. I have reason to think, from some investigations I made in the naval archives when I was attached to the bureau of construction, that every official report relating to him was burned when Ross burned the public building at Washington. One of the Tuckers, or possibly one of the Watsons, had Nolan in charge at the end of the war; and when, on returning from his cruise, he reported at Washington to one of the Crownshields, who was in the navy department when he came home, he found that the department ignored the whole business. Whether they really knew nothing about it or whether it was a non miricorde, determined on as a piece of policy, I do not know. But this I do know, that since 1817, and possibly before, no naval officer has mentioned Nolan in his report of a cruise.

But, as I say, there is no need for secrecy any longer. And now the poor creature is dead, it seems to me worth while to tell a little of his story, by way of showing young Americans of today what it is to be a man without a country.

Philip Nolan was as fine a young officer as there was in the "Legion of the West," as the Western division of our army was then called. When Aaron Burr made his first dashing expedition down to New Orleans in 1805, at Fort Massac, or somewhere above on the river, he met, as the devil would have it, this gay, dashing, bright young fellow, at some dinner party I think. Burr marked him, talked to him, walked with him, took him a day or two's voyage in his flatboat, and in short, fascinated him. For the next year or two his voyage was very tame to poor Nolan. He occasionally availed himself of the permission the great man had given him to write to him. But never a line did he have in reply from the gay deceiver. The other boys in the garrison sneered at him, because he sacrificed in this unrequited affection for a politician the time which they devoted to Monongahela, hazard and high low jack. Bourbon, euchre and poker were still unknown. But one day Nolan had his revenge. This time Burr came down the river, not as an attorney seeking a place for his office, but as a disguised conqueror. He had defeated I know not how many district attorneys; he had dined at I know not how many public dinners; he had been heralded in I know not how many *Weekly Arguses*, and it was rumored that he had an army behind him and an empire before him. It was a great day—his arrival—to poor Nolan. Burr had not been at the fort an hour before he sent for him. That evening he asked Nolan to take him out in his skiff, to show him a canebreaker or a cottonwood tree, as he said, ready to seduce him, and by the time the trail was over, Nolan was enlisted—body and soul. From that time, though he did not yet know it, he lived as a man without a country.

What Burr meant to do I know no more than you, dear reader. It is none of our business just now. Only, when the grand catastrophe came, and Jefferson and the house of Virginia of that day undertook to break on the wheel all the possible Clarence of the then house of York, by the great treason trial at Richmond, some of the lesser fry in that distant Mississippi Valley, which was further from us than Puget Sound is today, introduced the like novelty on their provincial stage, and, to while away the monotony of the summer at Fort Adams, got up, for spectacles, a string of court martials on the officers there. One and another of the colonels and majors were tried, and, to fill out the list, little Nolan, against whom, Heaven knows, there was evidence enough—that he was sick of the service, had been willing to be false to it, and would have obeyed any order to march any whither with any one who would follow him had the order been signed, "By command of His Exc. A. Burr." The courts dragged on. The big flies escaped, rightly for all I know. Nolan was proved guilty enough, as I say; yet you and I would never have heard of him, reader, but that, when the president of the court asked him at the close whether he wished to say anything to show that he had always been faithful to the United States, he cried out, in a fit of frenzy:

"D—n the United States! I wish I may never hear of the United States again!"

I suppose he did not know how the words shocked old Colonel Morgan, who was holding the court. Half the officers

who sat in it had served through the revolution, and their lives, not to say their necks, had been risked for the very idea which he so cavalierly cursed in his madness. He, on his part, had grown up in the West of those days, in the midst of "Spanish plot," "Orleans plot" and all the rest. He had been educated on a plantation where the finest company was a Spanish officer or a French merchant from Orleans. His education, such as it was, had been perfected in commercial expeditions to Vera Cruz, and I think he told me his father once hired an Englishman to be a private tutor for a winter on the plantation. He had spent half his youth with an older brother, hunting horses in Texas, and, in a word, to him "United States" was scarcely a reality. Yet he had been fed by "United States" for all the years since he had been in the army. He had sworn on his faith as a Christian to be true to United States. It was "United States" which gave him the uniform he wore, and the sword by his side. Nay, my poor Nolan, it was only because "United States" had picked you out first as one of her own confidential men of honor that "A. Burr" cared for you a straw more than for the flat boatman who sailed his ark for him. I do not excuse Nolan; I only explain to the reader why he damned his country, and wished he might never hear her name again.

He never did hear her name but once again. From that moment, Sept. 23, 1807, till the day he died, May 11, 1863, he never heard her name again. For that half century and more he was a man without a country.

Old Morgan, as I said, was terribly shocked. He called the court into his private room and returned in fifteen minutes, with a face like a sheet, to say:

"Prisoner, hear the sentence of the court. The court decides, subject to the approval of the president, that you never hear the name of the United States again."

Nolan laughed. But nobody else laughed. Old Morgan was too solemn, and the whole room was hushed dead as night for a minute. Even Nolan lost his swagger in a moment. Then Morgan added:

"Mr. Marshal, take the prisoner to Orleans in an armed boat, and deliver him to the naval commander there."

The marshal gave his orders and the prisoner was taken out of court.

"Mr. Marshal," continued old Morgan, "see that no one mentions the United States to the prisoner. Mr. Marshal, make my respects to Lieut. Mitchell at Orleans, and request him to order that no one shall mention the United States to the prisoner while he is on board ship. You will receive your written orders from the officer on duty here this evening. The court is adjourned without day."

I have always supposed that Col. Morgan himself took the proceedings of the court to Washington city, and explained them to Mr. Jefferson. Certain it is that the president approved them, certain, that is, if I may believe the men who say they have seen his signature. Before the *Nautilus* got around from New Orleans to the northern Atlantic coast with the prisoner on board the sentence had been approved, and he was a man without a country.

The plan then adopted was substantially the same which was necessarily followed ever after. Perhaps it was suggested by the necessity of sending him by water from Fort Adams and Orleans. The secretary of the navy—it must have been before the Crownshield, though he is a man I do not remember—was requested to put Nolan on board a government vessel bound on a long cruise, and to direct that he should be only so far confined there as to make it certain that he never saw or heard of the country. We had few long cruises then, and the navy was very much out of favor, and as almost all of this story is traditional as I have explained, I do not know certainly what his first cruise was. But the commander to whom he was entrusted—perhaps it was Tingey or Shaw, though I think it was one of the younger men—we are all old enough now—regulated the etiquette and the precautions of the affair, and according to his scheme they were carried out, I suppose, till Nolan died.

When I was second officer of the *Intrepid*, some 30 years after, I saw the original paper of instructions. I have been sorry ever since that I did not copy the whole of it. It was, however, much in this way:

WASHINGTON (with a date which must have been in 1807).  
SIR—You will receive from Lieutenant Nolan the person of Philip Nolan, late a lieutenant in the United States army.

This person, on his trial by court martial, expressed with an oath the wish that he might "never hear of the United States again."  
The court sentenced him to have his wish fulfilled.  
For the present the execution of the order is entrusted by the president to this department.

You will take the prisoner on board your ship, and keep him there with such precautions as shall prevent his escape.

You will provide him with such quarters, rations, and clothing as would be proper for an officer of his rank, if he were a passenger on your vessel on the business of his government.

The gentlemen on board will make any arrangements agreeable to themselves regarding his society. He is to be exposed to no indignity of any kind, nor is he ever unnecessarily to be reminded that he is a prisoner.

But under no circumstances is he ever to hear of his country or to see any information regarding it, and you will specially caution all the officers under your command to take care that in the various indulgences which may be granted this rule, in which his punishment is involved, shall not be broken.

It is the intention of the government that he shall never again see the country which he has disowned. Before the end of your cruise you will receive orders which will give effect to this intention.

Respectfully yours,  
W. SOUTHWARD, for the Secretary of the Navy.

If I had only preserved the whole of this paper there would be no break in the beginning of my sketch of this story, for Capt. Shaw, if it were he, handed it to his successor in the charge, and he to his, and I suppose the commander of the *Levant* has it today as his authority for keeping this man in his mild custody.

The rule adopted on board the ships on which I have met "the man without a coun-

try" was, I think, transmitted from the beginning. No mess liked to have him permanently, because his presence cut off all talk of home or of the prospect of return, of politics or letters, of peace or of war—cut off more than half the talk men liked to have at sea. But it was always thought too hard that he should never meet the rest of us, except to touch hats, and we finally sank into one system. He was not permitted to talk with the men unless an officer was by. With officers he had unrestricted intercourse, as far as they and he chose. But he grew shy, though he had favorites. I was one. Then the captain always asked him to dinner on Monday. Every mess in succession took up the invitation in turn. According to the size of the ship you had him at your mess more or less often at dinner. His breakfast he ate in his own stateroom—he always had a stateroom—which was where a sentinel or somebody on the watch could see the door. And whatever else he ate or drank he ate or drank alone. Sometimes, when the marines or sailors had any special jollification, they were permitted to invite "Plain Buttons," as they called him. Then Nolan was sent with some officer, and the men were forbidden to speak of home while he was there. I believe the theory was that the sight of his punishment did them good. They called him "Plain Buttons," because, while he always chose to wear a regulation army uniform, he was not permitted to wear the army buttons, for the reason that it bore either the initials of the insignia of the country he had disowned.

I remember, soon after I joined the navy, I was on shore with some of the older officers from our ship and from the *Brandywine*, which we had met at Alexandria. We had leave to make a party and go up to Cairo and the Pyramids. As we jogged along (you went on donkeys then), some of the gentlemen (we boys called them "Dons," but the phrase was long since changed) fell to talking about Nolan, and some one told the system which was adopted from the first about his books and other reading. As he was almost never permitted to go on shore, even though the vessel lay in port for months, his time at the best hung heavy, and everybody was permitted to lend him books if they were not published in America and made no allusion to it. These were common enough in the old days, when people in the other hemisphere talked of the United States as little as we do of Paraguay. He had almost all the foreign papers that came into the ship sooner or later, only somebody must go over them first and cut out any advertisement or stray paragraph that alluded to America. This was a little cruel sometimes, when the back of what was cut out might be as innocent as Hesiod. Right in the midst of one of Napoleon's battles, or one of Canning's speeches, poor Nolan would find a great hole, because on the back of the page of that paper there had been an advertisement of a packet for New York, or a scrap from the president's message. I say this was the first time I ever heard of this plan, which afterwards I had enough and more than enough to do with. I remember it, because poor Phillips, who was of the party, as soon as the allusion to reading was made, told a story of something which happened at the Cape of Good Hope on Nolan's first voyage, and it is the only thing I ever knew of that voyage.

They had touched at the Cape, and had done the civil thing with the English admiral and the fleet, and then, leaving for a long cruise up the Indian Ocean, Phillips had borrowed a lot of English books from an officer, which, in those days, as indeed in these, was quite a windfall. Among them, as the devil would order, was the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," which they had all of them heard of, but which most of them had never seen. I think it could not have been published long. Well, nobody thought there could be any risk of anything national in that, though Phillips swore old Shaw had cut out the "Tempest" from Shakespeare before he let Nolan have it, because, he said, "the Bermudas ought to be ours, and, by Jove, should be one day." So Nolan was permitted to join the circle one afternoon when a lot of them sat on deck smoking and reading aloud. People do not do such things so often now, but when I was young we got rid of a great deal of time so. Well, so it happened that in his turn Nolan took the book and read to the others, and he read very well, as I know. Nobody in the circle knew a line of the poem, only it was all magic and border chivalry, and was 10,000 years ago. Poor Nolan read steadily through the fifth canto, stopped a minute and drank something, and then began, without a thought of what was coming—

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,

It seems impossible to us that anybody ever heard this for the first time, but all these fellows did then, and poor Nolan himself went on, still unconsciously or mechanically—

"This is my own, my native land!"

Then they all saw something was to pay, but he expected to get through, I suppose, turned a little pale, but plunged on:

"Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,  
As home his footsteps he hath turned—

From wandering on a foreign strand—  
If such there breathe, go, mark him well!"

By this time the men were all beside themselves, wishing there was any way to make him turn over two pages, but he had not quite presence of mind for that; he gaged a little, colored crimson, and staggered on:

"For him no minstrel raptures swell;  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,  
Despite these titles, power and pelf,

The wretch, concentred all in self,"

and here the poor fellow choked, could not go on, but started up, swung the book into the sea, vanished into his state room, and "And by Jove, said Phillips, "we did not see him for two months again. And I had to make up some beggarly story to that English surgeon why I did not return his Walter Scott to him."

That story shows about the time when Nolan's braggadocio must have broken down. At first, they said, he took a very high tone, considered his imprisonment a mere farce, affected to enjoy the voyage, and all that; but Phillips said that after he came out of his state room he never was the same man again. He never read aloud again, unless it was the Bible or Shakespeare, or something else he was sure of. But it was not that merely. He never entered in with the other young men exactly

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as a companion again. He was always shy afterward when I knew him—very seldom spoke, unless he was spoken to, except to a very few friends. He lighted up occasionally—I remember late in his life hearing him fairly eloquent on something which had been suggested to him by one of Flechier's sermons—but generally he had the nervous, tired look of a heart wounded man.

When Capt. Shaw was coming home—if, as I say, it was Shaw—rather to the surprise of everybody they made one of the Windward Islands, and lay off and on for nearly a week. The boys said the officers were sick of salt junk and meant to have turtle soup before they came home. But after several days the Warren came to the same rendezvous; they exchanged signals; she sent to Phillips and these homeward bound men letters and papers, and told them she was outward bound, perhaps to the Mediterranean, and took poor Nolan and his traps on the boat back to try his second cruise. He looked very blank when he was told to get ready to join her. He had known enough of the signs of the sky to know that till that moment he was going "home." But this was a distinct evidence of something he had not thought of, perhaps—that there was no going home for him, even to a prison. And this was the first of some twenty such transfers, which brought him sooner or later into half our best vessels, but which kept him all his life at least some hundred miles from the country he had hoped he might never hear of again.

It may have been on that second cruise—it was once when he was up the Mediterranean—that Mrs. Graff, the celebrated southern beauty of those days, danced with him. They had been lying a long time in the bay of Naples, and the officers were very intimate in the English fleet, and there had been great festivities, and our men thought they must give a great ball on board the ship. How they ever did it on board the *Warren* I am sure I do not know. Perhaps it was not the *Warren*, or perhaps ladies did not take up so much room as they do now. They wanted to use Nolan's state room for something, and they hated to do it without asking him to the ball; so the captain said they might ask him if they would be responsible that he did not talk with the wrong people "who would give him intelligence." So the dance went on, the finest party that had ever been known, I dare say; for I never heard of a man-of-war ball that was not. For ladies they had the family of the American consul, one or two travelers who had adventured so far, and a nice bevy of English girls and matrons, perhaps Lady Hamilton herself.

Well, different officers relieved each other in standing and talking with Nolan in a friendly way, so as to be sure that nobody else spoke to him. The dancing went on with spirit, and after a while even the fellows who took this honorary guard of Nolan ceased to fear any contretemps. Only when some English lady—Lady Hamilton, as I said, perhaps—called for a set of "American dances," an odd thing happened. Everybody then danced contradances. The black band, nothing loath, contered as to what "American dances" were, and started off with "Virginia Reel," which they followed with "Money-Musk," which, in its turn in those days, should have been followed by "The Old Thirteen." But just as Dick, the leader, tapped for his fiddles to begin, and bent forward, about to say, in true negro style, "The Old Thirteen," gentlemen and ladies!" as he had said "Virginy Reel," if you please!" and "Money-Musk," if you please!" the captain's boy tapped him on the shoulder, whispered to him, and he did not announce the name of the dance; he merely bowed, began on the air, and they all fell to, the officers teaching the English girls in the figure, but not telling them why it had no name.

But that is not the story I started to tell. As the dancing went on Nolan and our fellows all got at ease, as I said, so much so that it seemed quite natural for him to bow to that splendid Mrs. Graff, and say:

"I hope you have not forgotten me, Miss Rutledge. Shall I have the honor of dancing?"

He did it so quickly that Fellows, who was by him, could not hinder him. She laughed and said:

"I am not Miss Rutledge any longer, Mr. Nolan; but I will dance all the same," just nodded to Fellows, as it to say he must leave Mr. Nolan to her, and led him off to the place where the dance was forming.

Nolan thought he had got his chance. He had known her at Philadelphia, and at other places had met her, and this was a Godsend. You could not talk in contradances, as you do in cotillions, or even in the pauses of waltzing; but there were chances for tongues and sounds, as well as for eyes and blushes. He began with her travels, and Europe, and Vesuvius, and the French; and then, when they had worked down, and had that long talking time at the bottom of the set, he said boldly—a little pale, she said, as she told me the story years after:

"And what do you hear from home, Mrs. Graff?"

And that splendid creature looked through him. Jove! how she must have looked through him!

"Home! Mr. Nolan! I thought you were the man who never wanted to hear of home again!" and she walked directly up the deck to her husband and left poor Nolan, as he always was. He did not dance again.

I cannot give any history of him in order—nobody can now—and, indeed, I am not trying to. These are the traditions, which I sort out as I believe them from the myths which have been told about this man for 40 years. The lies that have been told about him are legion. The fellows used to say he was the "Iron Mask," and poor George Pons went to his grave in the belief that this was the author of "Junius" who was being punished for his celebrated libel on Thomas Jefferson. Pons was not very strong in the historical line. A happier story than either of these I have told is of the war. That came along soon after. I have heard this affair told in three or four ways—and, indeed, it may have happened more than once. But which ship it was on I cannot tell. However, in one, at least, of the great frigate duels with the English, in which the navy was really bap-

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tized, it happened that a round shot from the enemy entered one of our ports square, and took right down the officer of the gun himself, and almost every man of the gun's crew. Now you may say what you choose about courage, but that is not a nice thing to see. But, as the men who were not killed picked themselves up, and as they and the surgeon's people were carrying off the bodies, there appeared Nolan, in his shirt sleeves with the hammer in his hand, and, just as if he had been the officer, told them off with authority who should go to the cockpit with the wounded men, who should stay with him, perfectly cheery, and with that way which makes a man feel sure all is right and is going to be right. And he finished loading the gun with his own hands, aimed it, and bade the men fire. And there he stayed, captain of that gun, keeping those fellows in spirits till the enemy struck—sitting on the carriage while the gun was cooling, though he was exposed all the time—showing them easier ways to handle heavy shot—making the raw hands laugh at their own blunders—and when the gun cooled again, getting it loaded and fired twice as often as any other gun on the ship. The captain walked forward by way of encouraging the men, and Nolan touched his hat and said:

"I am showing them how we do this in the artillery, sir."

And this is the part of the story where all the legends agree; and the commodore said:

"I see you do, and I thank you, sir; and I shall never forget this day, sir, and you never shall, sir."

And after the whole thing was over and he had the Englishmen's sword, in the midst of the state and ceremony of the quarter deck, he said:

"Where is Mr. Nolan? Ask Mr. Nolan to come here."

And when Nolan came the captain said: "Mr. Nolan, we are all very grateful to you today; you are one of us today; you will be named in the despatches."

And then the old man took off his own sword of ceremony and gave it to Nolan and made him put it on. The man told me this story. Nolan cried like a baby and well he might. He had not worn a sword since that infernal day at Fort Adams. But always afterward on occasions of ceremony he wore that quaint old French sword of the commodore's.

(To be concluded next week.)

### MISHAPS OF THE POST.

#### Curious Incidences of Letters that Never Came.

It is an exceedingly rare thing, now-a-days, in any civilized country, for a letter, properly stamped, sealed, and addressed, to fail to reach its destination. Sometimes letters are written which are never received, but the large numbers of those which go to the returned-letter office because they are improperly addressed or not addressed at all serve to explain by far the greater part of these rare disappearances.

Now and then, however, someone, somewhere in the country, is astonished to

receive a letter written and posted years before. A short time ago a considerable number of inhabitants of Spandau, in Prussia, were astonished to receive letters bearing the date of 1880, and treating of matters long since gone by. An investigation of this affair was made by the government, and the fact was revealed that a wagon in which the mail for Spandau had long been brought to the post office was so badly constructed that a large packet of letters had slipped in between the two floors of the structure. There they had lain until the necessity of repairing the wagon brought them to view ten years later.

Several of the persons to whom these belated letters were addressed were dead, and the post office was forced to take charge of their mail once more.

Not long ago, in Michigan, a gentleman received a letter which was written, and bore evidence of having been put into the post, in Vermont in the year 1856.

The stamp upon this letter was obsolete, but the post office department forwarded it to its destination. It was perfectly good when the letter was posted. Where the letter had been during all these years was never explained.

It may be surmised, however, that it had slipped into some cranny in the course of its transmission, and remained there until the making of certain repairs revealed it. It was then put into the post anew and nothing said about it.

It gives a very singular impression to receive, as a new communication, a letter which is ten or fifteen years old, so completely change in the circumstances of life generally change in such an interval. But it is not a more singular sensation than is felt when one receives a letter which is intended for someone else of the same name.

Not long ago, for instance, a wealthy and fashionable lady of Wigglesworth—the names we use are of course not the real ones—received a note which read as follows:

"MRS. JAMES JACKSON.—I wish you would come and do my washing next Tuesday. I heard with great regret that your husband had beaten you again, and it is a sorrow to me that he should have returned to his intemperate habits. I will have ready for you when you come some of my daughter's cast-off dresses for your little girl."

Yours, with sympathy,  
MRS. WILLIAM B. SMITH."

Mrs. James Jackson read this letter with feelings of astonishment and indignation, and was upon the point of fainting. Scanning the address more closely, she noticed that it was evidently addressed, though in a blind fashion to Wigglesworth, instead of Wiggleswick. She could only surmise that in that town a less fortunate woman of her own name followed the occupation of a laundress for a livelihood, and she forwarded the latter to that place.—*Cassell's Saturday Journal*.

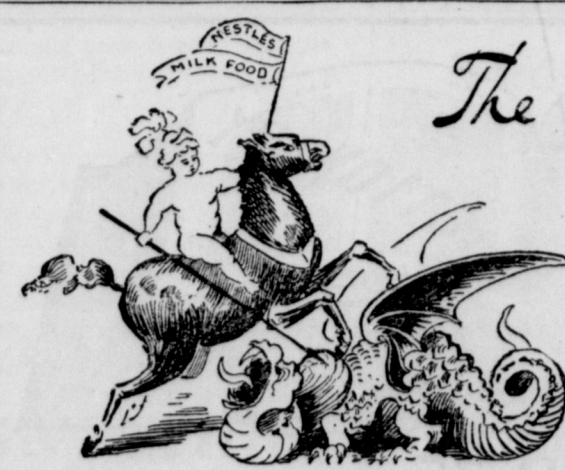
#### Not in the Agreement.

She—Darling, go and get that beautiful bit of sea-weed for me, won't you?

He—My dearest, I'd get my feet wet.

She—And yet before marriage you said you'd go through fire for me.

He—But I honestly leave it to you, did I ever say anything about water?—*Ex.*



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