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The Three Guardsmen

By Alexandre Dumas

These two women ned each other for an instant in a close embrace. Certes, if milady's strength had been equal to her hatred, Mme. Bonacleux would have never escaped alive from that embrace. But not being able to stifle her, she smilled upon her.

"Tomorrow, this evening perhaps, I shall see him again, and then the past will no longer exist," said Mme. Bonacleux.

"This avantage"

will no longer exist," said Mme. Bonacieux.

'This evening?" asked milady.

'What do you mean? Do you expect any news from him?"

'I expect him himself."

"But that's impossible! He is at the slege of La Rochelle."

"Read." said the unhappy young woman in the excess of her pride and joy, presenting a letter to milady.

"Humph! The writing of Mme. de Chevreuse!" said milady to herself. And she greedily read:

My Dear Child—Hold yourself in readiness. Our friend will see you soon, and he will only see you to release you from that imprisonment in which your asfety required you should be concealed. Prepare, then, for your departure and news despair of us. Tell him that certain parties are grateful to him for the warning he has given.

has given.
At that moment the galloping of a horse was heard.
"Oh," cried Mme. Bonacleux, darting to the window, "can it be he?"
Milady remained still in bed, petri-

Milady remained still in bed, policy field by surprise.

"Alas, no!" said Mme. Bonacleux.

"It is a man I don't know, and yet he seems to be coming here. Yes, he has checked his horse—he stops at the

gate—he rings!"

Milady sprang out of bed and began
to dress herself. "The man is coming here, do you say? He must come either to you or

to me."

"Hush!" said Mme. Bonacieux.
"Somebody is coming." In fact, the
door opened, and the superior entered.
"Do you come from Boulogne?" demanded she of milady.

"Yes, I do. Who wants me?"
"A man who will not tell his name,
but who comes from the cardinal."
"Then let him come in, if you please."
"I will leave you with this stranger,
but as soon as he is gone, if you will

permit me, I will return," said Mme.
Bonacieux.
"Certainty! I beg you will." The
superior and Mme. Bonacieux retired.
The door opened, and a man appeared.
Milady uttered a cry of joy. This man
was the Count de Rochefort, the agent

Two Varieties of Demi OU come?"— asked milady.
"From La Rochelle. A
you?"
"From England."

"From England."
"How is Buckingham?"
"Dead or desperately wounded. A fanatic has just assassinated him. I wrote to the cardinal from Boulogne."
"His eminence was uneasy and sent me to inquire after you."
"I only arrived yesterday."
"And what have you been doing since yesterday."

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Thens he looks upon you as a stranger.

Milady smiled.

"Tam her best friend. She is about to be taken away tomorrow or the day of the about to be taken away tomorrow or the day of the appearance of the safe in the sevent from the possible of the look from the look if the cannot account for."

"Tell him this, Rochefort; tell him that our conversation at the Red Dovectot was everheard by these four men; tell him that after his departure one of them came up to me and took from me by violence the safe conduct which he had given me; tell him they warned Lord de Winter of my passage to England; that this time they had nearly made me fall in my mission as they did in the affair of the stude; tell him that, among these four men, two only are to be feared—D'Artagnan and Athos."

"But these four men must be now at the slege of La Rochelle?"

"I thought so, too, but they are on the road hither to take her away. What did the cardinal say with respect to the men."

"The North Carolinian and The account for."

"The North Carolinian and The account for the safe conduct which in the affair of the stude; tell him that after his departure one of them came up to me and took from me by violence the safe conduct which he had given me; tell him that after his departure one of them came up to me and took fro

What did the cardinal say with respect to me?"

"I was to take your dispatches, written or verbal, to return post, and when he shall know what you have done he will think of what you have to do."

"Then I must wait bere?"

"You are to let me know where to find you."

"I may not be able to remain here. My enemies may arrive at any manute."

"Is this little woman to escape his eminence?"

river and I shall be in a foreign country."

"Write that name on a piece of paper, lest I should forget it. There is no fear of compromising yourself in that. A name of a town, is it not?"

"Eh? Who knows? Never mind," said milady, writing the name upon haif a sheet of paper. "I will commit myself for once by writing."

"That will do," said Rochefort, taking the paper from milady, folding it and placing it in the lining of his hat. "Besides, to make sure I will repeat the name as I go along."

An hour afterward Rochefort set out at his horse's best speed. Five hours after that he passed through Arras.

Arraa,
Our readers already know that he was recognized by D'Artaguan and how that recognition, by inspiring fear in the four musketeers, had given fresh activity to their journey.

"Well," said Mme. Bonacieux, "what you dreaded has happened. This evening or tomorrow the cardinal will send some one to take you away. I heard it from the messenger."

"Come and sit down close to me," said milady. "Then he has well played his part. That man is my brother. Coming to my assistance to take me away, by force if necessary, he met with the emissary of the cardinal, who was coming in search of me. He required the messenger to deliver up to him the papers of which he was the bearer. The messenger resisted. My brother killed him."

"Oh?" said Mms. Bonacieux, with a

"My brother took the papers and presented himself here as the emis sary of the cardinal, and in an hou

"Inderstand. Your brother sends this carriage."

"Exactly so. But that is not all.
That letter you have received and which you believe to be from Mme. de Chevreuse is a snare to prevent your making any resistance when the persons come to fetch you."

"But it is D'Artagnan that will come."

"Do not deceive yourself. D'Arta gnan and his friends are detained at the siege of La Rochelle. My brother met some emissaries of the cardinal in the uniform of musketeers. You would have been summoned to the gate, you would have thought you went to meet friends, you would have been carried off and conducted back again to Paris." "Oh, my senses fall me amid such a chaos of iniquities! Dear lady, what do you advise me to do? I will listen to your advice with the greatest grat-itude."

ftude."
"In the first place," said milady, "is possible D'Artagnan and his friends may come to your assistance. If you friends are the more speedy you will be

friends are the more speedy you will be saved. If the satellites of the cardinal are so you will be lost! Walt, concealed in the neighborhood, until you have satisfied yourself who the men were who came to ask for you."

"But where can I wait?"

"I shall stop and conceal myself at a few leagues hence - until my brother can rejohn me. Well, I can take you with me. The carriage is at the door; you bid me adieu, you get upon the step to embrace me a last time, my brother's servant, who comes to fetch me, is told how to proceed; he makes sign to the postilion, and we set off at a gallop. We will send my brother's servant back to Bethune in disguise. If the emissaries of the cardinal arrive, rior that, in order that we may be as much together as possible, you beg her to allow you to take your meals with me."

And the two women parted, ex-changing affectionate smiles.

canvey her to a place or save, between there, matters so falling out, make her a hostage.

At the end of an hour she heard a soft voice calling her. It was Mme. Bonacleux's. The good abbess had naturally consented to her request, and as a commencement they were to sup together.

On reaching the courtyard they heard the noise of a carriage, which stopped at the gate. The bell of the convent gate was rung. Milady was not mistaken.

"Go up to your chamber," said milady to Mme. Bonacleux. "You have perhaps some jewels you would like to take with you."

"I have his letters," said she.

"Well, go and fetch them and come to my apartment. We will snatch some supper. We shall perhaps travel part of the night and must keep our strength up."

Milady ran up to her apartment quickly. She there found Rochefort's lackey and gave him his instructions. He was to wait at the gate. If by chance the musketeers should appear the carriage was to set off as fast as

lackey and gave him his instructions.

He was to wait at the gate. If by chance the musketeers should appear the carriage was to set off as fast as possible, pass round the convent and so and wait for milady at a little villeless which was situated at the other aide of the wood. In this case milady was to cross the garden and gain the village on foot. If the musketeers did not appear things were to go on as had been agreed. Mme. Bonacieux was to get into the carriage as if to bid her dilet, and she was to take away Mme. Bonacieux. Mme. Bonacieux came in, and the lackey left.

Milady made her a sign to sit down before her, poured out a small glass of Spanish wins for her and helped her to the wing of a chicken.

But at that moment milady heard something on the road which sounded like the rattling of a distant gallop, and which drew nearer, and, almost at the same time, she heard the neighing of houses. She grew pale and ran to the window, while Mme. Bonacieux, trising all in a tremble, supported here.

seif upon her chair to avoid railing.

Nothing was yet to be seen, only, they heard the galloping draw nearer. The horses could not be more than a hundred paces distant. If they were not yet to be seen it was because the road made an elbow.

All at once, at the turning of the road, miliady saw the glitter of laced hats and the waving of feathers; she counted two, then five, then eight horsemen. One of them preceded the rest by double the length of his horse. Miliady uttered a stifled groan. In the first horseman she recognized D'Artagnan.

"They are the cardinal's guards!"
cried milady, endeavoring to drag Constance along by the arm. "Thanks to
the garden, we yet can fly. I have
the key, but make haste! In five minutes it will be too late!"

At this moment they heard the rolling of the carriage, which at the approach of the musketeers, set off at a gallop. Then three or four shots were fired.

"For the last time, will you come?"

cried unlindy "I cannot walk. Fly alone!"
"Fly alone, and leave you here! No.

no, never!" cried mindy.

All at once she remained still, a livid flash darted from her eves; she ran to the table, poured into Mme. Bons. cleux's glass the contents of a ring color, which melted immediately. Then taking the glass with a firm

"Drink," said she; "this wine will give you strength drink!" And she put the glass to the lips of

to avenge myself," said milady, re-placing the glass upon the table with an infernal smile, "but we do what we can!" And she rushed out of the At length Mme. Bonacleux heard the

great nurmur of voices. All at once she uttered a loud cry of joy. "D'Artagnan, D'Artagnan!" cried she, "Is it you? This way! This way!". "Constance, Constance," replied the

Several men rushed into the chamber. Mme. Bonacieux had sunk into a chair, without the power of moving.

"Oh, D'Artagnan, my beloved D'Artagnan, thou art come, then, at last! Thou hast not deceived me! It is indeed thee! Oh, it was in vain my companion!" cried D'Artagnan, becoming more pale than the white veil of his mistress, "of what companion are you speaking dear Constance?"

"Of her whose carriage was at the gate, of a woman who calls herself your friend, of a woman to whom you have told everything. But my head swims. I cannot see!"

"Help, help, my friends! Her hands are lcy cold!" cried D'Artagnan. "She will faint! Great God, she is losing her senses!"

her senses!"

Athos, standing before the table, his hair rising from his head, was looking

at one of the glasses.
"Oh," said he, "oh, no; it is imposs ble""
"Water, water!" cried D'Artagnan

"Oh, poor woman, poor woman!"

der the kisses of D'Artagnan.

"She revives!" cried the young man.

"Madame," said Athos, "madame, in
the name of heaven, who poured out
the wine for you?"

"Oh, I remember," said Mme. Bonacleux, "the Countess de Winter."

The four friends uttered one and the
same cry, but that of Athos dominated
over all the rest.

At that moment the counters.

At that moment the countenance of



rouse strength, drink!"

ful agony pervaded her frame, and she sank panting into the arms of Porthos and Aramis.

"D'Artagnan! D'Artagnan! Where art thou? Do not quit me. Thou seest that I am dying!" cried she."

Collecting all her strength, she took the head of D'Artagnan between her hands, looked at him for an instant as if her whole soul passed in that look and, with a sobbing cry, pressed her lips to his.

"Constance! Constance!" cried D'Artagnan wildly. But he held nothing but a corpae pressed in his arms.

The young man uttered a cry and fell by the side of his mistress as pale and as senseless as alse was.

At that moment a man appeared in the doorway almost as pale as those in the chamber, looked round him and saw Mme. Bonacleux dead and D'Artagnan fainting.

"Gentleinen," said he. "rou sre, as I

ail. Ill search of a woman was, assed he, with a terrible smile, "must have passed this way, for I see a corpse. I am the Lord de Winter, brother-in-isw of that woman."

Athos arose and, offering him his hand, said:

"You are welcome, milord," said he;
"you are one of us."

"I set out five hours after her from Portsmouth," said Lord de Winter. "I arrived three hours after her at Boulogne. I missed her by twenty minutes at St. Omer. At has at Lilliers I lost all trace of her. I was going about at hasard inquiring of everybody when I saw you gallop past. I recognized M. d'Artagnan. Are both dead?"

"No," replied Athos. "Fortunately M. d'Artagnan has only fainted."

At that moment D'Artagnan opened his eyes. He tore himself from the arms of Porthos and Aramis and threw himself like a madman on the corpse

himself like a madman on the corpse

Athes said to him, with his noble and persuasive voice:

"Friend, be a man! Women weep for the dead; men avenge them?"

Athes took advantage of the moment of strength which the hope of vengeance restored to his unfortunate friend to make a sign to Porthos and Aramis to go and fetch the superior.

"Madame," said Athes, passing his arm under that of D'Artagnan, "we abandon to your plous care the body of that unfortunate woman."

D'Artagnan concealed his face in the bosom of Athes and sobbed aloud. Then all five, followed by their lackeys, leading their horses, took their way to the town of Bethune and stopped before the first inn they came to.

"But," said D'Artagnan, "shall we

to.

"But." said D'Artagnan, "shall we not pursue that woman?"

"Presently," said Athos. "I have measures to take."

"She will escape us," replied the young man. "She will escape us, and it will be your fault, Athos."

"I will be accountable for her," said Athos. "Now, gentlemen," said he, "let every one retire to his own spartment. I take charge of everything."

"It appears, however," said Lord de Winter, "that if there be any measures to be taken against the countess it particularly concerns me. "She is my sister-ih-law."

"And," said Athos, "she is my wife!"
D'Artagnan smiled, for he was satisfied Athos was sure of his venge-ance when he revealed such a secret as that. Porthos and Aramis looked at each other and changed color. Lord de Winter thought Athos was mad.

The Man With the Red Cloak. HE despair of Athos had given cid the brilliant mental faculties of that extraordinary man. He
procured a map of the province, perceived that there were four different
roads from Bethune to Armentieres
and called Planchet, Grimaud, Basin
and Mousqueton, who received clear,
positive and serious orders.

They were to set out for Armentieres the next morning at daybreak
and to go to Armentieres, each by a

and to go to Armentieres, each by a different route.

All four were to meet the next day at 11 o'clock. If they had discovered milady's retreat three were to remain on guard; the fourth was to return to Bethune to inform Athos and serve as a guide to the four friends.

Athos then arose from his chair, girded on his sword, enveloped himself in his cloak and left the hotel. It was nearly 10 o'clock. He mide his way to a small house, isolated, solitary, dark and dismal, on the outskirts of the town. Three times Athos knocked without receiving any answer. At the third knock, however, steps were heard inside. The door at length was opened and a man of high stature, pale complexion and black hair and board appeared.

laboratory, where he was engaged in fastening together with from wire the dry bones of a skeleton. All the frame was adjusted, except the head, which lay upon the table.

All the rest of the furniture indications of the theory of the table.

iran sciences. But there was no family, no servant. The tall man inhabited this house alone.

Athor explained to him the cause of his visit and the service he required of him, but scarcely had he expressed his request than the unknown, who remained standing before the musketeer, drew back with signs of terror and refused. Then Athos took from his pocket a small paper, upon which were written two lines, accompanied by a signature and a seal, "and presented them to him who had given too premiaturely these signs of repugnance. The tall man had scarcely read these lines, seen the signature and recognized the seal when he bowed to denote that he had no longer any objection to make and that he was ready to obey.

Athor returned to the hotel and went to his apartment.

At daybreak D'Artagnan came to him and asked him, "What was to be done?"

"Wait!" replied Athos.

clouds covered the heavens, concealing the stars. The moon would not rise much before midnight.

At every instant Athos was forced to restrain D'Artagnan, who had but one thought, which was to go forward. Several times Lord de Winter, Porthos or Aramis endeavored to enter into conversation with the man in the red closk, but to every interrogation put to him he bowed without making any repit.

put to him he bowed without making any reply.

A little before they came to Fromilles the storm burst in all its fury upon them, and they unfolded their cleaks. They had still three leagues to travel, and they performed it amid torrents of rain.

At the moment the little troop had passed Goskal a man advanced into the middle of the road with his finger on his lips. Athos recognized Grimaud.

maud.
"What's the matter?" cried Athos.

"What's the matter?" cried Athos.
"Has she left Armentieres?"
Grimmud made a sign in the affirmative. D'Artagnan ground his teeth.
"Where is she?" asked Athos.
Grimmud stretched out his hands in the direction of the Lys.
"Alone?" asked Athos.
Grimmud made a sign that she was.
"Gentlemen," said Athos, "she is alone in the direction of the river."
"That's well," said D'Artagnan.
"Lead us on, Grimaud."
Another flash enlightened all around them. Grimmud extended his arm, and they distinguished a little isloated

they distinguished a little isloate house on the banks of the river with a hundred paces of a ferry.

"This is the place," said Athos.

"This is the place," said Athos. At this moment a man who had been crouching in a ditch jumped up and came toward them. It was Mousquetona He pointed with his finger to a window with a light.

"She is there," said he.

"And Bazin!" asked Athos.

"While I kept my eye on the window he guarded the door."

"All is well!" said Athos.

Athos sprang from his horse, gave the bridle to Grimaud and advanced toward the window, after having made a sign to the rest of the troop to go to

want the window, after having made a sign to the rest of the troop to go toward the door.

By the light of a lamp Athos saw a woman enveloped in a mantle of a dark color seated upon a joint stool near the dying embers of a fire. Her elbows were placed upon a mean table, and she leaned her head upon her two hands, which were white as fvory.

At this moment one of the horses neighed. Milady raised her head, saw the pale face of Athos close to the window and screamed with terror.

Athos, perceiving that she knew him, pashed the window with his knee and hand. It yielded; the frame and glass were broken to places. And Athos, like the specter of vengeance, sprang into the room.

Milady rushed to the door and open-

into the room.

Milady rushed to the door and opened it; but, still more pale and menacing than Athos, D'Ariagnan stood of the sill.

Milady drew back, uttering a cry means of flight and fearing she sho

"Put back that weapon, D'Artagnan," said he. "This woman must be judged, not assassinated. Come in, gentlemen."

Behind D'Artagnan entered Porthos, Aramis, Lord de Winter and the man in the red cloak. The four lackeys guarded the door and the window.

"What do you want?" screamed miled.

"We want," said Athos, "Charlotte Backson, who first was called Counter de la Fere and afterward Lady de Win complexion and black hair and beard ter, Baroness de Sheffield."

The man whom Athos had come so lady in extreme terror. "What do you aboratory, where he was a status of the status of

your crimes," said Athos. "You shall be free to defend yourself. Justify yourself if you can. M. D'Artagnan, it is for you to accuse her first."
"Before God and before men," said D'Artagnan, "I accuse this woman of

having poisoned Constance Bonacieux. . "We bear witness to this," said Por

"We bear witness to this," said Porthos and Aramis.

D'Artagnan continued:

"Before God and before men I accuse this woman of having attempted
to poison me in wine which she sent
me from Villeroi, with a forged letter,
as if that wine came from my friends.
God preserved me, but a man named
Brisemont died in my place."

"We bear witness to this," said Porthos and Aramis.

"Before God and before men I accuse this woman of having urged me to

"Before God and before men I accuse this woman of having urged me to murder the Baron de Wardes and of fiaving employed seasassins to shoot me, from whom I was again preserved by God's providence; but, as none can bear witness to these facts, I attest them myself. I have done."

"It is your turn, milord," said Athos. The baron came forward.

"Before God and before men," said he, "I accuse this woman of having been the means of the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham. That is not all. My brother, who made you his heir, died in three hours of a strange disorder, which left vivid traces behind it all over the body. Assassin of Buckingham, assassin of Felton, assassin of my brother, I demand justice upon you, and I swear that if it be not granted to me I will execute it myself!"

that if it be not granted to me I will execute it myself?"
Milady let her head sink between her two hands and endeavored to recall her ideas, which whirled about in a mortal vertigo.

"It is my turn," said Athos. "I married that woman when she was a young girl. I married her in opposition to the wishes of all my family, I gave her my wealth, I gave her my name, and one day I discovered that this woman was branded. This woman was marked with a flour-de-lis on her left choulder."

"Oh," said milady, "I defty you to find any tribunal which pronounced such an infamous sentence against me! I defty you to find him who executed it!"

"Silence!" cried a hollow voice. "It

man in the red cloak came forward.
All eyes were turned toward this man, for to all except Athos he was unknown. And even Athos looked at him with as much stupefaction as the rest.

"The executioner of Lille! The executioner of Lille!" cried milady, a prey to wild terror. "Oh, pardon, pardon!" cried the miserable woman, falling on her knees.

All eyes were fixed upon the unknown, who said:
"That woman was formerly a young maiden as beautiful as she is now. She was a num in the convent of the Benedictines of Templemar. A young

oth arrested. "Within a week she seduced the son of the jailer and got away. The young priest was condemned to ten years of imprisonment and to be branded. I was executioner of the city of Lille, as this woman has said, and the guilty mnn, gentlemen, was my brother. I then swore that this woman who had ruined him should at least share his novighment. I followed her. I

his punishment. I followed her, I caught her and I impressed the same disgraceful mark upon her.
"The day after my return to Lille my brother in his turn succeeded in my brother in his turn succeeded in making his escape, I was accused of complicity and was condemned to remain in his place till he should be again a prisoner. My poor brother was ignorant of this sentence. He rejoined this woman. They fied together into Berry, and there he obtained a little curacy. This woman passed for his sister.

"The lord of the estate upon which the church of the curacy was situated saw this pretended sister and became enamored of her, so much so that he offered to marry her. Then she left him she had ruined for him she was destined to ruin and became the Coun-

destined to ruin and became the Coun-tess de la Fero".—

All eyes were turned toward Athos, whose real name that was and who made a sign with his head that all was true that the executioner had said.

"Then," resumed he, "mad, desperate, my poor brother returned to Lille and, learning of my sentence, surrendered himself and hung himself from the iron bar of the loophole of his prison. I was set at liberty. That is the crime of which I accuse her; that is the cause of her being branded."

"MM. d'Artagnan, Porthos, Aramis, De Winter," said Athos, "what is the penalty you demand against this wo-

penalty you demand against this wo-man?"
"The punishment of death," replied At these words milady raised herself up to her full height and endeavored to speak, but her strength failed her. She felt that a powerful and implacable hand seized her by the hair

and dragged her away.

Lord de Winter, D'Artagnan, Athos,
Porthos and Aramis went out close
behind her and the executioner. The lackeys followed their masters.

Two of the lackeys now led, or, rather, dragged, along milady by her arms.

The executioner walked behind them, and Lord de Winter, D'Artagnan, Por

executioner.

The two lackeys led milady to the banks of the river. Being a few paces in advance, she whispered to the lack-

"A thousand pistoles to each or you if you will assist my escape, but if you deliver me up to your masters I have near at hand avengers who will make you pay for my death very dearly."

Athos, who heard milady's voice, came sharply up. "Change these lack-eys," said he. "She has spoken to them. They are no longer safe." When they arrived on the banks of

the river the executioner approached milady and bound her hands and feet. Orders may be left at this office

sassins, ten men combined to murder one woman! Beware! If I am not saved I shall be avenged!"
"You are not a woman," said Athos coldly and sternly. "You are a demon coldly and sternly. "You are a demon escaped from hell, to which place we are going to send you back again."

"He who shall touch a hair of my head is himself an assassin."

"The executioner can kill, madame,

"The executioner can kill, magains, without being on that account an assassin," said the man in the red cloak, Eriking upon his immense sword. "This is the last judge."

He took her up in his arms and was carrying her toward the boat.
"Oh, my God," cried she, "my God, are you going to drown me?"
These cries had something heartrend-

These cries had something heartrending in them. D'Artagnan was the youngest of all these men. His heart falled him.

"Oh, I cannot behold this frightful spectacle!" said he. "I cannot consent that this woman should die thus!"

Milady heard these few words.
"D'Artagnan, D'Artagnan," cried slie, "remember that I loved you!"

Athos drew his sword and placed himself between them.
"One step further, M. d'Artagnan," said he, "and, dearly as I love you, we cross swords." He made a step toward milady.

"I pardon you," said he, "the ill you have done me. Die in peace!"

have done me. Die in peace!"

Lord de Winter advanced in his turn,
"I pardon you," said he, "the poisoning of my brother, the assassination of

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

"Young mau, I saw you put your arm round my daughter's waist last even-

He (coming out of hotel)—What book is that you're wading through? Tennyson, eh? She—Did you notice the particular poem I was reading? He—No. Why? She—Because it's odd you abould have used the word "wading." I'd just got to the middle of "The Brook."—Boston Transcript.

Cooing softly to the lovely-sp Chasing sunbeams on the w What can be this dimpled day Just a baby—that's all.

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