

## ≈A Modern Parable @The Floating Tower of Babel≈

by David Lee Burris

**Cultural Myth & Bible Truth: “Come let us build a tower whose top is in the heavens.” - Genesis 11.4**

**The Myth That Is True.** Historians don’t talk about mythical people as if they actually existed. Mythical stories are not said to have occurred in the context of historical events.

**Cautionary Tale Versus Story Parable.** “Some teachers have defined parables as ‘earthly stories with heavenly meanings.’ The English word ‘parable’ comes from the Greek word *parabole*, which means ‘to throw alongside.’ The word also is related to the word ‘parallel,’ which usually describes two similar things laid side-by-side. Two things that are ‘thrown alongside’ each other are easier to compare. The goal of a parable is to compare one thing to another – with one of the objects being an important spiritual lesson and the other **being an event from life.**” – Stan Butt

**AT THE TIME OF ITS SINKING, THE *TITANIC* WAS THE LARGEST MOVING OBJECT EVER MADE BY MAN AND A STRIKING SYMBOL OF THE SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.**

**“This Ship Is Unsinkable!”- Owner “GOD HIMSELF Couldn’t Sink This Ship!”- Crew Interview**

This was the first major international disaster. “When humans declare that they have defied the laws of nature and have overcome every lesson that history offers, when things go horribly wrong, it attracts a lot of attention. Declaring that the *Titanic* was unsinkable set into motion a ‘Greek Tragedy’...

In terms of media, the wireless, precursor to radio communication, and the age of instant communication coincides with the sinking of the *Titanic*, helping to make it a trans-Atlantic and even global event.” – Kenneth Heineman

**Ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.** Over one thousand victims of different races, classes and religions were lost in the shipwreck. Every type of human behavior imaginable seems to have been there – including cowardice, bravery, incompetence, dutifulness, self-sacrifice, selfishness and genuine heroism. Because it is only just over the horizon of human memory, it is very easy to imagine oneself on that ship on that night and wonder how we might behave ourselves.

## The Fifteen Characteristic Traits and/or Behavioral Indicators of Human Arrogance

They Brag - They Are Rude - They Need To Be Right - They Seek Admiration - They Exaggerate Their Abilities - They Have A “My Way Or The Highway” Attitude - They Lack Self-Awareness - They See Everything As A Competition - They Talk Over Others - They Are Disagreeable - They Are Defensive - They Give Off An Air Of Superiority - They Lack Empathy - They Are Self-Obsessed - They Put Others Down

## The Sinking of the Titanic As Modern Parable to the Price of Arrogance

### Creature Arrogance In Catastrophic Combination: An Arrogant Age

Heineman Continues “...The Industrial Age coincided with, or actually spawned, the scientific management movement, which filtered into the politics of Western societies, including the United States. Hence, the so-called Progressive Era. The sinking of the *Titanic* was an unwelcome reminder that not everything will go as planned. The loss of the *Titanic* was a symbol of the deficiencies of the era’s new reality. “

The best technology ever & the most experienced crew. “In the spring of 1912 the world stood in awe. A colossus was setting out on her maiden voyage. The pride of the White Star Line was a marvel of modern engineering. At 882 feet long, she was the largest ocean liner ever built. The docks were packed with Brits who came to watch this floating palace steam out to sea. With Victorian smugness, the press proclaimed that the impossible had been done with the building of this unsinkable ship. It was the apex of Darwinian evolution. Man was not only master of the seas; he was greater than God himself!” - *The Ship That Couldn't Sink*

### Creature Arrogance In Catastrophic Combination: An Arrogant Design

*Titanic* was built with a double bottom but not a double hull. It had watertight bulkheads, but they didn't all go all the way to the top of the hull. These omissions doomed the ship after a 200-foot gash was torn in its starboard side below the waterline by a spur projecting from the iceberg. Or perhaps, new research suggests, the gash was not that big, but substandard rivets caused the *Titanic's* hull plates to buckle.

Problems with *Titanic's* maneuverability have also been cited as a cause for the collision. Whether the ship was fitted with a rudder that was too small, as has been suggested, or whether an officer on the bridge rang the engine room with the wrong maneuvering instructions, the ship was unable to avoid the spur at her speed of 23 knots. There were not nearly enough lifeboats aboard to accommodate the 2,228 passengers and crew - although *Titanic* actually carried more boats than required for a ship of its tonnage. With the water temperature a frigid 34 degrees, a high death toll was inevitable.

### **Creature Arrogance In Catastrophic Combination: An Arrogant Captain**

*The captain wanted the Titanic to beat the speed record of the Lusitania, which was owned by White Star's rival, the Cunard line.*

### **Creature Arrogance In Catastrophic Combination: An Arrogant Decision**

*The ship ignored more than 30 different ice warnings. At 11:40 p.m. on April 14, The Titanic hit an iceberg and stalled. At 2:20 a.m., it sank.*

### **Creature Arrogance In Catastrophic Combination: An Arrogant Rescued**

Survivor Lawrence Beesley and others talked about how no one at the time thought the Titanic was going to go under. At first, they joked that they had to stop for a fresh coat of paint to be applied to where the iceberg scrapped the hull. After all, the Titanic was "unsinkable," they figured. "The improbability of such a thing ever happening was what staggered humanity," Beesley wrote.

"The story is ageless, like all great stories," said James Delgado, director of maritime heritage at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "The elements in this case of triumph, tragedy, and hubris, of bravery and cowardice, all wrapped up in one brief moment. That speaks to people."

Before the Titanic, the great Chicago fire, the Galveston hurricane and the San Francisco earthquake attracted America's attention, but "the Titanic hit a nerve in a different way," said Kevin Rozario, a professor of American Studies at Smith College. "It's the dramatic quality of the Titanic." In fact, the Titanic's sinking took about as long as a stage play of that era, noted John Wilson Foster, a Queens University Belfast professor who wrote several Titanic books. "The survivors did say during the sinking it seemed like a play," Foster said.

Epic disasters — the anguished cries, the stories of heroism — are the central narratives of our age, both enthralling and horrifying. And our obsession began a century ago, **unfolding in just 160 terrifying minutes, on a supposedly unsinkable ship, as more than 1,500 souls slipped into the icy waters of the North Atlantic. And the band played on...**

“Yet no event in the past century exerts the sustained and concentrated fascination of the Titanic, the immediacy of its drama, the moral choices on deck... The Titanic was a *Tower of Babel* moment. It was inspired by the fear every civilization shares that it might be eternally erased. The urge to build the biggest ship, the first with a swimming pool and gymnasium, was an irresistible late twitch of the British age of engineering and invention. **It was a vanity of vanities, a homily-in-waiting on man’s folly and futility in the greater scheme of things.**” - Norman Lebrecht

## AND THE BAND PLAYED ON...≈

The effect of the music on passengers awaiting rescue appears to have been one of reassurance. When everything else on the *Titanic* was being turned upside down, the music remained the same. In the midst of mind-jarring abnormality, it was the one thing that retained its familiarity. For those out on the water it provided a bizarre soundtrack to a sight that so many would only be able to describe as “like watching a moving picture.”

George Orrell, bandmaster on the *Carpathia* in 1912 said “The ship’s band in any emergency is expected to play to calm the passengers.” The music itself played a major role in boosting their nerve. It’s long been known that music can alter moods.

If the quote attributed to the Titanic’s Band Director, Wallace Hartley, is anything to go by, he would have concurred with this sentiment: “I have always felt that, when men are called to face death suddenly, music is far more effective in cheering them on than all the firearms in creation.”

*After the Titanic struck the iceberg the band began to play bright music, dance type music, comic songs — anything that would prevent the passengers from becoming panic-stricken. The ship was so badly holed that it was soon obvious that disaster was ahead. Then various awe-stricken passengers began to think of the death that faced them and asked the bandmaster to play hymns. The one which appealed to all was, “Nearer, My God, to Thee.”*

Hartley left behind no written confession of faith, but all the indications are that the *faith of his childhood had continued into adulthood*. His moral character and his personal assurance that death was not the end must have stirred his bandsmen, all of whom had at least “grown up in the church.” The choice of “Nearer, My God, to Thee” was almost certainly due to Hartley’s familiarity with the hymn and love for its message, something he had already confirmed to friends.

One of the reports was published in the *Post-Dispatch* and the *New York World*, before being syndicated by the Associated Press read: “As the screams in the water multiplied, another sound was heard, strong and clear at first, then fainter in the distance. It was the melody of the hymn ‘Nearer, My God, to Thee,’ played by the string orchestra in the dining saloon. Some of those on the water started to sing the words, but grew silent as they realized that for the men who played, the music was a sacrament soon to be consummated by death. The serene strains of the hymn and the frantic cries of the dying blended in a symphony of sorrow.” Others, clinging to lifeboats far from the sinking ship, couldn’t hear the band at all, but only the sound of fellow survivors singing “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” in nearby lifeboats.

The following is excerpted from the Steve Turner book *The Band That Played On: The Extraordinary Story of the Eight Musicians Who Went Down with the Titanic*.

This excerpt is specifically from the chapter “A Natural Fruit of the Evil of the Age” that reflects on the role of faith and music during the disaster:

*Mrs. Ada Clarke, one of the first to tell the story of “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” left her husband behind because he urged her to get into a lifeboat even though she wanted to remain with him. She saw him standing on the deck as the ship sank. Mrs. Ida Straus, wife of the multi-millionaire philanthropist Isidor Straus, elected to stay with her husband and they both calmly faced death together, seated and holding hands. W.T. Stead apparently remained in his chair as though the next life was merely a last-minute change of destination.*



# Now all four parts



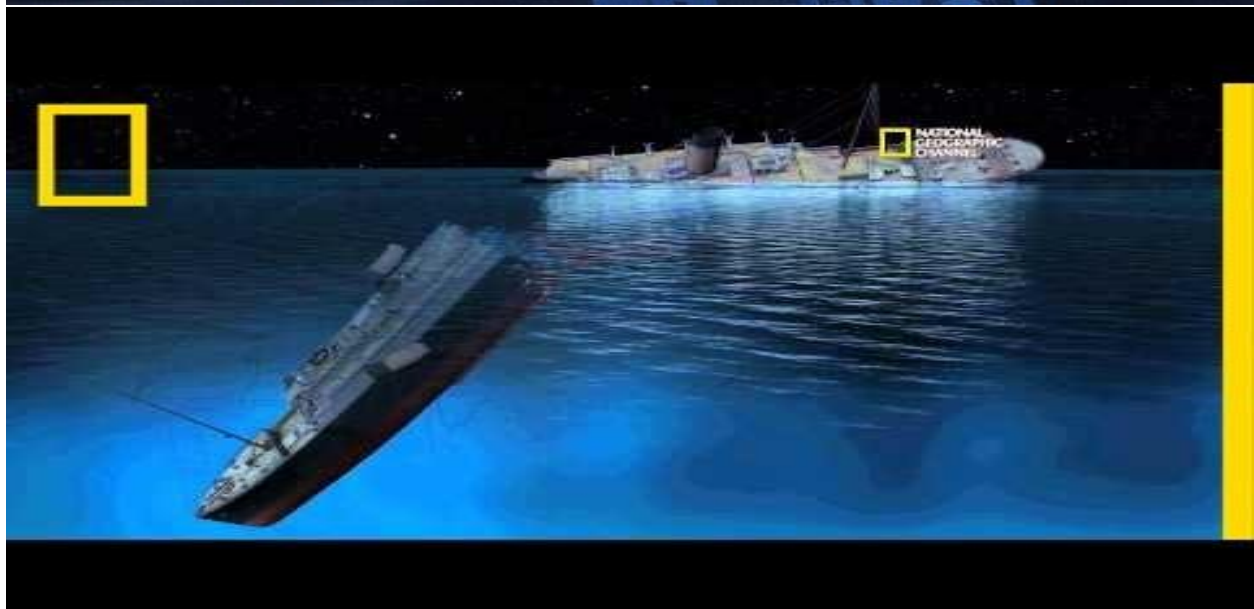
Yet in my dreams I'd be



## THERE WAS ONE WHO MET HIS FATE AS A LAST OPPORTUNITY...≈

Denominational preacher John Harper famously sacrificed his life to save others, giving up his seat on the lifeboat alongside his sister and six-year-old daughter so he could offer words of comfort to others as the ill-fated ship sank in the Atlantic-ocean in April 1912.

The widower was on his way to Chicago when the ship hit the iceberg; he decided to stay and preach to those on board instead of fleeing the ship, and even gave his lifejacket to another passenger who miraculously survived the disaster. John Harper preached the Gospel to the lost on the sinking ship and later he swam out to preach to and pray with those in the freezing water before succumbing to the inevitable.



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WHAT IS THE MORAL LESSON TO THIS MODERN PARABLE?

Human Arrogance: When Healthy Self-Respect Morphs Into Dysfunctional Pride

**“Pride Goes Before Destruction & A Haughty Spirit Before A Fall.” - Proverbs 16:18;**  
**“A Man’s Pride Will Bring Him Low!” - Proverbs 29:23**

*Hubris (from Ancient Greek ὕβρις 'pride, insolence, outrage), or less frequently hybris, describes a personality quality of extreme or excessive pride or dangerous overconfidence, often in combination with (or synonymous with) arrogance. The term arrogance comes from the Latin adrogare, meaning "to feel that one has a right to demand certain attitudes and behaviors from other people". To arrogate...*

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**In Conclusion – According to Herodotus - Hubris or Human Arrogance in Catastrophic Combination Has Historically Generated Exponential Death & Has Been for Both The Community & Individual - The Destroyer of Worlds!**

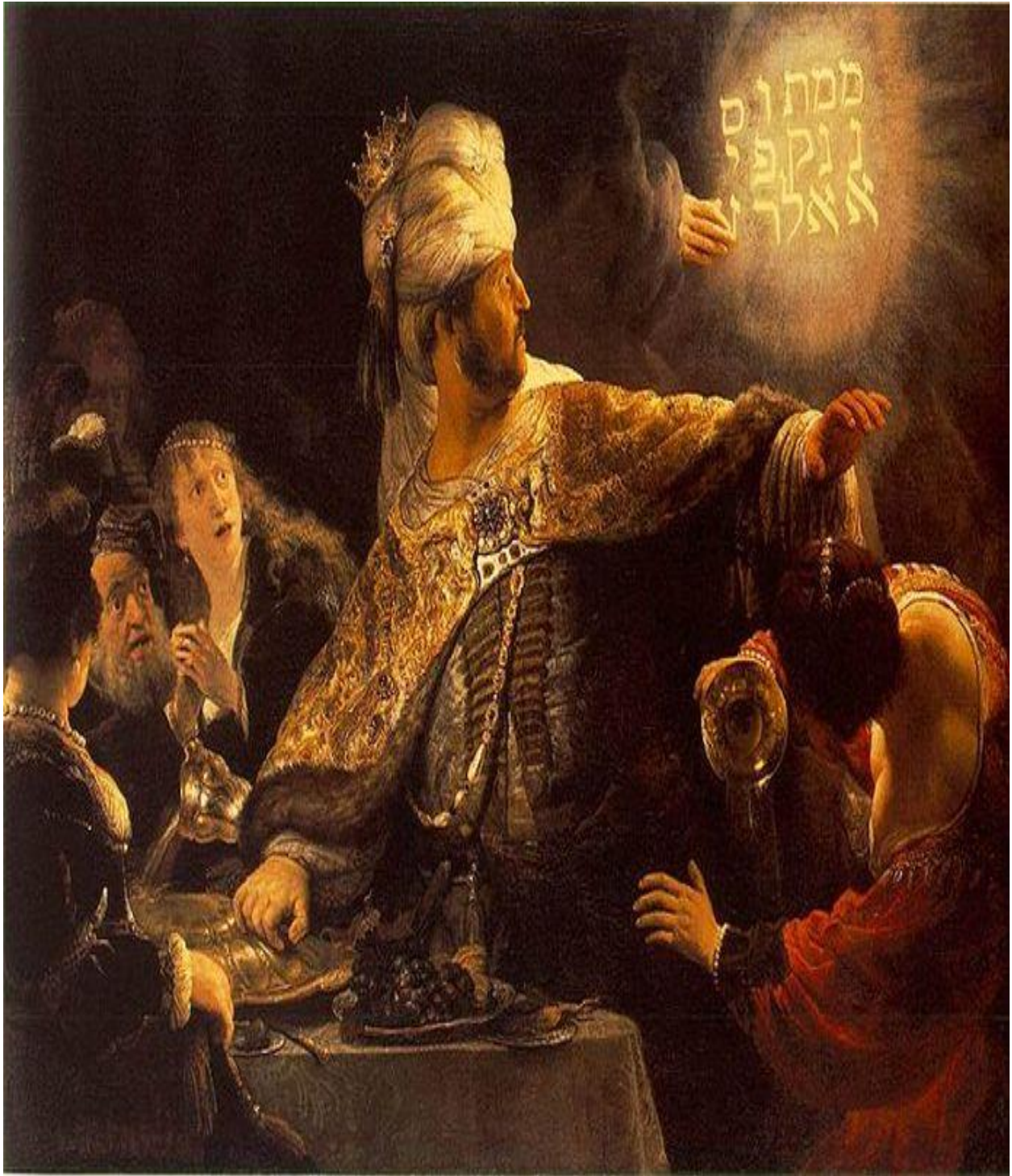
**We can see by the review of events on this Titanic Anniversary – how the reputed best-of-the-best & most self-confident had gravitated to positions of decision-making & authority – how types of Arrogant Personality Traits such as lack of self-awareness worked together with strong self-obsession to interfere with important critical thinking during a crisis situation – waking up too late - delaying distress rockets too long.**

**Most unfortunately, their false sense of self-sufficiency left little place for God but did leave room for the devil to deceive with his gamesmanship of social status almost to the very end.**

**Moral Lesson: Man-Is-The-Measure Greek Travesty [Tragedy Plus Disaster] Human Arrogance in Catastrophic Combination most often brings down loved ones & significant others with arrogance in its inevitable descent - family – friends – groups – communities – societies & civilizations.**

**Individual Application – We don’t have to be buried in a watery grave of death – lost without rescue - like those of the Titanic when we can take the opportunity to obey the gospel and in death-burial-resurrection replication - rising with Jesus Our Savior – Up From Watery Burial To An Eternal Life!**

Pridefully Arrogant Realize Their Errors Too Late:



## The Pridefully Arrogant Identify With The Devil:

# **Barnes' Notes on the Bible**

**First Timothy 3:6...** Not a novice - Margin, "one newly come to the faith." The Greek word, which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, means, properly, that which is "newly planted." Thus, it would mean a plant that was not strong, or not fitted to bear the severity of storms; that had not as yet struck its roots deep, and could not resist the fierceness of a cold blast. Then the word comes to mean a new convert; one who has had little opportunity to test his own faith, or to give evidence to others that he would be faithful to the trust committed to him. The word does not refer so much to one who is young "in years," as one who is young "in faith." Still, all the reasons which apply against introducing a very recent convert into the ministry, will apply commonly with equal force against introducing one young in years.

**Lest being lifted up with pride** - We are not to suppose that this is the only reason against introducing a recent convert into the ministry, but it is a sufficient reason. He would be likely to be elated by being entrusted at once with the highest office in the church, and by the commendations and flattery which he might receive. No condition is wholly proof against this; but he is much less likely to be injured who has had much experience of the depravity of his own heart, and whose mind has been deeply imbued with the spirit of the gospel.

Lest he fall into the condemnation of the devil - That is, the same kind of condemnation which the devil fell into; to wit, condemnation on account of pride. It is here intimated that the cause of the apostasy of Satan was pride - a cause which is as likely to have been the true one as any other. Who can tell but it may have been produced by some new honor which was conferred on him in heaven, and that his virtue was not found sufficient for the untried circumstances in which he was placed? Much of the apostasy from eminent virtue in this world, arises from this cause; and possibly the case of Satan may have been the most signal instance of this kind which has occurred in the universe. The idea of Paul is, that a young convert should not suddenly be raised to an exalted station in the church. Who can doubt the wisdom of this direction? The word rendered "lifted up" (τυφωθεῖς tufhōtheis), is from a verb which means to smoke, to fume, to surround with smoke; then to "inflate" - as a bladder is with air; and then to be conceited or proud; that is, to be "like" a bladder filled, not with a solid substance, but with air.



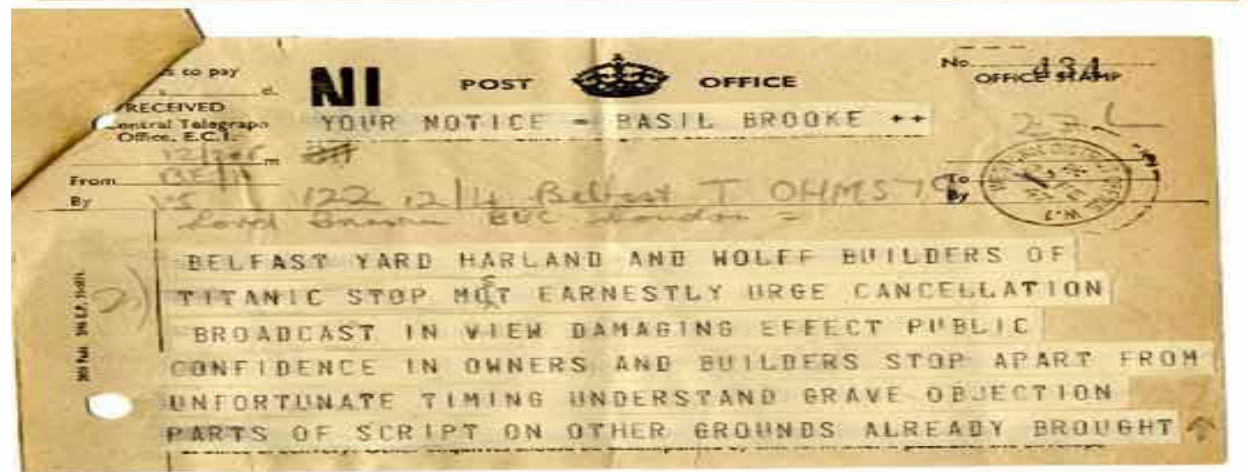
PRIDE IS ONE OF THE MOST, IF NOT THE MOST HORRIBLE SIN THAT ANY HUMAN BEING CAN BE GUILTY OF. PRIDE IS THE SIN THAT TURNED AN ARCHANGEL INTO A DEVIL.





Titanic Disaster Signaled "The End Of The World As They Knew It" For The Progressive Era But...

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