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Jack and the Beanstalk

A Pantomime

John Morley

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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CHARACTERS

Dame Trot
Jack, her son
Silly Billy, her other son
King Satupon
Princess Melanie, his daughter
Daisy, the Cow
Sergeant Spick } The King's Guardsmen
Corporal Span }
Clarence Clanger, the Town Crier

IMMORTALS
Fleshcreep, the Giant's Henchman
The Vegetable Fairy
The Dreaded Dragon
Giant Blunderbore
Mrs Blodwyn Blunderbore, his wife

Villagers, Townspeople, Magic Beanstalk People, Prisoners of the Giant, Wedding Guests

ACT I

SCENE 1 The Village of Pennyfarthing
SCENE 2 Outside Daisy's Cowshed in the Village
SCENE 3 The Cattle Market in the nearby Town
SCENE 4 On the way back to the Village
SCENE 5 Inside Dame Trot's Cottage
SCENE 6 Beanstalkland up in the Clouds

ACT II

SCENE 1 The Dragon's Cave outside the Giant's Castle
SCENE 2 The Henchman's evil Grotto in the Castle
SCENE 3 The Giant's Kitchen
SCENE 4 Down to Earth again
SCENE 5 The Wedding Beano

NOTE: Act I, Scenes 2 and 4; Act II, Scenes 2 and 4 are either tabs or front cloth. Act I, Scenes 2 and 4; Act II, Scene 4 could all be the same if required. Act I, Scenes 1 and 3 could with adjustments be the same if this economy is of help

Description of Characters

Jack is a romantic dreamer, warm hearted so that he becomes emotional when having to sell Daisy the Cow, but also he is a brave hero. Preferably a female part.

The Princess must really struggle and fight and kick Fleshcreep, the Giant's Henchman so that the audience will cheer her on when she is defiant.

Dame Trot is the comedy Dame but is seriously emotional about selling the Cow and her famous scene of tragic dismay at finding the beans are not gold after all, should be played with great sincerity and she is enraged with her son Jack at this moment.

The King is daft, is comically scared ofthe Giant and he fancies Dame Trot.

The Giant, if in a medium or large auditorium, needs an offstage voice that can boom loudly and deeply into an offstage microphone. His is not a long part because he can outstay his welcome but if your cast includes a bass baritone (or someone that can almost be one) then the short "deep down ballad" he sings is a good idea. The Giant is the character that the audience is waiting for so he needs to be taken just that extra bit more seriously. Please see the costume notes about him and his height.

Fleshcreep is an immortal so he should perhaps have a green face. A highly sinister make-up and acting performance are needed as the entire cast is terrified of him and this fact must ring true. His villainy not only helps the story but also works as a butt for the comics. He is devious and horrible, yet the part should be played with relish.

Daisy the Cow. The audience will fall in love with Daisy and this makes the part very well worth playing for the (usually female) occupants of the cow costume. The head on one side or slowly lowered makes good mimed pathos and she can "moooo" whenever she thinks fit.

The Vegetable Fairy. The actress playing this rewarding part should not entirely rely on the comedy rhyming couplets too much, as Pantomime is a visual art so her props and comedy business are important. A mild rustic accent works well and it is best to play her with wild optimism and fun and never be "downbeat".

Silly Billy is a personality part with emphasis on comedy. Perhaps he looks a bit "country yokel" with battered hat and smock—if so his style must not clash with the Vegetable Fairy and must remain a personality part.

Clarence Clanger the Town Crier can be a fat red cheeked bluff man like the Beadle in Oliver Twist. Or he is an ex-sergeant major with a bristling moustache. Or, if played young, or by an actress, let the ringing of the bell drive the cast crazy when they hear it and let him or her have a cheeky almost cocky personality.

Spick and Span. Sergeant Spick and Corporal Span are a sort of military version of the traditional panto broker's men parts. It is traditional that they continually hit each other and fall down and are slapstick and the audience does like them played that way. But they can be played as Women's Army in which case they become a military version of the Ugly Sisters in style, though they need not be ugly, just a bit florid.

Mrs Blodwyn Blunderbore. Her make-up, voice and acting are menacing and splendidly melodramatic so that—like Fleshcreep—the cast are terrified of her and thus she works the comedy. She may wish to acquire a Welsh accent, in which case a bit of simple re-phrasing with a few "boyos" and "indeed-to-goodnesses" will help. The more horrible she is the better the comedy scenes work in Act II. She is not a panto witch, but she is played in the French Revolution Tricoteuse style.

The Dreaded Dragon is not dreaded at all when we meet it. Preferably played by an actress, the Dragon is cuddly and jigs about in its scene and song.

Costumes

Pantomime medieval is best for this subject though of course not essential.

The **Villagers, Townsfolk** (perhaps a couple of Gypsies in the cattle market scene) the Prisoners of the Giant (who are again the Villagers in rags), and Finale Scene are all straightforward costumes.

The **King** and **Princess** are richly dressed, the King comically so.

The **Dame** can have many costumes because this is pantomime tradition, though she could manage with almost one costume because of the story.

Jack and **Silly Billy** are village lads, Silly Billy comically so.

Clarence Clanger needs a three-cornered hat and a hand bell and perhaps a beadle-style costume.

Sergeant Spick and **Corporal Span** wear bright and gaudy guardsmen uniforms which should be a bit comical. If these two parts are played by actresses then the costumes can be a comedy version of drum majorettes with trousers.

Daisy the Cow is the same style of costume as a pantomime horse. The udder is usually made of wood and can swing about as much as you like and there must be room in the udder area to let the actress/actor playing the back legs hold out a hand with the milk bottle (see text).

The **Dragon** is preferably played in a complete head mask so that we do not show the human face and thus spoil the illusion. It is a small cuddly dragon.

Fleshcreep is helped if he is given a cloak to swirl about and his costume is sinister, in keeping with his character.

The **Vegetable Fairy** is sometimes dressed as a leek. But any green and eccentric costume will be fine. To dress her as a straightforward Fairy seems to be missing an opportunity for creating a "fun" costume, but she must be able to move her arms freely if the costume is involved and vegetable style.

In a medium or small-scale production the Villagers can easily wear the same costumes throughout, as the entire adventure story takes place in one day.

The **Beanstalkland** costumes can be green Beanstalk style cloak and hat or cap worn over the basic Villager costume.

The Giant's Costume

The most complicated and interesting costume problem is the Giant. If a Giant's costume is not going to be hired, here are some suggestions that may be of help.

To build up his height we need a straightforward pair of boots nailed on to very high sole and heel platforms made of wood. This can add a foot to his stature. If this pair of boots are awkward and clumsy that is in keeping with his character.

It will help further to achieve the necessary height effect by a big wig that the actor wears with some padding in it so that it really feels more like a hat to the actor. It may need elastic under the chin to hold it in place. The huge domed forehead comes down to a pair of bushy eyebrows—below this it is the actor's face (real), though with a big moustache and big beard. A very tall hat with feathers in it sticking upwards is also a help for height.

It may be possible to use an entire big head mask of the type that was called a "Big Head" in Victorian pantomime. It rests on the shoulders and the wearer looks through the mask's open mouth for vision.

It is possible—as his scene is not all that long—that the giant problem is solved by one actor sitting on the shoulders of another and his coat or smock hangs right down, almost to the floor; but this idea is tiring for the actor below.

The body bulk and sometimes the building up of the shoulders and head is usually done with foam rubber.

His arms must be practical and the gloves that are made to look like huge hands should allow for him to hold his big club and thus fight with Jack. (See text for fight details.)

Not only the costume but other things in this scene help to give the illusion of a terrifying Giant. Dim lighting and probably someone roaring and speaking the lines *close to* the offstage microphone to ensure a thunderous deep voice. When the dual is fought, *Jack* needs much agility as he jumps about, convincing the audience that he is fighting a duel with the Giant who is, in fact, going to have to be fairly stationary. Loud dramatic music, lightning flashes or Strobe lighting—all these things help the duel to be a good moment of theatre and prevent the Giant Scene from being an anticlimax.

The Giant's death is most effective if there is a great dying roar at the offstage microphone, a dramatic chord, and the Giant lurches forward over the table and is then still. He should on no account fall to the floor as this is dangerous because of the costume.

Scenery Note

The Village is with cottages and trees, but any trick props for the Fairy's "magic that goes wrong" is best if it is thought about right from the first scenery discussion. (See text for suggested Fairy props.)

The Cattle Fair should have some flags and bunting so that the "mind reading" routine seems to belong in this fairground cattle market scene. It is possible for it to be Scene 1 "tarted up" with flags etc. but of course it is best as a Pantomime Mediaeval Town. UC is the Magic Sword in the Magic Stone—please see text.

The Cottage Interior is entirely subservient to how the beanstalk is made to seem to grow by magic. There is no need for any practical cottage scenery, such as shelves, all that is needed is an upstage cut-out shaped like a cottage interior with pointed roof, but the window must be practical in as much as it is already open so that the Dame can instantly throw the beans out in her fit of fury.

The Growth of the Beanstalk

The Fairy conjures up the Transformation, and the easiest way is U.-V. light. Stage assistants in black can remove the interior of the cottage plus furniture, which appears to dance in the air. Or the cottage is split and pulled off to each side, and we now see the groundrow of grass and weeds, etc. The stage is dark so we cannot see the wire but, as this wire is pulled upwards, so the U.-V. beanstalk starts to rise magically from behind the groundrow.

There can only be so much beanstalk unrolling, so soon other scenery must mask this moving beanstalk. As we are now in a magic place, "silver slash" could be used for this masking but best is a backcloth designed as though a vast network of beanstalks. The beanstalk *can* stop rolling and this stationary beanstalk would be seen for the rest of the scene, and perhaps beanstalk-style wings can be moved on from the sides or flown in.

So we have gone from the beanstalk growing on an empty blacked out stage to a stage that is "all beanstalk" and it is now Beanstalkland in the sunshine. If U.-V. light is not possible, then the window can be made in the upstage cottage cut out an exaggerated size—say six foot wide by four foot in height—so that the audience can very clearly see through it, at the garden backing or just a plain light blue cyclorama.

This window has a central "post" to it, dividing the window, just as one sees in many windows. Behind this central post is the hidden nylon wire or rope. Pull the wire or rope, and soon the beanstalk (which must of course

be wider than this central post of the window) appears and is seen to be growing outside the window.

What we don't want—and what you may have seen even in lavish professional pantomimes—is a rope or nylon wire showing clearly so that the whole audience knows perfectly well that the rope is to soon cause the beanstalk to grow. This is the story's famous moment and if possible, we do want the beanstalk to grow magically. You may find that after the beanstalk has grown you need to draw tabs or have a Beanstalk style frontcloth and in front of this Magic People sing or dance or both. But usually this isn't necessary.

A rope ladder or a wooden ladder disguised as a beanstalk is tempting but the best way is to turn the whole scene into Beanstalkland and not have Jack climbing. It is true that this is a famous moment, but it can be dangerous. Jack will not want to climb very high so it can be an anti-climax. Also, it is tricky to pull a heavy rope ladder, disguised as the beanstalk, upwards from the groundrow.

The other scenes in both acts are clearly explained in the script and are simple.

Production Notes

Music. There are, deliberately, few solos. If one of the cast has an excellent voice, then the music suggestions can easily be adapted to suit this fact. See **Musical Numbers.**

Snow effects. These can be made either by a lighting effect or by a cloud of torn pieces of paper thrown from the wings by a stage-hand standing on a ladder—the Fairy being near the wings for this moment.

Scene change to the **Cattle Market.** The previous frontcloth scene should be enough to cover the change, but if the set is an elaborate one, requiring more time, then Jack and the Dame, just before Jack's couplet and exit with Daisy, can sing a short sentimental love song about Daisy (with Daisy standing between them), and the lights can be brought down to a spot on the three of them.

Act I, Scenes 4/5. If required, the Chorus can enter at the end of Scene 4 so that the song becomes a Production Number. During it, the tabs can open (or the frontcloth be flown) so that the Production Number ends in the cottage interior, which is a full stage set. It must be remembered that there is not much time before Singers and Dancers are needed in the Transformation Scene, so that in (yet another variation) just a few people join Jack and Billy. During this number, or during the Black-out, the log that Daisy sat on is removed.

"Baby and bath" sequence. It is important that the baby is quite clearly a doll and is treated as a doll. This is an updated 1815 Grimaldi comedy scene, and it is necessary to avoid the "sadism to the baby" that was a feature of Regency comedy.

Fight between Fleshcreep and the Dame. This pantomime fight idea has to have "audience recognition", and whatever is the current trend on television should supply that. If, however, this topical idea is impracticable, then the Fairy can announce "Supersonic Sarah", and the Dame can enter in some Outer Space military uniform.

The **Vegetable Fairy.** Sometimes the lighting effects accidentally do work for the Fairy, and she has then lost her audience laugh. It is a good idea for her to keep the following couplet in case of this emergency. If said as an *ad lib.*, it should receive applause:

> What on earth has happened tonight
> Some of my magic is *going right*!

Musical Numbers

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The songs listed below are *only suggestions* for the type of music that can be used in this pantomime. Choice of music and songs is left to the discretion of the individual producer.

ACT I

Song 1	*On A Wonderful Day Like Today* A dance routine production number	Villagers and Princess
Song 2	*On The Sunny Side Of The Street* The Audience can join in this one, the Villagers perhaps entering, strolling in tempo, making an exit on the last note	Silly Billy
Song 3	*It's Not Where You Start It's Where You Finish* Song and dance production number	Jack and Villagers
	Charleston—Can-Can—Polka A dance competition between the Dame and the Cow. They dance about eight bars of the three up-tempo bouncy songs, such as the ones mentioned above	Dame, Silly Billy and Cow
Song 3(a)	Reprise of Song 3	Jack, Spick, Span, Clarence and Villagers
Song 4	*You're My Everything* One verse of this song is sung with great emotion	Jack, Dame, Cow
Song 5	*This Is The Simple Life*	Townsfolk (perhaps Gypsies, Clarence and Princess too)
Song 5(a)	*A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody* Incidental music played gently under the scene	

Song 5(b)	*In A Persian Market Place* Incidental music played during "Mind-Reading" sequence. You may want to include the music for "Fry's Turkish Delight" as well!	
Song 6	*Money, Money, Money* A duet in which the Audience can join in by clapping	Jack and Billy
Song 7	*Old Macdonald Had A Farm* This is a crazy comedy quartet song with movement and business, the dafter the animal noises are the better	Dame, King, Spick and Span
Song 8	*Climb Every Mountain* For the short Transformation Scene Ballet the tempo needs to be made into a slow waltz. For the vocal sung by the Magic Beanstalk People it becomes a ballad. For the "Interval Curtain Moment" when Jack enters in his armour with a sword, he and the others reprise it for eight bars at a dramatic tempo	Beanstalk People

ACT II

Song 9	*Sing Hallelujah* They are the Giant's prisoners in torn clothes and they sing this number with strange spooky lighting—it is almost a voodoo style number. For the second chorus, let the middle with lyric about "Satan" be a nasty solo for Fleshcreep, then return to the song and dance OR *Rockin' All Over The World* The other way to open Act II is to have comically eccentric animals dancing a rock 'n' roll session. First there is serious and spooky music as they glide about, then suddenly they go into the rock number	The Villagers

Song 10	*White Christmas* Sung unaccompanied to cheer *themselves up while the wicked* Mrs Blunderbore enters for the joey-joey scene of "she's behind you!"	Dame, King, Silly Billy, Spick and Span
Song 11	*Puff The Magic Dragon* The terrifying Dragon turns out to be a nice cuddly one. The Audience may wish to clap and join in this number. Probably two choruses will be ample	Jack, the Dragon
Song 12	*Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better* They battle it out in this song. Like "Old Macdonald" it is comedy with business	Fairy and Fleshcreep
Song 13	*You Made Me Love You* Duet and dance, the song being stopped three times for "kiss it better" comedy business. Start the dancing fairly early as it is not just a sung duet	Dame and King
Song 14	*It's Love Makes The World Go Round* You may prefer a ballad from the Top Twenty here	Princess
Song 15	*Food, Glorious Food* A song and dance production number with the Villagers as Cooks using huge Giant-scale props. Mrs Blunderbore can be made the central person of this Production Number. If she sings she can parade about like a "Broadway Musical Comedy Star" or else she can conduct with a huge fork	Villagers
Song 16	Duet (short reprise)	Jack and Princess
Song 17	James Bond Theme This is played as loudly as possible while the Dame does her karate style comedy fight with Fleshcreep. The Dame being "Wonderwoman" or "Supersonic Sarah" (see production notes)	

Song 18	*Drinking* ("In Cellar Deep") This is a short parody of a Victorian ballad and its coda is very "baritone". It is sung at the offstage microphone by a bass baritone and it's chorus and comedy coda should be long enough to convey the Giant's personality to the Audience	Giant
Song 19	*Happiness* A triumphant song of victory in which the Audience can join	Company
Song 20	*Daisy Bell* (Daisy, Daisy)	Songsheet number
Song 21	Finale A reprise of an earlier song (perhaps No. 3)	Company

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ACT I

PROLOGUE

This is played either in front of tabs that then open on to the Village Scene or else it is played in the Village Scene with no lighting upstage and the two Immortals are very much downstage in the lit area

There is a flash in the footlights. Fleshcreep the Giant's wicked Henchman, is already on stage, laughing demoniacally

Fleshcreep Ha ha ha ha ha!
Bats fly about and the moonbeams glisten
It's the midnight hour but LISTEN! LISTEN! (*He cups his hand to his ear melodramatically*)

We hear the Giant's voice booming

Giant (*on the offstage microphone*)
Fee fi fo fum
I smell the blood of an Englishman
Be he alive or be he dead
I'll grind his bones to make my bread.

Fleshcreep paces about

Fleshcreep Let darkness cover this land
Let everyone hear that roar
Yes hark to the dread command
of GIANT BLUNDERBORE!

He addresses the audience

You—(*local place*)—*fools*, how you cringe and quake!
The might of the Giant no-one shall break!
Ha ha ha . . .

His laugh is interrupted by a burst of fairy music

Vegetable Fairy enters R, *and optimistically waves her hand. Behind her back she hides a large prop leek*

Fairy Hullo, my dears! It's the middle of the night
But I'll make everything turn out right!
I'm the Vegetable Fairy!
I look after the plants and the flowers!

She turns to Fleshcreep

And although you *do* look scarey
I'll thwart you with my powers!

Fleshcreep How I hate the way you speak.
Your weakness I'll soon find

Fairy Never! Here is my magic leek
To make you lose your mind!

There is a flash. She produces her leek as though a magic wand and points it at him. Sarcastic and confident, he grabs hold of its end

Fleshcreep Huh! A vegetable is all you've got!
OW! The darned thing's boiling hot!

As he yells "OW" there is a further flash, he lets go of the leek, wrings his hand in pain—percussion noises. The Fairy laughs at him, he is enraged

In this battle we are going to fight
You'll end up in a mess.

Fairy Never! My friends will help me all right!
(*To the audience*) You'll help me won't you?

She conducts them with her leek and they shout

Audience *YES!*

With a loud dismissive snarl of "Huh" and waving his fist at the audience, Fleshcreep exits L. *The Fairy, waving her leek triumphantly, exits* R.

At the same time we see instant sunshine, or the tabs open and at once we are in—

Scene 1

THE VILLAGE OF PENNYFARTHING

A village with cottages and trees and open countryside at the back. By the Dame's cottage is a barrel or a large bucket from which the Fairy's flower will later grow by pulling upwards on a nylon wire. The Villagers are singing

SONG 1

During the song, the Princess enters, the singing Villagers bow and curtsey and the Princess joins them in the song and dance

After the song, Clarence Clanger the Town Crier, wearing a three-cornered hat enters, ringing a hand bell. All the Villagers pull faces and put their fingers in their ears

Clarence (*announcing to the audience importantly*) I am the Town Crier! My name is Clarence Clanger and I want to pronounce a pronouncement! If anyone kills Giant Blunderbore his reward will be the Princess's hand in marriage!

Princess Clarence, you announce that every day—(*to the Villagers*)—and it doesn't get us anywhere, does it?

Villagers No!

First Villager (*waving his fist in the air*) The Giant is a villain!
All (*chanting*) Death to the Giant! Death to the Giant!
Princess Yes, death to the Giant—but who's going to kill him?
Clarence (*shaking his head anxiously*) Your Highness, there isn't anyone!
Princess If only someone could come along and set us free! If only someone *could* kill the Giant!

Loud comedy fanfare

Second Villager That's the royal fanfare!
Princess That will be Father. Perhaps *he's* got some ideas!
Third Villager It's the King!
Fourth Villager It's His Royal Magnificence!
Clarence (*removing his hat with a flourish*) His Majesty, King Satupon the Seventh!

All bow and curtsy

Sergeant Spick and Corporal Span, in comedy Guards uniforms, enter carrying a sedan chair. It is a simple cutout held in front of the walking monarch. The King waves graciously from the chair, calling out "Hullo, hullo."

King (*to the audience*) Greetings, objects! (*To Spick and Span*) Lower the litter the quicker the better.
Spick / **Span** } Pardon? { (*Speaking together*)
King Lower the quicker the better the litter. (*He corrects himself*) Quicker the litter the better the—oh forget it!

He steps out or gets off the chair while Guardsmen Spick and Span smartly move forward away from the chair with plenty of complicated foot stamping and their comedy salute and stand at attention on each side of the King, with their hands held out, palm upwards

(*Seeing their hands*) What are you doing that for? It's stopped raining.

The Villagers laugh

Oh, I understand—you want *paying*, don't you?
Spick / **Span** } Yes, Your Maj! { (*Speaking together*)
King How much?
Spick Twenty pounds.
Span Ten each.
King (*scandalized, to the audience*) Twenty pounds from—(*local railway station*)—to this village? TWENTY POUNDS?
Spick Yes, Your Maj.
Span Including VAT.
King Oh well, VAT's all right, then. (*To Spick*) I suppose you've got a wife and kids to support. Here you are. (*He counts as he mimes putting the coins into Spick's hand*) One—two . . . How many kids have you got?

Spick Seven.

King (*counting more "money" into Spick's hand*) Eight, nine, ten. That's you paid. (*To Span*) Now, Corporal, you live near me don't you—what number is your house?

Span Number eight.

King Really? (*He counts into Span's hand*) Nine, ten. There you are! (*Cheerfully*) Good day, gentlemen!

Spick / **Span** (*with bewildered looks*) Good day, Your Maj! (*Speaking together*)

The Villagers laugh

Spick and Span exit with the sedan chair

King Remove the litter! Keep Britain Tidy! (*To the audience*) Well, folks, I must introduce myself. I am King Satupon the Seventh! (*Dramatically and patriotically*) Yes, I am your *KING!*

He reacts to the fact that the audience has not responded to this

When you see the King all you ladies should curtsy and all you gentlemen should bow! (*He admits defeat*) Oh all right, you can wave instead. (*He waves to various sections of the audience*) Greetings! Greetings! Happy New Year! (*Waving to the front row*) The front row! Where they only eat fish and chips out of the *Daily Telegraph*! (*Waving to another area*) Oh look, the Muppets! And look, there's a group not waving to me at all. Stuffy lot. Well, they come from—(*local snob area*)!

Princess Oh Father, how can you be so cheerful! What are we going to do about the Giant?

King (*to her and the Villagers*) Now don't worry, anyone, don't panic, because if we keep a stiff upper lip and—

Dramatic chord

Fleshcreep enters fast and stands by the King but unseen by him. He carries a whip

—stick out our chests and smile and say—

Fleshcreep Silence, fool!

King (*continuing*)—"Silence, fool". That's not right. (*He sees him*) AAAH! It's Evil Canevil—(*or some television villain or politician*)!

Fleshcreep You know quite well who I am. (*To the Villagers*) And so do you. (*He walks along the footlights addressing the audience*) So do you, you crummy collection of—(*local place*)—nitwits! (*As though audience has reacted, as they may well have done*) And don't you dare answer me back like that or I'll come down there and have a quick whip-round! (*He cracks his whip*) My name is *Fleshcreep*, the Giant's Henchman, and he's looking for humans like you—Mums, Dads and Kiddy Widdies! He's not so fond of the Dads, they're a bit tough and they stick in his gullet, but he likes a NICE, PLUMP, JUICY Mum for supper and for breakfast he just *loves* little boys and girls. (*Cracking his whip*) Ha ha ha!

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