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SF PERUSALS

5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche

Evan Linder and
Andrew Hobgood

With contributions by Sarah Gitenstein, Mary Hollis Inboden, Meg Johns, Thea Lux, Beth Stelling, and Maari Suorsa

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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5 LESBIANS EATING A QUICHE was first produced by The New Colony in Chicago, IL (Andrew Hobgood, Artistic Director; Evan Linder, Artistic Director) on June 24, 2011. The production was directed by Sarah Gitenstein and assistant directed by Jaime Totti, with sets by Nick Sieben, costumes by Nathan Rohrer, lighting by Garvin Jellison, sound design by Gary Tiedemann, props design by Shelby Wilson, and special effects by Ruth McCormack. The Script Supervisor was Joel Kim Booster. The Production Stage Managers were Jessica Whitington and Stephanie Shum. The cast was as follows:

LULIE STANWYCK . . . . . Mary Hollis Inboden
WREN ROBIN . . . . . Meg Johns
GINNY CADBURY . . . . . Thea Lux
DALE PRIST . . . . . Maari Suorsa
VERONICA "VERN" SCHULTZ . . . . . Beth Stelling

5 LESBIANS EATING A QUICHE received its New York City premiere on August 10, 2012 as part of the New York International Fringe Festival, a production of The Present Company (Elena K. Holy, Producing Artistic Director) at the Living Theatre. The production transferred to the SoHo Playhouse (Darren Lee Cole, Artistic Director) on September 21, 2012 as part of the FringeNYC Encore Series, and began an extension on October 16, 2012, presented by John Arthur Pinckard, as part of the SoHo Playhouse's 2012-2013 Season. The production was directed by Sarah Gitenstein, with set and special effects by Kevin McClintock, costumes by Nathan Rohrer, lighting by Nicholas J Carroll, sound design by Gary Tiedemann, and props design by Shelby Wilson. The Associate Producers were Jaime Totti and Noah Lemaich and the Production Stage Manager was Smyra Yawn. The cast was as follows:

LULIE STANWYCK . . . . . Rachel Farmer
WREN ROBIN . . . . . Meg Johns
GINNY CADBURY . . . . . Caitlin Chuckta
DALE PRIST . . . . . Maari Suorsa
VERONICA "VERN" SCHULTZ . . . . . Thea Lux

The full-length version of *5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche* was commissioned by The New Colony and based on a ten-minute version, written and directed by Evan Linder, presented in 2010 by Collaboraction at Sketchbook X in Chicago, Illinois.

The playwrights would like to give special thanks to: John Arthur Pinckard, Anthony Moseley at Collaboraction, Nicholle Dombrowski and Charlie Bills at the Dank Haus, Elena K. Holy and Britt Lafield at the New York International Fringe Festival

CHARACTERS

LULIE STANWYCK – President

WREN ROBIN EVENTS – Chairwoman

GINNY CADBURY – Secretary

DALE PRIST – Historian

VERONICA "VERN" SCHULTZ – Buildings and Grounds Chairman

SETTING

A community center in middle America where the annual Quiche Breakfast of the Susan B Anthony Society for the Sisters of Gertrude Stein is being held.

TIME

Today, 1956

PRODUCTION NOTES

Any lines that are book-ended with brackets can be said by the actor however they feel each night, but the substitution should keep to the written line's intent. Wren's [I can't! I can't! Oh, this is dangerous.] could become [Oh, ladies! I can't! It's too much.] The purpose of these brackets is to inject spontaneous moments into each performance that will never be seen the same way twice. The actors should follow their instincts and say how the character is thinking/feeling in the moment. If, in that moment, nothing new comes to mind – you can always adhere to what is written.

When you come upon a "/" in the script, it means that the following line should begin at the slash mark and the line being spoken should continue to the end of the sentence.

Each time the name of the sisterhood is spoken, the rest of the characters should join in on "…Society for the Sisters of Gertrude Stein."

The melody for the song in Scenes I and V should be improvised.

PLAYWRIGHTS' NOTES

As a satire on the melodramatic fears of America during the Cold War and Today, there will be a temptation to play *5 Lesbians Eating a Quiche* as a campy comment on society, complete with knowing winks to the audience. Avoid this trap at all costs! The script, when delivered simply and with honest emotion, will take care of the satire on its own. The actors need not think on how to make the script funny. Instead, they should focus on how to make the women real. These five women do not in any way find the events of the play funny. In fact the complete opposite is true: this is the most serious day of their entire lives. While it is easy for the outside world to look at fundamentalists and see their beliefs and traditions as absurd and outrageous, fundamentalists themselves see only the absolute truth and majesty of their mission. They are never commenting on the absurdity of the situation.

These women never speak in double entendres. The fact that their literal words read as such to the audience goes unnoticed by the women. All of the comedy in this play originates from one source: honest, real people delivering ridiculous dialogue and tackling insane situations as if what they are saying and doing is commonplace and expected by the audience. For every ounce of honesty you inject into *5 Lesbians*, the laughs will be returned by the pound, and the deeper the audience will slip into seeing themselves as your Fellow Widows.

Perhaps most important: Always remember that these women love each other. Lulie even loves Ginny despite the hazing Lulie imposes on her as their newest officer. They are not only fellow officers but best friends. The audience should know this the moment they burst into the room.

All audience members should receive a name tag when they enter the space. The names should all be popular women's names before 1950. Any time you see an audience member being referenced by name in the script – you should call them by the name on their name tag.

Each performance will feature a male audience member who is pre-selected (without their knowing it) to play Marjorie throughout the show. He should receive a "Marjorie" name tag and be seated in the audience where he is most visible to the other audience members. No one loves Marjorie.

Now let the Breakfast Begin!

– Evan Linder & Andrew Hobgood

Scene I

*(***WREN**, **DALE**, *and* **VERN** *all come bursting out into the crowd. They are friends with everyone. They ad lib their hellos with the audience: "LUCILLE! [a member of the audience] How're your orchids doing?!"* **WREN** *becomes overwhelmed by it all and has to hoot off a little steam. She then brings the meeting to order.)*

WREN. Oh, Vern! Oh my!! OH! This looks beautiful!

(She can't stop herself from hooting.)

O O O O O O O O O O O O O O H ! ! ! ! OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!!!!

(She composes herself. Or at least makes a great effort.)

WREN. Ladiiiiies!

(The sisters gather. She addresses the audience.)

Fellow Widows! Ladysisters! Welcome! Welcome to the [INSERT TODAY'S DATE] meeting of the Susan B. Anthony Society for the Sisters of Gertrude Stein! I am your Events Chairwoman, Wren Robin, and I am so happy to welcome you all to the 1956 Quiche Breakfast!

(The widows applaud.)

VERN. Hop to it, Dale! That's a photo.

*(***DALE** *leaps out to snap a photo of* **WREN** *which* **WREN** *is immediately ready for. Click.* **VERN** *is pacing around the audience, inspecting the troops.)*

DALE. Nice pose, Wren!

*(***WREN** *melts.)*

WREN. Thank you Dale. Isn't Dale just lovely this morning? I know most of you probably walked in and thought to

yourselves, "Who is this…beautiful, porcelain doll?!" But it was just Dale!

(Remembers suddenly!)

WREN. *(cont.)* Oh! And let us all give a round of applause to Vern Schultz for our Community Center's fully – modernized facelift! Doesn't this place look just beautiful!

VERN. Thank you, Sisters!

*(***GINNY** *rushes in.)*

GINNY. Sisters! Lulie is almost done judging the quiches and then we'll be ready to start the meeting.

WREN. Oh, sisters! Did you hear that?

*(***WREN** *and* **DALE** *busy themselves setting up.)*

VERN. Ginny. I waited for you earlier. I thought we were going to walk over together.

GINNY. Oh Vern, I completely forgot! I've been so frazzled getting ready for today.

VERN. No. It's fine. Louise walked over here with me after I fitted her for a pant suit.

*(***VERN** *gives a seductive smile to the audience member.* **GINNY** *gives Louise a look.)*

GINNY. I didn't even know you and LOUISE were friends.

VERN. *(trying to make her jealous)* Well, she's not my first choice. But I could certainly get used to her kind of walk.

GINNY. No! Vern, truly I've just been pre-occupied. I haven't been able to think about anything but quiche!

VERN. You're excited about eating that prize quiche, are you?

GINNY. More than anything!

VERN. Very well. I'll accept that.

WREN. Ginny, how many quiches were submitted this year?

GINNY. Well, we have [NUMBER OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS ATTENDING] sisters here in attendance today, and all but one submitted a quiche.

DALE. Who wouldn't submit a quiche?

*(***VERN** *has spotted someone in the audience.)*

VERN. Looks like there's someone here who's too ashamed to let the light of day see her quiche ever again.

(She walks up to the audience member that has been pre-selected as Marjorie.)

VERN. Isn't that right, Marjorie?

(The sisters gasp.)

WREN. *(trying to be polite)* Oh my. Marjorie. I didn't see you. Out there with all the other widows.

DALE. Yeah, Marjorie. We're used to seeing you up here with the other officers.

GINNY. *(She remembers the stories.)* Oh…Marjorie.

VERN. That's right. The Marjorie.

WREN. Now, now, sisters. We can all discuss Marjorie's fall from grace immediately after the meeting.

VERN. Let's do that by the way. Immediately after the meeting. Let's get that on the agenda. Ginny!

*(***GINNY** *pulls out a small notepad.)*

GINNY. I have made note of it as an Action Item.

DALE. [Oh! An action item!]

WREN. Oh sisters! The anticipation is so incredible!

GINNY. I'm so excited for my first quiche breakfast!

WREN. Yes! And welcome to you Ginny! We're all so fortunate to be together like this today. Not that I have to tell you that. This is such an important day to all of us, of course.

VERN. Amen sister!

WREN. It makes you appreciate how brave our dear founder, Lady Ulrika Monmont was. To live alone in the woods all those years, amongst the creatures and

birds and berries…until the day when she came across that colony of chickens. The chickens who would produce the backbone of this sisterhood.

WREN. The egg!

GINNY. The egg!

DALE. Oh! That reminds me…I have a surprise for everyone.

*(***DALE** *mischievously smiles and heads towards the exit.)*

GINNY. Now now Dale, you must hurry. Lulie is almost ready.

DALE. I'll be really quick!

(She hands her camera to **GINNY***.)*

If anyone strikes anything resembling a pose –

GINNY. Absolutely. I won't let you down.

*(***DALE** *goes to the exit but quickly turns around in a "pose", testing* **GINNY**. **GINNY** *is immediately ready for it and clicks.)*

GINNY. You were testing me…

DALE. I was testing you.

GINNY. *(with pride)* You were testing me!

DALE. Guilty!

*(***DALE** *exits.)*

WREN. Ginny, I have a new agenda that I'd like to add to the agenda for today!

GINNY. The agenda is almost / filled, Wren.

WREN. Thank you! This is important! While I was walking here this morning – it struck me: we need more public spaces to share! We have a park. And it's beautiful. But we need more! So I would like to propose –

– for the very first time –

– that we build and then donate a ranger station!

VERN. Wren, we've been over this. There's no use for a Ranger Station. Because there are no rangers in this town.

WREN. Oh, I don't think that's truuuue! I think that if we build the station, the rangers will come to it! And it could be right in the center of town. I know the perfect place for it! Right in the center! And if there is ever an emergency, I'll just pull out the ol' phone tree, call everyone up and say, "Yoodle-oo! Meet me at the Rangers Station!" and you all would know what I was talking about! Oh, and I could keep an eye out for any kind of Soviet invasion –

VERN. Whoa, whoa, whoa. In the event of a Communist attack – there's a much safer place to go than a Ranger Station.

WREN. Where are you suggesting?

VERN. Well, Wren. I'm suggesting you're standing in it.

WREN. In what?

VERN. Only the safest place in America Today. You see, Wren, as buildings and grounds chairman, this facility is under the care of my person, which means, by extension, you are all under my person, and while anyone is under my person…Ginny!

GINNY. Yes?

VERN. I expect to be obeyed.

GINNY. *(trying to not succumb to this…)* I've…made note of it.

VERN. Give 'em the tour, Ginny.

GINNY. Well I did have this later on the agenda, but I suppose we can break from procedure for this one matter.

VERN. That's right.

GINNY. [Widows, as you probably know when Vern –]

VERN. Ginny.

(She leans in a bit.)

Like I asked you to do it.

GINNY. [Vern, I feel silly –]

VERN. *(the final word)* Ginny.

*(***GINNY** *stands at attention like she is reading a Royal Proclamation.)*

GINNY. *(in a VERY British accent)* Upon the impeachment of the previous Buildings and Grounds Chairman… Marjorie –

(They turn and glare once more.)

One Veronica Schultz was elected to the post and tasked with renovating this Community Center. Under her direction, this facility was outfitted with a top-of-the-line security system.

VERN. *(stepping over to the security door)* Exhibit A. As you know, a point of contention between myself and the beautification committee was this security door. Though eventually we were all able to see eye to eye.

GINNY. If anyone needs to step outside to the powder room during the breakfast, you are more than welcome to do so.

VERN. *(to Marjorie)* Respectfully.

*(***VERN** *should hold this look as long as the audience allows. And the other sisters agree with it. This is serious. The last time Marjorie used the bathroom…let's just say it was disastrous.)*

GINNY. Yes. Now, in the event of an atomic bomb, there are –

*(***DALE** *re-enters with a large framed portrait. The audience can only see the back of the frame.)*

DALE. Look what I have!

VERN. *(to* **GINNY***)* That's okay. We can cover that part later.

WREN. Oh my! What is that Dale?

DALE. I thought Lulie would love this! I was digging through the archives the other day and made the most incredible discovery!

(She turns the portrait around so that everyone can see. An absolutely hideous picture of Lady Monmont holding an axe is revealed. Ooohs and Aaahs.)

DALE. I found this old candid – very candid – portrait of Lady Monmont, taken when she was clearing the subdivision now known as "Oak Tree Falls."

(Murmurs of agreement from the widows.)

DALE. Now you can see here she is returning from the Colony of Chickens. I deduced this from the specially designed egg satchel she is carrying. And just then…a mighty oak, fell before her, and landed right in her path. And this portrait was taken just as she began to chop that tree into pieces and clear her path. And even though this was candid, I look at this and think, "But that's a pose."

*(***WREN** *is caught by such surprise that she hoots a little.)*

DALE. Exactly! A tree lands, she sees it, and she's dealing with it. She has to build a town, she's got a lot of eggs, she's got a tree in her way, but she's dealing with it. And it's the sheer drama in this pose. She was just one of those women…a woman who knew how to pose. Even when she wasn't.

*(***DALE** *has discreetly landed in a pose which a caught off guard* **GINNY** *scrambles to click a photo of.)*

WREN. Oh, Dale. That was beautiful! Lulie will be so touched.

WREN. Look at her. Sisters! None of us would be here if it weren't for her. Her determination became our future.

(She gives the portrait back to **DALE** *who goes to hang it.)*

VERN. Hey Dale, I thought I saw you bring two big portraits into the meeting today.

DALE. Keen set of peepers, ya got there Vern. The other one is in the kitchen. I'll be revealing that one at the end of today's quiche breakfast. It's an even bigger surprise than this one!

WREN. *(reprimanding)* Dale Prist! Too many surprises!

(She starts to crack a smile.)

WREN. *(cont.)* No such thing! Oh, the anticipation! Could this breakfast be any more exciting?

(Suddenly, we hear a handbell being run offstage. The widows get all excited.)

GINNY. [Everyone sit up! Do you want Lulie to have a conniption?!]

*(***VERN** *goes to dim the lights. The Quiche Breakfast is about to begin!)*

(The sisters all line up. **GINNY** *takes out a pitch pipe out of a tiny pouch attached to her dress and tries to give the sisters their note. She doesn't quite hit the note. Hurriedly puts the pitch pipe back in the pouch.)*

GINNY. [We know what a "C" sounds like.]

(They all agree with **GINNY**. *They begin to sing. At the start of* **LULIE***'s solo, she makes her grand entrance holding a covered silver dish with this year's Prize Quiche in one hand and an envelope in the other.)*

ALL.

WE ARE THE SUSAN B. ANTHONY SOCIETY
FOR THE SISTERS OF GERTRUDE STEIN
WE ARE A STRONG AND VIB-A-RENT SOCIETY
TOGETHER TIL THE END OF ALL TIME

LULIE.

AND YOU KNOW WE STAND AS ONE,
OH MY, IS THAT QUICHE DONE?

ALL.

(I THINK IT'S DONE!)
WE ARE ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES THE LADY
WHEN WE'RE STANDING ARM IN ARM

WREN/GINNY.	**DALE/VERN.**
LINKED AS ONE	(LINKED AS ONE)
HAND IN HAND	(HAND IN HAND)
WE ARE STRONGER	(WE ARE STRONGER)
THAN ANY MAN	(THAN ANY MAN)

ALL.

WE ARE ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES THE LADY WHEN WE'RE STANDING ARM IN ARM

LULIE. Well isn't that lovely. The female voice in unison. Even if we weren't singing about quiches, it would still send chills down my spine.

(This speech ends in an elaborate pose.)

WREN. Keep on your toes Dale! That's a photo!

LULIE. Where do I look?

*(***DALE** *snaps* **LULIE.***)*

DALE. Gorgeous as/always, Lulie.

LULIE. *(to the officers)* Hello fellow Widows!

ALL. Hello sister!

LULIE. *(to the audience)* Hello fellow widows!

(The audience responds. But not up to **LULIE***'s standards.)*

LULIE. *(addressing the "Current Members" in the audience and the officers)* Sisters, let's give them our customary welcome. When we say, "Hello fellow widows!" I want to hear you shout a the top of your lungs, "Hello Sister!" Now let me hear it with pride! HELLO! FELLOW. WIDOWS!!

(They officers and the audience all cheer their response.)

LULIE. *(charged up by the response from the room)* Can you believe it is that time of year again? The tasting of the first quiche! I don't think I need to re-iterate the importance of the EGG to me and my life. All of our lives. As I explained in the forward of my best-selling textbook "Women Can Yes: the History of the Egg", the egg is as close to the Lord Jesus as a piece of food can get. So pure, so perfectly shaped, so delicious. I remember the first time I ate quiche.

(The widows sigh, thinking about their first times.)

I was so young. Sprightly. Naive. And that first bite. I didn't think I'd ever find others who enjoyed quiche as

much as I did. And then I found you all. My sisters. My fellow widows. And I for one cannot wait for you all to try this year's Prize Quiche.

(The widows excitedly hubbub and gather around the table. **LULIE** *goes over to the portrait of Lady Monmont.)*

LULIE. Now, now, sisters! Who is responsible for this?

(beat)

DALE. I am, Lulie. I found it in the archives.

(beat)

LULIE. That's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. Let us take a moment to reflect on how our founder suffered for our sake. Feasting off of nothing but bits of bark and moss. Working tirelessly to build a haven we now call home. This very day, all those years ago, was an historic day. She had promised herself that she wouldn't stop until her mission was complete. A modern day Noah! But she was exhausted and hungry. Sure that she couldn't possibly go on. Until she stumbled upon this very spot – the home of hundreds of wild chickens. Nests overflowing with a bounty of eggs. And from those eggs she drew the strength necessary to complete this town. I like to think Lady Monmont is looking down on us today and smiling. Oh, and she's eating a quiche.

(The sisters beam looking up towards Lady Monmont in Heaven.)

LULIE. Wren, as the Events Chairwoman, it is your privilege to honor our great hero by presenting this year's Prize Quiche.

GINNY. I wonder who's quiche we are eating first / this year?

LULIE. THIS year, I chose a very special quiche to begin the festivities. One of such beauty and imagination that I think it may be one of our best quiches ever.

GINNY. I can't take it! I just can't!

LULIE. She just "kaant". Isn't that adorable. This year, our first quiche shall be…

*(***WREN** *reads the back of the envelope.)*

WREN. [Spinach. Red Onion. Gruyere. Rosemary. Asparagus.] Made with love by…

(She opens the envelope and reads the card:)

WREN. Veronica Schultz!

(The widows squeal and congratulate **VERN**.*)*

VERN. Stop it you guys.

(The sisters continue applauding.)

VERN. Stop.

(The sisters continue.)

VERN. Stop it! I'm serious. Stop.

GINNY. Lulie, if no one else has asked yet, may I do the unveiling of the quiche?

LULIE. Oh Ginny. Sweetheart, you must learn to stop being such an attention hog. You're in America now! Vern can unveil her own quiche.

VERN. Hey Ginny. We can do it together. Come here.

WREN. Oh, isn't that lovely! Sisterhood in action.

*(***GINNY** *and* **VERN** *place their hands on the dish. They unveil the quiche. They almost lose it, but still try to maintain decorum. They all lean down and take a big whiff. Whoa, that smells good.* **LULIE** *shows the quiche to the audience and encourages an "Ooh! Aah!" response. Finally:)*

DALE. The suspense is killing me! Take a bite Lulie!

LULIE. Now now Dale. It would be rude of me as the president to take the first bite. [Therefore I will go immediately to my left – and then one more over.]

(Poor **GINNY** *gets passed over.)*

LULIE. Ginny, it's just Wren's year to get to try first.

GINNY. Yes.

LULIE. Chin up sweet girl. Maybe next year. Maybe not.

*(***WREN** *holds the fork to her heart. Enraptured, this bracketed moment goes on for quite a long time.)*

WREN. [I can't! Oh, I can't! Thank you! Oooooh. I can't!]

GINNY. [I will if / you don't want to…]

WREN. I'm going to do it Ginny!

*(***WREN** *continues with ooh's, oh's and ah's as she digs the fork into the quiche and selects the perfect bite. She lifts it up, smiles as* **DALE** *takes a photo, and just as she's about to:)*

WREN. [I can't! I can't! Oh, this is dangerous.]

*(***WREN** *finally takes a bite. The sisters cannot move. How is it? Finally* **WREN** *looks at the other sisters in horror and covers her mouth. The other officers do the same. Oh no!* **WREN** *finally uncovers her mouth revealing a huge satisfied smile.)*

WREN. It's tooo good!

LULIE. Oh, thank Jesus.

WREN. This might make everyone here just lose their senses!

VERN. That's what I was going for.

LULIE. Wren, I take it the quiche has passed the test?

WREN. Well, if Vern's quiche has anything to say about it, 1956 is going to be our best year yet!

GINNY. Oh Vern! I knew you could do it!

LULIE. Surely, its considerably better than what Marjorie submitted last year.

VERN. Yeah, tomato and mushroom. That was a real winner Marge.

DALE. Ew. I can't even think about it. She might as well have just put meat in the quiche.

LULIE. Dale Prist! Wash out that mouth! We do not even joke about putting meat in a quiche.

DALE. Sorry, Lulie.

LULIE. Need I remind you all of this sisterhood's golden rule?

ALL. No men. No meat. All manners.

LULIE. Thank you.

(beat)

Meat in a quiche! Can you imagine?

WREN. Remember Petunia Bradley?

LULIE. Remember her? I expelled her!

GINNY. Who's Petunia Bradley?

LULIE. This was before your time here Ginny. It was one of the darkest days the Susan B. Anthony Society for the Sisters of Gertrude Stein has ever seen. Four years ago, Petunia Bradley marches in here with a sausage quiche!

VERN. I can't even think about it.

LULIE. She marches in here, puts it down on the table, and tells us that we need to open our minds.

DALE. Ew.

LULIE. Broaden our horizons!

WREN. I'm going to be sick.

LULIE. I mean, can you imagine? Putting a sausage in a quiche. The moment you put meat in a quiche, it's all you can taste. It takes away from the cornerstone of what makes a quiche magical…

LULIE & GINNY. The Egg!

LULIE. *(annoyed with* **GINNY***)* THE EGG!

VERN. Yer darn tootin'.

WREN. Next thing you know, Lulie takes Petunia by the hair in one hand, takes that sausage quiche in the other hand, tosses them both right out the door.

VERN I daydream about that a lot. I just replay it in my head, over and over again. And I will. Laugh.

GINNY. *(catching a whiff of the quiche)* Sisters! We can't wait any longer!

(beat)

GINNY. *(cont.)* It just seems unfair…to keep the others waiting in hungry anticipation.

LULIE. Ginny.

(She holds the tension. And then:)

You are quite right. We can't torture our fellow sisters like this any longer. Let the breakfast begin! Wren, bring in the other quiches!

(Lights. Sirens. This is it. The Big One.)

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