

The Courier with an Empty Satchel

120-minute plan | 4 players | No combat

A courier insists her empty satchel contains a parcel. The recipient's bell rings whenever she turns away, and the dispatch office has no visible entry.

Content notice: Privacy and delivery trust; no real addresses or player names are requested.

What is really happening

Courier Miri accepted a parcel wrapped in a privacy veil for a surprise repair gift. The veil opens only when the named recipient consents; a smudged route tag has led her to the wrong door. Matching the dispatch seal to the correct household permits delivery. Returning it unopened preserves privacy but postpones the gift.

Prepare and play

Use your own rules or play without dice. State the goal, choose an approach, explain a reasonable cost and let the players decide. Plausible careful actions succeed; uncertain actions can succeed with delay, spent supplies or a favour owed. Evidence is always available through its described action. Each player creates an ordinary person with a useful skill, a reason to help, and an item. No character sheet, monster statistics or proprietary rulebook is needed.

Take 10 minutes to introduce characters, read the premise and discuss the content notice. Anyone may say "pause", pass on a description, or ask to move an uncomfortable moment offstage. Agree on no combat and on treating consequences as delay or repair, not permanent harm. Give one player the route map and another the time sheet.

Time plan

120-MINUTE PLAN

0-10: Opening agreement

10-20: Arrival

20-35: Records and tools

35-50: An independent trail

50-55: Break

55-75: The immediate problem

75-95: The final choice

95-110: Home and aftermath

110-120: Closing and epilogues

Follow both investigations; take the break before the immediate problem.

At 75 minutes, settle the immediate problem using a safe approach without another roll. At 95 minutes, finish the final method and begin the return.

With 10 minutes left, first secure the immediate goal: Ask Ona to verify the seal register and give Miri a corrected tag. Mark the immediate goal safe only once the people or resource are secured. Then, if no final method was used: Apply the RETURN seal and bring the unopened parcel to dispatch. Mark the fallback method and read the cost ending. Give each character an epilogue; do not bypass the safety step.

4 PLAYERS

Find the correct household without opening the veil.

Two pairs take observation and action tasks. Resolve them in two short alternating turns.

Resolve the delivery with the recipient's choice.

Work in two pairs, one following the method and the other preparing a fallback or record.

Arrival - 10 minutes

Place: Dispatch arch

Read aloud

Lev watches an empty satchel pull at its strap as if full of stones. Its buckle rings once when Miri walks away.

Run this scene

The parcel is veiled, not absent. Return safely if consent cannot be obtained. Begin with the concrete request in the premise. Ask each character why they care and give them one ordinary useful item. Read both public observations without requiring a roll. Explain that the marked routes are safe to investigate, and offer a choice of the records or the visible trail. Let the group appoint a map reader; do not use hidden travel rolls to block the first lead.

Choices

1. Visit Seal desk
2. Follow the trail to Wrong doorstep

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Courier shelter. A missing method can be found again at Recipient door; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Lev: Resolve the missing entry without exposing a private gift Offers directions and ordinary transport for news of the outcome. Voice: Patient, concrete sentences; ask one practical question.

Timeline record: The satchel has weight and a square shadow although nothing is visible. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: The parcel is veiled, not absent.

Fallback instruction: A RETURN seal sends the unopened parcel back to dispatch. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Return safely if consent cannot be obtained.

Records and tools - 15 minutes

Place: Seal desk

Read aloud

Ona holds a route tag against three household seals. A smudge obscures the street number but leaves the seal intact.

Run this scene

Use the seal to deliver to the correct household. Miri waits at the shelter. Put the method card and destination note on the table. Ask what the two objects suggest, then answer direct practical questions from their wording. The maker can trade tools for help carrying or recording them, but refusal never removes these public documents. The trail remains another route. A check, if your rules use one, changes the time or tidiness of the work rather than whether this evidence exists.

Choices

1. Proceed to Courier shelter
2. Compare evidence at Wrong doorstep

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Courier shelter. A missing method can be found again at Recipient door; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Ona: Find the household whose seal matches the tag Lends supplies if a character helps carry or catalogue them. Public instructions remain available. Voice: Quick, exact words; point at tools while speaking.

Method diagram: The surviving route seal matches the recipient door, not the smudged number. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Use the seal to deliver to the correct household.

Destination note: Miri's route tally marks COURIER SHELTER after the mistaken door. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Miri waits at the shelter.

An independent trail - 15 minutes

Place: Wrong doorstep

Read aloud

Biri opens the wrong door with a tired smile. "The bell is not ours," they say, pointing toward a lane.

Run this scene

A visible trail identifies the courier's location. A witness supplies an independent route. Describe the physical trail before asking for a decision. The witness tells what they actually observed and admits what they did not see. If the group refuses conversation, the physical route supplies the destination. Let a character compare the timeline and another trace the map. For a divided group, take one short turn per side, then reunite at the meeting; do not add another travel encounter.

Choices

1. Proceed to Courier shelter
2. Compare evidence at Seal desk

If the group gets stuck

If conversation or a test fails, give the public card anyway. A clear sign points to Courier shelter. A missing method can be found again at Recipient door; no character skill is required.

People and evidence

Biri: Keep the wrong door from being disturbed Guides the party if they share a plan. If refused, points to the visible trail. Voice: Cautious, distinguish observation from assumption.

Physical trail: The parcel's square shadow follows the satchel into the courier shelter. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: A visible trail identifies the courier's location.

Witness statement: Biri saw Miri sit in the shelter after trying the wrong door. Give it: Ask any direct question, or read the witness's signed statement if conversation is refused. GM inference: A witness supplies an independent route.

The immediate problem - 20 minutes

Place: Courier shelter

Read aloud

Miri rests in a sheltered doorway. The satchel casts a small square shadow although it looks empty.

Run this scene

Courier Miri accepted a parcel wrapped in a privacy veil for a surprise repair gift. The veil opens only when the named recipient consents; a smudged route tag has led her to the wrong door. Matching the dispatch seal to the correct household permits delivery. Returning it unopened preserves privacy but postpones the gift. State the immediate stakes and offer both listed approaches. Before resolving action, ask who observes, who acts and who helps. Make any cost visible before a player accepts it. Avoid demanding a special ability or spell. When a plan fails, use the slower listed route and mark its time cost; people remain recoverable. Once the goal is safe, mark the immediate goal safe and continue. A refusal by the keeper cannot hide the marked safety instructions.

Choices

1. Compare the dispatch seal with the door seals while leaving the satchel closed.
2. Ask Ona to verify the seal register and give Miri a corrected tag.

If the group gets stuck

Ask Ona to verify the seal register and give Miri a corrected tag. Explain a five-minute delay before they accept it; mark the immediate goal safe when the people or resource are secured.

People and evidence

Miri: Deliver only with the actual recipient's permission Explains both solutions when the party agrees to protect the immediate goal; the marked instructions are available regardless. Voice: Calm under pressure; admit the decision and its cost.

Safety marks: Only the named recipient's YES opens the veil. Waiting or returning leaves it intact. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Privacy persists until consent.

Encounter and party adaptation

Find the correct household without opening the veil.

A delay leaves less time for the final repair or decision. Explain costs before resolving an action.

Compare the dispatch seal with the door seals while leaving the satchel closed.

Ask Ona to verify the seal register and give Miri a corrected tag.

Two pairs take observation and action tasks. Resolve them in two short alternating turns.

Mark the immediate goal safe after either safe approach; a setback costs time, not access to the next scene.

The final choice - 20 minutes

Place: Recipient door

Read aloud

The recipient door bears a seal matching the tag. A sign asks visitors to knock and wait for an answer.

Run this scene

Use the seal to deliver to the correct household. Privacy persists until consent. Reveal the method and fallback together. Ask the group which tradeoff it accepts and give every character a small contribution. Mark the complete method for the first choice or the fallback method for the second. A risky improvisation should inherit one of these outcomes after its cost is explained, rather than create a third unprepared lock. Keep the immediate goal safe. Return by the known marked route; no new location needs to be invented.

Choices

1. Knock, explain the sealed gift, and let the recipient choose YES.
2. Apply the RETURN seal and bring the unopened parcel to dispatch.

If the group gets stuck

Apply the RETURN seal and bring the unopened parcel to dispatch. Mark the fallback method, keep the immediate goal safe and read the cost ending. Do not repeat a failed test.

People and evidence

Ona: Find the household whose seal matches the tag Lends supplies if a character helps carry or catalogue them. Public instructions remain available. Voice: Quick, exact words; point at tools while speaking.

Miri: Deliver only with the actual recipient's permission Explains both solutions when the party agrees to protect the immediate goal; the marked instructions are available regardless. Voice: Calm under pressure; admit the decision and its cost.

Method diagram: The surviving route seal matches the recipient door, not the smudged number. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Use the seal to deliver to the correct household.

Fallback instruction: A RETURN seal sends the unopened parcel back to dispatch. Give it: Inspect the visible labelled object. Give its full text automatically; a check affects time or extra colour only. GM inference: Return safely if consent cannot be obtained.

Encounter and party adaptation

Resolve the delivery with the recipient's choice.

The complete method preserves the planned service; the fallback preserves the immediate goal at a visible cost.

Knock, explain the sealed gift, and let the recipient choose YES.

Apply the RETURN seal and bring the unopened parcel to dispatch.

Work in two pairs, one following the method and the other preparing a fallback or record.

Mark the complete method for the first approach or the fallback method for the second. Both allow return and an ending.

Home and aftermath - 15 minutes

Place: Dispatch arch

Read aloud

A parcel appears in consenting hands, or the satchel returns unopened. The bell finally waits instead of demanding.

Run this scene

Choose a complete resolution or a resolution with a cost, then ask the group what happens next. Read the ending matching the selected outcome. Invite each character to add one ordinary detail to the aftermath, then ask the keeper for a concrete next action. Record who accepted the cost and which clues went unused. Spend the last few minutes on one enjoyable moment and one thing to change next time. Characters need not solve every optional inference to earn a resolved ending.

Choices

1. Describe who follows up tomorrow
2. Ask who helped whom and what it cost

If the group gets stuck

If no method was chosen, first confirm the immediate goal is safe, use the final fallback method and then read the cost ending. Record the unresolved work and give every character an epilogue.

People and evidence

Lev: Resolve the missing entry without exposing a private gift Offers directions and ordinary transport for news of the outcome. Voice: Patient, concrete sentences; ask one practical question.

Miri: Deliver only with the actual recipient's permission Explains both solutions when the party agrees to protect the immediate goal; the marked instructions are available regardless. Voice: Calm under pressure; admit the decision and its cost.

Endings

Complete resolution

The veil lifts in the recipient's hands, revealing a carefully repaired keepsake. Miri adds a clean seal impression to the route book.

First secure the immediate goal at Courier shelter. Use final method A at Recipient door before choosing this ending.

Resolution with a cost

The parcel returns unseen. Its sender receives a request for a clearer route and a suitable delivery time, while nobody's privacy is traded for speed.

First secure the immediate goal at Courier shelter. Use final method B at Recipient door before choosing this ending.

Knock, explain the sealed gift, and let the recipient choose YES remains for a later visit.

Handout answers

h-order: The parcel is veiled, not absent.

h-fallback: Return safely if consent cannot be obtained.

h-method: Use the seal to deliver to the correct household.

h-note: Miri waits at the shelter.

h-trail: A visible trail identifies the courier's location.

h-witness: A witness supplies an independent route.

h-safe: Privacy persists until consent.

Clue reasoning

The parcel is veiled, not absent.: c-order

Proceed to Courier shelter: c-note OR c-trail OR c-witness

Privacy persists until consent.: c-safe / marked safety fallback

Resolve the delivery with the recipient's choice.: c-method OR c-fallback

Map descriptions

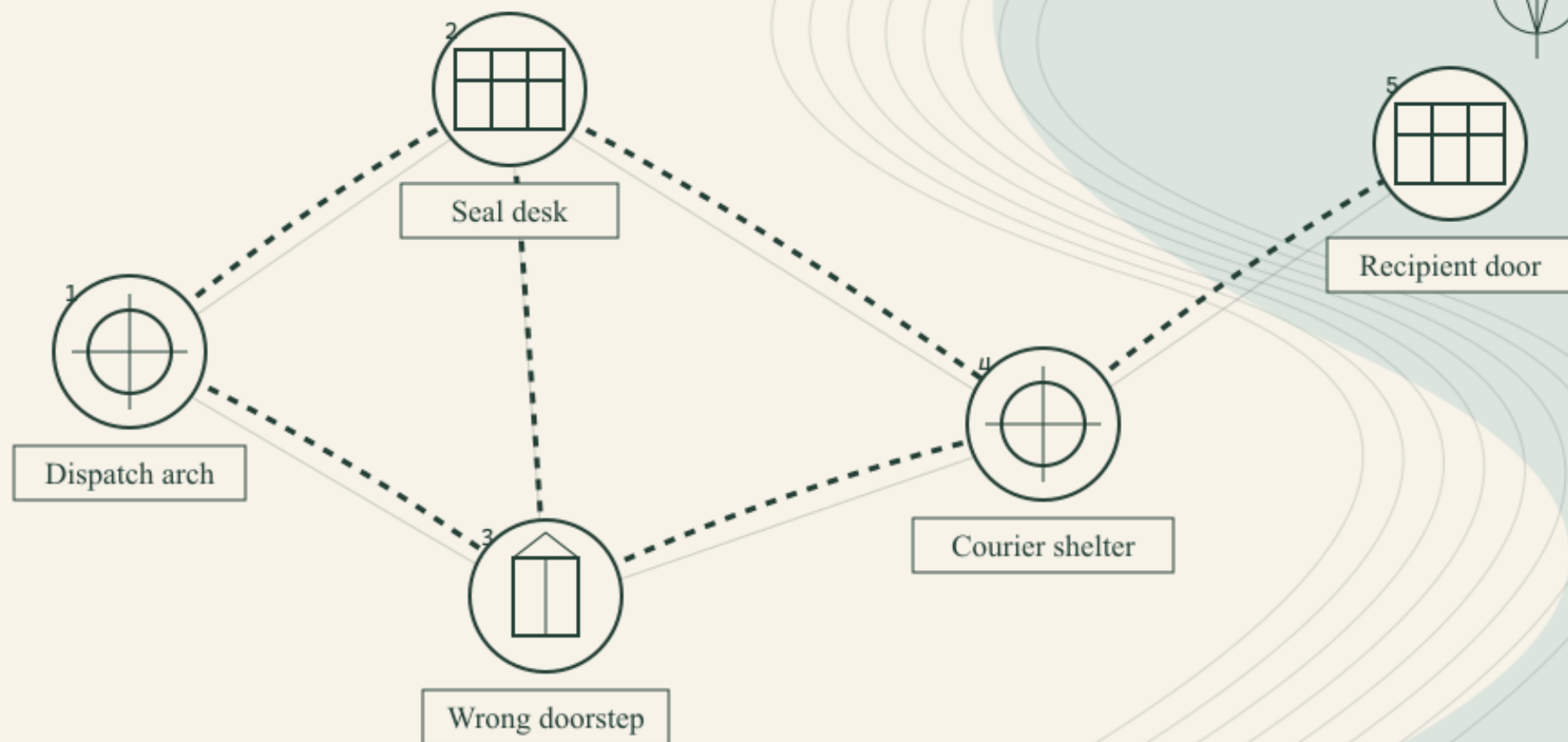
GM route atlas: Start at Dispatch arch. Seal desk and Wrong doorstep are independent investigation routes; both connect to Courier shelter, which leads to Recipient door. All marked connections are bidirectional. Return uses the known route to Dispatch arch.

Courier shelter - approach plan: At Courier shelter, the marked entrance reaches the immediate problem. Approach A: Compare the dispatch seal with the door seals while leaving the satchel closed. Approach B: Ask Ona to verify the seal register and give Miri a corrected tag. Both reach the onward route. Layout is

schematic, with no combat grid or movement scale.

Player route map: Public route map: Dispatch arch connects to Seal desk and Wrong doorstep; either reaches Courier shelter, then Recipient door. Routes work in both directions. Retrace the route to return. No hidden information is marked.

GM route atlas

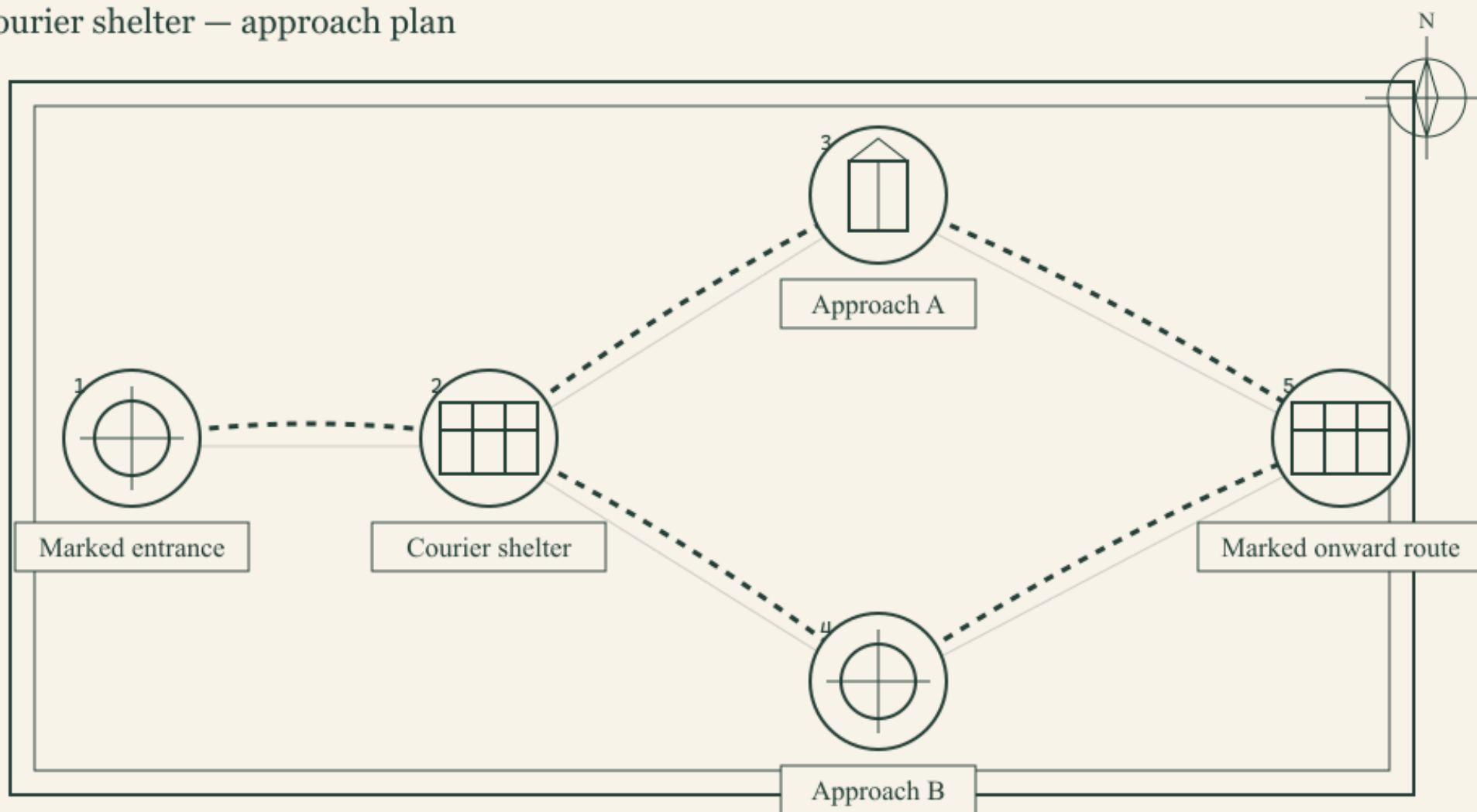


C-SAFE / immediate problem

C-METHOD or C-FALLBACK

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Courier shelter — approach plan



Compare the dispatch seal with the door seals while leaving the satchel closed.

Ask Ona to verify the seal register and give Miri a corrected tag.

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