

# Revelations

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2014  
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Monkeys,  
& Pokemon**

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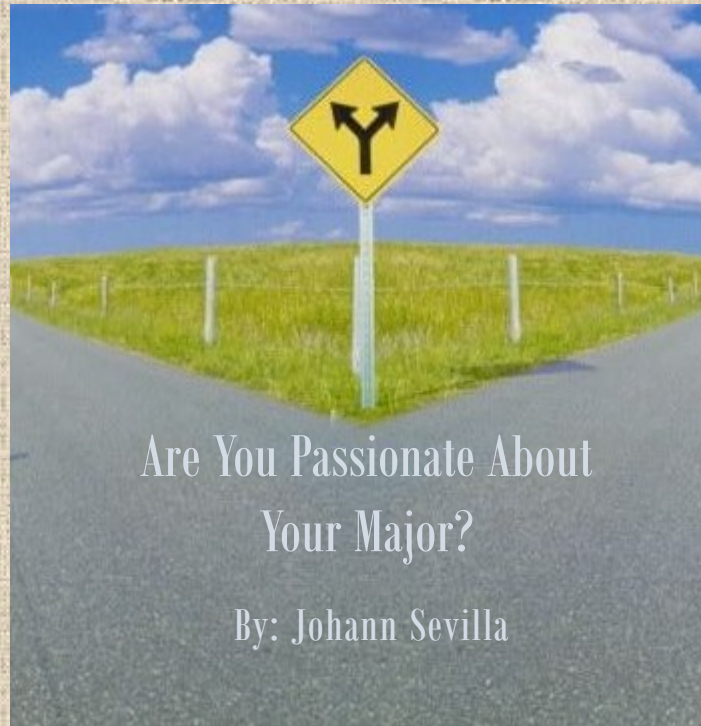
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Check out the full version at:  
<http://revelations.ucsd.edu>





## Are You Passionate About Your Major?

By: Johann Sevilla

Lately, I've been pondering my life, reconsidering my long term goals, and trying to understand my not-so-clear motivations for being in school. As a sophomore majoring in Computer Science, I find myself in a very uncertain position that I'm sure many other students can relate to.

When I look behind me, I see a growing pile of conquered general education requirements. I think back to the sociology readings I started but never cared to finish, the chemistry lectures I tried so hard to stay awake in, the math classes that moved a bit faster than I could, and of course, the Hum papers that I frantically willed into existence the night before.

Now, I look ahead and see myself at the foot of a mountain, my CS diploma at the top, fluttering in the wind. And as I begin the climb up these upper division CS courses, I cannot help but wonder if I am climbing the right mountain.

I discovered programming the summer before coming to UCSD, and chose computer science as a major because I liked it more than any other academic topic. I was (and still am) fascinated by the idea of creating something out of nothing with only a computer. Although I cannot see myself studying any other major, meeting so many other CS majors who have programmed in their past has made me realize that I lack their passion for computer science. This makes me

second guess whether or not I am in the right major, and the profound depth of my own uncertainty troubles me greatly. I know I am still learning and discovering and haven't had the time to develop a passion for CS, but I cannot help but fear that in the thick of all my courses, I will think "Man, I don't enjoy this at all... is it really worth it?"

To commit yourself to one academic topic without recognizing it as your passion is extremely terrifying.

The aspirations and motivations of the typical college student are often too unstable and complex to pigeonhole into a single major. What can one do when the rigid structure of a college major does not fit his or her erratically moving interests and goals? Although I know that working hard no matter what I do is the smartest option, a little more clarity or direction would be comforting in such an intense academic environment.

What I've written about is very personal, but I believe that explaining my internal struggle and perspective is important because so many other students are in similar positions. I am still learning, aspiring, and planning. If you can relate to this uncertainty, understand that you are not alone, and that even though you don't have the slightest clue as to what your future holds, you must persist. I feel our future selves will be thankful that we did.



## *A Calculus Problem*

*By: Stella Raedeker*

My junior year of high school, I miraculously survived pre-calculus with a little help from a smart friend. After that, I decided to give up on math, against the desperate pleading of my college counsellors. "I'm going to major in English" I foolishly explained to them. I imagined wiling away my college days in creative bliss, spending my free time writing under a shady tree. Perhaps I would be surrounded by some artsy-fartsy friends who would be playing acoustic guitar and ranting about the commercialization of something or another.

I couldn't have been more wrong. I was placed in Revelle, which, as we all know, has a basic calculus requirement. And, as if that wasn't enough for me, I changed my major to economics (which involves calculus) and declared an accounting minor. I know. I must be out of my mind.

Somewhat contrary to my expectations, it was easy enough in the beginning. I remember thinking to myself "Wow, maybe I should be in 20A," as we were reviewing how to find the slope of a line on the first day of class. But then, they started asking me about a limit as  $h$  goes to 0. It all went downhill from there. I'm *still* not so sure about h... but I think I reached my limit a long time ago. Needless to say, I'm very glad I stuck with 10A.

Nowadays, I just don't have much time to question much of anything, including the Revelle GE requirements or my major. It seems like I'm always in the calc tutoring lab or walking to the calc tutoring lab. I can't even find the time to study math. Studying requires some basic understanding. I usually just stare at things until my eyes get tired.

Fear not, all my right-brained friends. You are certainly not alone. Although it may seem like it, you are not the only one in UCSD who can't use chain rule in your sleep. Take my advice, and don't give up. Go to the basement of AP&M, don't be afraid of it because it's a basement (but don't use the elevator, it's a waste of your time). Raise your hand and eventually you will be helped. It may take ten minutes, maybe ten hours... you may have to wait there so long that your test will be over by the time someone comes to you, but it will all be worth it eventually. I do believe that if we keep on, we will eventually understand, and maybe even be able to apply it to practical things. It's a possibility.

Yet even if we never learn, still there is hope. There will come a day when we won't need to take calculus anymore. There will come a day when we can freely congregate on the lawns of this great university, to talk about our feelings without fear in our hearts of the next math midterm. There may even come a day when we can look back on this struggle fondly. But until that day comes, we must endure with courageous hearts.



# **The Next Muhammad Ali, But Not Really**

## **By: Johanna Wu**

I am proud to say that I actually followed through with one of my New Year's resolutions this year, which was to take boxing classes. For inexplicable reasons, I have always been curious about the sport, and thus made trying it one of my bucket list entries. It wasn't until I was notified about an attack on campus, however, that I felt compelled enough to act upon my desire to learn. The thought of not knowing any self-defense made me feel helpless, and so I tried to amend that.

As an avid athlete who threw shot put and discus for three years in track and field, I foolishly thought that I would be somewhat prepared for my first day of boxing. But anyone who has been on a sports team knows that the beginning of a season, typically known as "hell week" is when people are weeded out via horrific activities such as bleachers and circuits. Boxing was no different. After my first two sessions, which were filled with many mountain climbers and squats, there was soreness in parts of my body that I didn't even know could be sore.

But like other sports, it got easier as the "season" progressed. I learned how to throw jabs and hooks and how to block my opponents' attacks. And before I knew it, I was applying the moves I learned to sparring with my fellow classmates, mouth guard, head gear and all. Boxing became an outlet for the stress that would accumulate during the week. If someone or something frustrated me, I would take it out on the punching bag until I was too exhausted to think about it. I didn't really realize until the last week of boxing how much I looked forward to the biweekly classes; it truly became the highlight of my winter quarter. The instructor was encouraging and clever, somehow managing to trick us into longer and longer workouts as the class progressed. I became friends with my fellow boxers despite having to hit them during sparring. But most importantly, I now feel more empowered and physically capable of defending myself.

To anyone who wants to try something new...what's stopping you? There are so many classes available at a discounted price to UCSD students, so take advantage of it at the UCSD recreation page! Whatever your reasoning is for trying, embrace it and hone it into something that could potentially become a new passion. Although I was ambivalent and thought I was going to die from exhaustion during the first week of boxing, I have actually come to enjoy the sport and all its physical and emotional benefits. Plus I like the awed looks of respect when I tell people that I take boxing classes. I hope to see some of y'all in the boxing room next quarter!



## Oh the Humanities ~ Essays and Sorrows

### By: Patricia Tam

Most people think Revelle, especially Revelle students themselves, has the most arduous and difficult writing sequence, but I wholeheartedly think that five courses of Humanities just makes us the best college. In no other college will you be exposed to mind-opening works, which one can only appreciate after they're nearly finished with the sequence. No other college will challenge you half as much as Revelle does--and it transforms us into stronger students for being able to handle so much more than most other colleges.

I only have one more? What will life be like when I don't have actual *works to read*?

Despite the essays, there's a lot to be learned about the Humanities. A reason one may begin to appreciate them is because they become more and more applicable to life. The Humanities only matter when you make it matter, and to me there are a few things that I've come to realize about them. While students have their complaints, this is not going to address the logistics the Humanities sequence has in place, for most students are well aware of them already; rather, this will be a personal anecdote based upon my own experiences with the Humanities.

I'm currently taking HUM 4 this quarter, but my first author to discuss will be Montaigne from HUM 3. Perhaps I may have read Montaigne at the wrong time, but I don't like his style. I expressed this earlier over coffee with my current Humanities professor, Antony Lyon. I could hardly care about Cannibals or Coaches. I understand that it was his style to go from one point to another and discuss both seemingly meaningless ideas and particularly serious issues. As the father of modern skepticism, he was very influential in writing things that are open to interpretation.

However, I feel like I need to read *Essays* again at some point, because I find myself writing more and more drafts that have more questions by the time I finish writing than answers. I *feel* resolved when I finish expressing myself in writing, but I could hardly say that whatever internal conflict I'm dealing with is actually completely done with. If only it were that easy, and perhaps that's the point of Montaigne: it's not. Cannibals will remain cannibals, but to think of them as less civilized than you are? You can't possibly answer yes to that without a few qualms.

My personal writing style is like Montaigne then, I suppose—but it is worth noting that I dislike Montaigne, and my favorite Humanities work that I've read so far is *The Sorrows of Young Werther* by Goethe. I like this work because it bothers me. It bothers me. That's what I define as a good book. It makes me upset and gets a reaction out of me. Long story short, Werther suffers from being unable to cope without his love, Lotte, and resolves to kill himself. Perhaps what I thought was the most appalling about the novel was the fact that I was able to sympathize with Werther's troubles--only to be unable to do anything to save him.

Even if most cannot feel Werther's emotions to their extremes, Goethe's purpose in writing Werther cannot be ignored. He writes in an attempt to understand himself, much like I do, but I

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make sure to note the difference between me and his protagonist: Werther is just so hell bent on Lotte that Lotte is his only answer. There's no deviation from it, no questioning, no ambiguity. Maybe that's why it makes me a little angry; I want to change his answers, but I know I can't.

While Montaigne cares about the issues of society in *Essays*, the only issues *I* care about are myself. While Goethe writes Werther to parse his own experiences, my answers will never be quite so definite as he put it in *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

In high school, we were forced to write about author after author after author. We were forced to analyze syntax, diction, and theme, and required to write stories and poems. I've experienced nearly the same things in high school and college: there's work, emotions, and drama involved. And I liked Calculus and Physics. But never did I ever find out who I really was in high school despite all of that work in the classroom.

This is Patricia. Patricia questions like Montaigne but analyzes like Goethe. I think I'm an interesting mix: I write about *my* issues but I can never quite get the answers.

Never quite getting the answers is one of the issues that people tend to have with the Humanities, according to Professor Lyon—and that's one of the most important tenets of the Humanities, which is that they're not *selling* you anything. You have to decide what you believe, and it's actually *difficult* to do that. It's what I've come to appreciate about the Humanities. No college is as cool as the one with the scary Humanities series, the one that takes forever and makes you read and forces you to think. It makes me question what the point of the other writing sequences are anyway, other than to make you write.

But in my opinion, if this is the message they're trying to sell me, then I'm still not sold: there's something a lot more than just thinking for yourself involved with the Humanities. There's also a considerable amount of *discovering* yourself along the way that people tend not to recognize. For me it was this interesting epiphany over coffee, but being exposed to things you wouldn't think of reading opens up parts of you that you probably didn't know existed, or maybe made you think in a way that was a slight turn from how you usually do. For me, that's why the Humanities is so important. The basic question that the courses return to is "What makes you human?"

Essay after essay and sorrow after sorrow, one could eventually find the answer to this question with enough evidence. But what matters more is knowing that there is no right answer to that, and I think I've found mine.



## The Three Unforgettable Lessons From a Stranger I Met on a Plane By:

*'How are you?'*

Says the man sitting beside me in the plane from Salt Lake City to San Diego. 'How am I?' I reiterated the question in my head as frustration swelled up within me. I stuck out my forefinger and said, 'Let's see, I've been airborne and stuck in the confinements of an airport since 6.30 in the morning, I'm sleep deprived, and I have a Hum essay due when I get back to my college.' Well, that all happened in my head. On the outside, I put up a smile and said I was amazing. Hoping that he would leave it at just that, I went back to daydreaming, enjoying whatever time I had left before I have to face that much-dreaded essay.

*'Do you live in San Diego?'*

My insides cringe. Now was not the time for small talk. Ten minutes into our conversation, and I found myself describing why and how I came to study in the U.S. This stranger was really curious about the process it took to come here as an international student. And so, I obligingly let him know how much of a pain it was, what with the SATs, the lack of resources, academic differences and so on.

The man now tucked his iPad away and faced me; he told me that I was a lucky girl. He then put his hand out as if about to give a speech, and went on to define what he meant by luck. Luck, in his opinion, is when opportunity meets responsibility. He told me that I was given the opportunity to come here but the reason I am here now is because I am responsible. My heart leaped in wonder as he had translated my frustration into an honorable responsibility. This man made me realize that I worked hard to be here. He made me realize that now that I'm living this opportunity, I should be blessed and geared to work hard. He reminded me of why I came here in the first place, and why I worked so hard to insist that I come to UCSD.

I wanted a good education.

It was as simple as that and it is surprising how something so simple could be easily forgotten. It is too easy to let the fast paced quarter system, the hum essay deadlines and the mid-terms cloud my drive and passion. Above all else, it is too easy to miss my home, the comfort of my bed and the company of my old friends.

I began to open up to this wise stranger, and I learned that he is a retired businessman who has a vast array of hobbies; wine collecting and travelling are among them. He spoke with enthusiasm as he explained his most recent adventure in South East Asia. He chuckled when I asked how he is able to live such a fulfilling lifestyle and replied with a single word,

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*'Health.'*

The first thing that came to my mind was the stress I put my body under when faced with college work and the Oreos that I binge on during midnight crunch sessions. I was wrecked with guilt at that point and mentally promised myself that I'd be kinder to my body.

When we were about to land, the old man addressed me again and asked if he could have the pleasure of knowing my name. I was both astonished and complimented by his wish. In requesting my name, he has shown his humility in being kind and attentive to someone who is generations behinds him. I felt humbled to be able to stand on the same ground as someone so established and wise. I shook his hand and felt some of his wisdom bestowed upon me.

Back home, as I sit in my hobbit hole (what I like to call my living space as I live in a triple-meant-to-be-double room), I smiled at this unexpected encounter. I secretly thanked the seemingly unfortunate event of a delayed plane ride that led to such a short and sweet conversation.

I am lucky. I worked hard to be here. Now, I'll work harder to stay here.





## *Shakespeare, Monkeys, and Pokemon - A Theorem Based Assertion*

### *Applied to Popular Culture*

By: Austin Bacong

It would be a fallacy to state that there does not exist a college student who has not read or heard of the popular works by Shakespeare. Several of us are familiar with the tragedies of *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Macbeth*, to the comedies of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*. While there is much to be learned and honored about the esteemed Englishman, I would venture to say many of you would not be able to see how Shakespeare, monkeys, and Pokemon could ever possibly be related. But I'll explain.

Have you ever heard of the Infinite Monkey Theorem? It deals with the interaction of individuals in society and their ability to make progress. First coined as a metaphor by Emile Borel in 1913, it later took storm to popular culture and the Internet, expanding on the theory with the assertion that "... if an infinite number of monkeys were left to bang on an infinite number of typewriters, sooner or later they would accidentally reproduce the complete works of William Shakespeare (or even just one of his sonnets)." Though the odds of such an occurrence appear astronomical with a seemingly better chance of winning the lottery, getting struck by lightning, or becoming the President of the United States, the Infinite Monkey Theorem found its place in the hearts of many as a 'chuckle' to such a grand speculation. Now, this is where Pokemon comes in.

Could you believe of such a thought experiment ever finding success? If you cannot wrap your mind around it, you may want to reconsider and give it a second chance with its applications to an online revival play-through of the original Gameboy Pokemon Red. If you are unfamiliar with Pokemon, it is a role-playing game (RPG) where you, with the help of creatures that are either fantastic or spin-offs of real animals, beat the game by becoming the top Pokemon Trainer; a side quest of the game is fulfilling the research of a Pokemon Professor (who allowed your journey to start) by obtaining data/descriptions on all the Pokemon in the game in an electronic journal known as the Pokedex. While an RPG is meant to be played by one person, TwitchPlaysPokemon puts the Infinite Monkey Theorem to the test, bringing tens of thousands (average sixty to one hundred thousand) of players together online an attempt to beat the game by inputting one command at a time into a chat-box (left, right, start, a, b).

Though it would seem impossible to make progress with such conditions, the non-believers and speculative audience can be put to rest. Airing in the middle of February, though much despair was experienced with people unable to agree on a specific course of action, after 16 days, 7hours, and 45 minutes, players beat the game by defeating the Elite Four and Champion, signifying a moment of triumph. Whether or not the efforts of tens of thousands of people confirm the Infinite Monkey Theorem on some level, TwitchPlaysPokemon proved a format allowing sheer numbers of people interacting in various ways on a single-input based system can come together and make progress. And the journey continues with TwitchPlaysPokemon's next installment of their online playthrough of the next generation of Pokemon: Gold, Silver, and Crystal Versions!

To see a recap of their journey, visit: <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Recap/TwitchPlaysPokemonRed>

To see TwitchPlaysPokemon live, visit:  
<http://www.twitch.tv/twitchplayspokemon>



## Humanities 1: Current Thoughts



By: Tyler Takemoto

Back in Week 3, I wrote an article listing my first impressions about Hum 1. To summarize, I came to the conclusion that the class did not seem too challenging and that I was curious as to why so many upperclassmen complain about it.

Now as we head into Week 8, I have had to change my point of view.

In the past, I have enjoyed classes like AP English and AP Literature. Refining my writing skills, becoming a more critical reader, and expanding my horizons with new ideas are all worthy pursuits that we explored in those classes. The purpose of Hum 1 is very similar. While providing a strong background in reading and writing, it seeks to lead us through an exploration of history and philosophy throughout the Western Cultural Tradition in Ancient Greece and Israel.

My professor and TA for Hum 1 are both phenomenal—they promote intellectual discussion about the material and help us tie important concepts from the readings to contemporary ideas that shape modern society. The readings are very long and sometimes uninteresting, but there is no question of their value in light of their historical and cultural significance.

But instead of focusing on my own experience with Hum 1, I want to discuss the Humanities program as a whole.

My biggest problem with the Humanities sequence is the grading system. While my views may seem shallow, I think I bring up a very valid and widespread concern when I say that grades matter. The Humanities sequence consists of 24 units spanning five quarters of our undergraduate education. For those of us aiming for graduate or pre-professional school, prestigious honors pro-

grams, and employment in top-level positions, a high GPA is very important. Especially early in our undergraduate careers when we have yet to accrue many units, a lower-than-optimal grade in a six unit course can break our chances at landing that coveted summer internship or lab position when faced with other candidates who did not have to deal with the same factors.

Of course, this assumes that students will receive less-than-perfect grades in Humanities, which brings me to my next complaint about the series.

Teaching Assistants decide the grades. Obviously there are too many students in the class for the professor to address each of them individually, but putting the TAs in charge of grading leads to quite a bit of inconsistency. Some TAs grade easily with the philosophy that demonstrated effort and proficiency deserve an A, while others seem to think that an A is a mythical paragon that no real student can achieve. Additionally, the quality of the Teaching Assistant in terms of providing a constructive learning environment varies widely from section to section. For example, one of my peers writes at the same level as I do. We always proofread our essays together before the due date and discuss ideas together so that we are on the same page as we begin to write. However, my TA gives me much higher grades than the TA of my peer. To add to the discrepancy, my peer's TA often rants about the low quality of theses and mechanics of the students' essays.

Personally, I find the variation in TA grading principles to be unacceptable. Factors like harsh grading and unsupportive class environments in-

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introduce unnecessary stress into what should be an enjoyable general education requirement. The most strenuous part of the Humanities sequence should be the extensive reading and thought-provoking discussion debate, not the grades on our papers. While developing a strong writing base is undeniably important, I feel that many of the graders set the standard much too high. The result is a generation of students who are more concerned about grades than about the subject matter at hand, which I believe is a grave mistake if the goal is to foster a passion and appreciation for the Humanities.

A secondary concern that I have of the series is its length. While it is true that such a broad subject is difficult to condense, I don't think that we should be required to fit five courses, two of them worth six units, into our schedules. Yes, I understand that the emphasis on Humanities is valuable for those of us who would not have otherwise explored outside of science and math classes; but what about those of us who are actually interested in the Humanities? I wanted to explore when I got to college. And having an interest in the Humanities, I knew I would want to take a wide variety of Literature, History, Philosophy, and Art classes on top of the classes for my major. At first, the Humanities sequence sounded like a dream come true. But then I realized what it really meant. Fitting five classes into my undergraduate years in addition to other GEs and major requirements greatly restricts my ability to explore. I want more freedom to take classes that I am interested in. The Humanities sequence has proven to be one of the factors preventing my own personal exploration.

So I guess my current opinion of the Humanities sequence is pretty lukewarm. Is it really worth it? I enjoy the course, but I honestly do not feel that I am getting as much out of it as I

would from an upper division Literature, Philosophy, or History course. One thing that I am getting enough of is my fair share of stress. My final graded essay is due this coming week. Unfortunately, I will have to put in quite a bit of work—more effort than is necessary, in my opinion—to pull off a grade I am satisfied with. I feel like my current struggle is shared by many of my peers and it saddens me to know that many students who could have come to love the subject are being driven to view it as one more commitment in an undergraduate education filled with obligations.

"It's college," you might say. "Of course you should be held to a higher standard. Requirements are a necessary evil to developing into well-rounded adults."

I have to politely disagree. College should be a time of exploration. Inhibitions are inevitable because there are certain responsibilities that we as students must fulfill if we want to be prepared for the world after graduation. However, these inhibitions should be avoided wherever possible in order to foster students who truly appreciate an interdisciplinary quest for knowledge. In my honest opinion, the Humanities sequence needs a bit of revision to transform it from a necessary evil to an enjoyable means of exploring a fascinating range of subjects.



# STAFF

## Join a Revelle organization! Revelle Hall Association (RHA)



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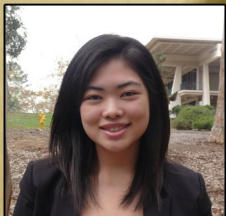
Sheng



Konto



Tyler



Jinky

Austin



Patricia



Punit



Kyra



Stella



Johanna



Kenny



Johann

Are you planning on applying to be an OL or an RA one day, and want the skill set you'll need for the job? Are you looking for a way to get involved? Look no further! Come join the Revelle Hall Association (RHA), where you can gain leadership and program planning experience while meeting great people and making new friends. We put on fun events every quarter for the Revelle residential community – some of the ones we've had in the past include Breaking Boards, Sports Day, Naked Juice Twister, & Chalk Up the Night! Be a community rep and bring ideas from your community to us about what events they'd like to see in the future. If you're interested, come represent your community by joining us every Tuesday from 10-11pm in Revelle Conference Room C for our general body meetings!

### Elections!

Elections season is here! Don't forget to vote in the college council/A.S. elections week 2 of spring quarter at [tritonlink.ucsd.edu](http://tritonlink.ucsd.edu)!

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