

Samarkand Amin Maalouf

Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib was born in Agra in the closing years of the eighteenth century. A precocious child, he began composing verses at an early age and gained recognition while he was still very young. He wrote in both Urdu and Persian and was also a great prose stylist. He was a careful, even strict, editor of his work who took to publishing long before his peers. His predilection for writing difficult, obscure poetry peppered with complex metaphors produced a unique commentarial tradition that did not extend beyond his work. Commentaries on his current Urdu divan have produced a field of critical writing that eventually lead to the crafting of a critical lens with which to view the classical ghazal. The nineteenth century was the height of European colonialism. British colonialism in India produced definitive changes in the ways literature was produced, circulated and consumed. Ghalib responded to the cultural challenge with a far-sightedness that was commendable. His imagination sought engagement with a wider community of readers. His deliberate switch to composing in Persian shows that he wanted his works to reach beyond political boundaries and linguistic barriers. Ghalib's poetic trajectory begins from Urdu, then moves to composing almost entirely in Persian and finally swings back to Urdu. It is nearly as complex as his poetry. However, his poetic output in Persian is far more than what he wrote in Urdu. More important is that he gave precedence to Persian over Urdu. Ghalib's voice presents us with a double bind, a linguistic paradox. Exploring his life, works and philosophy, this authoritative critical biography of Ghalib opens a window to many shades of India and the subcontinent's cultural and literary tradition.

In the 21st Century, a drug that guarantees the birth of boys--originally developed to reduce Third World populations--leads to a worldwide shortage of women. The result is an explosion of male violence, wars, and the sale of women on the black market. The narrator is a French entomologist trying to eradicate the drug.

In 1739, Qaraar Ali, a young craftsman from Delhi witnesses the destruction of his world as he has known it. His wondrous city where he found love, spirituality, the friendship of poets and philosophers becomes a desolate, scorching hell. From the embers of his past, a journey begins; one which takes him into the depths of Sufi philosophy. Traversing spectacular landscapes of a fading Mughal empire, a turbulent central Asia and Persia, a culturally retreating Ottoman empire and declining Spanish influence, Qaraar Ali finds hope in the sacred Geometry of the Sufis through which he attempts at rebuilding his life and rediscovering love. A deeply passionate love story imbued with spirituality, acceptance, compassion and redemption, *The Lost Fragrance of Infinity* gives a much deserved voice to Sufism and its contributions to humanity, art, mathematics, mysticism and science.

European and Arab versions of the Crusades have little in common. For Arabs, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were years of strenuous efforts to repel a brutal and destructive invasion by barbarian hordes. Under Saladin, an unstoppable Muslim army inspired by prophets and poets finally succeeded in destroying the most powerful Crusader kingdoms. The memory of this greatest and most enduring victory ever won by a non-European society against the West still lives in the minds of millions of Arabs today. Amin Maalouf has sifted through the works of a score of contemporary Arab chroniclers of the Crusades, eyewitnesses and often participants in the events. He retells their stories in their own vivacious style, giving us a vivid portrait of a society rent by internal conflicts and shaken by a traumatic encounter with an alien culture. He retraces two critical centuries of Middle Eastern history, and offers fascinating insights into some of the forces that shape Arab and Islamic consciousness today. 'Well-researched and highly readable.' *Guardian* 'A useful and important analysis adding much to existing western histories ... worth recommending to George Bush.' *London Review of Books* 'Maalouf tells an inspiring story ... very readable ... warmly recommended.' *Times Literary Supplement* 'A wide readership should enjoy this vivid narrative of stirring events.' *The Bookseller* 'Very well done indeed ... Should be put in the hands of anyone who asks what lies behind the Middle East's present conflicts.' *Middle East International*

In the summer of 1964, while a military coup was taking place and tanks were rolling through the streets of Algiers, Robert Irwin set off for Algeria in search of Sufi enlightenment. There he entered a world of marvels and ecstasy, converted to Islam and received an initiation as a faqir. He learnt the rituals of Islam in North Africa and he studied Arabic in London. He also pursued more esoteric topics under a holy fool possessed of telepathic powers. A series of meditations on the nature of mystical experience run through this memoir. But political violence, torture, rock music, drugs, nightmares, Oxbridge intellectuals and first love and its loss are all part of this strange story from the 1960s.

Chronicles the history of Arab civilization, looking at the beauty of the great mosques, the importance attached to education, the achievements of Arab science, the role of women, internal conflicts, and the Palestinian question.

Set in Cairo between 1997 and 2011, *The Crocodiles* is narrated in numbered, prose poem-like paragraphs, set against the backdrop of a burning Tahrir Square, by a man looking back on the magical and explosive period of his life when he and two friends started a secret poetry club amid a time of drugs, messy love affairs, violent sex, clumsy but determined intellectual bravado, and retranslations of the Beat poets. Youssef Rakha's provocative, brutally intelligent novel of growth and change begins with a suicide and ends with a doomed revolution, forcefully capturing thirty years in the life of a living, breathing, daring, burning, and culturally incestuous Cairo.

From a master historian, the definitive account of history's first terrorists An offshoot of the Ismaili Shi'ite sect of Islam, the Assassins were the first group to make systematic use of murder as a political weapon. Established in Iran and Syria in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, they aimed to overthrow the existing Sunni order in Islam and replace it with their own. They terrorized their foes with a series of dramatic murders of Islamic leaders, as well as of some of the Crusaders, who brought their name and fame back to Europe. Professor Lewis traces the history of this radical group, studying its teachings and its influence on Muslim thought. Particularly insightful in light of the rise of the terrorist attacks in the U.S. and in Israel, this account of the Assassins--whose name is now synonymous with politically motivated murderers--places recent events in historical perspective and sheds new light on the fanatic mind.

How does what we know shape the ways we read? Starting from the premise that any productive theory of narrative must take into account the presuppositions the reader brings to the text, *Before Reading* explores how our prior knowledge of literary conventions influences the processes of interpretation and evaluation. Available again with a new introduction by James Phelan.

"In the aftermath of a deadly outbreak bearing similarities to the Tanganyika Laughter Epidemic, a city at the tip of Africa is losing its mind-complete with hallucinations, paranoia, and good old-fashioned ghost sightings. Is it the result of secret government experiments, an episode of mass hysteria, the effects of trauma, a sign of the end times? In a quarantined city in which the inexplicable has already occurred, rumors, superstitions, and conspiracy theories abound. In these strange days, Faith works as a full-time corpse collector and a freelance truthologist, putting together disparate pieces of information to solve others' problems. But after Faith agrees to help an orphaned girl find the girl's abducted baby brother, she begins to wonder whether the boy is even real. Meanwhile, Sans, a ponyjacker in the human hair trade, is so distracted by a glimpse of his dream woman that he lets a bag of money he owes his gang partners go missing-leaving him desperately searching for both and soon questioning his own sanity. Over the course of a single week, the paths of Faith, Sans, and a cast of other hustlers-including a data dealer, a drug addict, a sin eater, and a hyena man-will cross and intertwine as they move about the city, looking for lost souls, uncertain absolution, and answers that may not exist. Part ghost story, part whodunit, part palimpsest, *THE DOWN DAYS* is a rollicking exploration of the mutability of memory, the

subjectivity of perception, and the notion that truth is ultimately in the eye of the beholder"--

There are ninety-nine names for God in the Koran, is it possible that there is a secret one-hundredth name? In this tale of magic and mystery, of love and danger, Balthasar's ultimate quest is to find the secret that could save the world. Before the dawn of the apocalyptic 'Year of the Beast' in 1666, Balthasar Embriaco, a Genoese Levantine merchant, sets out on an adventure that will take him across the breadth of the civilised world, from Constantinople, through the Mediterranean, to London shortly before the Great Fire. Balthasar's urgent quest is to track down a copy of one of the rarest and most coveted books ever printed, a volume called 'The Hundredth Name', its contents are thought to be of vital importance to the future of the world. There are ninety-nine names for God in the Koran, and merely to know this most secret hundredth name will, Balthasar believes, ensure his salvation.

These transcendent, lyrical essays on the West announced Gretel Ehrlich as a major American writer—"Wyoming has found its Whitman" (Annie Dillard). Poet and filmmaker Gretel Ehrlich went to Wyoming in 1975 to make the first in a series of documentaries when her partner died. Ehrlich stayed on and found she couldn't leave. *The Solace of Open Spaces* is a chronicle of her first years on "the planet of Wyoming," a personal journey into a place, a feeling, and a way of life. Ehrlich captures both the otherworldly beauty and cruelty of the natural forces—the harsh wind, bitter cold, and swiftly changing seasons—in the remote reaches of the American West. She brings depth, tenderness, and humor to her portraits of the peculiar souls who also call it home: hermits and ranchers, rodeo cowboys and schoolteachers, dreamers and realists. Together, these essays form an evocative and vibrant tribute to the life Ehrlich chose and the geography she loves. Originally written as journal entries addressed to a friend, *The Solace of Open Spaces* is raw, meditative, electrifying, and uncommonly wise. In prose "as expansive as a Wyoming vista, as charged as a bolt of prairie lightning," Ehrlich explores the magical interplay between our interior lives and the world around us (Newsday).

SamarkandAbacus

Origins, by the world-renowned writer Amin Maalouf, is a sprawling, hemisphere-spanning, intergenerational saga. Set during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth—in the mountains of Lebanon and in Havana, Cuba—*Origins* recounts the family history of the generation of Maalouf's paternal grandfather, Boutros Maalouf. Maalouf sets out to discover the truth about why Boutros, a poet and educator in Lebanon, traveled across the globe to rescue his younger brother, Gabrayel, who had settled in Havana. What follows is the gripping excavation of a family's hidden past. Maalouf is an energetic and amiable narrator, illuminating the more obscure corners of late Ottoman nationalism, the psychology of Lebanese sectarianism, and the dynamics of family quarrels. He moves with great agility across time and space, and across genres of writing. But he never loses track of his story's central thread: his quest to lift the shadow of legend from his family's past. *Origins* is at once a gripping family chronicle and a timely consideration of Lebanese culture and politics.

The Silk Road conjures images of the exotic and the unknown. Most travellers simply pass along it. Brit Chris Alexander chose to live there. Ostensibly writing a guidebook, Alexander found life at the heart of the glittering madrassahs, mosques and minarets of the walled city of Khiva - a remote desert oasis in Uzbekistan - immensely alluring, and stayed. Immersing himself in the language and rich cultural traditions Alexander discovers a world torn between Marx and Mohammed - a place where veils and vodka, pork and polygamy freely mingle - against a backdrop of forgotten carpet designs, crumbling but magnificent Islamic architecture and scenes drawn straight from "The Arabian Nights". Accompanied by a large green parrot, a ginger cat and his adoptive Uzbek family, Alexander recounts his efforts to rediscover the lost art of traditional weaving and dyeing, and the process establishing a self-sufficient carpet workshop, employing local women and disabled people to train as apprentices. "A Carpet Ride to Khiva" sees Alexander being stripped naked at a former Soviet youth camp, crawling through silkworm droppings in an attempt to record their life-cycle, holed up in the British Museum discovering carpet designs dormant for half a millennia, tackling a carpet-thieving mayor, distinguishing natural dyes from sacks of opium in Northern Afghanistan, bluffing his way through an impromptu version of "My Heart Will Go On" for national Uzbek TV and seeking sanctuary as an anti-Western riot consumed the Kabul carpet bazaar. It is an unforgettable true travel story of a journey to the heart of the unknown and the unexpected friendship one man found there.

Joanne Harris, bestselling author of *Chocolat*, presents her most accomplished novel yet -- an intoxicating concoction that blends theology and reason, deception and masquerade, with a dash of whimsical humor and a soupçon of sensuality. *Britanny*, 1610. Juliette, a one-time actress and rope dancer, is forced to seek refuge among the sisters of the abbey of Sainte Marie-de-la-mer. Reinventing herself as Soeur Auguste, Juliette makes a new life for herself and her young daughter, Fleur. But when the kindly abbess dies, Juliette's comfortable existence begins to unravel. The abbey's new leader is the daughter of a corrupt noble family, and she arrives with a ghost from Juliette's past -- Guy LeMerle, a man she has every reason to fear and hate. This P.S. edition features an extra 16 pages of insights into the book, including author interviews, recommended reading, and more.

Born into a Christian minority in Lebanon and since settled in France, acclaimed writer Amin Maalouf claims a unique position in global conversation. His first book, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, was a critical and commercial success and remains in print after 20 years. In *Disordered World*, Maalouf combines his command of history with a critical perspective on contemporary culture East and West-joining them with a fierce moral clarity and a fluid, propulsive style. In this "disordered world" of ours, Maalouf argues, the human race faces any number of urgent threats: climate change, global financial crisis, humanitarian disasters. Yet these threats have not united us. In fact, tensions are rising between the Arab world and the West. This is not, Maalouf maintains, a "clash of civilizations." We lack ideological debate because there seems to be no common ground on which to start discussion. Rather, our civilizations are exhausted, declined into moral incompetence. The West has betrayed its enlightenment values, even as it pushes democracy abroad. The Arab world, nostalgic for its golden era, has rushed toward radicalism. Maalouf eruditely examines a century of confrontations between our cultures, from the secularization of Turkey under Ataturk, through Nasser and the Suez Crisis, the Six Day War, the Camp David Accords and the assassination of Sadat, and the U.S. wars on Afghanistan and Iraq. We keep adapting, Maalouf argues, our ancestral prejudices for contemporary scenarios. But in a voice that is intelligent, impassioned, and remarkably hopeful, Maalouf imagines that in the face of common challenges, we might just invent a new conception of the world we all share.

The life of Omar Khayyam, the 11th Century Persian poet who wrote *The Rubaiyat*, chronicling his adventures and romances. The novel is in two parts, the second describing the manner in which the manuscript reached the West.

Young Turk Ossyane leaves Beirut to study in Paris during the 1930s, joins the Resistance to fight Nazi occupation, returns home a hero, meets and falls for the Jewish Clara, and settles back in the troubled Middle East. Reprint.

In the tradition of celebrated wartime storytellers Somerset Maugham and Graham Greene, Tan Twan Eng's debut novel casts a powerful spell. The recipient of extraordinary acclaim from critics and the bookselling community, Tan Twan Eng's debut novel casts a powerful spell and has garnered comparisons to celebrated wartime storytellers Somerset Maugham and Graham Greene. Set during the tumult of World War II, on the lush Malayan island of Penang, *The Gift of Rain* tells a riveting and poignant tale about a young man caught in the tangle of wartime loyalties and deceits. In 1939, sixteen-year-old Philip Hutton—the half-Chinese, half-English youngest child of the head of one of Penang's great trading families—feels alienated from both the Chinese and British communities. He at last discovers a sense of belonging in his unexpected friendship with Hayato Endo, a Japanese diplomat. Philip proudly shows his new friend around his adored island, and in return Endo teaches him about Japanese language and culture and trains him in the art and discipline of aikido. But such knowledge comes at a terrible price. When the Japanese savagely invade Malaya, Philip realizes that his mentor and sensei—to whom he owes absolute loyalty—is a Japanese spy. Young Philip has been an unwitting traitor, and must now work in secret to save as many lives as possible, even as his own family is brought to its knees.

Alamut takes place in 11th Century Persia, in the fortress of Alamut, where self-proclaimed prophet Hasan ibn Sabbah is setting up his mad but brilliant plan to rule the region with a handful of elite fighters who are to become his "living daggers." By creating a virtual paradise at Alamut, filled with beautiful women, lush gardens, wine and hashish, Sabbah is able to convince his young fighters that they can reach paradise if they follow his commands. With parallels to Osama bin Laden, *Alamut* tells the story of how Sabbah was able to instill fear into the ruling class by creating a small army of devotees who were willing to kill, and be killed, in order to achieve paradise. Believing in the supreme Ismaili motto "Nothing is true, everything is permitted," Sabbah wanted to "experiment" with how far he could manipulate religious devotion for his own political gain through appealing to what he called the stupidity and gullibility of people and their passion for pleasure and selfish desires. The novel focuses on Sabbah as he unveils his plan to his inner circle, and on two of his young followers — the beautiful slave girl Halima, who has come to Alamut to join Sabbah's paradise on earth, and young ibn Tahir, Sabbah's most gifted fighter. As both Halima and ibn Tahir become disillusioned with Sabbah's vision, their lives take unexpected turns. *Alamut* was originally written in 1938 as an allegory to Mussolini's fascist state. In the 1960's it became a cult favorite throughout Tito's Yugoslavia, and in the 1990s, during the Balkan's War, it was read as an allegory of the region's strife and became a bestseller in Germany, France and Spain. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the book once again took on a new life, selling more than 20,000 copies in a new Slovenian edition, and being translated around the world in more than 19 languages. This edition, translated by Michael Biggins, is the first-ever English translation.

"I want to try and understand why so many people commit crimes in the name of identity," writes Amin Maalouf. Identity is the crucible out of which we come: our background, our race, our gender, our tribal affiliations, our religion (or lack thereof), all go into making up who we are. All too often, however, the notion of identity—personal, religious, ethnic, or national—has given rise to heated passions and even massive crimes. Moving across the world's history, faiths, and politics, he argues against an oversimplified and hostile interpretation of the concept. He cogently and persuasively examines identity in the context of the modern world, where it can be viewed as both glory and poison. Evident here are the dangers of using identity as a protective—and therefore aggressive—mechanism, the root of racial, geographical, and colonialist subjugation throughout history. Maalouf contends that many of us would reject our inherited conceptions of identity, to which we cling through habit, if only we examined them more closely. The future of society depends on accepting all identities, while recognizing our individualism.

Based on the Book of Genesis, Dinah shares her perspective on religious practices and sexual politics.

Having fled his homeland 25 years ago for France, Adam returns to the East for the first time to see a dying friend. Among the milk-white mountains of his homeland, the past soon catches up with him. His childhood friends have all taken different paths in life - and some now have blood on their hands. Loyalty, identity, and the clash of cultures and beliefs form the heart of this big and bold novel.

A dramatic historical narrative of the man who stole the secret of tea from China In 1848, the British East India Company, having lost its monopoly on the tea trade, engaged Robert Fortune, a Scottish gardener, botanist, and plant hunter, to make a clandestine trip into the interior of China—territory forbidden to foreigners—to steal the closely guarded secrets of tea horticulture and manufacturing. *All the Tea in China* is the remarkable account of Fortune's journeys into China—a thrilling narrative that combines history, geography, botany, natural science, and old-fashioned adventure. Disguised in Mandarin robes, Fortune ventured deep into the country, confronting pirates, hostile climate, and his own untrustworthy men as he made his way to the epicenter of tea production, the remote Wu Yi Shan hills. One of the most daring acts of corporate espionage in history, Fortune's pursuit of China's ancient secret makes for a classic nineteenth-century adventure tale, one in which the fate of empires hinges on the feats of one extraordinary man.

This book provides a broad history of the Seljuq Turks from their origins and early conquests in the 10th century, through the rise of empire, until its dissolution at the end of the 12th. Where the history of the Seljuqs is usually studied in the context of medieval Persian, Arabic or Islamic history, this book considers the topic from the perspective of Turkish history. Examining the corpus of academic work on the period and how Turkish historiography has interpreted and understood the Seljuqs, the author demonstrates how the Great Seljuq Empire can be considered not only in a historical context, but as the instigator of Turko-Islamic civilization. Rejecting traditional Turkish scholarship, which places Iranian culture and Islam as the civilising elements in the Great Seljuq Empire, the author shows how the nature of nomadic pastoral empires have come under fresh scrutiny, reassessing Seljuq history and the framework within which it has been treated. This book provides a unique insight into the adoption to an urban environment of Turkic expectations that were forged on the Eurasian steppes, showing how the outcome put its

stamp on the second millennium throughout the Middle East and Balkans. It will be an important addition to the literature on Medieval Islamic, Turkish and Middle Eastern history. Born in a Mesopotamian village in the third century, the son of a Parthian warrior, Mani grows up in a volatile and dangerous world. As battle rages for control over the Middle East between the great Roman and Persian empires, as Jews and Christians, Buddhists and Zoroastrians fight for ascendancy, Mani- painter, mystic, physician and prophet- makes his way through the battlefields to preach to his incandescent doctrine of humility, tolerance and love, a doctrine that comes to be known as Manicheanism. A vivid glimpse of the ancient world in all its perfumed splendour and cruelty, an elegantly philosophical discourse on the fall of man, THE GARDENS OF LIGHT is a story of great beauty and resonance, exquisitely told.

Omar Khayyam's magical poetry with its rich sensual glow and evocative oriental imagery, once again available in Edward Fitzgerald's famous translation. One of the great classics of world literature. Large print edition PERSIAN POETRY

An imaginary autobiography of the famous geographer, adventurer, and scholar Hasan al-Wazzan. He wrote the first trilingual dictionary and Description of Africa.

A French entomologist, attending a symposium in Cairo, finds a curious kind of bean being on a market stall. It is claimed the beans, derived from the scarab beetle, have magic powers; specifically the power to guarantee the birth of a male infant - and when the entomologist does some research in to the matter, discovering the incidence of female birth has become increasingly rare, he is left in no doubt that the world has entered into a critical phase of its history. As this beloved daughter Beatrice approaches maturity, the entomologist and his partner question the validity of gender bias, and attempt to redress the growing imbalance before it reaches irreversible proportions. But in the poverty and famine of the South, where male children can mean the difference between survival and starvation, the popularity of the scarab beans is already taking devastating effect.

Tanios, the illegitimate son of a powerful Sheik, becomes caught up in the political intrigues of the Middle East

In the spring of 1949, Stella O'Riain flees her home - a sheep property on the barren edge of the Strzelecki Desert. She leaves behind the graves of her husband Joe and her baby daughter. With no money and limited options, Stella accepts her brother-in-law Harry's offer to live at the O'Riain cane farm in the Richmond Valley. There she hopes to get answers to the questions that plague her about her marriage. However Harry refuses to discuss Joe or the family's secrets, even forbidding her to speak to the owner of the neighbouring property. Nearly a century earlier in County Tipperary, Irish cousins Brandon and Sean O'Riain also fled their homes - as wanted criminals. By 1867, they are working as cedar-cutters in New South Wales's lush green Richmond Valley. But while Brandon embraces the opportunities this new country offers, Sean refuses to let go of the past. And one cousin is about to make a dangerous choice that will have devastating consequences down the generations . . .

Accused of mocking the inviolate codes of Islam, the Persian poet and sage Omar Khayyam fortuitously finds sympathy with the very man who is to judge his alleged crimes. Recognising genius, the judge decides to spare him and gives him instead a small, blank book, encouraging him to confine his thoughts to it alone. Thus begins the seamless blend of fact and fiction that is Samarkand. Vividly re-creating the history of the manuscript of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, Amin Maalouf spans continents and centuries with breathtaking vision: the dusky exoticism of 11th-century Persia, with its poetesses and assassins; the same country's struggles nine hundred years later, seen through the eyes of an American academic obsessed with finding the original manuscript ; and the fated maiden voyage of the Titanic, whose tragedy led to the Rubaiyat's final resting place - all are brought to life with keen assurance by this gifted and award-winning writer.

From the Nobel Prize laureate and author of the acclaimed Cairo Trilogy, a beguiling and artfully compact novel set in Sadat's Egypt. The time is 1981, Anwar al-Sadat is president, and Egypt is lurching into the modern world. Set against this backdrop, The Day the Leader Was Killed relates the tale of a middle-class Cairene family. Rich with irony and infused with political undertones, the story is narrated alternately by the pious and mischievous family patriarch Muhtashimi Zayed, his hapless grandson Elwan, and Elwan's headstrong and beautiful fiancée Randa. The novel reaches its climax with the assassination of Sadat on October 6, 1981, an event around which the fictional plot is skillfully woven. The Day the Leader Was Killed brings us the essence of Mahfouz's genius and is further proof that he has, in the words of the Nobel citation, "formed an Arabic narrative art that applies to all mankind."

"Reminiscent of Zadie Smith and Michael Chabon, this ... coming-of-age tale follows a young man who is forced to flee his homeland of Rwanda during the Civil War and make sense of his reality"--

The United States is losing its moral credibility. The European Union is breaking apart. Africa, the Arab world, and the Mediterranean are becoming battlefields for various regional and global powers. Extreme forms of nationalism are on the rise. Thus divided, humanity is unable to address global threats to the environment and our health. How did we get here and what is yet to come? World-renowned scholar and bestselling author Amin Maalouf seeks to raise awareness and pursue a new human solidarity. In Adrift, Maalouf traces how civilisations have drifted apart throughout the 20th century, mixing personal narrative and historical analysis to provide a warning signal for the future.

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