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ROALD DAHL

THE TWITS NEXT DOOR

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THE TWITS NEXT DOOR

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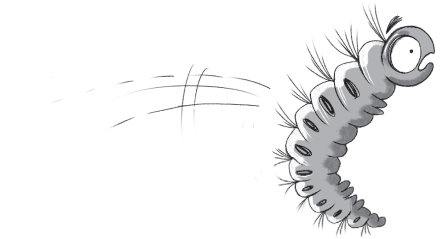


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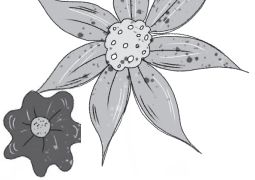
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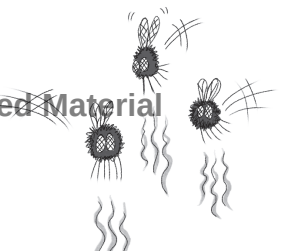




CONTENTS

Mrs Twit Fills the Toilet With Wasps	1
The *Daily Twit*	13
The New Neighbours	26
Ruff and Tumble	42
A Lovely Morning	54
Hairy Wart Disease	61
The Lovely Bus	73
Mr Twit Takes Out the Bins	88
Hairy Cakes	102
The Tiger Tamer's Tame Tiger	117
The Tiger Who Came to Breakfast	129
The Tree, the Catapult and the Enormous Plot Twist	141
Great-Aunt Biscuit	155
Oh! What a Lovely War!	166
Mrs Twit's Knicker Drawer	174
The Incredible Dancing Twits	184
Complimentary Beer	197
The World's Most Famous Twits	208
The Grand Twit Parade	216
The Great Food Fight	228
The Statues in the Square	238

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CHAPTER ONE

MRS TWIT FILLS THE TOILET WITH WASPS

Imagine what it must be like living next door to a pair of TOTAL **TWITS.**

What if you were unlucky enough to have **NOISY** twits as neighbours? The sort of people who play the trombone incredibly badly until four o'clock in the morning, or decide to start drilling into the walls while you're trying to have a lie-in?

Or imagine living next door to **NOSY** twits, who peer at you over the garden fence, or peep in through your windows while you're eating your tea.

What if some really **MESSY** twits moved in next door and filled their house with rubbish and

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their garden with rusty old cars?

Worse still, what if you lived next door to some **SMELLY** twits? Or some **MEAN** twits? Or some completely **HORRIBLE** twits, who are mean to your cat, or jump out at you from behind the garden fence dressed as clowns for no good reason?

All these are foul in their own way. But what if you were to end up living next door to a pair of twits who are

NOISY,
NOSY,
MESSY,
SMELLY,
MEAN and
HORRIBLE?

Do such appalling people really exist?

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Well, sadly, yes they do. Their names are Mr and Mrs Twit and here they come now.

BRACE YOURSELVES.

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Mr Twit has a face like a warthog's hairy armpit and a personality to match. There are many disgusting things about him, all the way from his dirty feet up to the hair on his head, which looks like the nest of the world's least house-proud bird. But the most disgusting thing about Mr Twit is his beard. It is as stiff and bristly as an old boot brush. And – even worse – it's full of the tiny morsels of food that miss Mr Twit's mouth as he eats his loathsome lunch or his sloppy supper. Clumps of **CURDLED** custard and puddles of **PUTRID** porridge nestle deep among the stubbly whiskers. And if he fancies a quick snack in between meals, Mr Twit simply sticks out his slimy tongue and sends it snaking through the beardy undergrowth in search of a tasty treat.



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That's enough about that for now. It's too revolting to think about for more than a few seconds without getting a cramp in your brain. But there's more. You heard us mention **DIRTY FEET** a moment ago. Speaking of those, let's take a look at Mrs Twit.

Mrs Twit is a foul, screeching bundle of pure hideousness. She has a face like a scrunched-up elbow and her dress looks like a sack that fell on hard times sometime in the late eighteenth century. If you ever caught sight of her toenails, you would run home screaming for your mummy no matter how old you are. Mrs Twit's hobbies include shouting at kittens and knitting jumpers for puppies. She doesn't give the jumpers to the puppies, though – she makes the puppies



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watch while she sets fire to them. That's the kind of thing Mrs Twit does for entertainment.

Mr and Mrs Twit live in a house that they built themselves, and as this story starts they do not have any next-door neighbours. That shouldn't come as a massive surprise. I mean, imagine living beside that pair. Or, indeed, beside that house. It is **DARK** and **DINGY,** because they built it without any windows to stop anyone from looking in at them. The garden is full of thistles and stinging nettles, and is surrounded by a high hedge of twisted brambles with sharp thorns to keep everybody out.

The reason for this is quite simple: Mr and Mrs Twit do not like other people. They don't even like each other. In fact, the list of things the Twits do not like is extremely long. It includes other people, being looked at by other people, talking to other people, other people living next door to them, each other, washing.

So what **DO** Mr and Mrs Twit like? That list is a lot shorter. And at the top of the list is this: playing

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HORRIBLE, MEAN tricks on each other. And that is exactly where our story starts.

It was a fine fresh morning in springtime. The sun had just risen, casting a golden glow over the Big Dead Tree that sat in a clearing on one side of the Twits' garden. Mrs Twit was out and about bright and early that day, moving among the thistles with a large cloth-covered bucket clutched in one warty hand. She was wearing a tatty dressing gown and a wicked smile. This was because she was about to play a particularly painful prank on her horrible husband – one that she had been planning for several days. She was in such a good mood that she was even humming a merry little tune to herself. Although to most of us it wouldn't have sounded very merry or even much like a tune. It sounded like the screeching of rusty hinges.

'Where are you, my little lovelies?' croaked Mrs Twit, her knobbly back creaking as she bent down to hunt for something among the nettles. When she straightened up, she was holding a jam jar that was absolutely full of angry buzzing wasps.

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The previous day, Mrs Twit had punched small holes into the lids of several jars and poured a small amount of honey into the bottom. This is how you make **WASP TRAPS** – the wasps crawl inside to get at the honey but can't find their way back through the holes. Carefully Mrs Twit unscrewed the lid of this first jar and tipped the wasps into her bucket, quickly putting the cloth back over the top. Then she moved on to her next trap. After half an hour, Mrs Twit's bucket was absolutely full to the brim with wasps. There must have been hundreds of them in there. Her smile grew wider and more wicked still.

Mrs Twit opened the front door of the house softly and crept inside. As you can imagine, the inside of the Twits' house was just as nasty as the outside. Everywhere you looked there was mess and neglect. The chairs were musty, the stairs were dusty, the oven was greasy and the toilet . . . well, we'll get to the toilet in a minute. But it's not going to be pretty.

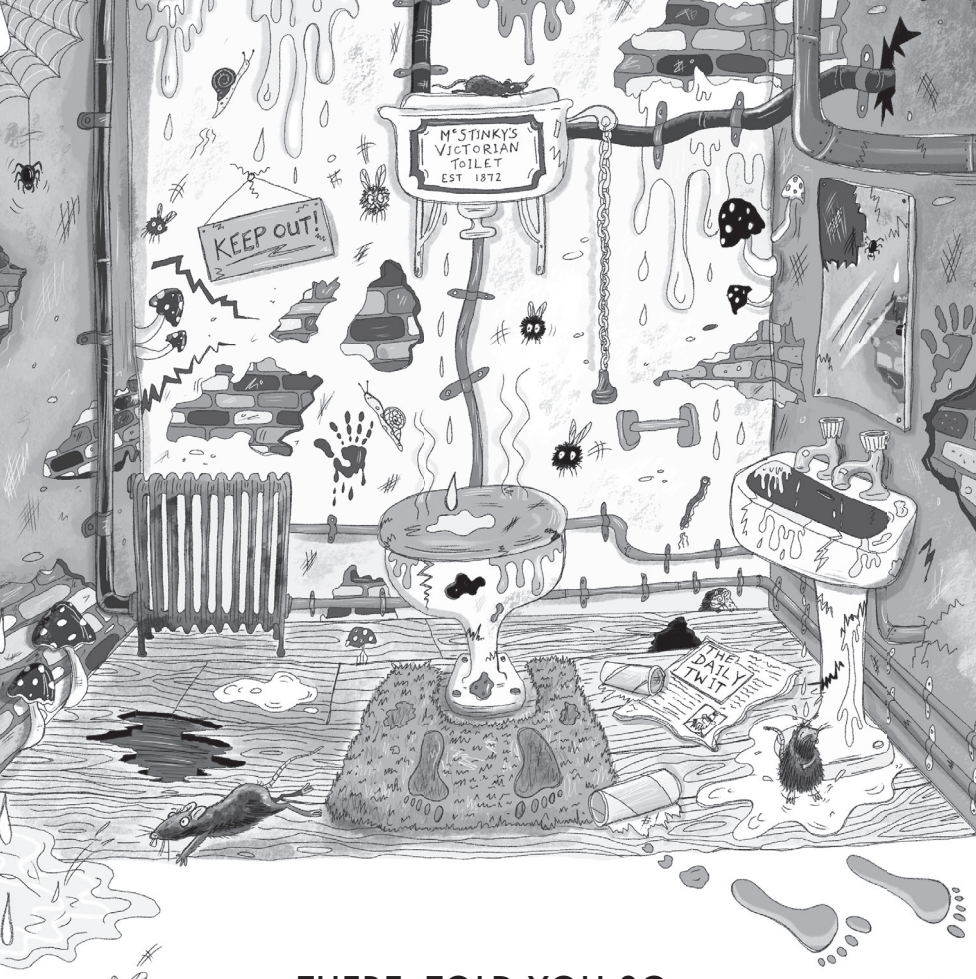
Mrs Twit crept through the living room, across the kitchen and into the bathroom. And an apology

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is probably in order at this point. Because nobody wants to see inside Mr and Mrs Twit's bathroom, but it's part of the story, so we're just going to have to get through it somehow. As you can probably imagine, it's one of the worst rooms on the entire planet. For a start, as we already know, it doesn't have a window. Also, the bathroom has never been cleaned. Ever. Not once. **PLEASE ONLY LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING PICTURE IF YOU ATE OVER TWO HOURS AGO,** because it will probably make you feel sick, and these pages aren't as absorbent as they look.

READY?

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THERE, TOLD YOU SO.
HORRIBLE, ISN'T IT?

But Mr and Mrs Twit didn't think it was horrible. They hate things that are bright and clean, so this dark, dank, dingy, dirty room was one of their favourites. Every morning as soon as he got up,

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Mr Twit would charge down the stairs straight to this bathroom and spend an hour sitting on the toilet and reading his newspaper.

'Hurry up in there, you smelly slop bucket!' Mrs Twit would shout, hammering on the door with the stick she always carried. (She didn't actually need a stick to walk; she just used it to thwack things.)

'Leave me alone!' the muffled voice of Mr Twit would reply from the other side of the locked door. 'I am reading my newspaper!'

'I NEED TO GO!' Mrs Twit would screech.

'I don't care!' Mr Twit would reply, smirking. 'You'll just have to cross your legs.'

This happened every morning for several years, and FINALLY an idea for revenge had come to Mrs Twit. Today she was putting her plan into action. Tiptoeing into the bathroom, she lifted the toilet seat and quickly upended the bucket on top of the toilet bowl. The wasps, who were growing tired of being cooped up, took this opportunity to make a bid for freedom and streamed down into the bowl.

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Before they could realize their mistake, Mrs Twit had slammed the lid down on top of them with a bark of harsh laughter.

'This'll teach you to hog the toilet, you **MANGY DISHCLOTH**!!'

From upstairs a series of foul coughs and snorts told her that her husband had woken up. She heard the springs of the **SAGGY** old bed creaking as he levered himself to his feet, and then the clump of his footsteps heading towards the staircase.

Mrs Twit lowered herself into a greasy armchair in the living room and prepared to enjoy the fun.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE *DAILY TWIT*

Mr Twit stomped down the stairs, his newspaper tucked under his arm. The newspaper was called the ***DAILY TWIT*** and it is not available in your local newsagent's. Mr Twit had made it himself and here is why.

Like many people, Mr Twit enjoyed catching up with the news each morning. But as he grew older, he realized that he only liked certain kinds of news. He really enjoyed reading about things that were sad, or things that were horrible, or things that were disgusting. And so Mr Twit began cutting these stories out of the newspaper and saving them in a

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special scrapbook that he called the ***DAILY TWIT.*** By now it was full of clippings about strange and unpleasant things. So each morning Mr Twit could amuse himself with headlines like

CAKE FACTORY CLOSES AFTER CUSTARD FLOOD

and

WORLD'S FLOOFIEST PUPPY ACCIDENTALLY SHAVED BALD IN CLIPPER ACCIDENT.

He particularly enjoyed one story from the local paper –

MAN DRIVES STEAMROLLER THROUGH PUMPKIN FESTIVAL

– because he had been the man in question.

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Mr Twit reached the bottom of the stairs and peered suspiciously at Mrs Twit, who was sitting in her chair with a smug expression.

'What's wrong with your face?' he grunted.

'Whatever do you mean?' replied Mrs Twit.

'You look all . . . happy,' said Mr Twit, frowning. 'Cheerful,' he went on, scrunching up his face even further.

'No, no,' said Mrs Twit airily. 'I promise I'm not. You go and have a nice read of your newspaper.'

'Are you certain you're not PLOTTING something?' asked Mr Twit, now scowling so deeply that his hairy eyebrows tickled the end of his nose.

'Pinkie swear,' said Mrs Twit, holding up a little finger that looked like a mouldy chipolata.

'Hmm.' Mr Twit gave a final suspicious grunt and marched to the bathroom. Only then did Mrs Twit reveal her other hand, with two spongy sausage fingers firmly crossed.

In the bathroom, Mr Twit whipped his newspaper out from under his arm. Without looking behind him,

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he flipped up the toilet lid and plunked his twittish bottom down upon the seat.

Snickering, he began to read one of his favourite *Daily Twit* stories about a gang of criminals who had stolen all the presents from a hospital on Christmas Eve. Mr Twit chortled. **'PAHAHA!!'**

You're probably wondering by now what the wasps were up to.

WELL, LET'S FIND OUT, SHALL WE?

Yesterday they had been perfectly happy, just going about their waspy business. Wasps are really quite mild-mannered and calm if they're left alone. It's only when you bother them that things start to get sting-y. But these wasps had not been left alone – they had suddenly found themselves trapped inside jars. This had made them fairly **IRRITATED**. They had then been transferred to a crowded bucket.

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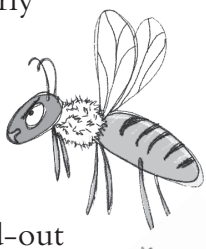


At this point they had become seriously

ANNOYED.

When they had escaped the bucket, to find themselves in the world's worst toilet, they grew properly

ANGRY.



And this anger had turned into out-and-out

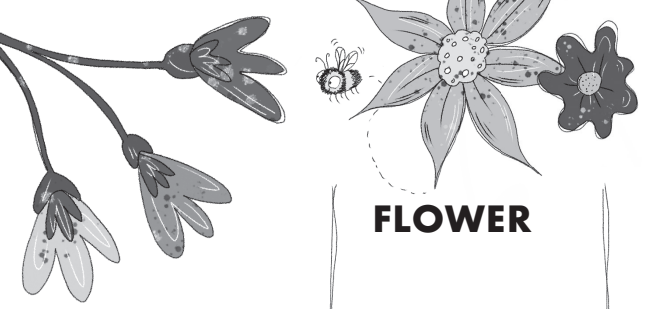
FURY



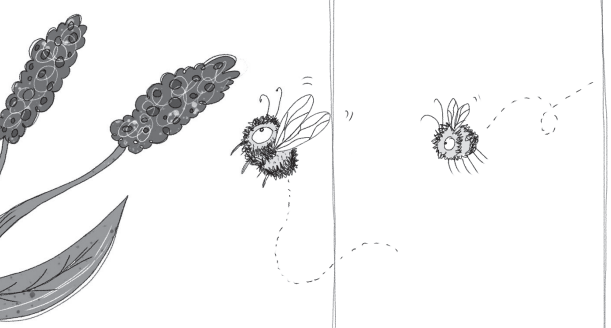
when Mr Twit's bottom had appeared from above, blotting out the sky like an incredibly unpleasant lunar eclipse.

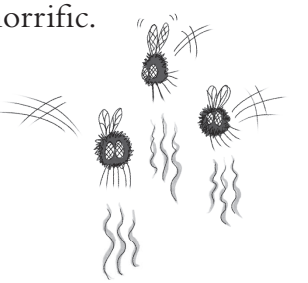
Wasps spend a great deal of time being up close and personal with flowers, which are some of the nicest things in the world. Mr Twit's bottom is about as far away from a lovely flower as you can get – see the following table for reference:

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	FLOWER	MR TWIT'S BOTTOM
APPEARANCE	Lovely with colourful petals	Foul with red pimples
SCENT	Attractive and floral	Sweaty egg
USEFULNESS	Vital for nature	You know the kind of stuff he eats – use your imagination. We can't go any further without getting complaints.
CONCLUSION	Flowers are great.	Mr Twit's bottom is horrific.





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With nothing to lose and the alternative being completely disgusting, the wasps decided they would have to mount an attack in a desperate bid for freedom. Stings at the ready, they surged upwards towards the incoming moon. And, as one, they plunged their barbs into its craggy cratered surface.

Midway through reading the news story, a change came over Mr Twit's face. His expression of mean glee was replaced by one of white-hot horror. His eyes widened so much that it looked as if they were about to

POP OUT
ON STALKS.

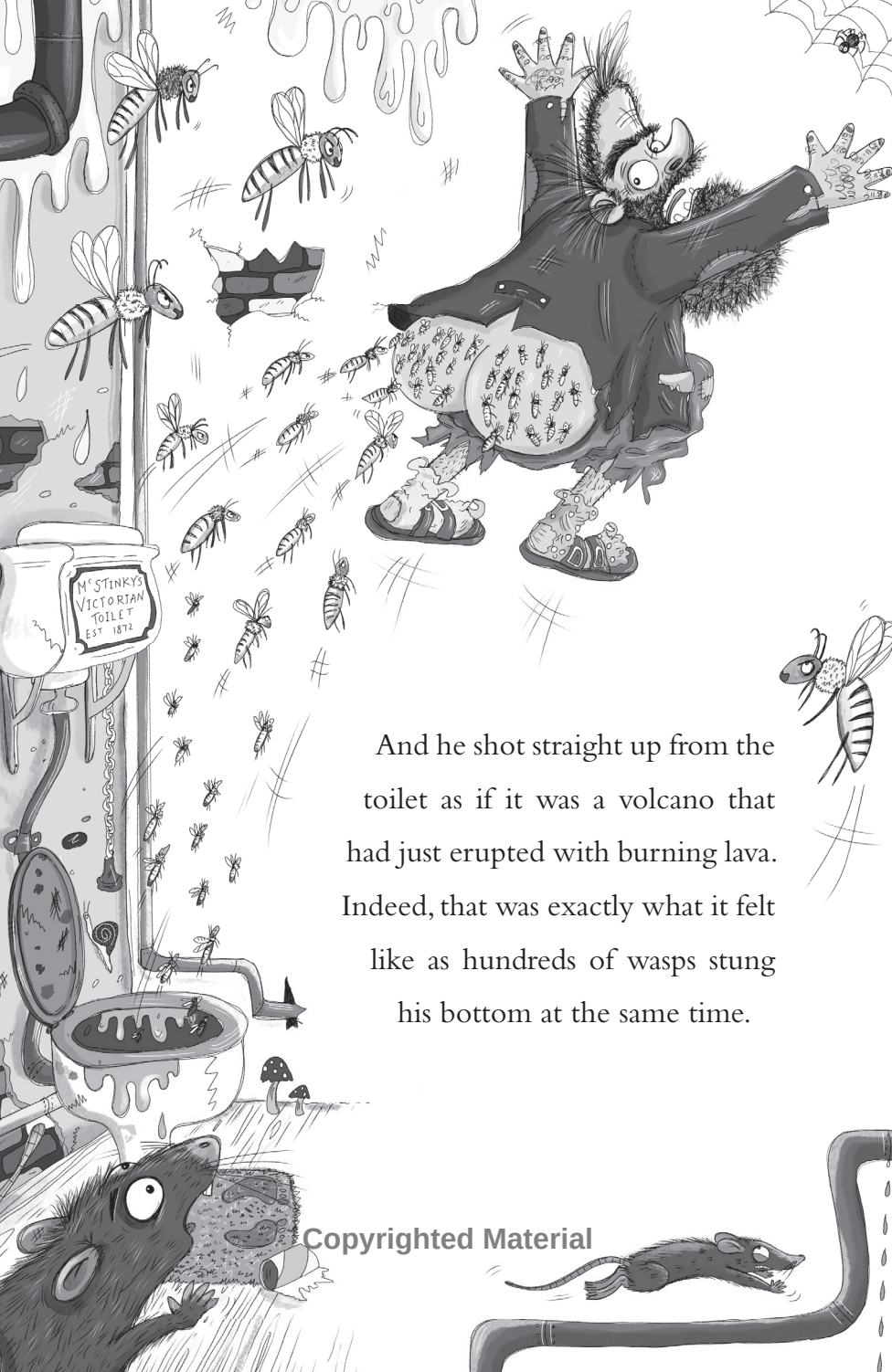
His face went so red that it looked as if it was about to

BURST INTO **FLAMES.**

A noise like a steam train in agony came

SPOUTING OUT OF HIS NOSE.

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And he shot straight up from the toilet as if it was a volcano that had just erupted with burning lava. Indeed, that was exactly what it felt like as hundreds of wasps stung his bottom at the same time.

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