

# THE GRAFTERS

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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## SYNOPSIS.

Chapter I.—Story opens at Gaston. Beginning of political campaign with Bucks as candidate for governor. Was mayor of Gaston during boom days when town was terminus of Trans-Western railway. David Kent, local attorney for railroad, entertaining Loring, old college chum, between trains. Loring going to capital to become general manager of road.

Chapter II.—Kent and Loring attend political meeting. Kent gives his opinion of Bucks. Loring leaves for capital, and as train pulls out reminds Kent of an old love affair of Kent's in the east.

Chapter III.—Mrs. Brentwood and daughters, Elinor and Penelope, of Boston, start on journey to west. Choose Trans-Western route as they own stock in the line. Millionaire Brooks Ormsby, in love with Elinor, goes with them.

Chapter IV.—Ormsby makes love to Elinor on train. She is in love with Kent. Penelope telegraphs Kent that party is to pass through Gaston. He gets on train there to go to the capital and meets them.

Chapter V.—Loring appointed general manager of Trans-Western. Kent advises Ormsby to get Mrs. Brentwood to sell her stock in road. Kent and Ormsby become friends and rivals.

Chapter VI.—Bucks and his crowd in charge of state government. House bill Twenty-nine, carrying danger to foreign corporations, including Trans-Western, is passed by legislature. Miss Portia Van Brock introduced into story.

He was no more than fashionably late at the Van Brock house, and fortunately he was able to reckon himself among the chosen few for whom Miss Portia's door swung on hospitable hinges at all hours. Loring had known her in Washington, and he had stood sponsor for Kent in the first week of the exile's residence at the capital. Thereafter she had taken Kent up on his own account, and by now he was deep in her debt. For one thing, she had set the fashion in the matter of legislative receptions—her detractors, knowing nothing whatever about it, hinted that she had been an amateur social lobbyist in Washington, playing the game for the pure zest of it—and at these functions Kent had learned many things pertinent to his purpose as watch-dog for the railroad company, and legal advisor to his chief—things not named openly on the floor of the house or the senate chamber.

There was a crush in the ample mansion in Alameda Square, as there always was at Miss Van Brock's "open evenings," and when Kent came down from the cloak-room he had to inch his way by littles through the crowded reception-parlors in the search for the Brentwood party. It was unsuccessful at first; but later, catching a glimpse of Elinor at the piano, and another of Penelope inducing an up-country legislator into the mysteries of social small-talk, he breathed freer. His haphazard guess had hit the mark, and the finding of Ormsby was now only a question of moments.

It was Miss Van Brock, herself, who told him where to look for the clubman—though not at his first asking. Loring had told him Miss Van Brock's story. She was southern born, the only child of a somewhat ill-considered match between a young California lawyer, wire-pulling in the national capital in the interest of the Central Pacific railroad, and a Virginia belle tasting the delights of her first winter in Washington.

Later, the young lawyer's state, or his employers, had sent him to congress; and Portia, left motherless in her middle childhood, had grown up in an atmosphere of statecraft, or what passes for such, in an era of frank commercialism. Inheriting her mother's rare beauty of face and form, and uniting with it the sympathetic gift in grasp of detail, political and other, she soon became her father's confidante and loyal partisan, taking the place, as a daughter might, of the ambitious young wife and mother, who had set her heart on seeing the Van Brock name on the roll of the United States senate.

Rensselaer Van Brock had died before the senatorial dream could be realized, but not before he had made a sufficient number of lucky investments to leave his daughter the arbitress of her own future. What that future should be, not even Loring could guess. Since her father's death Miss Van Brock had been a citizen of the world. With a widowed aunt for the shadowiest of chaperones, she had drifted with the tide of inclination, coming finally to rest in the western capital for no better reason, perhaps, than that some portion of her interest-bearing securities were emblazoned with the great seal of this particular western state.

Kent was thinking of Loring's recital as he stood looking down on her. Other women were younger—and with features more conventionally beautiful; Kent could find a round dozen within easy eye-reach, to say nothing of the calm-eyed, queenly improvisatrice at the piano—his constant standard of all womanly charm and grace. Unconsciously he fell to comparing the two, his hostess and his love, and was brought back to things present by a sharp reminder from Portia.

"Stop looking at Miss Brentwood that way, Mr. David. She is not for you; and you are keeping me waiting."

He smiled down on her.

"Of what use can I be to Mr. David Kent this evening?"

"See how you misjudge me!" he protested. "My errand here tonight is purely charitable. Which brings me back to Ormsby; did you say you could tell me where to look for him?"

"He is in the smoking room with

five or six other tobacco misanthropes. What do you want of him?"

"I want to say two words in his ear; after which I shall vanish and make room for my betters."

Miss Van Brock was gazing steadfastly at the impassioned face lighted by the piano candles.

"Is it about Miss Brentwood?" she asked abruptly.

"In a way—yes," he confessed.

She rose and stood beside him—a bewitching figure of a woman who knew her part in the human comedy and played it well.

"Is it wise, David?" she asked softly. "I am not denying the possibilities; you might come between them if you should try—I'm rather afraid you could. But you mustn't, you know; it's too late. You've marred her, between you; or rather that convention, which makes a woman deaf, blind and dumb until a man has fairly committed himself, has marred her. For your sake she can never be quite all she ought to be to him; for his sake she could never be quite the same to you."

He drew apart from her, frowning.

"If I should say that I don't fully understand what you mean?" he rejoined.

"I should retort by saying something extremely complimentary about your lack of perspicacity," she cut in maliciously.

"I beg pardon," he said, a little stiffly. "You are laboring under an entirely wrong impression. What I have to say to Mr. Brooks Ormsby does not remotely concern the matter you touch upon. It's an affair of the stock exchange."

Miss Van Brock let him go at that, but now the way to the smoking-den on the floor above was hedged up. He did battle with the polite requirements, as a man must; shaking hands or exchanging a word with one and another of the obstructors only as he had to. None the less, when he had finally wrought his way to the smoking-room Ormsby had eluded him again.

He went back to the parlors, wondering how he had missed the clubman. In the middle room of the suite he found Portia chatting with Marston, the lieutenant-governor; and a young woman in the smartest of reception gowns had succeeded to Elinor's place at the piano.

"You found him?" queried the hostess, excusing herself to the tall, saturnine man who had shared the honors at the head of the people's party ticket with Jasper G. Bucks.

"No," said Kent. "Have you seen him?"

"Why, yes; they all came to take leave just a few moments after you left me. I thought of telling Mr. Ormsby you were looking for him, but you shut me off so snippily—"

"Miss Van Brock! What have you done? I must go at once."

"Really? I am complimented. But if you must, you must, I suppose. I had something to tell you—something of importance; but I can't remember what it was now. I can never remember things in the hurry of leave-taking."



"YOU MISJUDGE ME!" HE PROTESTED, "MY ERRAND IS PURELY CHARITABLE."

As we have intimated, Kent had hitherto found Miss Portia's confidences exceedingly helpful in a business way and he hesitated. "Tell me," he begged.

"No, I can't remember it: I doubt if I shall ever remember it unless you can remind me by telling me why you are so desperately anxious to find Mr. Ormsby."

"I wonder if you hold everybody up like this," he laughed. "But I don't mind telling you. Western Pacific preferred has gone up to 58 1/2."

"And Mr. Ormsby has some to sell? I wish I had. Do you know what I'd do?" She drew closer and laid a hand on his arm. "I'd sell—by wire—tonight; at least, I'd make sure that my telegram would be the first thing my broker would lay his hands on in the morning."

"On general principles, I suppose so should I, and for the same reason. But have I succeeded in reminding you of that thing you were going to tell me?"

"Not wholly; only partly. You said

latter of Mr. Ormsby's concerned Miss Brentwood—in a way—didn't you?"

"You will have your pound of flesh entire, won't you? The stock is hers, and her mother's and sister's. I want Ormsby to persuade them to sell. They'll listen to him. That is all; all the all."

"Of course!" she said airily. "How simple of me not to have been able to add it up without your help. I saw the quotation in the evening paper; and I know, better, perhaps, than you do, the need for haste. Must you go now?" She had taken his arm and was edging him through the press in the parlors toward the entrance hall.

"You haven't paid me yet," he objected.

"No; I'm trying to remember. Oh, yes; I have it now. Wasn't some one telling me that you were interested in House Bill Twenty-nine?"

They had reached the dimly lighted front vestibule, and her hand was still on his arm.

"I was interested in it," he admitted, correcting the present to the "past tense."

"But after it went to the house committee on judiciary you left it to more skillful, or perhaps we'd better say, to less scrupulous hands?"

"I believe you are a witch. Is there anything you don't know?"

She turned from him and spoke to the footman at the door.

"Thomas, fetch Mr. Kent's coat and hat from the dressing-room." And then to Kent, in the tone she might have used in telling him of the latest breeziness of the member from the Rio Blanco: "I remember now what it was that I wanted to tell you. While you have been trying to find Mr. Ormsby, the committee on judiciary has been reporting the long-lost House Bill Twenty-nine. If you hurry you may be in time to see it passed—it will doubtless go through without any tiresome debate. But you will hardly have time to obstruct it by arousing public sentiment through the newspapers."

He snatched coat and hat from the waiting Thomas and was running like a madman for the nearest cab-stand.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE SENTIMENTALISTS.

Kent's time from Alameda Square to the capitol was the quickest a fogged cab-horse could make, but he might have spared the horse and saved the double fee. On the broad steps of the south portico he, pushing three at a bound, met the advance guard of the gallery contingent, down-coming. The house had adjourned.

"One minute, Harnwicke!" he gasped, falling upon the first member of the corporations' lobby he could identify in the throng. "What's been done?"

"They've taken a fall out of us," was the brusque reply. "House Bill Twenty-nine was reported by the committee on judiciary and rushed through after you left. Somebody engineered it to the paring of a fingernail: bare quorum to act; members who might have filibustered weeded out, on one pretext or another, to a man; pages all excused, and nobody here with the privilege of the floor. It was as neat a piece of gag-work as I ever hope to see if I live to be a hundred."

Kent faced about and joined the townward dispersal with his informant.

They parted at the entrance to the Camelot club, and Kent went two squares farther on to the Wellington. Ormsby had not yet returned, and Kent went to the telephone and called up the Brentwood apartments. It was Penelope that answered.

"Well, I think you owe it," she began, as soon as he had given his name. "What did I do at Miss Van Brock's to make you cut me dead?"

"Why, nothing at all, I'm sure. I—I was looking for Mr. Ormsby, and—"

"Not when I saw you," she broke in flippantly. "You were handing Miss Portia an ice. Are you still looking for Mr. Ormsby?"

"I am—just that. Is he with you?"

"No; he left here about 20 minutes ago."

Kent hung up the receiver, and when he was asking a second time at the clerk's desk for the missing man, Ormsby came in to answer for himself. Whereupon the crisis was outlined to him in brief phrase, and he rose to the occasion, though not without a grimace.

"I'm not sure just how well you know Mrs. Hepzibah Brentwood," he demurred; "but it will be quite like her to balk. Don't you think you'd better go along? You are the company's attorney, and your opinion ought to carry some weight."

David Kent thought not; but a cautious diplomatist, having got the idea well back into the back part of his head, was not to be denied.

"Of course, you'll come. You are just the man I'll need to back me up. I shan't shrink; I'll take the mother into the library and break the ice, while you are squaring things with the young women. Penelope won't care the snap of her finger either way; but Elinor has some notions that you are fitter to cope with than I am. After, if you can give me a lift with Mrs. Hepzibah, I'll call you in. Come on; it's getting pretty late to go visiting."

Kent yielded reluctantly, and they took a car for the sake of speed. It was Penelope who opened the door for them at 124 Tejon avenue; and Ormsby made it easy for his coadjutor, as he had promised.

"I want to see your mother in the library for a few minutes," he began. "Will you arrange it, and take care of Mr. Kent until I come for him?"

Penelope "arranged" it, not without

another added pang of curiosity, whereupon David Kent found himself the rather embarrassed third of a silent trio gathered about the embers of the sitting-room fire.

"Is it to be a Quaker meeting?" asked Penelope, sweetly, when the silence had grown awe-inspiring.

Kent laughed for pure joy at the breaking of the spell.

"One would think we had come to drag you all off to jail, Ormsby and I," he said; and then he went on to explain. "It's about your Western Pacific stock, you know. To-day's quotations put it a point and a half above your purchase price, and we've come to persuade you to unload, pronto, as the member from the Rio Blanco would say."

"Is that all?" said Penelope, stifling a yawn. "Then I'm not in it; I'm an infant." And she rose and went to the piano.

"You haven't told us all of it; what has happened?" queried Elinor, speaking for the first time since her greeting of Kent.

He briefed the story of House Bill Twenty-nine for her, pointing out the probabilities.

"Of course, no one can tell what the precise effect will be," he qualified. "But in my opinion it is very likely to be destructive of dividends. Skipping the dry details, the new law, which is equitable enough on its own face, can be made an engine of extortion in the hands of those who administer it. In fact, I happen to know that it was designed and carried through for that very purpose."

She smiled.

"I have understood you were in the opposition. Are you speaking politically?"

"I am stating the plain fact," said Kent, nettled a little by her coolness. "Decadent Rome never lifted a baser set of demagogues into office than we have here in this state at the present moment."

He spoke warmly, and she liked him best when he put her on the footing of an equal antagonist.

"I can't agree with your inference," she objected. "As a people we are neither obsequious nor stupid."

"Perhaps not. But it is one of the failures of a popular government that an honest majority may be controlled and directed by a small minority of shrewd rascals. That is exactly what has happened in the passage of this bill. I venture to say that not one man in the ten who voted for it had the faintest suspicion that it was a 'graft'."

"If that be true, what chances there are for men with the gift of true leadership and a love of pure justice in their hearts!" she said half-absently; and he started forward and said: "I beg pardon?"

She let the blue-gray eyes meet his and there was a passing shadow of disappointment in them.

"I ought to beg yours. I'm afraid I was thinking aloud. But it is one of my dreams. If I were a man I should go into politics."

"To purify them?"

"To do my part in trying. The great heart of the people is honest and well-meaning. I think we all admit that. And there is intelligence, too. But human nature is the same as it used to be when they set up a man who could and called him a king. Gentle or simple, it must be led."

"There is no lack of leadership, such as it is," he hazarded.

"No; but there seems to be a pitiful lack of the right kind: men who will put self-seeking and unworthy ambition aside and lift the standard of justice and right-doing for its own sake. Are there any such men nowadays?"

"I don't know," he rejoined gravely. "Sometimes I'm tempted to doubt it. It is a frantic scramble for place and power for the most part. The kind of man you have in mind isn't in it, shuns it as he would a plague spot."

She contradicted him firmly.

"No, the kind of a man I have in mind wouldn't shun it; he would take hold with his hands and try to make things better; he would put the selfish temptations under foot and give the people a leader worth following—be the real mind and hand of the well-meaning majority."

Kent shook his head slowly.

"Not unless a motive stronger than the abstraction which we call patriotism."

"I don't understand," she said; meaning, rather, that she refused to understand.

"I mean that such a man, however exalted his views might be, would have to have an object more personal to him than the mere dutiful promptings of patriotism to make him do his best."

"But that would be self-seeking again."

"Not necessarily in the narrow sense. The old knightly chivalry was a beautiful thing in its way, and it gave an uplift to an age which would have been frankly brutal without it: yet it had its well-spring in what appeals to us now as being a rather fantastic sentiment."

"And we are not sentimentalists?" she suggested.

"No; and it's the worse for us in some respects. You will not find your ideal politician until you find a man with somewhat of the old knightly spirit in him. And I'll go further and say that when you do find him he will be at heart the champion of the woman he loves rather than that of a political constituency."

She became silent at that, and for a time the low sweet harmonies of the nocturne Penelope was playing filled the gap.

He turned upon her suddenly.

"Did you mean to reproach me?" he asked abruptly.

"How absurd!"

"No, it isn't. You are responsible

for me, in a certain sense. You sent me out in to the world, and somehow I feel as if I had disappointed you."

"But what went you out for to see?" she quoted softly.

"I know," he nodded, sitting down again. "You thought you were arousing a worthy ambition, but it was only avarice that was quickened. I've been trying to be a money-getter."

"You can be something vastly better."

"No, I'm afraid not; it is too late."

Again the piano-mellowed silence supervened, and Kent put his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands, being very miserable. He believed now what he had been slow to credit



"YOU CAN BE SOMETHING VASTLY BETTER."

before that he had it in him to hew his way to the end of the line if only the motive were strong enough to call out all the reserves of battle-might and courage. That motive she alone, of all the women in the world, might have supplied, he told himself in keen self-pity. With her love to arm him, her clear-eyed faith to inspire him—

He sat up straight and

To be Continued.

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Meets on second and fourth Friday evenings of each month at the new Elks hall on Main St. Visiting Elks are invited to meet with us.  
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CASE FAIRBANKS, Commander.

### RAILROAD TIME TABLES

AUSTIN PASSENGER TRAINS.

#### C. M. & ST. P. RAILROAD.

Arrive from	Depart for
11:30 a.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	6:30 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
12:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	7:30 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
1:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	8:30 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
2:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	9:30 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
3:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	10:30 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
4:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	11:30 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
5:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	12:30 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
6:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	1:30 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
7:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	2:30 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
8:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	3:30 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
9:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	4:30 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
10:30 p.m. St. Paul and Minneapolis	5:30 p.m. Albia, Kansas City

### FREIGHT TRAINS CARRYING PASSENGERS.

Arrive from	Depart for
8:00 p.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	5:15 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
9:00 p.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	6:15 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
10:00 p.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	7:15 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
11:00 p.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	8:15 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
12:00 p.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	9:15 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
1:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	10:15 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
2:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	11:15 a.m. Albia, Kansas City
3:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	12:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
4:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	1:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
5:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	2:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
6:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	3:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
7:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	4:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
8:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	5:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
9:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	6:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
10:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	7:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
11:00 a.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	8:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City
12:00 p.m. Owatonna, Fairbault and Albia	9:15 p.m. Albia, Kansas City

Except Sunday—Others daily. Carries through sleeper to Chicago.  
Revised to Nov. 3, 1904.  
C. W. SNERE Agent.

### Iowa Central Railway.

Time of arrival and departure of trains of Iowa Central R'y., at Mason City, Ia. Ticket office at depot, East Eighth street. Corrected to January 25, 1904.

PRINCIPAL CITIES.	LEAVE	ARRIVE
Marshalltown, Okaloosa, Albia, Kansas City	12:40 pm	1:05 pm
Marshalltown, Okaloosa, Albia, Kansas City	12:50 pm	1:40 am
Hampton, Ackley, Eldon, and Marshalltown	5:45 am	8:45 am
Manly, Keosauqua, Northwood and Albia	11:05 am	11:30 am

Daily. Daily except Sunday. 8:40 p. m. train has fine reclining chair cars and high back coaches through to Kansas City and St. Louis, and Pullman sleeping cars Albia to St. Louis and Kansas City. 12:30 a. m. train has through buffet sleepers chair cars and coaches all way to St. Louis. 4:45 a. m. has fine reclining chair through to Peoria. For rates etc apply to H. T. Boyd, Agent. A. B. CUTTS, G. P. & T. A.

### SUMMONS.

STATE OF MINNESOTA, County of Mower. In District Court, Tenth Judicial District. Bessie V. Malone, Plaintiff against James A. Malone, Defendant—Summons. The state of Minnesota, to the above named defendant: You are hereby summoned and required to answer the complaint of the Plaintiff in the above entitled action, which complaint has been filed in the office of the Clerk of said District Court, at the city of Austin, County of Mower, and State of Minnesota, and to serve a copy of your answer to said complaint on the undersigned, at their office in the City of Austin, in the said County of Mower, within thirty days after the service of this summons upon you, exclusive of the day of service; and if you fail to answer the said complaint within the time aforesaid, the plaintiff in this action will apply to the court for the relief demanded in said complaint. Dated November 28, A. D. 1904. SHEPHERD & CATHERWOOD, Plaintiff's attorneys, Austin, Minn.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### ILLINOIS CENTRAL R. R.

The Illinois Central maintains Double Daily Service and operates the best of trains, with Dining Cars, Buffet-Library Cars, Chair Cars and Sleeping Cars. Regular service to St. Louis, Cincinnati and Louisville south to New Orleans. The best road for reaching the Winter Tourist resorts of the South including New Orleans, Vicksburg, Havana, Cuba, Colon, Panama, Gulfport, Miss., Hammond, La.

Mardi Gras at New Orleans March 7. Gulfport is a Mexican Gulf Coast resort having the new fine "Great Southern" Steamships leave New Orleans every Saturday afternoon for Havana; every Wednesday morning for Colon, Panama. Regular ocean steamship sailings from New Orleans to Mexico, Central America, Panama, West Indies and Europe. Send or call for descriptive matter in regard to the above.

**Hot Springs, Ark., Florida**  
Daily Sleeping Car without change Chicago to Hot Springs, with connections at Memphis from Cincinnati and Louisville. Excursions through "Dixie Flyer" Sleeping Car Line St. Louis to Jacksonville via Nashville, Chattanooga and Atlanta.

**Mexico, California**  
Tour of all Mexico via Illinois Central R. R. under escort of the "Camelot" and "Albia" agents the American Tourist Association, Quincy Building, 113 Adams St., Chicago, leaves Chicago January 31. West coast excursions limited. All exclusive privileges independent travel. Special Pullman Vestibule Train, Drawing Rooms, Compartments, Library and Music Room, with the largest Dining Car in the world, and the famous Open-Top Observation Car, Chilliwell. Special Baggage Car. Tickets include all expenses every where.

Special Tours of Mexico and California via the Illinois Central and New Orleans under the auspices of Raymond & Whitcomb, will leave Chicago Friday, Jan. 20 and Feb. 10 for Mexico and California, and Friday March 3, for California; this last to include a stop-over at New Orleans for the Mardi Gras. Entire trips made in special private vestibule trains of the Pullmans, with dining car service. Fascinating trips, complete in every detail.

Illinois Central Weekly Excursions to California. Excursion cars through to Los Angeles and San Francisco as follows: Via New Orleans and Southern Route every Friday from Chicago; every Tuesday from Cincinnati. Via Omaha and the Scenic Route every Wednesday from Chicago.

Full Particulars concerning all of the above can be had of agents of the Illinois Central or by addressing the nearest of the undersigned representatives of the "Central."  
A. H. HANSON, G. P. & T. A., Chicago, Ill.  
J. F. MERRY, A. G. F. A., Dubuque, Iowa to April 1.

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