

InsideOUT

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Denver Center
THEATRE
KENT THOMPSON,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR **COMPANY**



WHEN WE ARE MARRIED
BY J.B. PRIESTLEY

WHEN WE ARE
MARRIED

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2012/13
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InsideOUT

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Synopsis

*When we are married
Why what will you do?
I'll be as sweet as I can be to you;
I will be tender and I will be true
When I am married, sweetheart, to you.*

—Lyrics by Hugh Morton,
Music by Ousters Kerber.

Married life is about to get very interesting! Set on a September evening in 1908, three couples, the Helliwells, the Soppitts and the Parkers, gather together to celebrate their joint 25th wedding anniversaries. As the evening progresses an outrageous secret is revealed: the parson who married them wasn't authorized to perform marriages, and thus, they were never really wedded. These fine upstanding couples have been "living in sin" for 25 years. To make the situation worse, the ladies learn of their plight from a sassy mouthed servant who is herself properly married. When each couple samples a taste of single life again, their relationships are energetically and hilariously put to the test and the fact cannot be ignored. Do they really want to be married to their respective spouses? ■

THE PLAYWRIGHT J.B. PRIESTLEY

If you want to achieve a solid lasting success in authorship, at least in this country, the thing to do is to write the same book—for example—the same sort of novel about the same sort of people over and over again.

—J. B. Priestley, 1927, ¹

John Boynton Priestley (1894-1984) was born in Manningham, a suburb of Bradford, England, to a mill worker turned schoolteacher and his wife. At the age of 16, he left secondary school and found work as a clerk in a wool firm in Bradford: in addition, he wrote a column for the local newspaper, *The Bradford Pioneer*.

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Priestley joined the British Army; he was immediately sent to France where he served on the Western Front. In the battle of Loos he was wounded and sent back to England for six months. Soon after returning to the war, he suffered from a German gas attack; treated at Rouen he was told he was unfit for military service and transferred to the Entertainers Section of the British Army. Awarded a government grant, he attended Cambridge University where he completed a degree in Modern History and Political Science and wrote for the *Cambridge Review*.

Priestley became a theatre reviewer for the *Daily News* and then began writing books of essays in such works as *Brief Diversions* (1922) and *Papers from Lilliput* (1922).

His output of literature was prodigious. His early critical writing included *The English Comic Characters* (1925), *The English Novel* (1927) and *English Humour* (1929). His novels begin with *The Good Companion* (1929) and *Angel Pavement* (1930). He also wrote many popular plays: *Dangerous Corner* (1932), *Eden End* (1934), *I Have Been Here Before* (1937), *Time and the Conways* (1937), *When We Are Married* (1938) and *An Inspector Calls* (1947). Priestley probably became best known as the presenter of “Postscripts,” a BBC radio commentary that followed the evening news on Sunday beginning in 1940. ²

Priestley led a turbulent personal life. In 1921 he married Pat Emily Tempest and they had two daughters, Barbara and Sylvia. When it was discovered Pat had terminal cancer, Priestley was devastated, but not so despairing that he couldn't have an affair with Jane Wyndham Lewis, which resulted in the birth of a daughter. Pat died in 1925 and the following year he married Jane. In 1952 he began an affair with Jacquetta Hawkes that resulted in a nasty divorce and made "scathing headlines in the national press."³ He married Jacquetta the following year. Judith Cook has written: "J.B. Priestley was a big man in every respect, in bulk, in his prodigious appetite for work, and in generosity of spirit."⁴ ■

1. Atkins, p. 1.
2. www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

Atkins, John. *J. B. Priestley: the Last of the Sages*. London: John Calder, 1951.

Priestley, J. B. *When We Are Married*. London: Heineman Educational Works. 1938.

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/j.priestley.htm>

1908 IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE WORLD

Although *When We Are Married* was written in 1938, it is set in 1908, at the end of the reign of King Edward VII. King Edward VII was the monarch and the Prime Ministers were Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Liberal (until April 3) succeeded by H. H. Asquith, another Liberal.

.....
1908 was in many ways an important year.
.....

In January Ernest Shackleton set sail from New Zealand on the *Nimrod* for Antarctica. In the same month Robert Baden Powell begins the Boy Scout movement.

In April the Territorial Army is founded. Campbell-Bannerman resigns as Prime Minister, on the grounds of health, to be replaced by H.H. Asquith. David Lloyd George becomes Chancellor of the Exchequer, while Winston Churchill enters the Cabinet for the first time as President of the Board of Trade. That same month England hosts the Olympics in London.

In June the first large suffragette rally was held in London. In July the Irish Universities Act receives Royal Assent in Parliament. This provides for establishment of the federal National University of Ireland based in Dublin and the Queen's University of Belfast.

In October Edith Morley is made Professor of English at University College, Reading, the first woman appointed to a chair at a British university-level institution. American born Samuel F. Cody makes the first powered fixed-wing aircraft flight in Britain.

In December Royal Assent is given to the Children's Act and the Prevention of Crime Act.

Other significant events were the meeting of Edward VII with Czar Nicholas II at Reval; William Howard Taft is elected to the United States Presidency; General Motors is founded and the Ford Motor Company produces the first Model T.

In 1908 E. M. Forster's novel *A Room with a View* was published as well as Kenneth Grahame's children's novel *The Wind in the Willows*. ■

Grun, Bernard, ed. *The Timetables of History*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1908_in_the_United_Kingdom

POLITICS IN BRITAIN CIRCA 1908

*How nature always does contrive
That every boy and every gal,
That's born into the world alive,
Is either a little Liberal
Or else a little Conservative!*

—W.S. Gilbert: *Iolanthe*

Herbert Asquith, a Liberal, was the Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1908-1916 during the monarchy of King Edward VII and King George V.

The economy had taken a turn for the worse in 1907-08 with many family businesses giving way to public corporations causing a rise in unemployment. David Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer at that time, is associated with many reforms that benefitted the majority of society. In 1908, a pension of five schillings was introduced for those over 70 (old age pensions); in 1911 the government introduced the National Insurance Act that provided insurance for workers in time of sickness. In addition, in 1902, the Balfour Education Act had provided for the funding of secondary schools. All these reforms were paid for by an increase in taxes on the rich.

Lloyd George also helped set off the clash between the House of Commons and the House of Lords. His “People’s Budget” of 1908 planned to introduce a new tax on the rich that would help finance more reforms to advance the lifestyle of the poor. The Lords rejected the budget and that prompted a conflict between both Houses of Parliament. The result was the passage of the Parliament Act of 1911, which stated that the Lords only had the power to delay, not veto, any act passed by the Commons.

Meanwhile the women were kept busy by the Women’s Social and Political Union founded by Emmeline Pankhurst and her two daughters in 1903. Their campaign for the women’s right to vote led to the term “suffragettes” coined by the *Daily Mail*. ■

Charmley, John. *A History of Conservative Politics Since 1830*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008.

<http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/politics/reform.htm>

http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk./david_lloyd_george.htm

DOMESTIC SERVICE IN GREAT BRITAIN CIRCA 1908

MARIA: *That Mrs. Northrop! When she's finished her washing-up tonight, she goes—and goes for good!*

—When We Are Married

The early 20th century was the era of Britain's "servant problem". From 1900-1980 domestic service had a compelling presence in British economic, social and cultural life. Middle class dinner parties were dominated by conversation about the shortage of decent help and the tendency of servants to be absent or depart with no notice. The demand for "skivvies" or maids who would do all kinds of work rose for decades as a newly created middle class looked for help. But new options were opening up for women in shops, offices and factories; therefore, domestic service was not a first priority for many young girls.

In addition, the British took a long time to turn to technology to solve this problem. For example, refrigerators caught on later than they did in the United States, as did vacuum cleaners, washing machines and dryers.

In the book *Knowing Their Place: Domestic Service in 20th Century Britain*, author Lucy deLap argues that domestic service has served as a foundational narrative among the stories British people tell about the last century and its changes." ¹

Indeed, the body of literature and screenplays contains many excellent examples. They include: *Upstairs, Downstairs*—this PBS series was partially written by Jean Marsh and Eileen Atkins and ran from 1971-75; it was about the wealthy Bellamy family and the servant staff that lived and worked downstairs. *Gosford Park*—this movie written by Julian Fellowes and directed by Robert Altman in 2001 focused on a wealthy family, their relatives, a retinue of servants and how a murder affected all of them.

The Remains of the Day—a novel by Kazuo Ishiguro written in 1989 about servants before World War II was turned into a movie with Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson. *Downton Abbey*—the current favorite on PBS—concerns a wealthy family, their daughters and the servants who drive much of the plot. ■

1. www.cam.ac.uk

<http://www.economist.com/node/21541717>

<http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/features/who-mops-the-floor-now-how-domestic-service-shaped-20th-century-britain>

THE CULTURE OF YORKSHIRE

There be such a company of willful gentlemen within Yorkshire as there be not in all England besides.

—Albert of York to Cromwell, 1556

.....

The couples in this play live in West Riding which is one of three historic subdivisions of Yorkshire, England. Unlike most counties in England which were divided into hundreds (the division of a shire for administrative, military and judicial purposes under common law), Yorkshire was divided into thirds (west, north and east).

The culture of Yorkshire has developed over centuries and been influenced by the Celts, Romans, Angles, Vikings and Normans. The people of Yorkshire are very proud of their county and tend to be unique individuals. “No other county produces so much originality—and that originality, when carried to excess is eccentricity.”² John Atkins in his biography of J.B. Priestley points out the prudery and sense of moral superiority that the characters in the play possess. They also can be rude, direct and stubborn. The most common stereotype of Yorkshire people is that they are tight-fisted with money. This is demonstrated in the play by Mr. Parker and in the story of “Peg Pennyworth” who would order “a pennyworth of strawberries or a pennyworth of cream at a time, pay down her penny, as she had an aversion to tradesmen’s bills.”³

.....

Yorkshire dialect is referred to as “tyke.” The BBC glossary of North Yorkshire gives some examples:⁴

'appen—maybe, possibly
bad 'un—no good
chelpin'—talking
down't—down the road
eeh my gum—oh my god.
gaffer—the boss
gi'over—stop it
summit—something

Yorkshire cuisine is known for its rich ingredients, especially in desserts. Yorkshire pudding is made from butter and gravy and is a standard with roast beef and vegetables. Yorkshire curd tart uses rosewater, butter, sugar, lemon juice and currants while parkin is a sweet ginger cake. Ginger beer is stronger than ginger ale and a product of one of the several breweries in the area. From 1700 on Yorkshire has seen the growth of many chocolate factories such as Rowntrees (who invented the KitKat), Terry's and Thorntons. ■

1. Baring-Gould, title page.
2. Ibid, preface.
3. Ibid, p.169.
4. www. bbc.co.wk.

Atkins, John. *J. B. Priestley: The Last of the Sages*. London: John Calder, 1981.

Baring-Gould, S. *Yorkshire Oddities and Incidents and Strange Events*. London: Methuen and Co., 1890.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/northyorkshire/voices2005/glossary/glossary.shtml>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Riding_of_Yorkshire

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/culture_of_yorkshire

THE WOOLEN INDUSTRY IN YORKSHIRE

Manufacture of wool is one of the oldest industries of Britain. As a home industry it dates back at least to the Bronze Age. But the emergence of the West Riding area of Yorkshire as the major manufacturing center has been comparatively recent and mostly due to the existence of supplies of accessible coal in an area of abundant soft water along with skilled workers.

Earliest records of sheep-raising and wool-working on a large scale in the West Riding vicinity go back to the 13th century monasteries. Before the advent of mechanical power many other areas of England were suited to wool production, but only in West Riding was the environment suited to the textile industry in all its stages. With the introduction of machinery in the 1770s, the abundant waterpower could be utilized; thus, mills were set up in valleys at breaks of slopes and streams. Later, with the introduction of the steam engine, came the decline of regions possessing waterpower but far from coal. With the steam engine, the West Riding industry adapted itself to the new conditions by a slight easterly migration; new mills were erected lower in the valleys where coal was more accessible. But for the first time the problem of transporting the coal had to be considered and it was for this reason that the canal system has evolved.

As contrasted with the Manchester region, the West Riding area has special characteristics. The two districts are separated by only 10 miles of barren land forming the summit of the Central Pennines, yet they have developed distinctly different industries. “The cotton district faces west (direction of its chief source of material); the woolen district faces east; one is near the sea, the other far inland.”¹ Cotton towns, especially those around Manchester, are foothill settlements at points where streams leave the mountains to enter the plains. Woolen towns are valley settlements in the heart of the moors and they have not one center but two. No other major industrial region has a double capital. Birmingham dominates the Black Country, Newcastle the Northeast Coast, while Manchester is the center for South Lancashire, Cardiff for South Wales and Glasgow for Central Scotland. But West Riding has two centers: Leeds, the regional capital, is the shopping center for not only for the woolen towns but also for almost all of Yorkshire—a wide area stretching southward almost to Sheffield, eastward to Hull and northward to Middlesbrough. Bradford, the other center, is a commercial and manufacturing town, chief marketing spot for the woolen and worsted industry. So at all times West Riding has proved the best

region for wool spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing.

In England the wool trade has given rise to hundreds of family names. For example:

Shepherd —
tended the sheep.

Pack, Packer, Packman, Lane, Laney, Lanier—
transported the fleeces.

Stapler, Staples—
bought the raw wool.

Card, Carder, Toner, Towzer, Kemp, Kemper, Kempster—
combed the wool.

Dyer, Littester, Lister—
dyed the wool.

Webb, Webber, Webster—
wove the fabric.

Fuller, Tuck, Tucker, Tuckerman—
fulled the fabric to create a nap.

Shears, Sharman, Shearman—
used shears to remove the nap from woollen cloth to produce
finer qualities of fabric.

Clothier and Draper—
prepared the woollen cloth and sold it to the tailors.

Tailor and Cutter—
made the wool into garments. ² ■

1. www.jstor.org.

2. www.a.yorkshiredynasty.

<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/141036?uid=3739568&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3739256&sid=48042580154377>

[http://www.ayorkshiredynasty.co.uk/page 17/page17.html](http://www.ayorkshiredynasty.co.uk/page%2017/page17.html)

THE YORKSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE

The gently rolling countryside of the Yorkshire Wolds (the range of chalk hills), part of the East Riding area of Yorkshire, is dotted with small market towns and criss-crossed by serene walking trails. This quiet rural area of groves and woods is a patchwork of fields that stretch across rolling hillsides under blue skies. The countryside is punctuated by villages with markets where local crafts are for sale and farmers sell their produce. Each place in the Yorkshire Wolds seems to have its own special feature, such as the churches with slender spires in Bishop Wilton and South Dalton as well as the rows of whitewashed cottages beside the village pond at Bishop Burton.

To explore the area on foot, there are marked footpaths including the Yorkshire Wolds Way which runs for 79 miles between Filey on the coast north of Bridlington and the River Humber near Kingston-upon-Hull. A series of short circular routes off it lead to some of the most scenic parts of the Yorkshire area.

The countryside of Yorkshire has acquired the common nickname of “God’s Own Country.” In recent times North Yorkshire has replaced Kent as the “Garden of England” according to the *Guardian*, a British newspaper. Yorkshire includes the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales National Parks and part of the Peak District National Park. Nidderdale and the Howardian Hills are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The scenic views of rugged cliffs can be seen at Whitby, Filey and the chalk cliffs at Flamborough Head.

There are seaside resorts in Yorkshire with sand beaches; Scarborough is Britain’s oldest seaside resort dating back to the spa town era in the 17th century, while Whitby has been voted as the United Kingdom’s best beach, with a “postcard” perfect harbor. ■

<http://suite101.com/article/exploring-the-yorkshire-wolds-countryside-a111795>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yorkshire>

THE BRONTE SISTERS

Charlotte (1816-1855), Emily (1818-1848) and Anne (1820-1849) are three sisters whose lives and novels are associated with the moors of Yorkshire, England, where they were born and lived.

Their father, Patrick Bronte, was an Irishman who became the parish clergyman in the isolated town of Haworth, Yorkshire, and lived there all his life. Bronte was somewhat eccentric and tended to be strict. His wife died in 1821; therefore his sister brought up the family conscientiously, but with little affection or understanding. The sisters were sent to boarding schools where they received a better education than was usual for girls at that time, but in a harsh atmosphere.

Very few jobs were available for women at that time, so the sisters, except for occasional stints as governesses and schoolteachers, lived their entire lives at home. They were shy, poor and lonely, and occupied themselves with music, drawing, reading and —above all—writing. Their isolation led to the development of their imaginations in making up stories and poems. In 1846, under the masculine pen names of Currier, Ellis and Acton Bell, they published a joint volume of poems. Only two copies were sold, but all three sisters soon had their first novels published.

Charlotte Bronte's famous novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) is largely autobiographical. Through the heroine, Charlotte relived the hated boarding school life and her experiences as a governess in a large house. Rochester, the hero and master of the house, is fictional. *Jane Eyre* was enormously successful, but many readers were shocked that Rochester, who tried to make Jane his mistress, should be rewarded by marrying her. Some were also shocked because Jane wanted to be considered a thinking and independent person, rather than a weak female.

Charlotte Bronte wrote three other novels. The first, *The Professor*, was not published until 1857, after her death. *Shirley* (1849) is set among the labor riots of the early 1800's. *Villette* (1853), the most popular of the three, is based on Charlotte's unhappy experiences as a governess in Brussels.

Emily Bronte wrote only one novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), a romantic masterpiece. It was not as popular as *Jane Eyre*, and was even more strongly condemned for its brutality, its lack of conventional morality and its glorification of romantic passion. Not all readers found the supernatural elements or the hero Heathcliff's pitiless cruelty wholly believable. But the author's vivid descriptions and her understanding of social class and individual temperament, give even the exaggerated elements of her story great impact. The book's portrait of the moors reveals Emily as a writer of enduring power.

Anne Bronte was the mildest and most patient of the sisters. Both her novels, *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848) can be seen as less violent versions of *Jane Eyre*. ■

http://www.haworth-village.org.uk/brontes/bronte_story/bronte_story.asp

The World Book Encyclopedia. Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1972.

Watt, Ian. "The Brontes."

RESPECTABILITY AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

The middle class in Edwardian England sought security, comfort and peace of mind and, foremost, social acceptance and approval. In J. F. C. Harrison's book, *Late Victorian Britain*, he writes, "In retrospect the years 1890-1914 have come to seem like the golden age of the middle classes.... It was a basically conservative civilization, alternately complacent and fearful."¹ Being respectable essentially meant maintaining a reputable façade.

In Yorkshire the meaning of respectability was open to interpretation and re-interpretation by individuals and communities. However, most authorities put the emphasis on "industry, self-reliance, self-restraint, sobriety, thrift, honesty, morality, cleanliness, domesticity and orderliness."² A respectable citizen also looked the part, possessing a tidy, clean appearance and self-disciplined in manner and speech. The importance of language plays a big role in the social class system; it is the mirror of social status and education.

The newly minted middle class recognized the importance of competition, prudence, self-reliance and personal achievement as opposed to privilege and inheritance. Thus, it was not society's responsibility to take care of families; it was up to individuals to seek improvement through education and hard work. Individualized accounts of great men building fortunes from nothing became a staple part of middle class culture, but these needed to be read with a certain caution. Having access to networks of support was certainly central to the emergence of the self-made man. Thus, middle class values were carved out of attempts to define a society based on merit rather than aristocratic privilege. ■

1. Harrison, p. 65-66.

2. www.c-s-p.org/flyers

Harrison, J.F. C. *Late Victorian Britain, 1875-1901*. London: Fontana Press, 1991.

www.c-s-p.org/flyers/978-1-4438-2512-2sample.pdf

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/middle_classes-01.shtml

<http://richardjohnbr.blogspot.com/2011/07/respectability-and-middle-classes.html>.

SMOKING IN BRITISH POPULAR CULTURE

1800-2000

“Tobacco was placed alongside a number of commodities such as fine wine, tailored clothing and mechanical gadgets, that could be appreciated only by tasteful and rational bourgeois male customers.”¹ This consumption was separated from the passive or directed shopping habits of the female consumer.

Though the pipe and cigar were worshipped in the 19th century, in the late 19th century mass production provided the impulse for a growing cigarette-buying public. In 1883, W.D. and H.D. Wills of Bristol began using the Bonsack machine to produce cigarettes; making cigarettes cheaper paved the way for a mass market. The evidence suggests that there was a marked increase in the number of juvenile smokers in the 1880s and 90s; the protests produced a legislative response in the form of the Children’s Act of 1908 which prohibited the sale of tobacco products to youths younger than 16 years of age.

Cigarette manufacturers used the powerful new advertising medium to boost consumption; two World Wars and scenes of smoking in movies increased demand. It was not until the second half of the 20th century that the health scares associated with smoking and cancer caused some people to examine the evidence. Still there are some who are prepared to take personal responsibility for their actions and continue to smoke. ■

1. www.history.ac.uk

<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/222>

PARTICIPATE

Free events designed to spark dialogue between actors, experts and audiences.

Perspectives - Denver Center Theatre Company's own "Creative Team" and community experts host interactive, topical discussions with attendees that provide a unique perspective on the production. This provides an in-depth connection that makes the stage experience even more rewarding.

11/16, 6pm, Jones Theatre

Talkbacks - Perhaps the best way to fully appreciate a production is by engaging in a stimulating dialogue with your fellow audience members and the actors who bring it to life.

11/25, Post-show

DCTC@The TC: The Art of Making Art - Discover the secrets behind the art and the artist at the DCTC. Gain deeper insight into the artist's journey in the creation and development of their work. Join Eden Lane (of channel 12's "In Focus with Eden Lane") as she interviews beloved DCTC veteran actors Kathleen M. Brady and John Hutton.

11/27, second floor of the Tattered Cover LoDo (1628 16th St.)

Higher Education Advisory Discussions - Audience members gain scholarly insight into the productions through discussions, facilitated by faculty members from regional colleges and universities.

12/9, Post-show

Theatre & Theology - In our continued partnership with Pastor Dan Bollman with the Rocky Mountain Evangelical Lutheran Synod and cast members, this discussion examines the relevant connections to the productions through a theological lens.

12/11, Post-show

QUESTIONS

PRE-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. What are similarities and differences between farce and a situational comedy?
2. What does being married mean to you? What makes a good spouse?

POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS

1. After seeing the play, explain if you would you consider *When We Are Married* a farce or a comedy?
2. How has the definition of marriage changed over time? Have the conventional roles of husband and wife changed over time?
3. How would you describe the three couples and their views of their relationship with their spouses? What do the characters learn about themselves and their spouses by the end of the play?
4. How are status and class shown in the play? How do the different classes treat the lower class or the upper class? In this time setting, how does one's status in society effect the success of one's marriage?
5. How do societal responsibilities and roles play a part in this play? Are the couples more worried about being married or about what the other townspeople would say about them?
6. What purpose do the news reporter and photographer serve in the play?
7. Why is the character Lottie introduced? Is her purpose to add some mystery or something else?
8. How do the different couples view roles in marriage? What will happen to these characters in five years? Will they still be happily married or will the marriages deteriorate?
9. What happens to our perceptions about our lives when we are confronted with a drastic change?
10. What would you do if you knew you could have a second chance with your marriage or relationship?

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