

# MISS TODD'S VAMPIRE

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## Miss Todd's Vampire

### A Comedy in One Act

#### By

#### SALLY SHUTE Author of "Theodore, Jr.," etc.

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#### BOSTON WALTER H. BAKER & CO. 1920

### Miss Todd's Vampire

P.S.3537 H997M55

#### CHARACTERS

Mrs. Winn. Miss Todd. Sue Makely. Enid Slater. Dan Morehouse.



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## Miss Todd's Vampire

SCENE.—A sitting-room in MISS TODD'S house. There is a door c., leading in to a hall; a window in left wall, a fireplace in right wall with a mirror above. A sofa down R. front, an easy chair at L. Small table at R. with a work-basket on it. Another small table for telephone. Other chairs, a bookcase, pictures and anything suitable to complete scene.

(MISS TODD is seated on the sofa knitting. She is a tall woman, well but not stylishly dressed. Rather quick in her speech. MRS. WINN, her sister, short and plump, is dressed in outdoor dress. She speaks with a slight drawl and is very deliberate in her movements. She is seated when the curtain rises, but stands as she speaks.)

MRS. WINN. You don't know how I've enjoyed your supper, Abby. It's such a change fer me to set at other folks' tables. I do hope ter goodness Sarah looked after my boarders. 'Tain't often I leave 'em.

Miss Todd. I guess it won't hurt 'em to kinder shift fer theirselves onct in a while. They'll think all the more of yer if you ain't a-runnin' round waitin' on 'em continual.

MRS. WINN. I hate to eat an' run, Abby, but you know how 'tis with men-folks. Mr. Winn, he does abominate gittin' in right in the middle of a picture. The theatre is so dark, too, you can't see an inch afore yer nose. The other night I caught my coat button in Eben Stanley's too-pay an' lifted it right offen his head. Mis'

Stanley, she ain't spoke to me sense. I think some one orter complain. Well, I must be goin'. Too bad you gotter miss this show. Mr. Winn heard it was swell. Shiela Parer's great. They ain't nobody can beat her in the Vamp line. I didn't sleep a wink after I see her last time. I do wish you'd go with us.

MISS TODD. Sm'ther time I'd be delighted; but I kinder feel it in my bones Sue'll be a-needin' of me tonight.

MRS. WINN. I wouldn't miss one fur anythin'. I'm awful sorry you can't go, Abby.

MISS TODD. So'm I, Cad; it sounds awful interestin', but you see how it is, don't yer? All the boarders is a-goin' out an' I don't feel like havin' Sue here all alone to entertain this young man. 'Twill look more respectable like to have an older woman round. Men appreciates them things. She seems as near ter me as if she was my own flesh an' blood, and she bein' a orphen, kinder clings ter me; she always tells me little things as happens in the shop; and comes ter me fer advice, an' shows me her clothes an' hats an' things. I don't know what I'd do ef Sue went away; why, she's the life of the house.

MRS. WINN (who has seated herself during MISS TODD'S speech). Well, Abby Todd, ef I ain't a-settin' down agin. Winn, he says, I remind him of a person a-drownin'. I always rises three times afore I departs final. Winn's a great joker, Winn is.

#### (Both ladies enjoy this joke.)

MISS TODD. Say, Cad, keep yer sittin' jest a minute, will yer? I don't feel as though I oughter tell yer this, but somehow it seems kinder mean not to, seein' as he's your boarder.

MRS. WINN (*surprised*). For the lan' sakes, Abby Todd, ef you gut anythin' ter tell me, be quick erbout it. What's one of my young men ben an' done now?

MISS TODD. Don't git so excited, Cad; 'tain't nothin' very bad; but who do yer suppose is waitin' on Sue Makely?

MRS. WINN. One of my boarders?

MISS TODD. Yes, but which?

MRS. WINN. Fred Somes, that's in the drug store; he's a great feller fer takin' the girls round.

MISS TODD. No, Cad, it's your star boarder. He is a-takin' of her to the theatre this evenin'.

MRS. WINN. What! Not Dan Morehouse?

MISS TODD. Yes, Dan Morehouse.

MRS. WINN (*indignant*). Well, ef Daniel Morehouse is a-comin' after your Sue, you needn't stay home ter chaperon. Mr. Morehouse is a gentleman ef ever there was one.

MISS TODD. Now don't yer git ter feelin' I don't trust that young man, Cad; but I believe a girl is lots more thought of if she has a sorter background, an' more'n likely she'll need me to hook up her dress. Oh, by the way, Cad, I do wish you'd stay an' see her new gownd.

MRS. WINN. Winn'll kill me, but I do like to see pretty new clothes. Do you suppose she's most ready?

MISS TODD. Wait a minute an' I'll holler up an' see. (She steps into the hall and calls.) Sue, oh, Sue!

SUE (outside). What is it, Miss Todd?

MISS TODD. Are you dressed yet? If you are, come down an' let Mis' Winn see yer new gownd.

SUE. All right; I'll be right there in a minute.

MISS TODD (coming into room). She'll be down in a minute.

MRS. WINN. There, I told yer I'd have ter set again. (Sits.) I do hope her minutes ain't like some folks'. That Enid Slater, fer instance; always late ter every meal. My! wa'n't I glad when her an' her mother left. I sez to Winn, I sez, "No more, no more women folks for me. I can't abide lady boarders."

MISS TODD. Well, I can't say as I like the general run, but my bein' a single lady, of course, it wouldn't do for me to bar the gentler sex. Where do the Slaters live now?

MRS. WINN. In Boston. Enid's in one of them Beauty Parlors. You oughter see the paint she puts on. Fer the life of me, I can't see what her mother's thinkin' erbout. If she was a daughter of mine, I'd be ashamed to own to it.

SUE (a pretty young girl, dressed most becomingly for the theatre, comes in; she has a bright, joyous manner). Oh, I thought you were going to the pictures, Mrs. Winn.

MRS. WINN. I am a-goin' ef I ever gits started, but I hate ter eat an' run, as I tells Cad.

SUE. *Didn't* we have a good supper?

MISS TODD (*playfully*). Now, Sue, as if we didn't always have good vittles.

MRS. WINN. Turn round an' let's see yer dress. (SUE shows off the gown, with innocent pride.) My, ain't it swell? Where yer buy it, Sue? Shoon's an' Hines?

MISS TODD. I guess not; she bought it at Hattery's. 'Twas one of them sampler dresses. She gut it at a bargin, didn't yer, Sue?

MRS. WINN. You must have paid twenty-five dollars for that ef yer paid a cent. (*Fingering the goods.*)

SUE. Shall I tell her, Miss Todd?

MISS TODD (nods). Sure.

SUE. I paid just nineteen dollars and seventy-nine cents.

MRS. WINN. Well, whatcher know erbout that! (*Clock strikes.*) Good lan'! I'll ketch it. Thanks fer invitin' me ter supper. (*Outside in hall, she calls back.*) Good-bye.

MISS TODD AND SUE. Good-bye.

MISS TODD (has been looking at SUE carefully). Sue, you ain't fixed them hooks on the shoulder right.

SUE. Oh, I meant to ask you to fasten them for me. They are very refractory. (MISS TODD fastens hooks and SUE gives her a grateful squeeze.) What would I do without you, you old dear.

MISS TODD. It seems to me as if you needed a bit of color. A artificial flower or ribbon or somethin'.

(Sue dances up to mirror, while MISS TODD gets bunch of flowers from drawer in table.)

SUE (takes them, and tries them on in different places

about her dress). Do they look best here, Miss Todd, or here, or here? (She runs to mirror again.)

MISS TODD. Sue, I do believe your petticoat hangs. Yes, I'll git a needle an' thread.

#### (She goes to work-basket.)

SUE. Oh, don't bother to sew it. Take a pin.

MISS TODD. Sue Makely, now don't you be a-gittin' shiftless. You jest stan' right still an' 'twon't take a minute. (MISS TODD sits on sofa and SUE stands in front of her facing the audience. SUE pays no attention to MISS TODD'S story. She is afraid that DAN will catch them.) Did I ever tell yer how Mandy Smith lost her beau?

SUE. Have you got it most done?

MISS TODD. Well, 'twas this way. Stand a little more over to the right, Sue. No, to the right. Ephrim White, you've heard me speak of him?

SUE. How much more is there to do? (Looks at work MISS TODD is doing.) Goodness, Dan will be here before you get it finished!

MISS TODD. That hall clock is fast. Well, to continue, Eph White he was courtin' an' they was as good as engaged, when Flora Bean come ter live with Eph's aunt. Flora, she reminded me of Enid Slater somehow. She was the beatenist fer gittin' other girls' beaux away —

SUE (*interrupting*). Enid has always been nice to me, Miss Todd.

MISS TODD. Well, you never had a beau for her to git away, did yer? There, it's all done. (*She bites off thread*.) Now stan' off an' let's have a look at yer. (*Door-bell rings*.) You look jest lovely, Sue. I wonder if Sarah is a-goin' to answer that door. (*Listens*.) Yes, there she goes. I do hate to keep folks waitin'.

#### (They wait expectantly.)

(ENID SLATER rushes in—a tall, dark girl, very attractive, dressed in the extreme of fashion; her cheeks are noticeably rouged and her hair elaborately dressed under a very daring hat.)

#### MISS TODD'S VAMPIRE

#### ENID. Hullo, Sue! (She embraces her.) SUE. Why, Enid, I didn't know you were in town.

#### (She goes L.)

ENID (throwing back coat, sits on the sofa). I'm only here for a few days. Well, how are you, Sue? Anything doing in this little old burg?

MISS TODD (feeling ignored). How do you do, Miss Slater? (MISS TODD is up back.)

ENID. Oh, how do?

MISS TODD. Sue, I'm a-goin' up-stairs; want I should bring down your hat and coat?

SUE. Thank you.

#### (MISS TODD goes out.)

ENID. You going out, Sue?

SUE. Yes.

ENID. What, in that rig?

SUE. Don't you like it, Enid?

ENID. Have you paid for it? If you haven't, I would advise you to send it back.

SUE. What don't you like about it?

ENID. I don't like anything about it. In the first place the color isn't becoming; then the neck isn't right for you. Perhaps it's because your hair isn't done well. I don't know as I can tell you just where the trouble is, but you look queer somehow. I could fix your hair, but the gown is simply impossible, Sue.

## (Telephone bells rings. MISS TODD enters with SUE's coat and hat. She goes to 'phone.)

MISS TODD. Hullo......Miss Makely?.....Yes, she's right here. Somebody for you, Sue.

SUE (at \*phone). Hullo.....Oh, Dan, I'm so sorry .....Dangerously?.....That's good.....All right. Seven-thirty, at Dupont's Drug Store.....Yes, I can take that. Seven-twenty from the waiting station at the foot of the street.....No, I don't mind in the least. All right, good-bye.

#### (Miss Todd is anxious during this telephone speech, and ENID is very much interested.)

MISS TODD. Anybody sick, Sue? Ain't yer a-goin'? SUE. Dan says that his boss has been taken ill and sent for him about some business deal. He wants Dan to see to it, or something. So I'm to meet Dan at the drug store, as he won't have time to come out here after me.

ENID. Sue, you don't mean to say that a man has asked you to meet him in a drug store, just like a common kitchen maid. My friends always come for me in a taxi, when we go to a theatre. Why, if a man didn't have any more respect for me than ——

MISS TODD (*interrupting*). Mr. Dan Morehouse boards with my sister, Miss Enid Slater, an' I'll have you know he's a gentleman, an' what's more, folks can be common if they ain't kitchen maids. I mean I seen lots of maids that wasn't common an' lots of other folks that was.

ENID. Aren't you a bit ambiguous, Miss Todd?

MISS TODD. I may be *amphibious*, but I guess I can give Sue all the advice she needs.

SUE. It's all right, Miss Todd; I am going to meet Dan at the drug store.

#### (She takes up her coat and MISS TODD helps her into it.)

MISS TODD (door-bell rings; MISS TODD goes out, saying). Don't miss yer car, Sue.

ENID (a slight pause). Sue, dear, come over here a minute. (SUE goes to ENID, who draws her down on the sofa beside her.) How long have you known Dan Morehouse?

SUE. Ever since before Christmas.

ENID. That's after I got my job in Boston, isn't it? How did you meet him, Sue? Who introduced you?

SUE. We were never really introduced; he used to come into the shop often about Christmas time, and I had always heard about him from Mrs. Winn, she's Miss Todd's sister, and he had heard about me from Miss Todd, so we felt acquainted and somehow he—why—we just drifted into a friendship.

ENID. Sue, darling, I'm younger than you, but being so attractive to men, I've had more experience. I'm going to give you a bit of advice. You won't take offense, will you, dearie? You know I am only doing this for your sake and because I love you.

SUE (*unmoved*). What advice do I need, Enid? You would better save it until another time. I am going to take this car.

ENID. You are really going to accept the attentions of a man to whom you have never been properly introduced. Sue Makely, have you ever stopped to think what his opinion of you will be? Don't you know that a girl who is boarding has to be twice as careful as one in her own home? (Sue *rises and walks away.*) Sue, dear, listen to me; you are cheapening yourself terribly.

SUE. Don't be tragic, Enid. I am not a child, at least give me the benefit of a little discretion. Mr. Morehouse is a gentleman. It's only because his employer is ill and needs him that he isn't coming to the house.

#### (She puts on her hat.)

ENID (who is desperate). Sue, you must listen to me. It's not you I care about. I've lied and lied. It's Dan. If Dan Morehouse doesn't forgive me and take me back I'll die. I'll kill myself.

SUE. Dan, take you back? What do you mean, Enid? ENID. Oh, Sue, didn't you know we were engaged to be married?

SUE. Engaged to be married!

ENID. It was when you were on your vacation, and I like a silly fool flirted with Fred Somes, at least that is what Dan thought. I was really scarcely decent to Fred, but you have no idea how horribly jealous Dan is. Such a scene! It makes me sick to think of it. I thought I could never forgive Dan, but, oh, Sue, I've just got to have a chance to explain. Poor Dan, I suppose that's why he is so kind to you, my most intimate friend, thinking that perhaps you might help fix things up between us. SUE. You are flattering, Enid. When did all this happen?

ENID. Just before Christmas time. When he began to take notice of you. Sue, won't you help me?

SUE. But I don't understand. I don't see how my not going to the theatre with a man who doesn't care for me is going to help you.

ENID. Let me go in your place, Sue, darling. You telephone Dan at Dupont's that you have sprained your ankle or that you've a splitting headache or tell him anything so long as you don't go. Do this for me, Sue. I will be there when he comes out of the telephone booth, and don't be afraid; I will find some way to convince him that I am ready to take him back. You will be the means of making two miserable people happy. I'll never ask you to do another thing for me as long as I live.

#### (She sobs.)

SUE (convinced of ENID'S sincerity slowly takes off her hat and coat). If you hurry, Enid, you will catch the seven-twenty car.

ENID (recovering quickly, rushes to SUE and kisses her). Oh, you darling Sue!

(SUE, in removing her coat, drops the little bunch of flowers. ENID stoops and picking them up, puts them in her coat, as she goes out. SUE'sinks on the couch with a little moan; the outer door is heard to close. A slight pause and MISS TODD comes in.)

MISS TODD. Why, Sue Makely, I thought I heard you go out. Why, Sue, what's the matter? I bet it's that Vampire's doin's. What is it, child?

SUE (putting her arms around MISS TODD and her head on MISS TODD'S shoulder). Don't ask me now, please. (Then getting braver.) I'm going up-stairs, and—and, Miss Todd, in about fifteen minutes will you ring up Dupont's and tell Dan—Mr. Morehouse—that I won't be able to keep my appointment; that I have a blinding headache. MISS TODD. All right, dear, I'll telephome. (She kisses SUE, and SUE goes out. She waits until she hears SUE'S door close and then goes quickly to the 'phone, which rings as she is about to use it.) Hello.....Well, ain't that funny? I was jest a-goin' to call you up..... What's that?.....He'll be right here in a lemmonzeene .....Yes, I understand. Sue isn't to take the car..... Yes, I'll tell her. Thank the Lord that hall clock was fast, or that Vampire.....Good-bye. (SUE enters. She looks woebegone.) Why, Sue, I didn't hear you come in.

SUE. I just couldn't stay up there all alone.

MISS TODD. You poor little soul. There, curl right up on the sofa.

SUE. Miss Todd, do you believe one girl would deliberately tell a malicious lie to another, just to hurt, without anything to gain by it?

MISS TODD. Scores of 'em. Didn't I tell yer about Flora Bean?

SUE. But how is a girl to find out whether it is a lie or not? (Door-bell.)

MISS TODD. I'll answer that myself. I let Sarah go out jest now. (SUE starts to get up from sofa, where she has been lying.) Don't yer move, honey; if it's any one that's a-comin' in, I'll cough, and you can run afore they gits in here.

SUE. All right.

(A pause, then DAN MOREHOUSE, a young, well-built, healthy, honest type of man, coughs as he is about to enter the door which MISS TODD left open. SUE, thinking it is a signal, hurrying to get away, runs right into DAN'S arms.)

DAN. Hello, Sue! By George, what a beauty dress. New, isn't it? (Sue has drawn away quickly and is seated on the sofa.) Stand up, Sue, and let's look at you. Got your hair done differently, too. My, but you're some swell! (Sue remains on sofa.) Well, what did you think when you got my message?

SUE. What message?

DAN. Didn't Fred Somes telephone for you not to take the car? That I was coming out for you?

SUE. No.

DAN. So you didn't know we were going in a limousine. Some class to us.

SUE. A limousine? Whose?

DAN. My boss's. Just think, sick as he was, he remembered that I was going to take you to the theatre. I guess I got sort of fidgety and he said: "Don't worry, Dan, you'll have time enough. I'm going to let you take your little Arts and Crafts girl in my limerousine." He's mighty fond of you, Sue; calls you the Arts and Crafts Girl; the girls he doesn't like he calls the Artfuls and Crafties. Likes his little jokes, the old man does.

SUE (calmly). Yes?

DAN (beginning to notice SUE's manner, he takes a box of candy out of his coat pocket). Here's a little candy I bought for Miss Todd. (As he takes out the box a bunch of artificial flowers drops from his pocket on the floor.) Get your coat on, Sue, and we can take a little spin before the theatre. (SUE is looking at the flowers. DAN's gaze follows hers.) Oh, I picked them up on the steps. Are they yours?

SUE (quietly, watching DAN). Enid Slater must have dropped them.

DAN. Enid Slater? I thought I saw her in the waiting station just now, but I was sure I must have been mistaken. Is she boarding here?

SUE. No, she came to see me.

DAN. What did she come to see you for?

SUE. To get me to ask you to renew the engagement.

DAN. Engagement-what engagement?

SUE. Marriage, of course.

DAN. So that's her little game! Sue, I'm going to tell you quite a story. Please listen, dear, and then judge me.

SUE. I am listening, Dan.

DAN. You didn't know that Enid Slater was once engaged to Fred Somes?

SUE. To Fred Somes? Why, she said -----

DAN. Just a minute, dear. They were going to be

married before Fred sailed for France. It was to be kept very quiet because Fred was afraid his grandfather would not approve. You know the old man is wealthy and Fred is to be his heir.

SUE. No, I didn't know; but go on.

DAN. I was to act as best man, see to the license and all that. Well, to make a long story short, one day when I was alone in the office with a drummer, he jumped up quick right in the midst of a yarn and went to the window. "By ——," said he, "how long have the Ritz women been in this town?" I looked out over his shoulder and said: "Ritz women, man; that is Enid Slater and her mother." "Enid nothing," said Bigler, the drummer; "if that isn't Emmer Ritz and her pal, I'll eat my hat. Why, boy, that pair are notorious crooks." Then I told him about Fred and that he was to be married in two or three days. "Something ought to be done right away. We'll have to trap them," said he. "And it won't be a snap, either."

SUE. Why didn't you go right to Fred and tell him? You are such friends.

DAN. Would I believe him if he said anything against you? Not much! It was up to me to furnish proof, and I tell you I felt sick. This Bigler's word was all I had. I said, "You are sure that this is Emma Ritz?" "Sure?" said he. "Dan, I was trimmed the prettiest by that girl three years ago—two big diamonds and a wad of bills."

(At the beginning of this speech SUE shows that she is ashamed for ever doubting DAN.)

SUE. Why didn't he have her arrested?

(She from this time on shows that she is in sympathy with DAN.)

DAN. That's what I asked him, and he said that he didn't want his friends to know what an ass he had made of himself. Well, finally we hit upon a plan. I was to get Fred, on the pretense of talking over the approaching marriage, into the back parlor of the boarding house.

SUE. I should think he would have been suspicious. Didn't he think it was strange, your not going to his room instead of the parlor?

DAN. We thought of that, so I just pulled him in there after supper as we were going through the hall. I had asked Mrs. Winn to tell Enid that I wanted to see her in the front parlor on important business, and I asked Mrs. Winn to see that we were not disturbed by the other boarders. Well, I was talking to Fred trying to make him believe that there was some difficulty about getting a license, when I heard Enid go into the front room; I had smuggled Bigler in there while the rest were in to supper. My heart stood still. Enid gave a little cry of surprise and Bigler sailed right in. I heard him say, "Hullo, Em, what are you doing here?" Then she said something, but so low we couldn't hear her. "Oh, can that stuff," he said; " you trimmed me pretty slick, didn't you? Got my sparklers right in your ears now. Come, 'fess up, girl; I've had you trailed for the last three years, and my detectives only spotted you yesterday."

SUE. Why, did Fred let him talk to her like that?

DAN. He started to stop him, but I convinced him that it would be better to let Enid prove the fellow a liar or we might always doubt her. Bigler went on, "Don't look so scared, girl; you give me back the sparklers and promise to fork over four thousand dollars when old Dupont leaves his property to your Freddy and I won't prosecute. Is it a 'go'?" Again we couldn't hear her reply, but she started to leave the room, evidently, for he said, "Not so fast, young lady; I want this in writing." Then after a little pause Bigler coughed. That was my signal, so I threw open the double doors. Enid made a grab for the paper in Bigler's hand, but he passed it to Fred. There it was in black and white, her promise to pay four thousand dollars to Bigler when Fred came into his property. There was an awful silence, then Enid started to walk out of the room; at the door she turned and said, "I'll get even with you, Dan Morehouse, for this."

SUE. What did Fred do?

DAN. I'll tell you that on the way; we must hurry or we'll be late.

SUE (goes to the telephone). Give me 4986R, please. Yes, the waiting station.....Hullo.....Is Miss Slater there?.....Thank you. Hand me my coat, please, Dan.

DAN. Hope she'll hurry.

#### (He puts SUE's coat on his arm.)

SUE. Hullo, Enid.....Yes, I know our clock was fast....I just rang you up to tell you I've changed my mind. I'm going to the theatre with Dan....Yes, in a limousine ——

DAN. Tell her I'm here.

SUE. He's here.

DAN. And that I've got a raise.

SUE. He's had a raise.

DAN. And we're engaged to be married. (Sue hesitates.) Say it, Sue.

SUE. And we're engaged to be married.

(DAN rushes toward SUE as the curtain goes down.)

(For second curtain: Only MISS TODD is on the stage. She stands at the window peering through her cupped hands, out into the street. A horn sounds outside.)

#### **CURTAIN**

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Plays and Novelties '	Inat	Hav	e R	een	••• VV 111	ners "
-	Males	Female			Price	Royalty -
The Americana		II	I 1/2		<b>25</b> C	Free
Anita's Trial		II	2	66	250	66
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The Thirteenth Star			I 1/2	·		
Twelve Old Maids		9 15	I 72	66	250 250	44
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The Blow-Up of Algernon Blow	8		/4 1/	**	150	66
The Boy Scouts	20		$2^{/2}$	66	250	66
A Close Shave	6		1/2	66	150	66
The First National Boot	7	2	1/2	66	150	66
A Half-Back's Interference	10	~	3/4	66	150	66
His Father's Son	14		134	6.6	25c	66
The Man With the Nose	8		3/4	66	150	66
On the Quiet	12		11/2	66	250	66
The People's Money	II		13/4	66	250	66
A Regular Rah ! Rah ! Boy	14		I 3/4	66	250	66
A Regular Scream	II		134	66	25c	66
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The Twig of Thorn	6	7	I 1/2	46	60c	66

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