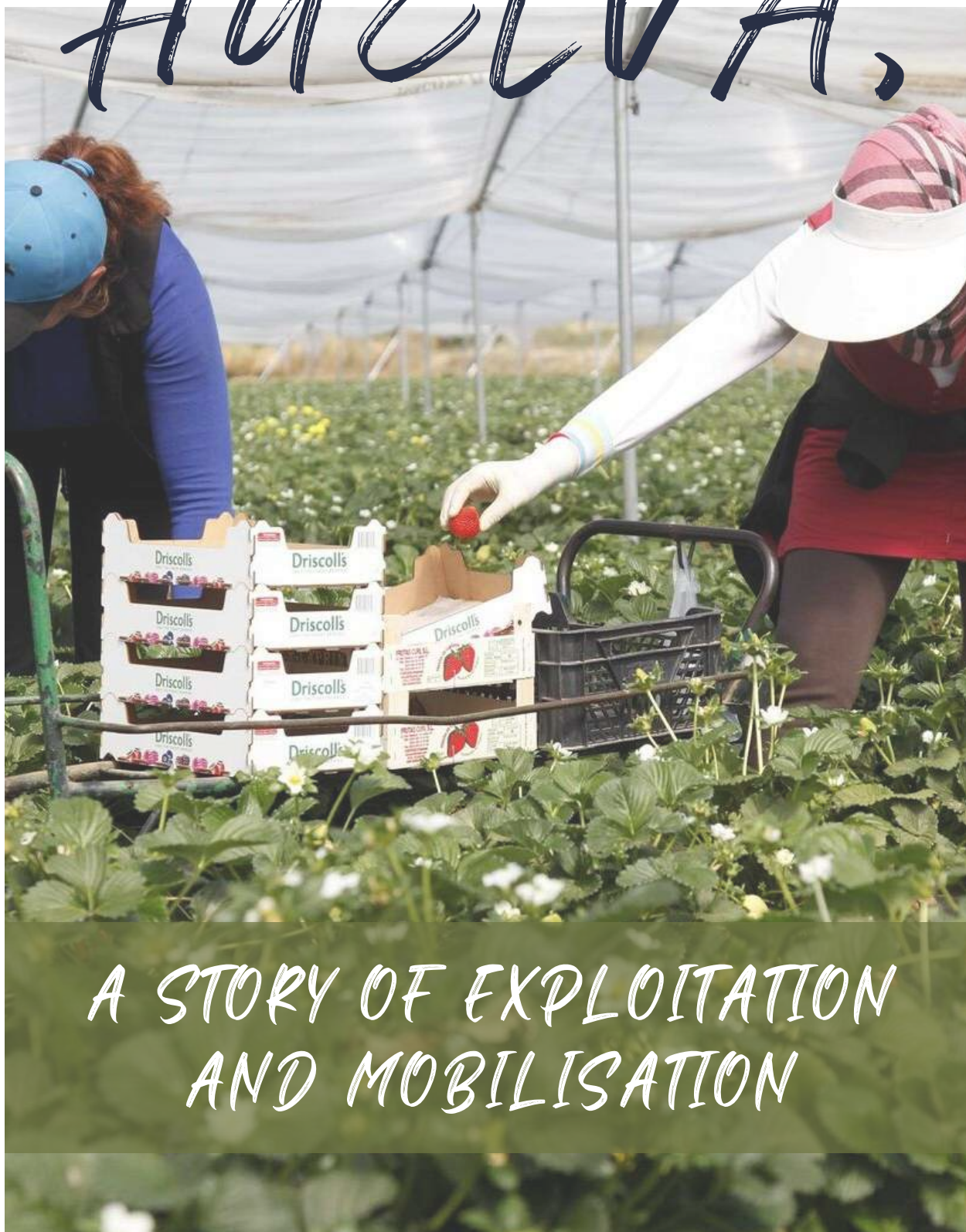


EUROPEAN COORDINATION VIA CAMPESINA

# HUELVA.



A STORY OF EXPLOITATION  
AND MOBILISATION

WE WANT TO WORK, WE WANT LABOUR RIGHTS

COMICS BY ANNEISE VERDIER

# HUELVA, A STORY OF EXPLOITATION AND MOBILISATION

This comic is part of the European Coordination Via Campesina broader process of campaigning against the exploitation of agricultural workers in Europe. More information of ECVC work on this issue could be found online at the following webpage:

<https://www.eurovia.org/es/tema/trabajadores-agricolas-y-migrantes/>

At least 2,000 women marched on June 17, 2018 in the streets of Huelva, a town in south-eastern Spain known for its intensive monoculture of greenhouse strawberries, in support of female seasonal workers - especially Moroccan women - who filed complaints of sexual assault on several farms in the region. These seasonal workers are mostly recruited through a foreign labour introduction scheme known as *contratacion en origen* (recruitment in the country of origin).

The call to join the demonstration was issued by the SOC-SAT (Andalusian Workers' Union), a member of ECVC, along with feminist associations to protest against various kinds of abuses against seasonal workers. Several women have filed complaints against their employers. Read the full story in this comic strip.







HUELVA, ANDALUSIA, SOUTHERN SPAIN. THE REGION IS KNOWN FOR THE DOÑANA NATURAL PARK, FOR ITS POLLUTING INDUSTRIES, BUT ABOVE ALL FOR ITS INTENSIVE GREENHOUSE AGRICULTURE THAT FORMS AN ENORMOUS "SEA OF PLASTIC".

JUNE 17, 2018, A DEMONSTRATION SWEEPS THE CITY OF HUELVA



\* NO SEXUAL HARASSMENT, NOR LABOR EXPLOITATION

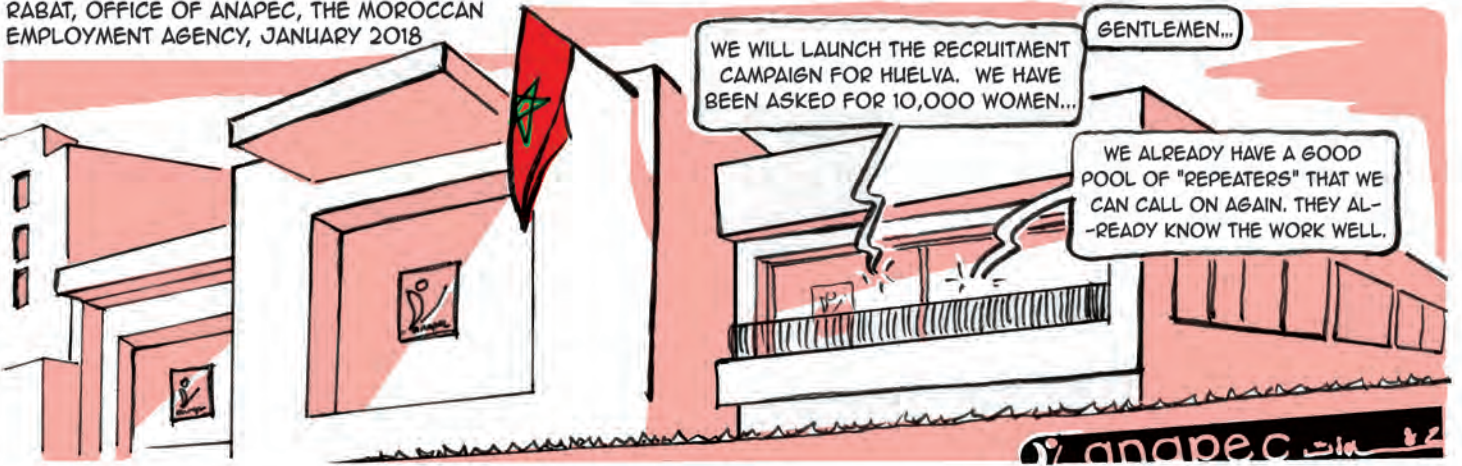
IN THE FRONT, YOU CAN SEE MOROCCAN WOMEN.



IN NO TIME, MEDIA COVERAGE ABOUT THE CONDITIONS OF THESE WOMEN WORKERS MULTIPLIED.



RABAT, OFFICE OF ANAPEC, THE MOROCCAN EMPLOYMENT AGENCY, JANUARY 2018



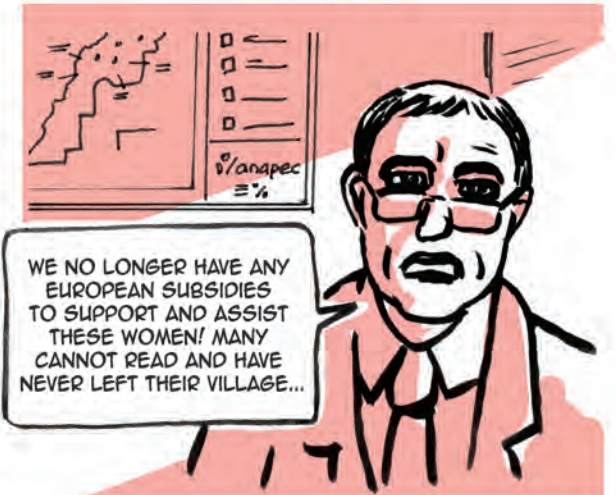
WE WILL LAUNCH THE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN FOR HUELVA. WE HAVE BEEN ASKED FOR 10,000 WOMEN...

GENTLEMEN...

WE ALREADY HAVE A GOOD POOL OF "REPEATERS" THAT WE CAN CALL ON AGAIN. THEY ALREADY KNOW THE WORK WELL.



YES, HOWEVER, WE WILL STILL NEED MORE.



WE NO LONGER HAVE ANY EUROPEAN SUBSIDIES TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST THESE WOMEN! MANY CANNOT READ AND HAVE NEVER LEFT THEIR VILLAGE...





" WELL, THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY DONE A SEASON WILL HELP THE NEW ONES. WE MUST START RECRUITING RIGHT AWAY. "

KHALTI!  
COME QUICKLY!  
THERE IS THE  
MEETING ABOUT  
SPAIN!

\*KHALTI : MY AUNT



" THE CONDITIONS ARE THE SAME AS USUAL; RURAL WOMEN, POOR, SOMETIMES DIVORCED OR WIDOWED... "



... WITH CHILDREN UNDER 14 TO TAKE CARE OF. HERE YOU HAVE THE PAPERS TO FILL OUT. CAN YOU READ?



NO.



LOCAL ANAPEC AGENCY,  
BENI-MELLAL



THEY SAY I'M TOO FAT FOR THE JOB!

AND ME, TOO TALL TO WORK IN GREENHOUSES!



SO, FATIMA,  
28 YEARS OLD...

DIVORCED WITH A CHILD,  
HOW OLD IS HE?



HE IS 4. HIS FATHER DOESN'T SUPPORT US. I LIVE WITH MY BROTHER AND HIS WIFE.



AND YOU SAY YOU WORK IN THE FIELDS... LET ME SEE YOUR HANDS?

GOOD.



PORT OF TANGIER, THREE WEEKS LATER.

SO, WHEN DO THEY GIVE US BACK OUR PASSPORTS?

OH, JUST AS WE'RE GOING THROUGH CUSTOMS, NOT BEFORE! WE SHOULDN'T JUST WANDER ABOUT WITH OUR BEAUTIFUL EUROPEAN VISAS!



DON'T BE SCARED... IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME TRAVELLING?

WE'RE LIKE YOU, WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT!

WE ALL HAVE CHILDREN!

YES... AND THE FIRST TIME I LEFT MY CHILD... I'M SO SAD!



THAT'S HOW THEY DO IT, TO MAKE SURE WE'LL GO BACK TO MOROCCO!

OBVIOUSLY IT'S HARD TO LEAVE YOUR KIDS



PORT OF TARIFA, SPAIN, ONE HOUR LATER

37 EUROS A DAY, ASMA! CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THAT IS IN DIRHAMS? I HOPE TO COME BACK WITH A LOT OF MONEY!

YOU'VE ALREADY DONE IT?

YES, THIS IS MY 4TH SEASON.

I HESITATED BEFORE TAKING THE JOB... SOME SAY THAT WOMEN WHO WORK IN SPAIN BECOME...

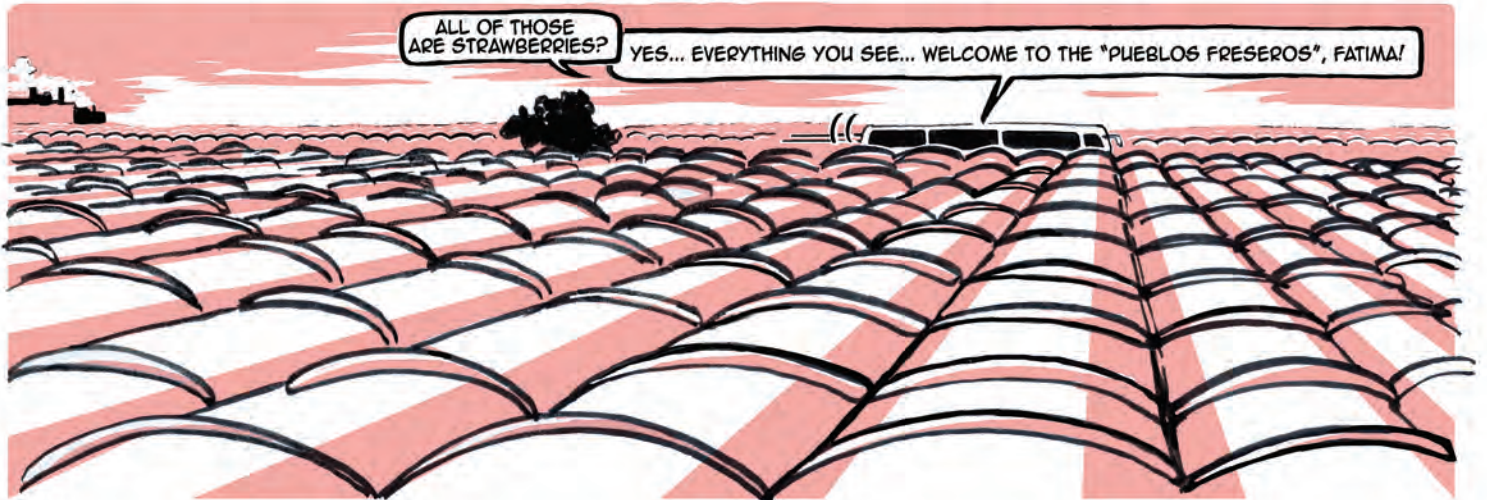
LET THEM SAY WHATEVER! IT'S JEALOUSY. MY HUSBAND COULDN'T STAND ME EARNING MORE THAN HIM... NOW WE ARE DIVORCED. I GO WHERE I WANT!

YEAH, BUT YOU KNOW IT WILL DEPEND ON THE BOSS YOU END UP WITH, TOO!



ALL OF THOSE ARE STRAWBERRIES?

YES... EVERYTHING YOU SEE... WELCOME TO THE "PUEBLOS FRESEROS", FATIMA!





A FEW DAYS LATER...











HELLO? WAIT, I'LL PUT YOU THROUGH TO MY COLLEAGUE WHO SPEAKS ARABIC.



IT'S THE WORKERS FROM 'FRESA FELIZ 2000'. THEY HAD A MEETING AND THEY WANT TO SEE US.... IT SEEMS SERIOUS.

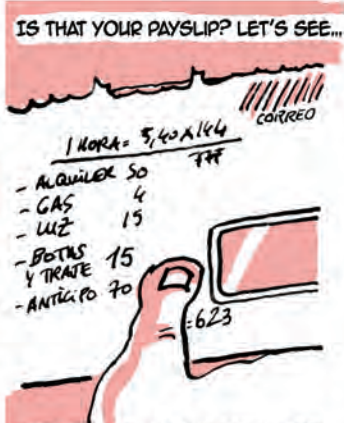


THE STRAWBERRY SEASON IS COMING TO AN END. YOU WILL SOON BE RETURNING HOME TO MOROCCO. WHAT PROBLEMS DO YOU HAVE?



I DON'T UNDERSTAND! I HAVE MUCH LESS MONEY THAN I EXPECTED!

ME TOO!



IS THAT YOUR PAYSLEIP? LET'S SEE...

MORA = 5,40 x 144  
FFF  
- ALQUILER 50  
- GAS 4  
- LUZ 15  
- BOTAS Y TRAJE 15  
- ANTICIPA 70  
= 623

THE BOSS' WIFE EXPLAINED IT TO ME, BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND.



WELL OF COURSE, FROM YOUR SALARY OF 777 EUROS YOU HAVE TO TAKE OFF...

4 EUROS FOR GAS  
50 EUROS FOR RENT

15 EUROS FOR THE BOOTS AND OVERALLS  
THE 70 EUROS ADVANCE FROM THE START OF THE SUMMER...



THAT'S BAD, BUT IT GETS WORSE!

HE TOUCHES US, HE WANTS TO SLEEP WITH US.

THE 'JEFE'! HE INSULTS US! HE SHOULDS ALL THE TIME

IF WE DON'T OBEY, HE DOESN'T GIVE US WORK.



HE CAME IN MY ROOM AND SAID "I'M SLEEPING WITH YOU" AND BECAUSE I RESISTED, HE DIDN'T GIVE ME WORK FOR TWO DAYS.

GOOD GOD! WE CAN'T TURN A BLIND EYE, WE NEED TO REPORT THIS AND CALL OUR LAWYER...

THERE ARE DAYS WHEN WE ONLY WORK 3 OR 4 HOURS BEFORE HE TELLS US TO STOP. WE CAN'T EARN ENOUGH.

WHEN HE'S NOT HAPPY, HE THREATENS TO SEND US BACK TO MOROCCO.



JUNE 1, 2018. THE COMPLAINT IS FILED. AN UNPLANNED DEMONSTRATION IS HELD IN FRONT OF THE COMPANY, WHEN THE CIVIL GUARD ARRIVES.

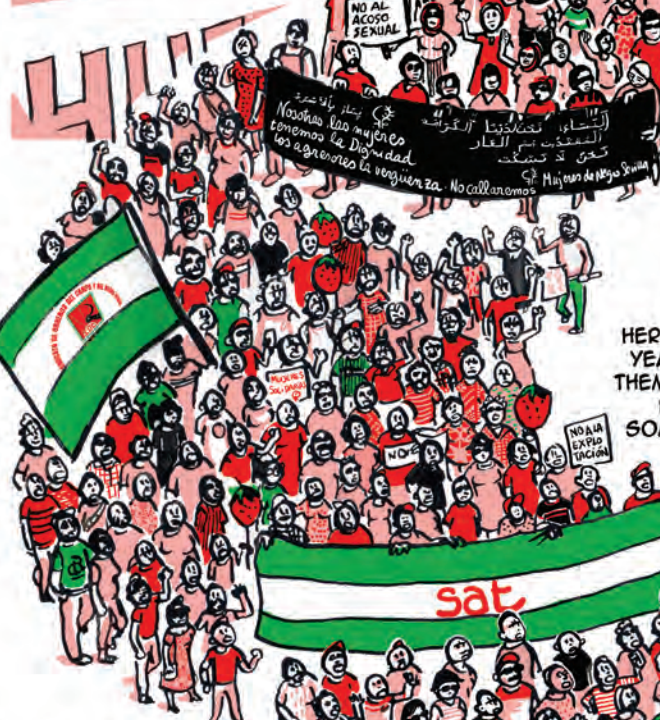
IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS, THE RETURN SHUTTLE BUSES ARE ORGANISED. THE WORKERS ARE ASKED TO LEAVE EARLY.



THEY ARE PAID THEIR APPROXIMATE WAGES ON THE BUS AND FATIMA GETS BACK ON THE BOAT WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE COMPLAINT.



FATIMA LEAVES. ASMA AND AROUND 12 OTHER WOMEN ARE DETERMINED TO TESTIFY AND DECIDE TO STAY IN SPAIN, HIDDEN IN A REMOTE VILLAGE IN HUELVA.



JUNE 4, OSCAR REINA, SECRETARY OF THE SAT TRADE UNION, APPEARS BEFORE THE PRESS.

TODAY WE MUST DENOUNCE SLAVERY, EXPLOITATION, WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE HERE WITH COMPLETE IMPUNITY! IT HAPPENS YEAR AFTER YEAR, AND THEY CAN'T DEFEND THEMSELVES. THIS IS A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THEY ARE ASKING US TO DO SOMETHING! NOBODY LISTENS TO OR SEES THESE WORKERS. TO THE REST OF THE WORLD, THEY ARE FACELESS INDIVIDUALS... IN A DEMOCRATIC STATE, THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE!



THE DEMONSTRATION, CALLED FOR BY A FEMINIST PLATFORM, TAKES PLACE ON THE SAME DAY IN ALL OF THE LARGE TOWNS AND CITIES IN SPAIN, BRINGING TOGETHER VARIOUS FEMINIST ASSOCIATIONS.

THERE ARE MANY ARTICLES AND REPORTS IN THE PRESS... A DOZEN OR SO WOMEN GAVE ANONYMOUS INTERVIEWS.

HE HAS HUMILIATED AND DISHONOURED US...



I CAN'T GO BACK TO MOROCCO, MY HUSBAND'S FAMILY WILL KILL ME.

WE MUST TELL THE TRUTH, AND WE WILL RETURN TO MOROCCO WITH OUR HEADS HELD HIGH!



\* WORK, YES, BUT WITH RIGHTS/ WITHOUT LABOUR SLAVERY NOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT



MOROCCO, JANUARY 2019



" WE DON'T LIKE GIRLS WHO TELL TALES. IF YOU WANTED TO GO BACK THERE TO WORK, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE REPORTED ANYTHING. ...WE CAN FIND SOMEONE ELSE! WE RECRUIT 19 179 WOMEN EVERY YEAR. YOU'RE NOT GOING. TOUGH LUCK FOR YOU!"



SOUTH OF FRANCE, FEBRUARY 2019





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# ECVC

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