Aug. 3, 1943. W. J. GIBBS ET AL 2,325,604

DISPENSER FOR TABLEWARE

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Fig. 2

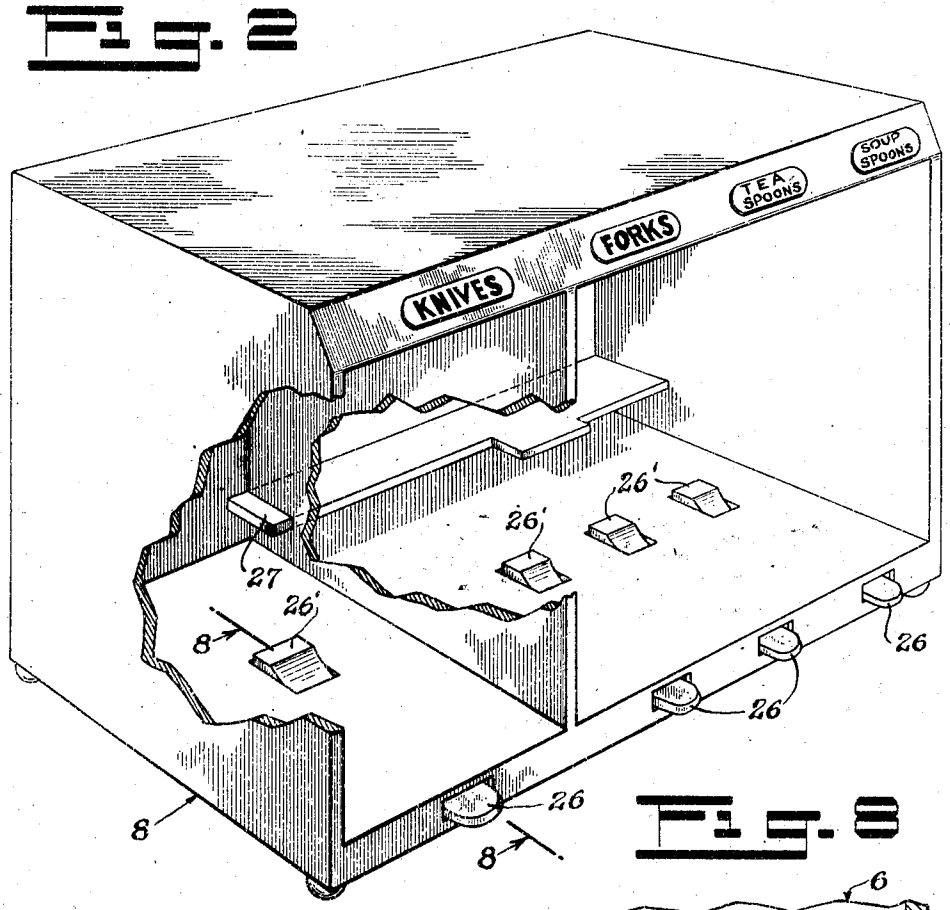


Fig. 8

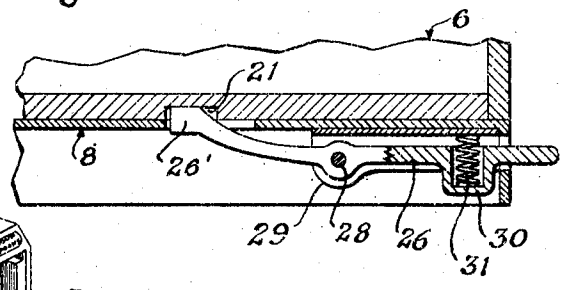
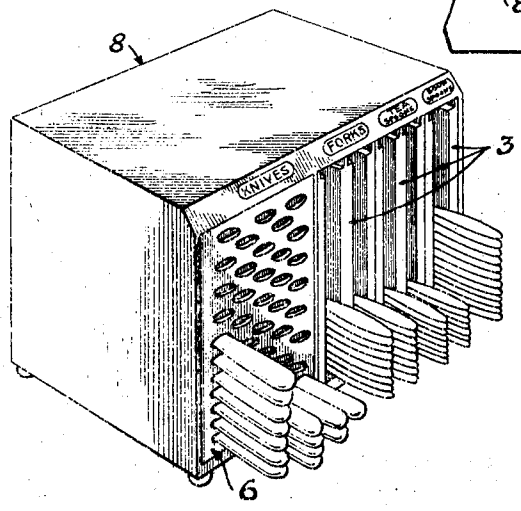


Fig. 1



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Fig. 3

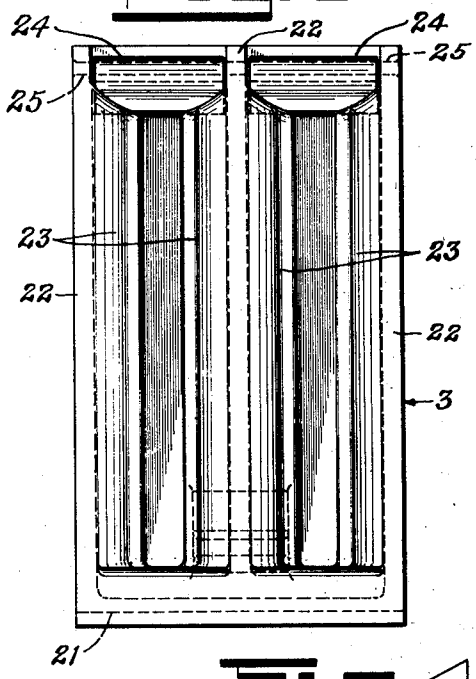


Fig. 5

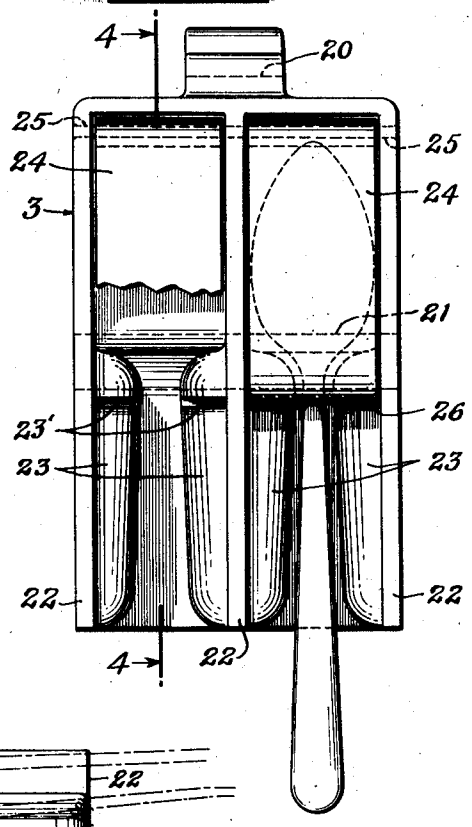
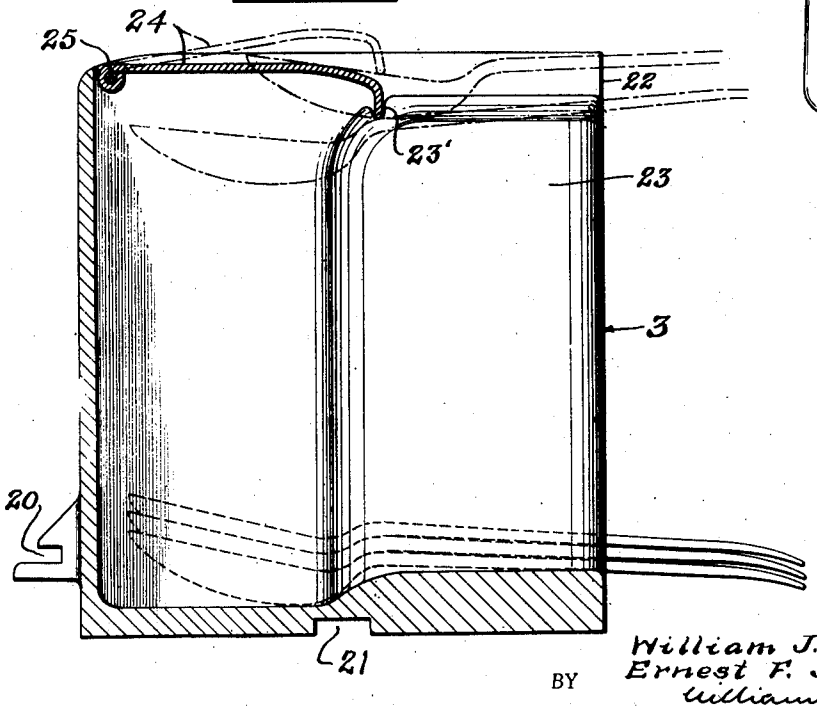


Fig. 4



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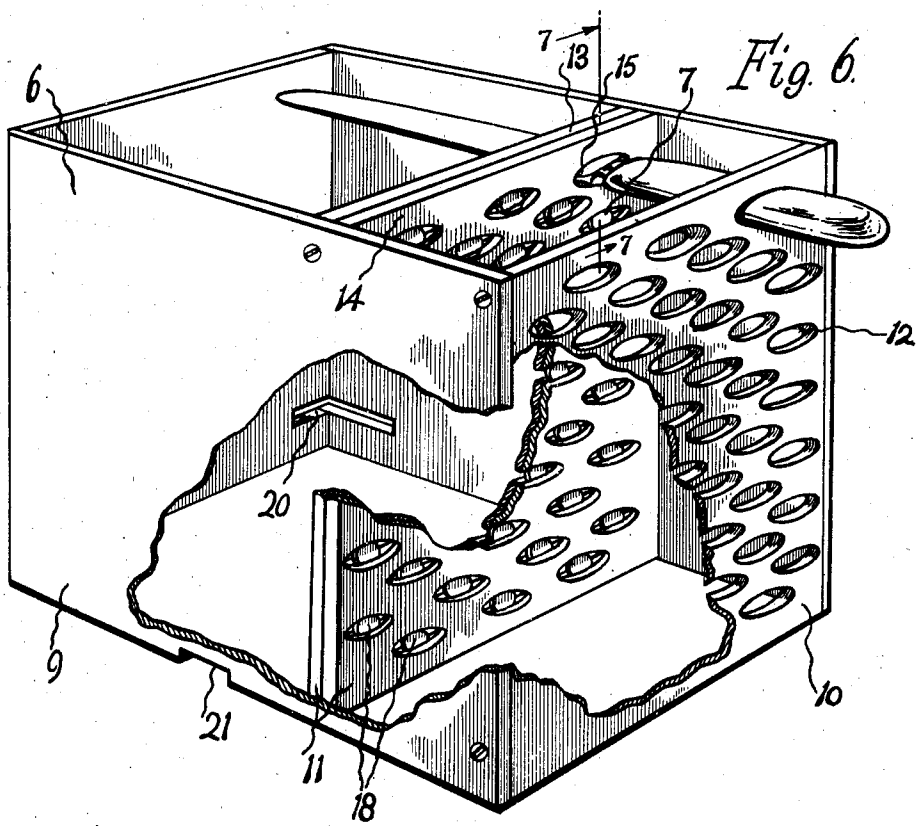


Fig. 6.

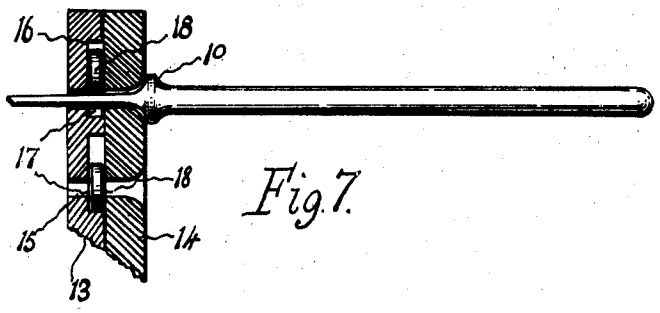


Fig. 7.

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Patented Aug. 3, 1943

2,325,604

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,325,604

DISPENSER FOR TABLEWARE

William J. Gibbs and Ernest F. Smith,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Application December 28, 1939, Serial No. 311,232

6 Claims. (Cl. 312—42)

Our invention relates to improvements in dispensers for tableware. Our improved dispenser is characterized in that tableware in the forms of spoons, knives, forks, etc. are held in place in such a manner that only the handles thereof are exposed, and in a manner such that the ware may be readily removed from the dispenser by grasping the exposed handle thereof, and in that the said ware may not be replaced in said dispenser without the re-adjustment of certain interlocking parts which are not normally to be manipulated without removing the dispensers from a surrounding casing.

An object of our invention is to provide such holders which may be readily and easily filled with tableware or the like with provision for positioning the dispenser, laden with ware, in attractive form so that the ware may be removed therefrom readily, one at a time.

Another object is to provide such a dispenser which has a simple interlocking device which will prevent the unintended replacing of a removed article of tableware into the holder while the dispenser is in its normal position for dispensing said ware.

Another object of our invention is the provision of a dispenser into which it is difficult or impossible to place articles of ware until certain locking mechanism have been manipulated to permit such placement and after which manipulation of the interlocking mechanism, the placement is done with great facility and rapidity.

The embodiment of our invention disclosed herewith is easily adaptable for the dispensing of tableware in restaurants, cafeterias and the like and is of special utility in such places in that the ware is conveniently and attractively stored in such a manner that a patron may with great facility remove the desired tableware. A great advantage of this embodiment of our invention resides in the arrangement whereby it is not possible for a person to place his hands on that part of the tableware usually intended to come in contact with the food or the mouth without removing the ware from the dispenser after which removal it is impossible to replace the article into the dispenser. The advantages of such an arrangement in the interests of sanitation are self-evident.

With reference to the accompanying drawings forming a part of this specification, the several embodiments of our invention to accommodate various forms of tableware are disclosed and bear reference numerals.

Parts of the several embodiments bear reference numerals wherein the same numerals refer to the same or similar parts in the several views and in which—

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of an assembled unit of one embodiment of our invention adapted to retain and dispense several different forms of tableware.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view in partial section of a surrounding casing adapted to hold the dispensing devices in position for use.

Fig. 3 is a front view of our dispenser adapted for the retention and dispensing of spoons.

Fig. 4 is a view in side elevation of the dispensing unit shown in Fig. 3.

Fig. 5 is a plan view of the dispensing unit shown in Fig. 3.

Fig. 6 is a perspective view in partial section of one form of our dispenser adapted for the retention and dispensing of table knives.

Fig. 7 is a partial sectional view taken along the line 7—7 of Fig. 6 and looking in the direction of the arrow.

Fig. 8 is a detailed view in partial section along the line 8—8 of Fig. 2 of the drawings and looking in the direction of the arrows, of latching mechanism adapted to retain the several dispensing devices in the enclosing casing shown in Fig. 2.

With reference to Fig. 1, we have disclosed a generally rectangular box, part 8, in the form of an attractive retaining device into which the knife dispenser, part 6, and the fork and spoon dispensers, parts 3, are placed and latched. This assembly is adapted to be placed conveniently to the patrons of the restaurant or the like.

Referring to Fig. 6, we have shown our table knife holder and dispenser which comprises generally a rectangular box 9 with open top, and provided with a front wall 10 and an intermediate partition wall 11. We prefer to make the entire dispenser and all of its parts of material, such as nickel-chromium bearing steel, which will resist corrosion and which will not stain silver or other tableware stored therein. Said front wall 10 is provided with a multiplicity of passages or openings 12 designed to permit the passage of the blade and handle of a table knife therethrough. Said partition wall 11, as shown in more detail in Fig. 7, comprises two parts, part 13 and part 14. Said part 14 comprises a flat plate of suitable material, having therein a series of passages or openings 15. Said part 13 comprises a plate of similar material having therethrough a like series of passages adapted to pass the blade of a table knife, and communicating with each of the several passages upper

indents or openings 16 and also lower indents or openings 17. The partition wall 11 is formed by assembling the plates 13 and 14 as shown in Fig. 7 so that said passages 15 are in alignment and so that said indents or openings 16 and 17 are adapted to retain loosely therein a series of slugs 18. The passages 15 may conveniently be so restricted in area that the usual enlargement 19 found in table knives may not pass therethrough. The distance between the front wall 10 and the partition wall is also conveniently made so that a suitable portion of the handle of the knife extends from the front wall when the knife is thrust through the openings 12 and 15, as shown in Fig. 6, until the enlargement 19 encounters the partition wall 11, as shown in Fig. 7. A slot 20 and a detent or recess 21 are provided in the walls of the structure, as shown in Fig. 6, and the objects of said slot and detent will presently appear.

With reference to Fig. 3, we have shown a dispenser for spoons and forks and the like comprising a cast metallic unit in the form of a double dispenser. The dispenser comprises a generally rectangular casing having the vertically extending walls 22, which walls are formed with inwardly projecting lugs or barriers 23, as shown in Figs. 3 and 5. These lug portions are adapted to coact in pairs to define a passage area lesser in width than is that area between the main walls and having that restricted width of area of sufficient width to permit the handle portion of a spoon or fork to be retained therebetween and narrow enough to prevent the passage of the bowl part of the spoon or the tine part of the fork therebetween in any position of the fork or spoon. The top of the dispenser is normally open-ended except for a latching device 24 which is pivotally mounted on the transverse rod 25 so that it may freely respond to the force of gravity. A recess 23' extending downwardly into the enlarged or lug portions of the side walls is provided to permit the entrance of the lower and downwardly depending end of the latch mechanism 24. A detent or recess 21 is provided in the bottom wall of the dispensing mechanism of Fig. 3 and a slot is provided in conjunction with the rear wall, as shown in Fig. 4, the objects of which will presently appear.

Referring to Fig. 2, we have shown a latch member 26', and a retaining device in the form of a horizontally disposed plate 27. Said latch member 26', as shown in detail in Fig. 8, comprises a lever 26 pivotally mounted on a rod 28 so as to oscillate in a vertical plane around said pivot 28. A retaining casing 29 is fixedly mounted against the under side of the lower wall or floor member of the retaining casing 8, as shown in Fig. 8. Near the outward end of said lever 26 there is provided a well or depression 30 adapted to receive the helical spring, part 31. Said spring 31 is constrained between the upper wall of said retaining member 29 and the bottom of the well 30 of the lever 26 so as normally to retain the inner end of said latch member 26' in an upward position.

The knife dispensing device, Fig. 6, is adapted to be held in position, as shown in Fig. 1, within the casing 8 with the latching end 26' constrained into a position within the recess 21 of the lower wall of the knife dispenser and with the slot 20 adapted to encompass part of the end of the retaining plate 27 of Fig. 2. The spoon and fork dispenser of Fig. 3 is adapted to be retained within the casing 8 as shown in Fig. 1 so that the recess 21 of the lower wall thereof is adapted to coact with one of the latching mechanisms 26', as described above, and with the slot 20 adapted to coact with the plate member 27. Since spoons are often of a different length than are forks and since some spoons and some forks are of different length with respect to each other, we find it convenient to make the dispensers of Fig. 3 of different lengths, front to rear, to accommodate the length of the spoon or fork to be retained and dispensed therein. We, therefore, make the front edge of the retaining plate 27 to be of varying distances from the rear wall of the casing 8, and these varying distances are to be in conformity with the varying lengths front to rear of the spoon and fork dispensers so that, when in position, all of the dispensers for knives, spoons and forks shall be in alignment with the front of the retaining casing 6, as shown in Fig. 1.

The manner of using the dispensers of Fig. 3 is as follows:

Assuming that such a dispenser is mounted within the casing 8, as shown in Fig. 1, and that there is no ware within the dispenser, a person may, by lifting the outwardly extending end of the latching member 26 shown in Figs. 2 and 8, release the dispenser so that it may be drawn from the casing. This dispenser may be taken to a store of clean tableware, the latching mechanism 24 may be raised around the pivot 25 out of the way and spoons or forks, as the case may be, may be very conveniently dropped within the walls of the dispenser until it is filled, after which the latching member 24 is permitted to fall into recess 23' and the dispenser is again inserted into the casing 6 until it is latched in place, as described above. A patron wishing to remove spoon or fork from the dispenser will grasp the outwardly extending handle and raise the ware lifting the latch member 24, as shown in Fig. 4, until the spoon is above the restricting lugs 23, after which it may be readily drawn outwardly from the front of the dispensing device. Should such a person attempt to replace the spoon into the dispenser, it will be discovered that the restricted passage between the lugs 23 will not permit of the passage of the bowl of the spoon or the tines of the fork therebetween in any position. Should the patron attempt to replace the ware through the top thereof, it will be discovered that the latching mechanism has fallen into place, thus preventing it. While the entire dispenser is retained within the casing 8 the latching mechanism 24 is not reached without difficulty or is completely unattainable.

Referring to Figs. 6 and 7, this dispenser of knives is removed from the casing 8 in the same manner as are the other dispensers above described, and is retained in position in the same manner. Should it be required to provide this dispenser with knives, the dispenser may be removed from the casing 8 and taken to a store of table knives, whereupon it is turned upside down so that the slugs 18 fall into the upper openings 16. Retaining the slugs within this upper detent the dispenser is readily supplied wtth clean knives by passing them through the aligned holes, illustrated in Fig. 6, after which the dispenser, loaded with clean knives, may be conveniently replaced within the casing 8, as illustrated in Fig. 1, and is retained by the latching mechanism 26', as above described. Should a patron wish to secure a knife he may grasp the outwardly extending handle and remove the knife

by drawing it outwardly. With reference to Fig. 7 it will be seen that the slug 18 rests on the blade of the knife. When the knife is removed the slug will fall downwardly into the lower recess 17, thus completely blocking the passage 16. Should the patron attempt to replace the knife into the dispenser the slug 18 will bar the passage of the knife through the passage 15 and make replacement impossible.

We claim:

1. In a storage and dispensing device for tableware such as knives, forks and spoons, a housing support, a plurality of containers for tableware detachably mounted in said support, each of said containers being so constructed and arranged as to receive the operative ends of tableware with the handle portions thereof projecting through the front of the container in position to be manipulated by the hand of a user for removal of the articles of tableware from the containers without contacting the operative parts thereof, and means associated with each container for preventing reinsertion of an article manually removed from a container.

2. In a storage and dispensing device for tableware such as knives, forks and spoons, a housing support, a plurality of tableware containers detachably mounted in said support, manually releasable interengaging means on said support and containers for locking the container in the housing support, each of said containers being formed to receive the operative ends of tableware articles with the handle portions of the articles projecting through the front of the container free to be grasped by the hand of a user for removal of the articles without contacting the operative parts thereof, and means actuated by gravity normally engaging an article on removal thereof from the casing, said means riding over the article as it is removed but falling behind the same to prevent reinsertion of the article in the casing.

3. A storage and dispensing device for tableware comprising a container having spaced apertured walls formed to receive and retain the operative ends of a plurality of table ware articles with the handle portions of said articles projecting through the front of the container in position to be grasped for removal of the article from the container, and gravity actuated means including closure members movably mounted on one of said walls adapted to slidably engage an article as it is removed from the container but arranged to drop behind the article to prevent reinsertion of the article in the container.

4. A storage and dispensing device for tableware articles comprising an open front casing having top, bottom, end and rear walls, a plurality of tableware containers detachably insertible through the open front of the casing, each of said containers having spaced walls adapted to receive and retain the operative ends of a plurality of tableware articles with the handle portions of said articles projecting through the front of the casing, gravity actuated means including stops movably mounted on one of said container walls adapted to slidably engage the upper surface of an article as it is withdrawn from the casing but arranged to drop behind the article to prevent reinsertoin of the article in the casing, and manually releasable latching means for retaining said containers in their assembled position in the casing.

5. A storage and dispensing device for tableware comprising an open front casing, a manually operable spring latch extending inwardly of the casing through one wall thereof, a container for tableware having spaced walls formed to receive and retain a plurality of tableware articles and having means cooperating with said latch for retaining the container in the casing, said container having gravity actuated means movably mounted on one of the walls thereof to engage the upper surface of an article as it is removed from the container but arranged to drop behind the article when removed to prevent reinsertion of the article in the container.

6. A dispenser for knives comprising a housing having substantially vertical spaced parallel supporting walls apertured in alignment to receive and support knives inserted through said aligned apertures with handle portions of the knives projecting outwardly of the housing, and gravity actuated means movably mounted on one of said walls adapted to block the apertures in the wall as knives are withdrawn so as to prevent reinsertion of a knife after it is withdrawn.

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