

MadeEn Man
A Mercynaries Story from <https://www.patreon.com/SinComics>

Julian smiled as he adjusted his tie and smoothed his collar. The warehouse heist had been the start of great things and the Dallas job... Oh the Dallas job couldn't have been smoother. And that's why he was about to step into the big leagues. He'd put in the hours, made the connections, and proved himself and now the boss himself summoned Julian for an audience. The big leagues!

The elevator slowed and opened out towards the long, dimly lit hallway. Julian took a confident stride out and towards the imposing, reinforced doors at the end. Waiting and guarding, Franklin nodded to Julian with a smile. It was Franklin that got the efforts started, bringing Julian in from the small time gigs he was running in a life that was heading, at best, nowhere and at worst, bleeding out in a gutter. Franklin gave the door three hard raps and then opened it for Julian.

Inside, Julian blinked rapidly to readjust his eyes towards the bright lights shining from the chandelier and reflecting off the gold walls. As he looked forward, he immediately came to a stop and bowed. Sitting at the head of the table, surrounded by the most elite of the enforcers, was the boss himself. There had been plenty of talk about how old he actually was, but in person he was as threatening as a man half his age. Pushing seven feet tall and built like a brick wall, the boss looked like he could take any fighter in that room.

“Julian! Glad you come make it on short notice!”

“Th-Thank you, sir. I couldn't say 'no'.”

The boss raised his drink and motioned to an empty seat at the side of the table. “Sit. Sit! Get you anything to drink?”

Julian gave a glance over to an enforcer, who nodded towards the chair. “No. But thank you, sir.”

“Right to business. Good man. I need your help on a special mission. It's the missus.”

“Sir? I'm sorry, I don't-”

“She gets up to things. Has some grand ambitions of her own. But she... The lady doesn't always share what's on her mind. The curse of falling for somebody driven and as much of a fighter as I am! I love the woman but she can drive a man mad.”

“I still don't-”

“Julian, I need somebody to keep tabs on her. Follow her on her rounds. Keep an eye on her side businesses. Oh, and I know she has plenty of those!”

Julian squirmed. This wasn't exactly the big score he thought he was working up towards. Weeks spent pouring over the latest demo plans, just to be a bodyguard.

“I thank you for the vote of confidence, sir, but surely anybody in this room could provide

ample protection or surveillance for her..”

“That's the problem, kid. Me and these boys go way, way back. The missus knows every single one of my goons so-”

“C'mon, boss!” A voice grunted from the back of the room.

“Ah, you know I mean 'goons' in the best way!” The boss knocked his drink towards the direction of the gripe.

“She knows my boys and she's crafty enough to know when my patterns change. If she notices one of my regulars is out of place, she's going to play things quiet and hide her cards.”

Julian nodded. “But I-”

“Exactly. You're still new. First time in the high rise and all that. She doesn't know what you've been up to and doesn't know you from any other guy fighting his way up the ranks.”

Julian nodded firmly once more. “If you think I can be of help, you can count on me, sir.”

The boss nudged one of the guards next him. “The man has ambition. I like it!”

He turned towards Julian again and put his drink down. “She might have eyes on this place, so we won't act today. The guys at the desk will give you a couple of low-level jobs to keep up appearances and make sure you're not on any prying eyes' radar. Once we know the coast is clear, we'll come to you and set things up. You're going places, Son!”

True to his word, the boss gave Julian a few errands, the kind he'd worked his way past years ago. In a way, it was nice to have something simple while he got his affairs in order and prepared to be out of town for a while. Most of the guys had brief encounters with the boss's wife. A glance while making a delivery to the office. Her dropping off some supplies at the depot. One of the elites would be on chauffeur duty for her but he stopped to pass out bonuses along the way. She shared her husband's ambitions and business sense. The word was she was the mastermind being the Cleveland affair, but nobody was willing to confirm or deny that.

Anyway, a few days on surveillance for her and then once this gig was over, Julian could draw up his plans for the data farm and make a pitch to the boss. This was the in he needed to lay the groundwork for the rest of his career.

The call came late at night. Groggy, Julian flipped out the phone and grumbled into it, half conscious.

“Jules. Time to make your move.

“Fran'lingh...” Julian stretched and fumbled to look at the clock. “Whuzzuh...”

“Yeah, buddy. Let's go. Around the corner, blue car. I've got the engine running so hop to it. I'd say get some coffee in you first, but the doc wants you on an empty stomach. Hurry up.”

“Dog?”

Franklin's driving was enough to wake anybody up, so Julian had come around by the time they reached the office. Late night, winding roads. Franklin didn't care. That just meant there were fewer people on the streets and it was a chance for some excitement behind the wheel. Thrill-seeking was the passion that Franklin and Julian shared before Franklin revealed his career and came to Julian with an opportunity to enlist.

Julian hadn't been to the office along the coast before. The facade was like any other senseless tech giant's home built into the cliffs. But the organization's space was built a good bit farther into the cliffs, followed by a elevator ride that lasted long enough to surely bring them under the water level.

“What's the deal, Franklin? This isn't like the usual armories.”

“It's how the Doc works. Stays away from the messy side of the business and works out here alone. As long as the boss gets his tech, the Doc doesn't get any questions. Remember that hospital stunt two three years ago? The one with the-”

“The ambulance chase! Ha! I'm not about to forget that one.” Julian chuckled. It took them four hours to ditch the police in that ambulance weighed down with boosted equipment.”

“Well all that stuff made its way to the Doc. Word is, the Doc is the one keeping the boss in good shape for his age. Guy just showed his first signs of gray and he's got to be pushing what, se-”

“Rumors have no place in my domain. Stick to business.” A voice boomed from above.

Julian looked around the metal hallway and couldn't find any indication of cameras or loudspeakers. How did they know or hear..

The voice echoed above once more. “Make a right at the next hallway. Third door down.”

The duo complied and followed the path. Past the doorway, they entered a pulsing white room fitted with only a chair Julian recognized from the dentist's office they knocked over. Standing behind it was a statuesque blonde in a white pantsuit. She motioned to the chair.

“Whichever one of you is ready, let's proceed.”

Julian looked around. “I don't get it. What's going on?”

Franklin closed his eyes and shook his head. “Boss doesn't want to take any chances. You need to go in disguise.”

“I've done disguises before but never had to come here.”

The doctor motioned to the chair. “Gentlemen! I don't have all day.”

Julian hopped onto the chair and the doctor extended an anesthetic face mask to him. She put it to his mouth and motioned for him to hold it. Julian caught hint of a fruity, berry-like perfume but couldn't tell if it was coming from her or the gas.

“Breathe deep. Count back from ten and we can get started.”

Julian raised a hand to interject but was silenced by the doctor slapping a button on the chair. Gas rushed through the tubing and into the mask.

“Ten. Nine. Eigh'... Spleben...”

His head throbbed as Julian finally came to. He was propped up, leaning against something cold and plastic. He grunted and tried to shift forward but was held back. Jostling himself, strands of red hair swayed back and forth in front of his eyes. He didn't know any redheads and he was a brunette...

A door opened somewhere behind him in the room and a hurried stride stopped at his side.

“The procedure was a success. You'll be sent to the debriefing room to-”

Julian grunted. “Procedure? Why can't I move? Let me up.”

The Doctor sighed. “You are restrained for your own safety. Not everybody reacts well to the infusion and you could hurt yourself thrashing around. Now, to the debr-”

Julian tugged against the restraints, his body sore and uncomfortable. “Let me up!”

The Doctor grunted once more, slapped a button the side of the table, and Julian immediately slumped free, hitting the ground with a meaty slap.

“Oww! What the hell was that for!?”

Julian rubbed his backside. It slowly dawned on him that his hand was massaging plump flesh instead of his normal toned backside. His hands pat himself up and down, before stopping as they cupped a pair of breasts straining against his undershirt.

“What's wrong with me?!”

The Doctor turned, shuffling back out of the room. “To. The. Debriefing. Room.”

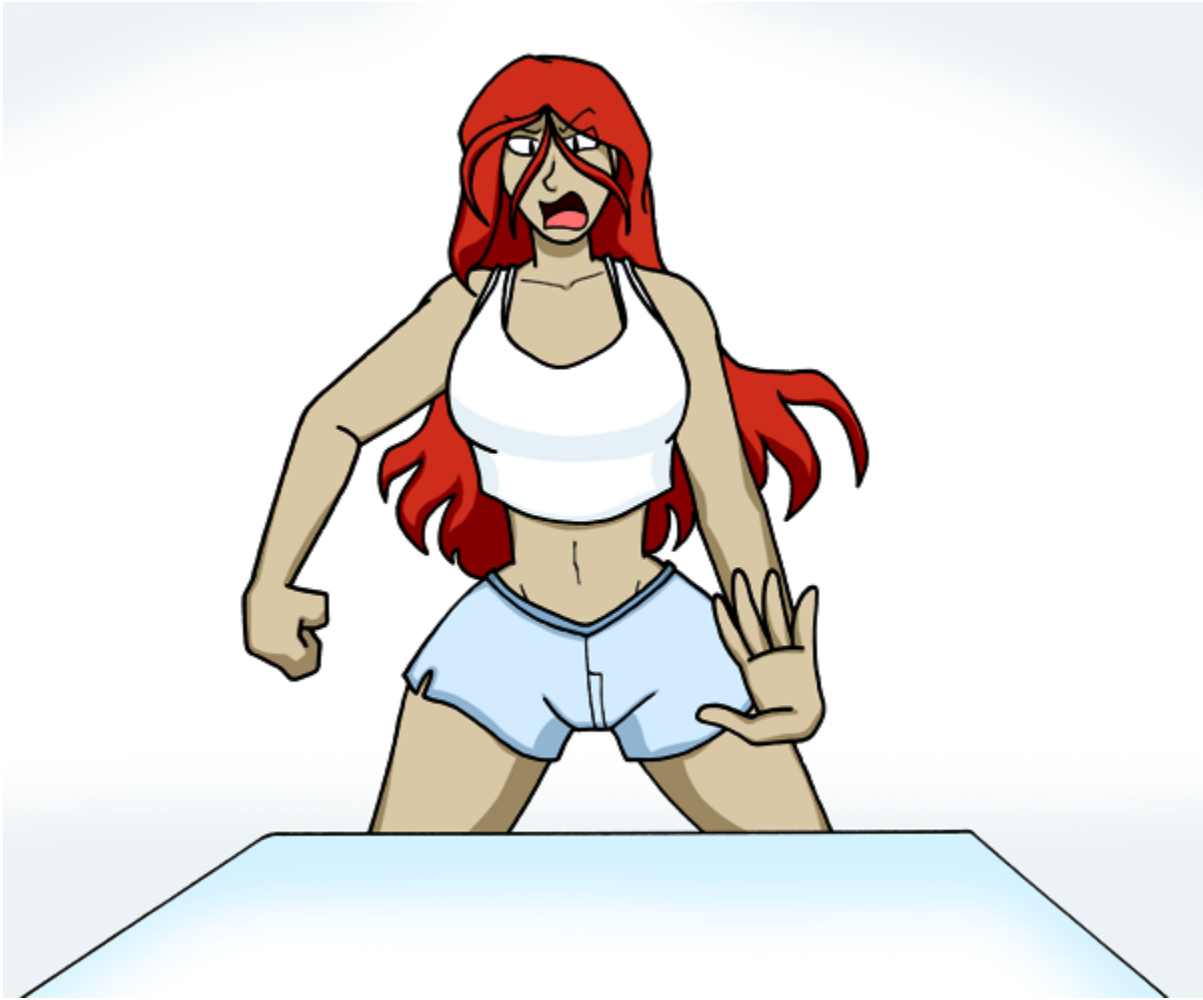
Julian huddled in the uncomfortable chair, trying his best to shrink back into himself and ignore his feminine body and strange new curves. Gulping down the glasses of water as soon as the Doctor poured them, his tongue was swollen and just speaking was a foreign experience with his new voice.

“Per your boss's agreement, you will maintain your disguise for the duration of the operation. Upon successful completion, measures will be taken to purge you of the procedure and return you to normal as best as reasonable measures allow.”

“That still doesn't explain why I'm a woman!”

“It should have been explained to you that your target is well studied in your boss's employees. You are not to reveal your associations and have been given an untraceable body. If you'll turn to page four of your dossier, you will find the particulars of your new self, Ms. Sapphire.”

“S-Seriously?!”



The Doctor showed no emotion nor was she swayed by the constant complaints and second-guessing by her patient.

“Your cover story is that you are a new hire at one of your boss's clubs. You are new to the area and trying to make friends. This will lead you to approaching the target in the form of guidance and learning. You are to make every effort to ingratiate yourself to her. A breakdown in relations counts the mission as a failure.”

Julian kicked out the chair from behind him and slammed a hand down on the table. He wobbled and felt unsure of his body so he grabbed the edge with his free hand in an attempt to maintain his posture and an air of authority. “Listen here! I'm not about to-”

The Doctor pushed herself away from the table and fidgeted with her earring, uncomfortable with the confrontation. “You have 36 hours for readjustment before you will be sent into the field.”

She tapped a button hidden on her earring and a spark jolted out from where Julian held the table. Electricity surged through him and he hit the ground with a slapping thud for the second time in less than an hour.

Julian pushed the door open to a happy little jingle and shuffled through. He tugged at the blue mini dress in a futile effort to cover up more as he tottered on his new heels. He approached the

woman at the counter and waved.

“Ms., uh, Sapphire. I have an appointment.”

The woman scanned her monitor and pepped up with a surprised “Oh!”

“Right this way, Ma'am. We got your reservation and booked you a special seat.” She winked and happily waved Julian to a chair before leaning in and speaking in hushed tones. “The boss said to hook you up. She usually gets in within in the next hour. You'll be at the table right across from her.”

“Th-Thanks.”

“Enjoy a treatment until she arrives.”

“But I don't want a-”

“Enjoy!”

Julian was pushed back into the chair as another woman hurried over with a case.

“Heeey there. You HAVE to try this new Déesse brand. Best makeup you will EVER wear. I adore the lipstick. Pucker up, hun!”

Julian slumped, propping his head up with his free hand as the woman across from him buffed and shaped his nails. The boss's wife was late... He'd run the gauntlet from makeup to hair to nails. If she didn't show up-

The door jingled once more and a stately woman bustled in and immediately owned the entire salon. A gaggle of workers rushed over to take her coat and supplies and true to her word, the woman in charge sat her down across from Julian's table. Just like with the boss, Julian had a hard time pinning down her age. Having an unethical monster of a scientist on your payroll gets you pretty good treatment. She was a little older but wore it proudly and Julian had to admit he was a bit attracted to her, her husband's ability to crush him notwithstanding.

Julian studied the target, waiting for an opportunity to make his move. When the beautician pulled out some several vials of nail polish, Julian jumped in.

“Oh, I love that color. I was thinking of that myself.”

The boss's wife looked him up and down before turning back and shaking her head. “Wouldn't match your hair at all. That dress barely does either. Speak to your stylist, dear.”

“See, that's exactly the kind of feedback I needed!” Julian wheeled his chair over, awkwardly scooting and bouncing until he was next to her.

The wife paused, eyeing the room with the precision of somebody that has lived this life for decades and was still in charge and out of jail. “Do I know you?”

“Such a ditz! I'm Sapphire. I just started at the club and was told that this was the best place to come to get ready.”

“Ah. One of my husband's clubs. Charmed.” She extended her free hand. “Tabitha.”

Julian took it and pulled himself in closer. “So classy!”

Julian spent the next hour working her over, doing his best to find any cracks in her cautious demeanor. The “naive out-of-towner struggling to make it in the big city” seemed to go over the best, so he leaned into it. As the final nails finished drying, Julian panicked. He hadn't seemed to have made any headway at all.

Tabitha nodded to the woman at the counter and was delivered her items, without paying. She pushed the door open before stopping and turning back.

“Are you coming, Sapphire?”

Julian shot up. “M-Ma'am?”

“If we're going to get you cleaned up, we need to get to work.”

Julian tottered over as fast as he could, receiving a winking nod from the woman at the front desk, following Tabitha out the door to her waiting car. A man stepped out and opened the door for her and motioned for Sapphire to pile in as well. Julian flashed a smile and recognized the man. Two or three months ago, they had broken a drug dealer's hand together. That was a fun night. But now Julian was more concerned with getting up into the vehicle without flashing him.

As the day wore on, Julian was finding it harder to maintain his cheery demeanor. His legs and ankles were sore from balancing on the heels, his back throbbed, and his face was tired from keeping up a vacuous smile.

Tabitha held up another dress to Julian and nodded. “That's finally the one.”

Julian sighed. “Goody. It's... It's been a lot of dresses...”

“You're in show business, dear. You need to walk into that club and command it. There are plenty of people in there for your first night and plenty of other girls vying for attention. Try this one on.”

Julian left the dressing room and curtsied for Tabitha. It was TIGHT around the waist and the slit up the side was more a window, but at least he no longer had to worry about slipping out of it with an errant bounce.

Tabitha clapped softly. “Wonderful! My treat, dear. You look lovely.”

“Yaaay...”

“Truthfully, I'm always happy to class up the clubs. Been trying to get my lovely husband to cater to the higher spending crowd for years. He's slowly opening up and I think you'll help. MUCH nicer than a tacky cocktail dress or costume.”

Julian smiled and nodded. “Oh, yes. Much.”

Tabitha dug through her purse and pulled out a tiny metal case. “Here. I want your first nights to be a smashing success.” She pulled out a small green capsule and placed it in Julian's hand.



“Uh, Ma'am... I don't think I should-”

“Nonsense! It's nothing untoward. Tips are everything in this business and this will put you in tip-top shape. Ha!”

Julian clenched his eyes and placed the capsule on his tongue. It immediately started to tingle and fizz, forcing him to gulp it down. It left his throat dry and pulsing. He coughed and felt a tightness in his chest. Each cough caused a throbbing. He gasped, followed by a guttural groan as the pressure released. His top was suddenly stretched tight and he had to pitch forward to see the ground.

“Oh- Oh. What is-”

Tabitha smiled and pat him on the head. “Those will get you plenty of tips. Your first night will be a wonder to behold!”

Julian nervously slapped his wrist against his hips. "Is it- It's not permanent?!"

Tabitha turned and motioned towards the counter. "No, dear, no. It will wear off after a few shifts. By then, you should have the confidence and connections to make it big."

"Th-Thank you, Ma'am. This will... help... Greatly."

Julian spent the rest of the car ride staring at his amplified chest and silently having a panic attack to himself. The Doctor could fix this. He'd finish the mission, report back to the boss, everything would go back to normal, and he would hit it big as a reward. The Doctor would fix this.

Julian was snapped back to reality as the car came to a halt and Tabitha put a hand on his shoulder.

"I just have a little business to attend to inside. Come. Let's spy on the competition."

He followed his target out and looked around the entrance. This wasn't one of the boss's clubs. What were they doing here? More importantly, who was she doing business with and where could he turn for backup if things went bad? He'd have to reveal himself, but maybe the driver would-

The sound of the car door slamming shut and driving away had Julian whip around and slump forward. Tabitha gave him a light tap across the back.

"Stand up straight, Dear. I know they're hefty but they'll pay out dividends!"

Inside the club, she told Julian to wait at the bar, grab a drink, and learn from the club's dancers. Temporary identity or not, Julian sneered at the club. It wasn't nearly as nice as the boss's and his cover story was for a waitress, not a dancer.

Tabitha sat down at a booth by herself and raised a finger for the waitress. Julian leaned in, but the music was too loud so he couldn't hear them and the lights too low to catch any lip movements. They talked for a while before the waitress scurried off to the back. Moments later, three men in suits positioned themselves around the table, while a fourth sat across from the boss's wife and leaned in.

They talked, no, argued for too long. Julian fidgeted in his seat. He'd give anything for a baseball bat around now. Soon, Tabitha slammed her glass down on the table and the man across from her finally leaned back. They quickly both leaned back in and pointed fingers at each other. The man jabbed his into Tabitha's shoulder and Julian cursed to himself.

Julian spun off the stool, tottered to his feet, and minced over to the booth.

"Miss Tabithaaa, I'm boored. Can we go now?"

The goons looked Julian up and down and poorly hid their guffaws.

"Not so fast, Doll." The man across from Tabitha finally leaned away from her and back into his seat. "Your friend here is a little behind on payment. Seems to forget about our generosity and courteous minimum monthly payments."

Tabitha scowled. "The merchandise was bad and you know it. Those devices couldn't have destroyed the wall on a cardboard box, never mind a vault!"

Julian quickly bounced forward. Deescalate! Tabitha was dangerous mad and it wouldn't help with these goons.

“We'll find a way to pay! I'm sure she can get a loan. We'll get one right now. C'mon, Ma'am.”

One of the goons stepped forward to stop Julian from helping Tabitha up. Their leader stood up and towered over Julian, even in his ridiculous heels.

“We know she'll pay. Maybe she needs to leave a down payment as an incentive.”

He put a hand on Julian's shoulder and pulled him in until Julian's chest squashed against the leader.

“What do you say, Boys? Can this one earn enough to hold off on collections? Club could always use a new dancer.”

The goons chuckled among themselves.

“I hope the tryouts are as fun as last time!”

“Interviews usually go a few rounds these days! Let's set up a few meetings.”

The leader draped his arm around Julian's shoulder and swept his other one towards the stairs. Julian looked around. He glanced back at Tabitha and then the stairway. If anything happened to her... He had to keep her safe.

“O-Okay.”

The leader's hand dropped from the shoulder down to Julian's hips. “Right this way.”

As they approached the stairs, a voice rang out behind them. “All right, that's enough. She's put in a good effort and has proven herself.”

The leader's hand broke free, brushing against Julian's backside before stepping away. Julian steadied himself and spun around. The goons leaned against the wall in a huff and Tabitha was marching over. She slipped an arm around Julian's bicep and dragged him towards the double doors leading to a backroom.

“Was really going to go through with it? Impressive.”

Julian finally didn't have to act to play up his cluelessness.

“Buh? What's-”

“What's your name, dear?”

“Sapphire!”

“REAL name.”

Julian looked around and then tensed. “J-Julian.”

Tabitha finally let go and leaned back against the padding on the cushioned walls. “Hmmm... Ah! One of the boys on the 4:15 robbery. If you had set up a retrieval from a second team at the Garden Street overpass, your crew could have escaped much faster and without the messiness at the station.”

“M-Ma'am?”

She pat Julian on top of his head. "You seem like a good one, but I just couldn't identify you. You were so sweet, and naive, that I couldn't put you through anything more and I called it off."

"You... What? What- How long did you know?"

She scoffed. "Even if I hadn't been tipped of before arriving at the salon, you may as well have been wearing a neon sign. I had my fun while trying to figure you out. You think I don't know my love sends his spies to watch over me? I play along, I let him discover some of my small plans and think he's won. I love that ox and it makes him feel good to be in charge so I'm happy to play his game. You daft boys though..." She sighed and then giggled, pulling Julian in tight and leaning her head on his shoulder. "I punish you boys for going along with his plans in my own way. Serves you right for agreeing to spy on me!"

Julian was dumbfounded. He allowed her to drag him along and couldn't respond.

"That Scheinwelter lad, the boy at the firing range. He was one of the first I caught after developing my little pills and he became my test subject. I call on him to do some side jobs from time to time in exchange for my silence. But, oh, he makes for the cutest nurse. You really should see him some time."

"Now for you. I've had my fun but have taken a shine to you. You stepped in to look out for me even at the risk of selling yourself. I respect that."

"So..." Julian shrugged, "We're even."

Tabitha chortled and it echoed down the hall. "No. No, not at all. We're going to make a deal in exchange for my silence. Play nice and my love gets what he wants and none of your crew need to hear about the lovely Ms. Sapphire."

She pushed her way through another set of doors at the end of the hallway into an office of her own. Women in business outfits were in a flurry of motion moving papers around and comparing devices.



Tabitha took her seat at a desk covered in files and tablets. She thumbed through it all and plucked out a small tablet before spinning it around and sliding it towards Julian.

“Because I like you. THIS is my current project.”

Julian activated the device and his eyes immediately went wide. “Trivetch Diamond Shipping?! You can't- You have to be kidding me. Their security is legendary. You can't make it past the-”

Tabitha chuckled and leaned back. “And those are my secrets I keep away from my husband. Are you... interested?”

Julian glanced back at the plans before him but gritted his teeth.

Tabitha snickered. “Oh, I'll let you turn back.”

Julian sighed in relief. “Then yes. These plans... I've been looking for this for some time. And if I get to stay as myself then-”

She clucked her tongue and wagged a finger towards Julian. “I said I'll let you turn back, but I never said you were always going to stay that way. When you work for me, we do it on the sly and out of my husband's watch. I need some ambitious women at my side. And I have plenty of pills.”

Before Julian could weigh his options, Tabitha leaned forward again.

“And my people tell me you have some interesting things to say about a data farming racket. Tell me more...”

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