

This is a Jixemetri CWP#6 entry. Eric and Cyndi have been haranguing me (in a good way and I appreciate it!) about what Honey and Dan are up to, so this one's for you guys! I also did something unprecedented (for me) with this story—I actually had an editor! Thanks to Kate for editing for me and Susan for giving it a read-through and a thumbs up! The title is from the Meat Loaf song of the same name.

## Lost Boys and Golden Girls

by Dana

Trixie stood back and surveyed the Sleepyside Junior-Senior High gym. She watched in satisfaction as her fellow students put the finishing touches on the decorations for the dance that she and the other Bob-Whites still in high school had planned. The bright yellow room had been transformed from a plain space for athletics into a quaint area perfect for a square dance. The charming western decorations gave the room a down-home fun kind of atmosphere. Trixie glanced over to where Slim Diamonte was placing a bouquet of dead flowers next to a decorative bale of hay.

She hurried over to him. "Slim, what exactly is that?"

Slim looked up at Trixie, confusion showing in his dark brown eyes. "It's dried flowers for the decorations."

Trixie looked at the withered array of carnations and roses with doubt. "Where did you get it?" She didn't remember requesting this type of a decoration.

"Well, my dad brought 'em home for my mom a while ago. And then we talked about having dried flowers as decorations for the dance. So I asked my mom if I could have them for the dance. She said sure, so I took 'em out of water and dried 'em with some towels. Dried flowers!" Slim looked at Trixie with the look of someone trying so hard to please and she couldn't help but smile.

"Thanks, Slim, they look great. That was really nice of you to want to help out with the decorations." Trixie was moved by the look of sheer happiness and pride on Slim's face as he glowed from her words.

"Thanks, Trixie. I'm glad to help! I'm really looking forward to the square dance tonight. I even borrowed my Uncle Lum's 'Hee-Haw' overalls to look like a real square dancer!" He looked around the room quickly and then back at Trixie. "Maybe you could put a good word into Ruthie Kettner about me?" The look of eagerness on the freshman's face was so priceless that Trixie couldn't help but agree.

"Sure, I'll talk to Ruthie."

Slim beamed. "Thanks, Trixie," he said as he left to find another way to be helpful.

Trixie smiled as she watched him walk away. She couldn't wait to see him tonight in his Hee-Haw overalls. That was sure to be quite a sight! She looked at her watch and realized that she needed to get home so that she would have time to change before the dance. The other four BWG's had left a while ago, but Trixie wanted to stay and supervise the last minute details.

As Trixie stepped into the early May sunshine to wait for Mart to pick her up, she reflected about the BWG's latest project. The art department needed a fundraiser, and since she had helped with a successful bike-a-thon to raise money for the art department in the past, Mr. Crider had approached her again. The five members of the club still at Sleepyside High—herself, Honey, Di, Mart, and Dan—brainstormed ideas. It had been Trixie's idea to hold a dance. She remembered the day in the clubhouse when she had suggested it. Four pairs of startled eyes had stared back at her and she knew what her friends were thinking. *Trixie Belden? Suggesting a dance?*

But of the high school Bob-Whites, Trixie was the only one not attending Sleepyside's Senior Prom the first week of June. Unlike a lot of high schools that held Junior-Senior Proms, Sleepyside's year-end dance was for seniors only. Honey and Di, her best friends, were juniors like she herself was, but they were

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dating Sleepyside seniors and were constantly giggling about dress shopping and boutonnieres and dye-able shoes. Trixie knew that they didn't mean to leave her out, and she honestly wasn't too sorry to be missing the prom when she knew she would be at her very own the next year, but she still felt a little left out.

*Now I know how Di must have felt two years ago*, Trixie thought. The year Jim and Brian had been seniors Trixie had accompanied Jim to his prom and Brian had asked Honey. Neither couple was dating, and it was a friendly evening with no romance, but Di had to have felt a little cast aside. Of course, she had just started dating Mart at the time and he took her to a very romantic dinner at the Inn and then to an evening of dancing at the Country Club. *All in all, she probably had a much more romantic evening than either Honey or I had*, Trixie reflected.

With the very glamorous prom coming up, the others hadn't been sure that a dance only a few weeks before would be a success, so they had taken a survey of their classmates. It turned out the underclassmen were very much in favor of a dance of their own. Although some wanted an evening of elegance to match that of the prom, the Bob-Whites decided that a much more casual dance would be better right before the glamour of prom.

Trixie and Honey started reminiscing about the square dances they had had so much fun at when visiting Di's uncle in Arizona and Trixie's uncle in the Ozarks. Dan had missed both trips and had never been introduced to the fun that was square dancing, and so the Sleepyside High Square Dance Fundraiser had been born.

Jim was flying in from Michigan State for the weekend to take Trixie and she couldn't wait. She smiled as she remembered his words of the previous night.

*"I have an hour layover in Detroit, but I can't wait to arrive in Sleepyside to take my sapphire girl to the dance," Jim had said in a soft, romantic voice.*

Trixie loved that voice! Trixie's older brother Brian, a sophomore at Columbia, was picking Jim up at the airport and arriving in—Trixie looked at her watch—an hour! The blonde impatiently scanned the parking lot for signs of Mart. Where was that brother of hers? She wanted to look her best for Jim. He was making a big sacrifice coming home for her. His finals started Monday and he had been doubling up on his studying for the last few weeks so that he could take this weekend off and take her to the dance. She had insisted it wasn't necessary, but he in turn insisted that it was. He even joked that he would bring his harmonica to provide entertainment for the square dance.

Mart finally arrived in the BWG station wagon and Trixie climbed in, a scolding already forming on her lips. He did not tell his sister that he was late picking her up because he had been with Di and she had been feeling particularly frisky that afternoon. And after the steamy scene that had followed Diana's revelation, Mart realized he had managed to misplace his keys and spent forever looking for them. Mart smiled at the memory of his afternoon with Di as Trixie berated him good-naturedly.

"And then there was this one time, at Lucy Camp," Mart realized that Trixie was talking. He turned to her, his blue eyes so like hers, but his were filled with puzzlement and hers with merriment.

"*What* are you talking about? Lucy Camp?" Mart asked with no small amount of exasperation in his voice. "Is this some Lucy Radcliffe thing?" he demanded.

Trixie laughed. "You'd know if you had been paying attention to what I was saying! But no, you had this googly look on your face, so I know you were thinking about Di." Trixie looked at him slyly before she continued. "Was she feeling extra frisky today or what?"

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Mart almost steered off the road. His mouth dropped open but no words came out. *Now, why the heck would Trixie say that?* He wondered.

Trixie was laughing gleefully by now. “Wondering how I knew that?”

Mart nodded dumbly.

“She told me before she left that she was feeling, er, frisky,” Trixie smiled.

Mart was speechless for a few moments, but finally regained his voice. “What—”

“What else does she tell me?” Trixie finished for him, enjoying his discomfort. Mart again nodded dumbly. “Thankfully, not much. There is an ick factor involved, you know.”

The two arrived at Crabapple Farm and Mart resolved not to tease his sister so much in the future. It wasn't worth this kind of torture in return! Trixie, with one last wicked smile at her almost-twin, disappeared inside the house and began to get ready for her date with Jim.

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Honey stood in front of her mirror, surveying her appearance. She had brushed her honey-brown hair until it gleamed. Her khaki pants were casual and comfortable—and perfect for square dancing in her opinion. The snug red knit top she wore clung to her and complimented her slim figure. Honey decided that the neckline showed just the right amount of cleavage. She smiled as she touched her favorite piece of jewelry—the gold locket that her boyfriend had bought her last Christmas. *And he wasn't even my boyfriend yet*, Honey mused.

Honey's relationship with Dan had taken her completely by surprise. She had always assumed she would end up with Brian, but she had come to the realization that Brian Belden was not what she wanted. Dan Mangan was. The two friends had grown close this last school year. And after being caught in a storm last March, they had realized what they had felt for each other. Then, during spring break last month, they had finally shared their 'see-crud' with Honey's brother and best friend. It was only a matter of time before the news traveled along the Bob-White grapevine and when Honey's other friend, Di Lynch, found out she had been thrilled with the news. She and Mart now had a couple to double date with. Di and Honey felt a little funny leaving Trixie out, but she insisted that she would rather spend the time talking to her boyfriend either online or on the phone. So Friday had become date night and Saturday was either girls night out for the three Bob-White females or all five Bob-Whites still in high school would find something to do together. It had been a fun end to the school year.

Honey was looking forward to prom in a month, but tonight her mind was on the dance. Trixie told her that Brian might be there. She hadn't seen him since she and Dan had become a confirmed couple and she wasn't sure if the situation would be awkward.

A knock sounded on Honey's bedroom door. “Come in,” she called. She watched in the mirror as the door opened and assumed it would be Miss Trask or one of the maids. When she saw the shock of red hair she whirled around and flew across the room to throw herself in her visitor's arms.

“Jim! You're home!” Honey greeted her brother enthusiastically.

Jim returned his sister's exuberant hug. “That I am,” he smiled. “But I only have about 20 minutes to shower and get ready before I have to pick Trixie up. I just wanted to say hi and I'll see you at the dance.” His sister released him from the hug and he gave her a quick kiss on the cheek before disappearing into his own room.

Honey returned to the mirror and decided that there was nothing else she could do to get ready so she wandered downstairs and decided to wait for Dan in her father's den. She hadn't even made it fully into

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the room when she heard chimes at the front door. "I'll get it, Celia!" she yelled to the maid and headed for the front door, her heart thudding. It was funny. She had been so comfortable with Dan for years and now after seven short weeks of dating he could make her heart pound at just the very thought of seeing him.

She opened the door and there was her dark-haired boyfriend, looking absolutely luscious in his faded denim jeans and black leather jacket. Honey felt breathless at the sight of him and without even thinking leaned forward to give him a long, slow kiss. Dan happily returned it.

"Wow! That's some greeting," Dan said as they pulled away.

"I missed you," Honey said as she grabbed her purse from the table by the door where she had left it earlier.

"You did?" Dan's voice softened. He had had girlfriends in the city before he came to Sleepyside, but there had never been anyone who made him feel as special as Honey did. He had only been with her such a short time, but he couldn't imagine his life without her.

Honey smiled and gave him a quick peck on the lips before heading out the door. "Of course I did! It's been over two hours since I've seen you, silly!" she giggled as she grabbed his hand and lead him toward the Bob-White station wagon. It was then that she saw two people in the car. Mart, whom she expected, in the front passenger seat, and Brian, whom she did not, behind the wheel. She faltered ever so slightly, but she smiled brightly and continued toward the car. Dan noted with satisfaction that she did not drop his hand when she saw the eldest Belden in the car.

Dan knew that Honey cared for him deeply. He also knew that she had cared deeply for Brian for the last three years. Sometimes he lay in bed at night, afraid that this was all a dream and that he would wake up. Or that Honey would wake up and decide that she wanted Brian after all. But he pushed these thoughts aside. Tonight was about fun and he was determined to have it.

The couple climbed into the middle seat of the station wagon. "Hi Mart!" Honey said cheerfully. "Brian, glad you could make it home for the weekend."

Brian forced a smile as he turned the car around and drove back down the Wheeler's long driveway. "I wouldn't have missed this dance for anything. You guys went to a lot of effort to plan it. The art department is lucky to have you guys working so hard for them."

Honey nodded, not sure what to say. She and Brian had always been so comfortable around each other, and now she couldn't think of a thing to say.

Brian concentrated on the road, his lips set in a grim line. He wasn't sure what he was feeling right then. He himself had written Honey the letter stating that he just wanted to be friends. He thought he had feelings for someone else, but that relationship hadn't lasted. Even now he mostly thought of Honey as a sister. Very special, someone he would always care for, but not ever in a romantic way. So why did he feel a pang of jealousy when he looked in the rearview mirror and saw a cascade of honey colored hair leaning in close to the man with jet black hair? *Ego*, Brian thought involuntarily, *dumb, stupid ego*.

Mart seemed to realize that Brian was feeling out of sorts and started a conversation about the current Stanley Cup playoffs to distract his brother from the couple in the back seat. "So, you think the Red Wings will pull it off this year? I was kind of hoping the Flyers might make it to the Finals but what with Ottawa's upset of them I guess that's out." Brian half listened to Mart's hockey prattle and was relieved when they arrived at the Lynch estate. Of course, now it meant he was the fifth wheel to two happy couples. *Face it Brian, you're their chauffeur*, Brian reflected peevishly.

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Mart hurried out of the car and soon returned with Di, looking radiant in a dark red western-style dress. She usually chose lavender, which complimented her eyes, but had decided that the deep red she now sported was a more 'Western' color. With her black hair, the dress looked stunning.

Mart and Di climbed into the seat behind Honey and Dan, making Brian feel even more like a chauffer. The five laughed and chattered all the way to Sleepyside High. Or rather, four of them laughed and chattered carelessly. The fifth member of the group pretended to be concentrating very hard on driving. To him, the short trip to town seemed a lot longer than the few minutes it actually was.

As they entered the gym, they saw that the dance was already in full swing. Once the Bob-Whites had gotten the idea off of the ground, students in the art department had volunteered to take tickets and money at the door, and to be there to get things started. As hardworking as the Bob-Whites usually were, it was somewhat of a relief to have an entire department helping them out. And the art students had insisted that they would take care of the ticket collecting and food. Trixie had managed to hire a bluegrass band that went by the name of Lem's Lincoln County Peach Pickin' Korn Krackers. The eccentric quartet was fired up and already playing "Cotton Eyed Joe." The Bob-Whites' classmates were happily dancing along to the lively tune.

Honey, an evil gleam in her eye, grabbed Dan and dragged him onto the dance floor. She had done it so fast that he had no time to protest and was soon caught up among the dancers. He had a mischievous glint in his dark eyes and Honey knew that he was plotting revenge for being dragged out on the dance floor. He had not planned on actually dancing any of the folk dances! But "Cotton-Eyed Joe" was a popular line dance even now and Honey showed him the steps. Soon he was laughing and dancing, trying his best to follow her lead and trip over his own feet. They were having so much fun that they didn't notice Brian watching them.

*They're perfect together*, Brian thought from the sidelines, surprised at the revelation. The couple was obviously enjoying themselves immensely. Gone were the shy little girl and the sullen boy with the chip on his shoulder of just a few short years ago. They obviously brought out the best in each other. Dan was actually out on the dance floor, something he had always resisted in the past. And Honey was responsible. The only time Brian could ever remember Dan dancing was when Trixie coerced him on their trip to New York when they had found that curious little idol. Since nobody could refuse Trixie anything once she had her mind set, Brian didn't really count that. But Dan was *willingly* dancing with Honey—and clearly enjoying himself.

As Brian stood watching the dancers, something caught his eye. *Is that...?* He asked himself. *No! It couldn't be!* But as Brian took a closer look, realization hit him. *It is! That guy out there with highlighted hair is wearing Hee-Haw overalls!* He stood there chuckling as he watched the young kid dancing with Ruthie Kettner. Nearby he heard a girl confidentially telling her friend, "Yeah, I rode Dan."

Brian's ears perked up and moved closer to hear that conversation.

"Is he as big as everyone says he is?" the other girl was saying. Brian couldn't believe his ears.

"Oh yeah, and *frisky*," the first girl said.

Brian didn't know whether to feel upset for Honey, who was obviously being played, or gleeful that Dan had been caught with his pants down.

"Well, stallions usually are," the second girl confided. Brian couldn't believe his ears. Dan? *A stallion?* Should he tell Honey this and break her heart?

"Well, once I put him through his paces, he calmed down a bit."

Brian couldn't imagine any girl putting Dan through his paces.

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“Did you use a snaffle bit or a curb bit?”

*Snaffle bit! This Dan they're talking about is a...a horse!* The young Belden could not believe he had read into the conversation what he had. After all the times he had lectured Trixie for jumping to conclusions!

Suddenly, one of Brian's old classmates was tapping his shoulder. “Brian?”

“Yeah, Mark?” Brian looked at the captain of Sleepyside's swim team.

“Have you seen my towels?” Mark asked.

Brian thought he must have misunderstood him. First Hee-Haw overalls, then the Dan the horse confusion, and now this! “Umm, what?”

“My towels. They were in the locker room and they're not there now. Someone stole them! I know it!” Mark's voice was starting to rise, indicating his level of irritation. “I've asked everyone and no one will admit who took them!”

“Well, I didn't. Sorry,” Brian said. Mark looked at him suspiciously and then turned to a pretty red-headed girl a few feet away.

“Angelique! Did you take my towels?” Brian heard the swimmer say. He rolled his eyes, hoping that Mark found his towels soon!

Just then Jane Morgan appeared at Brian's side. “Want to dance, Brian?”

Brian looked down at the girl who had tried to make his sister so miserable once upon a time. But Jane had learned her lesson and wasn't so bad nowadays. And dancing with Jane sure as heck beat standing there watching the happy couples on the floor—especially one in particular.

Brian smiled at Jane. “Sure.” The next thing he knew Jane was fervently trying to teach him the steps to “Skip to My Lou.” Brian was wondering how everyone knew the moves to all of these line dances. Then he realized it must be one of those things like the Hustle of the '70's or the Macarena of the '90's. Some things just caught on and wouldn't die!

Meanwhile, Honey and Dan waved from the dance floor as Trixie and Jim entered the dance. Trixie looked fabulous in her form-fitting denim jeans and bright blue blouse. She immediately turned to Jim, said something that made him laugh, and they joined the rest of the Bob-Whites on the dance floor.

Finally, after Honey made Dan sing along—against his will—to “Put Your Little Foot” with the rest of the crowd, he drew the line.

“Honey, I need a break,” Dan pleaded after the song ended and everyone had had their fun stomping along to the music.

Honey, her face flushed from the exercise, agreed. “Let's go grab something to eat. I hear the food committee was going to have pecan pie and I would love a piece!”

Dan placed his hand on Honey's back to guide her through the crowd to the refreshment tables. Honey leaned into his hand, reveling in the feel of his touch. She couldn't get enough of her sexy guy. When he looked at her with those intense, smoky eyes, Honey thought she would melt. Even now, with just the gentle pressure of his hand on her back in a crowded place, Honey felt the tingly session in her stomach that she had come to associate with the physical longing she felt for Dan.

Dan waded through the freshmen who were camped three deep in front of the refreshment table and surveyed the damage. He noted that the pecan pie seemed to have long disappeared and the dessert dishes that were left were not very appealing. He turned to Honey to tell her what was left on the table

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and he suddenly realized something was appealing. *Very* appealing. He turned abruptly, quickly grabbed two cans of soda, and then hurried Honey toward an exit, mumbling that he needed some air.

Honey would have been bewildered at his behavior except that she had seen the way he looked at her before his behavior had changed so dramatically. Seen the way his eyes had darkened and his cheek muscles had gone taut. Despite the fact that she was still innocent, she had learned to read Dan. When they were alone together and things progressed between them, she had come to know exactly what it meant when his dark eyes smoldered and his face, already so chiseled, looked like it had been absolutely carved with a knife from the sheer emotions that he was feeling.

It was those times, alone in the preserve or alone in the clubhouse, that Honey wanted to throw caution to the wind and give in to her body's desires. But Dan always stopped her. Dan, who had been with women before, always stopped her. Honey had pressed Dan to tell her about his relationships when he had been in the city, and he had told her some, but she knew that he had not told her everything. And she knew why—and she loved him all the more for it. Dan wanted to be her white knight. He wanted to protect her.

Honey knew that Dan's life on the streets had not been pretty. She knew that he had kept a lot from the Bob-Whites when he had first come to Sleepyside. Part of that was because he didn't think they would understand what he had gone through, part was because he was afraid of what they would think of him, and a significant part was because what had happened was so painful for him that it was easier to push it deep down inside and deny it rather than put his grief into words.

Honey had gotten to know Dan like no other Bob-White had. And she cherished that knowledge—actually reveled in it. But she also knew that Dan thought of her as pure and innocent—his golden girl, as he liked to put it. And so he would never reveal too much of his past. And he would never, ever let things get out of hand between them. He respected her too much.

Presently, Honey found herself sitting on a swing in the park that was adjacent to their high school. Dan had opened her soda for her and the two were sitting on their swings, staring at each other.

"Hi," Honey said with a smile.

Dan grinned at her. "Hi."

"Needed some air, huh?" Honey said. Dan marveled at the way her voice could sound so seductive when it was just a simple phrase.

"Something like that," he whispered as he moved closer to nuzzle her ear.

"Dan," she managed to breath before his lips were crushing down on hers. The soda dropped to the ground, forgotten, as Honey returned the passionate kiss. Her body was on fire and she didn't know how much longer she could take it. Seven weeks was such a short time when one looked at things logically, but it was an eternity when it was seven weeks of sweet torture. Her time spent with Dan had been a serendipity of new discoveries. Sweet, innocent little Honey Wheeler was slowly learning the ways of the flesh and she was loving every minute of her education in the hands of this devastating man who was her boyfriend.

Dan's work roughened hands traveled over his girlfriend's creamy skin. She was silk beneath his touch and, once again, he couldn't believe that she was his. When he had first come to the city, she was the only one who was nice to him. Sure, Di had flirted with him, but that was just Di. Honey had been genuinely interested in him as a person and he had immediately fallen for her sweet personality and simple, direct way of looking at life. It was a refreshing change from the games the girls in the city played.

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Honey pulled him closer and soon the two were on the ground, hardly noticing their surroundings, too busy trying to press themselves against each other. The only time Honey obtained the sweet relief she so craved was when his body was close to hers. Her blood pounded in her ears and the only thing that mattered was Dan's hands on her skin, Dan's legs entwined with her own, and Dan's lips on hers. Honey sighed contentedly as she ran her fingers through his long hair.

"Honey girl," Dan whispered, "I want you so badly."

"Me too," Honey cried out. "Me too."

Something in Honey's voice broke through Dan's lust-driven haze and he pulled back. "Honey," he said, his ragged breath a testament to his passion.

"Don't stop, Dan, please," Honey pleaded as she continued to kiss his neck.

But Dan loved Honey too much to continue. "Sweetie, Honey, we have to stop," he was fighting desperately to get control. Lord knew he didn't want to, but he had to. When he considered what he had felt for those girls in the city, it was laughable. All those times he had acted so smooth and suave, saying the right things, doing everything he could to get them to go all the way with him and he had never given a damn about any of them. And now he had this beautiful girl in his arms, whom he would die to make love to, and he was not willing to do that yet. He would feel horrible if he did something to cheapen this girl. He wanted to love her and cherish her. To shout to the roof tops that she was his. He had only been with her for less than two months, but he had been in love with her for three years. He had never dreamed that she could ever feel the same about him, and now that she did, he vowed never to do anything that might make her hate him.

So even when his body was screaming for release, his love for this honey-haired girl reined his hormones in and allowed his common sense to regain control. For her sake. For their sake.

"But Dan..." Honey started to protest, thinking of the fire that he had ignited inside her body.

"Shhhh." Dan kissed her lips. "I love you too much to have our first time be on the hard, cold ground. You deserve so much better than that."

Honey's hazel eyes widened. He had never told her he loved her before. "You love me?"

Dan chuckled at the amazement in Honey's voice. "Of course, I do. I have for years."

Honey was overwhelmed with a new emotion. The fire that had raged through her body just moments before subsided and she was overcome with an overpowering sense of contentment. Dan loved her.

"I love you, too," she whispered, meaning every word with her very heart and soul.

Dan let out his breath in a rush, and realized that he had not breathed while waiting for Honey's reaction to his declaration. She loved him. His golden girl loved him. It was like a dream come true.

They both stared at each other and became lost in each other's eyes. Finding each other was a dream come true. For both of them.

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The name of the band came from Hillbilly-Music dawt com ([www.hillbilly-music.com](http://www.hillbilly-music.com)) and is a combination of three bands I found there: Lincoln County Peach Pickers, Korn Krackers, and Lem's Down Home Boys.

My carryover items are: a bright yellow room (#1), a bouquet of dead flowers (#2), someone losing their keys (#3), people putting up decorations (#4), pecan pie (#5), a survey (SA#1), and leather clothing (SA#2).

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