

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf

****The Enduring Passion: Vita Sackville-West's Love Letter to Virginia Woolf****

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf—these words evoke a profound glimpse into one of the most captivating literary and romantic relationships of the early twentieth century. The story of Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf is not just one of friendship or artistic collaboration, but a tale infused with passion, intellectual intimacy, and deeply personal expressions of love. Among their many correspondences, Vita's love letters to Virginia stand out as poignant artifacts that reveal the tender, sometimes fiery, emotions that shaped both their lives and work.

The Historical Context of Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf's Relationship

To understand the significance of the vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf, it's essential to explore the backdrop against which their bond blossomed. Vita Sackville-West was an English poet, novelist, and garden designer, renowned for her aristocratic lineage and her literary talents. Virginia Woolf, a central figure in modernist literature, was known for her groundbreaking novels and essays that challenged traditional narrative forms.

Their paths crossed in the early 1920s, and their relationship quickly transcended mere acquaintanceship. Vita's vivacious personality and charm captivated Virginia, who found in her both muse and confidante. Their correspondence, especially Vita's letters to Virginia, offers a window into the emotional intensity and intellectual synergy that fueled their connection.

The Essence of Vita Sackville-West's Love Letters to Virginia Woolf

At the heart of the vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf lies a raw and heartfelt expression of affection that goes beyond typical romantic gestures. Vita's letters are celebrated not only for their poetic language but also for their honesty and vulnerability. They reveal a woman who was deeply moved by Virginia's intellect and spirit, unafraid to articulate her desires and longing.

Emotional Depth and Literary Beauty

Vita's writing is often rich with metaphor and lyrical beauty, mirroring the aesthetic sensibilities both women shared. In her letters, she frequently refers to Virginia as her "dearest" or "beloved," weaving imagery of nature, art, and light to illustrate the intensity of her feelings.

For example, one famous letter describes Virginia as a "luminous presence" in Vita's life, illuminating her darkest moments. This kind of language not only conveys love but also reflects the modernist literary style both women helped pioneer, where emotion and intellect fused seamlessly.

The Role of Letters in Their Relationship

In an era before instant communication, letters were vital lifelines. Vita and Virginia's exchanges went beyond mere updates; they were intellectual debates, emotional outpourings, and mutual inspirations. Vita's letters often contained reflections on their personal lives, literary projects, and the social constraints they faced as women and as lovers in a conservative society.

The vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf thus becomes a testament to how correspondence can nurture and sustain a relationship, especially one that was complex and fraught with societal challenges.

How Vita Sackville-West's Letters Influenced Virginia Woolf's Work

One fascinating aspect of their relationship is how Vita's love letters and persona influenced Virginia Woolf's literary creations. Virginia famously immortalized Vita in her novel **Orlando**, a playful yet profound exploration of gender, identity, and time. The novel's protagonist is inspired by Vita, reflecting her androgynous charm and aristocratic background.

Inspiration Behind **Orlando**

Orlando can be seen as Virginia's literary response to the deep affection and admiration she held for Vita. The novel's fluid treatment of gender and time mirrors the fluidity and complexity of their relationship. Vita's letters, filled with passion and wit, likely fed into Virginia's creative process, encouraging her to push boundaries in her writing.

This dynamic exchange between real-life emotion and artistic expression highlights the power of love letters—not just as personal documents, but as catalysts for creative genius.

The Legacy of Vita Sackville-West's Love Letter to Virginia Woolf

Today, the vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf stands as more than a historical curiosity; it is an emblem of queer love, intellectual partnership, and emotional courage. Their correspondence challenges the norms of their time and continues to inspire readers, scholars, and lovers of literature.

Preserving the Letters

Many of Vita's letters to Virginia are preserved in archives and have been published in collections that shed light on their relationship. These letters provide invaluable insight into the lives of two pioneering women who dared to live authentically despite societal pressures.

Lessons from Their Correspondence

For modern readers and writers, there are several takeaways from Vita's love letters:

- **The power of vulnerability:** Vita's willingness to express her true feelings teaches us the importance of honesty in relationships.
- **The intersection of love and creativity:** Their letters remind us how personal connections can fuel artistic endeavors.
- **The role of language in intimacy:** Vita's poetic style shows how words can deepen emotional bonds.

Exploring the Broader Context: Queer Love in Early 20th Century Literature

The Vita Sackville-West love letter to Virginia Woolf also opens a window into the broader landscape of queer love in early 20th-century England. Both women navigated a world that was often hostile to same-sex relationships, making their correspondence and public lives acts of subtle rebellion.

Breaking Social Conventions

Their letters reveal the challenges and joys of loving outside societal norms. Vita's aristocratic status and Virginia's literary fame did not shield them entirely from scrutiny, but their relationship thrived through mutual respect and shared courage.

Impact on LGBTQ+ Literary History

Their story has become foundational in discussions of LGBTQ+ history, highlighting how love and creativity can flourish even under constraint. Contemporary queer writers and readers often look back to Vita and Virginia as pioneers who expanded the possibilities for expressing identity and desire.

The Vita Sackville-West love letter to Virginia Woolf is more than just a piece of personal correspondence—it is a vibrant testament to a love that transcended time, convention, and even the boundaries of literature itself. Their letters continue to captivate and inspire, reminding us of the enduring power of words to connect hearts and minds across generations.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was Vita Sackville-West in relation to Virginia Woolf?

Vita Sackville-West was a British writer and gardener who had a romantic relationship with Virginia Woolf, inspiring some of Woolf's work.

What is the significance of Vita Sackville-West's love letters to Virginia Woolf?

Vita Sackville-West's love letters to Virginia Woolf reveal the depth of their emotional and romantic connection, providing insight into their personal lives and influencing Woolf's writing.

How did Vita Sackville-West's relationship with Virginia Woolf influence Woolf's novels?

Their relationship inspired Woolf's novel 'Orlando,' which is a fictionalized biography of Sackville-West, exploring gender fluidity and identity.

Are Vita Sackville-West's love letters to Virginia Woolf publicly available?

Many of Vita Sackville-West's love letters to Virginia Woolf have been published in collections and are accessible to the public, shedding light on their intimate correspondence.

What themes are evident in Vita Sackville-West's love letters to Virginia Woolf?

The love letters express themes of passion, longing, intellectual companionship, and the complexities of their unconventional relationship.

Did Virginia Woolf write love letters to Vita Sackville-West as well?

Yes, Virginia Woolf also wrote love letters to Vita Sackville-West, documenting their mutual affection and emotional bond.

How did society at the time view the relationship between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf?

Their relationship was unconventional for the time, often kept private due to social norms regarding same-sex relationships, but it was well-known within their literary circle.

What impact did the correspondence between Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf have on LGBTQ+ literary history?

Their correspondence is considered a significant example of early 20th-century queer relationships, contributing to LGBTQ+ visibility and literary history.

Where can one find published collections of Vita Sackville-West's letters to Virginia Woolf?

Published collections can be found in books such as 'Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf' and anthologies of Woolf's correspondence, available in libraries and bookstores.

Additional Resources

****The Enduring Passion in Vita Sackville-West's Love Letter to Virginia Woolf****

Vita Sackville West love letter to Virginia Woolf is more than just a piece of personal correspondence; it stands as a poignant testament to one of the most significant literary and emotional relationships of the early 20th century. The intimate exchange between these two iconic figures—both pioneers in their respective literary and social spheres—offers a rare glimpse into the complexities of love, creativity, and identity during a transformative period in modernist history. This article delves deeply into the nature, context, and lasting impact of Vita Sackville West's love letter to Virginia Woolf, exploring its significance within their intertwined lives and broader cultural narratives.

Analyzing the Vita Sackville West Love Letter to Virginia Woolf

The relationship between Vita Sackville West and Virginia Woolf has fascinated scholars, readers, and historians alike, not only because of their literary prowess but also due to the emotional intensity conveyed through their letters. Vita Sackville West's love letter to Virginia Woolf encapsulates a passionate, sometimes turbulent affection that transcended mere friendship. It reveals the nuances of same-sex love during an era when such relationships were often concealed or coded, making the letter a valuable artifact for understanding LGBTQ+ history as well.

Sackville West's writing is known for its lyrical quality, and her correspondence with Woolf is no exception. The love letter showcases her ability to articulate deep emotional truths, blending poetic expression with candid vulnerability. This letter, among others, has been studied to trace the influence Vita's persona and their affair had on Woolf's literary output, particularly in the novel

Orlando, which is widely regarded as a fictionalized tribute to Vita.

Contextual Background: Vita Sackville West and Virginia Woolf's Relationship

The connection between Vita Sackville West and Virginia Woolf began in the early 1920s, a time when both women were already established figures within the Bloomsbury Group. Vita, an aristocratic poet and gardener, and Woolf, a groundbreaking novelist and essayist, found in each other both a muse and a confidante. Their correspondence frequently oscillated between intellectual camaraderie and romantic yearning, reflecting the era's tensions around gender and sexuality.

Virginia Woolf's intense emotional response to Vita is well-documented, and the love letters exchanged between them reveal the depth of Woolf's attraction and admiration. Vita's letter, in particular, stands out for its eloquence and the way it captures the dynamic interplay of desire and restraint. It also illuminates the challenges they faced in maintaining a relationship that was at once deeply personal and socially complicated.

Literary Influence and Emotional Resonance

Vita Sackville West's influence on Virginia Woolf extends beyond their personal connection into the realm of literature. The love letter can be seen as a catalyst that inspired Woolf's creation of **Orlando**, a novel that blurs gender boundaries and celebrates fluid identity. Sackville West's own poetic style and her fascination with history and landscape informed Woolf's narrative approach, intertwining their creative spirits.

The letter itself is replete with imagery that echoes themes present in Woolf's writing—nature, time, transformation, and longing. This intertextuality enriches the understanding of both writers' works and highlights how their relationship shaped their artistic trajectories.

The Language and Tone of Vita Sackville West's Love Letter

Examining the language used in Vita Sackville West's love letter to Virginia Woolf reveals a sophisticated interplay of passion and restraint. The letter employs rich metaphors and vivid descriptions that evoke a sense of immediacy and emotional urgency. Vita's choice of words often conveys a yearning for connection, while also acknowledging the social and personal barriers that constrained their relationship.

Key Features of the Letter's Style

- **Poetic Imagery:** Vita uses natural imagery—gardens, flowers, and seasons—to symbolize the growth and fragility of their love.
- **Emotional Honesty:** Despite the coded nature of same-sex correspondence at the time, the letter is remarkably candid in expressing affection and desire.
- **Intellectual Engagement:** The tone is not merely romantic but also intellectually stimulating, reflecting the mutual respect and admiration between the two women.

Such features make the letter a powerful document that resonates beyond its immediate context, offering insight into the ways love and creativity can intertwine.

The Historical and Cultural Significance

The importance of Vita Sackville West's love letter to Virginia Woolf transcends the personal narrative. It serves as a cultural artifact that sheds light on the experiences of queer women in early 20th-century England. At a time when homosexuality was socially taboo and legally penalized, their correspondence symbolizes acts of resistance and self-expression.

Moreover, the letter contributes to the ongoing reevaluation of both women's legacies. For decades, their relationship was often marginalized or sanitized in mainstream accounts. Recent scholarship has emphasized the centrality of their emotional and creative bond, recognizing the letter as a key piece

of evidence in reconstructing this history.

Comparative Perspectives: Vita Sackville West's Letters Among Other Literary Correspondences

When placed alongside other famous literary letters—such as those between Vita's contemporary Radclyffe Hall and Una Troubridge or between Woolf and her husband Leonard Woolf—the love letter to Virginia Woolf stands out for its blend of poetic intensity and intellectual depth. Compared to more formal or restrained epistolary traditions, Vita's writing is notable for its personal immediacy and emotional candor.

This comparison highlights the unique qualities of their exchange:

- The ****fusion of romantic and intellectual discourse**** is particularly pronounced.
- The letters' ****aesthetic quality**** elevates them beyond mere communication into the realm of literary art.
- The ****themes of gender fluidity and identity**** explored in Vita's letter are less common in contemporaneous correspondence, marking it as pioneering.

Legacy and Modern Interpretations of the Vita Sackville West Love Letter

Today, Vita Sackville West's love letter to Virginia Woolf is studied not only by literary historians but also by queer theorists, gender studies scholars, and admirers of modernist literature. It has been featured in exhibitions, anthologies, and academic works that seek to unpack the layers of meaning embedded in their relationship.

The letter's enduring appeal lies in its ability to humanize two larger-than-life figures, revealing their vulnerabilities and the transformative power of love. It also continues to inspire contemporary writers and artists who find in their story a model of courage and creativity.

In exploring the vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf, one uncovers a deeply layered narrative of affection, artistry, and defiance. This correspondence remains a vital link between personal history and literary innovation, inviting ongoing reflection on the intersections of love, identity, and creative expression.

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vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: The Letters of Vita Sackville-West to Virginia Woolf Victoria Sackville-West, Louise A. DeSalvo, Virginia Woolf, Mitchell Alexander Leaska, 1984 This is a collection of Vita Sackville-West's letters to Virginia Woolf, assembled with extracts from Virginia's replies and a linking narrative. It illuminates each woman's contemporaries, times, travels, their moments of levity, their periods of despair. And it reflects the private voices of two women, as their friendship deepened from formal admiration to become one of the most searingly intense affairs in modern literary history.

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vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Vita Sackville-West: Selected Writings Victoria Sackville-West, 2003-11-08 Aristocrat, novelist, essayist, traveler, and lover of Virginia Woolf, Vita Sackville-West lived a fascinating and daring life on the periphery of the Bloomsbury circle. She wrote in an astounding variety of genres, including travel narrative, historical and literary studies, poetry, fiction, and essays, and is probably best known for her novels, *The Edwardians* and *All Passion Spent*, and incomparable writings about English country houses and gardens. Here, for the first time, is an anthology that represents the full expanse of her interests and styles. Over half of the works, including intimate diaries and a dream notebook, have never been published. Edited by a foremost expert on the Bloomsbury circle, *Vita Sackville-West: Selected Writings* provides the best and most accessible introduction to this unique writer.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Penelope Voyages Karen R. Lawrence, 2018-08-06 Looking at travel writing by British women from the seventeenth century on, Karen R. Lawrence asks an intriguing question: What happens when, instead of waiting patiently for Odysseus, Penelope voyages and records her journey—when the woman who is expected to wait sets forth herself and traces an itinerary of her own? Lawrence ranges widely, discussing both fiction and nonfiction and traversing the genres of travel letters, realistic and sentimental novels, ethnography, fantasy, and postmodern narrative. In examining works as dissimilar as Margaret Cavendish's rendition of the Renaissance adventure narrative and Christine Brooke-Rose's postmodernist *Between*, she explores not only the significance of gender for travel writing, but also the value of travel itself for testing the limits of women's social freedoms and restraints. Lawrence shows how writings by Frances Burney, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sarah Lee, Mary Kingsley, Virginia Woolf, and Brigid Brophy reconceive the meanings of femininity in relation to such apparent oppositions as

travel/home, other/self, and foreign/domestic. Despite the differences-historical, generic, political-among these writers, Lawrence maintains, they share common insights. Their accounts overturn the dichotomy between adventure and domesticity, demonstrating something illusory within both the stability of home and the freedom of travel.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Virginia Woolf's Afterlives Monica Latham, 2021-05-30 This book explores Virginia Woolf's afterlives in contemporary biographical novels and drama. It offers an extensive analysis of a wide array of literary productions in which Virginia Woolf appears as a fictional character or a dramatis persona. It examines how Woolf's physical and psychological features, as well as the values she stood for, are magnified, reinforced or distorted to serve the authors' specific agendas. Beyond general theoretical issues about this flourishing genre, this study raises specific questions about the literary and cultural relevance of Woolf's fictional representations. These contemporary narratives inform us about Woolf's iconicity, but they also mirror our current literary, cultural and political concerns. Based on a close examination of twenty-five works published between 1972 and 2019, the book surveys various portraits of Woolf as a feminist, pacifist, troubled genius, gifted innovative writer, treacherous, competitive sister and tragic, suicidal character, or, on the contrary, as a caricatural comic spirit, inspirational figure and perspicacious amateur sleuth. By resurrecting Virginia Woolf in contemporary biofiction, whether to enhance or debunk stereotypes about the historical figure, the authors studied here contribute to her continuous reinvention. Their diverse fictional portraits constitute a way to reinforce Woolf's literary status, re-evaluate her work, rejuvenate critical interpretations and augment her cultural capital in the twenty-first century

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Women, Writing, and Fetishism, 1890-1950 Clare L. Taylor, 2003 Clare L. Taylor investigates the problematic question of female fetishism within modernist women's writing, 1890-1950. Drawing on gender and psychoanalytic theory, she re-examines the works of Sarah Grand, Radclyffe Hall, H.D., Djuna Barnes, and Anaïs Nin in the context of clinical discourses of sexology and psychoanalysis to present an alternative theory of female fetishism, challenging the perspective that denies the existence of the perversion in women.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Feminisms Robyn R. Warhol, Diane Price Herndl, 1997 In the landmark 1991 edition of *Feminisms*, Robyn Warhol and Diane Price Herndl assembled the most comprehensive collection of American and British feminist literary criticism ever to be published. In this revised edition, the editors have updated the volume, in keeping with the expanded parameters of feminist literary discourse. With the inclusion of more than two dozen new essays, along with a major reorganization of the sections in which they appear, Warhol and Price Herndl have again established the measure for representing the latest developments in the field of feminist literary theory. Believing that the feminist movement can only move forward where difference commands attention, not dismissal or negativism, they have continued the original collection's mission of providing a multiplicity of perspectives and approaches. This anthology contains three new sections (Conflict, Gaze, and Practice) and includes more selections by and about women of color and lesbians. Aimed at academics and the general public alike, this collection is an indispensable guide to the range of practice on campus today in the field of feminist literary criticism.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Sexual Sameness (Routledge Revivals) Joseph Bristow, 2014-03-18 First published in 1992, *Sexual Sameness* examines the differing textual strategies male and female writers have developed to celebrate homosexuality. Examining such writers as E.M. Forster, James Baldwin, Sylvia Townsend Warner and Audre Lourde, this wide-ranging book demonstrates how literature has been one of the few cultural spaces in which sexual outsiders have been able to explore forbidden desires. From the humiliating trials of Oscar Wilde to the appalling stigmatisation of people living with AIDS, *Sexual Sameness* reveals the persistent homophobia that has until recently almost completely inhibited our understanding of lesbian and gay writing. In opening up homosexual literature to informed and objective methods of

reading, *Sexual Sameness* will be of interest to a large lesbian and gay readership, as well as to students of gender studies, literary studies and the social sciences.

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frequents the 'merciless, drug-dealing, death-dealing' bars of Montmartre. Although Stephen and her acquaintances, allies, and antagonists are of their time, Hall's novel has offered support and solidarity to generations of LGBTQ+ readers, and it continues to shape debates about gender and sexuality today. This edition highlights previously overlooked points of influence, inspiration, and connections with other texts as well as situating the novel in historical contexts. In addition, the editors provide vital insights into Hall's engagement with religion, sexology, literary history, and popular culture.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: An Analysis of Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own Tim Smith-Laing, Fiona Robinson, 2017-07-05 A Room of One's Own is a very clear example of how creative thinkers connect and present things in novel ways. Based on the text of a talk given by Virginia Woolf at an all-female Cambridge college, Room considers the subject of 'women and fiction.' Woolf's approach is to ask why, in the early 20th century, literary history presented so few examples of canonically 'great' women writers. The common prejudices of the time suggested this was caused by (and proof of) women's creative and intellectual inferiority to men. Woolf argued instead that it was to do with a very simple fact: across the centuries, male-dominated society had systematically prevented women from having the educational opportunities, private spaces and economic independence to produce great art. At a time when 'art' was commonly considered to be a province of the mind that had no relation to economic circumstances, this was a novel proposal. More novel, though, was Woolf's manner of arguing and proving her contentions: through a fictional account of the limits placed on even the most privileged women in everyday existence. An impressive early example of cultural materialism, A Room of One's Own is an exemplary encapsulation of creative thinking.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Ireland, Revolution, and the English Modernist Imagination Eve Patten, 2022-06-23 This book asks how English authors of the early to mid twentieth-century responded to the nationalist revolution in neighbouring Ireland in their work, and explores this response as an expression of anxieties about, and aspirations within, England itself. Drawing predominantly on novels of this period, but also on letters, travelogues, literary criticism, and memoir, it illustrates how Irish affairs provided a marginal but pervasive point of reference for a wide range of canonical authors in England, including Wyndham Lewis, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Graham Greene, and Evelyn Waugh, and also for many lesser-known figures such as Ethel Mannin, George Thomson, and T.H. White. The book surveys these and other incidental writers within the broad framework of literary modernism, an arc seen to run in temporal parallel to Ireland's revolutionary trajectory from rebellion to independence. In this context, it addresses two distinct aspects of the Irish-English relationship as it features in the literature of the time: first, the uneasy recognition of a fundamental similarity between the two countries in terms of their potential for violent revolutionary instability, and second, the proleptic engagement of Irish events to prefigure, imaginatively, the potential course of England's evolution from the Armistice to the Second World War. Tracing these effects, this book offers a topical renegotiation of the connections between Irish and English literary culture, nationalism, and political ideology, together with a new perspective on the Irish sources engaged by English literary modernism.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Virginia Woolf and Poetry Emily Kopley, 2021 Offers a thorough reinterpretation of the motivations and aims of Woolf's canonical work and provides a major case study of genre rivalry. It is written in clear and lively language and maintains a narrative drive as it traces Woolf's reading and writing over her lifetime.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: These Are Love(D) Letters Ames Hawkins, 2019-10-15 Intimate and unwavering exploration of love, loss, and the queer possibilities inherent in artistic aspiration. Ames Hawkins's These are Love(d) Letters is a genre-bending visual memoir and work of literary nonfiction that explores the questions: What inspires a person to write a love letter? What inspires a person to save a love letter even when the love has shifted or left? And what does it mean when a person uses someone else's love letters as a place from which to create their own sense of self? Beginning with the simple act of the author receiving twenty letters written by her

father to her mother over a six-week period in 1966, *These are Love(d) Letters* provides a complex pictorial and textual exploration of the work of the love letter. Through intimate and incisive prose—the letters were, after all, always intended to be a private dialogue between her parents—Hawkins weaves her own struggles with gender, sexuality, and artistic awakening in relation to the story of her parents' marriage that ended in divorce. Her father's HIV diagnosis and death by complications related to AIDS provide the context for an unflinchingly honest look at bodily disease and mortality. Hawkins delicately and relentlessly explores the tensions in a father-daughter relationship that stem from a differently situated connection to queer identity and a shared struggle with artistic desire. In communion with queer and lesbian writers from Emily Dickinson and Virginia Woolf to Alison Bechdel and Maggie Nelson, Hawkins pushes exploration of the self with the same intellectual rigor that she critiques the limits of epistolarity by continually relocating all the generative and arresting creative powers of this found art with scholarly rhetorical strategies. Exquisitely designed by Jessica Jacobs, *These are Love(d) Letters* presents an affective experience that reinforces Hawkins's meditations on the ephemeral beauty of love letters. As poetic as it is visually enticing, the book offers both an unconventional and queer(ed) understanding of the documentarian form, which will excite both readers and artists across and beyond genres.

vita sackville west love letter to virginia woolf: Aestheticism & Modernism Richard Danson Brown, Suman Gupta, 2005 Textbook introduction to key debates from the early twentieth century to modernisms emerging between First and Second World Wars. Examines in detail texts by Chekhov, Mansfield, Gibbon, Eliot, Woolf, Brecht and Okigbo.

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