



# Books as Gifts

It's the time of the year to light up faces and shorter days with a story or two (or more!). Books are always there for you — no electricity needed! Satisfy that itch of curiosity, let your imagination soar, or get a chuckle as you open a book, share it alone or with a friend, or give it as a gift.

Happy Holidays from Reading Rockets!

## Books for children 0-3 years old

### *Baby Goes to Market*

by Atinuke

Mama and baby go to a colorful, crowded market to buy fruits and other staples. While Mama is busy, baby is so curious, cheerful and funny that each vendor gives the baby something a little extra for Mama's basket. Expressive illustrations and rhythmic text make a tale to share again and again.

### *Buster and the Baby*

by Amy Hest

Buster, a small white dog, hides from a child as they play enthusiastically all day. But turnabout is fair; in the evening, the toddler waits for Buster to find her in bed. Charming illustrations and lively text capture the energy of a baby and her dog.

### *Cat Nap*

by Toni Yuly

Young readers will find the adult cat hiding from an energetic kitten until both wind up in the same bed for a much-needed nap. Simple forms outlined in black and straightforward text tell a tale that both children and adults recognize.

### *Flora and the Ostrich: An Opposites Book*

by Molly Idle

Flora and an ostrich, both clad in deep lavender, demonstrate opposites such as hello/goodbye, near/far. The expressive illustrations, however, reveal a friendship and humor that goes far beyond the single words on each open page occasionally expanded when a flap is lifted.

### *Little Excavator*

by Anna Dewdney

Little Excavator, better known as Little E, wants to help the big construction equipment transform a vacant lot. Rhymes and onomatopoeia accompany the expressive illustrations of heavy-duty equipment, for a satisfying tale of growing up.

### *Main Street Magic*

by Ingela Arrhenius

Take a walk along Main Street to visit a bakery, a fish market, a hair salon, and other shops. Discover secrets that hide beneath each of the many flaps on sturdy pages. Enjoy the surprises at each cleverly designed and simply illustrated spread.

### *My Busy Day*

by Sophie Bordet-Petillon

From morning to mealtime, washing up to bedtime, young children will recognize the routines and steps presented in checklists. They'll delight, too, in seeing each in a different way as they slide a durable image to change the scene.

### *On the Go with Mother Goose*

by Iona Opie

Traditional nursery rhymes, some familiar, others not so familiar, appear in a compact, sturdy collection appealingly illustrated with a host of animals in the artist's signature style.

### *Peekaboo! On the Farm!*

by Cocoretto

Peekaboo! Lift the flap of a partially covered animal face to find animals in action. Large flaps are sturdy enough for inquisitive hands to discover or rediscover familiar animals.

### *Snow Scene*

by Richard Jackson

"What are these?/Trees. And those?/Shadows." Short, poetic, rhythmic questions and answers and textured illustrations progress from a frozen winter woods to the coming of spring and all of its changes.

### *Tool Book*

by Gail Gibbons

Curious children are sure to learn about various instruments and how they are used, as the contents of a typical toolbox are unpacked. Each is presented in crisp illustrations and brief text.



## Reading Rockets 2017 Holiday Buying Guide

# Books for children 3-6 years old

### *After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again*

by Dan Santat

After his initial fall and being put back together, Humpty Dumpty becomes more fragile. He's now afraid of heights but longs to fly. How he climbs back to the top of the wall and is able to go beyond is surprising and exhilarating. Illustrations from varied perspectives add depth and dimension to an inventive story.

### *Baabwaa and Wooliam*

by David Elliott

Although Baabwaa likes to knit and Wooliam likes to read, they both long for an adventure. They find a different and quite literary adventure when they meet a "rambunctious" wolf in sheep's clothing in this hilarious story with equally funny, expressive watercolor illustrations.

### *The Bad Seed*

by Jory John

After a busy night in the neighborhood, Mr. Pip, the cat, tries to find a quiet place to sleep. That's easier said than done! Vacuum cleaners, canoodlers, and more make noises that keep the poor feline awake! Stylized illustrations in rich colors and lots of alliterative language create an irresistible tale.

### *Big Machines: The Story of Virginia Lee Burton*

by Sherri Duskey Rinker

Jinnee lives by the seaside and is quite magical. Using her magic, for her sons she created little house in a big city, a very special train, a steam shovel that saves the day, and more. The fictionalized biography of author/illustrator Jinnee, better known as Virginia Lee Burton, is presented to bring her work into focus.

### *The Boy and the Whale*

by Mordicai Gerstein

When a whale becomes caught in fishing net, the father is concerned about how he will provide for his family. His son, however, is determined to set the huge mammal free. Against his father's wishes, he returns to the entrapped whale and successfully frees it. Shimmering illustrations present a compelling story of compassion and courage.

### *City Moon*

by Rachael Cole

A child and his mother see the moon peek in and between the buildings as they take a nighttime walk. Though it appears in different places, it is the same moon that watches over the sleeping child when he returns to go to bed. Dark pages with uncluttered forms are punctuated by light to delight.

### *Duck on a Tractor*

by David Shannon

The daring Duck on a Bike wowed the other animals as he rode around the farm. This time, they all join him on the tractor into town! Ebullient artwork and repeating phrases create a rollicking adventure for Duck and company to the amazement of townspeople.

### *The Five Forms*

by Barbara McClintock

A child finds a book atop a bin "free to a good home." At home, the girl ignores the warning and does the martial arts poses calling to life a succession of animals causing chaos. Soon after she cleans up the mess, her mother walks in with a surprise: zoo tickets! Inspired by her son's martial arts study, McClintock's illustrations call to mind Asian art.

### *Goodbye Autumn, Hello Winter*

by Kenard Pak

Two children walk across an autumn landscape greeting birds, animals, leaves and more. Gradually, the season changes and the now-bundled up kids greet the signs of winter. Soft illustrations and lyrical text gracefully evoke the evolution of seasons.

### *Koala*

by Claire Saxby

Join the young koala's search for a safe place to live and eat when he outgrows his mother's pouch. A dramatic text on realistically illustrated pages is accompanied by additional factual information.

### *La La La*

by Kate DiCamillo

A girl's search for friendship becomes an adventure as she travels with her song, "la la la", as her only company. Richly hued, radiant illustrations reveal the girl's journey. A note from both the author and illustrator provides insight into this multi-layered, memorable, nearly wordless story.

### *Little i*

by Michael Hall

When small letter i's dot falls off, Little i sets off to find it. Savvy readers will appreciate the send off and what Little i sees and experiences (such as the exciting and loud exclamation mark). Rich colors in textured illustrations present an artfully humorous alphabetic story.

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## Reading Rockets 2017 Holiday Buying Guide

# Books for children 3-6 years old

### *Many: The Diversity of Life on Earth*

by Nicola Davies

From one child to many creatures in different locations, life on earth is very diverse but delicate. This important message is gently delivered in lyrical text and highly detailed line and wash illustrations.

### *Molly and Mae: A Friendship Journey*

by Danny Parker

Two girls meet as their train leaves the station for a long journey. Their friendship develops along the same track as the traveling train including a "signal failure" when the girls don't get along. But all's well by the arrival with the friendship sure to continue on.

### *No Kimchi for Me!*

by Aram Kim

Yoomi loves her grandmother's Korean cooking; that is, every thing except kimchi. Her older siblings say it's because she's still a baby. But Yoomi's grandmother is wise and comes up with a tasty solution: kimchi pancakes! A recipe is included and other dishes mentioned are pictured and labeled on endpapers for an international feast.

### *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*

by Gris Grimly

The words are familiar but Grimly's illustrations present a slightly irreverent, distinctive farmer and his loyal animals. The bear, however, who chases them all away from their barn, is an uninvited guest.

### *Rapunzel*

by Bethan Woollvin

Slyly humorous and boldly illustrated, the girl with the long locks is no match for the witch and not only befriends forest critters; Rapunzel puts fear in the hearts of all witches! This slightly fractured fairy tale is sure to delight young readers.

### *Sail Away Dragon*

by Barbara M. Joosse

Girl and her friend Dragon long to visit Far Away. Their adventure takes them across the seas where they rescue a small cat from Bad Hats returning comfortably Home again. Imaginative, gauzy illustrations complement the rhythmic text.

### *Say Zoop!*

by Hervé Tullet

If your finger is placed on the small blue dot, say "oh." If it's on a big blue dot, say "OH!" Imagine what happens when there is a series of blue dots! Blue, red, and yellow lines and dots dance across white pages encouraging sounds and gleeful play in this inventive participatory book.

### *There's a Pest in the Garden!*

by Jan Thomas

Who's the real pest eating up dog, donkey, sheep, and duck's garden? Is it the groundhog or someone with feathers? Cartoon illustrations and repeating text create a silly tale sure to tickle multiple funny bones.

### *Thunder Underground*

by Jane Yolen

Have you ever thought what's underneath you in your house? Beneath the garden? Or under a city street? There is a great deal underground, exposed here in short, often humorous, sometimes sophisticated poems, and deeply colored illustrations.

### *We Are Shining*

by Gwendolyn Brooks

"Life is for me/and is shining!" begins the poem and continues as the child expresses her wish for a peaceful world in which there is laughter and family. Watercolors are both fantastical and realistic as the poem continues to a gleeful, "Life is for us,/and is shining./We have a right to sing."

### *Who Am I? An Animal Guessing Game*

by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page

Animal characteristics provide clues as different animals ask the reader to guess who they are. Each clue is clearly pictured on a white page; then turn the page to view the entire animal on a double-page spread. Crisp collage illustrates each creature. The accessible volume ends with additional information (including size comparisons).

### *Why Am I Me?*

by Paige Britt

The questions asked by two children celebrate our commonalities as well as what makes each person distinct. Lyrical text and handsome watercolors portray the tapestry of a city and the people who live in the world.

### *Windows*

by Julia Denos

A boy walks his dog as the sun sets, glimpsing different activities in the lighted windows. The brightest window is in his own home where his mother waits for him. As night falls outside that window, the pair curl up together to share a book. Detailed illustrations use light and dark to present a warm story.



## Reading Rockets 2017 Holiday Buying Guide

# Books for children 6-9 years old

### *Before She Was Harriet*

by Lesa Cline-Ransome

"Here she sits/an old woman/tired and worm/her legs still/  
her back achy ... but before wrinkles formed" she was a young woman who could walk for miles, worked for women's right to vote and much, much more. This unique and touching introduction to Harriet Tubman is lovingly revealed and handsomely illustrated.

### *The Big Bad Fox*

by Benjamin Renner

Fox wants to be bad but when he takes on the hens, poor fox always loses. But if he hatches some eggs, he'll have his own chickens to eat ... except is it possible to eat someone who calls you "mom"? Cartoons and dialog from a French comic book artist are fresh, funny, and very satisfying.

### *Big Cats*

by Seymour Simon

Updated information about tigers, leopards, and other big cats is presented in a readable text and full-color photographs. Where to find additional information is included at the end of this large formatted, handsome book.

### *Charlie & Mouse & Grumpy*

by Laurel Snyder

Charlie and Mouse enjoy a weekend with their grandfather known as Grumpy. The gentle family story of an older and younger brother enjoying each other and the company of an older relative is cozily illustrated and divided into short chapters, similar to the first story about these characters, Charlie & Mouse.

### *Dangerous Jane*

by Suzanne Slade

Jane Addams hated war. But what could one person do? Jane found a way, dedicating her life to peace and won a Nobel Peace Prize for her commitment to it. Soft watercolors create a period in time, the people and places where Jane worked to complement the straightforward, engaging narration. Additional biographical information is included.

### *Family Poems for Every Day of the Week / Poemas familiares para cada día de la semana*

by Francisco Alarcón

Every day is a celebration, from Sunday with grandparents to an all-play day Saturday. Short, lively poems are exuberantly illustrated and presented in Spanish and English.

### *Her Right Foot*

by Dave Eggers

Meet the Statue of Liberty. She came from across an ocean like many of the people she continues to welcome; that's why her right foot is mid-stride, of course. Strong graphics and factual but timely, tongue-in-cheek text presents Lady Liberty as never seen before.

### *A Hundred Billion Trillion Stars*

by Seth Fishman

Earth is surrounded by stars of which the sun is only one. Earth is blue "because it is covered by 370,000,000,000,000,000 gallons of water." It has trillions of trees and millions of cities ... but "only one of YOU ..." This imaginative presentation is enjoyable to read and may well encourage closer observation of what is all around.

### *Imagine That! How Dr. Seuss Wrote The Cat in the Hat*

by Judy Sierra

It was good to be a kid in 1954. There were nickel doughnuts and one-cent lollipops. At the same time though, learning to read was just plain boring. That is until Dr. Seuss came up with an idea! Straight narration and Seussian rhyme combine with both realistic and imaginative illustrations to present the story of how entertaining leveled books began.

### *Jasmine Toguchi, Super Sleuth*

by Debbi Michiko Florence

Jasmine Toguchi (first introduced in *Jasmine Toguchi, Mochi Queen*), uses her detective skills to find out why her best friend and older sister are no longer excited about the Japanese celebration of Girl's Day. Characters and events are recognizable and engaging to cause a chuckle or two.

### *Last Laughs: Prehistoric Epitaphs*

by J. Patrick Lewis and Jane Yolen

They're all gone now but a group of dinosaurs come back to life even if only while reading funny epitaphs. Equally comic illustrations and a smattering of factual information are included on the pages of this clever collection.

### *The Legend of Rock Paper Scissors*

by Drew Daywalt

The legendary battles between Rock, Paper, and Scissors started long ago in the Kingdom of Backyard, the Empire of Mom's Home Office, and in the Kitchen Realm. Exaggerated, expressive, and over-the-top illustrations bring the tale of the saga that is still plays out on hands everywhere.

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## Reading Rockets 2017 Holiday Buying Guide

# Books for children 6-9 years old

### *Libba: The Magnificent Musical Life of Elizabeth Cotten*

by Laura Veirs

Elizabeth “Libba” Cotton heard music all around her growing up in North Carolina. She became a self-taught guitarist using her brother’s instrument until he moved. Her musical talent remained hidden until it was uncovered after she started working for Pete Seeger. Libba’s story is told effectively with swirling text and soft illustrations in a limited palette.

### *Miguel’s Brave Knight: Young Cervantes and His Dream of Don Quixote*

by Margarita Engle

A vivid imagination helped Miguel Cervantes to grow beyond a tough childhood and to create a cultural icon: Don Quixote. Luminous illustrations and rich poetry follow young Miguel to adulthood where his creativity triumphs. A note about Cervantes from the author and illustrator conclude this stunning book.

### *Pigeon P.I.*

by Meg McLaren

Pigeon has given up his private detective work. That is until a young canary goes missing along with other colorful birds. Young mystery lovers will enjoy the humor and graphic comic elements in this comical mystery.

### *Red Again*

by Barbara Lehman

A boy on a bike spies a red book by the side of the road. As he reads it in his chilly seaside village, he sees a girl in a boat in a much warmer place reading a red book, and so on. Could children be connected by a book? No words are needed in this intriguing, surprisingly sophisticated story.

### *Robinson*

by Peter Sís

All the other kids have pirate costumes for their adventures while the narrator has one like Robinson Crusoe. When teased about it, he heads to his bedroom where he dreams he is marooned on an island, savoring the solitary adventure until his friends return. Signature illustrations are evocative, detailed, and delicate, accompanied by brief but effective narration.

### *Sergeant Reckless: The True Story of the Little Horse Who Became a Hero*

by Patricia McCormick

A small, underfed horse was found by a group of Marines during the Korean War. She was named Sergeant Reckless for her courage and willingness to carry ammunition into battle. The story of this faithful, brave animal is presented in a gripping narration and realistic (though not explicit) illustrations.

### *Song of the Wild: A First Book of Animals*

by Nicola Davies

Large pages are used to present animals from around the world. Lyrical language and lush mixed media illustrations generate wonder and appreciation for a host of animals from habitats in the sea, land, and air.

### *The Great Art Caper*

by Victoria Jamieson

GW, the hamster enjoys his evenings with his animal friends and is even beginning to like the second graders with whom he shares the room during the day. It is up to GW and his friends save the art show from the dastardly plot of mouse Harriet and her minions in this amusing, short graphic novel. A new story in the *Pets on the Loose* series.

### *Vincent Can’t Sleep*

by Barb Rosenstock

Vincent Van Gogh often had trouble sleeping. As a child, his parents fussed but Vincent continued to travel in his imagination, which precluded sleep. Glowing illustrations suggest the artist’s style and a rhythmic text provides an engaging introduction to Van Gogh and his powerful paintings. An author’s note includes additional information as well as images of several of Van Gogh’s paintings.

### *Where Are You Going, Baby Lincoln?*

by Kate DiCamillo

Baby Lincoln decides to go on a ‘necessary journey’ away from her bossy older sister, Eugenia. Baby returns with lots of stories and a sister who missed her. Fans or newcomers to the Deckawoo Drive series are sure to enjoy this charming, gentle, and very funny story.

### *Winter Dance*

by Marion Dane Bauer

Fox realizes that winter is coming as the first snowflakes fall on its nose. Forest dwellers from the smallest to the largest offer advice, but when the fox meets its companion, they do what foxes do in winter: dance! Textured illustrations accompany the well-paced narration to suggest animal behavior and simple delight.



## Reading Rockets 2017 Holiday Buying Guide

# Books for children 9-12 years old

### *Animalsaurus: Incredible Creatures from Prehistoric and Modern Times*

by Tracey Turner

There were prehistoric predators and plant eaters, prehistoric sea creatures and creepy-crawlers. And there are modern beings that have similar characteristics. Meet the giant pacarana and its modern cousin, the capybara on land; compare *leedsichthys* and the whale shark and other beasts. Line drawings show the prehistoric critter while photos show the modern ones in a unique exploration.

### *Book of Bones: 10 Record-Breaking Animals*

by Gabrielle Balkan

Whose bones are pictured in white on black pages? Turn the page to see the fleshed out creature in full color and learn more about it, where it lives, and its size. Comparisons are clever and familiar (e.g., the skeleton of a particular shrew is the size of a paperclip) for a fun and informative examination of animals and their structures.

### *The End of the Wild*

by Nicole Helget

Eleven-year old Fern lives near an old-growth forest which her family relies on to forage for food. The forest, however, is threatened by a company that wants to use hydraulic fracturing that will require a wastewater pond. How Fern finds friendship, family, and a resolution within a splintered town is plausible and heartwarming.

### *Norse Myths: Tales of Odin, Thor and Loki*

by Kevin Crossley-Holland

Tales from the Norse are not for the fainthearted or youngest, evident in these straightforward retellings. Readers will meet “[s]ome men and women [who will] become great ... [and] the gods and goddesses [who] are even stronger and greater” in these myths. Illustrations are ominous, dark, and perfectly fitting for the tone of these tales.

### *Older Than Dirt: A Wild but True History of Earth*

by Don Brown and Mike Perfit

The Earth started long ago with a Big Bang and continues to evolve and change. Its history is presented humorously yet factually in a tour guided by a small, expressive, and charming groundhog. The collaboration between authors (one a university geology professor, the other an award-winning artist) has created an accessible and engaging look at Earth’s history.

### *Podkin One-Ear (Longburrow Book 1)*

by Kieran Larwood

A bard tells the story of a lazy rabbit named Podkin, how he defeated the red-eyed Gorms to save his rabbit family in the first of a new fantasy series. Vivid storytelling includes several battles, including the one in which Podkin loses an ear as he and his allies defeat the Gorm and Scramakshank, the Gorm’s vicious leader.

### *Poison: Deadly Deeds, Perilous Professions, and Murderous Medicines*

by Sarah Albee

“Let’s get one thing straight ... this is not a how-to book. It’s a history book.” Using a conversational tone and a variety of graphics, the role of naturally occurring and manufactured poison in world history is explored. The result is an engaging, fresh look at history albeit a bit of its darker side.

### *The Purloining of Prince Oleomargarine*

by Mark Twain and Philip Stead

A fragment of an imaginative tale told by Mark Twain to his daughters has been completed and illustrated with all due respect to the original author. Readers will meet Johnny, a poor but worthy boy who helps rescue Prince Oleomargarine, communicate with animals, and find lasting friendships. Delicate illustrations combine with the Twain-esque narration for a memorable (and gorgeous) package.

### *Real Friends*

by Shannon Hale

Shannon Hale shares her memoir in an appealing graphic format. Even for a well-known author, growing up can be fraught, filled with bullies and changing friendships. Readers are sure to see themselves as they share Shannon’s growing pains on her road to maturity.

### *Runny Babbit Returns: Another Billy Sook*

by Shel Silverstein

Tongues get ready to be twisted by Runny Babbit and lots of silly Spoonerisms! Fans of the original *Runny Babbit* won’t be disappointed in this collection of short poems about everyday topics with initial letters of familiar words reversed. Silverstein’s signature black/white line drawings illustrate the collection.

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## Reading Rockets 2017 Holiday Buying Guide

# Books for children 9-12 years old

### *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library*

by Carole Boston Weatherford

Who was Arturo Alfonso Schomburg? He was an Afro-Puerto Rican man whose thirst for knowledge about his roots led him to collect and manage what would become a great library in New York City. Fluid language informs as handsome, realistic paintings illuminate the highlights of Schomburg's life and contributions. A timeline and bibliography may inspire other young researchers and booklovers.

### *Silent Days, Silent Dreams*

by Allen Say

James Castle was born deaf and mute in 1899 on a farm in Idaho. The story of this child who grew up to become an artist is told in his nephew's voice and illustrated in dark-hued illustrations that evoke not only the artist's work but also his difficult life. Allen Say's appreciation of this artist and his work is sophisticated and memorable, presenting a unique and truly original artist.

### *The Song from Somewhere Else*

by A. F. Harrold

When Frank's (nee Francesca) backpack is tossed into nettles by a bunch of bullies, it is Nick Underbridge who retrieves it for her. Nick is as unusual as his home where Frank finds friendship and solace until a secret upends not only their friendship but almost the entire world. Mysterious and otherworldly, this is an involving and satisfying fantasy.

### *Sputnik's Guide to Life on Earth*

by Frank Cottrell Boyce

Prez needs a friend and he finds one in Sputnik. Sputnik looks like a dog to everyone except Prez who realizes Sputnik is an alien in disguise. It's a good thing that Prez is a list maker, because he and Sputnik must come up with 10 reasons why Earth shouldn't be destroyed. The physics-defying story is fast, fresh, and fun.

### *Ten*

by Shamini Flint

Maya loves soccer. But girls in Malaysia where she lives with her Asian Indian mom and English dad don't usually play the sport. How Maya brings her school and perhaps even her family together is told plausibly with pathos and just enough soccer to engage both sports enthusiasts and other readers.

### *This Is Just a Test*

by Wendy Wan-Long Shang and Madelyn Rosenberg

One of David's parents is Jewish, the other Chinese. With one grandmother living with David and his family and the other next door, which culture will win? As David prepares for his bar mitzvah, he worries about the possibility of war both inside his family as well as the U.S. of the 1980s. Fast-paced and believable, the clash between cultures finally subsides.

### *The Unbreakable Code*

by Jennifer Chambliss Bertman

Emily and James (first introduced in *The Book Scavenger*) return in this standalone companion which involves ciphers, books by Mark Twain, mystery, and dastardly plots. Sophisticated readers will appreciate the intrigue and shadowy goings-on that claim Emily's favorite bookstore.

### *The Unicorn in the Barn*

by Jacqueline Ogburn

Could the white deer that Eric spots in the woods really be a unicorn? Can Eric help Dr. Brancusi, a vet, and his daughter really keep the unicorn – and her offspring – safe? Love and loss, hope and happiness are threads throughout this delicately illustrated and absorbing novel.

### *The Unlucky Lottery Winners of Classroom 13*

by Honest Lee and Matthew Gilbert

The teacher in Classroom 13, Ms. Linda LaCrosse, is just plain unlucky. And it was an unlucky win of a 28 billion dollar lottery that helps her and her 27 students realize just how lucky they really are. Absurd events, sly humor, and a zany cast of characters create a fast-paced plot to a speedy (even if a bit seemingly unlucky) conclusion.

### *Who Gives a Hoot?*

by Jacqueline Kelly

Calpurnia Tate and her grandfather, both naturalists, travel on the San Marco River to observe nature in and around the river. When they rescue a sick owl from the water Callie and her grandfather must figure out what's wrong with the owl before it's too late to save it. This is a worthy addition to the Calpurnia Tate, Girl Vet series.



# Reading Rockets

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