

Kostas  
Stoforos

Tale in  
Orange



Illustrations by  
Stefany Veldemiry



KOSTAS STOFOROS

# TALE IN ORANGE

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Translated from Greek by  
METAXIA TZIMOULI



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to Styliana Galiniki

## She saw a dream...

She was in an orange car...with her dad and mom. A strange music was all around them. You could say it was purple...

With tales in red and yellow swimming inside her, tears of joy ran down her cheeks. When she wiped them, they had become orange...

"Where are we going?" she asked her mom.

"On the Orange trip you wanted"





The path they followed connected the Orange State of the Moon with the Purple Night. It was made out of silk, knit by a bird that long before had ran away from the seamstress of the palace...



What a confusing dream! She could not understand it. Usually, she was the one grownups could not understand. Everyone thought her love for orange was bizarre. *Obsession*, they called it.

As a baby, her mom said, she got hold of an orange rattle and would not let go. She only wore orange clothing. She ate only orange food.

She almost drove her parents crazy. They simply could not understand her. But what else could she do?

Tiptoeing in the dark and quiet house, she went in the kitchen, opened the refrigerator and looked at the shelves before pulling out a carrot. Then she filled a glass of orange juice and stepped out onto the balcony.

An orange half-moon leaned into the sky's background...Tomorrow they were going on a trip.

The suitcases waited with patience in the hallway for dawn. Hers was orange-what else?

For the first time in her life she would fly on a plane. For the first time she would be leaving the country. They were flying to Spain—her dad showed her on the map and told her stories about poets, painters and bullfighters. They would rent a car (she picked it out herself on the Internet and it was a fantastic and shiny orange Volkswagen) and they would go to magical cities, her mom said. Of course, they would also be going to Portugal—or “Portokalia<sup>\*</sup>” as she insisted on calling it.

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\* “Portokali” in Greek is orange. We have the same word for orange color. So the name of the country “Portokalia” is something like Orangeland. Also it reminds of Portugal (in Greek “Portogalia”)

She believed this Lorca -mom's favorite poet- with the most beautiful gaze she had ever seen, was definitely "Portokalian". For who else could write such a beautiful song about an orange tree?

*"Underneath the orange tree she washes the cottons  
Green are her eyes and her voice purple"*

Why did her mother's eyes cloud over when she heard the song, and why did her dad always squeeze her hand?

Marianna drank her last drop, looked at the moon one more time and went to sleep...

..I am going on a plane to see the world from high above!

Inside the airplane, Marianna could not stop gazing and asking questions. As the plane rose to the air, the earth grew smaller and smaller. He pointed to a rock down below, "Hump" as they called it because of the way it was shaped like a hump on top of the mountain. Under its shadow people were diving from the rocks only to resurface from the ladder to do it all over again...

Marianna found herself fascinated with the tray table that was popping up and down. She was also fascinated with the orange juice, that the stewardess had given her. She was really pretty and spoke with a funny accent, like her friend Jason. Then she gave her a toy-an airplane with yellow and red colors: "the flag of Spain", mom told her. If you mix red with yellow you get orange!

"Spanish women are beautiful", said dad, looking at the stewardess. Her mom blushed and did not say anything. Marianna played dumb. She did not say anything either but she agreed with her dad!

She liked everything: even the unbelievable food. The paella was orange and delicious. Maybe Spain is a part of Portokalia? Somewhere in Gibraltar Hercules had discovered "golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides", namely the oranges! Orange is her second favorite fruit – first is tangerine.



She pulled out of her orange bag her coloring pencils and created her drawing of Portokalia. A country that you could drink with a straw and it would rain tangerines and oranges. And the white boats that would take off from her harbor and come back loaded with clams and sea urchins. They had the smell of the sea when opened on the plate, an orange explosion...

Besides, everyone knows it: the more orange the eggs of a sea urchin are, the tastier it will be!



But what is happening now? Her painting is alive!

...The straw from the drawing grew. Marianna felt like it was sucking her in and all of a sudden she found herself flowing inside it like a waterslide...she was scared but most of all she was having fun. She was flowing madly. The smell of tangerine became clearer as she got further down. Like when she would open with her fingers a jar of her favorite tangerines from Chio and the smell swam in her nostrils. Little drops splash you and you shiver with delight...



She was flowing like Alice in Wonderland! She expected to see a white rabbit run in front of her at any moment. But she was living her own Fairytale-and without realizing it-she was in a sky full of tangerines. She was flying on the tops of some strange orange trees and open books that were flying too for the distant horizon...

She caught sight of some of the titles: "Tangerine Jelly", "Clockwork Orange", "Bitter Orange", "My other half of orange", "5/4 orange", "Tangerine Days"...

She swoops down next to a tower in the shape of a glass which overlooks the cliffs of a foamed orange juice that runs down like the sea and hits on the sandy beach.



She fell in too making a giant Splash! Her mouth was full of sweet and sour juice...with quick strokes she reached the shore. In front of her a road leads straight to the Orange Tower...

An orange carpet rolled out in front of her feet. She hesitated.  
*"Come now, do not be afraid. We've been waiting for you!"*

An orange tiger, dressed in a green velvet suit, yellow boots with blue dots and a huge red bow tie stood before her.

The tiger gently bowed down and showed her the way...

Marianna started walking on the carpet...





## The orange tower

...Marianna hesitated a little and the tiger gently lead her by the hand to the colorful entrance of the Orange Tower...On top of the gate, one giant and juicy orange slice sends out waves of its refreshing aroma. Freshly squeezed orange juice in enormous jugs and glasses, foamed around her. Small orange drops sprayed her as she crossed the entrance into the hallway with the strangest paintings of oranges...She lost herself in the designs and colors that she did not see the tiger disappear...

Still in a daze, she heard a sweet and melancholic song coming from the sky:

"I open the closet and in the mirror I see a child smiling at me and telling me:  
"I have been grounded. But if you want to keep coming over the glass is your door.  
They cannot see me,  
And when I say orange three times, come out"

Marianna looks up. A woman with a yellow blouse and blue skirt, holding a big flower in her hand, sang...



She looked at Marianna when she realized she was being watched and said:

*"Welcome. It's nice to see you here the first day of the month!"*

*"But it's not the first day of the month", answered Marianna...*

*"Here every day is the first day of the month! We have thousands of names for the months. We name them as we please. Do you have any idea what is the name for today's month? Let's call it Marianna-isn't that your name? I do not think Lucia got it wrong. Who is Lucia you are wondering...the stewardess! Oh, don't look at me like that! Surprised you, didn't I? She chooses who comes to Portokalia. Do not think we welcome just anyone!"*

Marianna was dizzy. The woman kept flying over her head and not even once did she stop to take a breath.

*"Don't be scared", she continued, unfazed, "No one will notice that you are missing! I, Isabella, named after the old Queen, am telling you. Have you seen the play? Which play? The play: Isabella, three caravels and a storyteller. It has some good songs as well. Have you heard the Oyster and the pearl? My mom used to sing it to me so I could fall asleep..."*

She started to sing, so sweetly, that Marianna forgot how dizzy she was. She felt her feet leave the ground as she was climbing skyward in between foaming oranges:

The young son from Tunezi,  
Black like the seabed's oyster,  
He who got caught in love's net,  
He had an eye, eye, eye,  
He had an eye like agate  
He who got caught in love's net,  
That got caught in love's net,

White, whiter than dawn,  
Leonora, daughter from Castille,  
Her skin a magnolia flower,  
Her ear like a shell,  
In love's net she got caught as well,  
In his love's net she got caught as well,  
The young son from Tunezi  
Black like the seabed's oyster,  
Becomes pale whenever he sees her,

The oyster opens up, opens gently  
Capturing her inside,  
White, whiter than the dawn,  
With trembling lips,  
She kisses him sweetly.

*"I will not sing anymore," Isabella said, flying around her. "It's much too sad. If I continue, I will not stop crying. And I see you were about to cry as well. Your heart needs to be light in order for you to fly next to me. Come, do not be afraid. Take my hand! Portokalia waits!"*

## A strange writer

Isabella would not stop singing as Marianna held on to her hand in a tight grip while they were flying over Portokalia. The houses did not have roofs and Marianna could see what was going on inside. Children playing, moms and dads cooking, some were reading and others were kissing. None of them had television!

Marianna took an opportunity to ask about the roofs when Isabella stopped her singing...

*"Roofs, Roofs? Of course we have roofs for our homes!"*

*"Why can't I see them?"*



"We put them away when the sun comes out! Sunlight goes in and cleans them. It's like living in the country. When it rains we put the roofs back in. It never snows here-the phrase "white as snow" we read in books, is inconceivable here. Some folks let the rain in. Instead of a floor they like green grass in their rooms. They only cover the furniture when it rains.

This idea, the "portable roof" was discovered by my great-great grandfather, who was none other than the greatest inventor in Portokalia: Juan Ramon Louis Bertrand! He was the first who made the towers out of orange juice and no matter how much you drink it never finishes. He discovered the flying books that you can read while flying. The wallet with the orange-money that never runs out, also the machine that turns kumquat seeds in jam in three minutes. The memory machine for names that you forget, and the apricot ice cream with the almonds! And finally, the orange dessert! Take a piece of paper and write down the recipe: It will blow your mind! You don't have a pencil? Watch me! Pencil-paper, come!"

All of a sudden with great speed, right out of the sky, appeared some paper with a perfectly sharpened pencil.

"Write!" Isabella said, and started reciting the recipe:

## Ingredients

6 bottles of still orange juice

3 sachets of powdered cream

3 table spoons of sugar

1 ½ pack of Miranda biscuits

Optionally: almond or hazelnut thressed

## Preparation

Heat the orange juice and stir with powdered cream and sugar. Leave to cool.

Spread in a clear pan a layer of biscuits. Pour in half the cream. We spread another layer of biscuits. We pour the rest of the cream. Optionally, we may put on top thressed hazelnut or almond. Leave in the refrigerator for two-three hours.

The pencil was writing with great speed and perfect...grammar. As soon as the recipe was written down, Isabella folded the paper and handed it to Marianna.

*"This is my mother's recipe. The pencil-paper that write on command, is my great-great grandfather's invention! He won Portokalia's greatest award for that: 3000 children's smiles...Now look down! You'll see one more of my great-great grandfather's inventions. A piano-typewriter! He received the Union Composers Authors of Portokalia Award for it.*

*The truth is that he discovered it for a writer he felt unrequited love for my great-great grandmother. He would send her presents and make her promises, but she remained rigid.*

*Until the day he made the piano-typewriter. She then realized that no one would love her more. They lived together from then on, but she never wrote on the piano-typewriter. She told him that she did not want him to think that she only married him for the magical piano-typewriter. It was enough for her that he made it, showing her his love...*

...The piano-typewriter stayed in the sitting-room, unused-a sample of their love. The first person who dared to touch it was Maria-Louisa Korvalan-my mother and much loved writer of children's books of Portokalia. There she is now!"



Marianna looked down and saw a woman with long hair and an orange-yellow dress with letters on it. Around her ten cups of tea and coffee floated around her.

Isabella pulled out a magazine clipping and read:

*... "The writer, is a woman that words and stories live inside of her. When we met her she was wearing flowers for rings and blue heels. She said, with those heels she would travel to the clouds whenever she got bored in Portokalia. She liked to drink dream coffees with a colorful friend. They often do favors for one another. "Place me inside your book", "Stick me in one of your paintings!" They would go in fairytales together! She had a piano-typewriter where she can listen to music of her words when she writes. It's the well-known invention of Juan Ramon Louis Bertrand, her grandfather, for whom she wrote the book: Juan the Orangeade..."*

Isabella stopped reading and cried out beneath her:  
"Mom, look what is written in *Portokalian News*".

The writer turned as Isabella made the clipping into a paper plane and sent it down to her. "Are you busy? May we come?"

"Come! I am waiting for Soledad to paint together. What is your friend's name?"

"This is Marianna from Greece", Isabella said.

"Oh Greece, it is such a magical country! We had gone with your father before you were born. To the prettiest cave I have ever seen. With all those colors... Oh hello Marianna. Would you like some tangerine juice? I brought the tangerine tree from an island that starts with the letter C, four letters..."

"From Chio", Marianna said. "It has the most aromatic tangerines in the world!"

The writer, Maria-Louisa, went to the far end of the room-where they had landed-and cut some tangerines from the tree that spread its branches over the piano-type writer...Beautiful music was heard.

*"That'll be the doorbell! I'll get it", Isabella said.*

She came back holding hands with a woman that held in her other hand a basket filled with carrots, paintbrushes, a bottle of red wine, and various green salads...

*"This is Soledad", said Isabella. "I'd like you to meet Marianna from Greece".  
"Greece! Oh the blue seas, the green, the orange trees, the unbelievable light..."*

She reached inside her pocket and took out a big painting with dolphins.

*"Another of my great-great grandfather's inventions: Pockets big enough to fit paintings", whispered Isabella.*



## That's how poetry is written in Portokalia

Soledad pulled out of her pocket a painting and laid it in front of Marianna and Isabella.

*"It is a picture of me and Maria Louisa with our babies. We were sitting underneath the oak tree that is swayed by the air, in between the most fragrant flowers", she turned to Isabella "so you could learn from a young age beautiful scents".*



*"You were talking and singing..."*

*"And you fell in love with Fernando and we found you two hidden behind the bitter oranges, kissing on the mouth!"*

Isabella blushed and pulled on Marianna's hand. Marianna didn't have time to say goodbye and before she knew it they were flying up again.

*"I have had it with hearing about Fernando!"* said Isabella angrily and Marianna thought for a second that she saw smoke coming out of her ears, as they were flying with speed over a vast field with giant orange pumpkins.

*"Mr. Fernando wanted to see the world-alone. Portokalia was too plain for him. He wanted to see how other people lived in other colors. He has been away for months. And he has the nerve to send me postcards from Eggplant (he talked our ear off about its wonderful capital, Lemovidio). Letters from Greenistan and Trefoil. Carpets from White Isle, delights from Sugaria...But I never reply! When he returns I shall give everything back. Mr. Fernando never wanted us with him, you see..."*

Marianna could not get enough of the gorgeous orange landscape and listening about all those strange countries she has never seen on any map.



Isabella slowly calms down and stays silent. And then a voice stretches out along the plain. A voice that bring memories of crystal little bells, running water that glistens in the sun, the sound of snow as it hits the ground softly, the fragrance of a tangerine as it is peeled open, a tender but swift smile on a cloudy day...

Mom's favorite song: "*Underneath the orange tree, she washes the cotton...*" How strange! The song started forming into notes in the air as they were flying over a forest with carrot trees and orange trees...

...and underneath the trees, a beautiful girl was actually washing her cotton and singing...Hidden behind a carrot tree, a young man was flying around, collecting the notes with a net.

"He's our National Poet, Diego Solomon", said Isabella with pride. "He wanders everywhere, collecting music and words and turning them into lyrics".





Then, Diego Solomon turns to them smiling and starts reciting:

You washed the sheets down by the river  
Dressed in orange, you were singing a song  
About a thousand and two stars that dry on a string  
While your slender fingers spread out the sheet

*"What do you think?"*

*"Hmm...it needs a little more work, but you are off to a good start!"* said Isabella.

She had a serious and erudite look on her face as if she was herself was a big book critic. Marianna could not believe that Isabella dared to speak to the National Poet of Portokalia like that.

Diego Solomon took off, muttering to himself:

*"They spread or they held the sheet? Sheet or handkerchief, yes I shall write it like this: while your slender fingers held the handkerchief. Better!"*

He turned and waved *"Thank you, Isabella!"*

Marianna was stunned. Is that how they write poetry here?



## Autumn?

When Diego Solomon was out of sight, Isabella told her about yet another invention of her great-great grandfather's, a gift to Diego Solomon's grandfather. Pablo Solomon was the great writer of Portokalia. He used so many pseudo names that one did not know how many books he actually wrote. His inspiration was endless and he lived almost half a century writing non-stop. It has been said that if one was to collect all of his writings they would be able to make a stairway leading to the stars!

*"With my great-great grandfather's invention, Pablo sowed in the dirt capital and small letters wherever he went and from that grew book flowers, colorful ones, that would chase away the clouds and rain. In the village of Portokalia, it was shiny with blue skies and plump white clouds, whenever he would pass by.*



Even now that he's no longer with us, around his monument, which was built with a huge orange, every spring grow books with news stories that always end in Autumn. One can only read them there. If you cut a book flower, it withers immediately and the story is lost forever. Thousands of people visit it in spring and summer... perhaps the next time you will come..."

"The next time?"

"Now the leaves turn orange and brown, the wind that blows is calling you back on your own journey. But always keep Portokalia in your heart".

Marianna saw Isabella leave, disappointed... Luckily, she turned around and hugged her tight just as her eyes were about to change into the color of a clouded sky. Isabella whispered to her:

*"You will always be in our hearts. Every time you eat an orange you will think of me. And should you wish to come back one day all you have to do is squeeze a tangerine and say the magic words:*

*"orange-tangerine and a ripe lotus»*

*three times and then clap your hands..."*

*Orange leaves and music started to encircle her in a swirling vortex. Marianna could taste tangerine...swirling...her eyes were closing...*





Her eyes open when she hears her mom's voice:

*"We're here... look down!"*

Marianna was lost for a moment. Where was she? She looked down and saw a beautiful city with a river... Nothing like Portokalia.

*"Would you like some candy?"*

Lucia, the stewardess smiled at her and winked.

*"My friend Isabella's favorite! It is orange and tangerine!"*

Marianna took a candy. As the taste flowed in her mouth, she began to recover.

*"Read what is written on the wrapper", Lucia said.*

There they were! Diego Solomon's corrected lyrics:

You were washing the sheets by the river  
Dressed in orange, you sang a tune  
About a thousand and two stars that were laid out to dry on the string  
While your slim fingers were holding the handkerchief

*"Have a great time", Lucia said "You'll see that everything is as beautiful here as it is in Portokalia!"*

The plane touched the ground. A little later, her and her parents were standing in front of the orange car of her dreams. Dad rented it as a surprise for her. The next several days she would learn that she did not need to fly to live a magical and beautiful journey that is on the edge of the world...

She would return to Portokalia again to live extraordinary adventures. But that is for another time, another journey! Ours ends here!





**Kostas Stoforos** studied economics and cinema, worked for twenty years on television, making his way through all the big channels out there, until his tolerance/stamina ran out.

He worked for three years in the Institute of Adult Continuing Education and now he cooperates with the Center for European Constitutional Law (Tsatsou Institution).

He has filmed a documentary series (?) of travels around Greece and still continues to write on magazines and newspapers.

However, during these years, he has three children!

He has written a handful of books, all very different from one another. A novel, two story collections, a history book, an albumen, a fairytale, four books for the parents.

Having a hard time to believe it himself, he put to paper (or rather put to the pc) four fairytales in Colors (Red, Yellow, Orange and White) inspired by **Stephania Beldemiri's** paintings. Thousands of people have read during these past two years the fairytales in question since they have been posted on the Internet.

In 2011, autumn, they created together the "**Fairytale Kitchen**" and since they have traveled all around Greece, cooking stories along with the children. Whatever the case, they would cook their fairytales each Saturday noon at the special space called "Τέχνης Γράμματα" (Letters of Art)

On December (same year) they created the "**Magic Card Deck**" that helped them create even better stories.

As the grownups began to envy them, they created for them, with the cooperation of "Exostis" magazine, a **Calendar** of 15 months and 15 short tales.

Kostas has often talked about and engaged in dialogue with parents about matters concerning raising and providing nutrition for children.

Since this year's autumn, by combining ... "work" and entertainment (!) Kostas teaches creative writing to children and adults, but also creates fairytales as well by performing on the stage, as well as doing puppet shows while cooking along with the children..



Personal blog: <http://stoforos.blogspot.gr>





**Stephany Veldemiry** is an Archaeological Findings and Works of Art preserver and cooperates with Greek museums (Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Byzantine Museum of Thessaloniki, Institute of Archaeology, Museum of Natural history of Iraklion, The Lesvos Petrified Forest European and Global Geopark) and institutions abroad (University of Missouri St. Louis, Smithsonian Institution, American Museum of National History), concerning the preservation of archaeological findings and works of art, as well as making casts and copies of fossils along with art objects for display.



She also works as a preserver in situ during excavation periods but also in research periods by attending the "Iklaima project" program, at the prehistoric dig in Iklaima.

Since she became a mom, meaning since 2002, she wanted to find a simple and playful way to infuse her love for works of art and commonly used items of every age to children. Thus, she started working as an artist teacher to full time grade schools and teaching Art History to children through interactive activities, games, experiential exercises, audiovisual stimuli and more importantly through smiling and a cheerful but disciplined atmosphere.

During recent years she is occupied with illustrating children books and drawing and 5 individual art displays which the paintings were accompanied by Kostas Stoforos's fairytales are credited to her, while the children had an active part in the action and the development of the story.

She often receives young children to her studio where, depending on their mood they play, learning through art.

Stephany loves to be in touch with the world of children and feels happy when she is allowed in that realm. That is how she feels as an arts teacher after class: Happy.

Personal blog: <http://stefaniaveldemiri.blogspot.gr>

## Writings of Costas Stoforos

### 2013

"Dead Brother's book - 41 Letters from the Civil War Front",  
Series of colourful fairy-tales that illustrated by Stefany Veldemiry ("Tale in Red", "Tale in Yellow", "Tale in Orange", "Tale in White")

### 2012

Participation in the collective volume of the 21st Century Parent-Dilemmas and prospects, "Calendar to remember or forget". Fifteen small tales for adults accompanying tables Stephany Veldemiri

### 2011

The Magic Cards Game, based on the function of the fairy tales of Vladimir Propp and "The Grammar of Fantasy" of Gianni Rodari (Illustrated by Stefania Veldemiri),  
"Green Fairy tale", part of a project for teaching proper nutrition in children

### 2010

Book for children's nutrition titled "20 chef , 11 moms and I - 111 recipes and food ideas for kids"

### 2009

"A father's diary" - part 3: "Daddy what is sex? ... And other stories of family madness"

**2008**

"A father's diary" - part 1: "Parents for the first time",

"A father's diary" - part 2: "From the first steps up the school"

**1998**

"Imbros"

**1997**

"Fifi, Pipis or how the city turned green" (Ministry of Environment)

**1989**

"Once upon a time there was an island" (novel)

**1986**

"Hunting Area" (short stories)

**1984**

"A fragile Time" (short stories)

## Documentaries

**2003:** "Amfikaia a sustainable farm"

**2001:** Research, script and presentation of the documentaries: Chania, Rethymnon, Corfu, Arta, Preveza, Thesprotia, Evros, Rodopi, Xanthi, Thrace (all for Alter TV Channel).

Research, script and narration for the documentaries:

**1999:** Imbros

**1997-1998:** Kefalonia-Ithaca

**1997:** Monasteries of Boeotia (Prefecture of Boeotia), Greek Horses, Thrace

**1996:** Land of Boeotia and Economic Development of Boeotia (Prefecture of Boeotia)

## Associations-Clubs

- Member of the Board of Directors of the Periodical and Electronic Press Union (ESPIT)
- President of the Parents' Association 13th Kindergarten Agia Paraskevi and representative of the Union of Associations of Parents of the City
- Special Secretary of the Scientific Company for Dorian & Dryope Studies
- Former President of the Contractors Association Institute of Continuing Adult Education
- Vice President of the Progressive Association "Kastellia"
- Board Member of the Union for the development of local newspapers in Athens-Piraeus-Athens (1981-1983)
- Member of the Institute of Nutrition Studies and Research







The idea of **Saita publications** emerged in July 2012, having as a primary goal to create a web space where new authors can interact with the readers directly and free.

**Saita publications'** aim is to redefine the relationship between publisher-author-reader, by cultivating a true dialogue, and by establishing an effective communication channel for authors and readers alike. **Saita publications** stay far away from profit, exploitation and commercialisation of literary property.

The strong wind of **passion** for reading,  
the sweet breeze of **creativity**,  
the zephyr of **innovation**,  
the sirocco of **imagination**,  
the levanter of **persistence**,  
the deep power of **vision**,  
guide the **saita** of our publications.

We invite you to let books fly free!



Marianna loves orange color -and everything with orange color (oranges, carrots etc)- and with a magic turn of events she finds herself in Portokalia. A strange land where pianos write fairytales, the houses have no roofs and you may drink as much orange juice as you like. She will make a new friend and explore this new place...flying!

A tale about autumn.  
The third of a series:

**Red** for spring  
**Yellow** for summer  
**White** for winter

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