

THE GIRL WITH TWO MINDS

by Thomas Hischak

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A Comedic One Act

by Thomas Hischak

DURATION: 25 minutes.

TIME: Modern day, a Tuesday in spring.

SETTING: Anywhere in America; Beth's house (*bedroom, kitchen.*) and her high school (*hallway, classroom, cafeteria.*).

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 females, 3 males, 0-1 either)

BETH (f)A high school senior. (159 lines)

PESSIMISTIC BETH (f)Beth's pessimistic alter ego. (110 lines)

OPTIMISTIC BETH (f).....Beth's optimistic alter ego. (87 lines)

MOM (f).....Beth's middle-aged mother. (18 lines)

DAD (m).....Beth's middle-aged father. (16 lines)

BRINDA (f)Beth's younger sister. (32 lines)

ZOE (f).....Beth's best friend. (41 lines)

CARMEL (f).....Beth's worst enemy. (7 lines)

MRS. GRANT (f)A friendly English teacher. (10 lines)

EMMETT (m).....A popular high school senior. (19 lines)

NORTON (m).....A not-very-popular high school senior.
(32 lines)

ANNOUNCEMENT (m/f).....Off-stage voice or pre-recorded. (3 lines)

SET

An open stage works best since the action quickly moves from place to place. A few pieces of nondescript furniture (1 table and 5 chairs) are reused in different locations.

PROPS

- backpack (BETH)
- newspaper (DAD)
- backpack (ZOE)
- term paper (MRS. GRANT)
- opened letter (BRINDA)
- cell phone (BETH)
- cell phone (ZOE)
- cell phone (EMMETT)
- cell phone (NORTON)

NOTE: Only essential hand props (cell phones, letter, term paper, backpacks, etc.) are needed. All other props mentioned in the script (food, tableware items, etc.) can be mimed.

SOUND EFFECTS

- cell phone rings
- Buzzing sound
- school bell rings for change of classes
- students' voices in the hall
- students' voices in the cafeteria
- Students' cheering
- school announcements

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The alter egos do not have to dress like Beth or like each other. They move about the stage quite freely though never too far from Beth.

AT START: *The table and four chairs are set up on one side of the stage to represent the kitchen. On the other side is a single chair to represent BETH'S bedroom. Her backpack sits on the floor. BETH sits in the chair sleeping. OPTIMISTIC BETH and PESSIMISTIC BETH are near-by. BETH'S phone alarm goes off, she yawns, wakes up and shuts it off.*

OPTIMISTIC BETH: *(Cheerfully.)* Morning!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: *(Sour.)* Already?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: It's Tuesday!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: What's so good about that?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Well... *(Thinks.)* It's not Monday!

BETH: *(Yawns.)* Why am I so sleepy?

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Because you had a lousy night!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Wake up, Beth Bonner! You slept seven hours!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Tossing and turning!

BETH: Maybe I slept too much.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: You wish!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: It doesn't matter. Today is going to be a good day! I can feel it!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Today is going to be a rotten day. I just know it.

BETH: It's Tuesday?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Yes! The week is still fresh!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: This week will never end!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: No French lab on Tuesday!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: But you've got chemistry lab. That's worse!

BETH: If today's Tuesday... *(Thinks.)* that means prom is... a week from Friday.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: And still no date.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: There's plenty of time yet. Someone will ask you.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: This late in the game? No way!

BETH: You don't need a date to go to prom. I'll just go with my friends.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: That's right!

BETH: Zoe and Candace and Sandra and—

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Losers! Every one of them!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: They are not!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Yeah? How come none of them have a date?

BETH: We'll have fun. More fun than with some dopey boy.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: You don't fool me! What about Emmett Carr?
He's no dopey boy.

BETH: He hardly knows I exist.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: He likes you. Remember last term in American
Lit class?

BETH: He was very friendly.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: And he hasn't said two words to you since! Give
up on that dream!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Don't listen to her, Beth. She's just in a bad mood.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: I'm not! I'm just being realistic.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Pessimistic, you mean.

BETH: I don't want to think about prom. There are more important
things in life!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Such as?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Wakefield University.

BETH: I still haven't heard from them.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: The letter said by the end of the month.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: It is the end of the month!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: You'll get accepted!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: You'll end up going to puny Springfield State. I
just know it.

BETH: I was crazy to apply to Wakefield.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: You sure were!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: No, you weren't!

BETH: But I can't think about it this morning. What sweater should I
wear?

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Sure. Run away from your problems.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: How about the powder blue one your mom gave
you at Christmas?

PESSIMISTIC BETH: You look like a duck in that sweater!

BETH: I've never worn it. Except at New Year's.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: When you changed your mind and wore the
maroon sweater instead.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: You really ought to wear it.

BETH: So Mom can see me in it. (*Mimes putting the sweater on.*)

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Now you're dressing to please your mother?
Honestly!

BETH: (*Looking in the mirror.*) Not bad...

OPTIMISTIC BETH: It looks nice.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Oh, sure. If you want to look like Grandma!

MOM enters the kitchen area and calls out.

MOM: Beth! Come get some breakfast!

Mimes placing food and dishes on the table as BRINDA and DAD enter and sit at the table. DAD reads the newspaper and BRINDA plays with her food.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Breakfast! The worst meal of the day!

BETH: It's late! (*Grabs backpack.*) Coming, Mom!

BETH heads to kitchen, OPTIMISTIC BETH and PESSIMISTIC BETH follow her.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Hmmmmm. Smells like French toast!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Ugh! Smells like burnt toast!

MOM: Good morning, dear. My, that sweater looks nice on you.

BETH: You think so? Is it okay?

MOM: Very nice.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: You look like a blue marshmallow!

BRINDA: You gave it to her for Christmas and it's been five months and she's never worn it!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Thanks for pointing that out, you brat!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Say something nice, Beth.

BETH: (*To MOM.*) I guess I forgot I had it.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Say you love it!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Say you hate it!

BETH: Sorry I haven't worn it before now, Mom.

MOM: No matter. Have some French toast. (*Mimes serving her breakfast.*) Brinda, don't play with your Cheerios.

BRINDA: I hate when they get soggy!

MOM: Then have some French toast. (*Continues to serve.*)

DAD: (*Coming out from behind his newspaper.*) Beth, shouldn't you have heard from Wakefield University by now?

BETH: They said by the end of the month.

BRINDA: Isn't it the end of the month already?

BETH: Soon.

MOM: Brinda, don't put so much syrup on your French toast. It'll be soggier than the Cheerios. (*Sits at table.*)

DAD: It would be great if you went to my old alma mater.

BRINDA: What's an alma mater? I thought Beth was going to college.

DAD: It means your old school. I went to Wakefield University. Hopefully Beth will get to go there too.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: She'll get in!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: With a C in French last term? Not in a million years!

MOM: The letter ought to come any day then.

BRINDA: Why don't they just send her a text? It'll be faster.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Can't someone shut that brat up!

DAD: Some things are still done by letter, Brinda.

BETH: I gotta go. (*Gets up and gets her backpack.*) I almost missed the bus yesterday.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Yes! Let's get out of here!

MOM: Have a nice day at school.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: We will!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: We won't!

BETH: Bye!

BETH crosses to the other side of the stage with PESSIMISTIC BETH and OPTIMISTIC BETH as MOM, DAD and BRINDA exit.

BETH: Dad is sure going to be disappointed if I don't get into Wakefield.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Disappointed? He'll blow his top!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: No, he won't.

BETH: It's a good thing I applied to two other schools.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: You could have applied to ten colleges but you'll still end up at Springfield State.

ZOE enters carrying a backpack.

ZOE: Beth! Did you try to do that chemistry homework?

BETH: Zoe!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Zoe Hurst. Your best friend!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: A loser. Like all your friends.

BETH: I tried. I'm afraid I didn't get very far.

ZOE: Me neither. We have Chem Lab today. Maybe we can work on it together.

BETH: Sure.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Parasite! She wouldn't have passed World Economics last term if it wasn't for you.

SFX: Bell rings.

ZOE: Home room.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Ugh! The worst time of the day!

BETH: Come on!

Noise of students' talking and shuffling through the halls. Four chairs are set up facing the audience and BETH, ZOE, OPTIMISTIC BETH and PESSIMISTIC BETH sit. An announcement is heard.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Attention. Today's pep rally will be held inside in the gym because of the threat of rain. The rally will begin as scheduled after seventh period.

ZOE: Short classes today! I forgot!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Now you'll never have enough time to finish your chemistry lab assignment.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Zoe will help you.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Who's going to help Zoe?

ZOE: Beth, did you get a letter yet from Wakefield?

BETH: Not yet.

ZOE: I hope you get in.

BETH: Thanks. Did you decide whether or not to do early decision with Jefferson?

ZOE: Still can't decide. I gotta let them know by the first.

BETH: That's soon.

ZOE: I know.

SFX: Bells rings. ALL stand, change seats, and sit again.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: British Lit with Mrs. Grant! Your favorite class!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: The old onion! She is never satisfied.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: You like her. She's a little tough but you admire her.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: All Old Grant cares about is dead British writers!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: That's not true. Remember how helpful she was when you were having trouble with Chaucer?

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Chaucer! Ugh!

MRS. GRANT enters.

MRS. GRANT: Class, I finished grading your essays on *A Tale of Two Cities*. (*Mimes passing out papers to class.*)

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Dickens! Another British fossil!

BETH: Oh, no!

ZOE: What's the matter?

BETH: My paper on *Tale of Two Cities* is awful! I never finished the last few chapters of the novel and got the plot off the internet.

ZOE: I wrote my whole essay using the internet.

BETH: But I really like Dickens. And I was enjoying the book a lot but then there were play rehearsals and choir had an extra session and they called me in to work at A&W on the weekend—!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: But what you wrote was quite good.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Old Grant is gonna see right through you, girl!

ZOE: You know that in the end the guy gets his head cut off by the guillotine.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: I told her that!

MRS. GRANT: Beth? (*Hands BETH her paper.*)

BETH: Yes, Mrs. Grant?

MRS. GRANT: Can you see for a moment after class?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Oh, dear...

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Now you're in for it!

BETH: Sure.

MRS. GRANT: Thank you. (*Continues handing out papers.*)

ZOE: What do you think she wants?

BETH: I'm not sure but...

PESSIMISTIC BETH: In the end, Beth gets her head cut off by the guillotine!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: It'll be all right, Beth.

ZOE: What grade did you get?

BETH: B.

ZOE: Sounds good enough to me! I only got a C+.

SFX: Bells rings. ALL stand and BETH crosses over to MRS. GRANT and OPTIMISTIC BETH and PESSIMISTIC BETH follow her.

BETH: You wanted to see me, Mrs. Grant?

MRS. GRANT: Yes. It's about your essay on *A Tale of Two Cities*.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Oh, dear...

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Caught red-handed!

BETH: Yes...?

MRS. GRANT: I was disappointed in it. I was expecting so much more from you. The essay started out strong but after a point your ideas don't seem as solid. Charles Darnay's redemption, for example. Did you understand the end of the novel?

PESSIMISTIC BETH: He dies! What's to understand!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Tell her the truth.

BETH: Well...

MRS. GRANT: The fact that he faces death willingly is very important.

BETH: I guess... I didn't read that part very carefully.

MRS. GRANT: Beth, do you like Dickens?

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Yeeech!

BETH: I do! I've read *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist* and—

MRS. GRANT: How about you write an essay on one of those two novels and we'll use it to replace this one?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Yes!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: No!

BETH: I'd like to write about *Great Expectations*.

MRS. GRANT: Excellent.

An announcement is heard.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Attention. The weather seems to have cleared so the pep rally will take place outside in the stadium. Thank you.

MRS. GRANT exits and ZOE joins BETH.

ZOE: Are you in trouble?

PESSIMISTIC BETH: You wish, you loser!

BETH: Not at all.

ZOE: (*Looks off.*) Uh-oh... Look who's heading this way!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Carmel McFadden!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Your worst enemy!

BETH: Carmel?

ZOE: The one and only!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Maybe she'll just pass you by.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: No. Look at the smirk on her face!

CARMEL enters.

CARMEL: Hey, Bonner! I was looking for you.

BETH: For me?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Relax. Carmel's not that bad.

ZOE: Hi, Carmel.

CARMEL: Get lost, Hurst. I've got to talk to Beth. Alone!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: She's worse than bad!

ZOE: See you later in chemistry, Beth. (*Exits.*)

CARMEL: What's Zoe Hurst doing taking chemistry? The only chemicals she needs is some conditioner for that mop she calls hair.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: That's Carmel, all right.

BETH: What did you want to see me about, Carmel?

CARMEL: Did Emmett Carr ask you to prom?

BETH: Emmett? Ask me?

CARMEL: I know the idea is ridiculous but he hasn't asked me yet and Melissa says he wants to go with you.

BETH: Well, Melissa is quite wrong. Why, I hardly even know—!

CARMEL: That's what I told her. But I thought I'd better check to be sure.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: She's jealous of you!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Don't be silly. Emmett Carr and Beth? Impossible!

BETH: Now you know.

CARMEL: Stupid idea. Don't know why I even considered it. (*Exits.*)

OPTIMISTIC BETH: That is not a very nice girl.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: That cow raises my blood pressure!

BETH: If Carmel hasn't been asked to prom yet, maybe it's not too late for me to be asked.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Good point!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Wishful thinking. (*Looks off.*) Oh... I don't believe what I see!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: (*Looks off.*) Oh... my goodness me!

BETH: It's Emmett Carr. Is he heading toward me?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: It sure looks like it!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: It's because you're standing in front of the boys' bathroom!

EMMETT enters and goes to BETH.

EMMETT: Uh... Beth.

BETH: Yes?

EMMETT: You probably don't remember me. We were in American Lit last term—

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Say you don't know him at all. Play hard to get!

BETH: Of course I remember you, Emmett.

EMMETT: Oh.... Good.

Pause.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Say something!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: No! Make him squirm!

BETH: How are you, Emmett? Having a good semester?

EMMETT: What? Oh... sure.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Put him at ease, Beth.

BETH: Only a month till graduation.

EMMETT: I guess so.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Just what every guy wants in a girl: a walking calendar!

EMMETT: Beth, I have something to ask you but... it's kinda personal.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Personal is good!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: He's going to tell you he has to have his wisdom teeth pulled. That's personal.

EMMETT: I guess it's more of a favor than a question. I mean, it's both.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: How sweet!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Get to the point, Romeo. Any second and the bell—!

SFX: Bell rings.

SFX: Students' voices in the hall.

EMMETT: Oh! I have to get to study hall. I'll... I'll catch you later! (*Exits quickly.*)

BETH: Goodbye...

PESSIMISTIC BETH: No one has to hurry to get to study hall! What's wrong with the boy?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: He's just nervous.

BETH: I don't believe it. Emmett Carr asking me to prom?

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Don't believe it.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Believe it!

BETH: It's the first time he's spoken to me in months!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: He's shy.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: He's demented.

BETH: Yet Carmel said he hasn't asked her to prom yet.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Good point!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Like you are his second choice? There are over sixty girls in the senior class. I'd say at least fifty-nine are ahead of you!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Don't listen to her, Beth. I'll bet Emmett will try to find you at lunch.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Lunch! The worst meal of the day!

Two chairs are set up behind the table and BETH sits and is joined by ZOE. PESSIMISTIC BETH and OPTIMISTIC BETH stand nearby. BETH and ZOE mime eating lunch as the SFX: students' voices in the cafeteria.

ZOE: He must want you to go to prom with him! What else can it be?

BETH: But, Zoe, he hasn't spoken to me since forever! I don't even think he notices that I'm alive.

ZOE: Well, he noticed you today! Are you gonna eat that slice of pie?

BETH: Take it. I've no appetite.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: I'd kill for a piece of pie!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: You'd kill for a stick of gum!

ZOE: And didn't he say he'd talk to you later?

BETH: I think he was just being polite.

ZOE: Maybe he'll find you here in the cafeteria. If Emmett comes near, I'll disappear.

BETH: Not likely. He doesn't have lunch this period.

ZOE: Oh. (*Looks off.*) Oh, dear.

BETH: What is it?

ZOE: Don't look now but Norton Freed is heading this way!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Norton's sweet.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Norton's a nerd if there ever was one.

BETH: Norton? I wonder what he wants.

ZOE: If he asks you to prom, tell him you've got hepatitis!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Tell him you've got the bubonic plague!

BETH: I don't think Norton is the type that wants to go to prom.

ZOE: I'll get out of your way. Just don't get Norton talking about his idol Albert Einstein!

ZOE exits as NORTON comes to the table.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Just because Norton is smart—!

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Smart? His socks don't even match!

NORTON: Hi there, Beth.

BETH: Norton...

NORTON: How's it going?

BETH: Okay, I guess.

NORTON: That's good. Can I sit down here or is Zoe Hurst coming back?

BETH: I think she's finished her lunch.

NORTON: But she left most of her pie.

BETH: It's all right, Norton. Have a seat.

NORTON: Oh, great! (*Sits.*)

PESSIMISTIC BETH: I can't believe anyone still wears a bow tie.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: It's very becoming.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: If your over eighty!

NORTON: Remember how we were lab partners in biology sophomore year?

BETH: Of course.

NORTON: That was rather fun. I was hoping you'd take physics this term. Mr. Walden's class.

BETH: Physics? Me? I'm having enough trouble with chemistry.

NORTON: But chemistry is easy! If you ever need any help...

BETH: Is that what you came to tell me?

NORTON: In all actuality, no. You see...

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Oh... oh. Here it comes!

BETH: Yes, Norton?

NORTON: I don't mean to insult you or anything...

BETH: Insult me?

NORTON: I want to ask you to the prom which, I hazard, assumes that no one has asked you already. Here it is only twelve days to the dance and I'm sure you already have someone. Most likely, more than just one fellow has asked you. So I worry that it might be something of an insult if I ask if you are still free. You see?

OPTIMISTIC BETH: This guy is nice.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Nice... and pathetic!

BETH: Actually, Norton I—

NORTON: I understand completely. (*Rises.*) I just thought that—

BETH: But, Norton...

NORTON: (*Hopefully.*) Yes?

BETH: I haven't... quite made up my mind about prom.

NORTON: You haven't? (*Sits again.*)

BETH: No. Not yet. But I'm a little surprised that you are interested in going to prom. I didn't think something like that would interest you.

NORTON: Well... it would if you were my date.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: I told you he was sweet.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: I think I want to barf!

BETH: Norton, I don't know what to say...

NORTON: You don't have to say anything, Beth. (*Rises.*) You take your time to decide what you want to do about the prom. I can wait. Good talking with you, Beth.

BETH: Good talking with you, Norton.

SFX: Bell rings.

BETH: (*Stands.*) I'm off to chemistry.

NORTON: I meant what I said about helping you if you want. I love chemistry!

BETH: Thanks for the offer. The way things are going I just might take you up on it.

NORTON: That would be excellent! Goodbye.

NORTON exits and the table and chairs are moved and BETH and ZOE sit side by side at the table in the chemistry lab. Both look through imaginary microscopes.

ZOE: Mine is so fuzzy I can't tell what it's supposed to be.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: If it's fuzzy it must be one of your hairs.

BETH: Adjust the lens, Zoe.

ZOE: I hope you made it clear to Norton that under no circumstances would you ever consider going to prom with him.

BETH: I said I'd think about it.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Be honest, Beth.

BETH: Actually, I lied and made it seem like I had other offers and hadn't decided yet.

ZOE: And he believed you?

BETH: Of course he did. Norton is an innocent.

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Innocent and without malice.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: Without taste. Did you believe that shirt he was wearing?

ZOE: I'm afraid he'll keep pestering you. *(Looks in microscope.)*

BETH: He won't.

ZOE: Oh! My tiny thing-a-bodies are moving!

BETH: Let me see! *(Looks though ZOE'S microscope.)*

ZOE: They're either dancing or mating.

BETH: Mine aren't moving. They must be dead or something.

ZOE: What should I write down for my observation?

BETH: Just don't say they're dancing. Mrs. Ross won't find it funny.

An announcement is heard.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Attention. The pep rally has been cancelled because of a tornado watch for late this afternoon. There will be an early dismissal after seventh period. Thank you.

SFX: Students' cheering; as the kitchen table is set up and the chair is placed in BETH'S bedroom. BETH, OPTIMISTIC BETH and PESSIMISTIC BETH go to the bedroom.

PESSIMISTIC BETH: A tornado watch! What wimps people are!

OPTIMISTIC BETH: Always best to err on the side of caution.

BETH: It feels good to get out early.

BRINDA enters.

BRINDA: Beth! What are you doing home?

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