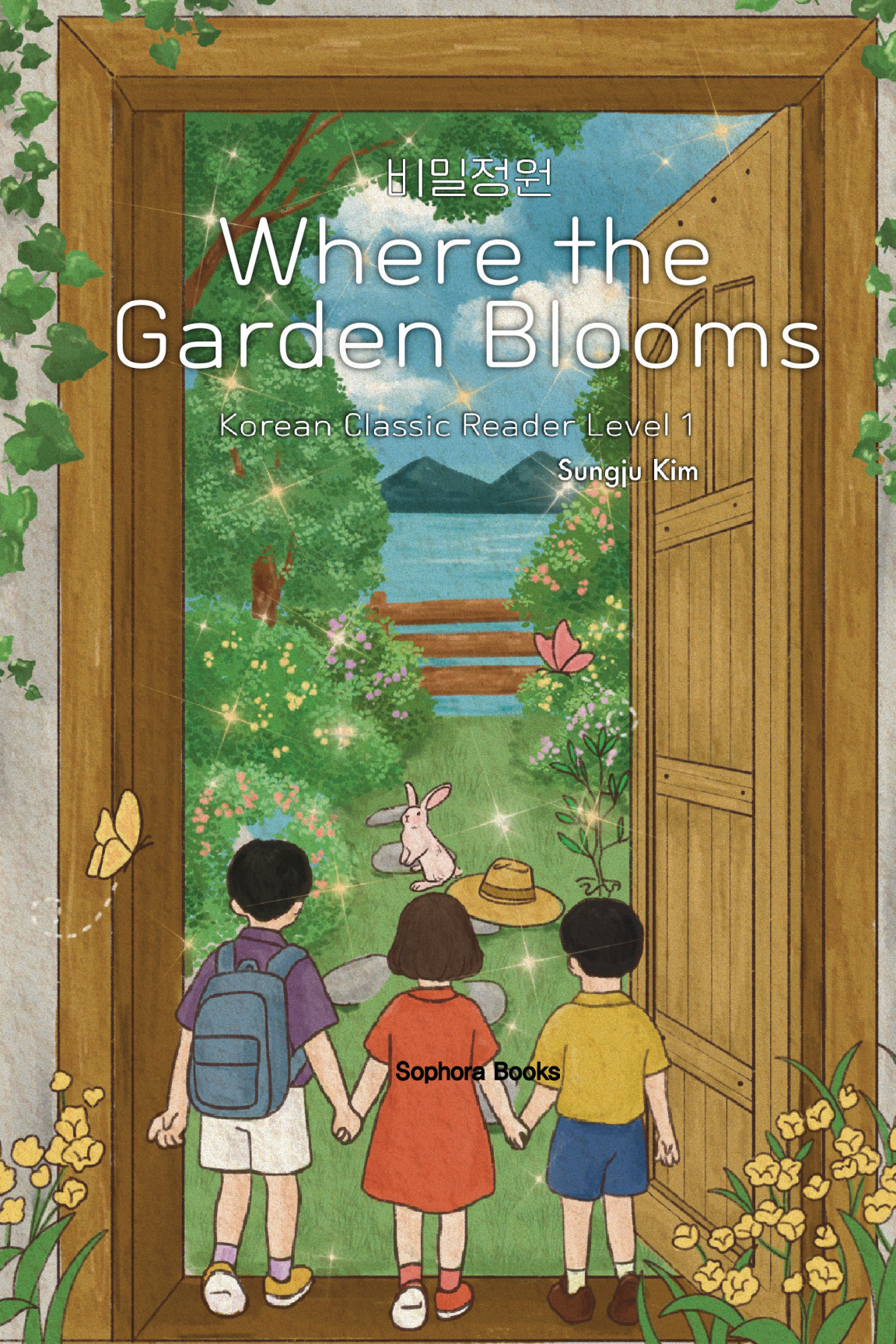

비밀정원

Where the Garden Blooms

Korean Classic Reader Level 1

Sungju Kim

Sophora Books

비밀정원 Where the Garden Blooms

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or contact us at admin@sophorabooks.com

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett was released into the public domain in the United States.

Where the Garden Blooms – Korean Classic Reader – Level 1 – Korean Edition
Revised and Expanded Edition
Original story – Loosely based on The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Written by Sung-ju Kim

First edition published May 2025 · 104 pages
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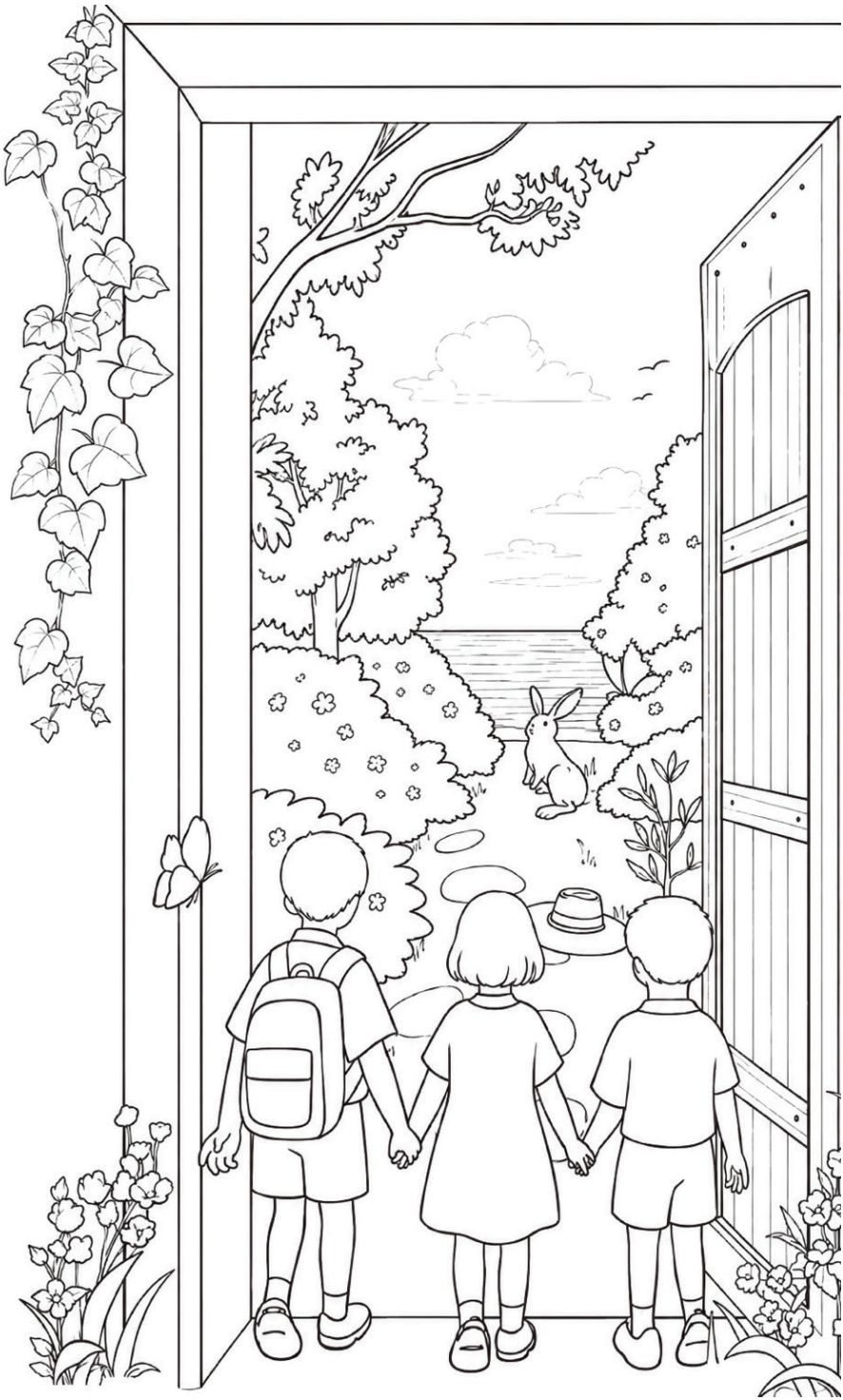

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Connecting you to your target language through stories

제1부

◎

ABOUT THIS BOOK
General information about this series

Introduction

A Korean Graded Reader
Published by Sophora Books

Welcome back to the Korean Classic Reader series – where language learning meets heartfelt storytelling.

In this volume, we invite you into **비밀정원 (Where the Garden Blooms)**, a gentle reimagining of The Secret Garden, now set in **early 1980s Korea.**

The story follows Sujin, a quiet girl who moves to Geoje Island after the loss of her family. There, she discovers a hidden garden and two new friends. Through shared moments in this secret place, their lives slowly begin to change – just as the seasons shift and the garden comes to life.
As always, this reader is specially designed for Korean learners:

- Uses essential vocabulary based on TOPIK I level
- Repeats key expressions naturally within the story
- Features short, simple chapters for steady progress
- Includes a helpful appendix of key words to support your reading

We hope this story not only strengthens your Korean reading skills, but also offers a quiet space to feel, imagine, and grow.

Written and adapted by Sung-Ju Kim
Edited and curated by the Sophora Books Korean Language Team

Thank you for reading with us.
Enjoy the journey – one word, one page, one garden at a time.

Adaptation Notes

This story is a gentle Korean adaptation inspired by The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett. While not a direct translation, it reimagines the heart of the original – emotional healing, inner growth, and the quiet transformation that comes from friendship and nature.

Set in early 1980s Korea, the story follows Sujin, a reserved girl who moves to Geoje Island after losing her family. There, she meets Jimin, a quiet boy with his own unspoken sadness, and Minjae, whose warmth brings light to their lives. Together, they discover a forgotten garden – and through it, a way to reconnect with themselves and with each other.

In this retelling, we've adapted the original themes to reflect Korean culture, landscapes, and emotions, offering learners a story that feels both deeply local and universally human. The rhythms of island life, traditional family dynamics, and the significance of seasons in Korean life all add layers of meaning to the story.

This book is part of the Korean Classic Reader series, designed for low-intermediate learners of Korean (Level 1).

- The vocabulary is carefully selected from the TOPIK I level
- Key expressions are naturally repeated for ease of learning
- Each chapter is short and approachable
- A glossary of essential words is included at the end to support your reading

Whether you've read the original or are discovering this story for the first time, we hope this Korean retelling offers you both a language learning experience and a moment of quiet reflection – like stepping into a hidden garden.

Who is Sophora Books?

Sophora Books is named after the *Sophora japonica*, also known as the Scholar Tree - a symbol of wisdom and learning in Korea since the Joseon Dynasty.

One day, while walking through a university campus, our founder noticed a particular tree among many others. Its wide, sprawling branches and small, vibrant green leaves exuded a natural elegance. Standing under its shade, she whispered aloud,

"It's so elegant, so beautiful."

The label on the tree read: Sophora japonica - the Scholar Tree.

The Scholar Tree holds deep cultural significance in Korea. During the Joseon Dynasty, it was traditionally planted in schools and academies, symbolizing knowledge and intellectual growth.

At Sophora Books, we believe books are seeds of knowledge - planted with care, nurtured with intention, and destined to grow in the hearts of readers. Just as the Scholar Tree spreads its roots and branches far and wide, we hope our books spread curiosity, wisdom, and a love of learning around the world.

Every book we publish is a seed. Every reader is a garden.

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Characters

Mary Lennox → 이수진 [Lee Su-jin]

A quiet and withdrawn girl who moves to Geoje Island after the sudden loss of her family. She slowly opens up as she discovers a hidden garden and forms new friendships.

Colin Craven → 김지민 [Kim Ji-min]

A reserved boy living with his grandfather. He has been physically and emotionally closed off from the world, but begins to change through his connection with Sujin and the garden.

Dickon → 신민재 [Shin Min-jae]

A warm-hearted and curious boy who helps Sujin and Jimin discover the joys of nature. He brings energy and kindness into their lives.

Locations

Geoje-do (거제도)

Where is Geoje-do?

Geoje-do (Geoje Island) is located off the southern coast of South Korea, in **Gyeongsangnam-do Province**, near the port city of Busan.

It's South Korea's **second largest island**, connected to the mainland by the **Geoje Bridge**.

Geoje-do: Nature and Atmosphere

Geoje Island is known for its mild oceanic climate, scenic coastline, and lush green mountains.

It's home to hidden gardens, quiet villages, and traditional Korean homes, making it the perfect backdrop for a story about healing and emotional transformation.

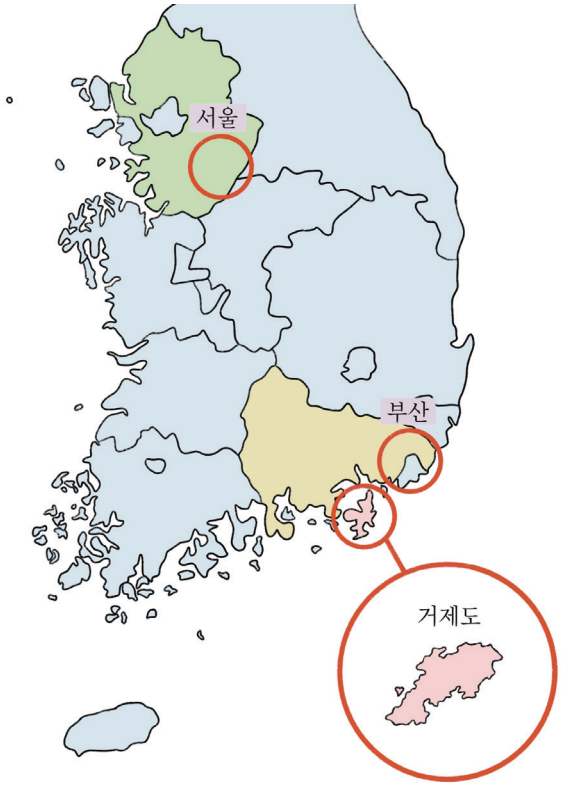
In Where the Garden Blooms

The story unfolds in this tranquil island setting, where Sujin finds not only a secret garden but also a space for quiet growth and healing.

Locations

Geoje-do (거제도)

Here's where it is on the map:



Before You Read

비밀정원 (Where the Garden Blooms) is a gentle story about loss, friendship, and healing, set on Geoje Island in the early 1980s. Before you begin, take a moment with the ideas and words below. You do not need to answer perfectly – just start thinking in Korean.

The heart of the story

- A girl named Sujin loses her parents and moves to a quiet island to live with a family she barely knows.
- Behind the house is a locked door – and a garden that no one visits anymore.
- As the garden slowly comes back to life, so do the people who care for it.

Think about this first

Answer in Korean or English – a single word or short sentence is enough.

1. Have you ever moved to a new place? How did you feel on the first day?

_____

2. What helps you feel better when you are sad?

_____

3. The title says a garden "blooms." What do you think will change in this story?

_____

Before You Read

Words to watch for

These words come back again and again. Learn them now and the story will feel easier.

Korean	Meaning
정원	garden
비밀	secret
슬픔 / 슬프다	sadness / to be sad
희망	hope
할아버지 · 할머니	grandfather · grandmother
씨앗 → 새싹 → 꽃	seed → sprout → flower
기억하다	to remember
다시 피다	to bloom again

As you read, notice how the garden and Sujin's heart change together. That is the real secret of this book.

Connecting you to your target language through stories

제2부

◎

비밀정원

. 1 .

이수진, 거제도로 오다

Track 1
▼

마음이 텅 빈 것 같았다.

수진은 서울에 살았다. 엄마와 아빠와 함께 살았다. 평범한 생활이었다.

어느 날, 사고가 났다. 엄마와 아빠가 돌아가셨다.[1]

수진은 매일 울었다. 밤에도 울었다. 수진은 슬펐다.

마음이 텅 빈[2] 것 같았다.

'이제 어디로 가야 하지?'

1 돌아가시다 v. pass away

2 텅 빈 adj. empty, hollow

수진은 생각했다. 그때, 지민이의 할아버지에게 전화가 왔다.

"우리 집으로 오너라."

할아버지는 따뜻하게[3] 말했다. 수진은 마음속으로 생각했다.

'이제 괜찮을 거야.'

작은 희망[4]이 생겼다.

**

거제도는 서울과 달랐다. 바다가 가까웠다. 조용했다. 사람들은 천천히 걸었다. 시간도 느리게 흐르는 것 같았다. 비가 오는 날이었다. 수진은 큰 가방 하나를 들고 버스를 탔다.

3 따뜻하게 adv. warmly, kindly

4 희망 n. hope

창밖에 산이 보였다. 바다가 보였다. 풍경[5]은 예뻤다.

하지만 수진의 마음은 무거웠다[6]. 버스가 멈췄다. 정류장[7]에 도착했다. 지민과 할아버지가 기다리고 있었다.

할아버지는 모자를 쓰고 있었다. 세 사람은 말이 없었다.

"어서 오너라."

할아버지가 말했다.

"안녕하세요."

수진이 인사했다.

"안녕."

지민이 작게 말했다.

"안녕."

---

5 풍경 n. scenery, landscape

6 무겁다 adj. heavy (emotionally)

7 정류장 n. bus stop

수진도 대답했다.

할아버지 집은 오래되었다.

지붕이 낮았다. 마당이 넓었다. 나무가 있었다.

바람이 불었다. 나무 소리가 들렸다. 수진의 방은 작았다. 하지만 따뜻했다.[8] 책상과 창문이 있었다. 작은 침대도 있었다.

수진은 가방을 내려놓았다.

'이제 이 집에서 사는구나.'

수진은 생각했다.

'엄마, 아빠, 잘 지내세요…….'

창밖에서 비가 떨어졌다. 수진은 천천히 눈을 감았다.

새로운 시작이었다.

8 따뜻하다 adj. warm

Further Materials and Other Books

Audiobook

"Scan this QR code to instantly access all Audio tracks."

This graded reader comes with an audiobook to help you practice your speaking and listening skills. Hearing the language will help you become more familiar with intonation, sentence rhythm, and natural pronunciation — essential for understanding Korean in context. This will also support your comprehension when watching or listening to Korean content.

The audiobook is available as a digital download on the Sophora Books website.

https://sophorabooks.com

You can also explore our other books by visiting the website.

Continue with Korean Mate

Reading and listening build your understanding.
Speaking makes it yours.

Korean Mate is our story-based learning platform, where you can read Korean with intonation guides, arrange sentences to test what you know, and record yourself speaking — one story at a time.

https://koreanmate.net

Sophora Books

You've just finished reading a Korean Classic Reader by Sophora Books.

Well done — that was no small thing, and we hope you're proud of yourself.

At Sophora Books, we believe that language learning should be joyful, meaningful, and rooted in stories that stay with you.

We hope this story has not only helped you grow your Korean reading skills, but also given you something to feel, reflect on, and carry with you.

There are many more stories waiting for you.

Let's keep reading, together.

Find us at

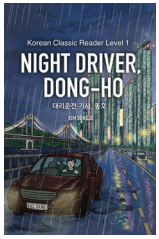
https://sophorabooks.com

Also in the Korean Classic Reader Series

More stories. More Korean. More Sophora Books.

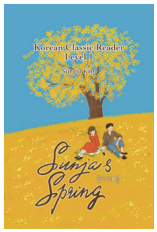
Korean Classics, Retold

The short stories Koreans grow up reading — moved into a Korea you would recognize today.



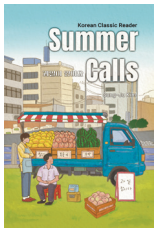
대리운전 기사, 동호 *Night Driver, Dong-ho*

One rainy night in Busan, a substitute driver picks up a passenger who changes everything. Based on 운수 좋은 날, one of the most beloved short stories in Korean literature. (Level 1)



순자의 봄 *Sun-ja's Spring*

After a spring of quarrels with the landlord's daughter, a quiet farm boy in a Jirisan village finally understands what she has been trying to tell him all along. Based on 동백꽃 (Camellias) by Kim Yu-jeong. (Level 1)



과일이 왔어요 *Summer Calls*

Loosely based on When Buckwheat Flowers Bloom by Yi Hyo-seok, this is the story of Cheor-i and a quiet fruit-truck driver. One summer in 1997 Jinju, a memory kept for twenty-three years slowly rises to the surface. (Level 1)

World Classics, Set in Korea

Stories you already know, replanted in Korean soil — Gatsby in Seoul, Jane Eyre in Busan. Knowing where the story goes leaves you free to notice the Korean.

김장미를 찾아서
Looking for Kim Jang-mi

Inspired by The Great Gatsby. A successful man looks back on a lost love in a story of longing and illusion. (Level 1)

비밀정원 ***Where the Garden Blooms***

Inspired by The Secret Garden. On a quiet Korean island, Sujin finds healing through friendship and a hidden garden. (Level 1)

봄은 다시, 여름으로 첫 번째 이야기
Spring Again, and Summer Part One

Inspired by Jane Austen. Seo-ha navigates friendship, first love,and the moments that change everything. (Level 1)

봄은 다시, 여름으로 두 번째 이야기
Spring Again, and Summer Part Two

The story continues with a time-travel twist as Seo-ha learns to take control of her own destiny. (Level 1)

어둠이 깊어질수록 별은 더욱 빛난다
The Deeper the Darkness, the Brighter the Stars Shine

Inspired by Jane Eyre. Set in modern Busan, young and determined Ji-su carves out her own path. (Level 1)

Connecting you to your target language through stories

비밀정원 | Where the Garden Blooms
Korean Classic Reader · Level 1 · 개정증보판

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