

analysis of love after love

An Analysis of Derek Walcott's "Love After Love": A Journey of Self-Discovery

Introduction:

Have you ever felt lost, adrift in a sea of self-doubt and past hurts? Derek Walcott's poignant poem, "Love After Love," offers a profound exploration of self-acceptance and the transformative power of rediscovering oneself after a period of emotional turmoil. This in-depth analysis delves into the poem's intricate layers, exploring its themes of forgiveness, self-love, and the ultimate journey back to oneself. We'll examine the poem's structure, imagery, and symbolism to uncover the rich tapestry of meaning woven within its seemingly simple lines. Prepare to embark on a journey of self-reflection as we unravel the complexities of "Love After Love."

I. The Structure: A Path to Self-Acceptance

Walcott masterfully employs a deceptively simple structure. The poem's fourteen lines are divided into two distinct parts. The first stanza, focusing on the pain of loss and the lingering shadow of a past relationship, acts as a prelude to the transformative journey. The imagery is dark and suggestive of isolation: "the long nights of rain." This section establishes the emotional landscape before the shift towards self-discovery. The second stanza, however, marks a turning point. The tone shifts from despair to hope, with the repetitive "give" and "yourself" acting as mantras of self-acceptance. This structural shift mirrors the poem's thematic progression from despair to self-love. The repetition of "yourself" emphasizes the ultimate destination of the journey: a profound understanding and acceptance of the self.

II. Imagery and Symbolism: Mirrors and Reflections

Walcott uses potent imagery to convey the poem's central themes. The repeated image of "the mirror" is crucial. It's not just a physical object; it symbolizes self-reflection, the process of confronting one's past and present self. Looking at oneself in the mirror is an act of confronting the truth, both the painful and the beautiful. The act of seeing your own face, after a period of emotional turmoil, represents a significant step towards healing. Similarly, the "long nights of rain" symbolize the period of grief and emotional turmoil, washing away the old to make way for the new. The "table set" represents preparation; the readiness for a future that includes oneself. This subtle but powerful imagery effectively captures the emotional journey of the speaker.

III. Themes: Forgiveness, Self-Love, and the Power of Letting Go

The central theme of "Love After Love" is self-love. But it's not a self-love that emerges from narcissism, but rather from a hard-won acceptance of oneself, warts and all. The poem suggests that true self-love comes only after navigating the complexities of past relationships and letting go of the hurt and resentment. Forgiveness, both of oneself and of others, becomes essential for this journey of self-acceptance. The poem doesn't shy away from the pain of the past; instead, it acknowledges the pain as a necessary step towards growth. Letting go of the past, symbolized by the act of "giving yourself" in the second stanza, is the key to embracing the present and building a future filled with self-compassion. The poem suggests that only through this process of emotional release can one truly rediscover and love themselves.

IV. The Significance of the Poem's Finality:

The concluding lines of the poem are particularly impactful: "sit down. There's no other way. Love after love." The simplicity of these lines reinforces the poem's message. It emphasizes the inevitability of self-love as the ultimate destination of this emotional journey. The instruction to "sit down" suggests a quiet acceptance, a stillness that allows for self-reflection and self-compassion. The poem doesn't promise easy answers; rather, it proposes the necessity of quiet self-acceptance as the path to lasting peace. The repetition of "love after love" suggests a cyclical nature of love; a continual process of self-discovery and self-acceptance.

V. Interpretative Ambiguity: Open to Personal Reflections

While this analysis provides a framework for understanding "Love After Love," the poem's beauty lies in its ambiguity. Its open-endedness allows for multiple interpretations and personal connections. The poem's power stems from its capacity to resonate with readers on a deeply personal level, regardless of their specific experiences. Each reader brings their own history and emotional landscape to the poem, creating a unique and meaningful interpretation. The lack of explicit details in the poem empowers the reader to connect their own experiences to its message. This open-endedness is a significant aspect of the poem's lasting appeal.

Outline of a Detailed Analysis:

Name: A Comprehensive Exploration of Derek Walcott's "Love After Love"

Contents:

Introduction: Brief overview of the poem and its themes.

Chapter 1: Structural Analysis: Examination of the poem's two stanzas and their significance.

Chapter 2: Imagery and Symbolism: Deep dive into the metaphorical meaning of key images (mirror, rain, table).

Chapter 3: Thematic Exploration: Detailed analysis of themes like forgiveness, self-love, and letting go.

Chapter 4: Literary Devices: Analysis of repetition, rhythm, and tone in contributing to the poem's effect.

Chapter 5: Contextual Background: Brief discussion of Walcott's life and influences on the poem.

Chapter 6: Interpretative Perspectives: Examining different readings and interpretations of the poem.

Chapter 7: Critical Reception: Overview of scholarly and critical responses to the poem.

Conclusion: Summarizing key insights and the poem's lasting impact.

(The following sections would expand on each chapter point outlined above, providing a detailed analysis based on the information provided in the initial sections of this article.)

FAQs:

1. What is the main theme of "Love After Love"? The central theme is self-love, achieved through forgiveness, letting go of past hurts, and self-acceptance.
1. What is the significance of the mirror in the poem? The mirror symbolizes self-reflection and the process of confronting one's past and present self.
1. How does the poem's structure contribute to its meaning? The two-stanza structure mirrors the journey from despair to self-acceptance.
1. What is the meaning of "give yourself"? It signifies the act of letting go of past hurts and embracing self-acceptance.
1. What is the poem's overall tone? The tone shifts from despair and isolation to hope and self-acceptance.
1. Who is the intended audience of the poem? The poem's universality makes it relevant to anyone who has experienced emotional pain and loss.

1. What literary devices does Walcott use? He employs repetition, simple language, and impactful imagery.

1. How does "Love After Love" relate to Walcott's other works? The themes of self-discovery and resilience are consistent throughout his work.

1. What is the significance of the final lines of the poem? They emphasize the inevitability and necessity of self-love as the ultimate resolution.

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analysis of love after love: Sea Grapes Derek Walcott, 2014-09-09 Derek Walcott was aptly described by Laurence Liberman in *The Yale Review* as one of the handful of brilliant historic mythologists of our day. *Sea Grapes* deepens with this major poet’s search for true images of the post-Adamic new world—especially those of his native Caribbean culture. Walcott’s rich and vital naming of the forms of island life is complemented by poems set in America and England, by inward-turning meditations, and by invocations of other poets—Osip Mandelstam, Walt Whitman, Frank O’Hara, James Wright, and Pablo Neruda. On the publication of *Selected Poems* in 1963, Robert Graves wrote, Derek Walcott handles English with a closer understanding of its inner magic than most (if not any) of his English-born contemporaries. This collection of new poems in every way confirms Walcott’s mastery. He is also the author of *The Gulf*, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* and *Other Plays*, and *Another Life*.

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thirty-something Bea, an immigrant in Boston, and ten-year-old Tina in Trinidad - as they separately navigate devastating losses, illness and betrayal in their quest to belong. Moving back and forth from the present to the past through flashbacks, this is the powerful story of how these women unearth family secrets that go beyond anything they could have imagined. Then unexpectedly their lives collide, and they are offered the chance to create a home. But can this gamble survive one last surprise about Tina's real identity?

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analysis of love after love: Postcolonial Love Poem Natalie Diaz, 2020-03-03 WINNER OF THE 2021 PULITZER PRIZE IN POETRY FINALIST FOR THE 2020 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FOR POETRY Natalie Diaz's highly anticipated follow-up to *When My Brother Was an Aztec*, winner of an American Book Award *Postcolonial Love Poem* is an anthem of desire against erasure. Natalie Diaz's brilliant second collection demands that every body carried in its pages—bodies of language, land, rivers, suffering brothers, enemies, and lovers—be touched and held as beloveds. Through these poems, the wounds inflicted by America onto an indigenous people are allowed to bloom pleasure and tenderness: "Let me call my anxiety, desire, then. / Let me call it, a garden." In this new lyrical landscape, the bodies of indigenous, Latinx, black, and brown women are simultaneously the body politic and the body ecstatic. In claiming this autonomy of desire, language is pushed to its dark edges, the astonishing dunefields and forests where pleasure and love are both grief and joy, violence and sensuality. Diaz defies the conditions from which she writes, a nation whose creation predicated the diminishment and ultimate erasure of bodies like hers and the people she loves: "I am doing my best to not become a museum / of myself. I am doing my best to breathe in and out. // I am begging: Let me be lonely but not invisible." *Postcolonial Love Poem* unravels notions of American goodness and creates something more powerful than hope—in it, a future is built, future being a matrix of the choices we make now, and in these poems, Diaz chooses love.

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York Times-bestselling novel-in-verse by an award-winning slam poet, about an Afro-Latina heroine who tells her story with blazing words and powerful truth. Xiomara Batista feels unheard and unable to hide in her Harlem neighborhood. Ever since her body grew into curves, she has learned to let her fists and her fierceness do the talking. But Xiomara has plenty she wants to say, and she pours all her frustration and passion onto the pages of a leather notebook, reciting the words to herself like prayers—especially after she catches feelings for a boy in her bio class named Aman, who her family can never know about. With Mami’s determination to force her daughter to obey the laws of the church, Xiomara understands that her thoughts are best kept to herself. So when she is invited to join her school’s slam poetry club, she doesn’t know how she could ever attend without her mami finding out. But she still can’t stop thinking about performing her poems. Because in the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent. “Crackles with energy and snaps with authenticity and voice.” —Justina Ireland, author of *Dread Nation* “An incredibly potent debut.” —Jason Reynolds, author of the National Book Award Finalist *Ghost* “Acevedo has amplified the voices of girls en el barrio who are equal parts goddess, saint, warrior, and hero.” —Ibi Zoboi, author of *American Street* This young adult novel, a selection of the Schomburg Center's Black Liberation Reading List, is an excellent choice for accelerated tween readers in grades 6 to 8. Plus don't miss Elizabeth Acevedo's *With the Fire on High* and *Clap When You Land*!

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analysis of love after love: *The Love Hypothesis* Ali Hazelwood, 2021-09-14 The Instant New York Times Bestseller and TikTok Sensation! As seen on THE VIEW! A BuzzFeed Best Summer Read of 2021 When a fake relationship between scientists meets the irresistible force of attraction, it throws one woman’s carefully calculated theories on love into chaos. As a third-year Ph.D. candidate, Olive Smith doesn’t believe in lasting romantic relationships—but her best friend does, and that’s what got her into this situation. Convincing Anh that Olive is dating and well on her way to a happily ever after was always going to take more than hand-wavy Jedi mind tricks: Scientists require proof. So, like any self-respecting biologist, Olive panics and kisses the first man she sees. That man is none other than Adam Carlsen, a young hotshot professor—and well-known ass. Which is why Olive is positively floored when Stanford’s reigning lab tyrant agrees to keep her charade a secret and be her fake boyfriend. But when a big science conference goes haywire, putting Olive’s career on the Bunsen burner, Adam surprises her again with his unyielding support and even more unyielding...six-pack abs. Suddenly their little experiment feels dangerously close to combustion. And Olive discovers that the only thing more complicated than a hypothesis on love is putting her own heart under the microscope.

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analysis of love after love: *And Still I Rise* Maya Angelou, 2011-08-17 Maya Angelou's unforgettable collection of poetry lends its name to the documentary film about her life, *And Still I Rise*, as seen on PBS's *American Masters*. Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size But when I start to tell them, They think I'm telling lies. I say, It's in the reach of my arms, The span of my hips, The stride of my step, The curl of my lips. I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, That's me. Thus begins "Phenomenal Woman," just one of the beloved poems collected here in Maya Angelou's third book of verse. These poems are powerful, distinctive, and fresh—and, as always, full of the lifting rhythms of love and remembering. *And Still I Rise* is written from the heart, a celebration of life as only Maya Angelou has discovered it. "It is true poetry she is writing," M.F.K. Fisher has observed, "not just rhythm, the beat, rhymes. I find it very moving and at times beautiful. It has an innate purity about it, unquenchable dignity. . . . It is astounding, flabbergasting, to recognize it, in all the words I read every day and night . . . it gives me heart, to hear so clearly the caged bird singing and to understand her notes."

analysis of love after love: The Fortunate Traveller Derek Walcott, 2014-09-09 Derek Walcott was one of the most accomplished and resourceful poets who wrote in English, winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992. The volume of his work in *The Fortunate Traveller*, which contains such poems as *Olde New England* and *Piano Practice*, cements his reputation as a poet who handles English with a closer understanding of its inner magic than most, if not any, of his contemporaries - Robert Graves

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analysis of love after love: Frankly in Love David Yoon, 2020-09-01 An Instant New York Times Bestseller and #1 Indie Bestseller! A William C. Morris YA Debut Award Finalist An Asian Pacific American Librarians Association Honor Book Two friends. One fake dating scheme. What could possibly go wrong? Frank Li has two names. There's Frank Li, his American name. Then there's Sung-Min Li, his Korean name. No one uses his Korean name, not even his parents. Frank barely speaks any Korean. He was born and raised in Southern California. Even so, his parents still expect him to end up with a nice Korean girl--which is a problem, since Frank is finally dating the girl of his dreams: Brit Means. Brit, who is funny and nerdy just like him. Brit, who makes him laugh like no one else. Brit . . . who is white. As Frank falls in love for the very first time, he's forced to confront the fact that while his parents sacrificed everything to raise him in the land of opportunity, their traditional expectations don't leave a lot of room for him to be a regular American teen. Desperate to be with Brit without his parents finding out, Frank turns to family friend Joy Song, who is in a similar bind. Together, they come up with a plan to help each other and keep their parents off their backs. Frank thinks he's found the solution to all his problems, but when life throws him a curveball, he's left wondering whether he ever really knew anything about love—or himself—at all. In this moving debut novel—featuring striking blue stained edges and beautiful original endpaper art

by the author—David Yoon takes on the question of who am I? with a result that is humorous, heartfelt, and ultimately unforgettable.

analysis of love after love: In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss Amy Bloom, 2022-03-10 In January 2020, Amy Bloom travelled with her husband Brian to Switzerland, where he was helped by Dignitas to end his life while Amy sat with him and held his hand. Brian was terminally ill and for the last year of his life Amy had struggled to find a way to support his wish to take control of his death, to not submerge 'into the darkness of an expiring existence'. Written with piercing insight and wit, *In Love* is Bloom's intimate, authentic and startling account of losing Brian, first slowly to the disease of Alzheimer's, and then on becoming a widow. It charts the anxiety and pain of the process that led them to Dignitas, while never avoiding the complex ethical problems that are raised by assisted death. A poignant love letter to Bloom's husband and a passionate outpouring of grief, *In Love* reaffirms the power and value of human relationships.

analysis of love after love: When I Loved Myself Enough Kim McMillen, Alison McMillen, 2001-11-10 *When I Loved Myself Enough* began as one woman's gift to the world, hand-made by Kim McMillen. Book by book, reader by reader, *When I Loved Myself Enough* was passed along from friend to friend, shared by parents with their children, and given as a gift at special occasions. As word spread, it's heartfelt honesty and universal truths won it a growing following. It brings to life simple, profound, and undeniable truths: our time on earth is limited, we are never alone, and loving others always begins with loving ourselves. The best way to experience the peace and quiet joy of *When I Loved Myself Enough* is to: *Read the book in order from page to page *Read to the very end You will see the simple, illuminating power of this special book.

analysis of love after love: Love That Dog Sharon Creech, 2002-01-01 This is an utterly original and completely beguiling prose novel about a boy who has to write a poem, and then another, and then even more. Soon the little boy is writing about all sorts of things he has not really come to terms with, and astounding things start to happen.

analysis of love after love: A Red, Red Rose Robert Burns, 2001

analysis of love after love: Nora Webster Colm Toibin, 2014-10-07 From one of contemporary literature's bestselling, critically acclaimed, and beloved authors: a "luminous" novel (Jennifer Egan, *The New York Times Book Review*) about a fiercely compelling young widow navigating grief, fear, and longing, and finding her own voice—"heartrendingly transcendent" (*The New York Times*, Janet Maslin). Set in Wexford, Ireland, Colm Tóibín's magnificent seventh novel introduces the formidable, memorable, and deeply moving Nora Webster. Widowed at forty, with four children and not enough money, Nora has lost the love of her life, Maurice, the man who rescued her from the stifling world to which she was born. And now she fears she may be sucked back into it. Wounded, selfish, strong-willed, clinging to secrecy in a tiny community where everyone knows your business, Nora is drowning in her own sorrow and blind to the suffering of her young sons, who have lost their father. Yet she has moments of stunning insight and empathy, and when she begins to sing again, after decades, she finds solace, engagement, a haven—herself. *Nora Webster* "may actually be a perfect work of fiction" (*Los Angeles Times*), by a "beautiful and daring" writer (*The New York Times Book Review*) at the zenith of his career, able to "sneak up on readers and capture their imaginations" (*USA TODAY*). "Miraculous...Tóibín portrays Nora with tremendous sympathy and understanding" (Ron Charles, *The Washington Post*).

analysis of love after love: Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays Derek Walcott, 2014-09-09 On a Caribbean island, the morning after a full moon, Felix Hobain tears through the market in a drunken rage. Taken away to sober up in jail, all that night he is gripped by hallucinations: the impoverished hermit believes he has become a healer, walking from village to village, tending to the sick, waiting for a sign from God. In this dream, his one companion, Moustique, wants to exploit his power. Moustique decides to impersonate a prophet himself, ignoring a coffin-maker who warns him he will die and enraging the people of the island. Hobain, half-awake in his desolate jail cell, terrorized by the specter of his friend's corruption, clings to his visionary quest. He will try to transform himself; to heal Moustique, his jailer, and his jail-mates; and

to be a leader for his people. *Dream on Monkey Mountain* was awarded the 1971 Obie Award for a Distinguished Foreign Play when it was first presented in New York, and Edith Oliver, writing in *The New Yorker*, called it a masterpiece. Three of Derek's Walcott's most popular short plays are also included in this volume: *Ti-Jean and His Brothers*; *Malcochon, or The Six in the Rain*; and *The Sea at Dauphin*. In an expansive introductory essay, *What the Twilight Says*, the playwright explains his founding of the seminal dramatic company where these works were first performed, the Trinidad Theatre Workshop. First published in 1970, *Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays* is an essential part of Walcott's vast and important body of work.

analysis of love after love: *The Course of Love* Alain de Botton, 2016-06-14 "An engrossing tale [that] provides plenty of food for thought" (People, Best New Books pick), this playful, wise, and profoundly moving second novel from the internationally bestselling author of *How Proust Can Change Your Life* tracks the beautifully complicated arc of a romantic partnership. We all know the headiness and excitement of the early days of love. But what comes after? In Edinburgh, a couple, Rabih and Kirsten, fall in love. They get married, they have children—but no long-term relationship is as simple as "happily ever after." *The Course of Love* explores what happens after the birth of love, what it takes to maintain, and what happens to our original ideals under the pressures of an average existence. We see, along with Rabih and Kirsten, the first flush of infatuation, the effortlessness of falling into romantic love, and the course of life thereafter. Interwoven with their story and its challenges is an overlay of philosophy—an annotation and a guide to what we are reading. As *The New York Times* says, "The Course of Love is a return to the form that made Mr. de Botton's name in the mid-1990s....love is the subject best suited to his obsessive aphorizing, and in this novel he again shows off his ability to pin our hopes, methods, and insecurities to the page." This is a Romantic novel in the true sense, one interested in exploring how love can survive and thrive in the long term. The result is a sensory experience—fictional, philosophical, psychological—that urges us to identify deeply with these characters and to reflect on his and her own experiences in love. Fresh, visceral, and utterly compelling, *The Course of Love* is a provocative and life-affirming novel for everyone who believes in love. "There's no writer alive like de Botton, and his latest ambitious undertaking is as enlightening and humanizing as his previous works" (Chicago Tribune).

analysis of love after love: *How to Fall in Love with Anyone* Mandy Len Catron, 2017-06-27 "A beautifully written and well-researched cultural criticism as well as an honest memoir" (Los Angeles Review of Books) from the author of the popular *New York Times* essay, "To Fall in Love with Anyone, Do This," explores the romantic myths we create and explains how they limit our ability to achieve and sustain intimacy. What really makes love last? Does love ever work the way we say it does in movies and books and Facebook posts? Or does obsessing over those love stories hurt our real-life relationships? When her parents divorced after a twenty-eight year marriage and her own ten-year relationship ended, those were the questions that Mandy Len Catron wanted to answer. In a series of candid, vulnerable, and wise essays that takes a closer look at what it means to love someone, be loved, and how we present our love to the world, "Catron melds science and emotion beautifully into a thoughtful and thought-provoking meditation" (Bookpage). She delves back to 1944, when her grandparents met in a coal mining town in Appalachia, to her own dating life as a professor in Vancouver. She uses biologists' research into dopamine triggers to ask whether the need to love is an innate human drive. She uses literary theory to show why we prefer certain kinds of love stories. She urges us to question the unwritten scripts we follow in relationships and looks into where those scripts come from. And she tells the story of how she decided to test an experiment that she'd read about—where the goal was to create intimacy between strangers using a list of thirty-six questions—and ended up in the surreal situation of having millions of people following her brand-new relationship. "Perfect fodder for the romantic and the cynic in all of us" (Booklist), *How to Fall in Love with Anyone* flips the script on love. "Clear-eyed and full of heart, it is mandatory reading for anyone coping with—or curious about—the challenges of contemporary courtship" (The Toronto Star).

analysis of love after love: *An Introduction to West Indian Poetry* Laurence A. Breiner, 1998-09-10 This introduction to West Indian poetry is written for readers making their first approach to the poetry of the Caribbean written in English. It offers a comprehensive literary history from the 1920s to the 1980s, with particular attention to the relationship of West Indian poetry to European, African and American literature. Close readings of individual poems give detailed analysis of social and cultural issues at work in the writing. Laurence Breiner's exposition speaks powerfully about the defining forces in Caribbean culture from colonialism to resistance and decolonization.

analysis of love after love: Love in the Time of Cholera (Illustrated Edition) Gabriel García Márquez, 2020-10-27 A beautifully packaged edition of one of García Márquez's most beloved novels, with never-before-seen color illustrations by the Chilean artist Luisa Rivera and an interior design created by the author's son, Gonzalo García Barcha. In their youth, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza fall passionately in love. When Fermina eventually chooses to marry a wealthy, well-born doctor, Florentino is devastated, but he is a romantic. As he rises in his business career he whiles away the years in 622 affairs—yet he reserves his heart for Fermina. Her husband dies at last, and Florentino purposefully attends the funeral. Fifty years, nine months, and four days after he first declared his love for Fermina, he will do so again.

analysis of love after love: *Life on Mars* Tracy K. Smith, 2017-01-10 Winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize * Poet Laureate of the United States * * A New York Times Notable Book of 2011 and New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice * * A New Yorker, Library Journal and Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year * New poetry by the award-winning poet Tracy K. Smith, whose lyric brilliance and political impulses never falter (Publishers Weekly, starred review) You lie there kicking like a baby, waiting for God himself To lift you past the rungs of your crib. What Would your life say if it could talk? —from No Fly Zone With allusions to David Bowie and interplanetary travel, *Life on Mars* imagines a soundtrack for the universe to accompany the discoveries, failures, and oddities of human existence. In these brilliant new poems, Tracy K. Smith envisions a sci-fi future sucked clean of any real dangers, contemplates the dark matter that keeps people both close and distant, and revisits the kitschy concepts like love and illness now relegated to the Museum of Obsolescence. These poems reveal the realities of life lived here, on the ground, where a daughter is imprisoned in the basement by her own father, where celebrities and pop stars walk among us, and where the poet herself loses her father, one of the engineers who worked on the Hubble Space Telescope. With this remarkable third collection, Smith establishes herself among the best poets of her generation.

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