



SKITTLES ROOM



Judy, a Forgotten Genius of the 1850s Part Two

Rod Edwards

Part I introduced ‘Judy,’ a chess player and problemist who, by the autumn of 1851, had become well-known through her enthusiastic correspondence with and contributions to the Illustrated London News (ILN), the Chess Players’ Chronicle (CPC) and other publications. She had already earned the respect of Staunton, Kling and Horwitz, all important names in the chess world of the time, who commended her play and her problem compositions. *Part II* continues her story, seen only through the fragmentary glimpses that appear in chess columns and magazines of the time.

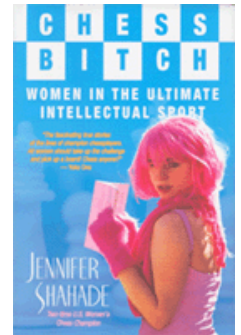
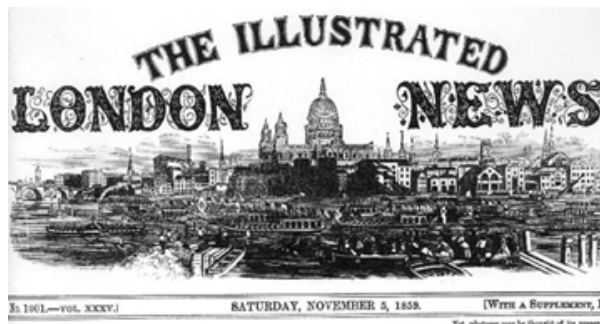
There is reason to believe that ‘Judy’ was associated with another correspondent, named ‘Punch,’ whose correct solution to Problem No. 348 was acknowledged in the September 28, 1850 issue of the *ILN* (p.263) and who had been corresponding with the *ILN* at least as early as the December 27, 1845 issue (p.411 – This early correspondence was about the art of chess problems, and Staunton included 3 problems in his reply, one by a Miss M. Smyth, an even earlier female composer!). Aside from the obvious reference to the puppet show characters, the connection between Punch and Judy is suggested by what appears to be a joint problem submission to *The Chess Player* a year later:

“Punchinello and Judy” – Each of these talented individuals has favoured us with two fine problems, two of which are inserted in our present number; the others shall appear shortly.
October 18, 1851 (The Chess Player, p.112)

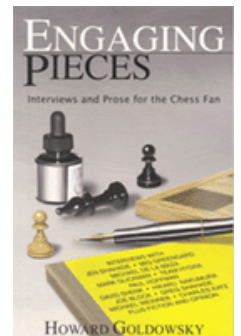
“Punchinello” (like “Judy”) also submitted problems to the *Gateshead Observer*, though they were never published there.

“Punchinello.” – Your problem has one defect: – it is a position which could not by any possibility arise in actual play. We shall be glad to examine a second specimen if authenticated by a real signature.
October 4, 1851 (Gateshead Observer, p.7)

It seems likely that ‘Punch’ and ‘Punchinello’ were the same person. In fact, correspondence of ‘Punchinello’ is acknowledged in the *ILN*, too (e.g., in the December 5, 1846 issue, p.363).



[Chess Bitch: Women in the Ultimate Intellectual Sport](#)
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by Howard Goldowsky

Some of Judy's communications to the *ILN* refer to emendations, but it is not always clear what is being corrected. The first below refers to move 15, and so perhaps refers to a game, rather than a problem. Were others just corrections to her own problems, or had Staunton recruited Judy to help him examine and correct problems submitted by others? He certainly had help with this task, as indicated in many comments regarding 'examiners' made to correspondents submitting problems (eg. to Sophia, October 9, 1852). Could the 'obliging' communications he mentioned in the June 14 issue (see Part I) be obliging in this respect?

JUDY – The emendation of 15. Q to her 3d, is ingenious and practicable, but the other suggestions we must demur to
September 13, 1851 (ILN, p.331)

JUDY – A communication has been forwarded, and we shall await impatiently the promised emendations
October 18, 1851 (ILN, p.449)

JUDY – Received with cordial thanks
October 25, 1851 (ILN, p.523)

Judy's first problem contributions to *The Chess Player* appeared in October 1851 (Problem 14, p.105, and Enigma 15, p.119). In November 1851, she sent a problem to the *Home Circle* (a previous one that Kling and Horwitz reprinted from the *Gateshead Observer* has already been mentioned), but it was some months before it appeared (and it also turned out to be one that had appeared in the *Gateshead Observer*):

JUDY. – Our fair correspondent is respectfully informed that we are compelled to decline insertion of problems, unless we are favored with the name and address of the inventors; nor can we undertake the examination of problems unaccompanied by their solutions.
November 1, 1851 (Home Circle, p.288)

As mentioned in Part I, a few problems by other women did appear. The October 25 issue of the *ILN* had an Enigma (No. 689) by Sophia, who also showed some talent:

JUDY – Enigma No. 689 is extremely clever. If the ladies continue to progress at Chess as they now do, gentlemen must look warily to their laurels. Thanks for the additional diagrams
November 1, 1851 (ILN, p.547)

Sophia corresponded with Staunton only on occasion. But there was also a Sophia who had been corresponding with the *Home Circle*. If they were the same, then she must have progressed very quickly, because two weeks before her 'extremely clever' problem appeared in the *ILN* we see:

Sophia S. – Do not advance the pawns too far... We recommend you to carefully peruse the 'Instructions for Beginners,' in our former numbers.
October 11, 1851 (Home Circle, p.240)

Kling and Horwitz expressed their views on women in chess in replying to another correspondent:

Emilia. – Your remarks upon the royal game are sensible and just. We ourselves have several times played the game with ladies who have studied chess as an accomplishment, and have been sorely pressed to achieve a victory. We should be glad to see the fair sex adopt it more universally. The problem favored us by you is neat in construction, but how is mate to be effected in four moves, if at the 3rd move you play Kt. to K. 7th?
November 15, 1851 (Home Circle, p.320)

A 'Miss C.' contributed a couple of problems to the column of the

Gateshead Observer (No. 92, February 22, 1851 and No.103, May 24, 1851). These were reprinted later in the *Home Circle* (No. 110, July 5, 1851 and No.160, March 13, 1852, respectively). The latter prompted a resumption of correspondence between Judy and the *Home Circle*, at least briefly. The respect for Judy held by Kling and Horwitz is evident.

JUDY. – Our welcome correspondent is incorrect in her remarks upon problem No. 160, by Miss C., as a re-examination of the position will convince her. The first move suggested, that of B to K 6th, provokes a very neat rejoinder on the part of white, which JUDY seems to have overlooked. Sometime since we were favored by a correspondent signing herself JUDY, with a problem in five moves, but unaccompanied by any solution; we, however, hesitate to give publicity to the problem until assured that our correspondent is the veritable JUDY whose clever productions have so frequently graced the chess columns of the *Illustrated London News*, the *Gateshead Observer*, and other publications. We shall be glad if JUDY will favor us with her name and address in confidence.
March 27, 1852 (Home Circle, p.206)

JUDY. – We are much gratified at the receipt of your communication. The problem sent shall appear in our next number.
April 10, 1852 (Home Circle, p.238)

More evidence for Judy's interest in current chess affairs:

JUDY – Many thanks. You are quite right. Unless some limit is assigned either as to the time a player shall be permitted to occupy over a single move, or the duration of each sitting, chess skill will go for very little, since it is always in the power of the physically stronger player to wear his opponent out. The experience acquired during the late Tournament will go far, we hope, to remedy this and other anomalies which call loudly for redress
November 29, 1851 (ILN, p.643)

Staunton's criticism of the speed of Williams' play at the London tournament is well known.

Judy also contributed in a more concrete way to this seminal tournament. In a list of 'Subscriptions in Furtherance of the Chess Tournament,' in the September 1851 issue of the *CPC* (p.283) we find a contribution by 'Judy' in the amount of £2 2s 0d.

Another admirer of Judy corresponded with Staunton at the *ILN* under the name 'Philo-Judy,' first appearing in the (of all days) February 14 issue!

PHILO-JUDY – The key moves of Enigma 656 are – 1. B to Q R 7th. 2. R to K B 2d. The key to No. 675, one of Judy's prettiest compositions, is – 1. K to Q R 5th. And the key to No 691 is – Kt to Q R 6th.
February 14, 1852 (ILN, p. 147)

Despite the beauty and ingenuity of Judy's problems, she did make mistakes:

Judy.– The position you have favoured us with allows of two terminations. We shall be glad to have your opinion upon the subject.
January 24, 1852 (The Chess Player, p.32)

Judy – We have received your ingenious solution; but unfortunately your problem can be solved quite differently.
January 31, 1852 (The Chess Player, p.40)

JUDY, JACK OF SHREWSBURY, PUNCH – Your solution of Mr. Bolton's fine stratagem is not perfect

March 6, 1852 (ILN, p.195)

R D M – It strikes us that ‘Judy’ should have placed a *Black Knight* instead of a Black Pawn, at the K B 6th, in her Problem in the C P C for March

March 6, 1852 (ILN, p.195)

Amateur – In reply to your inquiry, Judy desires us to say that, in her Problem No. 29, *Chess Players’ Chronicle* for August, the White Bishop should stand at *Queen’s* square instead of King’s square.

August 14, 1852 (ILN, p.115)

The last of these, in particular, might have been a typesetting error, but clearly, Judy was not always perfect. It was quite normal, though, for even renowned problemists to make occasional flawed or weak problems. For example, here is a response to a contribution by H.E. Kidson to the *Home Circle*:

H.E.K. (Sheffield). – Thanks for the problems; they scarcely, however, do justice to your acknowledged merit in the composition of these positions.

October 8, 1853 (*Home Circle*, p.240)

In the March *CPC* we find another game of Judy’s:

Scotch Gambit. Spirited game between “Judy” and Lady B—.

White. (“Judy”) Black. (Lady B—.)

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 exd4 4.Bc4 Bc5 5.e5 Nge7. The accepted move at this moment is d5. **6.0-0 0-0 7.Bg5 d6 8.exd6 Qxd6 9.Re1 Bg4 10.Bxe7 Nxe7 11.h3 Bh5 12.Qd3 Bxf3 13.Qxf3 c6 14.Nd2 Ng6 15.Ne4 Ne5.** The game from this point becomes extremely lively and amusing. **16.Qg3 Qe7 17.Nxc5 Qxc5 18.Rxe5 Qxc4 19.Rg5 g6 20.h4 f6 21.Rg4 Qxc2.**



22.h5. This attack is carried on with all the ardour and impetuosity which distinguish the best efforts of “Judy,” who, whether in the intricate and beautiful composition of chess problems, or in the more difficult strategy of actual games, is undoubtedly entitled to rank as the very first female chess genius of this or perhaps any former age. **22...Qf5 23.hxg6 hxg6 24.Rxg6+**

Kf7 25.Rg7+ Ke6. Ke8 would have been even more immediately fatal, on account of White’s playing Qc7, &c. **26.Re1+ Kd5 27.b4 c5 28.b5 c4 29.Qc7 Rad8 30.Qxb7+ Kc5 31.Rc7+ Kb4 32.Qc6 Qd3 33.Qc5+ Kc3 34.Qa3+ K moves 35.Q mates.**

March 1852 (*CPC*, p.82–83)

In the April *CPC*, Staunton responded to Judy regarding a submission, with his usual praise:

Judy.– Always welcome because always ingenious and original.
April 1852 (*CPC*, ‘Notices to correspondents’ in unnumbered cover pages)

Two of Judy’s problems appeared in this issue, Problem No. 14, which she named “Stella” (p.127) and Problem No. 15, “Vanessa” (p. 128). “Stella,” as printed, was flawed, however, and in the April 3 issue of the *ILN*, she gave a correction:

JUDY requests that amateurs attempting to solve her Problem called 'Stella,' in the April number of the *Chess-Player's Chronicle*, will set up all the pieces one square more to the left than they are placed on the diagram

April 3, 1852 (ILN, p.275)

(The corrected problem is given below.) It was reprinted eventually in the *CPC* in corrected form:

Problem No. 36 "Stella" by Judy*

*The diagram of this position, which was originally sent to us, and was published in the April No., p. 127, having been found inaccurate, we are induced, from the Problem being a fine one, to give a correct version of it.

October 1852 (CPC, p.319)

Judy's identity must have continued to perplex people:

M P – 1. Judy is a lady.

July 17, 1852 (ILN, p.43)

I suggested above that Judy might have been assisting Staunton as an 'examiner' of submitted problems. There is no firm evidence for this, but she was certainly helping Staunton in some capacity:

Judy is warmly thanked for her indefatigable aid.

August 21, 1852 (ILN, p.131)

On Judy's facility for solving difficult problems:

Janus – 1. Our problems have latterly been so difficult that hardly one in ten of the solutions forwarded to us prove correct.

September 4, 1852 (ILN, p.187)

And in the same issue Judy is acknowledged for correct solutions to Problems 447 and 448 and the latest Enigmas. She apparently had no trouble with them.

Now more on the difficulty of Judy's own problems:

W.L.– ...and as to the Problem by Judy, you are quite wrong; therefore try again, and you will find that she is one of the difficult sort.

May 8, 1852 (The Chess Player, p.152)

Puttino – The charming Problem by 'Judy,' called 'Stella,' which appears in the October Number of the *Chess Player's Chronicle*, and has baffled some of the most acute players in London, is perfectly correct. Set the pieces as follows: –

White: K at Q 3d, R at Q R 6th, B at K 2d, Kt at K 5th.

Black: K at Q B 4th, Ps at K 6th and Q 4th.



White to play, and mate in five moves.

October 9, 1852 (ILN, p.307)

L S T – The position of the men in Judy's Problem, called 'Stella,'

is given above, and we are somewhat curious to see how many correct Solutions we shall receive of this fine stratagem within the next fortnight

October 9, 1852 (ILN, p.307)

J M, of Sherburn – There is no flaw in ‘Stella,’ but its extreme difficulty is shown in the fact, that of the solutions sent to us only about half a dozen are correct, and in these, one of the chief and most beautiful variations is omitted. We shall withhold the key for a few days longer

October 16, 1852 (ILN, p.323)

Judy seems to have been so pleased with her problem, ‘Stella,’ that she decided to call herself ‘Stella’ from this point onwards, starting in the October 30, 1852 issue of the *ILN*. She continued to submit problems, and to make the occasional error:

Problem No. 464 By ‘Stella’ (*ci-devant* ‘Judy’)

December 18, 1852 (ILN, p.547)

Problem No. 464.

With deference to the talented authoress of this position, we submit that she has overlooked one variation by which Black may escape. To remedy this, we propose that the Pawn at White’s Q B 4th should stand at White’s Q B 2nd.

December 25, 1852 (ILN, p.563)

Stella.– The problems on hand shall appear shortly.

January 1, 1853 (ILN, p.11)

In February 1853, we receive further confirmation of the value Staunton placed on contributions by Judy (now Stella) for his *Illustrated London News* column.

Contributions in the shape of Games, Problems, Chess Studies, &c., pour in upon us with a profusion which sets individual acknowledgment at defiance. To the many, therefore, we can only offer general thanks, and an assurance that every communication shall have attention. But we cannot omit to express particular obligations to Stella, the Rev. H. Bolton, E.A.M.M., of India; Messrs. Kling and Löwenthal; Delta, A.F. of Florence (for some charming Problems); Signor Centurini (for an ingenious dissertation on the mis-called ‘Allgaier Gambit’); F.D. of Bruges; R.B.B. of Oxford; C.S. of Brighton; and W.G. of York.

February 12, 1853 (ILN, p.131)

It may be significant that Stella’s name appears first in the above list of contributors singled out by Staunton.

Staunton received more games from Stella in early 1853:

Stella.– Many thanks for the games, which, like everything from the same source, are highly spirited and pleasing.

March 26, 1853 (ILN, p.235)

Only one of the games referred to here seems to have been printed, in the April issue of the *CPC*. Note that Staunton gave Stella’s own notes to this game.

Dashing little Gambit, played between “Stella,” — *ci devant* “Judy,” and Lady B.

Allgaier Gambit.

Notes by “Stella.”

(Stella.) *White.* (Lady B.) *Black.*

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Nf3 g5 4.h4 g4 5.Ng5 h6 6.Nxf7 Kxf7 7.Bc4+

d5 8.Bxd5+ Kg7 9.d4 Bd6 10.e5 Ne7. Ingeniously played. **11.Nc3 Bb4.** Lady B., plays this game with all her usual spirit. **12.Bc4 Nbc6 13.Bxf4 Nxd4.** By this move she wins a Pawn, which she could not have done by taking the Q. Kt., checking [i.e., 13... Bxc3]. **14.0-0 Bf5.** Threatening to win another Pawn and have the best of the game. **15.Ne4.** The correct move we believe. If Black does not take the Kt. she must lose a piece. **15...Bxe4 16.Qxg4+ Bg6 17.h5 Bc5 18.Kh1 Rf8 19.e6 Bd6 20.Bxd6 Rxf1+ 21.Rxf1 Qxd6**



22.Rf7+. The termination of this game is not amiss, Black has two pieces more, but cannot resist the attack. **22...Kh8** [Note: Kg8 was needed – RE] **23.hxg6 Re8 24.Qh5.** This move renders Black's game hopeless. **24...Ndf5 25.Rxf5 Nxf5 26.g7+ Nxg7 27.Qxh6+ Kg8 28.e7+ Ne6 29.Bxe6+ Qxe6 30.Qxe6+.** And wins.
April 1853 (CPC, p.107-108)

If anything, her problems became more difficult. In the April 23, 1853 issue of the *ILN* (p.307), appeared Problem No. 482 by Stella, entitled "Une difficulté." Over the next five weeks, Staunton commented that he had received *no* correct solutions at all. Finally, the week after he printed the solution, he revealed that a total of 2 people had finally got it right:



White to play, and mate in six moves

Problem No. 482. Of this 'difficulty' we have received so few solutions, that we shall leave it as an exercise of our readers' ingenuity for a few days longer.
May 7, 1853 (ILN, p.347)

D.D.– We have received no perfectly correct solution of Stella's 'Difficulté.'
May 28, 1853 (ILN, p.419)

J.P. of Bethnal-green.– We received but two correct solutions of Stella's 'difficulty,' of which yours was one.
June 4, 1853 (ILN, p.443)

This is the problem we gave at the end of [Part I](#). The solution printed by Staunton is given at the end of this article.

Stella's last problem to appear in the *CPC* was in the February 1853 issue (p.64). Her last problem to appear in the *ILN* (I have checked carefully up to mid-1857) was Problem No. 518 in the January 21, 1854 issue (p.61). Unfortunately, it seems to have been flawed.

Hollander, J.H.D., and others – The solution of No. 518 was found to be imperfect, and is now under consideration.
February 4, 1854 (ILN, p.94)

Miltonia.– The error in "Stella's" problem shall be rectified, if possible.

February 11, 1854 (ILN, p.133)

Argus, Philo-Stella, and others.— The integrity of “Stella’s” clever problem, No. 418 [*sic*], may be perfectly restored, we believe, by adding to the diagram a Black Pawn on Black Queen’s 7th square.

February 18, 1854 (ILN, p.156)

Whether Judy (Stella) became discouraged because of the flaw in this and a few earlier problems, or for some other reason, this is almost the last we hear of her. She had charged into the chess problem world with gusto and skill, had created problems of great subtlety and beauty, had stumped some of the best chess minds of the time, and won the admiration at least of followers of the English chess press (note the sobriquet ‘Philo-Stella’ in the last quote above – ‘Philo-Judy’ renamed?). She had also been of assistance to Staunton in a way that he repeatedly acknowledged, most likely in the capacity of a problem examiner. Then, after just a little over 3 years on the scene she disappeared from view. And we don’t even know who she was.

There are precious few clues to help identify or locate Judy. We know she was a ‘Lady’. The fact that she played a game against a ‘Metropolitan Amateur’ might suggest that she lived in London, but it seems equally possible that Judy was visiting London or that they met elsewhere. Slightly more telling might be the fact that some of Judy’s early problems appeared in the *Gateshead Observer*. While the *ILN* and the *CPC* were read everywhere, it seems less likely that Judy would submit problems to a Northern newspaper if she did not live in the vicinity, or at least in the North.

Although essentially pure speculation, it is tempting to wonder if Judy might have been one of the ladies present at chess meetings in Lincolnshire in 1851 and 1854. These events appear to have had an unusually strong female contingent. The first meeting took place at Caistor on October 9, 1851.

The most attractive and delightful feature in the interesting *reunion* was the presence of a gay bevy of ladies, most of whom were evidently well versed in all the intricacies of the beautiful game they had met to celebrate, and who took and maintained their places in the lists, with a gallantry and skill which excited general admiration even from the veteran players of the other sex.

October 18, 1851 (ILN, p.499)

The meeting in the course of the evening was graced with the presence of a number of fair chess-players, whose skill in the noble game was gallantly acknowledged by Herr Loewenthal and others.

October 18, 1851 (The Chess Player, p.110)

Staunton was present at this meeting (*ILN*, September 27, 1851, p.394) and so could have met Judy if she was there. Note that the game between Judy and the ‘Metropolitan Amateur’ (see [Part I](#)) appeared shortly after this in the November 1851 issue of the *CPC*.

The second Lincolnshire meeting took place again at Caistor, on October 25 and 26, 1854 (*ILN*, November 11, 1854, p.495; *CPC*, December 1854, p.391). Again, many ladies were present, and the names of 26 of them are actually given in the *CPC*.

On this, as on the previous occasion, an interesting feature of the assemblage was the presence of several ladies, some of whom, indeed, displayed a proficiency in Chess that would have astonished many ambitious amateurs of the other sex.

December 1854 (CPC, p.391)

This event occurred some months after Stella’s last enigma and problem appeared in the *ILN* (in December 1853 and January 1854, respectively),

and nothing had appeared before those since April 1853. So even if Judy was from this area, she may no longer have been active by the time of the second Caistor meeting. But if she *was* there, then she might well have been one of the twenty-six women named in the *CPC* report.

Another lead might be to identify Judy's chess partner, 'Lady B.' But the probability that her true name began with a 'B' is not much to go on. 'Lady B.' corresponded with the *ILN* at least once, a couple of years later, just to submit correct solutions to a Problem and Enigmas (July 26, 1856, p.104).

Judy did make a reappearance many years later, though a brief and uneventful one. In her usual uninhibited style, she wrote in to Staunton at the *ILN* under the name "Guess Who," which appears among the list of correspondents who had submitted correct solutions to Problems in the February 3, 1866 (p.123) issue and the subsequent week. On the second occasion, Staunton replied:

"Guess Who?"— We "guess who" very readily, and greet the reappearance of our ever-esteemed and always welcome contributor, "Stella," with vivas.
February 10, 1866 (ILN, p.147)

The following week, Staunton replied to another correspondence from Stella, either about a problem she submitted, or about someone else's problem, it is not clear which. In any case, she seemed out of form:

Stella.— Are you quite sure? How will you mate if —
1. R to Q 8th Kt to Q 3rd | 2. Q to Q B 6th (ch) *Kt takes Q!*
February 17, 1866 (ILN, p.171)

Correct solutions by Stella were acknowledged the following three weeks, after which she disappears again, except for another problem solution in the issue of November 24, 1866 (p.515), if this is indeed still the 'true' Stella. However, a correspondent named 'Stella' had submitted correct solutions to problems in the *ILN* the previous year (September 9, 1865, p.251, and September 23, 1865, p.299). We cannot be sure if this is the same person, of course. The same applies to solutions to problems submitted under the name 'Judy' in the December 20, 1856 issue (p.609) and under the name 'Mrs. Judy' in the April 25, 1857 issue (p.393), though it is tempting to interpret the latter as Judy's way of informing Staunton that she had married.

Speculation aside, this rather remarkable woman 'genius' of the 1850s will probably remain a mystery. Her problems and games should not, however, be forgotten.

Staunton's solution to "Une Difficulté"

Solution of Problem No. 482. Une Difficulté.

1. Bxc5 Kf5; or *
2. Nd5+ Kg4

(If 2... Kg6 or Kg5, White plays 3. Rg2+, and mates within the stipulated number of moves; and, if 2...Ke5, then White plays 3. Kd7, and mates next move.)

3. Rf4+ Kh3 or Kg3
4. Bf2 K moves
5. Ne3 K moves
6. R mates

(The variations in this ingenious Problem are too numerous to publish;

but those given will suffice, we believe, to enable any player to discover the remainder.)

* 1. B[x]e5 Kf6

2. Nd5+ Ke6

(If he move to d5, White mates in four moves)

3. Nc3 K moves

4. d4+ K moves

5. Bb6 K moves

6. Rf6 – Mate

May 28, 1853 (ILN, p.419)

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

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