



# From Ice to Ashes

*Rhett C. Bruno*

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**From Ice to Ashes** Rhett C. Bruno

**A humble laborer is caught in the tensions between Earth and Titan, the now-colonized moon of Saturn, in a standalone novel set in the universe of *Titanborn* ("Sci-fi noir at its finest!"--David Simpson, author of the Post-Human series).**

Kale Drayton knows his place. As a Ringer born on Titan, he's used to keeping his head down and his mouth shut--no matter how much the Earthers abuse him or his own kind berate him. So when he's caught stealing from a wealthy merchant, he's lucky to be sentenced to low-paying maintenance work on a gas-harvesting ship instead of life in a cell . . . or worse.

But when his mother is quarantined, Kale finds himself backed into a corner. To pay for her medicine, he needs money--the kind of money he'll never make sweeping floors and cleaning ships. So when he receives a mysterious offer asking him to do a simple job in exchange for his mother's treatment, Kale takes a chance once more. All he has to do is upload a program onto his employer's ship and all of his problems will disappear.

What starts as a straightforward smuggling gig soon reveals its shattering repercussions. The people who hired Kale are more dangerous than he suspected--and he's more important to *them* than he ever could have imagined.

## From Ice to Ashes Details

Date : Published March 28th 2017 by Hydra

ISBN :

Author : Rhett C. Bruno

Format : Kindle Edition 274 pages

Genre : Science Fiction

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# From Reader Review From Ice to Ashes for online ebook

## Lauren Stoolfire says

**I received this eARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review after being approached by the author to review his newest release.**

As a Ringer, Kale knows where he belongs and how to keep his mouth shut and his head down, no matter how much abuse he suffers at the hands of the Earthers, or his own people for that matter. He knows he's lucky to only be sentenced to maintenance work on a gas-harvesting ship after getting caught stealing from a rich merchant. Then when he learns that his mother has been quarantined, he knows that his back's to the wall. He'll never be able to pay for her medicine, so he jumps at the chance to take a simple yet mysterious job in exchange for his mother's treatment. The only thing he has to do is upload a program to his employer's ship and all of his trouble will be taken care of. What should be as a simple smuggling gig actually has huge repercussions. The people Kale's working for are much more dangerous than he expected, and he's much more important to them than he could know.

*From Ice to Ashes* by Rhett C. Bruno starts off with a bang and just speeds up from there. It's set in the same universe as the author's novel, *Titanborn*, but you don't need to be familiar with that story to fully understand the events of this novel. I'm sure being familiar with that novel would only benefit the reader, but even though I've never read it I never felt lost here. Butler's novel still managed to suck me in right from the very beginning regardless. His writing is compelling and I didn't want to put this book down for a minute. His world-building, character development, and action scenes in particular are all top notch. One thing that really stood out to me from early on are his descriptions of the Ringers (people born on Titan, the colonized moon of Saturn) in comparison to the Earthers. Just that detail really began to set the tone and the atmosphere of the novel for me. I also particularly liked that none of the characters are exclusively good guys or bad guys. Everyone tends to occupy a morally gray area, which is certainly refreshing. The descriptions and action are all quite visual - I could easily picture the events of this sprawling space opera as if they were on the big screen.

Overall, Rhett C. Bruno's newest novel, *From Ice to Ashes*, is a tightly written and action packed adventure from start to finish. If you're looking for a new space opera to dive into, I have a feeling that you'll like this story whether you've read it's companion, *Titanborn* or not. You may also like Bruno's style if you are a fan of Neal Stephenson's work. After reading *From Ice to Ashes*, I definitely want to return to this universe and try *Titanborn*.

**Thanks again to the author and NetGalley for providing this free eARC!**

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## Stefan Svartling says

I got an ARC of *Ice to ashes* directly from the author Rhett C. Bruno. It started really good and I liked the idea of "Hand Terminals" and how it reminded me of the devices I use as my main computers. But the story didn't fly for me. The plot wasn't interesting enough. It's a stand alone story in the same universe as the author's popular book *Titanborn*. I haven't read *Titanborn* so maybe that's why I didn't like this story as much as I did with *The Circuit*? But even if I only give this story 3.5 in score I still thinks that Rhett C. Bruno is one of the best new science fiction writers out there. I can highly recommend reading his books.

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## **Stephanie (Bookfever) says**

From Ice to Ashes is a standalone set in the same world as Titanborn. I must say I liked Titanborn a bit more than this one because it took me a little while to really get into it but once I did I felt like I couldn't stop reading.

I don't want to give too much away about the story and its plot but I was really impressed with it. Especially the ending had me turning page after page, not wanting the stop. And then there was that epilogue that made me gasp out loud. I loved it.

I also feel like I should say that science fiction is one of my top three favorite genres and it's books like this one is what makes me love the genre so much. It was just outstanding, really.

Overall, From Ice to Ashes by Rhett C. Bruno was such a riveting science fiction thriller. The non-stop action combined with the great writing and unique set of characters made this quite the page-turner.

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## **Koeur says**

<https://koeur.wordpress.com/2017/01/2...>

Publisher: Random House

Publishing Date: March 2017

ISBN: 9780399181610

Genre: SciFi

Rating: 3.9/5

Publishers Description: Kale Drayton knows his place. As a Ringer born on Titan, he's used to keeping his head down and his mouth shut—no matter how much the Earthers abuse him or his own kind berate him. So when he's caught stealing from a wealthy merchant, he's lucky to be sentenced to low-paying maintenance work on a gas-harvesting ship instead of life in a cell . .

Review: Holy shjtballz this was good. A meaty bite of science fiction that satisfied my need. Kale is a thief just trying to save his mom from an earthborn sickness and soon finds himself offered a chance to save his mom if he smuggles something onto the gas harvesting ship he works on. What follows is a wild and imaginative SciFi ride through our solar system.

The character development was great in that it grew along with the constant and intense movement. The world building was rendered in spectacular detail and thus created an ease into visualizing the narrative.

“So why you no give 5 stars!!?”. Cora. She was good when first introduced but quickly wore on my nerves

with her clingy weirdness and “Oh, Kale!” exclamations during dire circumstances. She became more of an affectation than a solid character. Also, a very compressed storyline that pushes at the edge of believability, especially when a reluctant hero/thief becomes the leader of the resistance within a couple of days. Still, a highly entertaining read.

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## The Shayne-Train says

A gripping sci-fi revolution tale written by someone who **knows** his business.

This book is set in the same universe as Rhett Bruno's previous book, *Titanborn*, which I also really enjoyed. In fact, one of the awesome things about this book is that it is set in the same basic timeframe, but shows the OTHER side of events.

So, here's the thing. Looong ago (but still in the future for *us*), Earth was about to be slammed by space-rock, a la President Morgan Freeman. Some of the population was all like, "EFF this place, we out!" and moved to other, less gravity-ish planets to eke out a hard but honest life. Some of the people were like, "No damn space-rock is gonna scare me!" and stayed, with a small percentage actually surviving the impact and the devastation to Earth that resulted.

Fast forward generations into the future, and there are Earthers (descendants of them that stayed) and Ringers (descendants of them that left). They reunite, and eventually the Ringers are completely subjugated by the Earthers. You know, virtual enslavement and complete exploitation of people that are different from us. Because we're dicks, and that's how we historically and ever-lastingly roll.

Backstory phase complete. So this book follows a Ringer worker/sometimes-thief as he gets drawn into a conspiracy that may have far-reaching results.

Like in his previous book, Bruno takes a very well-known literary trope (the aforementioned "regular dude" pulled into a political conspiracy/revolution") and breathes new and glorious life into it. This world is fully-fleshed out, the characters well-written and complex, the themes behind the words thoughtful and important.

I really enjoyed this book, and look forward to reading MOOOORE set in this world!

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## The Captain says

Ahoy there me mateys! I discovered this novel when the author asked me if I was interested in readin' this one in exchange for me honest musings. The premise sounded fascinating and so I said yes. Those of me crew that have been reading me log these last several days have seen that I had to abandon ship on me last two reads. I was feelin' rather disheartened and didn't want to be fighting off the dreaded readin' slump. So I finally deemed that it was time to read this book and hopefully keep the slump at bay. And it worked! Arrrrr!

I found this book to be an excellent read that was gripping, fun, and certainly lightened me mood considerably. While technically the second book in a series, Matey Bruno assured me it could be read as a standalone and I am so very glad he convinced me. I absolutely loved the world of the Ringers!

The Ringers are descendants from a starship that left Earth to settle on Titan (one of Saturn's moons) in the face of an asteroid destined to hit Earth. They worked hard and slowly adjusted over the centuries both genetically and culturally. However, some Earth-folk survived and eventually make their way to Titan to co-exist. However Earth disease runs rampant among the immune systems of the Ringers which lead to the Earthers taking over the moon and the Ringers becoming second-class citizens.

In this novel, a Ringer named Kale is struggling to get by. He used to be a small-time thief until he got caught. His mom helped him get a legitimate job aboard a gas harvester. But then his mom gets sick and Kale needs a lot more money to help her survive. Much more than his small salary provides. A seemingly too-good-to-be-true opportunity comes along which may solve his problems. But what happens if he takes it? A wonderful story that's what.

Now do not get me wrong, I loved the plot and the characters. I thought Kale was a fantastic protagonist. There were lots of plot twists that I did not see coming. Some of which kinda broke this grizzled Captain's salty heart. It was a seemingly simple story that has greater depths. But it was the juxtaposition between the Earthers and the Ringers that made the book for me.

Ye see the Ringers have adapted to life on Titan which makes them tall, like extremely cold temperatures, and need lower gravity. The problem is their immune systems are so bad that they go dressed in decontamination suits at all times. Any direct contact with an Earther can be fatal. The Earthers need heat, are immensely strong in comparison to the Ringers, and of course prefer Earth gravity. But they need Ringers to help maintain Titan and their lifestyles. So in situations like cleaning of the gas harvester, the two groups have to work together. But when they clash, and clash they do, it is fascinating to watch them interact.

I really can't do justice to the world-building in this post. It just felt so real and plausible. The space ships, the jobs, the technology, the relationships are all gritty in many ways. Yet underneath that grit is determination to survive. Kale himself seems to encapsulate love for those in his life and even understanding and compassion for some of the Earthers. Watching his journey was wonderful.

The only small flaw for me was the epilogue which had a character that I didn't know. But I got the gist and so it was no big deal.

Much thanks to Matey Bruno and I certainly will read the first book in the series at some point. Arrrrrr!

To see me other reviews check out <https://thecaptainsquartersblog.wordpress.com/>

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## **Paul E. Morph says**

*From Ice To Ashes* is Rhett C. Bruno's second novel set in the world of his earlier novel *Titanborn*. It isn't really a sequel as it doesn't follow on from the events of the previous book so much as explore some of the same events from a completely different perspective. It's very cleverly done and, while you don't *need* to have read *Titanborn* to enjoy this new book, I'd recommend doing so as you'll get a lot more out of this one if you do.

It was great to submerge myself into this world again, as it is such a well thought out setting. The characters and various factions really add to this feeling, as one of Bruno's great strengths as an author is that he doesn't

do 'goodies' and 'baddies'. All his characters are very much shades of grey on the moral spectrum, all capable of doing good and evil to greater and lesser extents, much like real people. There were a lot of passages in this book that had me extremely conflicted over the actions of our central protagonist. I often felt like I either couldn't root for him at all or that I felt bad about rooting for him. In fact, there were sections of this book that made me feel deeply uncomfortable, if I'm completely honest.

I'm not sure who said it originally but the whole book brought to mind the saying 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter'. If you read this book (and I really do recommend you do) prepare to have your preconceptions about a protagonist's morality challenged.

The book is fast-paced and action-packed and straddles the line between space opera and speculative fiction with confidence and ease. Oh, and a message to fans of *Titanborn*: you're going to **love** the epilogue! I shall say no more.

*Full disclosure: I received an advanced review copy from the author in exchange for a fair and honest review.*

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### **Norma says**

This was the first Sci/Fi I've read in quite a while and I have to say I really liked it. The story kept me engaged and entertained.

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### **Lena says**

#### **Heroes rise when they are needed.**

Now I was a fan of *Titanborn*, it was an original work of cinematic science fiction. This parallel sequel wasn't. It was *Star Wars: Titanborn Edition* and I loved it!

No one needed a Luke Skywalker, a leader, a hero, more than the Ringers. Made second class citizens on their own world, these beautiful people are heartlessly left to die of disease and lack of resources by the Pervenio Corporation. It's a slow genocide the Ringers are finally rising to fight. Every win for these underdogs feels good.

The epilogue touches base with Malcolm Graves and has me in fearful anticipation as to what Bruno has planned for *Pervenio Strikes Back*.

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## **Luke says**

Original review at <http://wp.me/p4Wvzn-1ZO>

In July 2016 Two Nerds Talking was lucky enough to receive a free review copy of Titanborn by author Rhett Bruno, a book that has to one of my favourites from the past year.

Recently we were delighted to be directly contacted by Mr Bruno who offered us a VERY advanced review copy of his next novel From Ice to Ashes. Of course we were more than happy to oblige, it's always an honor and a privilege to be trusted with a book before it's released to the general public.

From Ice to Ashes takes place a little before, mostly parallel and a little after the events of Titanborn. It centers around the character of Kale Drayton, a Ringer with a lot of responsibilities on his shoulders, struggling to make ends meet.

On a side-note, if you haven't read Titanborn (it's awesome, you should really get on that) you could still read and follow this novel without too much difficulty. You will miss some of the deeper nuances though.

But back to Kale...

When his mother is taken into quarantine, Kale has to find money fast to pay for her treatment. But Ringers don't earn as much as their earth-born cousins, in fact they're all but treated as second-class citizens. So when Kale receives a mysterious offer to help his mother in exchange for smuggling a device onboard his employers ship, he jumps at the chance...a decision that catapults him into the middle of a series of events that could affect all of humanity.

I have to say that I absolutely loved being back in this amazingly vibrant and realistic universe. I love seeing just how different the Ringers are to earth-born humans just because they were born on a different planet

But what stood out the most to me in his book was the characters and their development. There are quite a few characters in this novel, but each of them is unique, fully fleshed out and well realised.

It's a credit to the writing skill of Mr Bruno that we see Kale change so much in this novel going from scared ringer going along with the flow to.... something quite different at the end of the novel.

And I still found myself sympathising with his character.

And then there was the epilogue of this book that had me sit bolt upright and swear. Please let there be more to this series, I can't have it end there!

TNT Score 5/5

Reviewed by Luke Goura

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## **Trish says**



Stayed up almost all night to read this. I'm so TIRED! 2 hours of sleep is definitely not enough for me. However, that is also the reason I couldn't pen a review afterwards. And now, my brain is mush from sleep-deprivation so you'll have to wait a few more hours to hear the praise for this fantastic story.

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After an infusion of good old English Breakfast tea directly into my blood stream, here is my review (please don't expect greatness from me today, I'm worn out):

This is the second book in the **Titanborn** series. It's not really a sequel, rather a side-step to illuminate an event from the first book and explain "the other side". A prospect I didn't like at first since the first book had left me severely hung over and I wanted to know what would happen next. But the author seems to enjoy torturing me and I just can't seem to stay away.

Thus, instead of a continuation of book #1, this second book is mostly about Kale, a Ringer (a person born on Titan; descendant of humans that left Earth a long time ago before an awful meteorite strike and that are now physically quite different from Earthers due to the difference in gravity and other conditions on Saturn's moon). He's quite young but accustomed to hardship. He nevertheless managed to get a decent job on a gas harvester – classic case of kid growing up in horrible neighbourhood but fighting his way to a somewhat better life. However, now his mother has fallen ill, which usually is a death sentence (Ringers don't have a good immune system and them dealing with Earthers means they need to wear facial masks and gloves and can still contract diseases they can't handle). So what would you do if you had no money but suddenly the opportunity to save the one person that means the most in your life?!

To make matters more complicated, he really is a good kid and despite his mother being so important to him, it's not as simple as that since he cares about people's lives in general. And yes, this all ties back to the movement that caused such chaos in the first book.

It feels slightly smaller in scale but not in a bad way - the first simply opened up an entire solar system while this one was more focused on one point.

The remarkable thing about this story is that I didn't need time to get back into this world. From the first line onwards, nothing mattered but the story. Even though I started this in November but had to abandon it due to a reading slump. It took me no time at all and I remembered everything I had already read vividly.

There was a lot of (very well done) action I enjoyed tremendously, but despite the breathtaking dash through several levels of the habitations on Titan, the characters were all wonderfully "fleshed out" and richly characterized. Some funny, some infuriating, some quirky, most of them heartbreaking. I already knew what would happen to the ship *Piccolo* from the previous book, of course, but there were enough details the reader didn't know to make me sit at the edge of my seat (we only got to see the events from one perspective last time and this completes the picture so to speak). And of course that wasn't the only thing happening here. I mean, I don't stay awake almost all night and only get 2 hours of sleep during a working week for nothing!

Also, the depiction of the history between the Earthers and the Ringers was epic again. Not just the corporation-run politics in the solar system (interesting forecast and definitely possible in the future), but also the racism ... especially after my last book (an autobiography of someone who lived under Apartheid) I couldn't help but see the parallels and notice the realism with which Rhett described the world he created, thus firmly grounding the reader.

That plus the fantastic technology in this universe (space travel is possible but many ships are basically rust buckets and not shiny like a brand new Apple product – think "Firefly" rather than "Enterprise") made

everything so awesomely real.

So despite sleep deprivation and yet another case of I-might-see-out-the-author-at-his-house-to-avenge-my-broken-heart syndrome, I can wholeheartedly recommend this book. But read them in order. It really is better.

In fact, read all of Rhett's books (I'll read his other series soon as well) because this author is so good (no, I'm not saying that because I'm friends with him here on GR, but because I know quality when I see it) that I nominated the first book of this series for a HUGO. If that doesn't convince you, nothing will.

Usual (still silly) disclaimer: I received a copy from the author in exchange for an honest review (because usually I'm a lying piece of \*peep\*). ;)

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## **Cathy (cathepsut) says**

Free review copy by the author, thank you very much! Review will follow.

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## **Lyn says**

Moon is a Harsh Mistress meets Nietzsche.

"What does not kill us makes us stronger" is taken to SF extremes in Rhett C. Bruno's dramatic thriller follow up to his 2016 novel Titanborn. While this is not a sequel, it is in the same universe and describes a SF construct where humankind has colonized most of the solar system following a cataclysmic meteor detonation on Earth. The diaspora of humanity that follows has been drawn into new sub-races contingent on where they have settled. Those born on Saturn's moon Titan have become taller and paler (and weaker and more susceptible to viral diseases than their petri dish cousins from what's left of Earth).

But the shorter, stronger, more immune and robust earthlings find out that the Ringers (those born in and around Saturn's moons) are more than meets the eye and like Heinlein's Loonies and Herbert's Fremens, they are a sleeping giant waiting for a reckoning.

Bruno has created more than a space opera. The distinction made between the earthlings and those born on Titan creates a dramatic tension between the two groups and serves also as an allegory for new and old world extended into space colonization. Also, the connection to Trass (a pioneer leader in the Titan colony) bordered on hero worship and was PhilDickian in Bruno's presentation.

Bruno's setting within the gaseous atmosphere of Saturn is a fecund ground for SF imagery and Bruno uses this made-for-film backdrop to full effect. With settings and imagery vaguely reminiscent of Ann Leckie, this would make for a cool SF film HINT HINT!!! HEY RIDLEY SCOTT!!!

Like Titanborn, Bruno highlights the ascension of corporate interests alongside or even surpassing governmental structures, like Neal Stephenson or William Gibson. Also like Gibson, Bruno has explored themes of death and rebirth in the Earth to Saturn colonies, as well as the continued but changed humanity still surviving on Earth after the catastrophe. Bruno's characters are scarred and brutalized by the past, dramatically symbolized by the Ringer's deficient immunity to earth germs.

This also somewhat reminded me of Samuel Delaney's 1968 novel Nova as both authors blend elements of myth into a SF vehicle.

Bruno is onto something cool and I am already anxious for the next Titanborn novel.

\*\*\* A free copy of this book was provided in exchange for an honest review

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## **Bradley says**

Update 1/26/17 Re-read:

I still very much enjoyed the book the second time!

In some ways this is a superior book to Titanborn in that the rising action culminates in something much bigger than personal tragedy. Those of the Titanborn revolutionaries finally get their day in this book.

Both are set in the same frame, but don't go expecting much in the way of overlapping characters. The settings, however, are very much characters in themselves. Sickness and exploitation is rampant, as is the sense of deep disparity between the classes (and locations).

The world-building is something very cool to behold, working ever so steadily on our consciousness until it gets firmly rooted and we begin feeling the deep ambiguities inherent in living in a real world. Thievery and desperation and constantly having to wear personal protection sits right up against a deep desire for doing the right thing, finding love and finding purpose.

This is a novel of a rising star. We go from nothing to the top of the food chain and the path is not simple or easy or really that expected. Kale isn't an alpha dog and all he really has going for him is his ancestry and the faith of a bunch of desperate idealists, and yet he finds his way to a really grand resolution. What more can we ask? Explosions? Ah, well, we get those, too. :) A lot of them. :)

This is truly some great Space-Opera, folks. It focuses much more on good storytelling than on technogadgetry, and that's great because it allows us to really get inside the characters. :) Bravo! :)

Original review of a pre-pre-release:

I promised not to reveal anything after getting a sneak peek, but there *\*is\** something that I can say.

It's AWESOME.

And for all ya'll praying and hoping to get into the grit, please be patient. Once you get your hands on this, you'll be very satisfied. Or you might Gaaaahhhhhhaa like me and demand that the author keep writing, double-time, and give us more or else.

That being said, It's So Cool.

This is real SF, focusing on truly entertaining us and giving us great characters and great solar system adventure with complicated situations. The real treat is in how it's written. :)

Keep your eye out!

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## **Guillermo says**

I really loved the decision to follow-up Titanborn with this stand alone. Here we get the perspective of the Ringers – settlers born on Saturn's moon Titan. The Ringers are treated as a subservient lower caste by the Earthborn, and you can really see the injustices firsthand in this novel. I think you could call this a sidequel, in that the action is taking place simultaneously as the action in Titanborn. From Ice to Ashes can absolutely be read before Titanborn, except for From Ice to Ashes' short Epilogue which I believe takes place after Titanborn's events.

When I finished this book, I immediately wanted to reread Titanborn. Don't get me wrong, I also would've liked a straight continuation from Titanborn's amazing ending, but I can really appreciate the author wanting to give us a different perspective- a different side of Titanborn's events. This approach is not something I see often, so bravo in deciding to present the story in this way. When you can sympathize with both sides and they are both full of compelling actors, you get a great and well-rounded story. The character's motivations always make sense especially when faced with some pretty harrowing choices. Some of the characters and settings we were briefly introduced to in Titanborn were further fleshed out here.

This story really flowed and the writing was clean, fast, and efficient. Bruno never gets bogged down in technical jargon or in superfluous sidetracks. I've read about five of Bruno's books already and I can attest that they do not waste time. I can really appreciate that.

I still slightly prefer Titanborn, but this was a great follow up. This is turning out to be a very cool series, and I absolutely cannot wait to see what comes next.

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