General Idi Amin Dada A Self Portrait

Idi Amin Dada: A Self-Portrait in Power and Paradox – An In-Depth Analysis

Idi Amin Dada's self-proclaimed title, "His Excellency, President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC," encapsulates the grandiose self-image projected in his only known autobiography, *Idi Amin Dada: A Self-Portrait*. This text, published in 1976 amidst the brutal reign of his dictatorship in Uganda, is not merely a biography; it's a complex artifact revealing the mechanisms of autocratic power, the construction of a national identity, and the psychological underpinnings of tyranny. This analysis delves into the book's content, examining its rhetorical strategies, historical inaccuracies, and the implications of its enduring legacy. The Construction of a Mythological Figure: Amin's self-portrait strategically crafts a "hero's journey," weaving together narratives of humble origins, military prowess, and divine favor. He portrays himself as a champion of the Ugandan people, a liberator from colonial subjugation and corrupt elites. This carefully constructed narrative aims to legitimize his seizure of power and subsequent autocratic rule. | Narrative Element | Description in "Self-Portrait" | Actual Historical Context | Strategic Purpose | ||||| | Humble Beginnings | Depicts himself as a poor, hardworking youth rising through the ranks. | Experienced some hardship but also benefited from colonial opportunities. | Generates relatability, showcases "self-made" success. | | Military Heroism | Emphasizes his role in the British Army, portraying himself as a skilled and courageous soldier. | Had a relatively unremarkable military career, though he rose through the ranks. | Establishes credibility and authority based on perceived competence. | | Divine Appointment | Claims to be chosen by God to lead Uganda. | Lacks any verifiable divine intervention; his rise to power was largely through political maneuvering. | Religious justification for his rule; diminishes opposition's legitimacy. | | Nationalist Champion | Presents himself as a staunch defender of Ugandan sovereignty and rights. | His rule was marked by ethnic cleansing and widespread human rights abuses. | Appeals to nationalist sentiments to gain popular acceptance despite atrocities. | (Figure 1: Narrative Emphasis in "Self-Portrait") ||| | Humble | Military Hero | | Beginnings | ism | ||| Emphasis Levels | High | High | ||| | Divine | Nationalist | | Appointment | Champion | ||| | High | High | ||| Rhetorical Strategies and Propaganda: Amin employs various rhetorical strategies to present a compelling, albeit deceptive, self-image. Repetition of key themes (e.g., his love for the Ugandan people, his fight against oppression), appeals to emotion (patriotism, religious faith), and the blatant omission of uncomfortable truths (e.g., instances of violence and human rights abuses) are central to his propaganda. The book lacks critical self-reflection and avoids any accountability for his actions. *(Figure 2: Distribution of Rhetorical Devices Used)* Rhetorical Device | Frequency of Use | Repetition of Key Themes | Very High Appeals to Emotion | High Over-Simplification of Complex Issues | Very High Omission of Uncomfortable Truths | Very High Personal Anecdotes & Self-Aggrandisement | Very High Historical Inaccuracies and Omissions: The book's blatant disregard for historical accuracy demonstrates its propagandistic nature. Amin consistently distorts or omits facts to build his desired image. For instance, his exaggerated claims about his military achievements, his downplaying of ethnic tensions, and his portrayal of his regime as economically successful are all demonstrably false according to historical accounts. Practical Applications: Analyzing Amin's self-portrait offers invaluable insights into autocratic rule, propaganda techniques, and the

psychology of dictators. This understanding has practical applications in: • **Conflict Prevention and Resolution:** Recognizing the rhetorical strategies used by autocrats helps identify potential threats to democracy and human rights. • *Counter-Propaganda Strategies:* Understanding how Amin crafted his image enables the development of effective counter-narratives to combat misinformation and disinformation campaigns. • *Historical Analysis and Critical Thinking:* Deconstructing the book's historical inaccuracies enhances critical thinking skills, promoting a deeper understanding of historical events and their interpretation. • **Political Science & Sociology:** The book contributes to the understanding of political leadership, propaganda strategies, and the relationship between power and ideology. **Conclusion:** *Idi Amin Dada: A Self-Portrait* is not just a flawed autobiography; it's a revealing window into the mind of a dictator. Amin's meticulous construction of a heroic self-image, his reliance on propaganda, and his blatant disregard for historical truth offer essential lessons about the dangers of unchecked power and the manipulation of public opinion. Understanding how such narratives are constructed and disseminated remains critical in preventing future atrocities and fostering more informed and resilient societies. Advanced FAQs: 1. How does Amin's portrayal of his economic policies reflect the reality of Uganda under his rule? Amin's claim of economic success directly clashes with historical evidence revealing severely declining economic conditions, widespread poverty, and a collapsed national infrastructure under his regime. 2. *What role did Amin's religious beliefs play in constructing his self-image?* Amin's professed belief in Islam was used to enhance his legitimacy and appeal to a segment of the population, justifying his rule through religious rhetoric despite his actions often contradicting core Islamic values. 3. **How does the book reflect the psychological profile of a dictator?** The self-portrait showcases traits consistent with narcissistic personality disorder, including grandiose self-perception, lack of empathy, and a disregard for the well-being of others. 4. What were the international responses to the book's publication and its portrayal of Amin? The international community largely rejected the book as propaganda, using it as evidence of Amin's tyrannical rule and human rights violations, furthering condemnation and calls for international interventions. 5. How can we use the analysis of this book to enhance media literacy and critical thinking skills? Examining the book's rhetorical strategies allows us to identify similar techniques used in contemporary propaganda, improving our ability to critically evaluate information sources and develop our own independent judgments, enhancing media literacy.

Idi Amin Dada: A Self-Portrait of a Tyrant

When we think of Idi Amin Dada, the first images that often come to mind are those of a formidable military dictator, a figure shrouded in both awe and terror. His reign in Uganda from 1971 to 1979 is etched into history as a period of immense bloodshed, economic devastation, and political upheaval. But beyond the headlines and the grim statistics, what kind of man was Idi Amin? To truly understand him, we must attempt to paint a self-portrait, piecing together the man from his actions, his pronouncements, and the accounts of those who knew him. This isn't a portrait of a hero, nor a simple villain, but a complex, and ultimately tragic, figure whose ambition and ruthlessness left an indelible scar on Uganda and the world.

From Humble Beginnings to Absolute Power

Idi Amin Dada Oumee was born in Koboko, in the West Nile region of Uganda, around 1925. His early life was far from privileged. He received a basic education, and it was through the colonial British army that he

found his path. Joining the King's African Rifles, Amin rose through the ranks, his imposing physique and military prowess quickly earning him recognition. He was known for his brute strength, his charm, and his ability to command respect, or at least, fear. This military background would prove instrumental in his later ascent to power. He was a skilled boxer, a former middleweight boxing champion of Uganda, a fact he often alluded to and which contributed to his image as a strongman. This physicality was a key part of his persona – the larger-than-life leader who could physically dominate any opponent. It's fascinating to consider how this athletic prowess, honed in the ring, translated into the political arena, where he sought to impose his will with similar force.

The Coup and the Rise of the "Butcher of Uganda"

In 1971, while President Milton Obote was away at a Commonwealth summit, Amin, then commander of the Ugandan army, staged a military coup. He promised to restore democracy and usher in a new era for Uganda. Initially, some Ugandans welcomed him, hoping for a change from Obote's authoritarian rule. However, this hope was short-lived. Amin's reign quickly devolved into a brutal dictatorship. Within months, his security forces began a systematic campaign of repression. Political opponents, ethnic minorities, and anyone perceived as a threat were targeted. The State Research Bureau and the Public Safety Unit became instruments of terror, responsible for widespread disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings. The exact number of victims under Amin's rule is unknown, but estimates range from 100,000 to 500,000. This is where the "Butcher of Uganda" moniker emerged. It wasn't a title he bestowed upon himself, but one earned through the sheer brutality of his regime. His self-portrait, at this stage, would have to include the chilling efficiency with which he silenced dissent.

Economic Ruin and the Expulsion of Asians

Amin's self-proclaimed genius wasn't confined to military matters. In 1972, he made a decision that would cripple Uganda's economy: the expulsion of its Asian minority. These individuals, many of whom were Ugandan citizens, controlled a significant portion of the country's businesses and trade. Amin accused them of economic sabotage and ordered them to leave within 90 days, taking only what they could carry. This act, driven by a mixture of xenophobia and a misguided attempt to "Africanize" the economy, had devastating consequences. The vacuum left by the departure of the Asians was filled by Amin's cronies and corrupt officials, leading to widespread mismanagement, shortages of essential goods, and hyperinflation. Uganda, once considered the "Pearl of Africa," was plunged into economic despair. How would Amin have painted this on his self-portrait? Perhaps he would have seen it as a bold stroke of national liberation, a reclaiming of Uganda for its true people. Yet, the reality was a self-inflicted wound that would take decades to heal.

A Charismatic, Yet Delusional, Leader

Despite the atrocities, Amin possessed a remarkable charisma that captivated many, both within Uganda and internationally. He was known for his bombastic speeches, his often bizarre pronouncements, and his flamboyant style. He declared himself "His Excellency President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Dr. Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, Conqueror of the British Empire in Africa in General and Uganda in Particular." This lengthy title, full of self-awarded accolades, speaks volumes about his ego and his desire for grandiosity. He presented himself as a pan-African hero, a champion of the oppressed, and a formidable adversary of

Western imperialism. His defiance of international norms and his outspoken criticisms of Western powers garnered him a certain notoriety and even admiration from some quarters. He was a master of propaganda, using state-controlled media to project an image of strength and popularity, even as his regime was collapsing under its own weight. His self-portrait would undoubtedly feature these elements: the strong leader, the liberator, the man who dared to stand up to the world. He might have painted himself with a halo of righteousness, a warrior for the downtrodden. However, this image would be a grotesque distortion of the reality of his actions.

The Dictator's Descent and Exile

Amin's paranoia and his erratic behavior escalated throughout his rule. He alienated international allies and his own people alike. In 1978, he ordered the invasion of Tanzania, a move that proved to be his undoing. The Tanzania People's Defence Force, with the support of Ugandan exiles, launched a counter-offensive, driving Amin out of Kampala in 1979. He fled into exile, first to Libya and then to Saudi Arabia, where he lived in relative obscurity until his death in 2003. His once-feared presence was reduced to that of a forgotten dictator, a cautionary tale of the corrupting nature of absolute power. In his final years, Amin reportedly expressed some regret, though whether this was genuine remorse or a bid for a more favorable historical legacy is a matter of debate. His self-portrait, if he had the chance to paint it in his final days, might have been more somber, perhaps tinged with a dawning awareness of the destruction he wrought. But the dominant colors would likely still be those of self-aggrandizement and a defiant pride.

The Lingering Legacy: A Complex Figure in History

Idi Amin Dada remains a deeply unsettling figure. He embodied the dark side of ambition, the destructive potential of unchecked power, and the seductive allure of demagoguery. His story is a stark reminder of how quickly a nation can descend into chaos when the rule of law is replaced by the rule of brute force. To understand Idi Amin is to grapple with the complexities of human nature. He was a man of contradictions: a charming conversationalist who ordered mass executions, a devout Muslim who was also a brutal dictator, a celebrated boxer who became a reviled tyrant. His self-portrait, if it could be truly rendered, would be a canvas filled with stark contrasts, a testament to the duality of man and the devastating consequences of a mind consumed by ego and devoid of empathy. When we look at the legacy of Idi Amin Dada, we are not just looking at the reign of a single man, but at a period that profoundly impacted Uganda's social fabric and its standing in the international community. The economic devastation, the loss of life, and the deep psychological scars left by his regime are a testament to the enduring power of a dictator's grip. His self-portrait, though perhaps never fully articulated by him, is vividly painted in the memories of those who lived through his reign and in the historical record of his destructive tenure. The echoes of his era continue to resonate, serving as a somber reminder of the fragility of democracy and the ever-present need for vigilance against the rise of tyrannical figures. His impact on Ugandan history and the broader discourse on African leadership continues to be debated and analyzed.

The General Idamin Dada Self Portrait: A Unique Expression of

Identity and Art

Idamin Dada, a notable figure in the realm of Nigerian modern art, carved a distinctive path through his self-portraits, among which the General Idamin Dada Self Portrait stands as a powerful testament to his inner world and creative philosophy. This artwork transcends mere representation; it is a layered exploration of selfhood, cultural identity, and artistic innovation. Dada's self-portraits are not simply images—they are profound visual diaries, blending personal narrative with broader social commentary.

An Intimate Window into Personal and Cultural Identity

The General Idamin Dada Self Portrait captures the essence of an artist deeply engaged with his heritage and his place within it. The use of traditional Nigerian motifs interwoven with modernist abstraction reflects a deliberate synthesis of past and present. Dada's expression, posture, and symbolic elements within the composition reveal not just a likeness but a psychological state—revealing confidence, introspection, and resilience. This self-portrait becomes more than a reflection of appearance; it serves as a mirror to the artist's inner convictions and a declaration of belonging in a rapidly evolving society. Viewers often interpret subtle references to indigenous textiles, ritual symbols, and facial markings as intentional assertions of cultural pride and resistance to homogenization in global art discourse.

Applications Beyond Aesthetics: Art as Dialogue and Empowerment

Beyond its artistic beauty, the General Idamin Dada Self Portrait functions as a catalyst for dialogue. It invites audiences to engage not only with aesthetic appreciation but also with questions of identity, authenticity, and representation. In educational and curatorial settings, it inspires conversations about postcolonial expression and the role of self-portraiture in empowering marginalized voices. The portrait's accessibility and emotional resonance make it a valuable tool for fostering empathy and understanding across diverse audiences. Additionally, it serves as inspiration for emerging artists seeking to explore personal narratives through bold, hybrid styles that bridge tradition and modernity.

Enduring Benefits and Cultural Legacy

One of the most enduring benefits of Dada's self-portrait lies in its ability to humanize the artist while elevating cultural discourse. By placing himself at the center with such intentionality, Dada asserts visibility and dignity, challenging historical omissions of African artists in global narratives. The artwork fosters a sense of connection, encouraging viewers to reflect on their own identities and stories. Its legacy continues to grow, influencing contemporary art movements that value authenticity and cultural specificity. As museums and digital platforms increasingly highlight diverse voices, the General Idamin Dada Self Portrait remains a touchstone of inspiration and a symbol of artistic integrity.

Looking Ahead: The Future of Self-Portraiture in African Art

The future of self-portraiture in African art, as exemplified by Dada's work, points toward deeper integration of personal and collective expression. With advancing technology, interactive media, and global connectivity, artists are expanding the boundaries of how identity is portrayed. The General Idamin Dada Self Portrait sets a precedent for future creators to explore self-representation with courage and

creativity. As new generations embrace hybrid visual languages, this tradition of introspective, culturally rooted self-portraiture is poised to evolve—remaining as relevant and vital as ever in shaping artistic and societal narratives.

The name Idi Amin Dada Oumee evokes a potent mix of fear, fascination, and historical controversy. A self-proclaimed "President for Life" of Uganda, his eight-year reign (1971-1979) was marked by brutal repression, economic collapse, and a personality cult that bordered on the theatrical. Yet, beyond the sensational headlines and the chilling accounts of human rights abuses, a more complex and perhaps even disturbing picture emerges when we consider 'General Idi Amin Dada: A Self-Portrait'. This enigmatic figure, through his pronouncements, actions, and the enduring legacy he left behind, offers a unique, albeit warped, window into the psyche of a dictator and the devastating impact of unchecked power.

Unpacking the Persona: The Construction of General Idi Amin Dada

Idi Amin’s rise to power was as dramatic as his subsequent fall. Seizing control in a military coup in 1971, he projected an image of a strong, decisive leader who would rid Uganda of corruption and inefficiency. He was a former boxer and a respected military man, and he expertly leveraged this image to garner initial support. His self-portraits, whether literal or metaphorical, were carefully crafted. He reveled in grand titles, frequently referring to himself as "His Excellency President for Life, Field Marshal, Al-Haj, Doctor Idi Amin Dada, VC, DSO, MC, Conqueror of the British Empire." This ostentatious display of honorifics was not merely vanity; it was a deliberate attempt to solidify his authority and project an aura of invincibility. The "Conqueror of the British Empire" title, in particular, was a potent symbol of his defiance against the former colonial power and resonated with a sense of post-colonial pride for some Ugandans, even if it was a deeply ironic claim given his later actions.

The Military Strongman Image

Amin's military background was central to his self-perception and his projection of power. He was a man of action, often seen in military uniform, exuding an air of brute strength. This image was amplified by his physical presence – a towering, imposing figure. He understood the symbolic power of military might and used it to intimidate both domestic opponents and international observers. His military parades and public displays of force were not just about security; they were performances designed to reinforce his image as the ultimate protector and enforcer of order. The consistent portrayal of himself as a disciplined military leader, even as his regime descended into chaos, highlights a core element of his self-constructed identity.

Charisma and Propaganda: A Manipulative Masterpiece

While terrifying, Amin was also undeniably charismatic. He possessed a certain swagger and a knack for connecting with ordinary people, often through his public pronouncements and carefully staged events. This charisma, however, was a double-edged sword, used as a tool of manipulation. His speeches, often broadcast widely, were a mixture of bombastic pronouncements, humorous anecdotes, and thinly veiled threats. He understood the power of propaganda and employed it effectively to shape public opinion and justify his increasingly erratic policies. The 'self-portrait' he painted for his people was one of a benevolent

father figure, a liberator, and a national hero, a stark contrast to the reality of widespread suffering and injustice. This disconnect between his public persona and the lived experiences of many Ugandans is a crucial aspect of understanding his rule.

The Mirror Cracked: The Darker Reflections in Amin's Self-Portrait

The "self-portrait" of General Idi Amin Dada is incomplete without confronting the horrific abuses that characterized his rule. The initial optimism that greeted him soon gave way to widespread fear and repression. His regime is estimated to have been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Ugandans, including political opponents, ethnic minorities, and anyone perceived as a threat. The expulsion of Uganda's ethnic Asian population in 1972, a move celebrated by Amin as a victory for Ugandanization, led to economic devastation and a significant brain drain, exposing the destructive undercurrents beneath his populist rhetoric.

Political Persecution and Human Rights Abuses

Amin's self-portrait as a strong leader was intrinsically linked to his willingness to eliminate any opposition with extreme prejudice. Dissent was not tolerated. Security forces, like the notorious State Research Bureau (SRB), became instruments of terror, engaging in arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings. The sheer scale of these atrocities suggests a chilling disregard for human life, a stark contrast to any image of a benevolent leader he may have tried to cultivate. His actions painted a self-portrait of a paranoid ruler who saw enemies everywhere and responded with brutal force. The 'general' in his title became synonymous with a reign of terror.

Economic Ruin and the Rwandan Connection

The expulsion of the Asian community, while a defining moment of his regime, was not an isolated incident. Amin's economic policies were disastrous, leading to rampant inflation, shortages of essential goods, and a collapse of the Ugandan economy. He nationalized businesses, often placing them in the hands of loyalists who lacked the expertise to manage them effectively. This economic mismanagement further eroded the quality of life for ordinary Ugandans, directly contradicting any self-image of a leader striving for national prosperity. His involvement in supporting rebel groups in neighboring countries, most notably in the lead-up to the Ugandan invasion of Tanzania in 1978, further destabilized the region and revealed a foreign policy driven by personal ambition and a desire for territorial expansion, rather than genuine national interest. This aspect of his actions, often overlooked in the immediate aftermath of his rule, adds another layer of complexity to his self-perception as a regional power broker.

The Legacy of the 'Self-Portrait': A Cautionary Tale

The fall of Idi Amin in 1979, following the Tanzanian-Ugandan War, brought an end to his reign of terror but left a deep scar on Uganda. His regime serves as a stark reminder of the dangers of unchecked power, the fragility of democracy, and the devastating consequences of ethnic and political persecution. The 'self-portrait' of General Idi Amin Dada, therefore, is not just a historical footnote; it is a critical case study in understanding the psychology of dictators and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of

unimaginable adversity.

Reckoning with the Past

For Uganda, grappling with the legacy of Amin's rule has been a long and complex process. The country has worked to rebuild its institutions, foster reconciliation, and establish mechanisms for justice and accountability. The stories of survivors and the collective memory of the atrocities serve as a constant reminder of the importance of safeguarding human rights and upholding the rule of law. The 'self-portrait' of Amin, however disturbing, is a vital part of this historical reckoning. Understanding how such a figure could gain and maintain power, and the devastating impact of his actions, is crucial for preventing similar tragedies in the future.

The Enduring Fascination with a Dictator

Despite the horrors, the figure of Idi Amin continues to fascinate. His eccentricities, his bombastic pronouncements, and the sheer audacity of his actions have made him a subject of numerous books, films, and documentaries. This enduring fascination, however, should not overshadow the suffering he inflicted. It is crucial to approach the 'self-portrait' of General Idi Amin Dada with a critical lens, recognizing the manipulative nature of his persona while acknowledging the profound impact he had on Uganda and the wider world. The 'general' was a complex figure, but his legacy is unequivocally one of immense human suffering, a chilling testament to the darkest aspects of power.

In conclusion, 'General Idi Amin Dada: A Self-Portrait' is a deeply unsettling narrative. It is a self-portrait painted with a brush dipped in arrogance, fear, and ultimately, immense destruction. While Amin may have sought to project an image of strength and benevolence, the reality of his rule painted a far darker picture, one that continues to serve as a potent and necessary cautionary tale for generations to come. His reign remains a crucial chapter in the study of 20th-century African history and the enduring challenges of building stable, just, and democratic societies.

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Questions & Answers About general idi amin dada a self portrait

No	Question	Answer

1	What is 'General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait' and why is it significant?	'General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait' is a 1974 documentary film that presents a unique and controversial portrayal of the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. Its significance lies in its direct access to Amin, allowing him to present his own narrative and image to the world, albeit through a manipulated lens.
2	Who directed 'General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait' and what was their approach?	The film was directed by Barbet Schroeder. His approach was to film Amin over several weeks, allowing him considerable freedom to speak and act directly to the camera, creating a disarmingly intimate yet ultimately unsettling portrait.
3	What kind of access did the filmmakers have to Idi Amin during the making of this film?	The filmmakers had unprecedented and intimate access to Idi Amin. They were allowed to film him in various settings, from official functions to more private moments, including rehearsals for a boxing match and interactions with his family.
4	How does Idi Amin present himself in 'A Self Portrait'?	In the film, Idi Amin attempts to project an image of a strong, charismatic, and popular leader. He speaks about his achievements, his vision for Uganda, and often engages in displays of physical prowess and humor, all while subtly reinforcing his authoritarian control.
5	What are some of the most striking or memorable moments from the film?	Memorable moments include Amin's boastful pronouncements, his choreographed displays of military might, his participation in a boxing match rehearsal, and his interactions with his various wives and children, offering glimpses into his personality and the cult of personality he cultivated.
6	Does the film offer a critical perspective on Idi Amin's rule?	The film itself is largely observational, presenting Amin's self-portrayal without overt condemnation within the narrative. However, the stark contrast between Amin's pronouncements and the known atrocities of his regime (which occurred during and after the filming) provides a deeply ironic and critical subtext for the viewer.
7	What is the controversy surrounding 'General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait'?	The main controversy stems from the film's perceived complicity in propaganda. Critics argue that by giving Amin such a platform without sufficient counterpoint, the film inadvertently helped legitimize his regime and his often-violent actions, even if unintentionally.
8	How does this film contribute to our understanding of dictatorships?	The film offers a fascinating case study in how dictatorships use media and self-presentation to maintain power. It highlights the psychological manipulation, the cult of personality, and the projection of strength that are often central to authoritarian rule.
9	What is the lasting legacy of 'General Idi Amin Dada: A Self Portrait'?	The film's legacy is complex. It remains a valuable, albeit disturbing, historical document offering a rare, direct glimpse into the mind of a notorious dictator. It serves as a powerful reminder of the dangers of unchecked power and the seductive nature of propaganda.

general idi amin dada self portrait art, idi amin dada self portrait analysis, idaman dada self portrait general description, idamin dada self portrait artistic style, idamin dada self portrait biography, self portrait idi amin dada cultural significance, idamin dada self portrait portrait style, idamin dada self portrait historical context, idamin dada self portrait artistic interpretation, idamin dada self portrait visual identity

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