

# **Our Fake History**

by

Nora Louise Syran

# OUR FAKE HISTORY

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## OUR FAKE HISTORY

### Suggested casting for 10 Females, 5 Males, 2 M/F

#### **The Students**

- (F) Charlotte (The Class President), Maid Marian\*
- (F) Belle (The Makeup Girl)
- (F) Emilie (The Newspaper Queen)
- (F) Anastasia (The New Girl), Cleopatra
- (F) Nellie (The Nerd)
- (F) Melody-Grace (The Musical Student)
- (F) Dotty (The Drama Queen)
- (M) Matthew (The Boy Next Door), Mark Antony, Isaac Newton, Robin Hood\*
- (M) Sam (The Scapegoat), Roman Senator, Ben Franklin
- (M) Jordan (The Sporty Student), Napoleon\*, King Tut\*, Archimedes\*
- (M/F) Piper (The Conspiracy Theorist)
- (M/F) Max (The Class Clown), Friar Tuck\*

#### **The Teachers**

- (M) Mr. Parker (The History Teacher)
- (M) Mr. Cole (The Principal), Octavian, John Smith, Sheriff\*
- (F) Ms. Shackleton (The Literature Teacher), Roman/Egyptian, Mummy\*, Turkish Pasha's Wife\*
- (F) Miss Simpson (Music Teacher and Newspaper Editor), Roman/Egyptian/1920s Guest, "DISNEY" Pocahontas\*
- (F) Miss Malloy (The Secretary), Servant\*, Roman/Egyptian/1920s Guest, The Real Pocahontas\*

\*nonspeaking / one line role

# OUR FAKE HISTORY

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Although the meta-theatrical element is recommended (with modern day characters playing historical ones) there is flexibility to the casting for a total of 41 roles.

### **THE STUDENTS**

- (F) Charlotte (The Class President)
- (F) Belle (The Makeup Girl)
- (F) Emilie (The Newspaper Queen)
- (F) Anastasia (The New Girl)
- (F) Nellie (The Nerd)
- (F) Melody-Grace (The Musical Student)
- (F) Dotty (The Drama Queen)
- (M) Matthew (The Boy Next Door)
- (M/F) Sam (The Scapegoat)
- (M/F) Jordan (The Sporty Student)
- (M/F) Piper (The Conspiracy Theorist)
- (M/F) Max (The Class Clown)

### **THE TEACHERS**

- (M) Mr. Parker (The History Teacher)
- (M) Mr. Cole (The Principal)
- (F) Ms. Shackleton (The Literature Teacher)
- (F) Miss Simpson (Music Teacher and Newspaper Editor)
- (F) Miss Malloy (The Secretary)

### **HISTORICAL FIGURES**

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (F) Cleopatra                | (M) Napoleon*              |
| (M) Mark Antony              | (M) King Tut*              |
| (M) Isaac Newton             | (M) Archimedes*            |
| (M) Roman Senator            | (M) Friar Tuck*            |
| (M) Ben Franklin             | (M) Sheriff of Nottingham* |
| (M) Octavian                 | (M/F) Mummy*               |
| (M) John Smith               | (M/F) Roman/Egyptian 1*    |
| (F) Turkish Pasha's Wife*    | (M/F) Roman/Egyptian 2*    |
| (F) Romanticized Pocahontas* | (M/F) Roman/Egyptian 3*    |
| (F) The Real Pocahontas*     | (M/F) 1920s Guest 1*       |
| (F) Maid Marian*             | (M/F) 1920s Guest 2*       |
| (M) Robin Hood*              | (M/F) Servant*             |

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

### Original Cast - ASEICA/CIV Valbonne, France - 2019

**Milana Alieva:** Roman/Egyptian, Anastasia Romanov  
**Olivera Bogojevic:** Cleopatra, Know It All Student  
**Sophia Bottein:** Roman/Egyptian, Music Teacher, Editor  
**Emily Cart-Grandjean:** Musical Student, Marie Antoinette  
**Myriam Cauchi:** Scientist Student, Pocahontas  
**Lohann Colle:** Octavian, Issac Newton, Principal  
**Freddy Cook:** Senator, Scapegoat Student, Archimedes  
**Loup Dudognon:** Confused Student  
**Max Gruber:** Mark Antony, Matthew Arnold, Ben Franklin  
**Ellen Hall:** Drama Queen  
**Natalia Hancock:** Sporty Student, Miss Malloy  
**Amélie Hasson:** Roman/Egyptian/Mummy, Literature Teacher  
**Annabelle de Villeneuve:** Sarcastic Student  
**Piper Hill:** Conspiracy Theorist  
**Calypso Martellini:** Roman/Egyptian, Charlotte Locus  
**Pablo Reviriego:** Class Clown  
**Parker Smith:** History Teacher  
**Emilie Venon:** Makeup Student

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

### **Production NOTES**

For Song information and Staging suggestions:  
[www.pinterest.com/SagaScripts/our-fake-history](http://www.pinterest.com/SagaScripts/our-fake-history)

### **\*\*IMPORTANT NOTICE \*\***

There are two FIRE ALARMS which are meant to sound during the play. Be sure to check the legalities of this in your region. The audience must be warned at the start of the show and the alarm and PA announcement must sound as unlike the venue's fire alarm warning as possible.  
(A Viking horn?)

OUR FAKE HISTORY

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## PROLOGUE

*Teachers and students gather on a bare stage or before a curtain. Some are dressed or posed as historical figures.*

**MR. PARKER.** Listen my children and you shall hear...

**SAM.** *(As Paul Revere in a tricorn hat.)* Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere...

**ANASTASIA.** *(As Cleopatra.)* Of Cleopatra...

**DOTTY.** *(As Marie Antoinette.)* Marie Antoinette...

**MATTHEW.** Billy the Kid...

**ENSEMBLE.** We're not done yet...

**MELODY-GRACE.** Sea monsters of a bygone age...

**MAX.** *(As a stereotypical Viking with horns. Fiercely.)* Vikings...

**ENSEMBLE.** No horns!

**MAX.** *(Removing horns. Meekly.)* Full of rage...

**JORDAN.** *(As Napoleon.)* Emperor Napoleon...

**CHARLOTTE.** *(Full of admiration.)* Who was no dope.

**SAM.** *(Now as Franklin with kite and key.)* Ben Franklin and his kite!

**CHARLOTTE.** That old trope.

**MATTHEW.** *(Holding up an apple.)* Newton's apple...

**MS. SHACKLETON.** Shakespeare's pen...

**MS. MALLOY.** The fountain of youth...

**NELLIE.** *(With a milk pail.)* Mrs. O'Leary's cow!

**PIPER.** Aliens, Atlantis... *(Indicating the stage.)* I don't know how!?

**MISS SIMPSON.** Columbus' "discovery" of the American shore.

**PRINCIPAL COLE.** John Smith and Pocahontas.

**ENSEMBLE.** There are many, many more. This is Our Fake History; tales we've been told. Things we've believed since we were only days old.

**EMILIE.** Stories we tell every man, girl and boy.

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**BELLE.** Was there really a horse in the city called Troy?

**CHARLOTTE.** Did Nero really fiddle as he watched Rome burn?

*(A School Bell rings.)*

**ENSEMBLE.** It's time we all head back to school. We've some lessons to teach and some lessons to learn...

### **SCENE ONE: HISTORY CLASS**

*Monday. History classroom. Maps, wall hangings, an antique bust on the desk. MR. PARKER, a History Teacher who loves teaching, writes "The Pyramids" on the board as the students enter, sit and open their textbooks. NELLIE organizes her writing materials, JORDAN slumps at their desk, MAX puts their feet up. MELODY-GRACE sits listening to or playing music. She carries an instrument (sitar/guitar/cello...) with her wherever she goes. EMILIE, BELLE and CHARLOTTE sit gossiping together. DOTTY sits as close as possible to them. Sound of a VIKING HORN being blown and then MS. MALLOY'S voice over the PA System.*

**MS. MALLOY.** *(Voice on Speaker.)* Good morning, Vikings! Just a quick, "Happy Monday" message from Principal Cole. *(PIPER puts a "We Believe" UFO poster on the board. Mr. Parker does not notice.)*

**PRINCIPAL COLE (V.O.).** Greetings Vikings! I want to take a moment this morning to let you know how proud we are of our student body. I want to encourage each and every one of you to get out there and make a difference! Our Varsity Swim team is already "making waves" and remember, you can too! As is tradition here at Hillsdale, Halloween week means you young citizens will be voting on Thursday for the Student Council President. Your current President, Charlotte Locus, has been doing a fine job so far. A fine job. If you want to run against her, you'll need to sign up by tomorrow to start your campaign! Good luck everyone!

**MR. PARKER.** *(Mr. Parker finishes taking attendance as Principal Cole signs off. He sighs and hops straight into the lesson.)* Good morning, class. So, today we'll continue with Ancient Egypt. There is a



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common misconception that the ancient Egyptians used slaves to create the pyramids. The Great Pyramid of Giza/

**NELLIE.** Gaza? Yeah, I think what's happening in Palestine is/

**CHARLOTTE.** Giza, Nellie! The Pyramids of Giza. In Egypt. Not Gaza. (*Charlotte looks to her friends Emilie and Belle. They laugh. Nellie quietly rearranges the pencils on her desk.*)

**MR. PARKER.** Yes, thank you, Charlotte; correct, as usual. But perhaps if you spent more time on your homework and a little less on your Presidency your grades would reflect your considerable potential? Yes, indeed. The pyramids of Giza—in Egypt, Nellie—were not built by slaves/ (*Charlotte fixes her cool eyes on Mr. Parker who is distracted by Piper reading a magazine: "Aliens in Atlantis"*)

**PIPER.** Mr. Parker, Mr. Parker! The pyramids were built by aliens.

**MR. PARKER.** Excuse me?

**PIPER.** The pyramids. I read they weren't built by slaves but by aliens.

**MR. PARKER.** Piper, you need to stop reading that ridiculous magazine/

**PIPER.** "Aliens in Atlantis" is a well respected publication, sir!

**MR. PARKER.** Not in my classroom, it isn't. Careful, Piper.

Remember: Consider the source. As I was saying... (*He sees the "We Believe" poster.*) The pyramids were not, as many of us falsely believe, built by slaves... (*He pulls the poster down.*) Nor were they constructed by aliens.

**PIPER.** But how do we know?

**EMILIE.** (*Loves arguments.*) Yeah, how do we know? We weren't there, were we?

**MR. PARKER.** No, Emilie, we weren't there. So, we can't believe any of it. Is that right? (*Mr. Parker writes "Our Fake History" on the board.*)

**BELLE.** (*Pouting her lips.*) What do you think of this shade?

**EMILIE.** It's red.

**BELLE** It's Carmine. Cleopatra invented it.

**EMILIE.** Or her slaves did.

**CHARLOTTE.** Either way, it was made from crushed ants.

**BELLE.** Ew... (*She wipes her lips off.*)

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**MR. PARKER.** So, how do we determine fact from fiction? Can history ever be objective or even accurate? So many of the stories we repeat today and believe in, may or may not have even happened. How do we know our history is really our history? How do we know we're being objective?

**NELLIE.** Objective?

**MR. PARKER.** Many of us get our history from school textbooks. But how balanced are they?

**JORDAN.** It's super important to be balanced. To eat a balanced breakfast and start the day right. First thing in the morning, I like to drink a full glass of water/

**MR. PARKER.** Balanced as in accurate. Not judging history from only one perspective. Say we're studying the winner or the loser of a certain battle... *(trying to maintain their attention)* or sporting event?

**CHARLOTTE.** History is always written by the winners. That's what my father says. So, everyone! Friday! Remember to vote--again--for me, Charlotte Locus.

**MR. PARKER.** Yes, well what your father says, Charlotte, is correct, sadly. History is often written by the winner. Yes, it's all too true. Look, when it comes to history, okay, write this down: you always have to consider the source. Can anyone think of any examples of stories we all believe from Ancient Egypt that are actually untrue? *(Belle is whispering.)*

**MR. PARKER.** Belle?

**MAX.** Ooh, Belle, Makeup Girl!

*(Emilie throws a dirty look at Max the Class Clown and/or an actual object.)*

**MR. PARKER.** Charlotte and Belle. You were talking about Cleopatra. What else do you know about her?

**BELLE.** Well, I know that Cleopatra was perhaps not the femme fatale history has painted her to be.

**CHARLOTTE.** Yeah. Like all powerful, ambitious women, she was...complicated. *(History comes alive as CLEOPATRA and MARC ANTONY enter. Cleopatra is dressed as the goddess Isis with attendants holding a golden canopy over her; Marc Antony is besotted with her.)*

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*ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MUSIC plays softly in the background (possibly played by Melody-Grace as the past and present merge.)*

**DOTTY.** Wow! Cleopatra knew how to make an entrance!

**MAX.** You would know, Drama Queen!

**PIPER.** *(Looking in textbook.)* Is it me or does Cleopatra look a lot like that new exchange student?

**NELLIE.** New student? Anastasia? The girl from Russia? *(Looks in textbook.)* Yeah, you're right! And Marc Antony looks like... Hey, Charlotte?

**CHARLOTTE.** What, Nellie?

**NELLIE.** Don't you think Marc Anthony looks a lot like Matthew?

**CHARLOTTE.** What do I care?

**NELLIE.** Matthew Arnold. Your neighbor. I heard he asked you out...

**CHARLOTTE.** Yeah, like in the 8th grade! I mean, really, Nellie. You are such a nerd. I'm the Student Council President. Do you really think I'd date someone like Matthew Arnold? He's into like, writing and poetry.

**BELLE.** But Mr. Parker, she wasn't dressed like Isis when she met Marc Anthony. It says here she was dressed as Aphrodite.

**MAX.** Oooh! Aphrodite, the goddess of love! *(ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MUSIC STOPS suddenly. Slightly irritated, CLEOPATRA changes part of her costume to look more like the goddess Aphrodite. The MUSIC STARTS again once she places herself for all to see.)*

**MR. PARKER.** Very good, Emilie. Cleopatra needed a powerful ally. She was determined to make a lasting impression on Marc Anthony. It's said, and this is a legend remember, that she perfumed the sails of her ship so you could practically smell her coming.

**BELLE.** Ew!

**MR. PARKER.** You see, as a woman and the ruler of a very rich country, Cleopatra's power and her independence were anathema to Rome/

**JORDAN.** An anathema? Is that some sort of theme song?

**MAX.** An enema! My grandmother had one of those and well/

**EMILIE.** Not an enema, you idiot, anathema! *(Mr. Parker speaks to a small box at the center of the room/theatre space.)*

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**MR. PARKER.** Okay, Mr. Know-it-All what's the definition of "anathema"?

**ROBOTIC VOICE (V.O).** Anathema: something or someone that is vehemently disliked.

**MR. PARKER.** Cleopatra's power and her independence were anathema to Rome.

**MAX.** Well, I wasn't so far off! Enema...anathema...my grandmother wasn't too pleased with it, I can tell you.

**BELLE.** They were just jealous of her beauty.

**MAX.** My grandmother's?

**BELLE.** Cleopatra's! She was anathema to the Romans because of her beauty/

**MELODY-GRACE.** What proof do we have that she was beautiful?

**MR. PARKER.** Well done, Melody-Grace.

**BELLE.** She had both Mark Antony and Julius Caesar wrapped around her little finger!

**MELODY-GRACE.** That doesn't mean she was beautiful.

**MR. PARKER.** You're right. Reliable sources indicate she was, above all, highly intelligent and charismatic. *(Cleopatra acknowledges the compliment. MUSIC.)*

**CLEOPATRA.** "Man's most valuable trait is a judicious sense of what not to believe" — Euripides. So, you still do not believe, Marcus Antonius, that I'm powerful and wealthy enough to spend 10 million sesterces on one meal?

**MARC ANTONY.** I believe we need no wager between us for you to prove your power and wealth to me, Cleopatra; we have eaten our fill. Nothing more you could bring me could sate me further.

**CLEOPATRA.** But you'll allow me this little wager, no? *(Flirtatiously.)* You'll please me...to let me...win...

**MARC ANTONY.** Very well, Cleopatra. I wager you cannot spend 10 million sesterces on one meal.

**CLEOPATRA.** Bring in the cup. *(A SERVANT enters with a cup. Cleopatra removes a pearl earring.)*

**MARC ANTONY.** You'd dissolve your own prized pearl to win this wager?

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**CLEOPATRA.** Yes, you above all men know me and of what I am capable. *(Cleopatra moves to drop the pearl into the cup but is interrupted.)*

**DOTTY.** Wow...she drank her prized pearl? That's so ...dramatic!

**MAX.** No way would a pearl dissolve like that! It's not possible.

**NELLIE.** Yes, it's possible for a pearl to dissolve... *(Cleopatra drops it into the cup.)* In vinegar... *(MUSIC stops suddenly. Cleopatra sniffs the cup. Wrinkles her nose but starts to drink.)* But it would take a few days. *(Cleopatra stops again in total frustration.)* Pearls don't just dissolve like an Alka-Seltzer!

**MARC ANTONY.** Stop! Stop! You win! You have indeed served me a meal worth 10,000 sesterces. Save your precious pearl. I'll have it set for you to wear about your lovely neck.

**DOTTY.** You see it always comes back to her beauty! She was photogenic.

**EMILIE.** Photogenic. Before cameras?

**MELODY-GRACE.** You're all worse than the Romans making up stories about her. We're back to the same old tune: once again, we're focusing on the femme fatale and not the...femme.

**BELLE.** They were just jealous of her. After her visit to Rome, everyone started dressing like her. *(Ancient music plays once again. ROMANS enter, gossiping.)*

**ROMAN 1.** Did you see what Cleopatra was wearing?

**ROMAN 2.** Yes! Red on her lips...

**ROMAN 3.** Really...?

**ROMAN 2.** Yes, and her jewelry!

**ROMAN 1.** They say she's the reincarnation of the goddess Isis!

**CHARLOTTE.** But if they were so into her, then why was she an an.../

**MR. PARKER.** Anathema. What better way to discredit someone than to make up stories about them? *(Charlotte smiles to herself.)* Cleopatra's history was recorded by her enemies in Rome. There was a propaganda war going on in 33 BC. Romans were battling it out over who would dominate the whole of the Mediterranean.

**CHARLOTTE.** History is always written by the winners. *(MUSIC plays once more. Romans gossip, carrying on despite interruptions.)*

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**ROMAN 1.** Marcus Antonius has been seduced by that witch Queen Cleopatra!

**MAX.** Marcus, who?

**NELLIE:** Marc Antony!

**ROMAN 3.** Our General and the Egyptian?

**ROMAN 1.** Yes! Cleopatra has bewitched him!

**ROMAN 2.** Look. He's just had this coin minted.

**ROMAN 1.** A new denarius? Let me see.

**ROMAN 2.** See what's written, there: ANTONI ARMENIA DEVICTA

**ROMAN 1.** FOR ANTONY, ARMENIA HAVING BEEN  
VANQUISHED.

**ROMAN 3.** Marc Antony is so handsome. It's a good likeness. I saw him once, you know. Standing as close as you are to me now. I could hardly breathe.

**ROMAN 2.** But look here! He's printed Cleopatra on the other side!  
CLEOPATRÆ REGINÆ REGUM FILIORUM QUE REGUM

**ROMAN 1.** TO CLEOPATRA, QUEEN ABOVE THE KINGS AND  
THEIR SONS

**ROMAN 2.** He's only interested in her money, surely.

**ROMAN 3.** Were her nose shorter, she wouldn't be regarded as so beautiful... (*Gossiping, the Romans exit.*)

**CHARLOTTE.** Wait, they minted coins like...tweets? That's a good idea.

**MR. PARKER.** Well, not exactly tweets, but they did use coins as propaganda, yes. The people often learned of a new Roman Emperor when coins appeared with the new Emperor's portrait and his motto/

**JORDAN.** Motto? Like the new slogan on my Varsity jacket!

VIKINGS, VIKINGS, WE'RE SO COOL

OUR VARSITY WILL MAKE YOU DROOL.

**EMILIE.** That's just plain stupid.

**CHARLOTTE.** It's brilliant. Repeat something often enough and people will believe it.

**BELLE.** How many times do I need to tell you that Vikings did not wear horns!

**JORDAN.** What?

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**BELLE.** You asked me to design your logo, but honestly... horned helmets? I'm sorry, Vikings did not wear horns on their heads.

**MAX AND JORDAN.** No horns. No fun.

**CHARLOTTE.** *(Aside to Max and Jordan.)* I agree. Horns are fun. Just ignore her. If you vote again for me, I'll be sure you keep your horns.

**NELLIE.** Sir, is it true that the Vikings discovered America?

**PIPER.** I heard it was actually the Chinese... *(Antony and Cleopatra are a bit lost as to what to do now that they are no longer the center of the students' attention.)*

**MELODY-GRACE.** There we go again with the European bias!

**MR. PARKER.** Okay, okay! Settle down, everyone. It's true, Vikings did not wear horns. Leif Erickson discovered Newfoundland, Canada, and, as advanced as the Chinese were... No, they did not discover America. The Vikings were the first to find what we now know as North America.

**MELODY-GRACE.** You mean, of course, except for the natives already here.

**MR. PARKER.** Yes. Of course. Thank you, Melody-Grace. The Vikings probably would have met the ancestors of the Algonquin. Good questions, everyone. Thinking critically. That's good. But let's stay focused, shall we? Ancient Rome and Egypt. The Romans did not exactly mint coins like tweets, it was more like/ *(ROMAN SENATOR and OCTAVIAN enter, plotting. Antony and Cleopatra freeze.)*

**ROMAN SENATOR.** My dear Octavian/

**NELLIE.** Wait! Is that the Roman emperor who was playing the fiddle while Rome was burning? What was his name?

**MELODY-GRACE.** Nero.

**BELLE.** No, look what he's wearing! That's a Roman Senator not an emperor!

**ROMAN SENATOR.** My dear Octavian, if everyone believes/ *(They are put off as their scene is constantly interrupted.)*

**PIPER.** Is it me or does he look like Sam? Where is Sam anyway?

**EMILIE.** Principal's office.

**PIPER.** Again?

**NELLIE.** No, not him, the other one! Is that Nero?

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**MR. PARKER.** No, no, no! That one, on the right, that's Octavian, he'll become Emperor later. Nero's another emperor, much, much later.

**MELODY-GRACE.** And Nero didn't play the violin while Rome burned to the ground; the violin hadn't even been invented yet!

**BELLE.** A Roman would not be walking around wearing a laurel crown!

**NELLIE.** Huh? *(Octavian removes his crown and looks at it, puzzled.)*

**BELLE.** The crown of bay leaves! It would only be worn on special occasions/

**MAX.** Like becoming Student Council President? Eh, Belle? *(This is unwelcome news to Charlotte.)*

**BELLE.** Oh, Charlotte, I... I was going to tell you. *(Panicking.)* Matthew is running, too! You didn't let me choose the theme for the Spring Fling, so some of the others put me up to it. *(The "others" back away/turn away from her. Charlotte is seething with anger at her friend running against her.)*

**MR. PARKER.** Well, well... This is Octavian, who through some careful maneuvering/

**CHARLOTTE.** You mean politics/

**MR. PARKER.** I mean plotting and murdering, Charlotte. He became the Emperor of the Western Roman Empire/

**BELLE.** Without a laurel wreath! *(Octavian throws down his crown in frustration. Mr. Parker retrieves it and playfully places it on the top of the head of an antique bust. The Romans are relieved to finally carry on their plotting.)*

**ROMAN SENATOR.** My dear Octavian, if everyone believes Marcus Antonius has been seduced by this Ptolemaic vixen and is in no fit state to rule Rome, you will win the/

**OCTAVIAN.** The entire empire. Not just the west.

**ROMAN SENATOR.** Once Romans truly fear for their precious General Marcus Antonius and the safety of the Empire in the hands of this witch, Cleopatra, we'll declare war on her and take her lands in the east.

**OCTAVIAN.** Cleopatra's not to be trifled with; she's a dangerously smart woman.



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**ROMAN SENATOR.** Yes, yes, but men rule women, Octavian, and this woman stands in the way of you ruling the world.

**OCTAVIAN.** True. I must, therefore, make everyone believe Marcus Antonius has been bewitched by her... Seduced by her... I must convince them to attack her to free him—and the Egyptian Empire, of course—all of it, from her clutches! And to mark the occasion of my victory, I'll mint a new denarius.

**ROMAN SENATOR.** What a glorious way to mark the occasion of our...your... rightful victory over Egypt. (*Spelling the words in the air.*)  
EGYPT CAPTURED

**OCTAVIAN.** (*Also spelling in the air.*) AEGYPTO CAPTA!

**NELLIE.** Wait, lies were told about her because the Romans were threatened by her? (*A SERVANT delivers a basket to Cleopatra.*)

**MELODY-GRACE.** They said she bewitched Marc Antony, so the Romans would fight to free him from her, which gave Octavian the chance to take over the East.

**PIPER.** Fake News!

**MR. PARKER.** Yes, fake news is old news. (*Octavian and the Roman Senator exit. Cleopatra takes an asp from the basket and holds it up to herself, ready to let it bite her. At the same time, Marc Antony unsheathes his sword, ready to commit suicide. They freeze in a tableau.*) Disinformation can be deadly. Like Romeo and Juliet, Marc Antony, believing the news that his lover, Cleopatra was dead, stabbed himself with his own sword. (*Marc Antony stabs himself with his sword and falls.*) With her powerful Roman ally and lover gone, Cleopatra died by her own hand—as the story goes—by snake bite. (*As Cleopatra brings the snake closer the MUSIC STOPS.*) People have been making up false stories for centuries. Stories that become history. Written by the "winners". (*Pause.*) Ancient Egypt is full of fact and fiction. Just look at the Sphinx.

**PIPER.** Yeah, Napoleon's army used it for target practice.

**MR. PARKER.** Wrong!

**PIPER.** What?

**MR. PARKER.** Just because people tell stories for centuries, it doesn't mean they're true.

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**PIPER.** Now you're going to tell us Napoleon wasn't short!

**JORDAN.** He wasn't. He was above average for his time.

**NELLIE.** But the Napoleon complex?

**MR. PARKER.** Be careful. Just because it makes a good story or psychology, doesn't mean it's true. Like I said, Ancient Egypt is full of fact and fiction. *(SAM enters with a late pass.)*

**SAM.** Sorry for being late, Mr. Parker.

**MR. PARKER.** Principal Cole's office again, eh, Sam?

**SAM.** Yeah, but I swear it's not me pulling the fire alarms! Fact.

**MR. PARKER.** Okay, Sam. Take your seat. *(Piper raises a hand.)* Yes, Piper?

**PIPER.** Did they really have unwrapping parties in the 1920s?

**DOTTY.** Oh, I love the 1920s! I can't decide on my costume for Halloween! Do I go as a Flapper or Marie Antoinette?

**NELLIE.** You do know that there were very few Flappers in the 20s?!

**BELLE.** Oh, shush, Nellie! Flappers are fun! You could go as Marie Antoinette and save your Flapper costume for the Spring Fling. I've chosen the 1920s!

**CHARLOTTE.** The President chooses the theme. You're not the Student Council President/

**BELLE.** Yet.

**DOTTY.** Unwrapping parties? Like presents? I love presents!

**EMILIE.** They didn't unwrap presents, Dotty! They unwrapped mummies.

**DOTTY.** Ew... *(1920s MUSIC plays. The history classroom becomes a parlor for an "Unwrapping Party". A MUMMY lies on the teacher's desk. GUESTS in 1920s costumes enter.)*

**GUEST #1.** Have you heard about the death of Lord Carnarvon?

**GUEST #2.** The archaeologist who discovered King Tut's tomb?

**GUEST #1.** No, not Howard Carter, the archaeologist. His financier. The Money.

**GUEST #1.** It was the curse of the Pharaohs, they say.

**GUEST #2.** Yes! I heard there was an inscription above the entrance to the tomb: "Death shall come on swift wings to him that toucheth the tomb of a Pharaoh."

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

**GUEST #1.** They say all the lights in Cairo went out the moment he died.

**GUEST #2.** And his canary too, no?

**GUEST #1.** Yes, bitten by a cobra on the day the tomb was opened.

**GUESTS.** The curse of the Pharaohs.

**GUEST #2.** Should we start the unwrapping?

**MR. PARKER.** Hold it, hold it, hold it! (*The MUSIC STOPS suddenly with the sound trope of a needle SCRATCHING across a phonograph record.*) That's not quite right. It was the Victorians who held unwrapping parties. Buying mummies and hosting parties while they unwrapped them, layer by layer.

**DOTTY.** Ew!

**NELLIE.** Queen Victoria, Victorians? (*The GUESTS exit irritated to be in the wrong costumes. The mummy remains.*)

**BELLE.** But the fashion of the 20s is much better. No woman should have been forced to wear a corset. The corset is the symbol of the patriarchal/

**DOTTY.** Short dresses with fringe are much more fun!

**MR. PARKER.** You can't change history—even fashion history—just because you don't like it. To answer your question: While Egyptomania was rampant in the 1920s, unwrapping parties had thankfully gone out of fashion by then.

**PIPER.** But King Tut's curse is real! Just like the Curse of the Unlucky Mummy is real! I've read all about it. It was stolen from the temple of Amen-ra. They say it was on board the Titanic! And we all know what happened to the Titanic...

**MR. PARKER.** I don't know much about this Unlucky Mummy and the Titanic, but you are right about one thing, Piper. After the discovery of King Tutankhamen's tomb, soon every death of anyone with the slightest connection to the excavation was blamed upon...The Curse/ (*The school bell RINGS and everyone starts as the MUMMY jolts up, gasping for breath, as if come suddenly to life. Mr. Parker laughs.*) Everyone loves a good mystery! (*The actor playing the Mummy tears off the tight bandages and then exits.*) That's the problem. The truth is often, boring. The truth is, Piper, the Unlucky Mummy you are talking about is not

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

lying at the bottom of the ocean with the Titanic. It's on display in room 62 of the British Museum. In London, England. So, everyone!

Remember to think about how history is made. Every day. Keep your eyes and ears open, this week and always/

**THE CLASS.** Consider the source.

### **SCENE TWO: MUSIC CLASS**

*Monday just after History class. The students head to Music class with MISS SIMPSON. Melody-Grace sits ready to accompany the rehearsal. Students slowly trickle in to form a choir. Belle approaches Charlotte.*

**BELLE.** Don't you just love Mr. Parker?

**CHARLOTTE.** *(Brushing Belle off.)* Yeah. *(She begins to exit.)*

**DOTTY.** Where you going, Charlotte?

**CHARLOTTE.** To see Mr. Cole. I'm dropping "Our Fake History." Waste of time.

**DOTTY.** But you need a history class to graduate! And...you're skipping music class? You'll miss the rehearsal.

**CHARLOTTE.** Oh, Miss Simpson won't mind. Mr. Cole will speak with her and to Mr. Parker... *(Charlotte leaves. MATTHEW enters.)*

**BELLE.** Sorry, Matthew. Charlotte knows.

**MATTHEW.** Knows what?

**BELLE.** That we're both running for class president.

**MATTHEW.** Oh, that. Well...

**BELLE.** Against her!

**MATTHEW.** Yeah, well...

**BELLE.** She's not the same Charlotte you knew in 8th grade, you know.

**MATTHEW.** That's what you think. I know her... and/

**BELLE.** You'll keep trying to ask her out?

**MATTHEW.** Yeah.

**BELLE.** Oh, Matthew. *(They're swept up in the students arranging themselves into a choir formation for "Old King Tut" by H. Von Tilzer & W. Jerome 1923)*

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

**MISS SIMPSON.** Okay, class. Let's try this again from the top. Pitch please.

*(Melody-Grace gives the pitch.)*

**MAX.** Hey, mister!

**SAM.** Yes?

**MAX.** Can you tell me where King Toot-Toot-and-Come-In's tomb is?

**SAM.** Ha-ha! Why, tut, tut, tut, my boy! You mean King Tutankhamen's tomb.

**MAX.** Aye, that's the man. Do you know anything about him?

**SAM.** Do I know anything about him? Why, you just listen to me.

*(Jordan the Sporty Student enters as KING TUT. Anastasia enters as Cleopatra.)*

**STUDENTS.** *(Singing.)*

THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO

IN HISTORY WE KNOW

KING TUTANKHAMEN RULED A MIGHTY LAND

HE RULED FOR MANY YEARS

'MID LOTS OF SONG AND CHEERS

HE MADE A RECORD THAT WILL ALWAYS STAND

WHY, THEY OPENED UP HIS TOMB THE OTHER DAY

AND JUMPED WITH GLEE

THEY LEARNED A LOT OF ANCIENT HISTORY *(Cleopatra sits awkwardly on King Tut's knee. Students attempt choreographed moves: "Egyptian" poses etc.)*

IN OLD KING TUT-TUT-TUTANKHAMEN'S DAY

*(Sam and Max the Class Clown mess about.)*

BENEATH THE TROPIC SKIES

KING TUT-TUT-TUT WAS VERY WISE

NOW OLD KING TUT-TUT-TUT WAS ALWAYS GAY

CLEOPATRA, SHE

SAT UPON HIS KNEE

PAT, THAT'S WHERE SHE SAT

*(Melody-Grace gives up and stops playing, lost in thought. Then tries to catch up.)*

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

THE GIRLS WOULD DANCE FOR HIM AND EV'RY MOVE A  
TREAT

THEY'D MOVE AND MOVE AND MOVE BUT NEVER MOVE  
THEIR FEET

A THOUSAND GIRLS WOULD DANCE EACH DAY

*(Melody-Grace gives up and stops playing catch up completely.)*

WITH LOTS OF HIP, HIP, HIP HOORAY

IN OLD KING TUT-TUT-TUT-TUT-TUT-TUT

KING TUTTY'S DAY

**MISS SIMPSON.** Okay, stop, stop, stop! Melody-Grace. You've stopped playing. Again. What is it, this time? The tempo? The articulation? Do please tell us what it is that's disturbing your fine artistic sensibilities this time?

**MELODY-GRACE.** Miss Simpson, the song doesn't make any sense. Mr. Parker/

**MISS SIMPSON.** This is a music class, not history class. It's a bit of fun! Let's get back to rehearsal, shall we?

**MELODY-GRACE.** It's just that Mr. Parker said we should think critically. So, I mean... what I want to say is... weren't there at least a thousand years between King Tut and Cleopatra? How on earth could she sit on his knee? He'd be all dried out and mummified bones by then!

**ANASTASIA.** *(Hopping up from King Tut's knee.)* Ew!

**NELLIE.** Consider the source.

**PIPER.** *(Conspiratorially.)* Even our teachers are lying to us!

**MISS SIMPSON.** Okay, that's enough for today. *(Anastasia and Jordan remove their costumes. Students chat as they collect their belongings.)*

**NELLIE.** We're only singing this song 'cause it's in the public domain. It's really old: 1923.

**MAX.** 1923. Wow, yeah and I thought the 1980s was a long time ago.

**MISS SIMPSON.** Start learning those lyrics. Who knows, we may be able to sing it this year for the Spring Sing and we'll want it snappy. Oh, I nearly forgot! Campaigning for Student Council President starts tomorrow! It's not too late to sign up, so let Ms. Shackleton know if you're interested in running. You'll be able to choose this year's theme for the Spring Sing & Fling! I hope the theme will be the 1920s! *(To*

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

*Max and Sam.) I need to talk with you two...and you/ (Miss Simpson points an accusatory finger at the Sporty Student, Jordan.) Stopping wiggling!*

**JORDAN.** But Miss Simpson, I'm a kinesthetic learner! *(The BELL RINGS. Miss Simpson exits with Max and Sam. Jordan smiles at Anastasia who is hanging behind, gathering up her belongings. Jordan then runs after Miss Simpson.)*

### SCENE THREE: HALLWAY

*Monday just after Music class. Students come and go. Melody-Grace, Belle and Dotty are talking.*

**MELODY-GRACE.** All I said was King Tut and Cleopatra never actually met.

**BELLE.** Who cares! It's a great song and will be perfect for this year's Spring Sing and a 1920s Spring Fling theme.

**DOTTY.** I agree. And I think we should all wear flapper dresses/

**BELLE & DOTTY.** With fringe! *(Charlotte and Emilie enter.)*

**CHARLOTTE.** We don't know what this year's Spring theme will be, do we/ *(Snaps her fingers.) Dotty. (Dotty moves obediently from beside Belle to Charlotte.)*

**CHARLOTTE.** You need to be elected first, Belle, to choose the themes for the school dances. When I'm elected President—again—I'll have more important things to think about first than the Spring Fling. There's the Fall Ball coming up, then Snowcoming, the raffle, ...do you really think you're up to it, Belle? The long campaign? The politics? *(Students come and go. Charlotte turns away to talk with Dotty and Emilie. In the hushed electrified gossipy whispers that follow, Matthew has worked up the courage to ask her out.)*

**MATTHEW.** Hi, Charlotte. I was wondering. The Fall Ball is on Friday. I was wondering if ...well, if you would want to... *(Charlotte ignores Matthew. Dotty is embarrassed for Matthew. Belle, concerned,*

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

*watches from a distance. Matthew eventually exits. Head bowed low. Belle watches him go.)*

**CHARLOTTE.** We start the campaign first thing tomorrow morning, Dotty. Dotty? We can't afford to lose one vote. Here's the list of things to do. *(Charlotte sends Dotty a message on her phone which DINGS. Dotty scrolls through a long list.)* And Emilie, I have a glowing article about me for the paper for Wednesday which you'll print, of course, my dear Newspaper Queen. And Dotty, my dear Drama Queen. With me as President, of course, we'll rule the school. Again.

**DOTTY.** But I'll never be able to get all of this done in time! And I have to sew my Halloween costume, too! I've decided I am going as Marie Antoinette. Did you know she had her head chopped off?

**CHARLOTTE.** Save the drama for the stage, Dotty.

**DOTTY.** *(Naively.)* Okay! *(Charlotte, Dotty and Emilie exit. Nellie and Jordan the Sporty Student join Belle and Melody-Grace.)*

**NELLIE.** How are you planning to run your campaign, Belle?

**BELLE.** I've Snap-Chatted a few people... and my Instagram numbers are looking good. And you're all voting for me, right? *(Phone DINGS.)* Oh, look, I just got another Like! I just love that...it makes me feel/

**NELLIE.** Dopamine.

**BELLE.** Don't be rude.

**NELLIE.** No. Dopamine. It's a chemical reaction you have to the "Likes" you're getting.

**JORDAN.** And when you don't get them, it's really depressing. Like when I don't get my run in every day.

**BELLE.** Yeah, tell me about it. I really want to win this election and choose the Spring theme.

**NELLIE.** Well, do you have a platform?

**BELLE.** Platforms. Good idea! I love those. They'll make me look so much taller! I'll have much more of a presence/

**NELLIE.** No, not platform shoes. What sort of changes do you want to bring to the school? Improvements? *(Piper joins them. Hovering as usual.)*

**MELODY-GRACE.** The music department needs a new piano.



## OUR FAKE HISTORY

**JORDAN.** My dad ran on the same track in the Fieldhouse—and he’s really old. Coach says it needs a complete overhaul/

**NELLIE.** And the cafeteria...Someone said they saw a rat!

**PIPER.** And they've stopped serving French fries! (*They react accordingly. French fries being of prime importance. Anastasia enters, walks past them.*)

**MELODY-GRACE.** Well, you're sure to get more votes than that new girl anyway. Talk about marching to your own drummer.

**NELLIE.** Wait, do you mean to tell me that Russian exchange student is running for Class President, too?

**JORDAN.** Anastasia's an exchange student?

**PIPER.** Anastasia is running for President?

**MELODY-GRACE.** Get out! She hardly knows anyone! She has a snowball's chance in... Hades.

**PIPER.** And have you heard the latest about her?

**MELODY-GRACE.** No...

**PIPER.** Okay. Keep this to yourself: I heard from someone—who heard from someone else—that she was caught cheating in her old school and was sent here, to Hillsdale!

**JORDAN.** Cheating? Anastasia Romanov cheating? I don't know/

**NELLIE.** On what? Or on who? Or is that whom?

**JORDAN.** Who cares! But she's really smart and hard working.

**NELLIE.** Cheating on her boyfriend, then....?

**MELODY-GRACE.** The one who looks like a Neanderthal?

**NELLIE.** Anastasia, the exchange student, has a boyfriend?

**MELODY-GRACE.** But you just told me...? (*Anastasia walks past again, a bit lost. Alone. Hugging her books.*)

**PIPER.** Wait, her name is Romanov, like THE Romanovs?

**JORDAN.** Who are the Romanovs?

**MELODY-GRACE.** Like “Ra-Ra-Rasputin”? Russian Queen lover? Romanovs?

**PIPER.** The missing Anastasia Romanov!? Daughter of the Tsar! (*They watch Anastasia as she walks past again, obviously lost.*)

**NELLIE.** Not THE Romanovs, obviously. Not everything is a conspiracy, you know, Piper! Hurry up, we're late for class. Come on!

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

**MELODY-GRACE.** Oh, that naughty boy, Rasputin... Was he really the lover of the Russian Queen? *(Thinks it over.)* Ew! *(She puts on headphones and exits.)*

*(MUSIC: If permission is granted— Boney M's "Ra Ra Rasputin" — otherwise the second half of the Turkish folk song "Kâtibim," the source of the pop song which plays loudly as the students gather for the next scene.)*

### SCENE FOUR: COURTYARD

*Tuesday morning in the courtyard. Ms. Malloy's voice squawks over the PA system.*

**MS. MALLOY (V.O).** Happy Tuesday, Vikings! Campaigns for Student Council President start today. Just a friendly reminder that posters and other announcements should only be posted on designated bulletin boards. Remember, tomorrow is Halloween! Get those costumes ready and don't forget to cast your vote on Thursday for Student Council President! And get your tickets for Friday's Fall Ball! *(Matthew and Belle enter.)*

**BELLE.** Hi, Matthew. You're missing out not taking Mr. Parker's history elective this year. We're learning about Fake History.

**MATTHEW.** Yeah, I heard. Sounds really cool. I've got chemistry instead. Failed it last year and need the credit to graduate. I'm liking physics, though. Don't you? I like the stories. Newton and his apple. Did you do the homework on gravity?

**BELLE.** Sort of... *(Max the Class Clown enters.)*

**MAX.** Hey, guys! What happened to your posters? You just put 'em up.

**MATTHEW.** Someone ripped 'em down. I don't know. I only ran for president to/

**BELLE.** Get Charlotte Locus's attention!

**MAX.** I bet you she's the one who is tearing them down.

*(Charlotte and Dotty, loaded down with posters, walk past them.)*

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

**MATTHEW.** No. Charlotte wouldn't do that. I'm running 'cause I just thought it would look good for university applications, but I'm not really a leader-type.

**BELLE.** Your posters look great. The one I saw. You're a good writer.

**MATTHEW.** Yeah, if anyone stops long enough to read the ones that haven't been ripped down yet.

**BELLE.** Charlotte certainly has the self-promotion gene thing going for her.

**MATTHEW.** Yeah, it's really hard to talk yourself up, huh? I'm good on paper, but ...speeches. Ugh. Wait! Aren't you running, too? I haven't seen your posters.

**BELLE.** I changed my mind. I'm still running, officially...but I've got a good feeling about you. People like you.

**MATTHEW.** People like you, too.

**BELLE.** They don't really know me. I was only running so I could choose the theme for the dances. That's pretty shallow, huh? Anyway, I read your ideas. You're good. You're honest. And kind. So, hey, when you win, could you let me help organize the Spring Fling? *(Matthew nods and holds out a hand. They shake. They exit together. Nellie joins Max the Class Clown. Teachers hurry students along.)*

**MAX.** Did you do the homework?

**NELLIE.** We just had to read up on Isaac Newton, that's all.

**MAX.** Oh, man. I read up on Archimedes.

**NELLIE.** That's for next week.

**MR. PARKER.** Let's get to class everyone.

**MAX.** Give me your book, will you?

**NELLIE.** When are you going to buy your own?

**MAX.** When you stop lending me yours! *(ISAAC NEWTON enters holding an apple. Max flips through the book.)* Huh. According to this there was no apple. It was just a story Isaac Newton told over and over again until it became his explanation of the laws of gravity. There was no apple at all! Not one that fell on his head, anyway. It's like that Eureka moment of that other guy. What was his name...?

**NELLIE.** Archimedes. I thought you said you read that chapter already?

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

**ISAAC NEWTON.** (*Crafting his story.*) After dinner, the weather being warm, the sun... No, no, no... Out in the countryside, far from the plague raging in London, I found myself in quarantine.

**MAX.** Quarantine?

**NELLIE.** Eighteen months of it...

**MAX.** That's rough.

**ISAAC NEWTON.** After months of quarantine, we went into the garden and drank tea under the shade of an apple tree/

**MAX.** Come on, Newton! It needs to be snappier! Drinking tea?

**ISAAC NEWTON.** (*Trying again.*) I was once in just the same situation, as when formerly the notion of gravitation came to my mind. I asked myself/

**MAX.** No, no, no, no, no... (*Max hops up into the scene to help. Isaac Newton, at first hesitant, gets more involved and more relaxed with his own story.*)

**MAX.** The story will never become "real" if you can't tell it properly!

**NELLIE.** Just ask Darwin.

**ISAAC NEWTON.** Who?

**NELLIE.** Charles Darwin. He's after your time. It was actually his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, who came up with the theory of evolution.

**MAX.** Get out!

**NELLIE.** Yeah, but he wrote it out in a footnote of a ridiculously long, boring poem...which no one read/

**MAX.** Except his grandson, Charles Darwin, obviously.

**NELLIE.** Obviously.

**ISAAC NEWTON.** Evolution?

**NELLIE.** Never mind.

**ISAAC NEWTON.** Snappier, eh? All right. Why should an apple always descend perpendicularly to the ground?

**MAX.** Hmm... Let me? Maybe a shift in the point of view would help. (*Dramatically.*) A young Isaac Newton is sitting beneath an apple tree contemplating the mysteries of the universe when suddenly/ (*Nellie takes the apple and drops it BOINK on Newton's head. It rolls onto the*

## OUR FAKE HISTORY

*ground just as ARCHIMEDES comes running in, half naked—one hand holding up a towel and the other a golden crown.)*

**MAX.** Boink! – an apple hits him on the head and/

**ARCHIMEDES & ISAAC NEWTON.** EUREKA! *(Dotty and Emilie enter. Stand staring. Dumbfounded. Dotty is holding rolls of poster paper.)*

**MAX.** He discovers the universal law of gravity!

**DOTTY.** Who is that? *(While Newton stands looking at the apple, Archimedes stands, with his towel, contemplating the crown and the mysteries of the universe.)*

**NELLIE.** This is Isaac Newton and that...is Archimedes.

*(Realizing everyone is staring at him, Archimedes slinks off, towel half covering his body, the crown held to cover his groin. Newton exits, also deep in thought.)* The displacement of water theory...? The principle of buoyancy? Never mind. According to legend, Archimedes was having his usual bath at the tepidarium when, after spilling water over the edge, he worked out that the crown was not pure gold.

**EMILIE.** Another obviously preposterous story. Why would the King give him his crown? To bring to the public baths? And why would he go running naked through the streets shouting "Eureka"?

**MAX.** Fake news! Here, Nellie, you can have your book back. *(Hands it back.)*

**EMILIE.** What other bogus chapter in the history of science were we meant to read for today?

**NELLIE.** Benjamin Franklin's "discovery" of electricity.... *(Sam enters dressed as Benjamin Franklin with kite and key in hand. Sound of thunder, a storm brewing.)*

**SAM AS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.** So, do I have everything I need? A kite, a string, a metal key (pause) lightning. What could possibly go wrong? *(A fire alarm sounds.)*

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