

born to run book

Born to Run Book: An In-Depth Exploration of the Ultimate Running Narrative

The Born to Run book has captivated runners, athletes, and health enthusiasts worldwide since its publication. Written by Christopher McDougall, this compelling work blends adventure, science, and personal storytelling to explore the origins of human running and how it shapes our identity. Whether you're a seasoned marathoner or a casual jogger, understanding the insights and stories within Born to Run can transform your approach to running and fitness. This article delves into the core themes of the Born to Run book, its impact on running culture, and key lessons to help you harness your innate running abilities.

Overview of the Born to Run Book

The Born to Run book was first published in 2009 and quickly became a bestseller, inspiring countless readers to lace up their shoes and hit the trails. It chronicles Christopher McDougall's journey into the world of ultra-running, the mysterious and legendary Tarahumara tribe of Mexico, and the science behind human endurance. The book blends storytelling, anthropology, and biomechanics, making it both an engaging read and a valuable resource for runners seeking to improve their performance and understanding.

What Is the Born to Run Book About?

At its core, the Born to Run book investigates:

- The origins of human running and evolution
- The extraordinary endurance of the Tarahumara people
- The science of barefoot running and natural biomechanics
- Strategies for injury prevention and performance enhancement
- The cultural significance of running in different societies

Chris McDougall's narrative explores how modern footwear and training methods have led to injuries and burnout among runners, contrasting this with the natural running style of indigenous tribes like the Tarahumara.

Key Themes and Ideas in the Born to Run Book

The Born to Run book emphasizes several themes that challenge conventional wisdom about running and fitness. Understanding these core ideas can help you adopt healthier, more sustainable running habits.

The Evolutionary Perspective

Humans Are Built to Run

One of the central messages in the Born to Run book is that humans are inherently designed for running. Unlike many animals that rely on speed or strength, humans excel at endurance running due to:

- Upright posture and bipedal gait
- Efficient cooling through sweating
- Long-distance stamina, honed over millennia

McDougall suggests that running was crucial for early humans' survival, aiding in hunting and scavenging. The book argues that our evolutionary history is rooted in endurance running, a trait that remains latent but can be rediscovered.

The Tarahumara: Masters of Endurance

Who Are the Tarahumara?

The Tarahumara, also known as Rarámuri, are an indigenous Mexican tribe renowned for their incredible long-distance running abilities. They often run hundreds of miles in traditional sandals called huaraches, without modern athletic shoes.

Their Running Philosophy

The Tarahumara's approach emphasizes:

- Running for joy and community
- Minimalist footwear or barefoot running
- Respect for nature and tradition

McDougall's interactions with the Tarahumara reveal a culture that views running as a natural, integral part of life rather than a competitive sport.

The Science of Barefoot and Minimalist Running

Rethinking Running Shoes

The Born to Run book explores the idea that modern running shoes, with thick cushioning and arch support, may actually hinder natural biomechanics and contribute to injuries.

Benefits of Barefoot Running

Research and anecdotal evidence presented in the book highlight several advantages:

- Improved running form and reduced impact forces
- Strengthening of foot muscles and tendons
- Lower risk of injuries such as shin splints, stress fractures, and plantar fasciitis

The book advocates for transitioning gradually to barefoot or minimalist running shoes to reconnect with our natural running style.

Injury Prevention and Performance

Common Running Injuries

McDougall discusses how improper footwear and running techniques can lead to:

- Overuse injuries
- Joint problems
- Muscle imbalances

Solutions Proposed

The Born to Run book encourages:

- Focusing on proper form

- Building strength gradually
- Incorporating barefoot or minimalist running into training

This holistic approach aims to create healthier, more efficient runners.

Running as a Cultural and Personal Practice

The Joy of Running

Beyond performance, the Born to Run book emphasizes running as a source of joy, community, and self-discovery. It advocates for embracing running as a natural, fun activity rather than a stressful competition.

Connecting with Nature and Tradition

The book encourages runners to appreciate cultural traditions and connect with nature, drawing inspiration from tribes like the Tarahumara.

Impact of the Born to Run Book on Running Culture

Since its release, the Born to Run book has had a profound influence on how many view running and fitness.

Popularization of Barefoot and Minimalist Running

The book played a pivotal role in sparking a movement toward barefoot running and minimalist footwear, leading to the emergence of brands like Vibram FiveFingers and Merrell.

Shift Towards Natural Movement

Many runners and coaches now emphasize natural gait, strength training, and injury prevention strategies aligned with the principles outlined in Born to Run.

Increased Interest in Ultra-Marathons and Trail Running

The book's stories of endurance races and tribal running traditions have inspired a surge in participation in ultra-distance events and trail running.

Critical Perspectives and Controversies

While the Born to Run book has inspired many, some experts caution against abrupt transitions to barefoot running, emphasizing the importance of proper technique and consultation with professionals.

Lessons from the Born to Run Book for Runners

Whether you're an experienced athlete or a casual jogger, the Born to Run book offers valuable lessons to improve your running experience.

Embrace Your Natural Running Style

Focus on Form

- Keep your posture upright and relaxed
- Land softly on the midfoot or forefoot
- Shorten stride length to reduce impact

Transition Gradually

- Start by incorporating barefoot or minimalist running in short sessions
- Increase duration slowly to prevent injury
- Strengthen foot and leg muscles throughout the process

Prioritize Injury Prevention

- Incorporate strength training and flexibility exercises
- Listen to your body and avoid overtraining
- Use proper footwear suited to your gait and terrain

Find Joy in Running

- Run with friends or community groups
- Explore new trails and scenic routes
- Focus on the experience rather than just speed or distance

Respect Cultural and Traditional Practices

- Learn from indigenous and local running communities
- Appreciate running as a cultural expression and a way to connect with nature

Conclusion: Why the Born to Run Book Matters

The Born to Run book is more than just a motivational story; it's a comprehensive exploration of human potential and the art of running. By challenging conventional wisdom and highlighting the wisdom of indigenous tribes like the Tarahumara, McDougall encourages us to reconnect with our innate abilities. The insights offered in the Born to Run book can inspire healthier running habits, reduce injuries, and rekindle the joy of movement. Whether you're seeking to improve your performance or simply enjoy running more, embracing the lessons from this influential book can lead to a more natural, fulfilling running experience.

Remember, we were born to run—it's in our DNA. The Born to Run book invites you to rediscover that primal joy and unlock your full potential as a runner.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main theme of 'Born to Run' by Christopher McDougall?

The book explores the secrets of long-distance running, emphasizing the importance of endurance, natural running techniques, and the culture of the Tarahumara tribe in Mexico.

Who are the key figures featured in 'Born to Run'?

The book highlights ultrarunner and running legend Caballo Blanco, the Tarahumara tribe, and various ultramarathon runners like Scott Jurek and others.

How has 'Born to Run' influenced modern running culture?

It inspired many to adopt barefoot or minimalist running techniques, increased interest in ultramarathons, and emphasized the joy and natural aspects of running.

What practical running advice can readers gain from 'Born to Run'?

Readers learn about proper running form, the benefits of minimalist footwear, and the importance of listening to one's body to prevent injury and improve performance.

Has 'Born to Run' been credited with popularizing barefoot running?

Yes, the book played a significant role in sparking the barefoot and minimalist running movement, encouraging runners to explore more natural running styles.

Are there any criticisms or controversies related to 'Born to Run'?

Some critics argue that the book oversimplifies running techniques and that barefoot running may not be suitable for everyone, emphasizing the need for personalized approaches.

Additional Resources

Born to Run is a compelling and inspiring exploration of human endurance, running culture, and the pursuit of personal limits. Authored by Christopher McDougall, this book delves into the mysteries of running, the history of barefoot and minimalist running, and the remarkable stories of ultramarathoners, culminating in a narrative that celebrates human resilience and the joy of movement. Since its publication, Born to Run has become a seminal work for runners, health enthusiasts, and anyone interested in understanding the natural human capacity for endurance and the cultural dynamics surrounding running.

An Overview of Born to Run

Born to Run was published in 2009 and quickly gained popularity worldwide, lauded not only for its engaging storytelling but also for its insights into running biomechanics and the cultural significance of running. McDougall combines investigative journalism, personal anecdotes, and scientific research to create a comprehensive narrative that appeals to a broad audience—from seasoned athletes to casual runners and curious readers.

The core premise of the book is that humans are naturally designed for running long distances, a theory supported by evolutionary biology, anthropology, and biomechanics. Throughout the book, McDougall explores the idea that modern running shoes and training methods may have inadvertently contributed to injuries and decreased running enjoyment, prompting a reevaluation of how we approach running in contemporary society.

The Central Themes and Topics

1. The Evolutionary Perspective on Running

One of the most captivating aspects of *Born to Run* is its exploration of the evolutionary roots of human running. McDougall presents compelling evidence that humans evolved as persistent runners, capable of running for hours to hunt or scavenge. Unlike many animals that rely on speed and power, humans excel at endurance running, thanks to features such as:

- Low resting body temperature
- Efficient cooling mechanisms
- The ability to sweat extensively
- A springy Achilles tendon
- A large gluteus maximus for stability

Pros:

- Provides a scientific basis for understanding human endurance
- Challenges modern assumptions about running and footwear

Cons:

- Some scientific claims may oversimplify complex evolutionary processes

2. The Tarahumara Tribe: Masters of Endurance

At the heart of *Born to Run* is the story of the Tarahumara, a reclusive indigenous group from Mexico's Copper Canyon renowned for their incredible long-distance running abilities. The Tarahumara run hundreds of miles in traditional sandals called huaraches, often over rugged terrain, without injuries that plague modern runners.

This segment is both a cultural exploration and an inspiration, illustrating how their lifestyle, diet, and running practices contribute to their health and resilience.

Features:

- Deep dive into Tarahumara culture and traditions
- Insights into their diet—primarily corn, beans, and natural foods
- Training and running techniques rooted in tradition

Pros:

- Highlights the potential of minimalist running and natural movement

- Offers a cultural perspective that broadens understanding of endurance

Cons:

- Not every runner can or should emulate their lifestyle due to environmental and cultural differences

3. The Science of Running and Injury Prevention

McDougall discusses biomechanics in detail, examining why modern running shoes may contribute to injuries such as shin splints, plantar fasciitis, and stress fractures. He advocates for a more natural running style, emphasizing:

- Barefoot or minimalist running
- Shorter stride lengths
- Landing softly on the midfoot or forefoot

The book references various studies and experts, including Dr. Daniel Lieberman and Dr. Michael Warburton, to support these claims.

Advantages:

- Empowers runners to consider alternative techniques
- Provides practical tips for reducing injury risk

Drawbacks:

- Transitioning to minimalist running requires careful adaptation to avoid injury
- Not all feet and biomechanics are suited for barefoot running

Notable Features and Strengths of Born to Run

- Engaging storytelling: McDougall's narrative style combines adventure, science, and cultural history seamlessly.
- Rich cultural insights: The book offers a window into indigenous cultures and their relationship with running.
- Practical advice: Tips on running form, footwear, and training are grounded in scientific research.
- Inspiration: The stories of ultramarathoners like Scott Jurek and others motivate readers to push their limits.

Critical Reception and Impact

Born to Run has been widely praised for its compelling storytelling and thought-provoking insights. It sparked a renewed interest in barefoot running and minimalist footwear, influencing brands and running communities worldwide.

However, some critics argue that the book occasionally overstates the benefits of barefoot running and underplays the risks involved in transitioning too quickly or without proper guidance. The scientific community remains divided on some of the claims, emphasizing that individual biomechanics and injury history should guide running choices.

Pros and Cons Summary

Pros:

- Inspires readers to reconnect with natural movement
- Combines storytelling with scientific research effectively
- Offers cultural insights beyond running
- Encourages a holistic approach to health and fitness

Cons:

- Some claims may be exaggerated or oversimplified
- Transitioning to minimalist running can be risky without proper training
- Not universally applicable; individual differences matter

Who Should Read Born to Run?

Born to Run appeals to a wide audience:

- Runners seeking motivation and injury prevention tips
- Fitness enthusiasts interested in biomechanics and human evolution
- Cultural explorers fascinated by indigenous lifestyles
- Anyone curious about human potential and endurance

It's particularly valuable for those contemplating a minimalist or natural approach to running but should be read with a cautious understanding of individual needs.

Conclusion: A Must-Read for Endurance and Inspiration

Born to Run stands out as a landmark work that challenges conventional wisdom about running and fitness. It combines adventure, science, and cultural history to create a narrative that is both engaging and educational. While some claims warrant a nuanced understanding, the book undeniably encourages readers to think differently about movement, health, and human potential.

Whether you're a seasoned marathoner, a casual jogger, or simply someone interested in the stories of remarkable people pushing the boundaries of endurance, Born to Run offers valuable lessons and inspiration. Its message that humans are inherently built for running—and that joy and health can be found in embracing our natural design—is a powerful reminder of our innate capabilities.

In summary, Born to Run is more than just a running book; it's a celebration of human resilience and the timeless pursuit of pushing beyond perceived limits. Its blend of storytelling, science, and culture makes it a compelling read that continues to influence how we think about running and movement today.

[Born To Run Book](#)

born to run book: Born to Run Christopher McDougall, 2009-05-05 NATIONAL BESTSELLER

- The astonishing and hugely entertaining story that completely changed the way we run. An epic adventure that began with one simple question: Why does my foot hurt? "Equal parts quest, physiology treatise, and running history.... The climactic race reads like a sprint.... It simply makes you want to run." —Outside Magazine Isolated by Mexico's deadly Copper Canyons, the blissful Tarahumara Indians have honed the ability to run hundreds of miles without rest or injury. In a riveting narrative, award-winning journalist and often-injured runner Christopher McDougall sets out to discover their secrets. In the process, he takes his readers from science labs at Harvard to the sun-baked valleys and freezing peaks across North America, where ever-growing numbers of ultra-runners are pushing their bodies to the limit, and, finally, to a climactic race in the Copper Canyons that pits America's best ultra-runners against the tribe. McDougall's incredible story will not only engage your mind but inspire your body when you realize that you, indeed all of us, were born to run. Look for Born to Run 2, out now!

born to run book: Born to Run 2 Christopher McDougall, Eric Orton, 2022-12-06 From the best-selling author and renowned coach duo from Born to Run, a fully illustrated, practical guide to running for everyone from amateurs to seasoned runners, about how to eat, race, and train like the world's best Whether you're ramping up for a race or recuperating from an injury, Born to Run 2 is a

holistic program for runners of every stripe that centers on seven key themes: food, fitness, form, footwear, focus, fun, and family. The guide contains: On-the run recipes for race-ready nutrition Training regimen to help get you in shape and achieve your running goals Corrective drills to perfect your form Helpful shoe recommendations Advice about how to bring more joy into running Suggestions for finding a running community Christopher McDougall and Eric Orton bring all the elements together into an integrated action plan—the 90-Day Run Free training schedule—that provides everything you need to prepare for a mile-long fun run or a 100-mile ultramarathon. Full of helpful illustrations and full-color photos of the iconic first Copper Canyons race, *Born to Run 2* is the perfect training companion for anyone who wants to get inspired about the sport again and learn the proven techniques to run smoother, lighter, and swifter.

born to run book: *Born to Run* Christopher McDougall, 2010 At the heart of *Born to Run* lies a mysterious tribe of Mexican Indians, the Tarahumara, who live quietly in canyons and are reputed to be the best distance runners in the world; in 1993, one of them, aged 57, came first in a prestigious 100-mile race wearing a toga and sandals. A small group of the world's top ultra-runners (and the awe-inspiring author) make the treacherous journey into the canyons to try to learn the tribe's secrets and then take them on over a course 50 miles long. With incredible energy and smart observation, McDougall tells this story while asking what the secrets are to being an incredible runner. Travelling to labs at Harvard, Nike, and elsewhere, he comes across an incredible cast of characters, including the woman who recently broke the world record for 100 miles and for her encore ran a 2:50 marathon in a bikini, pausing to down a beer at the 20 mile mark.

born to run book: *Born to Run* Instaread, 2016-02-24 *Born to Run* by Christopher McDougall | Summary & Analysis Preview: *Born to Run* is a book about the natural virtues of running, based on Christopher McDougall's own experiences, research, and training. It is centered on the Tarahumara, an indigenous Mexican tribe known for their feats of long-distance running. McDougall, a journalist, is a low-key hobbyist runner himself, but he experiences numerous injuries which threaten to force him to stop. Given the high injury rate among runners, McDougall is fascinated by stories of the Mexican Tarahumara. These native people live in the rugged, hot Copper Canyon, and are known for running more than 100-mile races over broken ground at amazing speeds. More amazingly still, the Tarahumara wear flat sandals rather than running shoes... PLEASE NOTE: This is key takeaways and analysis of the book and NOT the original book. Inside this Instaread Summary of *Born to Run*: · Overview of the book · Important People · Key Takeaways · Analysis of Key Takeaways

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by the love of running; that the sports shoes you wear are the cause of your pain. Running is probably part of your daily routine: not to miss the bus, to catch up with your child, to warm up, but also to run as a sport in its own right. You have probably already started jogging at least once in your life. How many times have you stopped in the middle, too out of breath, with a side stitch, a sprain? You'll be surprised to learn that there are men in the world who are able to run for hours without stopping! From the Tarahumara tribe to the world's greatest marathon runners, plunge into the world of the most extraordinary runners in history! *Buy now the summary of this book for the modest price of a cup of coffee!

born to run book: *Summary and Analysis of Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen* Worth Books, 2017-02-21 So much to read, so little time? This brief overview of Born to Run tells you what you need to know—before or after you read Christopher McDougall's book. Crafted and edited with care, Worth Books set the standard for quality and give you the tools you need to be a well-informed reader. This short summary and analysis of Born to Run by Christopher McDougall includes: Historical context Chapter-by-chapter overviews Detailed timeline of key events Important quotes Fascinating trivia Glossary of terms Supporting material to enhance your understanding of the original work About Born to Run by Christopher McDougall: Christopher McDougall's New York Times-bestselling Born to Run brought the underground sport of distance running to the forefront of American conversation, spurring trends like barefoot running and chia seeds' recognition as a superfood. Centering around two long-distance races, the second of which McDougall intends to run, the book is written in a distinctly Gonzo journalism-style. The author focuses on the Tarahumara, an ancient tribe of runners that lives isolated in Mexico's Copper Canyons, but he also pulls in plenty of other characters, past and present, and explores the biological reasons we are all born to run. The summary and analysis in this ebook are intended to complement your reading experience and bring you closer to a great work of nonfiction.

born to run book: Summary of Born to Run InstaRead Summaries Staff, Instaread, 2016-02-24 Summary of Born to Run by Christopher McDougall | Includes Analysis PLEASE NOTE: This is key takeaways and analysis of the book and NOT the original book. Preview: Born to Run is a book about the natural virtues of running, based on Christopher McDougall's own experiences, research, and training. It is centered on the Tarahumara, an indigenous Mexican tribe known for their feats of long-distance running. McDougall, a journalist, is a low-key hobbyist runner himself, but he experiences numerous injuries which threaten to force him to stop. Given the high injury rate among runners, McDougall is fascinated by stories of the Mexican Tarahumara. These native people live in the rugged, hot Copper Canyon, and are known for running more than 100-mile races over broken ground at amazing speeds. More amazingly still, the Tarahumara wear flat sandals rather than running shoes... Inside this Instaread Summary of Born to Run: · Overview of the book · Important People · Key Takeaways · Analysis of Key Takeaways About the Author With Instaread, you can get the key takeaways, summary and analysis of a book in 15 minutes. We read every chapter, identify the key takeaways and analyze them for your convenience.

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running. You will learn: " Why 70%-80% of runners experience injuries annually " Why your expensive running shoes might actually be hindering you " Why you're never too old to run.

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born to run book: The Born to Run Ryan Reed, 2012-11-13 In chronicling his travels to many of America's dog tracks, Greyhound owner and adoption advocate Ryan H. Reed shatters misconceptions about the controversial sport of Greyhound racing. Reed uncovers a world of magnificent canine athletes and their devoted owners and trainers. With amazing color photographs of the dogs in action, Born to Run gives readers a behind-the-scenes look at the daily activities of breeding kennels, racetracks, and adoption centers, detailing the lives of racing Greyhounds from puppyhood to their competitive careers to their lives as cherished pets after retirement.

born to run book: Born to Run Bruce Springsteen, 2017-09-05 In 2009, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band performed at the Super Bowl's half-time show. The experience was so exhilarating that Bruce decided to write about it. That's how this extraordinary autobiography began. Over the past seven years, Bruce Springsteen has privately devoted himself to writing the story of his life, bringing to these pages the same honesty, humour, and originality found in his songs. He describes growing up Catholic in Freehold, New Jersey, amid the poetry, danger, and darkness that fueled his imagination, leading up to the moment he refers to as The Big Bang: seeing Elvis Presley's debut on The Ed Sullivan Show. He vividly recounts his relentless drive to become a musician, his early days as a bar band king in Asbury Park, and the rise of the E Street Band. With disarming candour, he also tells for the first time the story of the personal struggles that inspired his best work, and shows us why the song Born to Run reveals more than we previously realized.

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born to run book: *Born to Run* Mercedes Lackey, Larry Dixon, 1992 Fast cars and futurism mixed in a tale of good and evil.

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born to run book: *Bruce Springsteen and Born to Run* Sean Egan, 2025-09-23 Celebrate the 50th anniversary of Bruce Springsteen's masterpiece of American rock 'n' roll with this handsomely produced and stunningly illustrated volume. Bruce Springsteen and Born to Run: 50 Years is the definitive story of a landmark album in American rock music. In 1975, Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band released what would become their breakthrough album and arguably the most lauded album of Springsteen's long, illustrious career. Born to Run has sold over 9 million copies and counting and continues to inspire musicians and music fans young and old from around the world. In this book, music journalist Sean Egan takes a deep dive into one of the legendary musician's most

famous albums on its 50th anniversary. Chapters cover Springsteen's career prior to 1975, track-by-track analyses of each side, the studios where it was recorded, the supporting tour, and The Boss's career after the LP. The book is illustrated with performance and off-stage photography as well as memorabilia. Springsteen fans new and old can expect: A deep dive into how the album came together and why it is regarded as a masterpiece Track-by-track analyses of the studio cut as well as insight into the many disregarded tracks and ideas leading up to its recording Historical insight and analysis about the state of rock in the mid-'70s and how Springsteen assembled a wildly talented group of musicians in the E Street Band The story of the battle between Springsteen and Columbia Records after his previous albums failed to ignite the public's passion And much, much more This book is a must for every Bruce Tramp's collection. The Great Albums series presents authoritative explorations of rock's most revered records. Delve into even more groundbreaking releases with: Pink Floyd and The Dark Side of the Moon, The Who & Quadrophenia, Prince and Purple Rain, and Queen & A Night at the Opera, with more to come.

born to run book: Born to Run: A Renegade's Journey Pasquale De Marco, 2025-05-13
Born to Run: A Renegade's Journey is the definitive biography of Bruce Springsteen, the American icon who has been the voice of the working class, the disenfranchised, and the dreamers for over five decades. Based on exclusive interviews with Springsteen, his family, friends, and collaborators, **Born to Run: A Renegade's Journey** tells the full story of his life and career. From his early days as a struggling musician to his rise to global stardom, **Born to Run: A Renegade's Journey** reveals the man behind the music. Springsteen's music is deeply rooted in the American experience. His songs celebrate the beauty of the land and the resilience of its people. He's also not afraid to tackle tough issues, such as poverty, social injustice, and war. Springsteen is a master storyteller. His songs are often cinematic in scope, and they transport listeners to another time and place. He has a gift for creating characters that are both relatable and unforgettable. Springsteen is also a gifted performer. His live shows are legendary, and he's known for his energetic stage presence and his ability to connect with his audience. Springsteen's music has had a profound impact on American culture. He's been praised by critics and fans alike, and he's received numerous awards, including 20 Grammy Awards and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Springsteen is more than just a musician; he's a national treasure. His music has touched the lives of millions of people, and he continues to inspire and entertain fans around the world. **Born to Run: A Renegade's Journey** is the essential guide to Bruce Springsteen's life and work. It's a must-read for fans of his music and anyone interested in American culture. If you like this book, write a review on google books!

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