# WARHAMMER THE HORUS HERESY



The Battle of Nyrcon City:

— Visions in the Flames —



EXEMPLARY BATTLES OF

The Age of Darkness

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## Visions in the flames

It is the Age of Darkness ground ever onwards, the fires of war would spread throughout the entire galaxy, consuming everything in their path. Armies and worlds were reduced to nothing more than ash, in many cases leaving no one alive to bear witness to the sacrifices made or the atrocities committed. During this time, each Legion employed unique formations to prosecute their own style of war, whether by choice or through necessity, making use of unconventional, often abhorrent, tactics and weapons. Many of these formations would be lost during the dark years following the Horus Heresy, their traditions wiped out and the last stockpiles of their weapons exhausted. Some, however, have been preserved in these records, that future generations may learn of the terrors unleashed upon the galaxy by the Emperor's turncoat sons and the valiant heroes who stood against them.



"The hydra coils about the star of Garmon, threatening to envelop it. The serpent seeks to quench the flame, lest it be consumed by it. Those who seek the flame must break the serpent's grip and carry it forth to burn out the venom."

The 128th Prophecy of Cassian Dracos, as transcribed by Xiaphas Jurr

Three years into the devastating conflict that wracked the Garmon Cluster, the Salamanders warship *Ebon Drake* burst into realspace on the outskirts of the Beta-Garmon system. Moving through the contested space above Beta-Garmon II, broadcasting no ident codes and ignoring the hails and threats of both Loyalist and Traitor vessels, it plunged towards the fortress-city capital, Nyrcon City. Waiting within, weapons ready, were the Disciples of the Flame and their leader, the Dreadnought Cassian

Dracos whose prophetic visions had guided them to that heavily embattled region. Making no effort to engage, its guns withdrawn and silent, the *Ebon Drake* pushed its thrusters past safe margins to manoeuvre through a formation of transport vessels belonging to the Legio Mortis Titan Legion and disgorged a swarm of gunships and drop craft, before withdrawing to the system's edge, away from the conflict.

#### THE EBON DRAKE

An assault cruiser of the XVIIIth (Salamanders) Legion, the fragmented records discovered on board the Ebon Drake's shattered hulk during the period known as the Scouring indicate that it set out from Nocturne in the early days of the Horus Heresy, seeking news of Vulkan and the fate of the forces that accompanied him to confront the Traitors in the Isstvan system. Commanded by the Chaplain-Lieutenant Xiaphas Jurr, this vessel found itself embroiled in several notable actions on its meandering journey. At Isstvan V its crew recovered the damaged Dreadnought sarcophagus of Cassian Dracos, former Master of the XVIIIth Legion, and learned the fate of their brethren there. Subsequently Cassian Dracos began to exhibit prophetic visions, and though Xiaphas Jurr remained the de facto commander of the vessel, it was increasingly Dracos who dictated its course. These warriors began to refer to themselves as the Disciples of the Flame, scorching their armour black and rendering it with images of their gene-sire in dedication to their cause. This force continued to strike against Traitor holdings where they could, though as the civil war progressed their purpose became less and less entwined with the Loyalist war effort and ever more dictated by the unpredictable guidance of their prophetic former Legion Master.

On the war-torn surface of Beta-Garmon II, the Lovalist offensive, led by a sizable detachment of Imperial Fists, was mired in brutal attritional warfare. A counter-thrust led by a Millennial from the Emperor's Children and an indeterminate number of Alpha Legion Legionaries had driven back the Loyalist advance, threatening to force them out of the vital city of Nyrcon, when the gunships of the Disciples of the Flame descended from the skies. Framed by the setting sun, the newcomers homed in on command-level Loyalist signals among the warring factions below. With each side unsure of the provenance of the new arrivals, the Disciples' gunships located a wide avenue on the Traitor flank held by a number of Alpha Legion artillery and support units, swooping down to disgorge their contents onto the cratered roadway. Power armoured warriors bearing the varied livery of the Disciples leapt from their transports even as they touched down, weapons blazing, cutting down the Alpha Legion units caught in the open and clearing a path for a single ornately decorated Thunderhawk to descend.

Thundering forth from the gunship, Cassian Dracos, a mountain of ceramite propelled by an atomantic heart, and a contingent of his most zealous followers smashed into the Traitor ranks. There, Dracos crushed and incinerated azure-armoured figures wherever he could find them as they struggled to bring their heavy weapons to bear at such close range, his booming proclamations punctuated by detonating Traitor vehicles. Xiaphas Jurr directed his squads to clear out key structures that the Dreadnought had bypassed in his frenzy of destruction, burning the Traitors out with blasts of flame and securing a landing zone for their remaining forces. With the immediate beachhead secured, the Disciples heavy transports set down, delivering their cargo of Predator assault tanks alongside Land Raider and Rhino transports before withdrawing to safety. With their heavy armour now supporting their assault, the Disciples drove the reforming Traitor forces back in a barrage of las-blasts and explosive rockets.

With his foe thrown into disarray, the Imperial Fists commander, Castellan Lyrmund Thall, acted swiftly. Diverting a cohort of his Mechanicum allies to support the Disciples of the Flame, Thall led his forces out of their defensive positions, driving several wedges into the disordered Traitor lines. The presence of an Iron Warriors contingent led by the Warsmith Nârik Dreygur among the Disciples' number, as well as the devotional murals, scripture and totems worn upon their modified armour, drew both alarm and suspicion from Thall's forces, especially from the Salamanders within their ranks, but with the Disciples' allegiance made clear by their actions Thall attempted to contact the Disciples' commanders. Receiving no reply from Cassian Dracos or Xiaphas Jurr, and only curt acknowledgement from Nârik Dreygur, Thall watched in confusion as the new arrivals pushed onwards in defiance of all military logic, continuing to harry the retreating Traitor forces instead of consolidating the Loyalist position. Reticent to lose momentum, but wary of overstretching his lines, the Castellan reluctantly ordered a halt.

Despite Thall's repeated requests, the Disciples instead continued their pursuit, followed by a number of his own Salamanders units who ignored his orders and instead sought to reunite with their brethren and former Legion Master. At the vanguard of this rogue host were several maniples of Mechanicum automata, heedless of the commands of their outraged magos controllers as they tore through the Traitor ranks with a fury that belied the cold logic that once ruled them. This rag-tag horde of warriors, automata and war machines, now numbering almost fifteen hundred, advanced as one under the banner of the Disciples, ignoring the demands of Castellan Thall to hold and giving full vent to the hatred of the foe that Cassian Dracos had kindled in their hearts.



Night fell over Nyrcon as the Disciples pushed ever deeper into the southern areas of the city, though no Loyalist observer could discern their ultimate objective other than the destruction of the Traitor forces. In response, the Alpha Legion dispatched elite Effrit Disruption Cadre operatives to try to slow this advance. Many of the Disciples' scout and outrider units abruptly found their auspex devices malfunctioning and their communications cut off, before being gunned down at close range in sudden ambushes. Others found themselves slowed by grav-snares or triggered explosive traps. Despite these attempts to distract or disorient them, the Disciples continued their determined push southwards until they reached Nyrcon City's industrial mag-rail terminus. With Dracos' forces split by the enormous engine-sheds and funnelled along the rail lines, the Alpha Legion seized their opportunity and struck back in force.

A firestorm erupted among the Disciples' formations. Explosive ordnance rained down on them from pre-ranged artillery, as shadowy figures opened fire from the surrounding maintenance sheds. Cybernetica automata silently formed up around Dracos, shielding him with their armoured bodies, even as missiles and lascannon blasts scythed through their ranks. The Disciples did not flinch, their purpose made certain by the proclamations and prophecies of their figurehead, even as their Rhinos and Land Raiders exploded around them. Flames burned brightly in the dark, illuminating hidden foes as Adherent squads, zealous warriors bearing potent combi-flamers, drove into the nearest buildings. Enduring a deluge of firepower, they pushed onwards, immolating the Traitors with blasts of burning promethium.

Over the following hours an attritional stalemate emerged. While each Disciples contingent was still relatively isolated from the others, several of the engine-sheds had been secured and makeshift defensive positions established. On multiple occasions, desperate Disciples squads reported assaults led by an ornately decorated Alpha Legion Dreadnought, its powered fists easily tearing apart the Loyalist defences and crumpling armour. Seeing an opportunity to strike a symbolic blow, Cassian Dracos sought to engage this warrior, but perhaps warned by its fellows, the Dreadnought disengaged each time, disappearing into the darkness, before seeming to attack again from another direction within minutes. Unable to vent his fury, and with Xiaphas Jurr and his other officers reporting low ammunition stocks and mounting casualties among their warriors, Dracos took decisive action. Leading his dwindling contingent towards the nearest potential escape route, a large maintenance entrance giving access to the mag-rail tunnels beneath the city, Dracos instructed his other officers to seek to rendezvous there. Though none could say how Dracos came to know of this unmarked safe haven, all trusted his guidance and sought to enact his will.

The Alpha Legion, previously content to preserve their forces and conduct hit and run assaults on their foes from the darkness, recognised that their trapped foe might break out, and committed their forces in a concerted push to encircle them anew. Harried by the Traitors, the Disciples' advance swiftly became a desperate rearguard action, squads instinctively falling back in overlapping patterns, laying down supporting fire as they sought to drive back their attackers and recover their fallen or injured brothers. Some units found themselves cut off from their fellows, their officers felled by pinpoint shots from Effrit units bearing deadly Nemesis bolters, and their normally resilient vox network severed without explanation. As confusion reigned in the dark, others threw themselves into the fighting with shattered blades or armoured gauntlets, their guns empty, holding back the relentless foe and buying precious moments for their brethren. Despite the carnage, Cassian Dracos remained unfazed, urging his forces onwards. Rallying around their figurehead, the Disciples of the Flame retreated over the bodies of their slain, moving inexorably towards the promised sanctuary, every step bought with blood.

As his forces converged on the maintenance entrance, its rockcrete mouth wide enough even to allow access by the Disciples' remaining armoured vehicles, Dracos looked over the assembled Legionaries. Fewer than five hundred of his followers still stood with him. Holding back the Alpha Legion forces at the entrance with blasts of flame as his forces filtered away into the tunnels urged on by the wounded Xiaphas Jurr and Nârik Dreygur, Dracos caught sight of his nemesis. Emerging in the firelight, weapons blazing, were a pair of identical Alpha Legion Contemptor Dreadnoughts. Breaking into a loping stride, they closed in on the escaping Loyalists, bringing their weapons to bear on Dracos.

Sensing an opportunity to atone for his earlier failure, Cassian Dracos turned to confront them. As Dracos drew near, one of the Traitor Dreadnoughts seemed to shut down entirely, as if his mere proximity caused the electro-fibre bundles in its limbs to cease function and the power of its atomantic generator to dim. As the light faded in its lensed eyes, its hulking form suddenly swerved into the rockcrete support at the side of the entrance tunnel, before toppling to the cratered ground. The other staggered but remained on its feet, smashing its iron form directly into Dracos and throwing him back against the tunnel mouth. Lesser warriors scrambled for safety as the Dreadnoughts grappled, each seeking to land a telling blow, as the entrance's rockcrete supports crashed down around them, cracks running up the walls and across the ceiling. With a roar of triumph, Dracos tore away his foe's clawed arm before plunging his own powered fist through its shattered armour, tearing out the remains of the warrior within. Triggering the heavy flamer built into his fist, Dracos incinerated his foe before casting the burning remains to the ground.

Seeing the last of his warriors reach safety, Dracos staggered back into the tunnel, heavy bolter shells exploding against his ravaged armour. His weapons empty, sparks flying from damaged locomotors, Dracos dragged himself towards the final undamaged support, and with a final sweep of his clawed fist, tore it down. With a deafening rumble, dust and chunks of rockcrete fell from the ceiling, and the roof began to sag. As Dracos limped backwards into the dark, the disabled Alpha Legion Dreadnought started to rise back to its feet, before the ceiling finally gave way beneath the massive weight of the city above, bringing hundreds of tons of rockcrete crashing down upon it. As muted explosions signalled its demise the entrance was sealed by the falling debris, and the Disciples of the Flame disappeared below the city.



#### **ELITES**

Although commonly categorised under the unofficial title of the Effrit Stealth Squad, the reality of the organisation and role of this elite echelon of the XX<sup>th</sup> Legion is far more complex. Squadrons comprised of highly capable individuals, selected for their innate abilities in stealth, subterfuge and reconnaissance are tasked with missions that would be tantamount to suicide for any other Legionary.

The Disruption Cadres are an example of one such a squadron, undertaking perilous battlefield tasks ranging from close observation of enemy commanders to disruptive strikes on vulnerable war machines, and are frequently embedded behind enemy lines for months with little more equipment than can be carried by individual Legionaries.

### Alpha Legion Effrit Disruption Cadre.....145 points

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	1	A	Ld	Sv
Effrit Disruptor	7	4	5	4	4	2	4	2	8	3+
Effrit Principal	7	4	5	4	4	2	4	3	9	3+

#### **Unit Composition**

- 4 Effrit Disruptors
- 1 Effrit Principal

#### Wargear

- Banestrike shotgun
- Bolt pistol
- Hydra's Wail disruption array
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- · Shroud bombs
- Power armour

### **Unit Type**

- Effrit Disruptor: Infantry (Skirmish)
- Effrit Principal: Infantry (Character, Skirmish)

#### **Special Rules**

- Legiones Astartes (Alpha Legion)
- Infiltrate
- Scout

#### **Options**

- The Effrit Disruption Cadre may take:
- Up to 5 additional Effrit Disruptors ......+21 points each
- Any model in the unit may exchange their Banestrike shotgun for:
  - Nemesis bolter ......+10 points per model
- The entire unit may take:
  - Melta bombs.....+5 points per model
  - Power daggers .....+25 points
- The Effrit Principal may take:
  - Power weapon.....+5 points

#### Hydra's Wail Disruption Array

Issued to elite forward infiltration teams, these arrays projected targeted waves of disruptive signals across a multitude of frequencies, overwhelming enemy comms, scanning and coordination networks, rendering them useless.

Weapon		Range	Str	AP	Type
Hydra's Wail disruption array	View	12"	-	-	Assault 1, Hydra's Wail

#### Hydra's Wail

A unit that suffers one or more Hits from a weapon with this special rule must reduce their Leadership characteristic by -1 until the end of their controlling player's next turn. A unit can only be affected by a single instance of the Hydra's Wail special rule at a time. In addition, units affected by this special rule do not gain the benefits of any wargear that models in that unit have that includes 'augury' or 'vox' in its name until the start of the Active player's next turn.

A weapon with this special rule may not be used to make Shooting Attacks as part of a Reaction and may not be used to make Snap Shots.

#### **Banestrike Shotgun**

What the Astartes shotgun lacked in finesse, it more than compensated for in versatility. Normally equipped to fire rudimentary solid slugs or bursts of scatter shot, they were also capable of being adapted to fire far more specialised ammunition optimised for specific targets.

All weapons listed here are counted as 'Bolt' weapons for those rules that affect such weapons

Weapon	Range	Str	AP	Type
Banestrike shotgun	12"	4	5	Assault 2, Shred, Breaching (6+), Concussive (1)



#### **TROOPS**

The core of the Disciples of the Flame consisted of a fanatical group of warriors from the XVIII<sup>th</sup> Legion. These formed adhoc units composed of the most vehement followers, seemingly with the blessing of their commanding officers. Wholly dedicated to the Prophecies of the Flames, these units were known by several informal names, including Promethean Apostles, Sons of Dracos and Ebon Advocates, though within their confraternity they were known as Adherents of the Creed, or simply Adherents.

The Adherents fought with a fanatical zeal, bringing their talents to bear across innumerable battlefields and them, before swiftly moving positions previously thought to be held by forces sworn to Horus had been found immolated, their defenders reduced to ashes. Though undoubtedly effective, the dogged pursuit of their own agendas made fighting alongside Adherent units forces, though the wholesale destruction of hostile forces for this.

## SALAMANDERS ADHERENTS SQUAD ..... 140 POINTS

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	1	A	Ld	Sv
Adherent	7	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	8	3+
Adherent Sergeant	7	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	9	3+

#### **Unit Composition**

- 4 Adherents
- 1 Adherent Sergeant

#### Wargear

- Dragon's Breath combi-flamer
- Bolt pistol
- Chainsword
- · Frag grenades
- · Krak grenades
- Power armour

#### **Unit Type**

- Adherent: Infantry
- Adherent Sergeant: Infantry (Character)

#### **Special Rules**

- Legiones Astartes (Salamanders)
- · Support Squad
- Relentless
- Guided by Prophecy

#### **Dedicated Transport**

 A Salamanders Adherent Squad may take a Legion Rhino Transport or Legion Land Raider Proteus Carrier as a Dedicated Transport. As a Dedicated Transport, this does not use up an additional Force Organisation slot, but its points cost must still be paid for as part of the army.

#### **Options**

- The Salamanders Adherents Squad may take:
  - Up to 5 additional Adherents ......+20 points each
- For every 5 models in the squad, one may exchange their Dragon's Breath combi-flamer for:
  - Dragon's Breath heavy flamer .....+5 points each
- The Adherent Sergeant may exchange their power armour for:
  - Artificer armour.....+10 points
- The Adherent Sergeant may take one of the following:

  - Thunder hammer ......+25 points
- The Adherent Sergeant may also take:
  - Melta bombs.....+5 points

#### **Guided by Prophecy**

The Adherents have made great study of Cassian Dracos' prophecies, memorising these writings and attaching excerpts to their armour. On occasion these contain glimpses of what is to come, gifting them the ability to anticipate their foe's actions and react accordingly.

At the start of any Assault phase, a Leadership test may be made for this unit by the controlling player against a Leadership of 7. If this test is passed, models in this unit gain the Feel No Pain (6+) special rule and improve their Weapon Skill characteristic to '5' for the duration of that Assault phase.

#### **Dragon's Breath Combi-flamer**

A Dragon's Breath combi-flamer is a minor combi-weapon with the following profiles:

The Bolter (Primary) profile is counted as a 'Bolt' weapon and the Dragon's Breath flamer (Secondary) profile is counted as a 'Flame' weapon for those rules that affect such weapons.

Weapon	Range Str	AP	Type
Bolter (Primary)	24" 4	5	Rapid Fire
Dragon's Breath flamer (Secondary)	Template 5	4	Assault 1, Dragon's Breath



## **UNIT SHOWCASE**

Shown below are some examples of the Alpha Legion Effrit Disruption Cadre and Salamanders Adherent Squad that have been built and painted by Studio staff.

The Alpha Legion Effrit Disruption Cadre uses the majority of the Forge World Legion MkIV Recon Squad, with the addition of helmets taken from the Alpha Legion MkIV Helmets set and the Alpha Legion Headhunter Kill Team Upgrade Set.

The Salamanders Adherent Squad uses the Legion MkVl Tactical Squad set. Combi-flamer components taken from the Horus Heresy Tank Accessory sprue have been attached to the models' bolters, while two models have been given heavy flamers taken from the Horus Heresy Heavy Weapons Upgrade set. The Adherent Sergeant has a bolt pistol and a shortened thunder hammer taken from the Legion MkIll Tactical Squad set. These have been finished off with Salamanders Legion MkIll Shoulder Pads. They are accompanied by a Legion Deimos Pattern Rhino.





### THE BATTLE OF NYRCON CITY LEGENDARY MISSION

## Guided by the flame

Priving deep into Nyrcon City, the Disciples of the Flame found themselves beset by Traitor forces. Any attempt to apply overwhelming force to a point in the enemy lines was thwarted as Alpha Legion units fought a harrying action, launching flanking assaults and destroying isolated units before fading away again. Surrounded and cut off from Loyalist reinforcement, the Disciples sought to break out of this trap, driving all before them with purging flame or else to destroy as many of the Traitors as they could before they were overwhelmed.

In this mission one player will be the Defender, representing the Disciples of the Flame forces coming under fire, and the other will be the Attacker, representing the Alpha Legion ambushers.

#### VICTORY CONDITIONS: BREAK THE TRAP

Each unit from the Defender's army has a value, based on its Battlefield Role, as shown on the table below.

At the end of the battle, add up the values of each unit from the Defender's army that has escaped and make a note of the total. Next, add 1 to that total for each unit from the Defender's army that is on the battlefield at the end of the battle. The Defender scores a number of Victory points equal to the final total.

At the end of the battle, add up the total value of each unit from the Defender's army that has not escaped or has been destroyed. The Attacker scores a number of Victory points equal to that total. The player with the highest total of Victory points is the winner.

Unit	VALUE	
HQ, Primarch or Lords of War unit	3	
Elites unit	2	
Any other unit	1	

Players may also score Victory points from the following Secondary Objective only:

**Slay the Warlord:** If a player causes the enemy Warlord to be removed as a Casualty for any reason before the end of the battle, that player scores 1 Victory point. If the enemy player's Warlord also had the Primarch Unit Type then the player that caused it to be removed as a casualty scores an additional Victory point.

#### **SELECTING ARMIES**

Both players should select armies with a points limit of 3,000 points and using the Crusade Force Organisation chart – neither player can include any units with the Fortifications Battlefield Role as part of their army and the Defender cannot include any units with the Flyer Sub-type.

#### SETTING UP THE MISSION

Set up terrain for the battlefield using ruins and other suitable terrain to represent the long, open mag-rail lines with surrounding ruined buildings. A large zone of Area Terrain should be placed in the Defender's Escape Zone area representing the maintenance tunnel entrance leading below the city.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

This Legendary Mission does not use Objectives, and does not require any Objectives to be placed onto the Battlefield.

#### DEPLOYMENT

This Legendary Mission uses the deployment map shown on page 12, with the Defender deploying first. Neither player may make a Deep Strike Assault, Flanking Assault, Subterranean Assault, Drop Pod Assault or other similar special deployment from Reserves.

The Defender must use the Deployment Zone indicated on the deployment map, deploying their entire army onto the battlefield and may not choose to place any units into Reserves or set up any units outside of their Deployment Zone, including any with the Infiltrate special rule or any similar abilities. Once the Defender has deployed all of their units, the Attacker deploys their entire army onto the battlefield, divided as they wish between their two Deployment Zones. If there is no position where the controlling player can legitimately deploy one or more of their units according to the deployment rules of the Legendary Mission being played, those units may be placed into Reserves instead.

Once both players have deployed all of their units, the first turn is begun.

#### THE FIRST TURN

The Defender takes the First Turn, unless the Attacker can Seize the Initiative.

#### **GAME LENGTH**

At the end of Game Turn Five the battle ends.

#### MISSION SPECIAL RULES

This Legendary Mission has the Sudden Death and Breakout Mission Special Rules. Additionally, the Defender may use the Desperate Escape Advanced Reaction as follows.

• Sudden Death: If, at the end of any Game Turn, either player has no models on the battlefield, the battle immediately ends regardless of the number of turns that have been played. Models that are in Reserve do not count as being 'on the battlefield', however models in a unit that is Falling Back, or are Embarked in a model with the Transport Sub-type or in a Building or Fortification, do.

If a battle is ended due to the Sudden Death rule then the victor is still decided by Victory points scored up to that point in the battle.

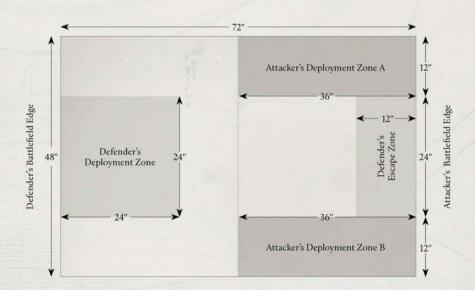
• Break-out: At the end of their turn, the Defender can select any units from their army that are wholly within the Defender's Escape Zone and are not locked in combat and remove them from the battlefield. Each unit removed in this way is said to have escaped. Units Embarked upon a Transport which escapes are also considered to have escaped.

#### ADVANCED REACTION: DESPERATE ESCAPE

This Advanced Reaction is available only to units from the Defender's army. Unlike Core Reactions, Advanced Reactions are activated in unique and specific circumstances, and can often have game changing effects. Advanced Reactions use up points of a Reactive player's Reaction Allotment as normal and obey all other restrictions placed upon Reactions, unless it is specifically noted otherwise in their description.

**Desperate Escape** – This Advanced Reaction may be made in the Assault phase when a Morale check is made for a unit under the Reactive player's control that is locked in combat and within the Defender's Escape Zone. That unit can choose to automatically fail its Morale check. If the unit breaks off from the combat successfully, that unit is instead removed from the battlefield and is said to have escaped (see 'Break-out', opposite).

#### DEPLOYMENT MAP



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