THE BOY MAGICIAN!

The Secrets of the Sea.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRISONER OF MID-OCEAN.

Late one summer afternoon, a dozen years ago, a solitary white man stood before an idolatrous temple on an island in the South Pacific.

He was of middle age, tall, thin, spare, with rugged features and sorrowful eyes, and with every sign of goodness and intelligence.

Beside him was a grim stone idol, in grotesque human form, more than twice as tall as himself, which he had just finished, and was indicated by the mallet and chisel in his hands.

"It is done," he muttered. "And these besides, little suspect that I have cut my name and story into the base of this idol!"

Here he gave vent to a deep sigh over the inscription in question. It was as follows:

"The 8th of May, 1852, I, David Lester, of the firm of Lester & Nichols, of Norfolk, Virginia, sailed as a passenger from Charleston for Hong Kong, by the way of Cape Horn, in the ship Hecla. A cyclone struck us in mid-ocean, the ship foundered, and we took to the boats, which all filled, with the exception of the one I was in. After drifting several days, during which my companions perished, I reached this island. The idolatrous inhabitants made me a slave in their temple, and for more than four years I have been doing menial offices and carrying images. I have been detained every night, and watched continually by day, but have nevertheless made three attempts at escape, and shall make another—doubtless my last, as I am resolved to succeed or die, preferring death to a longer captivity. I therefore write these words upon this idol, praying any one who may see them to report my fate, if possible, to my family, at Norfolk, Va. Finished this inscription this 7th day of July, 1852."

For several minutes the prisoner contemplated these lines in silence, and then aroused himself, looking vaguely around.

"Three times I have tried to escape in a canoe, I be mutined, and every time I be caught, and visited with tortures. To be caught again in such an attempt will be certain death. Yet I will risk all the first opportunity that offers. This longing for freedom and my family is growing a positive madness. O, my God! what is this?"

He gazed in perfect stupefaction to the eastward, far out upon the ocean.

There, miles and leagues away, was a ship, her white sails gleaming as she lay becalmed upon the waters.

"A ship! a ship!" cried Lester, sobbingly. "At last, O Heaven! At last, O Heavenly prayer is answered!"

THE PRISONER'S HOPE.

On the east bank of the Elizabeth river, just out of Norfolk, and overlooking Hampton Roads, stood a beautiful cottage, the home of the wife and daughter of David Lester, the prisoner of the lone island in the Pacific.

Near the close of a lovely afternoon in May, Mrs. Lester and her daughter sat together upon their front verandah.

The mother was a lovely, sweet-faced, sad-eyed woman of two and thirty years.

The daughter, Amy Lester, not yet fifteen, was a strange compound of child and woman.

"You are thinking of father, dear mother!" murmured the maiden, as she marked the lady's lounge gaze.

"Yes, child. Your father, my husband; where is he? Somewhere under the sea waves, wrecked on a desert island, or languishing on a hostile shore? It is five years since he left us on his voyage to China. My reason assures me that he is dead; yet, Amy, I can only think of him as living."

"It is so with me, mother," said Amy, with a tremulous quiver of her lips. "I dream often that he is living—that he is coming home."

"We need him in a hundred ways," said Mrs. Lester, sighing. "If anything were to happen to me, Amy, I shudder to think what would become of you. You have been brought up in luxury, and would feel keenly any change to poverty."

"Are we not rich, then, mother?" asked Amy, in surprise.

"I supposed so, dear, until three years ago," replied the mother sadly. "Your father was a merchant and ship-owner, a partner of Colonel Nichols. But two years ago Colonel Nichols informed me that the outstanding debts of the firm more than balanced the assets; in short, Amy, that he was on the verge of bankruptcy, his fortune and our all-but wrecked!"

"I don't like Colonel Nichols!" said Amy, thoughtfully. "If he lost all his money with us, how does he live in such grand style? To whom do his ships and great house belong?"

"To his nephew, Ally Bell. Colonel Nichols is Ally's guardian. The Colonel has nothing of his own, excepting a farm or two, upon property which were not risked in the business."

Amy contracted her little brows reflectively, and was about to reply, when the garden gate swung on its hinges, and a boyish figure came lightly up the walk.

"It's Ally, mother—it's Ally Bell!" exclaimed Amy, in smiles and blushes. "I'll bring him to you."

The young girl ran lightly down the verandah steps and met the newcomer, linking her arm in his, and drawing him gently towards the house.

He was a lad of seventeen, an orphan, the nephew and ward of Colonel Nichols. Bright and gay and handsome, Allen Bell was also impetuous, ardent, and intelligent—one of those noble, manly youths who mature early into grand and noble men. Boy as he was, he loved Amy Lester with a pure and chivalrous love, which made her to derepute in time into the great love of his life.

He was the bearer of a letter from his uncle to Mrs. Lester, and having delivered it, he strolled with Amy down the wide garden walks into the cool shadows of a grove at the bottom of the garden.

"Aren't expecting you this good while, Ally," said Amy, with charming frankness. "I thought you would be down here to try those scientific experiments on me."

"We'll try them to-night, Amy," replied Ally. "The moonlights shine better at night. I'm getting along finely in my chemistry, and I like it best of all my studies."

"I am upon my life," said Amy, earnestly. "You are the wisest boy I ever saw!"

Ally Bell laughed aloud. Amy's childlike simplicity and outspoken truthfulness were her greatest charm in his eyes.

"Light of that lady yonder," said Ally, "reminds me that I promised to meet Colonel Nichols on board of it directly after I delivered that letter to your mother. It is queer to me, but you may expect me as soon as it's dark."

He clasped her in his arms and kissed her.

For a minute the youthful lovers stood at the garden gate, towards which they had slowly walked, and here they parted tenderly—Ally to go down to the bay where he had engaged to meet his uncle, and Amy to return to her mother.

She found Mrs. Lester, the open letter in her lap, silent and motionless, in a statue, her attitude that of profound despair.

"What is it, mother?" cried Amy, in wild alarm, springing to her side.

Mrs. Lester looked at her daughter with a woe-stricken face.

"O, Amy!" she cried, turning to that brave, childish heart for strength and comfort. "Colonel Nichols writes me that we are beggars! He reminds me that he has saved us three several times to marry him. And, Amy, he says he knows your father to be dead, and he offers himself to me for the last time. He reminds me of my ill-health, of your young helplessness. And he says," and Mrs. Lester's voice broke down in a tempest of sobs, "that on the one hand he offers me wealth, comfort and happiness, and your power and protector, if I refuse him, he swears to turn us out of our home to-morrow!"

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Amy, with a sharp cry, as she laid her face in her mother's bosom.

CHAPTER II.

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

Before Ally Bell reached the big, frowning wharf, his uncle, Colonel Nichols, had been there and arranged with the Captain, who went by the name of Hiley, to carry Ally off to China, for which service the Colonel promised to give the captain the brig and $10,000, *in case the boy never came back.* Hiley was a murderer, whose real name was Sprouls, and Colonel Nichols knew it. And Colonel Nichols had robbed Mrs. Lester, and now wanted to rob his nephew and have him murdered, and Hiley knew that, and resolved that Ally Bell should never see Norfolk again.

"Where is the lad?" he asked as he and Colonel Nichols finished drinking success to their nefarious schemes, to which the Colonel replied:

"He should be here at this very moment. Ah, I hear his step on deck now! Here he comes!"

Even as he spoke Ally Bell came hurrying into the cabin, his face flushed with pleasurable excitement.

"I'm just in time to see you off, Captain Hiley," he said, noticing the guilty looks of the conspirators. "The wind is fair, and the crew anxious. A good voyage to you, Captain. Bring me some rare shells when you return. They are for a little girl's cabinet, and I want pretty!"

"Aye, aye, Mr. Allen," responded the Captain, heartily. "Didn't you see my collection of shells in yonder state-room? If you are well come to your choice of them all, sir!"

He advanced, and flung open the state-room door.

Ally bent forward and looked in.

With a quick thrust, Hiley pushed him into the state-room, and hastily locked the door.

With an exultant smile Colonel Nichols said adieu, and went ashore.

The next minute the hurried trampling of feet was blended with the songs of the stout seamen, as the brig moved slowly from her wharf towards the sea.

Ally's first thought, on finding himself shut up in Captain Hiley's state-room, was that the two men were joking—merely intending to scare him a little for his curiosity. But he soon discovered that the *Quickstep*—the brig was so named—had left her moorings, and was standing down the Elizabeth river towards the ocean.

The truth flashed upon him!

"I see it all!" he cried, leaping to his feet. "Hiley is taking me to my uncle's! Let me out, Hiley!" he shouted, pounding on the wall, "open the door, this minute! Let me out, or it will be the worse for you!"

No reply was made to him—no attention was paid to his cries.

He saw that he was fast.

For a moment he was stunned by the knowledge of his situation.

Then he drew up his slight, boyish figure proudly, his eyes flashing defiance.

"The thing for me to do," he mused, "is to help myself. A boy who can't fight his own way will never be a man!"

Drawing from his pocket a match, of which he usually carried a supply, he lighted the candle in its box at one end of the state-room.

"I see," he mentally commenced, looking around, in the light thus furnished, "Here's a whole drag load of boxes and bundles. And here's a cannon too," adder she to the other one, which is expected, no doubt, to bring a big price from those simple natives in the South seas.

"I can use this thing," thought the boy, with kindling eyes. "I have plenty of powder in my pocket!"

He had bought the powder just before he came aboard of the brig, for the experiments he had promised to show Amy that very evening.

Without more ado, Ally set at work loading and firing the little cannon as rapidly as possible, smashing the door, and calling out for everybody to keep out of the way. The captain and crew were frantic with fear, as there was a large quantity of powder in the state-room, and the prospect was that the ship would be blown to atoms. Having filled the state-room and cabin with smoke, Ally drew out of the Captain's revolvers, burst open the shattered door, rushed upon deck, and leaped into the rigging.

"Thunder and lightning!" cried Hiley, started beyond expression. "After that boy, all of you! Satan himself is in him! A hundred dollars to the man who first puts a hand upon him!"

With a yell, as of blood-hounds, half a dozen of Hiley's men splashed into the river, incited by the promise of money, and sprang to the pursuit, while Hiley, hastily lowering a boat, rowed after his men, whom he soon overtook, one after another, and ordered into the boat.

They then pulled on after Ally, who had launched the mate while they were in the water, and was pulling manfully towards the shore, arriving at an old sunken schooner, a long way from the shore, the boy climbed upon the topmast, and looked back at Hiley and his crew approaching. The captain felt sure of his prey, and was telling his men how easy it was to boy, when Ally suddenly fell from the topmast, as if shot, and immediately sunk from sight.

"Thunder and lightning!" cried Hiley, "he's gone!"

"Gone?" echoed all the men in chorus.

"Yes, gone!" and Hiley sprang to his feet, bending forward. "I saw him go! He fell back into the water, and went down like a bullet, without the least cry! Pull for your lives!"

The men obeyed. The boat was quickly beside the topmast. But no trace of the boy could be found!

"I'll take my Bible oath," said Hiley, "that the young salamander has not gone towards the nearest shore—or any other. A cramp or a shark has took him!"

The eyes of the schoming villain lit up strangely, almost savagely.

"And such being the fact, men," added he, "we may as well go up the sound!"

The men resumed their oars, the Captain the tiller, and the boat returned in silence to the brig, with *Ally clinging quietly to the shore*—his head just far enough out of the water to enable him to breathe—and there he continued to stay until the boat returned to the brig.

And then, the boat being left in the water, and the crew of two and thirty men, Ally climbed on board from the painter, let it drift down stream some distance, then dived in and and row away for Norfolk, which he at once did.

For a minute or two the boat continued to speed away in the darkness.

And then Ally clinging out of the water into it, with a long sigh of relief, and seized a pair of oars resolutely.

Crouching out of sight in the bottom of the boat, he began rowing shorewards—but softly, for he was not near the brig, and the night was so calm he feared his enemies would hear him.

There was only too much occasion, as it proved, for this caution.

The boat had not long gone two minutes from the brig, when Captain Hiley, wishing to go ashore to see Colonel Nichols, made his way aft, and discovering its disappearance at once sent a couple of men after it in another boat.

Ally *swore* that he must again take to the water, took the oars along with him, and went drifting seaward, with nothing but a pair of oars to support him.

The night had now fully set in, and the tide ran fast. Cramped and chilled for his long continuance in the water, Ally was drifting along, growing weaker every moment, not notice hope was in sight, when he suddenly beheld a sail behind him, rapidly approaching, under the force of a freshening breeze.

A big, bluff, certain I'll be ground, after a long look at the nearing cloud of canvas. "It will be old Hiley!" The wind having come again, he is off for the Pacific ocean!"

He regarded the brig as it came nearer, asking himself if he should hail her.

"Let her be what she may," he muttered, "friend or foe, I must hail her... My strength is used up! I shall soon slip off from these oars and drown! Fortunately the brig is coming straight towards me. I will hail her!"

He waited till the brig was near him, and then carried his resolve into execution. His feeble call was heard and answered, the brig hove to, a boat was lowered, and he was taken aboard the stranger. The boy had only strength enough to learn that the brig was not Hiley's, and then he fainted.

CHAPTER III.

MORE VILLAINY.

Captain Hiley, verily, believing that Ally was drowned, went ashore to inform Colonel Nichols of the fact. He found the Colonel just coming from Mrs. Lester's cottage, where he had gone an hour before, and amused Amy by informing her that Ally Bell, her lover and boy, was being carried off to sea in the Quickstep, and that she would never see him again.

The Colonel heard Hiley's story about Ally's disappearance with feigned interest, as they walked along the beach; after which the two villains congratulated themselves upon the boy's being thus completely taken out of their path.

While discussing the matter, they heard the sound of oars, and soon saw a boat approaching the shore. It proved to be a cottage belonging to an old retired sailor named Nicholas Collins, which was situated at the foot of Mrs. Lester's grounds. In the boat was a man, and along with him was a female, sobbing convulsively. Colonel Nichols, with surprise and alarm, recognized the voice of the weeper as that of Amy Lester. She and the companion left the boat and entered the cottage from the windows of which a light soon shone. Colonel Nichols and Captain Hiley crept towards a window, to spy and listen. They soon learned that Collins had rowed Amy off to the brig in search of Ally, and that she had heard Hiley of his attempt to escape and his consequent death by drowning.

Amy was vehement in her denunciations of Col. Nichols, and declared that if Ally was really dead, she would raise the whole country against his uncle, who had compassed his death.

On attempting to return to her home, Amy found she was too weak to walk, and sent Collins for her mother to come to her. As soon as he had sailed for the cottage, Colonel Nichols proposed to Hiley that he should carry Amy off instead of Ally, and leave her on a plantation of his on the coast, down by Cape Henry, so as to silence her dangerous tongue, and be sure of a hold on her mother. The Captain agreed to this, and they entered the cottage, coming upon Amy so suddenly that, in her weak state, she was so completely overcome that she fainted away.

"So much the better!" said Nichols, stooping and gathering her in his arms. "Now lead the way to your boat! Hiley. On our way we must overset Collins's boat, to make him think she did it herself in a wild mood."

He bundled out of the cottage bearing his frail burden. Hiley followed hastily, and the two made their way to the spot where Collins's boat lay. It was but the work of a moment for Hiley to push off the little craft and overset it.

"There, they'll think the girl got wild with grief and was drowned in an attempt to search for Ally again!" said the Colonel exultantly, tossing Amy's white apron upon the beach. "Let your apron will fix the matter beyond a doubt! The wind is rising, Hiley. You had better take advantage of it!"

The two hurried to the waiting boat. Hiley laid the unconscious Amy in the bottom, and the two pushed off from the shore, rowed out, and then seized the oars and rowed rapidly towards the brig.

Nichols, full of exultation, looked after the boat until it was lost to view.

"My first plan was successful!" he muttered. "Ally is dead! I am a rich man! And my second plan promises a little sweeter. When Margaret Lester's heart is nearly broken at Amy's loss, I will offer to restore her child on condition that she will marry me! The day of my full triumph is near!"

He locked with gloating eyes seaward, exulting in his evil success until at last, nearly an hour later, the sails of the *Quickstep* filled, and the brig moved swiftly toward the sea, taking with her Margaret Lester's only comfort—the distant father's star of hope!

CHAPTER IV.

LESTER ESCAPES AND HEARS FROM HOME.

We left David Lester on his lonely island, planning his escape, with a ship in sight from the elevated point, where he was at work. He waited till night and until a priest of the idolatrous temple came to shake him in his dungeon, where they nightly confined him; and then suddenly leaping upon the priest, he bore him to the floor, chained and gagged him, disguised himself in his priestly robes, stained his face brown with dirt, went to the shore where the canoes were lying, entered one of them, paddled out to sea in the direction in which he had seen the ship.

He paddled for hours with all his strength, and had gone so far that the lights of the island could not be seen, and yet no ship had been found; and now the wind was rising and a storm was threatening.

"Oh, God! Am I forsaken?" he cried, in an agonized anguish, lifted with a fear that the wind would take the ship from him. "Must I perish here?"

At that moment, when hope was dying, he beheld a sight that turned all his wild woe into yet wilder ecstasy.

There, to the northward, was the ship, standing directly towards him, with all sails set to catch the rising breeze, and not half a mile away.

"Yes, there she is," he shouted. "She is coming this way. I am saved—saved!"

He raised his arm to heaven in a mute thanksgiving and then stood aloof, the glad tears streaming down his worn and haggard cheeks.

The ship came nearer and nearer.

He redoubled his wild shouts, his heart and soul in his voice.

An anxious, eager cry came suddenly from the ship's deck, and she drew steadily nearer, swerved from her course slightly, and a rope was thrown from her deck, falling into his canoe.

He seized the rope in desperate eagerness, and a group of sailors leaning over the ship's side hailed him aboard.

In an instant more the ship had resumed her course, and was moving in stately fashion before the breeze.

"Safe at last!" murmured Lester, leaning against the bulwarks, weak and nerveless as an infant. "Oh, the gladness of this hour!"

Poor man! He did not dream at that moment that his adverse fate was even then relentlessly closing around him; that he was on one of his own ships—the Cyclone by name, the ship was commanded by a bitter foe in league with Colonel Nichols, who, on recognizing him, would without remorse consign him again to the mercies of the Pacific in his Indian canoe.

On inquiry, Lester learned that the vessel was the Cyclone, and in the light of the moon he had recognized her Captain.

Leaving the boat in charge of the sailors, he sought the captain, and, seeing that captain was his old enemy, Sprouls, he fainted.

"Captain Sprouls, do you know me?"

"Davy Lester! Dead! Drowned! Impossible! Why, man, I saw you—"

Lester wiped his forehead and sat down, the Captain taking a seat opposite him.

"Captain Sprouls, I am in your hands, subject to the operation of the inspecting officer in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, to which port the Cyclone is delivered, when required, free of expense to the Government, for which security must be given.

FOR BUREAU OF CONSTRUCTION, &c.

1,000 gallons Linseed Oil, Raw, Best.

For further information, apply at office on the premises, or at the NAVAL CONSTRUCTOR'S Navy Yard.

FOR BUREAU OF PROVISIONS AND CLOTHING.

5,000 lbs. Sugar.

500 gallons Molasses.

400 gallons Vinegar.

40 Boxes Candles.

For particulars, samples, time of delivery, &c., apply at this office, where blank forms of proposals can be obtained.

H. M. HISKELL,

Commander U. S. Navy.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HIGHWAYS, OFFICE, NO. 510 SOUTH FIFTH STREET.

PHILADELPHIA, September 2, 1869.

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS.

SEALED PROPOSALS will be received at the office of the Chief Commissioner of Highways until 11 o'clock A.M. on MONDAY, the 13th instant, for the construction of a sewer in the Lawful owner whose right in the *Cyclone* he had usurped.

"If report speaks truly," he said, "Mrs. Lester need not be called 'poor?' Colonel Nichols has long been her admirer, and his wife died a few months ago. I, for one, shall be glad to see the lady of my choice, and the Contractor shall take bills prepared against the property. Ally and Amy Lester! Sewer to the amount of one dollar and fifty cents for each thousand feet of the land on that side. Sewer so much cash paid! the balance, as limited by ordinance, to be paid by the City; and the Contractor will be entitled to the sewer and sewer in good order for three years after the date of completion.

When the street is occupied by a City Passenger Railway, the sewer is to be so far constructed along side of said track in such manner as not to interfere with the free and safe passage of the cars thereon; and no claim for compensation on the part of the Contractor or the company using said track, as specified in the act of Assembly, to be made.

Each proposal will be accompanied by a certificate that it has been filed with the Law Department as directed by Ordinance of May 12, 1869. The bidder will be required to execute a contract within five days after the work is awarded, to which he will be required to give and will be held liable on his bond for the faithful performance of the same, and the next lowest bidder. Specifications may be obtained in the Department of Surveys, which will be strictly adhered to. The Department of Highways reserves the right to reject all bids not deemed satisfactory.

All bidders may be present at the time and place of opening the bids, and proposals for awards will be made for rock excavation unless by special request.

All bids must be addressed to the undersigned at his station.

MARLON H. DICKINSON,

Chief Commissioner of Highways.

FURNITURE, &c.

1869. 1869.

FURNITURE.

1316 CHESTNUT STREET.

Having just completed the best lot of Furniture ever offered in this city, we invite attention to our stock, during the month of September.

AT PRICES THAT WILL SATISFY AND OFFER INDUCEMENTS TO PURCHASERS.

The designs are all new, of the latest styles, workmanship and materials are of the highest order.

Our facilities for manufacturing and our extensive warerooms enable us to offer Furniture, and convince themselves of the above facts.

JOHN M. GARDNER, 1316 Chestnut St.

SUMMER RESORTS.

CAPE ISLAND, N. J.

A first-class RESTAURANT, à la carte, will be opened by AUGUST DELMONICO, late of 112 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, on the 15th of June, under the name and style of DELMONICO'S RESTAURANT, at the Ocean House, Cape May, Cape Ingham's Cottage. 4th Families will be supplied at the Cottage. Looking House for Day or Week.

MOUNTAIN HOUSE,

CRESSON SPRINGS, PA.

Will remain open for the reception of guests.

THE "CHALONE,"

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.

ELISHA ROBERTS,

Proprietor.

LUMBER.

MAULE, BROTHER & CO.,

2500 South Street.

1869. PATENT SAWS. 1869.

1869. SHINGLES. 1869.

1869. SPRUCE AND HEMLOCK. 1869.

1869. FLORIDA FLOORING. 1869.

1869. CAROLINA FLOORING.

1869. DELAWARE FLOORING.

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1869. CAROLINA H. T. SILLS.

1869. CEDAR SHINGLES.

1869. PLASTERING LATH.

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2500 SOUTH STREET.

Lumber Under Cover,

ALWAYS DRY.

Walnut, White Pine, Spruce Pine, Cedar, Shingles, &c., always on hand at low rates.

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924 Richmond Street, Eighteenth Ward.

THOMAS & FOHL, LUMBER MERCHANTS,

No. 1031 S. Fourth street, Are daily receiving Lumber of all kinds, which they offer for sale, cheap for cash, or to suit the trade.

YELLOW PINE LUMBER—ORDERS by mail or telegraph promptly executed at lowest market rates. Address, BEVIN, SIDMAS, Augusta, Ga., Box 1, Bennett's Wharf.

GAS FIXTURES.

GAS FIXTURES.—MISKEY, MERRILL & HACKLEY, No. 704 Chestnut street, manufacturers of Gas Fixtures, Chandeliers, Brass Work, and Gilt Goods, would respectfully call the attention of the trade to their large and elegant assortment of Gas Chandeliers, Pendants, Brackets, &c. They also introduce gas pipe into dwellings and public buildings, and furnish, attend and repairing gas fixtures.

PROPOSALS.

PROPOSALS FOR SUPPLIES.

OFFICE OF PAYMASTER U. S. NAVY, NO. 422 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Sept. 1, 1869.

SEALED PROPOSALS, endorsed "Proposals for Supplies," will be received at this office until 12 o'clock M. on the 13th of September, for furnishing the United States Navy Department with the following articles, to be of the best quality, subject to the inspection by the inspecting officer in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, to which place they are to be delivered, when required, free of expense to the Government, for which security must be given.

FOR BUREAU OF CONSTRUCTION, &c.

1,000 gallons Linseed Oil, Raw, Best.

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