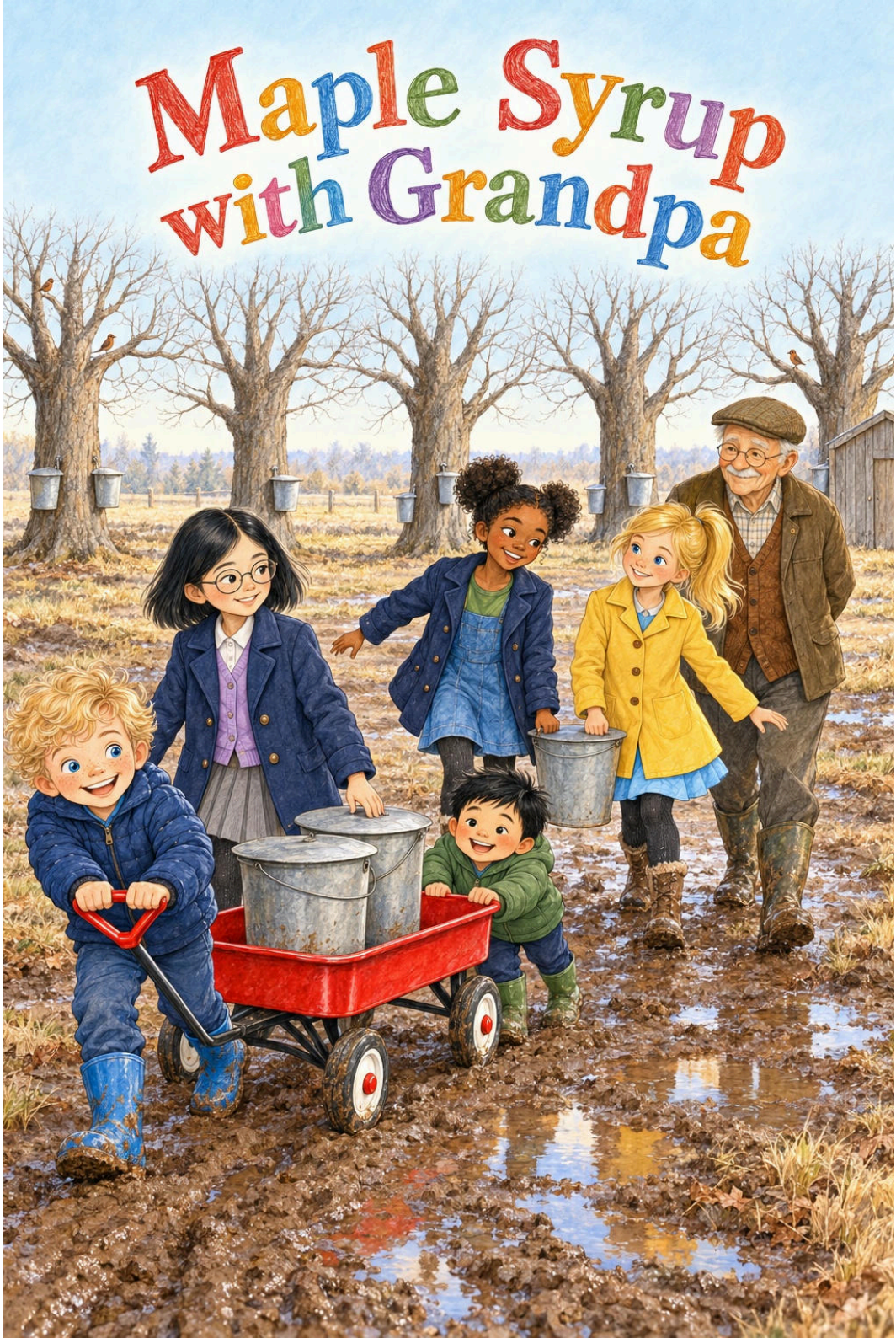

Maple Syrup
with Grandpa

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About This Book

At a Glance

- **Reading level:** English level A1 (CEFR)
- **Age:** 7+
- **Length:** 9 chapters · ±7,400 words

Edition

This is the **first edition** — version 1.0, published October 2026.

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	October 2026	First edition

About the Story

The Series

Rosie's Bakery sits on Main Street in the little American town of Maple Falls, where Evie and her mom bake fresh bread every morning and cakes to order. Evie loves to bake — and most of all to decorate, with a ring of red cherries on top. In each book she takes on one baking job, from the first mixing bowl to the last cherry, while her little brother Billy tastes everything and Crumble the shop dog waits for a crumb. Warm, gentle stories for children just starting to read English.

This Book

It is March in Maple Falls. The snow melts. Main Street is all mud, and the first birds sing in the big maple tree.

Grandpa comes into the bakery with mud on his boots. "The trees are waking up," he says. Behind his garden stand five old maple trees, with sweet sap inside. But Grandpa makes no syrup now. The buckets are too heavy for one old man.

"One old man?" says Evie. "There are six of us!"

Ten old buckets. Drip, drip, drip. A big pan and lots of white steam. Tess watches a little red line. Billy waits for pancakes. And Mom has a plan for Saturday.

Forty buckets of sap. How much syrup will they get?

Chapter 1: The Trees Wake Up



It is a Monday morning in March.

Evie looks out the shop window.

The snow is going now. It melts in the warm sun.

Main Street is wet.

Water drips from the roofs. Drip. Drip.

The big maple tree by the square is not white now.

It is gray-brown, with no leaves yet.

But there are little birds in the tree.

They sing and sing.

“Mom!” says Evie. “Look at the birds!”

Mom comes in from the kitchen.

She has baby June in her arms.

"The first birds," says Mom.

"It is March. Spring is here."

"Spring?" says Evie.

"Look at the snow," says Mom.

"It is melting. That is spring."

Evie looks out at the street.

There is no snow on the sidewalk now.

There is only brown mud. Lots of mud.

"It is all muddy," says Evie.

Outside, two little boys jump in the mud.

It is Billy. And it is Sam.

"Look, Evie!" says Billy. "Mud!"

"Brown boots!" says Sam.

Ding! The door opens.

Billy and Sam stamp into the shop.

Now there is mud on the floor.

There is mud by the door and by the counter.

"Boots off!" says Mom.

"Boots off, boys! Now!"

Billy and Sam look at their boots.

"Oh," says Billy. "Muddy."

"Very muddy," says Sam.

They sit down by the door.

They pull and pull at their boots.

Mom gives Evie a cloth.

Evie cleans the floor.

"Thank you, Evie," says Mom.

Ding! Sara and Tess come in.

Sara has her list in her hand.

Tess has her purple apron on.

"Morning!" says Sara.

"Look at the floor," says Billy. "It is clean now."

"I did it," says Evie.

Ding! The door opens again.

It is Grandpa.

He has mud on his boots and his cap in his hand.

"Grandpa!" says Billy. "Boots off!"

Grandpa looks down at his boots.

He laughs.

"Boots off," he says.

He sits on a chair by the door.

He takes off his boots.

Then he stands up and looks at them all.

He smiles a big smile.

"The trees are waking up," says Grandpa.

"The maple trees?" says Evie.

"My maple trees," says Grandpa. "Behind my garden."

"Do they sing?" says Sam.

"No," says Grandpa. "The birds sing. The trees drip."

"Drip?" says Billy.

Grandpa sits down at the little table.

They all sit with him.

“In the winter the maple tree sleeps,” says Grandpa.

“In the spring it wakes up.”

“Then it has sweet water inside.”

“Sweet water?” says Tess. “In a tree?”

“Yes,” says Grandpa. “It is called sap.”

“Sap,” says Sam. “What is sap?”

“Sap is the sweet water in the tree,” says Tess.

In the spring a maple tree has sap inside.

The sap is only a little sweet.

You boil the sap for a long time.

Then it turns into syrup.

Maple syrup is thick and golden.

“Maple syrup,” says Billy. “On pancakes!”

“Pancakes?” says Sam. “What is a pancake?”

“A pancake is flat and round,” says Evie.

“It is soft and warm.”

“You eat it with syrup,” says Sara.

Grandpa looks out the window at the big maple tree.

“No syrup for many years,” he says.

“Why, Grandpa?” says Evie.

“The buckets are heavy,” says Grandpa.

“The work is long.”

“It is too much work for one old man.”

Evie looks at Grandpa.

Then she looks at her friends.

“One old man?” says Evie.

She counts on her hand.

“Me. Sara. Tess. Billy. Sam.”

“And Grandpa.”

“There are six of us!”

Grandpa looks at them all.

He says nothing for a long moment.

Then he smiles.

“Six,” says Grandpa. “Six is a lot.”

“And the bakery can help, too,” says Mom.

“How?” says Sara.

“A pancake breakfast,” says Mom.

“Here in the shop. On Saturday.”

“Pancakes for our friends,” says Mom.

“With Grandpa’s maple syrup on top.”

“And maple cookies,” says Mom.

“With a little syrup in the dough.”

“Maple cookies!” says Billy. “I taste first!”

“You always taste first,” says Sara.

“Every child has a job,” says Mom.

“Evie decorates. Sara checks the list.”

“Tess measures. Billy tastes first.”

“And I watch the oven.”

"And me?" says Sam.

"You taste second," says Billy.

Sam smiles. "Good."

Sara takes out her pencil.

She writes two lines on her list.

"Monday. The trees wake up."

"Saturday. Pancakes."

Crumble looks up at the table.

"Later you get a pancake, Crumble," says Billy.

Crumble puts his head on Billy's foot.

Grandpa stands up and goes to the door.

He puts on his muddy boots.

"Then come tomorrow," says Grandpa.

"All of you. Come to my trees."

"Tomorrow?" says Evie.

"Tomorrow," says Grandpa. "Bring your boots."

Billy looks at his boots by the door.

They are brown with mud.

"My boots are ready," says Billy.

Everyone laughs.

Ding! Grandpa goes out.

He walks down Main Street in the sun.

The birds sing in the big maple tree.

Evie looks out the window.

Tomorrow they go to Grandpa's trees.

Chapter 2: Five Old Trees



It is Tuesday morning.

The sun is out. The roofs drip.

Evie and Billy put on their boots.

Ding! Sara, Tess and Sam come in.

They have their boots on.

“Ready?” says Sara.

“Ready!” says Billy.

Mom stands at the door with baby June.

“Go to Grandpa,” says Mom.

They walk down Main Street.

The snow is gone. The street is wet.

At the end of Main Street is a small house.

That is Grandpa's house.

Grandpa stands at the front door.

He has his cap on.

"Good morning!" says Grandpa.

"You have your boots. Good. Come with me."

They walk around the house.

Here is Grandpa's garden.

There is nothing in the garden now.

There is only brown mud.

"Where are the pumpkins?" says Sam.

Grandpa laughs.

"No pumpkins in March, Sam," he says.

"Now it is only mud."

The mud is soft and wet.

Billy's boot goes into it.

He pulls and pulls.

His boot comes out. It is very muddy.

"My boots are ready," says Billy.

Behind the garden stand five old maple trees.

They stand in a row.

They are big and gray-brown.

They have no leaves yet.

Sam counts the trees.

"One. Two. Three. Four. Five!"

"Five trees," says Sam.

"Five old trees," says Grandpa.

"They are old. Older than me."

"Are they awake now?" says Billy.

Grandpa puts his hand on a tree.

"Yes," he says. "They are waking up."

"The days are warm. The nights are cold."

"Then the sap comes."

"First we need my box," says Grandpa.

Next to the garden is a small wooden shed.

Grandpa opens the door of the shed.

There is an old wooden box on the floor.

Grandpa pulls at the box.

It does not move.

"It is heavy," says Grandpa.

"We can carry it," says Evie.

Evie and Sara carry the box out of the shed.

Grandpa opens the box.

Inside are ten metal buckets.

They are gray and old.

Every bucket has a little lid.

There are small metal taps, too.

Billy holds up a tap.

"What is this?" says Billy.

"That is a tap," says Grandpa.

"The tap goes in the tree."

"The sap comes out of the tap."

"And the bucket?" says Sara.

"The bucket hangs on the tap," says Grandpa.

"The sap drips into the bucket."

"And the lid?" says Tess.

"The lid keeps the rain out," says Grandpa. "And the snow."

Tess nods. "Tap. Bucket. Lid."

Grandpa looks at the old buckets.

He says nothing for a long moment.

"They were my dad's buckets," he says.

Then he takes one more thing out of the box.

It is an old drill.

"What is that?" says Sam.

"This is a drill," says Grandpa.

"It makes a hole."

"A hole in the tree?" says Sam.

"A small hole," says Grandpa. "The tree is OK."

"Can I drill?" says Billy.

"No," says Grandpa. "The drill is my job."

"You stand back. All of you."

The children stand back.

Billy stands back, too.

Grandpa goes to the first tree.

He puts the drill on the tree.

He turns it and turns it.

Grandpa is drilling now.

Little bits of wood fall on the mud.

Then he stops.

There is a small hole in the tree.

Grandpa pushes a tap into the hole.

“Now the bucket,” he says. “Evie?”

Evie takes a bucket.

She hangs it on the tap.

She puts the little lid on top.

They all wait.

Nothing.

“Nothing,” says Billy.

“Wait,” says Grandpa.

Then a drop comes out of the tap.

It is a little clear drop.

It falls into the bucket.

Drip.

“A drop!” says Sam.

Then one more drop comes.

Drip. Drip.

“The tree is dripping!” says Billy.

“That is sap,” says Grandpa.

He smiles a big smile.

“No sap for many years,” he says.

“Now my tree drips again.”

Grandpa drills one more hole in the first tree.

Then he goes to the next tree.

The children stand back every time.

Billy and Sam hang the buckets.

Billy holds his bucket with two hands.

“Careful,” says Evie.

“I am careful,” says Billy.

Sam puts on a lid.

“Lid on!” says Sam.

Tess counts the buckets.

“Two buckets on tree one.”

“Two on every tree. Five trees. Ten buckets.”

“Ten,” says Grandpa. “All my dad’s buckets.”

Sara takes out her list and her pencil.

She writes.

“Tree one. Two buckets.”

She writes down all five trees.

“That is my tree list,” says Sara.

Now they all stand by the row of trees.

It is quiet.

The birds sing.

The buckets drip.

Drip. Drip. Drip.

“How much sap is in there?” says Sam.

Evie takes the lid off one bucket.

There is not much in it.

“Not much,” says Evie.

“Trees are slow,” says Grandpa.

“Come back tomorrow. Then we look again.”

Billy looks at the trees one more time.

Ten buckets on five old trees.

Drip. Drip. Drip.

How much sap will be in the buckets tomorrow?

Chapter 3: Forty Buckets



It is Wednesday morning.

The sun is out again.

Ding! Sara, Tess and Sam come in.

They all have their boots on.

Billy's little red wagon stands by the bakery door.

Billy takes the wagon.

"Why the wagon?" says Evie.

"Buckets are heavy," says Billy.

"Two buckets go in my wagon."

They walk down Main Street to Grandpa's house.

The wagon goes bump, bump on the sidewalk.

Billy pulls the wagon.

Sam pushes it from behind.

Grandpa waits at the front door.

“Good morning,” says Grandpa.

“You have a wagon. That is good.”

They walk around the house and past the muddy garden.

There are the five old trees.

The buckets hang on the taps.

Drip. Drip. Drip.

Evie goes to the first tree.

She puts her hand on a bucket.

“It is heavy now,” says Evie.

“Lift the lid,” says Grandpa.

Evie lifts the little lid.

The bucket is full of clear sap.

“It is water!” says Billy.

“No,” says Grandpa. “It is sap.”

He takes a small cup out of his coat.

He puts the cup in the sap.

“Here. Taste it. A little bit.”

Billy tastes first.

Sam tastes second.

Then Evie, Sara and Tess taste it.

“How is it?” says Grandpa.

Tess looks in the cup.

“It is clear,” she says.

"It tastes like water," says Sara.

"And a little sweet," says Evie.

"Yes," says Grandpa. "A little sweet. That is sap."

Billy looks in the bucket.

"Where is the syrup?" says Billy.

Grandpa laughs.

"The syrup is not here yet," he says.

"First we need a lot of sap."

"How much?" says Sara.

"Forty buckets of sap," says Grandpa.

"Then we get one bucket of syrup."

"Forty?!" says Billy.

"Forty," says Grandpa.

Tess counts on her fingers.

"Ten buckets. Ten more. Ten more. Ten more."

"That is forty."

"That is a lot of sap," says Sam.

"Yes," says Grandpa. "Come. The sap goes in my barrel."

Next to the shed stands a big barrel.

It is an old wooden barrel.

Grandpa takes the lid off the barrel.

It is empty inside.

"All the sap goes in here," says Grandpa.

"Now the buckets come off the trees."

Evie takes the bucket off the tap.

The bucket is very heavy.

"Sara, help me," says Evie.

Sara holds one side.

Evie holds the other side.

Two children for one bucket.

They walk slow and careful.

The mud is soft.

"Slow," says Sara. "Slow."

At the barrel Grandpa holds the lid.

Evie and Sara lift the bucket up.

The sap goes into the barrel.

Splash!

"One bucket," says Tess.

"Thirty-nine more," says Sam.

Billy brings his wagon.

"Two buckets in my wagon," says Billy.

Sam and Tess put two full buckets in the wagon.

Billy pulls.

Sam pushes from behind.

The wagon goes slow over the mud.

"Careful," says Evie.

"I am careful," says Billy.

The wagon comes to the barrel.

Splash, splash!

"Three buckets," says Tess.

They go to the next tree.

Again and again.

Grandpa does not carry a bucket.

He stands by the barrel with the lid.

Evie looks at him.

“Grandpa? Are you OK?”

Grandpa looks at the buckets.

“The buckets are too heavy for me now,” he says.

“I am old. My arms are old.”

“That is why. No syrup for many years.”

The children are quiet.

Then Evie takes his hand.

“Now you have us,” says Evie.

“Five,” says Billy. “And you. There are six of us.”

Grandpa smiles a big smile.

“Yes,” he says. “Now I have you.”

The children hang the buckets back on the taps.

Sam puts on the lids.

“Lid on! Lid on!” says Sam.

Drip, drip, drip.

Sam runs back to the barrel.

His boot goes into the soft mud.

He slips and sits down in the mud.

“Sam!” says Evie.

He looks at his hands. They are brown.

He looks at his coat. It is brown, too.

Then Sam laughs and laughs.

Billy laughs, too.

"Now your boots are ready," says Billy.

Sara and Billy pull Sam up.

"Are you OK?" says Grandpa.

"I am OK," says Sam. "I am only muddy."

At noon they eat at Grandpa's table.

Grandpa makes soup.

Sam sits on an old cloth.

Then they go out again.

The trees drip all day.

The children carry the buckets to the barrel.

Billy pulls the wagon.

Sam pushes.

Bump, splash. Bump, splash.

Sara writes on her list.

"Tree one. Four buckets."

"Tree two. Four buckets."

Tess counts. "Twenty buckets today."

The sun goes down.

The air gets cold.

Grandpa looks in the barrel.

The barrel is full.

"Is that forty?" says Sam.

"No," says Grandpa. "Not forty."

"But it is a good start."

"The trees will drip again tomorrow."

Evie looks at the full barrel.

"And now?" says Evie.

"Now the sap is ready," says Grandpa.

"Tomorrow we make a fire."

"A fire?" says Billy.

"A fire," says Grandpa.

"And my big pan."

"Tomorrow the sap boils."

Chapter 4: Steam



It is Thursday morning.

The sun is out. The air is cold.

Dad does not go to the mill today.

“Today I help Grandpa,” says Dad.

Mom stands at the bakery door with baby June.

“Bring me a little syrup!” says Mom.

Dad and the five children walk down Main Street.

Billy pulls his red wagon.

Sam pushes it from behind.

Grandpa waits at the front door.

They walk around the house with him.

Next to the shed stands the barrel.

It is full of sap.

Next to the barrel, old gray stones lie in a circle.

On the stones sits a big pan.

The pan is wide, flat and black.

“That is my big pan,” says Grandpa.

“A big pancake pan!” says Billy.

Grandpa laughs.

“No pancakes in this pan,” he says.

“Only sap.”

Dad brings wood from the shed.

Grandpa puts the wood under the pan.

Then Grandpa looks at the children.

“The fire is my job,” he says.

“My job and Dad’s job.”

“Not for children. You stand back. All of you.”

“We stand back,” says Evie.

The children stand back.

Tess goes back three more steps.

“Three steps,” says Tess.

Dad makes the fire.

The wood goes pop, pop.

A little smoke goes up.

Then the fire is big and hot.

Dad takes the lid off the barrel.

He fills a bucket with sap.

He pours the sap into the pan.

Again and again.

Soon the pan is full.

They wait.

The pan gets very hot.

“Look!” says Sam.

Little bubbles come up in the sap.

“It is boiling!” says Sara.

Then lots of white steam goes up into the cold air.

“Steam,” says Grandpa.

“That is the water. The water goes up.”

“The sweet part stays in the pan.”

“The water goes away?” says Billy.

“Yes,” says Grandpa. “Slow. All day.”

Billy looks up at the white steam.

“Bye, water,” says Billy.

Everyone laughs.

There is less sap in the pan now.

Grandpa takes a big metal jug from the shed.

“Now we need more sap,” says Grandpa.

“Who pours?”

“Me!” says Evie.

“Pour with the jug,” says Grandpa.

“Stand here. Pour slow and careful.”

“Do not touch the pan. It is hot.”

Evie fills the jug at the barrel.

She holds the heavy jug with two hands.

She pours the sap into the pan.

Then she steps back.

“Good,” says Grandpa.

Sara pours next, then Tess.

Then Billy and Sam pour together.

Four hands on one jug.

“Slow,” says Sam.

“I am going slow,” says Billy.

Pour and wait. All morning.

The children carry the full buckets to the barrel.

Billy pulls the wagon.

Sam pushes.

Bump, splash. Bump, splash.

“Ten more buckets,” says Tess.

At noon they eat bread by the shed.

It is Mom’s bread.

After lunch Dad gets his keys.

“I go to Pine Lane,” says Dad.

Billy looks at Evie.

“Pine Lane?” says Billy.

“You will see,” says Dad.

Soon the truck comes back.

Mrs. Hill gets out of the truck.

She has her coat on.

She has her cane.

“Mrs. Hill!” says Billy.

"Hello, children," says Mrs. Hill.

Grandpa brings a chair from his kitchen.

He puts it by the shed.

It is far from the fire.

Mrs. Hill sits down.

She puts her cane next to the chair.

"Maple syrup again," she says.

"No syrup for many years."

"No," says Grandpa. "But now I have help."

Mrs. Hill looks at the five children.

"I see," she says. "Good help."

"Can you pour, Mrs. Hill?" says Sam.

"No," says Mrs. Hill.

"I do not carry. I do not pour."

"I watch. That is my job today."

"That is a good job," says Billy.

"It is the best job," says Mrs. Hill.

"I sit. I watch. I am warm."

Everyone laughs.

In the afternoon the trees drip again.

The children carry the buckets to the barrel.

"Ten more buckets," says Tess.

She counts on her fingers.

"Twenty yesterday. Ten this morning. Ten now."

"That is forty."

"Forty!" says Sam.

Grandpa smiles a big smile.

"Then we get one bucket of syrup," he says.

The sap boils all afternoon.

Then Evie looks in the pan.

The sap is not clear now.

It is yellow.

Then it is darker.

"It is golden," says Evie.

Billy puts his nose up.

"It smells sweet!" says Billy.

"Yes," says Mrs. Hill. "I smell it from my chair."

"Can I taste it?" says Billy.

"Not yet," says Grandpa.

"It is too hot. And it is not syrup yet."

The sun goes down.

The air gets cold.

Dad puts out the fire.

Grandpa looks in the pan for a long moment.

The sap is golden now.

There is not much in the pan.

"Is it syrup now?" says Sam.

"No," says Grandpa. "Not yet."

"Now it goes in the house."

"In my kitchen. On my stove."

"Why?" says Evie.

Grandpa looks at the children.

"The last part is hard," he says.

"It is the hardest part."

Chapter 5: The Red Line



It is a dark Thursday evening.

Grandpa's kitchen is small and warm.

Dad carries the golden sap into the house in the big metal jug.

"Slow," says Grandpa. "Careful."

Dad pours the sap into a small pot.

Grandpa puts it on his stove.

The five friends stand by the kitchen table.

Mrs. Hill comes in with her cane.

She sits down on a chair by the wall.

"I watch," she says. "That is still my job."

Billy laughs.

The stove gets hot.

Soon the sap is boiling again.

Little bubbles and a little steam come up.

The kitchen smells sweet.

“Is it syrup now?” says Sam.

“Not yet,” says Grandpa.

He opens a drawer.

He takes out a long thin glass stick.

“What is that?” says Billy.

“It is a thermometer,” says Grandpa.

“A ther-mo-me-ter,” says Sam slowly.

“It measures hot things,” says Tess.

“Yes,” says Grandpa. “Hot sap.”

He puts it in the pot.

It hangs on the side.

“Look,” says Grandpa.

“Here is a small red line.”

Evie looks.

There is a little red line on the glass.

“I made this line,” says Grandpa. “Many years ago.”

“Look at the red line.”

“At the red line, it is syrup.”

“Not before. Not after.”

“Before the red line?” says Sara.

“Then it is thin,” says Grandpa.

“Too thin. It is not syrup.”

"After the red line?" says Evie.

"Then it is too thick," says Grandpa.

"It gets hard. Hard sugar."

"Hard sugar!" says Billy. "I like sugar."

"Not on a pancake," says Mrs. Hill.

Everyone laughs.

Grandpa looks at the five friends.

"Who watches the red line?" he says.

They all look at Tess.

Tess measures and counts.

She is very careful.

"Me," says Tess. "I watch it."

"Good," says Grandpa.

"Stand here. Do not touch the pot."

Tess stands next to Grandpa.

She does not touch the pot.

She looks at the red line on the thermometer.

Grandpa stirs the sap with a long spoon.

Stir. Stir. Stir.

The sap is getting darker.

"Is it there?" says Billy.

"No," says Tess. "Not yet."

They wait.

The sap boils in the pot.

Grandpa stirs it again.

"Is it there now?" says Sam.

"No," says Tess. "Not yet."

They wait.

Sam is thirsty.

There is a jug of water on the table.

Sam's hand bumps the heavy jug.

It tips.

Splash!

The water goes over the table, onto the floor and onto Billy's socks.

"Oh no!" says Sam.

"I bumped the jug!"

"My socks!" says Billy.

Grandpa turns around.

He looks at the floor.

"It is only water, Sam," he says.

"It is OK. We need a cloth."

Grandpa gets a big cloth from the sink.

Evie and Sara help Sam.

Billy takes off his wet socks.

Dad picks up the jug.

Everyone is looking at the floor.

Only Tess is not.

Tess is looking at the thermometer.

The line in the glass is going up.

Up. Up. Up.

It is near the red line now.

Tess opens her mouth.

Grandpa is at the sink with his back to the stove.

Now it is at the red line.

“Now!” says Tess.

“Grandpa, now! It is at the red line!”

Grandpa turns fast.

He takes the pot off the stove.

Just in time.

The kitchen is very quiet.

Grandpa looks at the thermometer.

He looks at the red line.

Then he looks at Tess.

“It is at the red line,” says Grandpa.

“Not before. Not after.”

He smiles a big smile.

“You said it, Tess.”

“You said it at the right time.”

Tess does not say anything.

She looks at the pot.

Her face gets pink.

Tess is proud.

It is a warm, quiet, happy feeling.

“Tess did it!” says Sam.

“Tess did it!” says Billy.

Evie looks at Tess.

Evie thinks of the bakery.

Sam's cake. Too much flour.

"Next time I will say it," says Evie.

"You said that, Tess. In the bakery."

Tess smiles.

"Yes," she says. "And this time I said it."

"Good," says Mrs. Hill.

"I watched it all."

"Sorry, Grandpa," says Sam quietly.

"I bumped the jug."

Grandpa puts his hand on Sam's head.

"It is only water," he says.

"Water is easy."

"And Tess watched the stove. That is good help."

Sam smiles a little smile.

Grandpa takes a spoon.

He dips it in the pot and lifts it up.

They all look.

A slow drop comes off the spoon.

It is thick and golden.

"Look at it," says Sara.

"It is thick," says Evie.

"Is that syrup?" says Billy.

Grandpa nods.

"That is maple syrup," says Grandpa.

"Maple syrup!" says Sam.

"From my trees," says Grandpa.

"After many years."

Billy looks in the pot.

There is not much in it.

"Grandpa," says Billy.

"Forty buckets of sap."

"How much syrup is that?"

Grandpa looks in the pot for a long moment.

"Tomorrow you will see," he says.

Chapter 6: One Big Jar



It is a sunny Friday morning.

The five friends walk down Main Street.

Billy pulls his red wagon.

Sam pushes from behind.

Bump, bump, bump.

Grandpa waits at his front door.

“Good morning,” he says.

“Come in. Boots off!”

Billy laughs.

They take off their boots by the door.

Grandpa’s kitchen is small and warm.

The small pot is on the stove.

Evie looks around the kitchen.

"Where is Mrs. Hill?" she says.

"At home," says Grandpa. "On Pine Lane."

"Dad came with the truck," says Billy. "Last night."

"Yes," says Grandpa. "Now she is at home. In her warm chair."

Grandpa looks in the pot.

"The syrup is cold now," he says.

"Cold syrup is very thick."

He turns on the stove.

"Now it is getting warm."

"Can I help?" says Billy.

"Not with the stove," says Grandpa.

"Hot pot and hot syrup. That is my job."

"You stand back. All of you."

The five friends stand back.

On the table are two glass jars.

One jar is big.

The other jar is small.

The jars are very clean.

"Clean jars," says Grandpa. "Very clean."

"Two jars?" says Sara.

"You will see," says Grandpa.

He takes a white cloth.

The cloth is clean and thin.

Grandpa puts the cloth over the big jar.

"What is the cloth for?" says Tess.

"Little bits from the fire," says Grandpa.

"Little bits of wood."

"The cloth keeps them out."

"Only the syrup goes in the jar."

The syrup is hot now.

Grandpa holds the pot with a thick cloth.

He pours slow.

The golden syrup goes through the white cloth.

It goes into the big jar.

Drip, drip, drip.

The five friends watch it quietly.

The big jar is getting full.

Grandpa moves the cloth to the small jar.

He pours again.

Drip, drip.

Then the pot is empty.

Grandpa puts the empty pot back on the stove.

He puts a lid on the big jar.

Then he puts a lid on the small jar.

One big jar.

One small jar.

That is all.

"One bucket of syrup," says Tess. "Two jars."

Billy looks at the two jars and the empty pot.

Billy is quiet.

He is a little sad.

It is a lot of work for two jars.

“All that work,” says Billy.

“Forty buckets. One jar?”

“Two jars,” says Tess. “One big and one small.”

“Two jars,” says Billy.

He looks at the floor.

Grandpa sits down next to Billy.

“Billy,” he says. “Look at the jar.”

Billy looks.

The sun shines on the big jar.

The syrup is thick and golden-brown.

“That is maple syrup,” says Grandpa.

“Every drop is good.”

“Every drop?” says Billy.

“Every drop,” says Grandpa. “Taste it.”

Grandpa takes five little spoons.

He puts a little syrup on every spoon.

Billy tastes first.

Sam tastes second.

Then Evie, Sara and Tess taste it.

Billy eats it slow.

His eyes get big.

“Mmm!” says Billy.

"It is so sweet!"

"It is thick!" says Sam.

"It is golden," says Evie.

"It is not thin," says Sara.

"Tess said 'Now!' at the right time."

Tess smiles with a pink face.

Billy licks his spoon.

"Every drop is good," he says.

Everyone laughs.

Grandpa laughs with them.

Billy is not sad now.

He looks at the jars again.

"Two jars," he says. "Two good jars."

"The big jar is for the bakery," says Grandpa.

"For the pancake breakfast. Tomorrow."

"Pancakes!" says Sam.

"And the small jar?" says Sara.

Grandpa looks at the five friends.

"You carried my buckets," he says.

"You choose."

The five friends look at each other.

Nobody says anything.

Then Evie and Billy say it at the same time.

"For Mrs. Hill!"

They laugh.

"She watched it all," says Sam.

"Her chair was by the shed," says Sara. "All afternoon."

"She has no maple syrup," says Tess.

"Not one drop."

Grandpa nods with a big smile.

"Good," he says.

"Mrs. Hill gets the small jar."

"Can we go to Pine Lane now?" says Sam.

"No," says Evie. "Tomorrow."

"At the pancake breakfast. Dad brings her in the truck."

"It is a surprise for tomorrow."

"A surprise for tomorrow," says Grandpa. "Good."

"The small jar stays here."

"I will bring it tomorrow."

He puts the small jar by the window.

They wait a long time.

Now the jars are warm. Not hot.

Evie lifts the big, heavy jar with two hands.

"Careful," says Grandpa. "Slow and careful."

"Put it in my wagon!" says Billy.

Sara puts a cloth in the red wagon.

Evie puts the big jar on the cloth.

Slow and careful.

"Mom said, 'Bring me a little syrup!'" says Evie.

"Then go to the bakery," says Grandpa.

“Your mom needs a little syrup.”

“For maple cookies.”

“Maple cookies!” says Billy.

“For tomorrow!”

They put on their boots.

Billy pulls the wagon.

Sam walks next to the big jar with one hand on it.

“Slow, Billy!” says Grandpa at the door.

“Slow!” says Billy.

Bump, bump.

“To the bakery!” says Billy.

“Maple cookies!”

Chapter 7: Maple Cookies



Ding!

The five friends come into the bakery.

Mom is at the counter.

“Mom!” says Billy. “Look in my wagon!”

Mom looks.

The big jar is on the cloth.

“Oh!” says Mom. “Maple syrup!”

“You said, ‘Bring me a little syrup,’” says Evie.

“This is a little syrup,” says Billy.

Mom laughs.

“This is a lot of syrup,” she says.

“Forty buckets,” says Billy. “One big jar.”

"And one small jar," says Sara.

"It is for Mrs. Hill," says Evie.

"A surprise for tomorrow."

"A good surprise," says Mom.

Evie lifts the big jar out of the wagon.

Slow and careful.

She puts it on the big table in the kitchen.

They put on their aprons.

Evie's apron is yellow.

Tess's apron is purple.

"Today I bake with you," says Mom.

"Maple cookies," says Evie.

Mom gets a big bowl.

Butter goes in. Sugar goes in.

Then an egg.

Tess measures the flour.

"Not more. Not less," she says.

Evie stirs.

Then Mom gives Tess a spoon.

"Now the syrup," says Mom.

"Tess, this is your job."

Tess opens the big jar.

She looks at the syrup for a long moment.

"Two spoons," she says.

"Not more. It is only one jar."

“Three spoons?” says Billy.

“Two,” says Tess.

“The rest is for the pancakes.”

Tess puts in one spoon of syrup.

Then a second spoon.

The syrup goes slow into the bowl.

It is thick and golden.

Evie stirs again.

The dough is a little brown now.

It smells sweet.

“It smells of maple,” says Sara.

Evie rolls the dough with the rolling pin.

“Flat and thin,” says Mom.

“But not too thin.”

Then Mom gets her old box.

The little metal shapes are inside.

“The cookie cutters!” says Sam.

“The snowflake!”

“Not the snowflake,” says Mom.

“It is March. The snow is gone.”

Evie takes a cutter out of the box.

She holds it up.

“The maple leaf,” she says.

“Only maple leaves today.”

“Maple, maple, maple!” says Sam.

Evie puts the cutter on the dough.

She pushes it down.

Then she lifts it.

There is a maple leaf in the dough.

She puts the leaf on the tray.

Push down and lift.

Leaf after leaf.

Tess counts the leaves.

“Twenty on one tray,” she says.

“Two trays,” says Mom.

“Two trays is forty,” says Tess.

Billy looks up.

“Forty buckets. Forty cookies!”

They all laugh.

Crumble sits by the table.

He looks up at the dough.

“No dough for dogs,” says Mom.

“Later, Crumble,” says Billy.

“Later you get a cookie.”

Sam counts on his fingers.

“Later a pancake,” he says.

“Later a cookie.”

“Later, later, later. Poor Crumble.”

Crumble lies down under the table.

He puts his head on his paws.

Mom puts the two trays in the oven.

“I watch the oven,” she says.

“Ten minutes.”

“Then the edges are golden.”

They wait.

The kitchen smells of butter and maple.

“Now,” says Mom.

She takes out the two trays.

The maple leaves are flat and thin.

The edges are golden.

“Not brown,” says Tess. “Good.”

The cookies go on the cooling table.

“Now the icing,” says Evie.

Mom gets a small bowl.

“Powdered sugar,” she says.

“Mrs. Hill had powdered sugar,” says Sam.

“For her snowball cookies.”

“Yes,” says Mom.

“And now a little maple syrup.”

She looks at Tess.

“One spoon,” says Tess. “Not more.”

Mom puts in one spoon of syrup.

She stirs.

The icing is thick.

It is white with a little gold.

"Maple icing," says Mom.

"The lines are Tess's job," says Evie.

Tess takes a little spoon.

She puts one thin line on a maple leaf.

The line goes down the middle of the leaf.

"A good line," says Sara.

Tess puts a line on every leaf.

Forty leaves. Forty lines.

Then Evie takes out a little jar.

Red cherries.

"And now my job," she says.

She puts one red cherry in the middle of a leaf.

On top of the line.

"One cherry on top," says Evie.

Forty leaves. Forty cherries.

"I taste first," says Billy.

"One cookie," says Mom. "Only one."

Billy eats a maple leaf slow.

His eyes get big.

"Mmm!" he says. "It tastes of maple syrup!"

"I taste second," says Sam.

He takes a maple leaf.

"Sweet!" says Sam. "Very sweet!"

Mom tastes the icing on her finger.

She nods.

"Very good," she says.

Sara takes her list and her pencil.

"Now the list for tomorrow," she says.

"Pancakes."

"Mom makes them," says Evie.

"Syrup," says Sara.

"The big jar," says Billy.

"Cookies," says Sara.

"Forty maple leaves," says Tess.

"Thirty-eight," says Billy.

Sam has a cookie in his hand, too.

They all laugh.

"Plates," says Sara.

"Forks."

"Chairs."

"Forks?" says Sam.

"For the pancakes," says Mom.

"You eat pancakes with a fork."

"Plates for everyone," says Sara.

"Forks for everyone. Chairs for everyone."

She looks up from her list.

"But who is everyone?" she says.

"Who comes tomorrow?"

Chapter 8: Pancakes



It is early on Saturday morning.

The sun is not up yet.

But the lights in the bakery are on.

Today is the pancake breakfast.

In the shop Dad and Evie push two tables together.

Now it is one long table.

“The Thanksgiving table!” says Billy.

Billy puts the plates on the table.

Evie puts a fork next to every plate.

“Plates and forks,” says Evie.

“Chairs,” says Billy.

Dad gets the chairs from the kitchen.

In the kitchen Mom gets the big bowl.

“Pancake batter,” she says.

Flour and milk go in the bowl.

Then two eggs and a little sugar.

Mom stirs.

The batter is soft and thick.

Billy looks in the bowl.

“Can I taste the batter?”

“No,” says Mom.

“Batter is not for tasting. Wait for the pancakes.”

Dad gets a big pan.

He puts it on the stove.

“A pancake pan!” says Billy.

“This time it is a real pancake pan.”

Dad laughs.

He puts a little butter in the pan.

The butter melts in the hot pan.

Dad pours a little batter in the pan.

It is round and flat.

“Now we wait,” says Dad.

Billy and Evie watch the pan.

Little bubbles come up in the batter.

Pop, pop, pop.

“Look,” says Dad. “Bubbles. Now you flip.”

He flips the pancake.

The pancake goes up in the air.

It comes down in the pan.

The top is golden.

“Wow!” says Billy.

Dad flips pancake after pancake.

The pancakes go on a big plate.

One pancake, two pancakes, three pancakes.

“A stack!” says Evie.

The stack on the plate gets high.

“Can I flip one?” says Billy.

Dad looks at Mom.

Mom nods.

“Careful,” she says. “The pan is hot.”

Dad holds the pan with Billy.

Four hands on one pan.

Billy watches the batter.

“Look. Bubbles,” he says.

“Now I flip!”

Billy flips the pancake.

It goes up very, very high.

“It will fall!” says Evie.

The pancake does not come down in the pan.

It lands on the kitchen floor.

Flap!

They all look at the floor.

Crumble runs to the pancake very fast.

One bite, two bites.

The pancake is gone.

“Crumble!” says Billy. “That is my pancake!”

Crumble licks his nose.

Evie starts to laugh.

“On Monday you said it, Billy,” she says.

“‘Later you get a pancake, Crumble.’”

Billy looks at Crumble.

Crumble looks at Billy.

“Later is now,” says Billy.

Mom and Dad laugh.

Billy laughs with them.

Crumble wags his tail.

“No more pancakes for dogs,” says Mom.

Evie cleans the floor with a cloth.

“I did it,” she says.

Ding! Ding!

The Lees come in: Mr. Lee, Mrs. Lee, Tess and Sam.

“Morning!” says Sam.

He sees the big stack of pancakes.

“Pancakes!”

Ding! Ding!

Sara and her mom come in.

Sara has her list in her hand.

"Hello, Rosie," says Sara's mom.

Ding! Ding!

Mr. and Mrs. Green come in.

Old Mrs. Green has a big smile.

"A pancake breakfast!" she says.

"With maple syrup! Mr. Green loves pancakes."

"I do," says Mr. Green.

He looks at the stack for a long moment.

"That is a good stack."

"Where is Mrs. Hill?" says Billy.

"I will get her with the truck," says Dad.

He gives the pan to Mom.

Then he takes his keys.

Ding!

Sara looks at her list.

"Pancakes," she says.

"Yes," says Evie. "Two big stacks."

"Syrup," says Sara.

Mom puts the big jar in the middle of the long table.

The syrup is thick and golden-brown.

"Grandpa's syrup," says Tess.

"Every drop is good," says Billy.

"Cookies," says Sara.

Evie puts the maple cookies on a big plate.

Sam counts them.

"Thirty-eight maple leaves," he says.

"Plates and forks and chairs," says Sara.

She counts the chairs.

"Fourteen chairs."

Then the truck comes down Main Street.

It stops at the bakery.

Dad helps Mrs. Hill out.

Ding!

Mrs. Hill comes in with her cane.

"Here I am again," she says.

"I smell your pancake breakfast from Pine Lane."

They all laugh.

Mom brings the two stacks of pancakes to the table.

Baby June sits on Mom's lap.

Now they all sit at the long table.

The pancakes are warm.

The syrup is in the middle.

The maple cookies are on their plate.

But nobody opens the jar.

Nobody takes a pancake.

One chair is empty.

"Where is Grandpa?" says Sam.

"It is Grandpa's syrup," says Evie.

"We wait for Grandpa."

Everyone waits for Grandpa.

Billy looks at the stack.

Crumble looks at the stack, too.

"No, Crumble," says Billy.

Evie looks out of the window at Main Street.

Then she smiles.

"He is coming!" she says.

Grandpa is walking down Main Street.

He walks slow with his cap on.

He has a bag in his hand.

Ding!

Grandpa comes in.

He takes off his cap.

He looks at all the people at the long table.

"Good morning, all of you," he says.

"I have something to say."

Chapter 9: With You



They all look at Grandpa.

Nobody talks.

Crumble sits very still.

Grandpa holds his cap in his hands.

“Thank you, children,” he says.

“You carried my buckets. Forty buckets.”

He looks at the five children.

Evie, Sara, Tess, Billy and Sam.

Sam holds up five fingers.

“Five children,” he says. “And Grandpa. Six!”

Grandpa smiles.

“My dad made syrup with me,” he says.

"Every spring. At the same five trees."

"I was a little boy. I carried the jug."

He looks at Evie.

"Now I make it with you."

The shop is very quiet.

Evie is very happy.

She smiles at Grandpa.

Grandpa smiles back.

"And next spring?" says Billy.

"Next spring we make it again," says Grandpa.

"Then you will be bigger."

"Then I will carry two buckets!" says Billy.

They all laugh.

"Sit down, Grandpa," says Mom.

"The pancakes are warm."

Grandpa sits on the empty chair.

Now no chair is empty.

Mom opens the big jar.

"The first pancake is for Grandpa," she says.

Evie puts a pancake on Grandpa's plate.

Tess pours the syrup.

She pours slow and careful.

The syrup is thick and golden-brown.

It runs slow over the pancake.

Billy watches it.

He licks his lips.

Grandpa takes his fork.

He takes a little bite.

He eats slow.

They all wait.

Grandpa closes his eyes.

Then he opens them.

“Mmm,” he says.

“The best syrup in Maple Falls.”

“Yes!” says Billy.

“Billy, you are the taste tester,” says Sam.

“You always taste first.”

“Not today,” says Billy.

“Today Grandpa tastes first. It is his syrup.”

Grandpa laughs.

“Now you,” he says.

Billy takes a pancake with syrup.

He takes a big bite.

His eyes get big.

“Sweet! Very sweet!”

Now they all take pancakes.

Tess pours syrup on every pancake.

“Not too much,” she says. “It is only one jar.”

“Every drop is good,” says Billy.

Mr. Green eats one pancake.

Then two pancakes.

Then three pancakes.

“I do love pancakes,” he says.

Mrs. Green laughs.

Mr. Lee tastes the syrup on his pancake.

“Maple syrup from Maple Falls,” he says.

“Very good.”

Sam has syrup on his nose.

Tess cleans it off with a cloth.

Then Grandpa opens his bag.

“I almost forgot,” he says.

He takes out the small jar.

The children look at the small jar.

Then they look at Mrs. Hill.

Grandpa gives the jar to Evie.

“You carried the buckets,” he says. “You give it.”

Evie stands up.

Sara, Tess, Billy and Sam stand up, too.

They walk to Mrs. Hill.

Evie gives her the small jar.

“For you,” says Evie. “From Grandpa’s trees.”

Mrs. Hill looks at the jar.

She holds it with two hands.

“For me?” she says.

“Yes,” says Billy. “For you.”

"We carried the buckets," says Sam.

"Tess said 'Now!'" says Billy.

Mrs. Hill is quiet for a moment.

Then she smiles a big smile.

"Thank you, children," she says.

"Then I will make pancakes. You will see."

"Can you flip a pancake?" says Billy.

"I do not measure," says Mrs. Hill.

"I do not look. I know it in my hands."

They all laugh.

Under the table Crumble puts his head on Billy's foot.

Billy looks down.

Crumble looks up.

"Oh, Crumble," says Billy.

"Yesterday I said it. 'Later you get a cookie.'"

"Later is now," says Sam.

Billy looks at Mom.

Mom nods.

"One cookie," she says. "Only one."

Billy takes a maple cookie from the plate.

He gives it to Crumble.

One bite, two bites.

The cookie is gone.

Crumble wags his tail.

Sam counts the cookies on the plate.

"Thirty-seven," he says.

"No more cookies for dogs," says Mom.

Then Mom takes a maple cookie, too.

She tastes it.

"Mmm," she says.

"The best maple cookies in Maple Falls."

Evie smiles at Tess.

Tess smiles at Evie.

Mom holds baby June on her lap.

She looks around the shop.

The shop is full.

The Lees are here.

The Greens are here.

Sara and her mom are here.

Mrs. Hill and Grandpa are here.

The long table is full of plates.

"Look at all the people," says Mom.

"In June the bakery is ten years old."

"Ten years!"

Evie looks at Dad.

Dad looks at Evie.

He winks.

Billy opens his mouth.

Sara puts a finger on her lips.

Billy closes his mouth.

Mom does not see it.

She gives baby June a kiss.

Evie and Dad have a plan.

It is a surprise for Mom.

A surprise in June.

In June Mom will see it.

Evie takes a maple cookie.

She looks out of the window.

The big maple tree by the square has no leaves yet.

But the birds sing in it.

“In June,” says Evie.

She smiles a big smile.

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