



A SWIFT ENTERPRISE SAGA

Thomasina Swift—Girl Inventor

Forever More: an excerpt from part 1

By Leo L. Levesque

There's a new girl in town, and she shows up just in the nick of time.

Previously unknown to the family, distant cousin Thomasina Swift comes to Shopton just when she is most needed. A series of unfortunate events has hit the Swift family and their century-old company is about to disappear into the mists of history.

But, what can she do? Nobody has ever heard of her.

Is she really who she says she is?

Can she pull the company from the brink?

Chapter Two: Friend or Foe

In the gloom of the room a voice spoke out.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" The voice was stern but definitely female. A young woman came into the room and stood in front of Thomasina with her hands on her hips.

Thomasina looked up at the tall, statuette, light blue eye blond, just like all the Swifts, She was looking at Sandra Swift and knew it. She managed to stammer out, "I'm your cousin from England, on your Uncle Henry's side."

"He had only one child, my Father!" she shot back.

Thomasina stood up right in front of her and her face come into the light from the door way. Sandra stumbled and gasped as she saw Thomasina's face. With a look of disbelief in her face she asked again. "Who are you?" this time in a mere whisper.

"I'm Thomasina Swift, your cousin. Please sit down." She pointed to the other chair that was in front of the desk. "This will take some time and I've already had a long afternoon." She spoke quietly and in a firm voice.

Sandra, with a thousand questions racing thought her mind, took the chair and faced Thomasina as they both sat down. She clasped her hands together and placed them on her lap.

"Okay," she spoke. "Tell."

So once again Thomasina went through her family history.

Sandra asked a few questions afterwards and finally said, "What do you want from us? If it's money, sorry, we're broke. If it's fame, we were out of that too! If it's the clothes off our backs, well, you can try for it but I'll fight you all the way. You'll only get rags by the time we're finished." Sandra stated this firmly and with no hostility. It was just the plain truth. Thomasina could have taken offense at this but knew that Sandra was just being honest.

"No, Sandra, I don't want anything of monetary value from your family. My only hope was to get to know more of this part of the family. It's all that I have left except for my Grandma and she's getting up there in age. She thought it best for me to get to know you now while she was still around. She hoped I would have family to go to after she died, if I wanted to. But, Sandra what happened? Grandma told me you had a thriving business. All this is too much to understand. Please tell me what happened. I met your father for a while earlier today but he told me nothing and just walked out!"

Sandra took a deep breath and began to talk.

"I knew something was wrong when dad came slamming into the house and disappeared into his study. I even heard him lock the door. I knew he had come to the plant so I came over here to find out what happened. When dad gets upset like this he broods for days in this study and won't talk to anyone. When I got here I saw the motorcycle in front of this building and found you up here. Look Thomasina... Tommy, if it's all right?"

"Sure, go ahead," the newly christened Tommy replied with a shrug of her shoulders.

"My Uncle Henry took over the company when he came back from Korea. My Great-grandpa, Tom disappeared in South America in eighty-eight. He was on an expedition with several other scientists on board the *Silver Cloud*. It was one of the last great dirigibles built by anyone. Actually Great-Grandpa Tom built it himself in the late twenties. After a long search it was given up as hopeless. Nothing was ever found. With Great-Grandpa Tom lost, the company had no new invention to fall on. Uncle Henry was no genius and could barely keep the Company going. As things got tight he sold off patent after

patent which left us with less and less to manufacture. My father did not agree with the way his father was running things and had a big fight with Uncle Henry. He left for college, graduated with dual masters in Electronics, specializing in avionics and computer control and then in Engineering, specializing in Rocketry. He took a job at NASA and helped big time in the shuttle program and the international space station.

"Uncle Henry died suddenly in eighty-eight and the company went to my father. He did the best he could with what was left. He slowly started to rebuild the company using his knowledge of Avionics and engineering skills he vastly improved upon while at NASA. He started small by making replacement parts for the Avionics in planes and their computer controls. His call to fame was durability. If it did not last he did not make it. A lot of his electronics was in miniaturization that could be plugged in right off the shelf and it last. Really last!" Sandra voice spoke with pride as she told of her father's accomplishments.

"He mothballed most of the buildings and ran a tight company. By the time he married and had Tom and me the future for us look great. We were happy, the past was but a bad memory. Tom and I loved school and you couldn't keep Tom away from the plant. He was everywhere, the crew loved him. They treated him like he was one of them. But the funniest part was that Tom did make a difference. He made parts; he soldered motherboards together for computers and he even improved on them. By the time he was fifteen he was dad's right hand man and helped in all the designing and engineering of almost every thing we were doing. Then in the fall of oh-five Tom and mother were killed in a car accident." Sandra's voice broke over this statement and tears started to steam down her cheeks.

Tommy reached over to her and took her hands into hers. Then, she slowly hugged her till she stopped crying.

"I'm sorry," stammered Sandra as she finally pulled back and wiped her eyes. "I haven't cried like that in a couple of years now. You must think of me as a baby." She leaned back into her chair and regarded Tommy as she finally composed herself.

"No," answered Tommy. "As a matter of fact I just had a good cry for myself before you came in." A little laughter came between them as they realized how much they shared.

"Then what happened?" Tommy had to know the rest of the story.

Sandra placed her hands back on her lap and stared at then for a moment and continued.

"They say that they both died in an instant. It was late at night, about one a.m. They were coming back from a science fair, a college level science fair. An eighteen-wheeler shot across the road and hit them head on. The car just disintegrated. Oh, Tommy... there was so little left. I just had to see it. I just could not believe it till I did." Tears were in her eyes again but they stayed there. She rubbed them away with her hands.

"The driver of the eighteen wheeler just walked away. The police found him several hours later sleeping it off at a friend's house. By then it was to late for a blood-alcohol test. He was charged with reckless endangerment and death resulting, and leaving the scene of an accident. Really just a slap on the hand for killing my mother and brother." She still looked outrage over this turn of events.

"My farther took it hard. He's been like the walking dead for the last five years. Absolutely nothing brings him out of it for long. The company just ran on it's own for the first few years. Thanks mostly to some very loyal employees. I tried to take over running things after things started to fall apart. But it was to late. Other business people heard of dad's mental state and that I, a mere girl, was running the place. Who wanted to risk a contract with us?

"The company is now about in the same shape as if Uncle Henry was running it. Our equipment is to be auction off in a few days, and I don't know how to stop it." After saying this, Sandra got up and walked over to a portrait of an elderly man. The brass plate on the bottom frame told who it was:

Barton Swift 1860 - 1930

She swung the portrait to the side and opened a small safe behind it. She took out a book, a small note pad held closed with an elastic band.

"I know dad would not take this," she said to Tommy as she sat back down in her chair. Tommy looked at it in her hand.

"It's Tom's dream book. That's what I call it. Every time he had an idea he would jot it down. Later he would add to these ideas as he gathered more information about them. It was his diary and no one

was supposed to look at it. He had it with him all the time. But somehow that day he left it at home. It's all we have left of his dreams, of the world he wanted to build and to be in." Her tone was sad and almost lost as she whispered it.

Tommy was stung by how much the loss of Tom and his mother had affected the family. The sun was down by now and the room was dark. The only light came through the doorway and that light lit up only where the girls were sitting. They looked at each other and knew this was the end. They were both emotionally dried out. There was no more to tell. Sandra got up first and held out her hand to Tommy.

"Let's go. There's too many bad stories in this room." They both walked silently out of the building and over to Tommy's motorcycle.

"I'm sorry, Sandra, I was wrong. Grandma was wrong too. There is no hope for a future here. Your family used it up a long time ago. Death only waits here now. You're young, strong and intelligent. Get away from here. Go as far away as you can. Start a new life. You'll die here if you stay. I know I can't. Come back to England with me. We can start over together. We could be great friends. I know it," and this time there was joy in her voice over the prospect of a life with Sandra as a companion.

"No, I can't. You may be right. There's not much left here. There are still my dad, a few trusted employees and I feel an obligation to see it thru. No matter what." Her voice was strong again and she fortified herself for the future.

Tommy reached into a saddle on the back of the bike and pulled out a jacket. She looked around once more as she put it on. The sun was gone and a few stars were in the sky. A couple of buildings had lights on, but mostly the compound was dark. It looked like a ghost town and most of it faded away into the distance. Tommy could not see a future here.

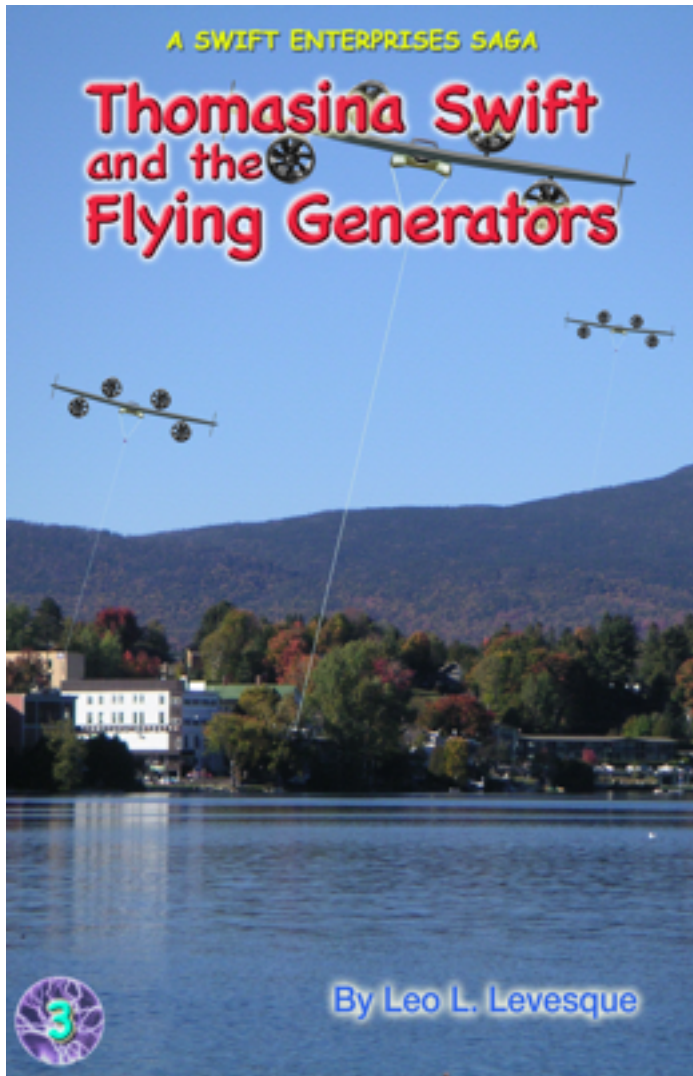
As she was looking around Sandra dropped the diary into the saddlebag.

"Why not? Maybe she will come back to return it." Sandra thought. *"I so much want to see Tommy again. Maybe we can work something out in the light of day that this night would not give us."*

She watched as Tommy got onto the cycle and started it. Thomasina held out her hands to Sandra.

"I know we could have been great friends," Tommy whispered as they clasped hands for the last time. "But Fate is not with us. Please take my advice and leave as soon as you can. You're always welcome in England."

And, a final tear sled down her face. With that she gunned the cycle into action and disappeared out the dark gate.



A SWIFT ENTERPRISE SAGA

Thomasina Swift—Girl Inventor

The Flying Generators

an excerpt from part 3

By Leo L. Levesque

Thomasina Swift has brought her family's company back from the brink and given her uncle a reason to start living his life again, but that isn't enough for her. With her sights set on creating huge amounts of safe power for something she can't yet fully understand, she and her cousin, Sandy, begin work on an entirely new type of electricity generator, one that flies and soars on an almost invisible cable.

But there is trouble when someone she has made an enemy of comes after her and people she knows and loves.

A showdown is coming and she needs to be ready for it, even if she has no idea what she needs to do!

Chapter Six: Revelation

After a long, miserable train trip, Tommy was back in Betty's office. Even a hot cup of tea couldn't soothe her nerves.

The second interview with Inspector Ames didn't go well at all. Too many coincidences to please him. Tommy was now on his radar. If it wasn't for her bruised neck and wrist she would have been sitting in the bulls-eye. After hours of questioning—or as he had put it, “assisting with Police inquiries”—she was let go.

Even after all the questioning she had gone through Tommy hadn't told that she had found what the killer wanted. She could only hope that the formulas and notes were useless, or that Sergey and his people couldn't figure them out. Both big ifs.

“So that's all of it, Betty. I called Sandy Swift as soon as I was no longer with the police. She checked to see that I have the copy of the video of his notes on my computer. She promises to keep it safe. I just wish that I had some way to remotely wipe my bracelet's memory chip.”

Tommy yawned, and looked sleepily at her friend. Betty was also falling asleep in her chair. Bidding each other goodnight, or rather good morning as the sun was about to rise, they went to bed.

The next few days were busy ones for both women in the lab. The

work that Tommy had done the week before when Haz was there, and when Betty had spent so much time with him, was now bearing fruit.

Tommy had mastered making minute string pieces out of the new crystal configuration. The next step was to make enough of it to be useful in tests.

Both women worked well together, and before long three trays of crystals were forming under controlled heat and in a special liquid growth medium. The trays had to be etched out with a fine laser beam of just a few microns wide and deep, the bottom of which was the collection and formation area.

Two trays had a mixture of minerals and carbon nanotubes to allow it to conduct electricity. The third tray was just a solution of minerals that were non-conductive, and would be used as the outer shielding.

The growth medium had to be injected into the tray grooves with a super fine needle with two different types of crystal seeds to be added. They were laid down, one of each type just touching, followed by a double space before the next set was laid down by a robotic device that Tommy had to modified by hand for their special use. Betty already had crystal layout units for the phone bracelet so that saved a lot of time. They could only view the procedure by video cameras set at high resolution. Everything was painstakingly slow.

As the two crystal seeds formed into dumbbell-shaped nodes, the trays dried out. One end of the nodes were solid spheres and the other end were partially open sockets. Next came two probes of different polarity, and they used them to touched the ends of an adjacent dumbbell-shape node. The negative charged sphere shrank and the positive socket expanded and both pieces magnetically joined together, lost their charge and returned to their normal size locking them together. This formed longer, stiff crystals, but they were able to swivel around in the joint.

This had to be repeated for every set of nodes. Only robotic equipment could do this precise job over and over. Two hours later the dried trays held the first segments of filament finer than a spider's web. The ends of each segment were then joined together using the electrical probes.

The two types of filament were taken up onto different spools. A one-foot length of conductive crystal was placed in a twisting

machine and the rest of that line was twisted around that center one. When that was finished, the non-conductive strands were twisted around the first bundle and sealed together to make a finished micro-cable.

The two women tested the micro-cable in every conceivable way. The results were astounding! The ultimate strength (MPa) of Nylon is 75 MPa, of high tensile steel alloy 1,860 MPa, and of multi-walled carbon nanotubes 62,000 MPa, but Tommy's micro-cable tested well over 120,000 MPa. The end result was that it was almost uncut-able. Diamond tipped blades could cut the smaller Crystal Carbon Nanotubes (CCN) cable but it took a special saw and epoxy compound together using the CCN cable itself to cut anything over several cables thick.

This work took the major part of the week; they only stopped for Professor Albert's funeral. On the train ride back from the funeral, Betty asked Tommy the one question for which she had no answer. "What did you name the cable CCN, or is that its name?"

"I was considering it, but I think because Sandy was the cause of all this, I'm going to call it SanCrys Cable." Tommy then spelled it out to her.

Betty chuckled and replied, "I've never had the pleasure of meeting the woman, but I don't think that name will fly. CCN cable is going to be it, mark my words."

It would take four months to get the new production line going. Mr. Dodd, an industrial engineer and the new plant manager, was well qualified to handle it.

Tommy, Mr. Dodd and a small staff of engineers had to create the layouts and blueprints of quite a few pieces of new equipment. A lot of it had to be robotically controlled, and several new computer stations also had to be installed. The curing oven had to be custom made by an outside firm. It wouldn't be ready for two months. After three weeks all the 'paper engineering' was done, and Tommy was ready to go home.

Mr. Avery had called a few times with technical problems on the generator wing that were resolved over the phone. The air waves got hot every night when—even after a hard day's work—Tommy would

call Bud at two in the morning, Greenwich Time, to spend a moment with him.

While Tommy was busy with the layouts, Betty kept busy in the lab reformulating the growth mixtures to match the super size trays that were to go into the ovens. With the help of a lab assistant, she made Tommy a roll of CCN cable to take back home to use on the generator wing. It took the whole three weeks even with ongoing refinements to the manual process. It was slow work. They could only create a few meters of it per hour.

Mr. Dodd would oversee the actual construction of the production line, and if problems arose, he would consult with Tommy to see if she needed to come back to England.

A lot had happened back home. Mr. Avery had finished the wing generator test model, and was waiting for Tommy's return with the CCN cable. Haz had returned from his travels, and he and Mr. Swift were mapping out their strategies for the new production plants. And most of all, Haz's first four satellites were launched from Russia without a snag. Satellites five and six would be launched in a few more days from China.

Betty and Tommy were sharing their last cup of tea together before Tommy left for the train in the morning, and then her flight back home that afternoon. As they finished their cup, Betty finally bit the bullet and asked Tommy if she knew what Haz's family business was.

"Sure," Tommy answered with a frown, "his father is in shipping. Haz told us that himself. Why do you ask?" She could see no reason for asking that question.

"Yes, he's in shipping, as in 'Atlas Freight & Transport'." Betty let that sink in before continuing. "He's one of the top five shipping moguls in the world. Trucks, planes, trains, container ships and anything else that moves goods around the world, he controls them. You said he's working for a base pay plus a percentage of the profits, and he's going to arrange all the shipping that your company does. Do you see my concern, Tommy?"

"Betty, do you really think he'll overcharge us by using his father's businesses, and then pocket the over fees?"

"I hear that the senior Mr. Samson is ruthless in his dealing, and it has me wondering, can the apple fall far from the tree? I hate to bring

this up, and I was hoping not to. But Tommy, you're my best friend! I can't just let you leave without warning you."

Tommy got up from her chair, went over to her friend, and took her hands in hers. Looking her in the eyes she said, "Betty, you're my friend, and sister for life, so nothing you tell me from your heart could ever hurt me. I'm glad you told me, and I'll talk to the Swifts when I get back to the States. Haz has always been a little crude, but I think it's a shield he uses to keep people away. I have never seen him hurt anyone deliberately unless it was to find out their motive for doing something. Actually he's gone out of his way to help on more than one occasion. Maybe there is a reason he's in the States doing business on his own, and not running things with his father."

"You're right, Tommy. He may be a knight in shining armor, but then he may not. Please, be careful."

"With you to watch my back, how can I not be?"

"Attention, attention please! First Class passengers for flight 1952 to Kennedy International Airport please report to gate A-9 for boarding," the announcement came over the boarding area speakers. Tommy, with a sigh of relief, grabbed her overnight bag and headed for the departure gate. As she was handing the attendant her pass she heard her name called out. Looking around she spotted Inspector Ames jogging over to her.

Out of breath he wheezed, "I thought I missed you. Can I talk to you for a couple of minutes?" Tommy looked at the attendant.

Ames flashed an apologetic smile at the airport employee. "Five minutes, miss," the woman told her as she handed Tommy back her boarding pass. The Inspector took her arm and led her over to a secluded spot.

"Miss Swift, I had to talk to you before you left. I shouldn't, but you've been a great help to us, especially to Interpol. That Sergey Levenkov is a tough nut to follow. Interpol lost him about a year ago. They thought he was in the Arab countries selling black market weapons. Boy, were they wrong!"

Tommy was starting to get worried.

"Interpol has called in the CIA and your FBI about this. You said

Levenkov has his people inside Mr. Flagger's Communication Company, and that's very bad. Your defense department has quite a few contracts with Flagger for high-tech equipment, and for communication systems. They now feel that they may be in a compromised situation. Your government has already moved in on Flagger headquarters and subsidiary companies. At this moment he's completely shut down. A dozen or so employees have disappeared, but they have taken several others in for questioning."

"What does this have to do with me?" She was really getting upset.

"Look. Levenkov is going to go after revenge for all this. You have interfered with his plans three times already. Twice in the States and once here. He'll want you out of his life! You're as good as dead to him. His attack at the university proves that. He'll have your family killed one by one just to see you suffer. You've seen in person what he's capable of doing. He'll drag it out till you're the only one left. He'll kill you himself—he has to. His position in his mob is at stake otherwise."

"Miss," called out the attendant, "You have to board now, and we must close the loading ramp door."

"Why are you telling me this? Won't the U.S. Government protect me?" Tommy was torn between running for the plane, or finding out more information.

Inspector Ames reached into his inside jacket pocket. He handed Tommy a business card.

"When you get home contact this man immediately... he'll know what to do. I made sure of that. Now get on the plane. It will be safer for you in America than it is here right now. At least we know that Levenkov is not there!"

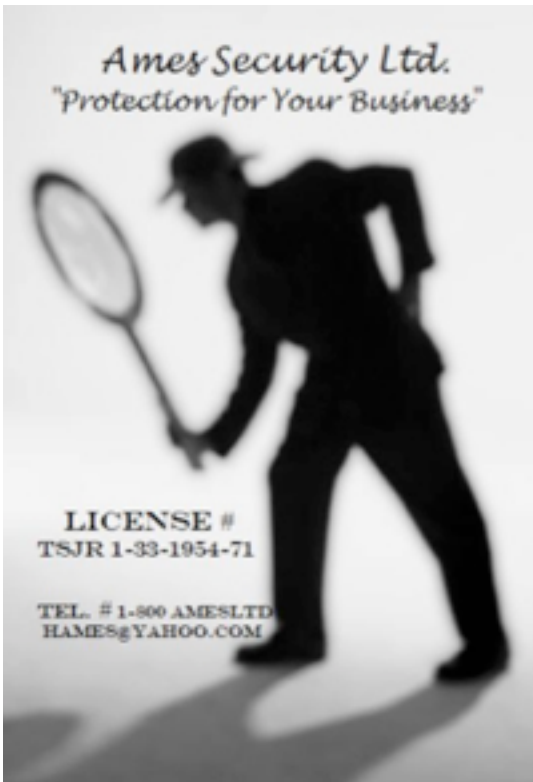
He once more took Tommy's arm and walked her to the gate. He showed his credentials to the attendant, and her whole attitude toward them changed. Inspector Ames told her to get the Captain of the plane so he could explain that there was going to be a delay in the flight. While she was gone he called security from the attendant's desk, and requested an Air Marshal for the plane.

With the Captain in tow, the attendant took him to Inspector Ames. Next, the flight attendant took Tommy's pass, stamped it, and went aboard the plane. She no longer wanted to be available. The Captain followed her a minute later.

Inspector Ames waited for five more minutes before he took Tommy slowly down the ramp. A minute later a rather inconspicuous man followed them down with another flight attendant bringing up the rear.

At the plane's door Inspector Ames stopped. "Tommy, get aboard. I hope everything turns out well for you. Call that man on the card, and watch yourself. Go, get on board." Tommy stared at the Inspector for a moment, turned and went into the plane. A couple of minutes later the man, she now assumed to be the Air Marshal, came aboard and the new attendant sealed the door. The man took one quick look at Tommy, noted where she was sitting, and nonchalantly went down the aisle to his seat.

Tommy was in a tizzy, afraid for all the people she loved. It was hours later that she remembered the card in her pocket. She took it out turning it over and over. It was rather elegant written business card.



Printed on semi-translucent vellum, it simply had a company name and contact information. She needed to talk to Sandy and Uncle Damon about this, and then all of them could decide what to do.

As Tommy pulled her luggage off the airport carousel a tall, athletic looking man approached her. His first words were, "Miss Swift, don't be afraid. My cousin Jim Ames called me to escort you back home, and possibly have me look over your security." He handed her his business card—a match to the one in her pocket—and the card of

his cousin back in England. “If you don’t trust who I am, I’m to tell you the rose garden was in full bloom at Professor Albert’s cottage, and the oversize Constable would not let you into the house.”

Tommy gulped, but relaxed a bit.

“Does that help quell your fears? My cousin is a cautious man, and he takes great pride in doing his job right. If he says you need protection, then you need my help.”

Tommy felt safe with his explanation, and she let him carry her luggage as he took her to a waiting car.

Several hours later he let her out at the Swift’s home. It was late morning by then, and she was exhausted. She hadn’t gotten much sleep in the car coming back from New York. Not that they talked much; it was nerves.

Mr. Ames took her to her door, and then asked permission to look around. This disturbed her a little, enough that she messed up the security code for the door that lead to her rooms. Mr. Ames smiled, and told her he was glad to see that the house had some type of protection.

A half hour later he was ready to leave, and as he left the house he nonchalantly told her that from now on he, or an associate, would be at hand watching over her and all the Swifts. His cousin would tell him when it was safe to stop. Mr. Ames also informed her not to worry about paying for the services... he owed his cousin one.

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