

MNOVEL



Press Pack



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MOLEY



Character Names

Cast List

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Warwick Davis

Moley



Jessica Henwick

Dotty



Stanley Tucci

Mishmosh



Gemma Arterton

Mona Lisa



Trevor Dion
Nicholas

Lester



Togo Igawa

Mystic Mole

Character Names
Cast List

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Richard E. Grant

The Gardener



Charles Dance

Mr James Moley



Julie Walters

Mrs Elizabeth Moley



Hilary Whitehall

Miss Petunia



Calum Callaghan

Milo/Brad/Todd/Old Coot/Rodrigo





Series

Overview



Series
Overview

Series Synopsis

Moley is a charming, optimistic young mole who lives deep in a burrow under Windsor Castle, in the hustling, bustling city of MoleTown. He is The Keeper of the Mystical Manual of Magic (or Manny as he likes to call him). The series follows the life of MoleTown's most famous mole. He is forever in demand. Each day he's invited to participate in events, make appearances, learn about new mole cultures and customs from moles of diverse backgrounds, and share his knowledge of the human world above.

Although Moley is viewed by the citizens of MoleTown as a knowledgeable "mole of the world", he's still the same old regular Moley and isn't as self-assured as he appears to be to the adoring public. Sure, he's got a magic book, and yes, he's been to a few amazing places ... but he's really no smarter than the average mole.



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Series Synopsis

Continued



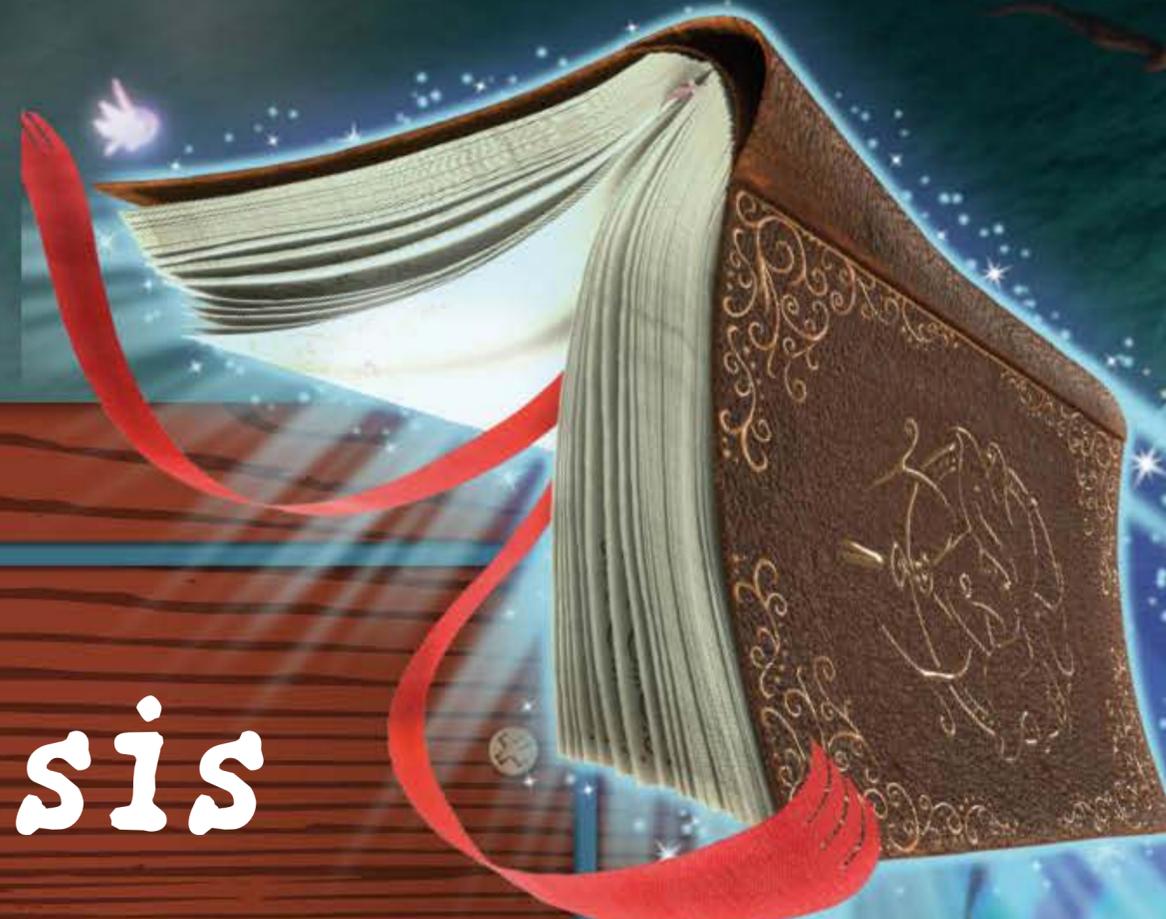
Therefore, with every new experience, Moley finds himself in a pickle. Whether he's joining in an underground tunnel race (but has never driven a racing car before), or entering a cooking competition against MoleTown's most famous chef (he's never really cooked before), or sharing the cultures of diverse moles (none of which he is familiar with), Moley always manages to wind up in a bind.

Luckily, he's got his best friends to help him un-muck even the muckiest of mucky circumstances. Mona Lisa's brains and class help him navigate the public eye, while his plucky best friend Dotty does a great job helping Moley in all his adventures. He's also got the ancient wisdom of Mystic Mole in his corner as well as the inventive sort-of-know-how of Mishmosh to help overcome molehills that are especially mountainous.



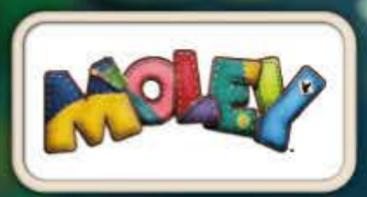
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Episode

Synopsis





The Magic Rectangle

When a cell phone falls into Roley Poley park from the Great Above, the entire town is mesmerized by it and Moley must break the "spell" it has on them.



Duck Moley Duck!

When an egg rolls into Moletown and a duckling hatches, Moley must play momma to the baby duck until they can find its home.



Guacamoley

When Moley gets in over his head when he enters a spicy chile eating contest, Manny accidentally makes the chile come alive!

There are 52 episodes being made in total.
The first 13 episodes premiere this Autumn with the remainder being delivered throughout 2022 and 2023.



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Molerskating Mayhem

Moley must learn to Molerskate for the Great Mole Roll skating competition and discovers his parents have a hidden talent.



Trash Trash Trash!

When Manny accidentally transports a heap of trash into Moletown, Moley attempts to recycle it by fixing up the town—but when he blows off Mishmosh's directions, his repairs become a problem.



Wormalicious

Moley vows to not eat worms for a few days in support of Dotty's veganism and his worm craving temptations get out of control.



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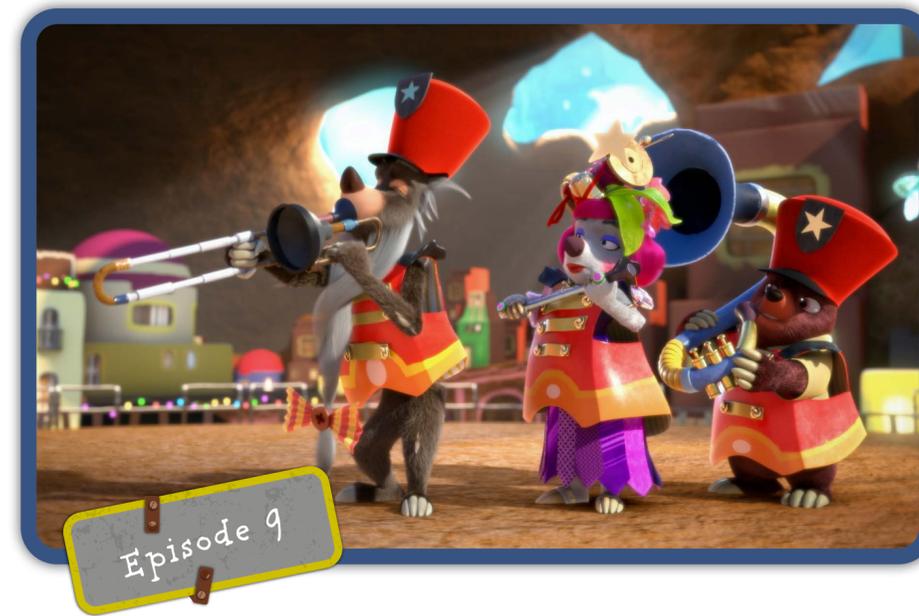
Keeper for a Day

When Moley spends the day with a young mole named Cheese who wants to be just like him, Moley helps Cheese recognize his own talents and uniqueness.



Three Gentlemen of Moletown

When Moley's Keeper duties are pulling him in too many directions, he gets Manny to create multiple Moleys!



Groundmole Day

When Moley is given the key to the city, he has such a great day he convinces Manny to let him repeat the whole day! But when the day never stops repeating, Moley needs to find a way out.



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Who Arted?

When Dotty joins an art competition Moley is afraid her art won't appeal to the snooty judge so he casts a spell that causes her art to "come to life!"



For All Molekind

Mishmosh builds a tunnel digger, upsetting some that it will replace moles' need to dig themselves. Dotty accidentally gets locked in the machine and it gets activated!



Some Like it Cool

When Moletown experiences a heatwave, Moley and Dotty hope Mishmosh can invent something to cool things down. Unfortunately, Mishmosh has "inventors block" so Moley and Dotty must help him get back his inventing mojo.



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Squirm's Day Out

When Moley helps take care of the worms at Dotty's Adopt a Worm Rescue Center, the Gardener sends Squirm to pose as a homeless worm and help him steal Manny.





The
Interviews



The Interviews



James Reatchlous, Creator

Remind us of the magical story behind Moley.

It's all about my daughters, Hettie and Tattie, who are 31 and 29. When they were six and four, I started making up bedtime stories for them – as

soon as they had brushed their teeth, I'd tell them about Moley's adventures. When they woke up in the morning, they wanted to know what happened next.

There were literally hundreds of stories and I got into the habit of writing them all down in my journals. Years later, when I was in hospital with stage four lymphoma, my daughters brought those journals in so I could read them and they lifted my spirits. When we made the show, we had to make sure that the Moley animation fitted the image that was in my daughters' heads!

Did it come easily to you, dreaming up these escapades?

At the time, I was so preoccupied with being an entertaining dad at bedtime. Whatever we'd done that day, be it going to a Robbie Williams concert, or rolling down a hill in Hyde Park, everything went into the stories. So, I was trying to make the stories a mixture of funny and interesting, with a little bit in there about how to live life – to be punctual, decent and nice. There's a little bit of me in Moley, and you see my mum and dad in his parents.

Why did you choose to invent stories about a mole?

I was trying to think of something that hadn't been done before – there are lots of cats, dogs, mice and rabbits in books, but you've only got one mole in *The Wind in the Willows* and he's a secondary character. A mole is cute, cuddly and endearing, and many humans don't like him because he makes all these molehills, so it's creatively fertile ground. Plus, they live below ground in a secret world, which is very important – we're giving kids the chance to have a sneak look at what goes on in a world that adults don't know about.

How did you turn the dream into a reality?

The secret has been to raise a lot of money, so that we could do things properly and get an amazing team of experts on board. I went to people I've known a long time like the ex-CEO of Marks & Spencer Stuart Rose; Brian McBride the ex-chairman of Amazon who is now the chairman of Trainline; Maggie Thatcher's PR guru the late Tim Bell; and the Olympic gold medalist James Cracknell. They all knew I was hard-working and trustworthy and I just asked for a small amount

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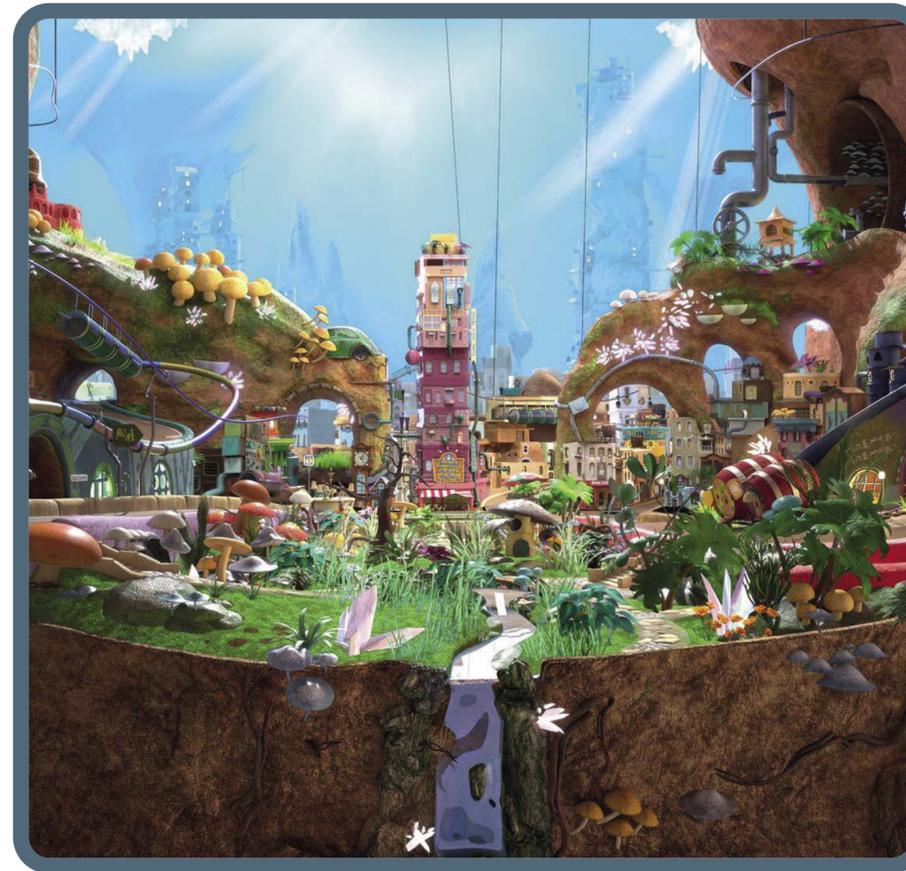


- £5,000 with tax relief – from 30 investors to begin with. It was a big day when we got the first investment, we were incredibly excited, and then we did additional rounds, the share prices went up and we made progress.

I didn't appreciate the speed it would go at. We staged a premiere of the 30-minute special with 800 people at Cineworld on my 70th birthday and they all sang Happy Birthday to me. Two years earlier I was in hospital with stage four cancer and they didn't know if I would make it, or if I would see 70.

Has it been a steep learning curve?

I've learned so much, but it's not my industry and there's still so much that I don't know. I didn't have a clue to start with, but I'm driven and I know that if you raise the money and organise great people in a collaborative way then you will have a good project. I'm the orchestra conductor with the baton, and we have 447 amazing, passionate people working together. The scripts keep getting better – they're based on my stories (there's about 300 of them to work from), but we've given them to good scriptwriters who know what



they're doing. Everyone feels like this is a fun project, rather than just another client.

If you look at the cast, Warwick Davis is now an executive producer, because he wants to be, whereas he could have done his lines and gone

home. Jessica Henwick, who plays Dotty, is a real find. They're all so normal – when I first met all these people I was slightly in awe of them, and it was so wonderful to meet them. Julie said it was kind of us to get her a car to the studio and we thought, "Why wouldn't we? You're Julie Walters!"

And you now have plans for your own production company?

Yes, once Moley was set up and rolling and we realised we had an infrastructure that was working, we thought why put all our eggs in one basket? So, we created a holding company, Two Daughters Productions, that owns Moley and has just bought three other properties, which we will announce in due course. Hets and Tatts simply can't believe it.

What are your ambitions for Moley's future?

Hasbro bought Peppa Pig for about \$4 billion and it took the creators of that show 13 years to get there. Their initial viewing figures were tiny. We've got big aspirations too – our first deal with Warner is a multi-million dollar deal, commissioning 52 episodes across 119 countries in Europe, the Middle

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East and Africa. Now we're doing deals with New Zealand, South America, Germany and China. It's now virtually guaranteed that millions of children around the world will see Moley, and we're rolling out merchandise from T-shirts to kids' wallpaper. Plus, there are apps and games – we're launching Moley on Roblox, which is a very big game with kids.

Why do you think Moley is proving so popular?

You've got to make children laugh, it's really important. There's got to be some serious stuff in there as well, but it has to start with humour and our scriptwriters are so good. The first episode is quite funny because a rectangular object falls from the sky and wedges in the square. It's a mobile phone that they all get addicted to – the battery runs out and they're upset, but then they go back to the playground and have fun on the merry-go-round.

Moletown shows how life should be in the great above. Let's hope that in the future the human world becomes more like Moletown because it would be a better place – down there everyone's equal and giving life their best shot, being decent

and nice, something we can all aspire to. There's a lot to be learned and maybe, just maybe, the kids might take some of those principles and employ them in their lives. There's even a character called Mishmosh, who likes to recycle – he takes a Pringles pack and turns it into a molemobile!

How does it feel to reflect on the Moley journey so far?

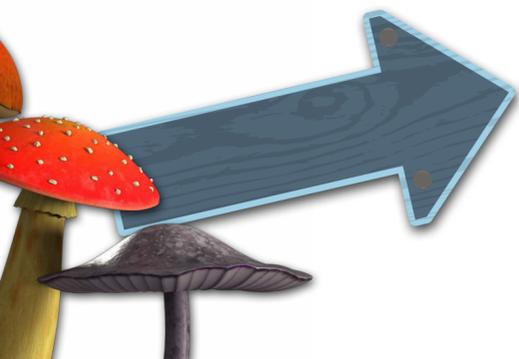
It's almost like this project is blessed. I've worked hard my entire life and had a reasonable amount of success with ups and downs. For this project to take off this late in life, how lucky am I? I'm incredibly grateful – I have to pinch myself every morning and I think the children feel the same way, it's amazing. I'm so fired up – I start at 6am and finish at 11pm every day, and it's a joy to work this hard. When I wake up, I wonder if I'm still in a dream and have to remind myself it's really happening.

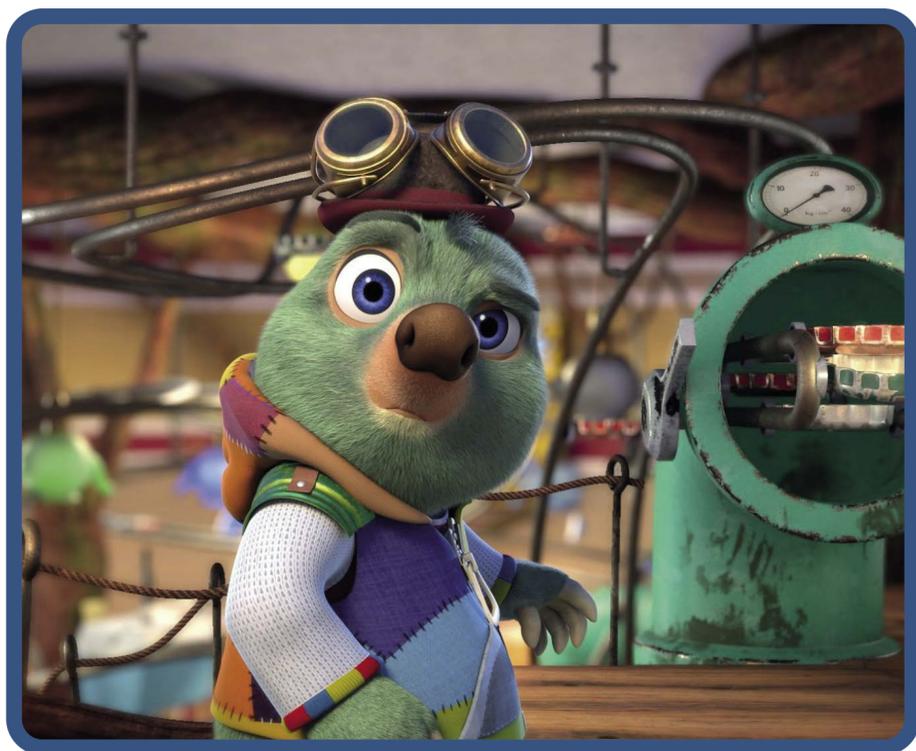
I'm so utterly blessed to be alive, and grateful that God gave me this project and somehow taught me to tell some stories all those years ago. And grateful that I wrote them down!

Can you see your daughters joining the family business?

I think there's a possibility that they might join, and we've discussed it and they know there will always be roles for them. But they have said there would be one condition - which is that they wouldn't report to me – they know I would be a complete nightmare!

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Warwick Davis is Moley

What do you enjoy about this series?

The stories are such wonderful creations and I love the idea that Moletown exists beneath the planet, a place where moles from different countries and backgrounds come together. I think that's a terrific

idea in today's world. The stories all have little morals in them as well, which is very important, and an environmental message too. Life in Moletown is fun and we all need a little bit of fun in our lives, somewhere where it always turns out alright in the end. I'd love to live in Moletown!

What's great is that often in this industry you'll create things that you think are absolutely marvellous, and nobody else seems to find your enthusiasm for them, but everyone loves Moley. Our creator, James, has got such a lot of tenacity and his enthusiasm is infectious – there's no vaccine for it!

Is it a strange job, pretending to be a mole?

I don't do method acting, but I do insist on sitting here with my feet in a bowl of soil! Seriously though, you have to get into the headspace of any character and Moley is a young guy whose outlook on the world I understand. It's all about making the lines feel sincere and using your voice to create all the movement and emotion. You have to deliver a larger than life performance, there's no subtlety to the acting here.

The challenge is maintaining the voice for an entire recording session, because it's quite out of my normal pitch range. You have to push a lot more air through your throat to actually keep the voice at that pitch. I often wonder why I started his voice so high, I snookered myself early on but that's his voice now, it's right for him!

Usually, I lay down the voice recordings before they create the animation and it's a very free process, much like acting in a motion picture. I'll do gestures in the recording studio that the animators can then use to inspire Moley's movements.

So when I watch it back I often think, "Wow that's remarkably like me!" Acting is my first love and always will be. Presenting is fun, but creating and performing a character is what I love doing, immersing myself in a different world and becoming someone else.

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Why did you decide to become an executive producer on Moley?

I'm attracted to creative people, and working on the pilot I realised that this was a great team that I really wanted to work closely with. I had loads of ideas that I started to throw in, and I really enjoyed the process.

I've been a filmmaker since I was 11, working on Star Wars and I was intrigued by the process of filmmaking from that age. Much like any 11-year old I was a sponge for information so would constantly ask questions about the cameras, lighting and editing before I started doing it myself. So I've got a real good understanding not only of performing but also finishing the film as well. Moley is such a collaborative job, and that's what makes it so good – we all suggest ideas and then have fun recording it. The animators work tirelessly to make the show look great, they do a fantastic job.



Is it special to be working on a programme for children?

Yes, because I know how important good quality children's TV is. I used to be a big fan of Scooby Doo, it was my treat when I got in from school on a Thursday and it was a truly special occasion when

that show was on TV. There's not enough good children's TV around now – shows with morals that are entertaining as well.

With Moley, there's nothing that parents should be concerned about their kids seeing, it's all very safe and very fun. And it's uplifting too, which we need more of.

My kids are much older now, 23 and 18, so I'm not so much making Moley for them, but for the kids they once were. As I sit here recording Moley's voice, I'm thinking of the little girl or boy watching TV in their front room, sitting cross legged, eating some crisps. That's who I'm performing for.

And your son, Harrison appears in the series, doesn't he?

Yes, I'm delighted to say that Harrison is getting into acting and he's playing a character called Cheese. Cheese is Moley's biggest fan, which is great – I'd like to say that was true in real life, but while Harrison is a fan of what I do I don't make him watch all of my productions! Cheese gets

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to be keeper of the magic manual for the day, it's an episode with a lot of heart and warmth. Harrison did a fantastic job – he's never professed to wanting to be an actor but he said he'd give it a go and I was so proud to stand in the back of the studio watching him. He'd really got it, he produced a great performance, which is fabulous. I'm a really proud dad.

My daughter Annabel stars in CBBC's The Dumping Ground, and she has been nagging me for a role in Moley for ages. Now Harrison has been on the show I do need to fix that! She is brilliant, she deserves to be part of it.

Did you make up bedtime stories when Annabel and Harrison were little?

I read a lot of stories to them. I remember reading the kids Spike Milligan's bedtime stories, which are completely bonkers as you can imagine. When I used to make up my own stories they were so out there and so crazy that they disturbed the children quite a bit. They were full of character voices, lots of noise and big performances in the bedroom, so they wouldn't go to sleep after. My wife would say, "What have you done to the kids?!".

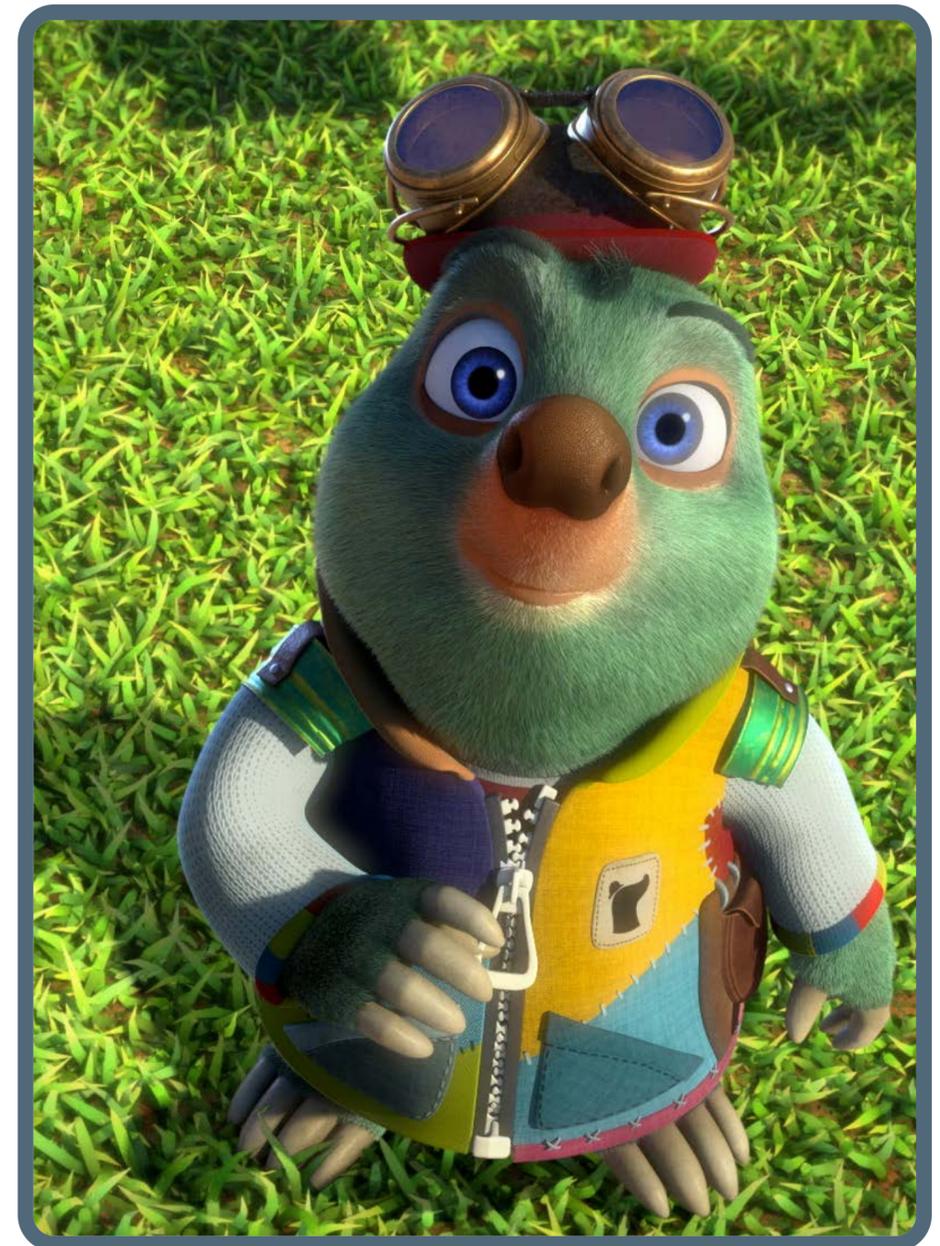
Was it important to make a show parents could enjoy too?

Yes, that is one of the keys to this. I remember as a parent watching the kids' TV shows, thinking, "This is really lame," but with Moley I think we've injected enough humour and jokes for the grown-ups, so parents can watch it with pleasure. It's much like when you put on a pantomime – I've directed loads of pantos throughout the UK and you want the grown-ups to have a good time, they are buying the tickets after all!

If you watch an episode of Moley, you know there's something in there for everyone, young and old.

Is it exciting to lead such a starry cast?

Oh, it's really lovely to have these brilliant actors lending their voices to this series, it's lovely for me to be part of that ensemble cast. Unfortunately, we don't often get to record our roles together. I haven't seen Julie Walters, who plays my mum in this, since we did Harry Potter together. The last time I saw Charles Dance was when I did the Top Gear fastest lap, and he was there for that day as well!



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Do you think moles deserve their moment in the spotlight?

We need to get behind these moles, don't we? We all see the molehills but I don't think kids often really understand what a mole looks like and what they get up to when they're not making molehills in your garden and annoying you.

Moley offers a little more understanding about their world, what they might eat and how they're a very important part of the ecology of your garden.



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Jessica Henwick is Dotty

How would you describe Dotty?

Dotty and Moley have been best friends for many years. They balance each other out really nicely, because while Moley is centred, steady and thoughtful, Dotty always wears her heart on her

sleeve and plunges in headfirst, so there's a nice push and pull between them. She is a little bit hare-brained and chaotic, but full of gusto and willing to try everything. She feels very passionate about so many different parts of her life, which gets them into trouble sometimes and definitely creates a lot of shenanigans, but her heart is in the right place. She's definitely a wonderful, strong female character to play. There's an episode called Squirm's Day Out where Dotty features very heavily and it's just peak Dotty, she's at her quirkiest, so that's my favourite story.

How challenging was it to find Dotty's voice?

I did a much safer voice for her originally, which was just a very generic girl next door American accent, and the team listened to it and suggested being a little kookier.

The voice we ended up with is everything I could have hoped for, I'm so glad they let me play around to find her voice.

Playing Dotty is very tiring vocally though – we normally do our recording sessions in four-hour

batches, and by the end I can't speak, which you don't think about when you start creating the voice. But it doesn't matter because she's so much fun! I'll probably go through three or four cups of ginger, lemon and honey tea during a session, several bottles of water and some lozenges. There's a lot of upkeep in voice acting, which people don't think about, but your voice is a tool and you have to look after it.

What made you decide to become part of the Moley family?

It's been so long since I worked in family friendly entertainment and if I ever have kids one day then I want them to be able to see my work. So, it was a little bit of forward planning on my part I guess, and the show just really touched my heart. I thought it was such a cute story and Dotty is so wonderful to play.

The beauty of voice work is also that I can do any voice I want and I won't be judged on my physical features. Honestly Dotty's voice is one that I will probably never be able to do in live action because people will say it's too different from how I physically look to be believable. So, that is the



beauty of it, getting to do crazy voices that you would never normally find.

How did you feel when you first saw Dotty on screen?

They sent me a drawing of Dotty when I got the job offer, so I already knew she was going to look really cool, but it's something completely different when you see her animated. She's just so adorable with her little beanie hat and she loves purple like me – if I were a mole I'd probably look like Dotty! I've been working on Dotty for a year and a half now, so I know her like the back of my hand.

What is it like being in the voiceover booth, recording Dotty's voice?

The recording sessions are so much fun, I really look forward to them – it doesn't matter how tired or busy I am, it's always such a joy. Dotty's voice is so hoarse that getting into the character is mainly just me starting to clear my throat.

At my first recording, I was able to see the



animation as I delivered the lines, but later you're just reading scripts and there's nothing to look at because they start drawing around what you say. It's lovely because it gives me a chance to improvise, so I'm always throwing in lines and often they end up in the show. I act out the lines to help with the voice too, and I do a lot of big expressions, which have also made their way into the animation.

You've written an episode of Moley too, was that a fun experience?

It was great, I got to create a Dotty and Moley mad day out adventure. Writing for children is its own beast because there are lots of rules and regulations for children's TV and you have to keep the script to a length that children will understand, so you've got to get good at bitesize storytelling, it's a skill. Plus, it has to be visually interesting and translate internationally. I loved writing it, I would definitely do another episode.

You're part of a dazzling cast – but have you met any of your co-stars yet?

I've never been able to meet them! Stanley Tucci and I have been crossing paths for years, so we're hoping we will finally have a recording session where they'll put us both in the booth together at the same time. That would be so much fun because we both love to improvise – we probably wouldn't get through the script, because it would just dissolve into chaos! But it would be a blast and could make for some great behind the scenes footage...

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Moley began as a bedtime story, do you have fond memories of storytime growing up?

James' story and the background to Moley is so wonderful, and definitely part of the reason why I signed on to do the show. My dad did read me bedtime stories when I was growing up but he read me young adult books like Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit, so I was exposed to pretty serious literature from a very young age. I don't remember understanding any of Lord of the Rings, but I just enjoyed the ritual of bedtime stories!

Which TV shows were special to you as a child?

I remember watching The Powerpuff Girls as a kid and I can still hear their voices in my head, Teen Titans too. The voice acting in those shows was so phenomenal, I still use it as a character reference to this day. I really hope Dotty joins their ranks!

Do you think Moley has the potential to become a new family favourite?

Yes, it's just such an interesting world that they've created – I can't really think of any other show doing this underground world, and visually it's just

stunning. I was so blown away. You can see the individual hairs on the moles, they've put so much work into it, and it's a really funny, heart-warming script, which kids will love and parents will enjoy too. They've thought about everything – how do moles get around, what do they eat and drink, what sports and activities do they like...

I don't think moles have really had their moment in the spotlight either – we've got pigs, meerkats, spiders in Charlotte's Web, even a sponge at the bottom of the ocean, so now is the time for moles. They're pretty cute in real life too, so soft and squishy.

I can't wait to get some audience feedback on Dotty, I would love there to be a fluffy Dotty toy one day, I'm putting it into the universe so it's going to happen! As long as Moley is on air, I 100% want to play Dotty so hopefully I'll be doing that voice forever.



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Stanley Tucci is Mishmosh

Tell me about Mishmosh.

Well, I'm just getting to know him, but he's awfully fun.

Can you start by telling us about the magical world Mishmosh and the other characters live in?

It's an incredible world that the creator came up with a long time ago, about 27 years ago. And it's all of these moles who have their own perspective on the world, and they're a bunch of really funny, really charming, eccentric characters.

Who do you think the audience is?

Well, I'd watch it. I mean, I have young kids so definitely them, but I think for older kids too.

It's really fun, it's smart and the episodes are really short, only 11 minutes. So, it's really quite wonderful I think.

What is Mishmosh's role in the story?

Mishmosh is a very dear friend of Moley's and he helps get him out of trouble but also sometimes ends up getting him into trouble, with his inventions and concoctions.

Can you tell us a little bit about how you generated the voice for Mishmosh?

We really just started working on this today, and I asked, "do you want him to be American?" and they did want him to be American, so that was easy. But then I ended up playing with a sort of mid-western accent, something quite flat and it seemed to work, everyone seemed happy with it. So that's what we're going with for now.

Did you recognise similarities between Mishmosh and other characters?

No but I think in a lot of kids shows there are a lot of, sort of stock characters, and those characters are very sort of reassuring for kids to see. It's really a matter in each show, how interesting do you make those stock characters, what are those details you bring to those characters. That is what makes a show different from other shows.

What drew you to the project?

I love doing animated stuff, first of all. I've done a lot of it over the years and it's awfully fun. You don't have to put on any makeup, you don't have to

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go anywhere except the studio, but also it's kind of like in some way, the purest form of acting because you're just playing like you're a kid and you're just pretending, and nobody's looking at you.

And it's just awfully fun, and I like to be able to do stuff that's appropriate for kids, because a lot of the movies I make are for adults and a lot of them might have a sort of darker tone to them, so it's nice to be able to do something that kids can see.

Have you seen yourself in mole form yet and what were your first impressions?

Yes, much better looking that I am in real life!

Is there any idiosyncrasies you might take away from your character?

Well, I like how positive and excited he is, I'll have to use that.

What will kids love about the show?

Kids will love the show because the characters are so much fun and they're sort of recognisable, but also the animation from what I've seen is, you know beautiful isn't the right word, but it's fascinating. And it's also a very funny show, smart and funny, and there are little messages in each show, and I think that's great.

What will parents think of the show?

They're going to be happy that their kids can watch something that isn't offensive. And they're not going to walk away from, and the parent goes "where did you hear that?"



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Gemma Arterton is Mona Lisa

How has Mona Lisa evolved as a character ahead of the series?

It has been great to see how she has developed

since the original conception of the character – we've been able to bring a lot of humour into Mona Lisa and it is always really good fun to play her.

In the special, she was more of a love interest to Moley, but she's someone else now, she's her own woman and they have a different relationship. She's a fashionista and she's got her own business, working in a boutique, so she's quite a savvy mole! She's quite funny but she's also the brains behind the operation – she's the grounded one who tells everyone else what to do.

There's a great episode this series that really made me laugh, when Moley's head grows into a massive light bulb – that's my sense of humour, quite surreal!

There's also an X Factor-style talent contest called The Mole Factor, which is really fun.

What do you love about the show?

The scripts are always really fun, charming and unique, and they come from James' mind so

there's nothing else like them. The characters are so lovable and memorable, and there's a bit of tongue in cheek humour, so hopefully the parents won't hate us when they find themselves watching an episode for the 20th time! It's very witty and the visuals are really sophisticated too, each episode is rich and beautiful. Moletown has got everything you need and anything can happen there, it's a magical place.

Was it tricky to find the right voice for Mona Lisa?

I love doing voiceovers because you can really have fun and try different voices, it's brilliant. Mona Lisa's voice is my take on a French accent, which is not accurate! It's a cartoony version of a French voice, so it's quite easy to just slip into it. It's very liberating to do voice work, because you're not on camera, so everything is conveyed through the voice. As it's children's material, you can amp it up a little bit and be a bit more playful.

Does voiceover work provide a nice contrast to your other roles?

Yes, in this day and age a lot of the work I do as an

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actress is about being naturalistic, downplaying moments and keeping it subtle, but you don't have to do that in Moley, you can just play around and it's lovely. A lot of the work I've been doing of late has been very heavy, but when I play Mona Lisa I don't have to cry or go through any trauma, I can just let go and I love it!

It's also a funny process, because as the performer you don't really know what's going on! So you come in, do your bit and sometimes you see some little clips, but you never see the full animated version of the scenes and you don't hear the other actors delivering their lines.

It takes such a long time to make the series, it's years from start to finish. So as an actor I come in for half a day, go off and do many other jobs, and then come back again to do the next bit. You almost forget what you did last time, but the people that are working on the show full time are living with it every day, and so much work goes in. Then it's lovely when you eventually see it all together, it just looks so beautiful and it's so satisfying. I can't wait to watch all of these episodes now.



It must be odd never seeing your co-stars though?

Yes, it's funny because I know quite a lot of the actors that are in this show – I've worked with Richard E Grant, Charles Dance and Stanley Tucci, but I never get to see them! I did have a session with Warwick Davis, but that was pre-Covid. That's just the way it is with voiceovers, you have to wait till the premiere to see each other!

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Did you enjoy bedtime stories growing up?

Definitely. I remember my dad used to read me all the Winnie the Pooh stories, Brer Rabbit and old school Enid Blyton stories. As I got older, we used to read The Worst Witch and I ended up doing the voiceover for the audio book when I grew up, I couldn't believe it. It was actually a really hard job, doing every single character in every book!

It's so special that Moley comes from tales James told his daughters when they were children and he's remembered those stories. It means that Moley comes from a really loving place, from a dad thinking about the adventures his girls might like, and then they loved the story and it went on. It's just so lovely and now the show has become a huge thing – I think James is totally amazed at what it has become!

Which children's TV shows did you enjoy when you were little?

I loved quite silly and zany shows, like the Looney Tunes, Scooby Doo and Rugrats. I would have loved Moley, because it's really fun and sometimes quite out there. These shows are so special to children

growing up, they really do stay with you – the other day someone mentioned Rosie and Jim, which I grew up with, and I thought, “Oh my God, I remember that as if it was yesterday!”. I suppose it’s because you’re absorbing so much during those formative years. It’s nice to think that hopefully kids will feel the same way about Moley.

Do you get the opportunity to improvise as Mona Lisa?

Our director and producer very much encourage improvisation, but I don’t know how much of it they actually use in the final cut.

It’s quite fun, you think “What am I going to say as a French mole?” – stuff comes out of your mouth and you wonder where it came from!

Is it tricky to play a mole?!

Well, the characters in Moley have human attitudes and attributes – they walk on two legs and sit at cafes, they’re not digging holes all the time, so it’s not that difficult. I have done other voiceover work where I played sniffy rabbits and

you have to think about those things, but there’s no crazy method acting here!

I’m hoping this might be the moment for moles – or the “mole-ment!” There haven’t been many moles in children’s stories other than Mole in The Wind In The Willows, so hopefully that will change and children will have mole cuddly toys soon!



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Trevor Dion Nicholas is Lester

What do you love about Moley?

I was so excited from the moment I heard about the idea. The show has a lot of heart and charm,

and there's so much potential for where we can go with Moley as a character.

The remarkable thing for me, is that the whole universe feels alive, which is a really modern version of storytelling through animation.

For the longest time, and for me growing up as a kid, you had your main characters to follow in a series, but nobody else really felt fleshed out. But in Moley everybody has a story and something to say. Moletown feels so real – it's like Springfield in The Simpsons, it feels alive and connected. I think that allows adults to attach to the characters, as well as kids. For those of us who have children, it's easier to watch shows with our kids when we are engaged as well, and Moley does that.

How would you describe Lester?

He is loud, brash and American! It's fun to lean into the aspects of that stereotype and find ways to make them fun and expressive, but never offensive in any way. Lester is there to sell food and drink at the shop but he also likes to have a good time. He

provides a lot of support to the other characters that he cares about as well. No spoilers, but there's an issue with guacamole coming up in one episode and that's my stand-out Lester moment!

I got the first drawing of Lester before I did my first recording session and I felt an instant connection to him. I felt like we were kindred spirits, even though we'd never met.

Did you enjoy the process of finding Lester's voice?

Yes, I was given the chance to play with the voice creatively, to find out who he is – I had a lot of freedom to improvise, which was great. I've done some voice work before, on video games and radio plays, but this was a different avenue for me, creating Lester's sound and working out what he had to say.

I'm happy with the voice I've created, Lester sits in a pretty comfy spot for me, even though he's a little gruffer than my natural voice. I'm from West Virginia and he's closer to New York, but he's a good time! I have a couple key phrases I repeat at the start of a recording session every time I play

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him, which I used in in the initial session. I also just say the name “Moley” over and over, because Lester says it in a really specific way.

Is it fun to explore new characters after such a successful run in Aladdin?

It's really cool. I miss my time as the Genie but I'm also appreciative of the rest after having done it for almost four years. It was a wonderful experience – it genuinely changed my entire life and led me to a lot of new avenues and new ways to express art.

Which TV shows did you enjoy as a child?

I was a massive Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles fan. The original '80s series is still one of my favourites to this day. I was heavily into the animated series of X Men, Spider-Man and Batman too, as well as Scooby Doo.

I'm a cartoon nerd. When we were touring the US with Aladdin we went through Atlanta, which I knew was the hub of Cartoon Network, so I reached out to every contact I had to try to get a tour! I went to the Cartoon Network office and I just loved it, I'm a big fan of animation, whether it's for adults or kids.



Does it excite you to create that same enthusiasm in a new generation?

Yes, for those of us born in the 1980s growing up in 1990s, we really got into the culture of the shows that we loved, we were the first ones to really dive into that I think. Now our nostalgia for that period is so strong, because we remember that excitement around the series we loved.

I see a mirroring of that today – the idea of building a whole culture around an animated series and then 20 years down the line today's kids will share that sense of nostalgia. It's exciting to be part of that with Moley.

Are you excited to watch Moley with your children?

Yes, my kids are 13 and 11 and we're going to have a blast watching it together. The thought of them watching it was a big inspiration for me when taking the role. The theatrical work that I've created is something my kids have always been able to enjoy, but to do something that feels like it's really their demographic and the type of show they love is a different level of excitement. Hopefully I'll get extra cool dad points! I'm not sure that any of the bedtime stories I gave them would spark a pitch for a new series, as happened to Moley's creator James, but my kids may say differently, I'll leave that up to them!

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Moley is a show parents will enjoy as well as their children, because it's lots of fun – the comedy is there and there's a lot of heart, with characters that people are really going to grow to love.

Are you excited for moles to have their moment in the spotlight?

Absolutely. If there's a mole in a TV series, they usually only have a brief moment on screen, or they are there as part of a joke, as opposed to being the protagonist. So I think that's an exciting new appeal for the show as well, which holds a lot of opportunity.

Animation always takes the longest time to make – it's an ongoing process, but I'm really excited for the audience to see the complete series!



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Togo Igawa is Mystic Mole

Do you enjoy playing Mystic Mole?

Yes, when I was chosen to play him I was really excited. Originally, I was just given the illustration of Mystic Mole and I really liked his appearance, I saw him as the chairperson of the mole world.

Then, when I read the scripts, I found that Mystic Mole sounded like Moley's grandfather figure, but he's also very energetic and very laid back at the same time, which I enjoyed. I really like him.

How do you find the experience of recording your voiceovers for Mystic Mole?

It's more of a picture-over than a voiceover! What I mean by that, is that I get given the storyboards for the episode, with rough sketches of the scenes, and then I follow our director Leon's notes and directions as I read my lines. After that process is complete, they do the animation. So it's quite a different process for an actor – you record your part and sometimes you don't have the chance to read the whole script or know the entire storyline. So in a way it can be difficult just to record your part, but I trust the team. Then when you see the finished episodes you know exactly what happens in the story!

Was it a challenge to recapture Mystic Mole's voice?

There was a big gap between recording the Moley

special and the series, so I almost didn't remember what sort of voice I used. I had to listen back to the original recording and then I followed that, so I think in the end that Mystic Mole has kept the same voice for the series!

The voice is the most expressive tool in the body and without using it properly you can't create a character or a story. I always do a voice warm-up before I record in front of the microphone, and it's a nice feeling to prepare for the job, just like when I'm performing on stage. Physical theatre is great and dance is a very expressive, special art form, but the words and the voice are the most important things in performing arts in my opinion. Dancers use their bodies as a voice, but actors are very lazy so we don't use our bodies when we can use our voices!

Did you draw on any influences or inspirations to create Mystic Mole?

I was chosen for this role by Tony the producer, because he saw a clip of me acting in the film Johnny English Reborn. The character I was playing was an old Tibetan monk, and Tony liked the voice I used to play that part, so that's why he chose me for Moley.

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In lots of ways, I think Mystic Mole is quite a similar character – he’s very witty but with that strong authority.

So, I often think about that Tibetan monk in recording sessions!

Have you had the chance to meet anybody else in the cast?

I haven’t met any of my co-stars yet, but I really want to see them! I worked with Julie Walters on a film about a hundred years ago, I don’t know if she remembers me, but I really wanted to meet her again. Since Covid I’ve been using my home studio to work in, so maybe when the situation gets better I can come to the London studio and meet everyone.

So you recorded all of your scenes for Moley from your house?

Yes, I recorded the whole series from home. I had actually converted a room in my house into a studio before Covid started, so I was lucky to have it during the pandemic. I use the home studio a lot



now – I’m just on my own in my secret studio, just like a mole! My neighbours don’t realise.

The studio looks like a normal room, but as soon as I start recording, I put panels on the windows and doors, and I put up sleeping bags and cartons for sound insulation, as well as material on the ceiling. It works very well and I’ve done it all myself. The problem is if I move house I can’t take

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it all with me!

My nickname is “Togs”, and sometimes “Best Togs”, so my studio is called “Best Togs’ Studio”. A friend of mine made a small sign for the door, so as soon as you switch the light on it comes on saying “Togs is recording”. I don’t live in London, I’m near Banbury in Oxfordshire, so it’s very handy, otherwise I’d spend the whole day travelling and recording.

Is Moley a show the whole family can enjoy?

Yes, I attended the premiere of Master Moley By Royal Invitation with my family and friends and their children, and all of us really enjoyed the film. My son and his partner are in their 30s, and my friends’ children are primary school age – they were talking about their favourite characters and scenes, and the adults loved it too. I think that’s tangible evidence that Moley will become a great family favourite, the special proves it.

It’s the kind of show I would have enjoyed when I was young, 70 years ago!



What's the secret to entertaining both children and parents?

When you write a children's show, I don't think it's a good idea to aim just for children. Children have the ability to absorb lots of different stories, even those written for grown-ups, so some animations end up being too patronising if they only think about a young audience. For instance, years ago I took my children to see a play when they were 8 and 6. They sat in the front row and the actress nearly stopped her performance because she saw my little children there, but they were really engaged in the play – even though they didn't understand it, they enjoyed it. That's an extreme example, but children have that ability and when you become an adult you forget that you were like that.

When James told his daughters about Moley, he himself enjoyed the story too as an adult, and that's the magic.

What do you love most about the Moley series?

Firstly, our series creator James Reatchlous has the most fantastic story of how he came up with

Moley. The setting for the show is just fantastic and it's a very clever series too, but also I just really love moles! They always remind me of the beginning of springtime when the molehills appear, they're fantastic animals and I really like them.

Human beings are now panicking about the climate crisis they've created, and animals are the victims of human selfishness. Moles are living under the ground right now and I think they know how important the Earth is. I hope Moley and the other characters can teach the generations to come to take care of our planet – that's the most attractive aspect of the series for me. I think we could explore the issue of nuclear power stations if we did an episode where Moley was living underneath Japan, I've suggested it to our team.



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Charles Dance is Mr James Moley

What attracted you to the story of Moley and playing the role of Mr James Moley?

I've always been a fan of Wind in the Willows, and Mole was my favourite character always.

And this story of this little mole, they're just such cute, delightful, wonderful batty little creatures. And the fact that I could be a father to one...

Can you see yourself in your character?

Well he is a bit... maybe one or two aspects of me that I don't particularly like very much, are in the character. I can be sarcastic, I can be patronising, I can be pompous you know, unless I really check myself. But I've known myself long enough now to give myself a kick up the arse when I can feel it happening. But there's all of those things in Mr Moley senior.

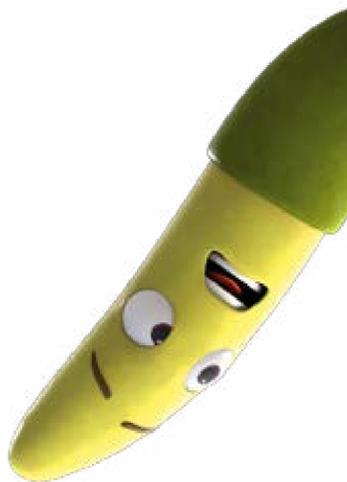
If you were a mole, where in the whole world would you burrow?

In a really nice field, but somewhere near the sea. I don't know whether or not moles can swim, but I'd like to be a mole that could swim.

Other than a mole, what is your dream animal

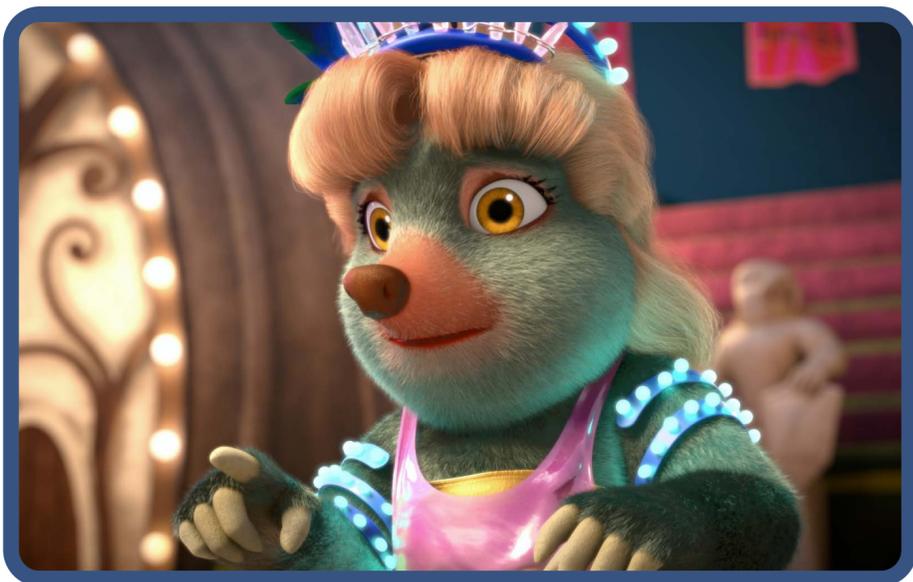
character?

A black Labrador. I used to have two, Star and Mabel, brother and sister.



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Julie Walters is Mrs Elizabeth Moley / The Queen

What is it about the show that made you want to return?

Moley is just such a warm and comforting show, with such loveable characters, which I know will be a hit with children and their parents.

Mother Moley is a real joy to play, and the show has a fantastic cast, it is a pleasure to be asked to be part of it. Plus, in the series I get to play The Queen again, which is an honour.

You voice two characters in the series, Mrs Moley and The Queen – what is it about those characters that you enjoy?

I can see myself in both characters, of course. I'm a mum, so I know what it's like to be proud of your child and think everything they do is marvellous no matter what... and Moley certainly gets into mischief in the series, but that unconditional love of a mother is such a wonderful thing and something I am so pleased to see being reflected in a show for children.

When it comes to being asked to play The Queen... well... how could I refuse. I think that the brilliant writers have captured the fun sparkle that the real Queen has in their animated version, and that made the part great fun to bring to life. I think it is so great that through this show many young children will have their first introduction to the

Queen, and see that fun side of her character, and I just hope my portrayal is one that Her Majesty would approve of!

We've heard you've had problems with mole's invading your garden in the past, do you have a new appreciation for them since working on Moley?

Well, it's funny isn't it! I think we have all seen molehills and think we know all about our subterranean neighbours, but actually how many of us have really met a mole? Perhaps this show will help to raise the profile of mole-kind and encourage us to appreciate them more than perhaps we do. At least, I hope it will. That is one of the wonderful things about this show, that it brings to life a magical underground world which, to the eyes of a child, really could be beneath our feet.

It also includes some really positive messaging around recycling, caring for our environment and making sure that we look after our planet. Messages that are more important now than ever.

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If you were a mole, where in the whole world would you burrow?

I think I'd burrow on a beach in South Cornwall. It is such a beautiful part of the world, and I bet a mole would be brilliant at building sandcastles.



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Hilary Whitehall is Miss Petunia

How would you describe Miss Petunia?

She's quite over the top, definitely not a shrinking violet! She's very proactive, rather than reactive.

I turned into a Miss Petunia type during lockdown, trying to be positive during what was a pretty grim time!

She looks quite extraordinary too, with pink hair, colourful clothing and lots of beads, she's quite Zandra Rhodes in her style. For Miss Petunia, anything goes in terms of fashion – if you want to be outrageous, she believes you should go for it and not worry about what people think.

She holds Moley in some esteem, because he is the keeper of the book. I think she feels he should be revered, even though he's got a bit of maturing to do, and she sees that as a role for herself, guiding him. She sees herself as a role model.

What appealed to you about the series?

I've always had a soft spot for moles, I think they're sweet. Really weirdly, my children have always called my husband a mole – they think he looks like one! I like the values in this show too, because we are trying to get some decent messages across to children, which I think is great, rather than the show just being for entertainment value. My son

Jack is also involved in Moley, he's an investor and he really likes it. The animation is great and there's some phenomenal voice talent on the project. As a woman who has just hit a big milestone birthday, it's quite nice that they have included a female character of a certain age. Once a woman hits 50 she often becomes invisible, so I'm thrilled Miss Petunia is a little bit more mature and has a slightly different outlook.

Also, as this is aimed at a younger audience you have the licence to go over the top and who wouldn't love that? I hadn't done much voice work before, but it's always been an ambition of mine to be in The Archers. I haven't quite achieved that yet but who knows, maybe Moley might lead to me to a nice guest slot there!

What was your inspiration for Miss Petunia?

I've worked on the vocal characterisation quite a lot, and I've had a lot of fun in recording sessions, mucking around with various versions of her voice. She is quite over the top and we relish that, it's good fun. Our director Leon was very keen for me to channel a character called Mame from the movie, Auntie Mame, played by Rosalind

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Russell. I had a long look at that performance – the character is an older woman who doesn't care what people say, she just does what she thinks is right and lives by her rules.

How did you get into character?

Funnily enough my daughter, Molly has a pink wig, which I borrowed for one of the recording sessions and it sort of helped with the characterisation. So much so that I'm waiting on the delivery of a slightly nicer version!

Do you have any favourite moments in the series?

I love the way the moles repurpose things – they turn a Pringles carton into a car, powered by a battery on the back. The messaging within the series is so good, it's all about friendship and trying to do things for the community.

There's a whole episode where they try to get Moley to become a vegan, but moles are carnivorous so that's interesting!



Is it the kind of series your children would have enjoyed?

Yes definitely, they would have loved Moley, because he's quite wacky and things go wrong for him – he gets in a panic and he has to work out how he's going to get out of it. And there's some strong female characters in there as well,

which is great for the girls, Dotty and Mona Lisa are great characters. I now actually have a little granddaughter to watch Moley with one day, too. It's also a fun show for parents watching along, trying to spot the everyday objects the moles have recycled and repurposed. It has real heart and while the episodes have standalone stories there are also threads that go right through the whole series.

Did you ever make up bedtime stories for your children when they were little?

I did quite a lot of role play with my children. My son Jack loved dressing up, and we used to build dens and pretend we were cavemen – I'm sure that's why he's gone on to be an actor. Bedtime stories were really the preserve of my husband and the children loved them. Michael would come home from work, take off his jacket and tie and read to them while I had a glass of mummy juice!

Do you think this series has the potential to become a family favourite?

Yes, I hope so. It has been really interesting to see the evolution of this project – the 30-minute

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special came out last year and the show has evolved quite a lot from there. It's interesting to see the progression of the characters and how the team has moved the show on, listening to audience feedback.

Moley's creator, James is the most extraordinary person, and he is a man on a mission. If it weren't for his energy the show wouldn't have come as far as it has, he cares so much about the series. What's so heartening is that the whole team is so enthusiastic about it. Let's hope we can harness all that energy and make it a big success.

Do you think that moles are overdue their moment in the spotlight?

It would be great if they were about to have their moment. We've got to try to protect all our wildlife and think seriously about our environment.

I know moles can be a nightmare to gardeners, but we do have to protect these species, they're all in the chain of life.



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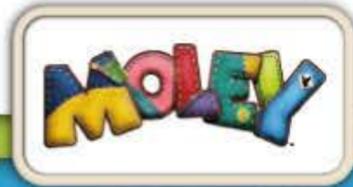
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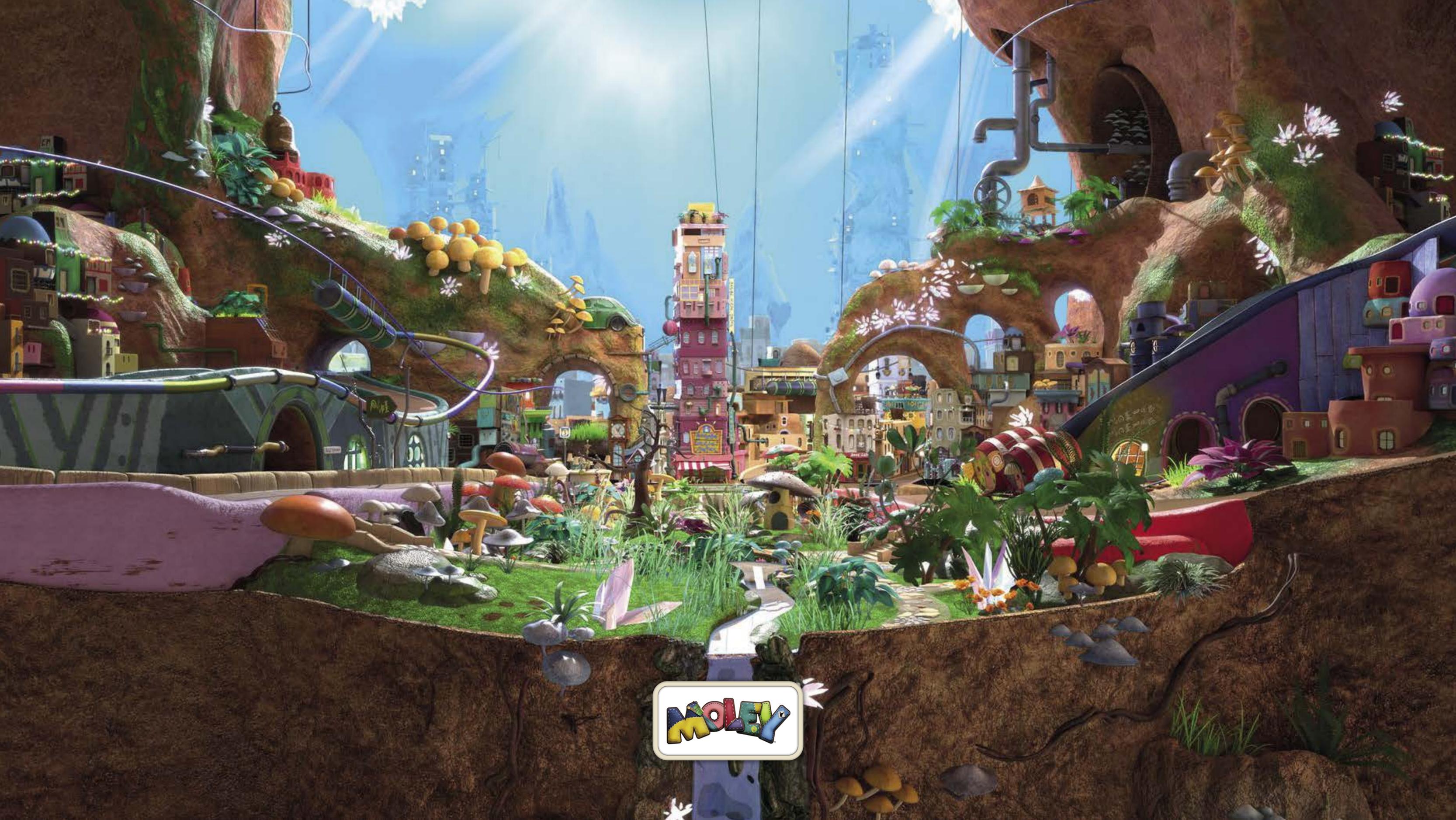
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