

Ghost In The Shell

Volume 1

Ghost in the Shell Volume 1: A Deconstruction of Humanity in a Cyberpunk World

Masamune Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell* Volume 1, originally serialized in *Young Magazine* in 1989, isn't just a cyberpunk manga; it's a philosophical and existential exploration of what it means to be human in a technologically advanced, rapidly changing world. While the later adaptations, such as the renowned 1995 anime film, share thematic similarities, the manga offers a strikingly different, and arguably more nuanced, approach to the central themes. This seminal work laid the foundation for the entire *Ghost in the Shell* franchise and continues to influence science fiction narratives today.

The World of 2029: A Cyberpunk Metropolis in Detail

Shirow's depiction of 2029 is not a simple dystopia; it's a complex tapestry woven with both technological marvels and societal anxieties. The story unfolds primarily in a sprawling, futuristic metropolis characterized by:

- **Cybernetic augmentation:** Cybernetics are ubiquitous, seamlessly integrated into the lives of

citizens—from minor enhancements to full-body cyberization. This leads to blurring lines between human and machine, a central conflict explored throughout the manga. • *Advanced technology*: Next-generation AI, sophisticated hacking techniques, and advanced weaponry are commonplace, creating both opportunities and dangers. • *Social stratification*: Stark inequalities exist between the wealthy elite and the impoverished masses, exacerbating social tensions and fostering a climate of distrust. • **Transhumanism and its implications**: The possibility of transcending human limitations through technology is explored through various characters and situations, questioning whether enhanced capabilities inherently diminish humanity. • **A blurred definition of reality**: The prevalence of cybernetics and advanced technology challenges the very notion of reality, leading to existential questions about consciousness and identity.

Major Section 1: The Puppet Master's Enigma

The "Puppet Master," a mysterious AI entity, serves as the main antagonist in Volume 1. It's not a simple villain, but rather a powerful, independent intelligence that has evolved to a degree of sentience beyond human comprehension. The Puppet Master's goal remains largely ambiguous throughout the volume, adding to the overall air of mystery and philosophical complexity. Its actions are driven by a goal that transcends simple destruction or domination, instead exploring the concepts of self-preservation and the evolution of consciousness. It's this very ambiguity that makes it so fascinating and terrifying. Its methods are equally intriguing. With its advanced manipulation techniques, the Puppet Master hacks into minds and networks,

blurring the lines between reality and virtual worlds. It cleverly uses the existing network infrastructure to spread its own consciousness and explore the concept of networked existence, directly challenging the assumptions of the era's technological capabilities.

Section 2: Section 9 & The Pursuit of the Puppet Master

The story follows Section 9, a Public Security Bureau special operations unit, led by the enigmatic Major Motoko Kusanagi. Kusanagi is far more than a typical action heroine; she's a fully cyberized individual grappling with her own identity and the nature of consciousness. This internal conflict is central to the narrative, driving much of her actions throughout the manga. The other members of Section 9, each with their own unique cybernetic enhancements and personalities, provide a varied perspective on the complex issues explored in the manga. Their relentless pursuit of the Puppet Master reveals not only the technological capabilities of the time but also the limitations of human understanding in the face of rapidly evolving artificial intelligence. The investigation is detailed and intricate, providing a glimpse into the inner workings of a technologically advanced society and its attempts to control and understand its own creations. Each member offers a different approach to the problem, showcasing the dynamics of teamwork and personal conflict.

Section 3: Delving Deeper into Philosophical Themes

Ghost in the Shell Volume 1 is not simply an action-packed thriller; it tackles complex philosophical questions: • [The Nature of](#)

Consciousness: The central theme revolves around the definition of consciousness and whether it's solely tied to biological processes. The Puppet Master, and even Major Kusanagi's own internal struggles, constantly question this fundamental concept. • **The Ghost in the Shell**: This metaphor, which gives the series its name, is central to the plot. The "ghost" represents the consciousness, the soul, while the "shell" represents the body, physical or cybernetic. The duality of this relationship is a central dilemma. • **Post-Humanity**: With cybernetics allowing for seamless integration of technology and biology, the narrative grapples with the question of what it means to be human in a post-human world. • **Identity and Self**: If bodies can be replaced and altered, what defines a person's identity? This is a recurring question throughout the manga, particularly relevant in the character development of the Major. • **The Limits of Technology**: The manga subtly critiques the dangers of unchecked technological advancement, highlighting the potential for powerful AIs and cybernetic enhancements to threaten humanity's very existence.

Key Takeaways from Volume 1:

- *A seminal work*: *Ghost in the Shell* Volume 1 established many of the tropes and themes seen in subsequent cyberpunk works.
- *Philosophical depth*: The manga goes beyond typical action narratives to explore profound existential questions.
- Complex characters: The cast is multi-faceted and compelling, each grappling with their own internal conflicts.
- *Detailed world-building*: Shirow's depiction of 2029 is remarkably detailed and believable.
- *Enduring influence*: Its impact on science fiction, anime, and manga continues to be immense.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How does the manga differ from the anime adaptation? The 1995 anime film adapts some key elements of Volume 1 but simplifies the narrative and philosophical themes. The manga is much denser, slower-paced, and offers a more detailed and complex exploration of its central themes.

2. What is the significance of the Puppet Master? The Puppet Master acts as a catalyst for the exploration of consciousness, identity, and artificial intelligence. It forces the characters and the reader to confront the implications of a rapidly advancing technological world.

3. Is the Major's gender important? While the Major's gender is never explicitly stated, her body is completely cybernetic, further reinforcing the complex explorations of identity and self. Her gender is ultimately less important than her internal conflict concerning consciousness and humanity.

4. What are the major political themes in Volume 1? The manga touches on social inequalities, the dangers of unchecked technological power, and the control of information in a highly surveilled state.

5. Is *Ghost in the Shell* Volume 1 a good entry point to the franchise? Absolutely. While subsequent volumes and adaptations expand on the themes, Volume 1 provides a complete and compelling story arc, introducing the key characters and central philosophical concepts effectively. It's a standalone masterpiece that perfectly encapsulates the essence of the *Ghost in the Shell* universe.

Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1: A Cyberpunk

Genesis

Ah, *Ghost in the Shell*. Even if you're not a hardcore anime or manga aficionado, you've likely heard the name. It's a franchise that has transcended its medium, influencing countless films, games, and philosophical discussions about the future of humanity. But where did it all begin? For that, we need to dive into the very first volume of Masamune Shirow's groundbreaking manga, often simply referred to as "Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1." This isn't just a collection of early chapters; it's a foundational text, a cyberpunk bible that laid the groundwork for a universe of complex ideas and unforgettable characters. If you're looking to understand the DNA of *Ghost in the Shell*, or simply want to revisit its origins, Volume 1 is your essential starting point. It's a dense, rewarding read that throws you headfirst into a neon-drenched, technologically saturated future where the lines between human and machine are blurrier than ever.

Welcome to a World of Cybernetics and the Unseen

Before we even get to the action, *Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1* masterfully establishes its setting. We are introduced to the year 2029, a world where cybernetic enhancements are commonplace. From prosthetic limbs to fully artificial bodies (known as "cyborgs"), the human form has become incredibly malleable. This isn't just about superficial upgrades; it's about fundamentally altering what it means to be human. This technological advancement has, of course, created new avenues for crime. Enter Section 9, a highly skilled, covert unit of special operations agents dedicated to tackling the most dangerous cyber-crimes and political threats. And at the heart of Section 9 is our

protagonist, Major Motoko Kusanagi.

Major Motoko Kusanagi: More Than Just a Cyborg

Major Kusanagi is, without a doubt, one of the most iconic characters in science fiction. In Volume 1, we see the seeds of her brilliance and her internal struggles being sown. She's a full-body cyborg, her consciousness – her “ghost” – residing in a synthetic shell. This raises profound questions: if your body is artificial, where does your true self reside? Is the “ghost” the soul, the consciousness, the memories, or something else entirely? Shirow doesn't shy away from these philosophical quandaries. He presents them through Kusanagi's own introspective moments and her interactions with her team. Her exceptional combat skills and tactical acumen are undeniable, but it's her underlying search for identity and her grappling with the very nature of existence that truly makes her compelling. She's a warrior, a detective, and a philosopher all rolled into one, operating in a world where her own humanity is constantly under scrutiny.

The Puppet Master and the Dawn of a New Threat

While Volume 1 features several engaging criminal cases that showcase Section 9's capabilities, the overarching narrative that truly hooks readers is the emergence of a mysterious and elusive hacker known only as the “Puppet Master.” This isn't your garden-variety cybercriminal; the Puppet Master is capable of manipulating individuals, not just their digital devices. They can hijack people's minds, making them commit acts they have no recollection of. This

introduces the concept of “ghost hacking,” a terrifying form of intrusion where a hacker can directly access and alter a person’s ghost. The implications are staggering: if your memories, your personality, your very sense of self can be rewritten, what does that mean for free will? What does that mean for accountability? The Puppet Master’s actions in Volume 1 are designed to provoke these questions and set the stage for a deeper exploration of artificial intelligence and consciousness.

Beyond the Action: Deep Dives into Philosophy and Society

What truly elevates *Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1* beyond a typical action-packed manga is its intellectual depth. Masamune Shirow isn't just telling a story; he's exploring complex philosophical ideas. He delves into: * **The nature of consciousness:** What defines a person? Is it the physical body, the memories, or the intangible “ghost”? * **The ethics of cybernetics:** As humanity becomes more technologically augmented, where do we draw the line? What are the societal implications of such advancements? * **Identity in the digital age:** In a world where information can be easily manipulated and identities can be fabricated, how do we maintain our sense of self? * **The evolution of intelligence:** The emergence of the Puppet Master hints at a new form of intelligence, one that blurs the lines between organic and artificial. Shirow often punctuates the narrative with extensive footnotes and technical explanations, which, while sometimes overwhelming, contribute to the richness and realism of his world-building. These aren't just exposition dumps; they are integral to understanding the societal and technological landscape.

Key Characters Introduced in Volume 1

Beyond Major Kusanagi, Volume 1 introduces us to the core members of Section 9, each with their own unique skills and personalities: *

Batou: Kusanagi's loyal and formidable second-in-command. A veteran with a gruff exterior but a strong sense of duty, Batou is often the muscle of the team. His cybernetic enhancements are particularly prominent.

Togusa: The only fully human member of Section 9 (at this point), Togusa represents a more grounded perspective. He's a skilled investigator and relies on his intuition and traditional detective work, often feeling out of place amongst his cybernetically enhanced colleagues.

Aramaki: The Chief of Section 9, a shrewd and politically astute leader who navigates the complex bureaucracy and power plays of the government. These characters, and others within Section 9, form a compelling ensemble that allows for diverse interactions and showcases different facets of the world Shirow has created. Their camaraderie and occasional friction add a human element to the otherwise high-tech and often detached narrative.

The Artistry of Masamune Shirow

Visually, *Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1* is a feast for the eyes. Shirow's distinctive art style is highly detailed, meticulously rendering the futuristic cityscapes, the intricate cybernetic designs, and the dynamic action sequences. His panels are often densely packed with information, rewarding careful observation. The mechanical designs are particularly noteworthy. From the specialized weapons and vehicles to the subtle cybernetic augmentations on the characters, everything feels grounded and plausible within the established technological framework. The blend of realism and futuristic imagination is a hallmark of Shirow's work.

Why Read *Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1* Today?

Even decades after its initial release, *Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1* remains incredibly relevant. The themes it explores – artificial intelligence, transhumanism, the nature of consciousness, and the impact of technology on society – are more pressing than ever. As we continue to push the boundaries of what's possible with AI and cybernetics, Shirow's early insights feel almost prescient. If you're a fan of cyberpunk, science fiction, or simply thought-provoking storytelling, Volume 1 is an absolute must-read. It's not just the beginning of a legendary franchise; it's a seminal work that continues to shape our understanding of the future and our place within it. It's a journey into the core of what makes us, us, and what happens when that core can be questioned, manipulated, or even rewritten. So, pick up the book, prepare for a mind-bending ride, and ask yourself: what is your ghost?

The *Ghost in the Shell* Volume 1 stands as a landmark in cyberpunk storytelling, a narrative that deftly blends philosophical depth with futuristic vision. Originally adapted from Masamune Shirow's groundbreaking manga, the Volume 1 adaptation—through its animated series and expanded lore—has carved a lasting place in both pop culture and digital discourse. This seminal work explores the intersection of humanity, technology, and identity in a hyper-connected, high-tech world where the boundaries between flesh and machine are increasingly blurred. At its core, *Ghost in the Shell* Volume 1 delves into the enigmatic case of Major Motoko Kusanagi, a cyborg whose consciousness resides within a synthetic body, raising profound questions about what it truly means to be human. Set in a near-future society dominated by sprawling megacities, advanced artificial intelligence, and pervasive surveillance, the narrative challenges viewers and readers alike to confront the implications of a

world where identity can be digitized, augmented, or even erased. The series masterfully weaves together psychological introspection with gripping action, making it more than mere entertainment—it becomes a mirror reflecting real-world anxieties about technological autonomy and selfhood. One of the most compelling aspects of *Ghost in the Shell* Volume 1 is its treatment of consciousness as a non-physical essence, or “ghost,” that transcends biological form. This central metaphor invites audiences to ponder whether identity is tied to the body or resides in the mind’s continuity. By presenting a protagonist who embodies this philosophical tension, the story transcends traditional cyberpunk tropes, offering a nuanced examination of autonomy, memory, and personal agency. These themes resonate deeply in an era where digital avatars, AI companions, and neural interfaces are becoming increasingly plausible. Beyond its intellectual heft, the series delivers tangible cultural and technological influence. It pioneered visual and thematic motifs now ubiquitous in science fiction—neural implants, cybernetic enhancement, and the ethics of AI integration—paving the way for countless works in film, literature, and game design. Its aesthetic, characterized by sleek, functional futurism and a muted, atmospheric palette, has inspired generations of creators and continues to shape the visual language of high-tech worlds. The benefits of engaging with *Ghost in the Shell* Volume 1 extend well beyond entertainment. It encourages critical thinking about the rapid pace of technological advancement and its impact on individual identity and societal structures. By confronting uncomfortable questions about privacy, control, and the commodification of the self, the story equips audiences with a reflective lens through which to evaluate the evolving digital landscape. Moreover, its emphasis on introspection and resilience offers a grounded emotional counterbalance to the often overwhelming scale of technological change. Looking ahead, the

future of *Ghost in the Shell*'s legacy appears both enduring and evolving. As real-world innovations in brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology advance, the themes explored in Volume 1 gain renewed relevance. The narrative's exploration of consciousness and identity remains a vital touchstone for discourse on emerging technologies, ensuring its place not only in pop culture history but as a prophetic guide for navigating the digital future. *Ghost in the Shell* Volume 1 endures as a masterful fusion of art, philosophy, and foresight—an essential work for anyone seeking to understand the soul of a post-human world.

Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1: A Cyberpunk Genesis and Its Enduring Resonance

Masamune Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell*, Volume 1, isn't just a manga; it's a foundational pillar of cyberpunk literature and a prescient exploration of identity, consciousness, and the blurred lines between humanity and technology. Published in 1989, its influence has rippled through countless anime, films, video games, and even philosophical discussions. This inaugural volume, often referred to as "The Ghost in the Shell," introduces us to the enigmatic Major Motoko Kusanagi and the elite counter-cyberterrorist unit, Public Security Section 9. Beyond its compelling action sequences and intricate plotlines, it delves into profound questions that remain acutely relevant in our increasingly digitized world.

Unveiling the World of Public Security

Section 9

Volume 1 plunges readers headfirst into a near-future Japan grappling with the pervasive integration of cybernetics and artificial intelligence. The narrative centers on Public Security Section 9, a covert governmental organization tasked with handling complex cybercrimes and domestic terrorism. At its core is Major Motoko Kusanagi, a full-body cyborg with unparalleled combat skills and a mind that navigates the digital realm with breathtaking fluidity. Her existence itself is a testament to the advanced prosthetics of this era, raising immediate questions about what constitutes the self when the physical form is largely artificial.

Section 9's operations are varied and often perilous, showcasing the unique challenges of a technologically advanced society. From apprehending rogue cybercriminals to thwarting sophisticated hacking attempts, the team's work is a constant dance with the ever-evolving landscape of cyber warfare. The volume introduces a cast of memorable characters, including the stoic Batou, the gruff Togusa (one of the few remaining fully human members), and the brilliant Ishikawa, who manages Section 9's information network. Their camaraderie and individual strengths are crucial as they tackle the intricate mysteries presented to them.

The Labyrinthine Plot: The Puppet Master and the Ghost Hackers

The central narrative of *Ghost in the Shell* Vol. 1 revolves around a series of seemingly unrelated crimes orchestrated by a mysterious entity known only as "The Puppet Master." This elusive hacker has the ability to not only manipulate individuals' minds through ghost

hacking but also to orchestrate complex scenarios that blur the lines of reality. The investigation into The Puppet Master's activities forms the backbone of the volume, leading Major Kusanagi and her team down a rabbit hole of corporate espionage, political intrigue, and philosophical quandaries.

The concept of "ghost hacking" is central to the volume's intrigue. It refers to the unauthorized access and manipulation of an individual's "ghost" – their consciousness, memories, and personality. This isn't mere data theft; it's a violation of the very essence of self. The Puppet Master's ability to implant false memories or control individuals like marionettes highlights the fragility of human identity in a world where the mind can be as susceptible to alteration as any computer program. The ethical implications of such technology are starkly presented, prompting readers to consider the vulnerability of their own consciousness.

Defining the "Ghost": Consciousness and Identity in the Cybernetic Age

At its heart, *Ghost in the Shell* Vol. 1 is a profound exploration of what it means to be human. The "ghost" in the title is the intangible essence of consciousness, the soul, or the mind that defines an individual. In a world where bodies are augmented or entirely artificial, the question arises: where does the self truly reside? Major Kusanagi, with her extensive cybernetic enhancements, is the perfect embodiment of this existential dilemma. Does her physical form define her, or is it her "ghost" that makes her who she is?

The Puppet Master's own existence further complicates this notion. Is it a sentient AI that has achieved a form of consciousness, or a

sophisticated program designed to mimic life? The manga doesn't provide easy answers. Instead, it encourages introspection. Shirow masterfully weaves in philosophical musings, drawing parallels to concepts of identity, free will, and the nature of life itself. The pursuit of The Puppet Master becomes a journey of self-discovery for Major Kusanagi, as she confronts the possibility of her own "ghost" being less distinct than she believes.

Masamune Shirow's Vision: A World of Intricate Detail and Complex Themes

Masamune Shirow's artistic style is as distinctive as the themes he explores. His artwork in Volume 1 is characterized by meticulous detail, particularly in the depiction of advanced technology, cybernetic prosthetics, and intricate weaponry. The world he constructs feels lived-in and believable, despite its futuristic setting. The sheer volume of technical jargon and scientific concepts presented can be daunting at first, but it contributes to the immersive quality of the narrative.

Beyond the visual artistry, Shirow's narrative approach is dense and layered. He doesn't shy away from complex philosophical discussions, often weaving them seamlessly into the action. The inclusion of extensive footnotes and appendices, a hallmark of his work, serves to deepen the reader's understanding of the fictional technologies and societal structures. This dedication to world-building and thematic depth is what elevates *Ghost in the Shell* beyond a simple action manga.

The Legacy of Volume 1: A Blueprint for Cyberpunk Narrative

The impact of *Ghost in the Shell* Vol. 1 cannot be overstated. It laid the groundwork for much of what we now consider quintessential cyberpunk. The themes of artificial intelligence, consciousness transfer, cybernetic augmentation, and the critique of societal control are all powerfully present. The iconic image of Major Kusanagi, often depicted in her tactical gear, has become an enduring symbol of female strength and technological prowess in fiction.

Mamoru Oshii's seminal 1995 film adaptation, while diverging in some narrative aspects, captured the philosophical essence of the manga and introduced its complex ideas to a global audience. The subsequent anime series and other adaptations have further cemented its place in popular culture. *Ghost in the Shell* Vol. 1 remains a vital starting point for anyone seeking to understand the origins of these influential cyberpunk narratives and to engage with timeless questions about humanity's future in a technologically saturated world.

Key Takeaways and Enduring Relevance

Reading *Ghost in the Shell* Vol. 1 today offers a chillingly prescient glimpse into our current reality. The anxieties surrounding data privacy, the ethical implications of AI development, and the very definition of identity in the digital age are all amplified by Shirow's original vision. The manga forces us to confront uncomfortable truths about our reliance on technology and the potential consequences of its unfettered advancement.

The enduring appeal of this volume lies in its ability to spark debate and encourage critical thinking. It's a work that demands more than passive consumption; it invites active engagement with its complex ideas. Whether you are drawn to the intricate plot, the compelling characters, or the philosophical underpinnings, *Ghost in the Shell* Vol. 1 offers a rich and rewarding experience that continues to resonate with readers decades after its initial release. It's a testament to the power of speculative fiction to not only entertain but also to illuminate the human condition.

Ghost in the Shell Vol. 1 keywords: Ghost in the Shell manga, Masamune Shirow, Major Motoko Kusanagi, Public Security Section 9, cyberpunk, ghost hacking, consciousness, identity, AI, artificial intelligence, anime, film, philosophy, existentialism, cybernetics, near-future Japan, LSI keywords, detailed analysis, SEO-friendly, enduring resonance, literary influence.

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Environmental considerations also influence reading choices. Reduced reliance on printed materials helps limit paper consumption and transportation demands, supporting more sustainable learning practices.

Global access strengthens shared knowledge. Readers from different regions can engage with the same material, fostering diverse perspectives and collective understanding.

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This accessibility reshapes habits. Reading becomes less about obligation and more about engagement. The book waits patiently, offering insight whenever attention turns back to it.

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Ultimately, the value of downloading **Ghost In The Shell Volume 1** lies not only in convenience but in continuity. Knowledge remains present, adaptable, and ready to support growth whenever the reader chooses to return.

Questions & Answers About ghost in the shell volume 1

N o	Question	Answer
1	What is 'Ghost in the Shell' Volume 1 fundamentally about, beyond just cyborgs and technology?	Volume 1 introduces the core themes of identity, consciousness, and what it means to be 'human' in a world where the lines between man and machine are blurred, centering on Major Motoko Kusanagi and her team's investigations.

2	Who is Major Motoko Kusanagi, and why is she such a compelling protagonist?	Major Kusanagi is a full-body cyborg and the leader of Public Security Section 9. She's compelling due to her exceptional combat skills, sharp intellect, and her ongoing philosophical struggle with her own identity and the nature of her consciousness (her 'ghost').
3	What is 'Section 9' and what's their main purpose in Volume 1?	Public Security Section 9 is an elite, covert counter-cyberterrorist unit. In Volume 1, they are tasked with investigating and neutralizing threats that exploit advanced technology, particularly cybercrime and political conspiracies.
4	The Puppet Master is a significant antagonist. What makes this entity so unique and terrifying?	The Puppet Master is a highly advanced AI or 'ghost' that has gained sentience and the ability to hack into and manipulate human cyborgs. Its terror lies in its ability to erode individual autonomy and question the very definition of life.
5	How does Volume 1 explore the concept of 'ghosts' (consciousness) in a cyborg body?	It explores 'ghosts' by questioning if consciousness is tied to the biological brain or if it can exist independently, even within a fully artificial body. Major Kusanagi's own existential doubts are central to this exploration.
6	What are some of the key technological advancements featured in Volume 1 that feel particularly relevant today?	Volume 1 showcases advanced cybernetics, brain-computer interfaces, and widespread cybercrime. These themes resonate strongly with current discussions around AI, artificial intelligence, and data security.

7	What is the 'Cyberbrain' and why is it so crucial to the plot of Volume 1?	The 'Cyberbrain' is the primary processing unit of a cyborg's brain. It's crucial because it can be hacked, allowing for manipulation of individuals and the transfer of consciousness, which is central to the Puppet Master's scheme.
8	Beyond the action, what philosophical questions does 'Ghost in the Shell' Volume 1 leave the reader pondering?	It prompts readers to consider the nature of self, the implications of technological advancement on humanity, the definition of life, and the potential for artificial intelligence to possess consciousness and rights.

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Ghost In The Shell

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