

CITY

## Onion farmer ends life, family blames meagre returns on produce

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Bhupat Jethwa

TNN



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Rajkot: An onion farmer committed suicide in Bhavnagar district's Isora village on Thursday. While the family members and acquaintances claimed that he took drastic step due to meagre returns on produce and debt, police blamed the farmer's mental stress as the reason.

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Bhupat Jethwa (53) was found hanging with a tree in his farm in Isora village of Talaja taluka. His family members told police that Jethwa was under severe mental stress over the last few

days as he was not able to harvest the crop considering the meagre prices in the wholesale market.

Jethwa was cultivating five bigha land in partnership and had grown onion in two bighas. His son Lalji said, "I had heard my father telling someone that he suffered a loss of Rs 35,000 to Rs 40,000 because of poor price in the market. He released goats and sheep in the farm for grazing on onions because it's not financially viable to harvest the standing crop."

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According to police investigation, Jethwa had also borrowed nearly Rs 40,000 to grow onions, but was unable to pay the debt

However, LD Gamara, police inspector of Talaja police station said, "The family members are trying to misguide the police by stating crop prices as the reason. There was a family dispute because Jethwa's both sons were unemployed. The actual reason will come out in investigation."

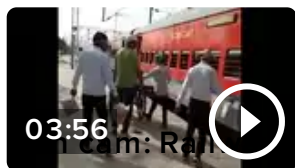
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One of his sons was a diamond artisan in Surat, but he is jobless due to lockdown. He also has three daughters.

Village sarpanch Sailesh Rao said, "Jethwa was very disturbed over the last few days and he left for his farm on Wednesday night. His son first saw him hanging with tree and informed me. We immediately took him to Talaja government hospital where he was declared dead on admission."

Bhavnagar is the largest onion-growing district in Gujarat, but the farmers are getting only Rs two to Rs five per kg in the wholesale market. With such meagre returns, they can't even recover the production cost and its not viable to pay labuor charges for harvesting the crop and transportation cost to bring the crop to market. The auction process has been suspended in all the marketing yards and farmers are at the mercy of the traders. .

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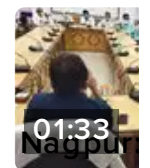
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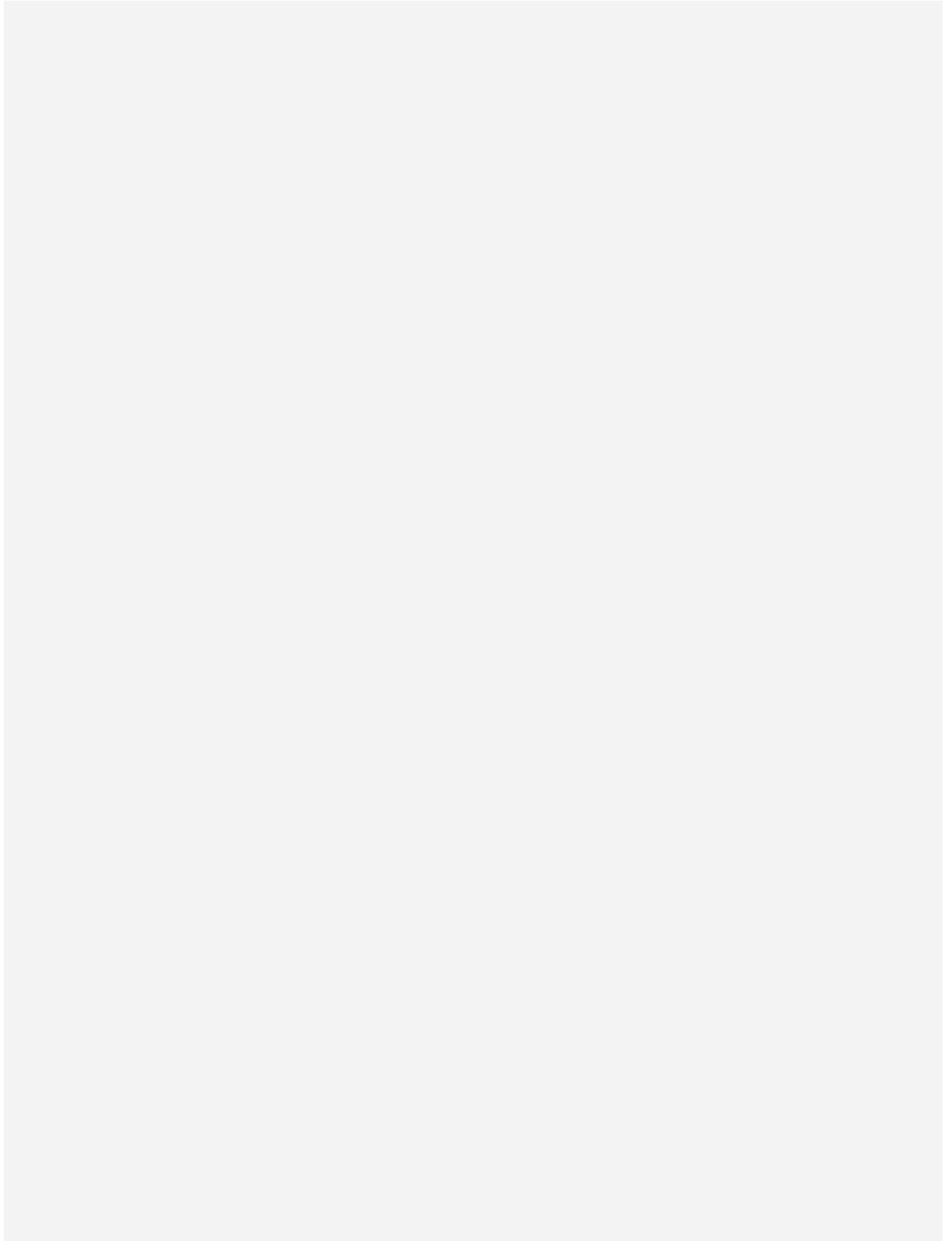
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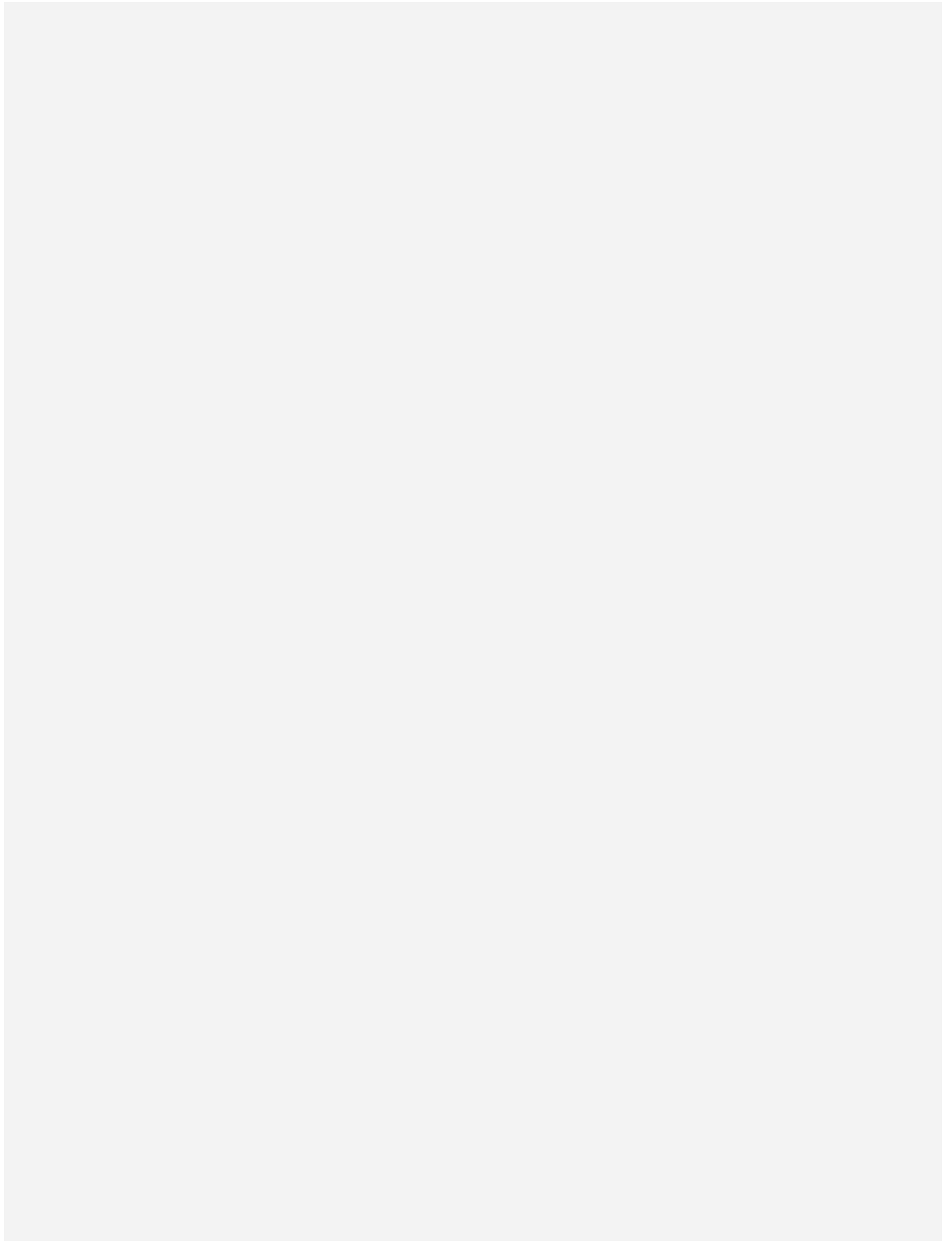
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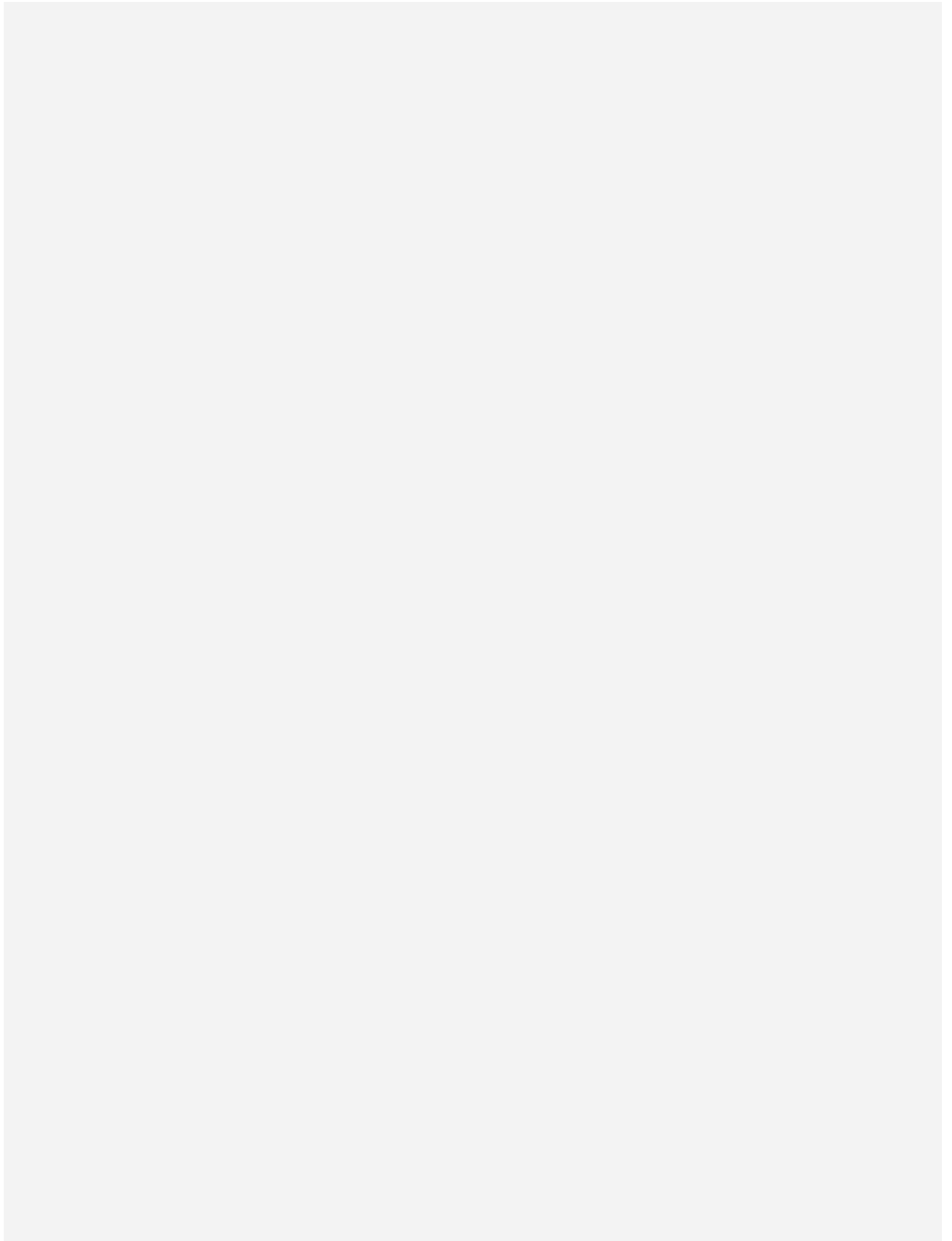
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