

# Reasoning with Object Capabilities

Sophia Drossopoulou, Imperial College London

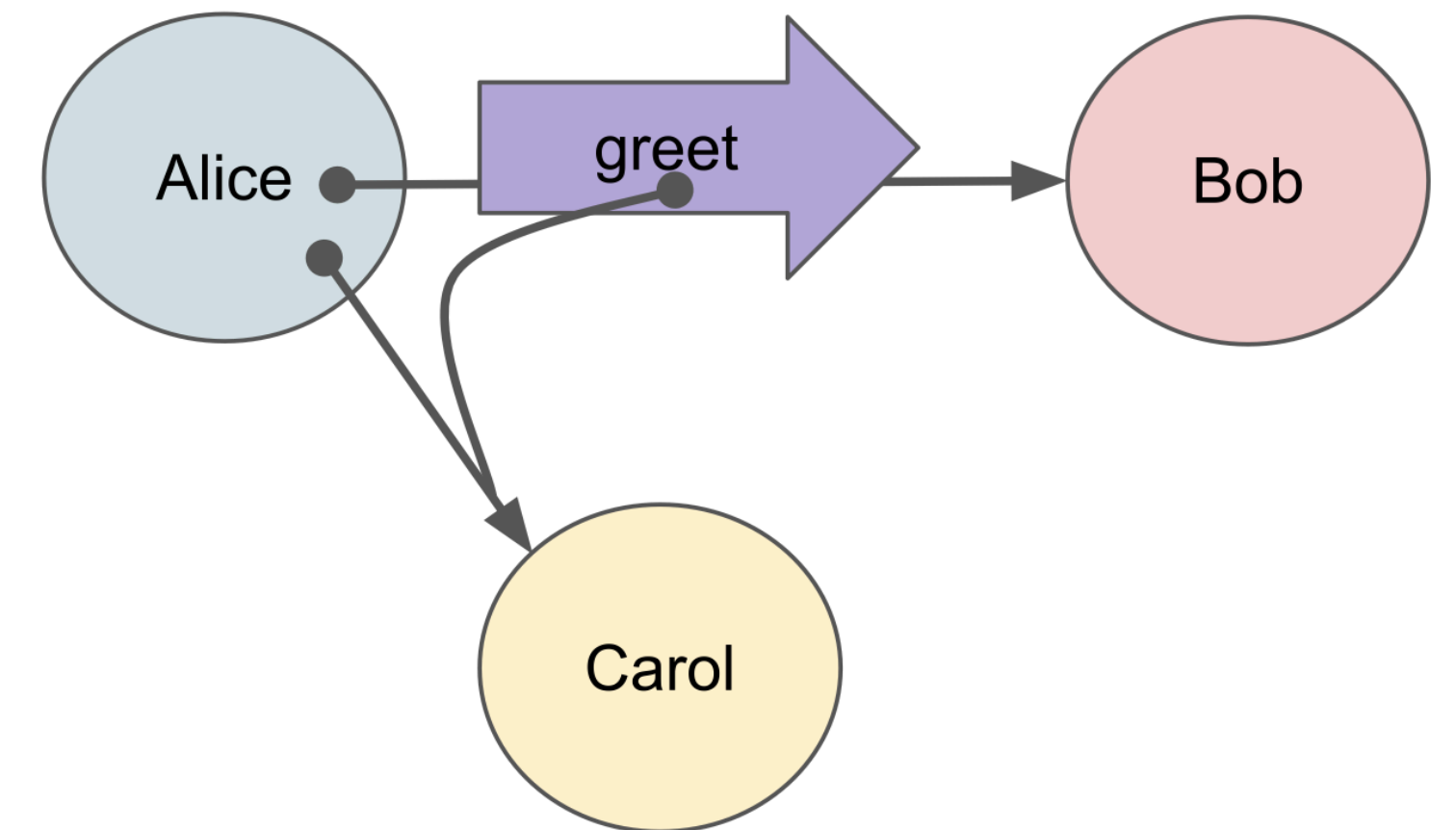
James Noble



Susan Eisenbach



Julian Mackay





**need new encapsulation features**



need new encapsulation features

Ownership  
types?



need new encapsulation features

Ownership types?

... WHAT should these features guarantee?



**Background,  
Problem,  
OCAP,  
Our remit**

# The Background:

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**B1:** Internal (trusted) and External (untrusted) objects are intertwined.



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**The Problem:** Mitigate the arising uncertainty.

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**Not our remit:** Forbid external access to capability.

**Background,  
Problem,  
OCAP,  
Our remit**

**— in a diagram —**

# The Background:

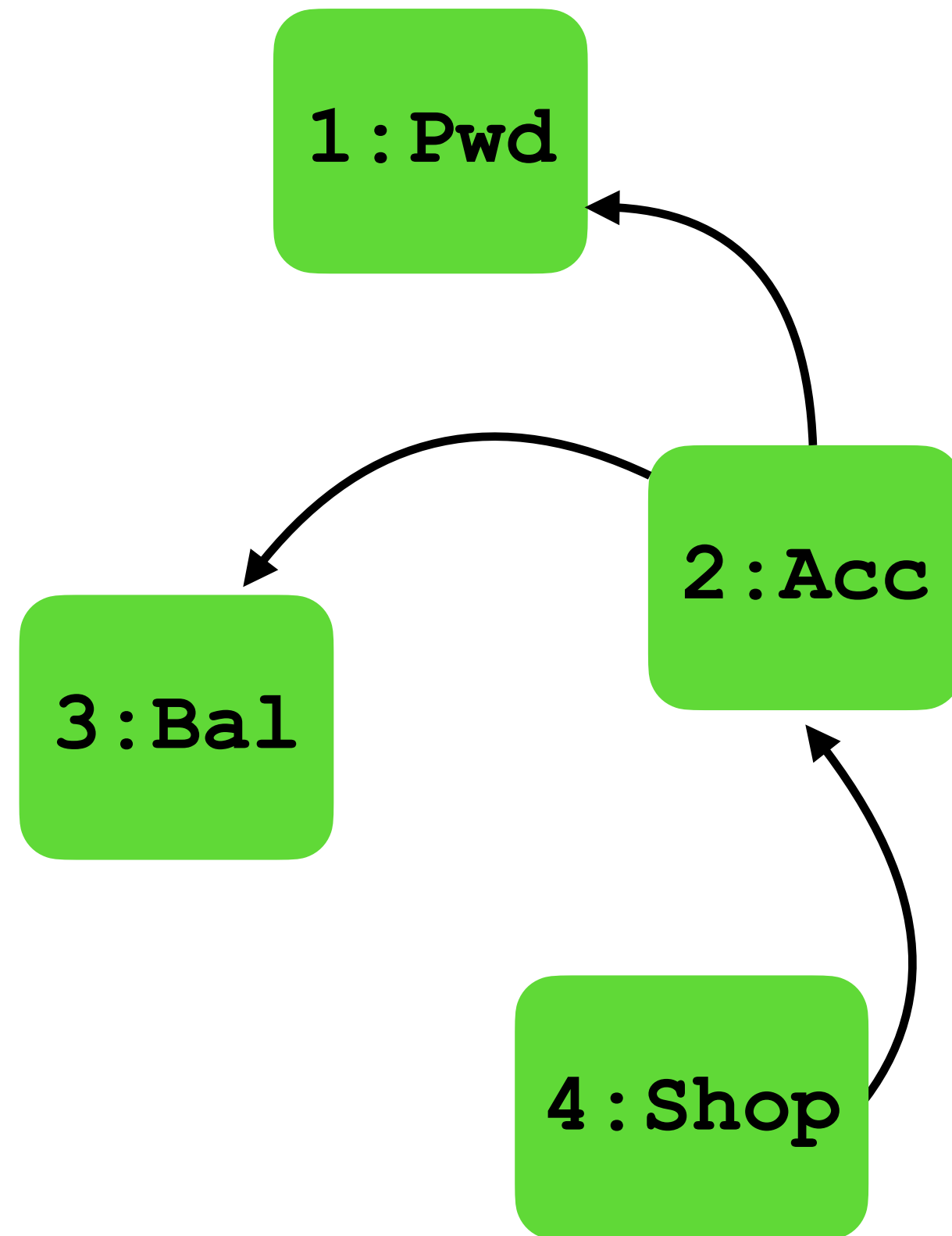


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**B1:** **Internal** (trusted) and **External** (untrusted) objects are intertwined.

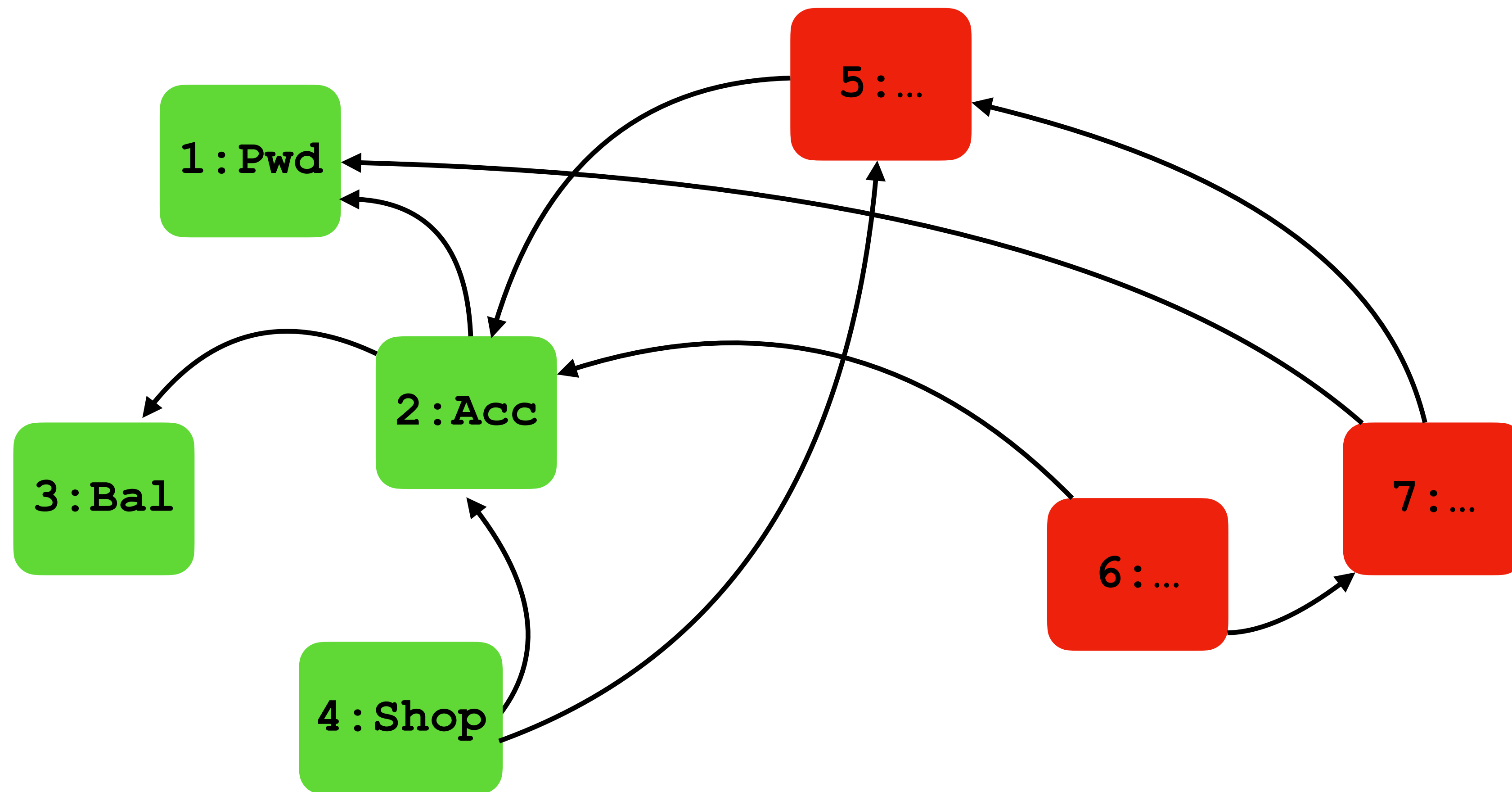
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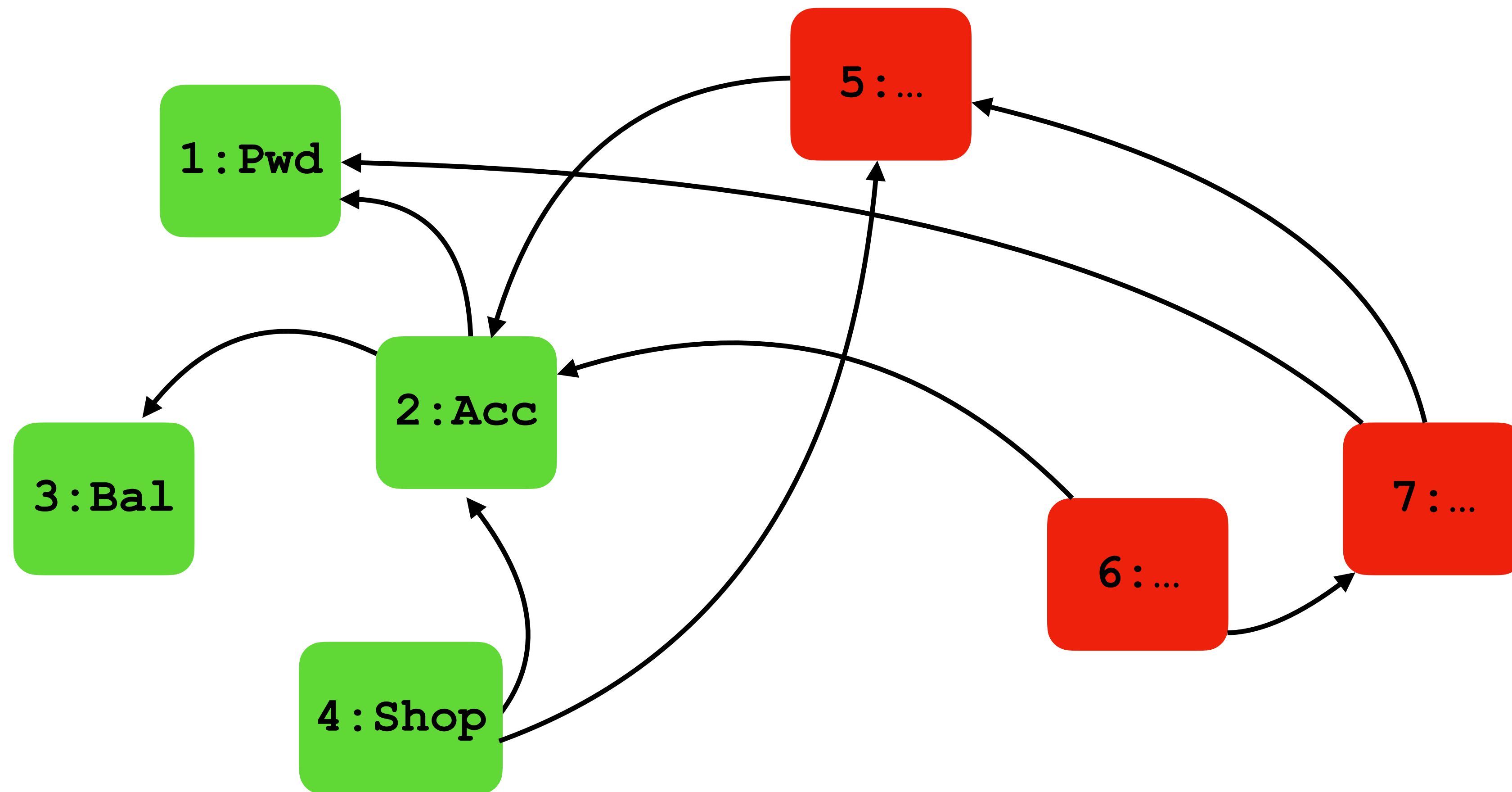
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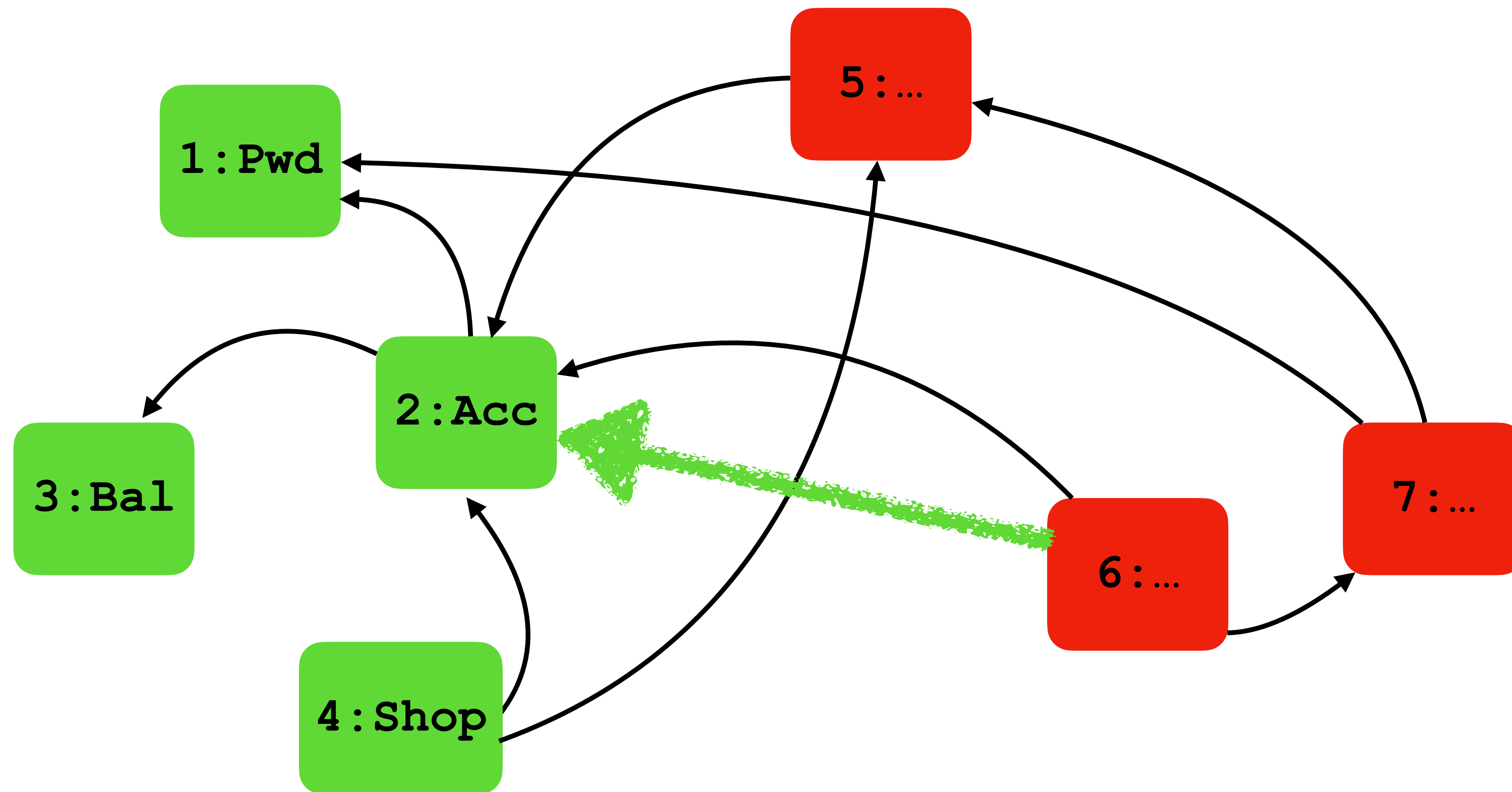
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**B2:** External objects may call methods on internal objects.



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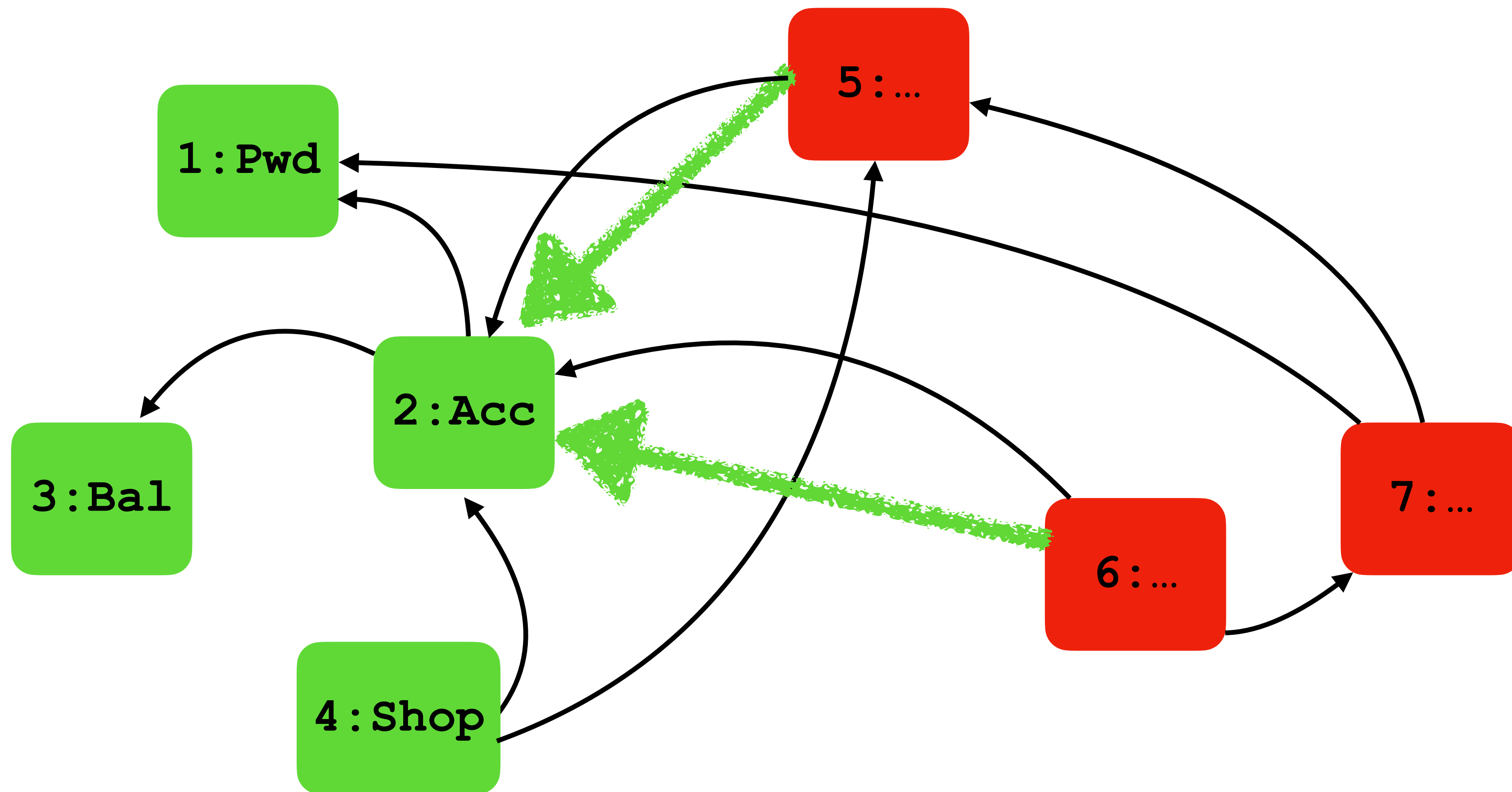
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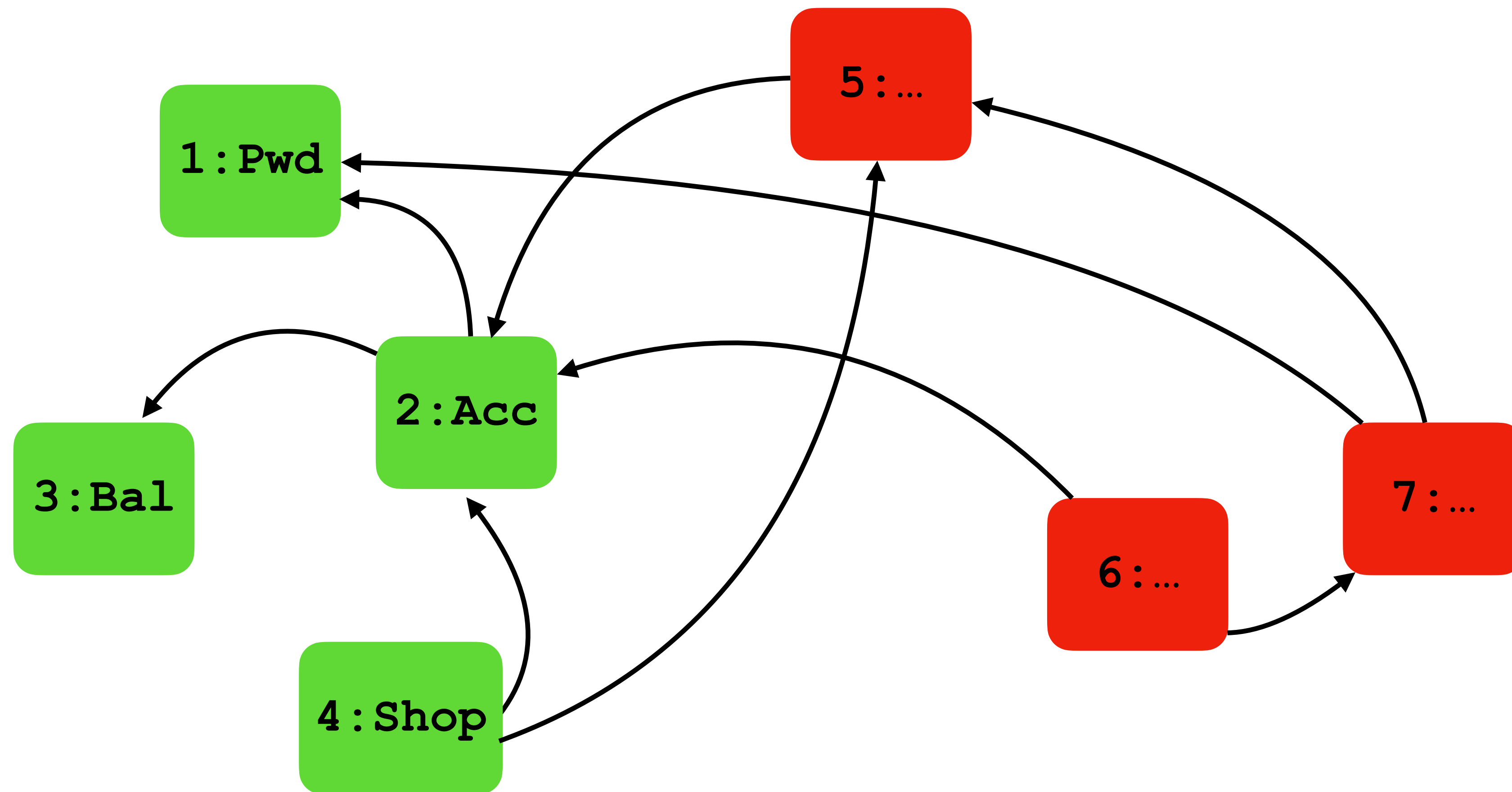
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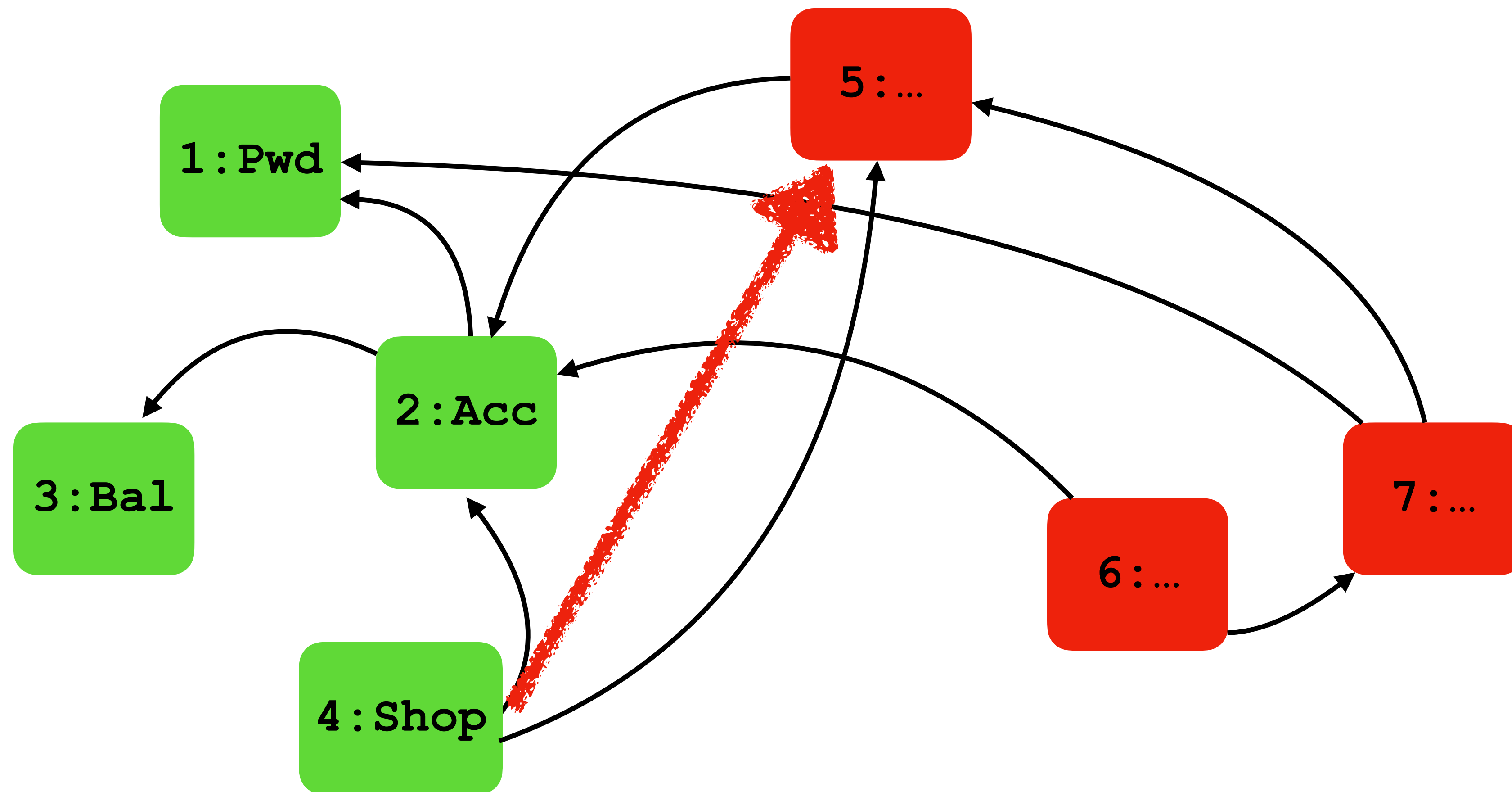
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**B3:** Internal objects may call methods on external objects.



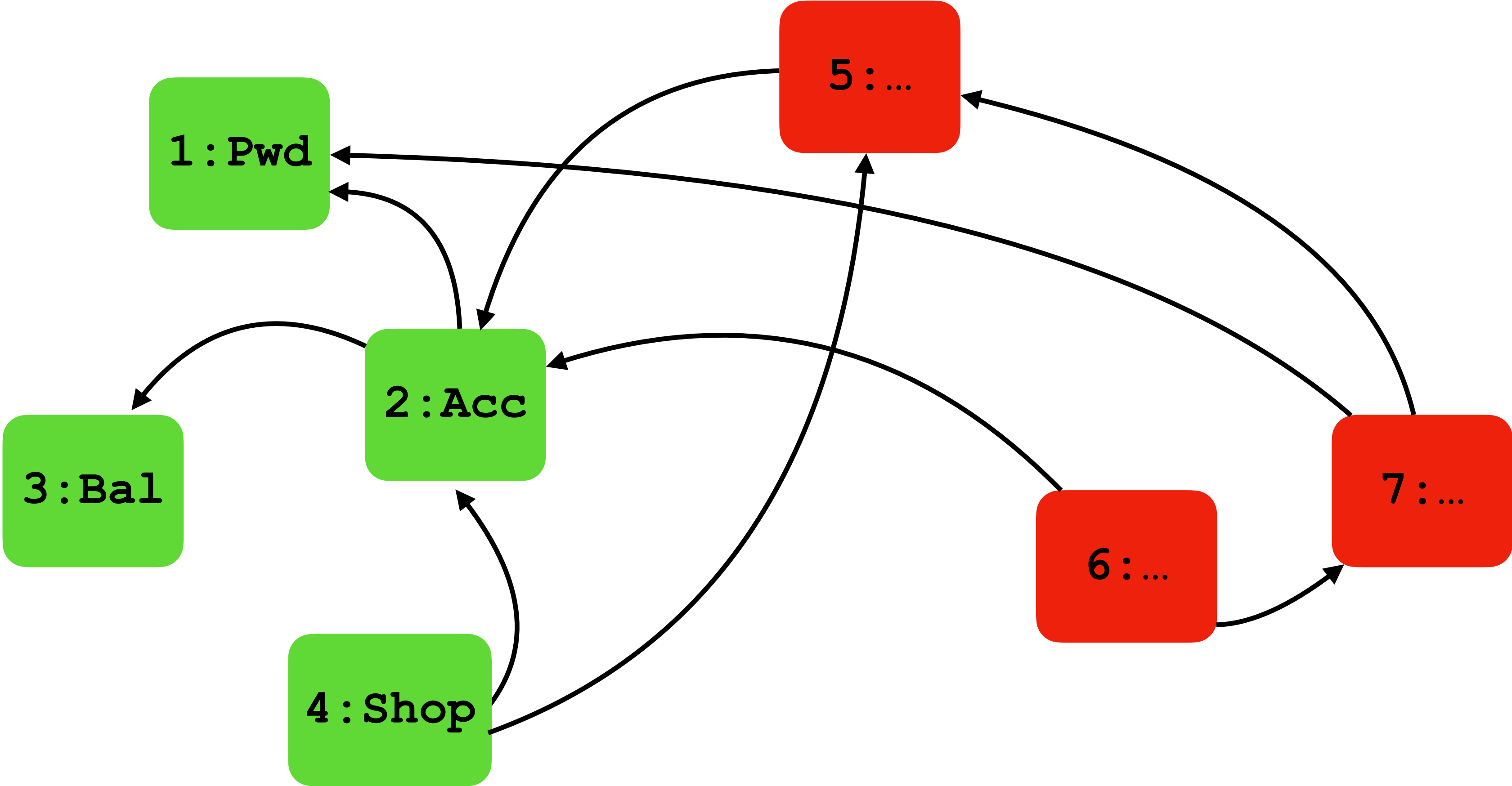
# The Background:

**B3:** Internal objects may call methods on external objects.



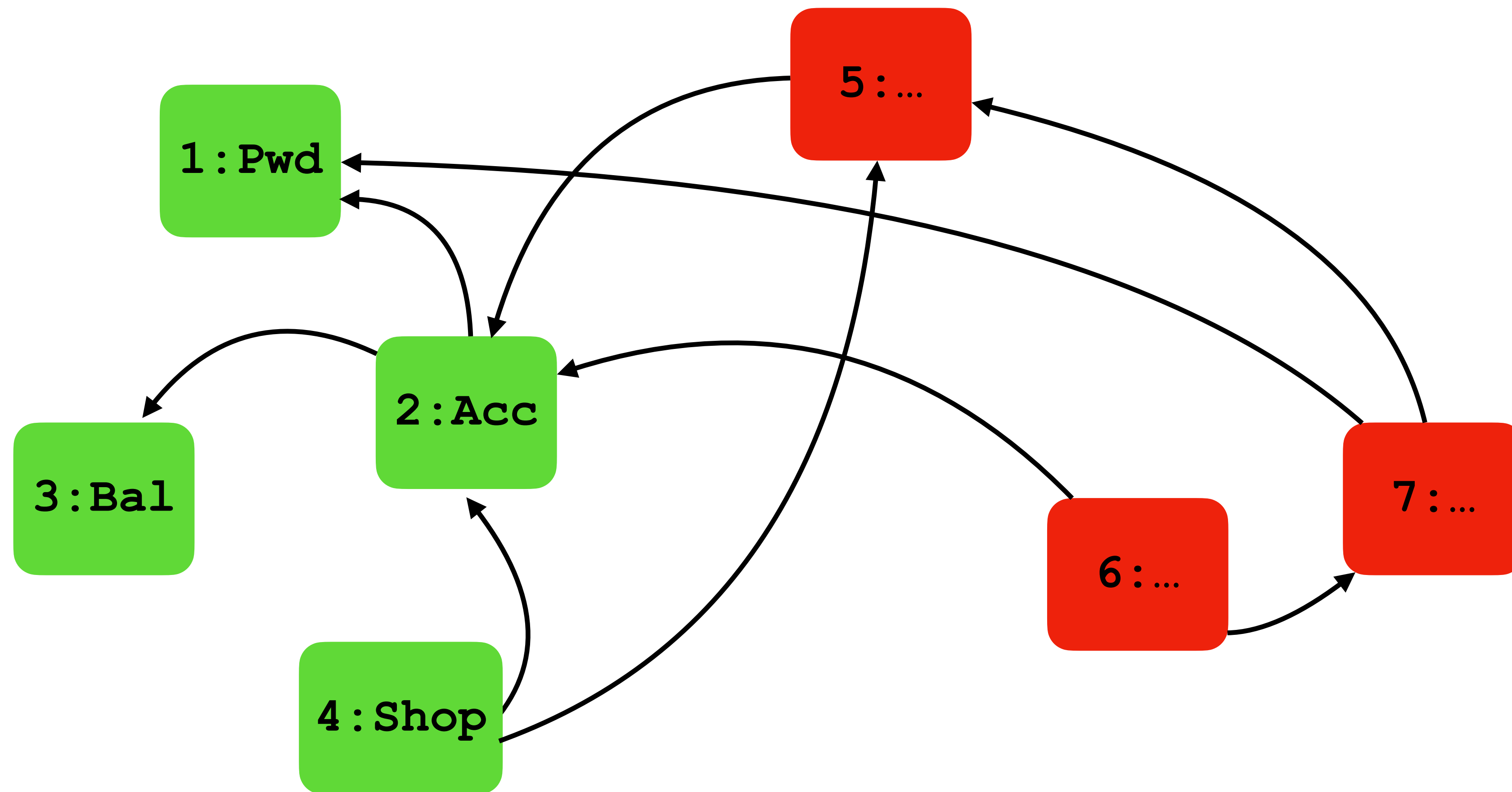
# The Problem:

# OCAP Solution:



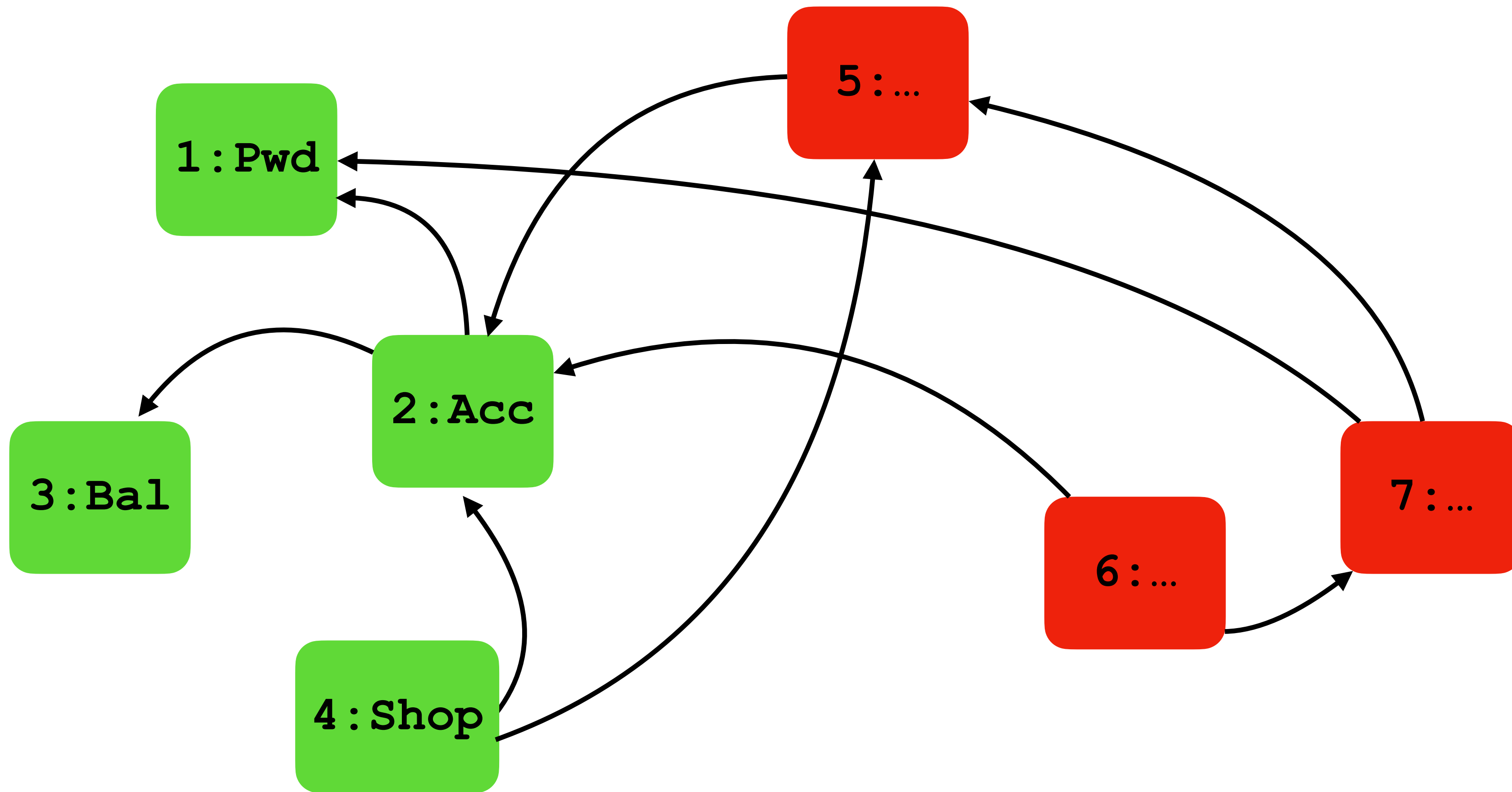
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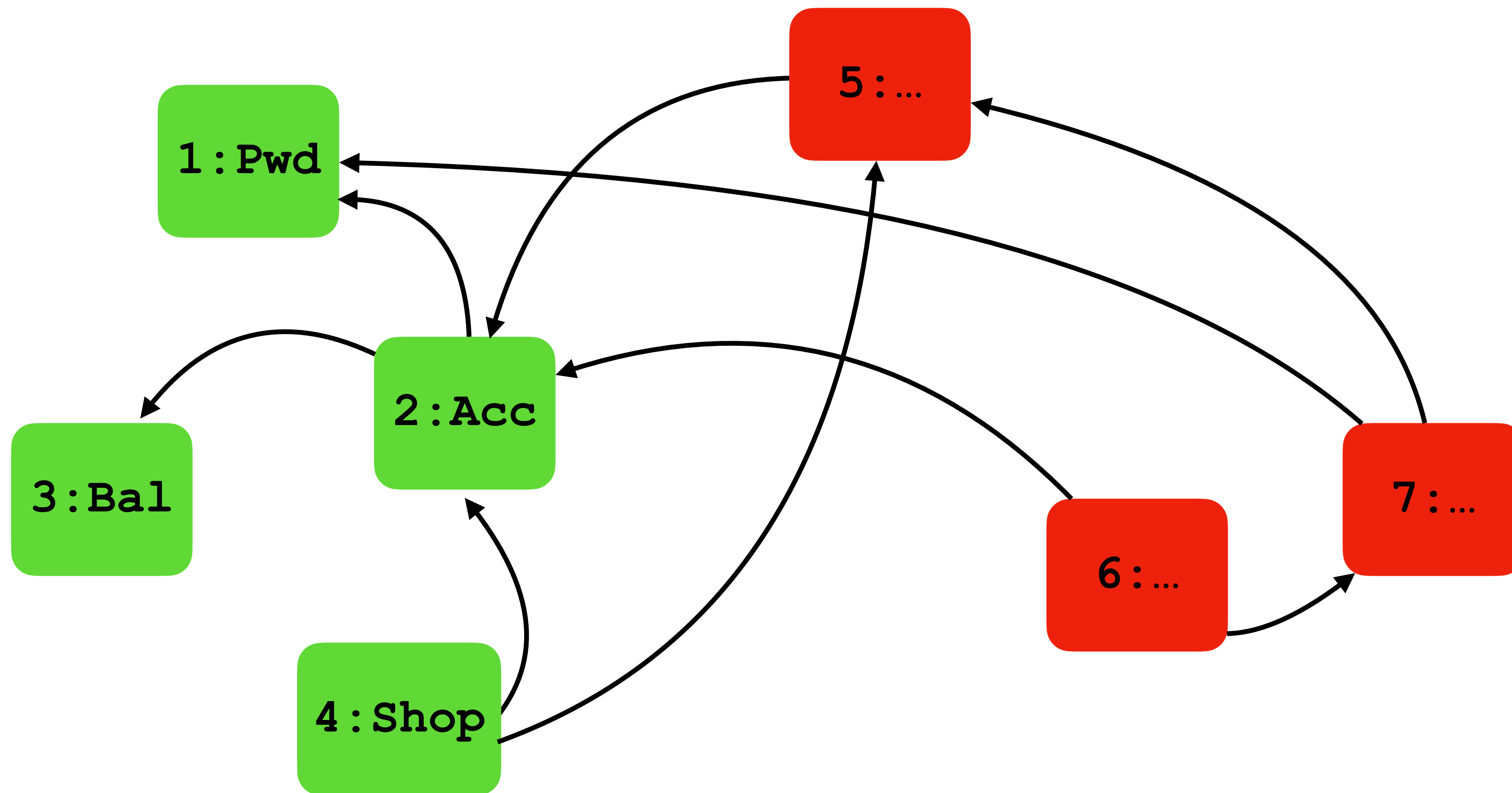
The  
OCA

# Capability as *guard* for a certain effect.



## Our remit:

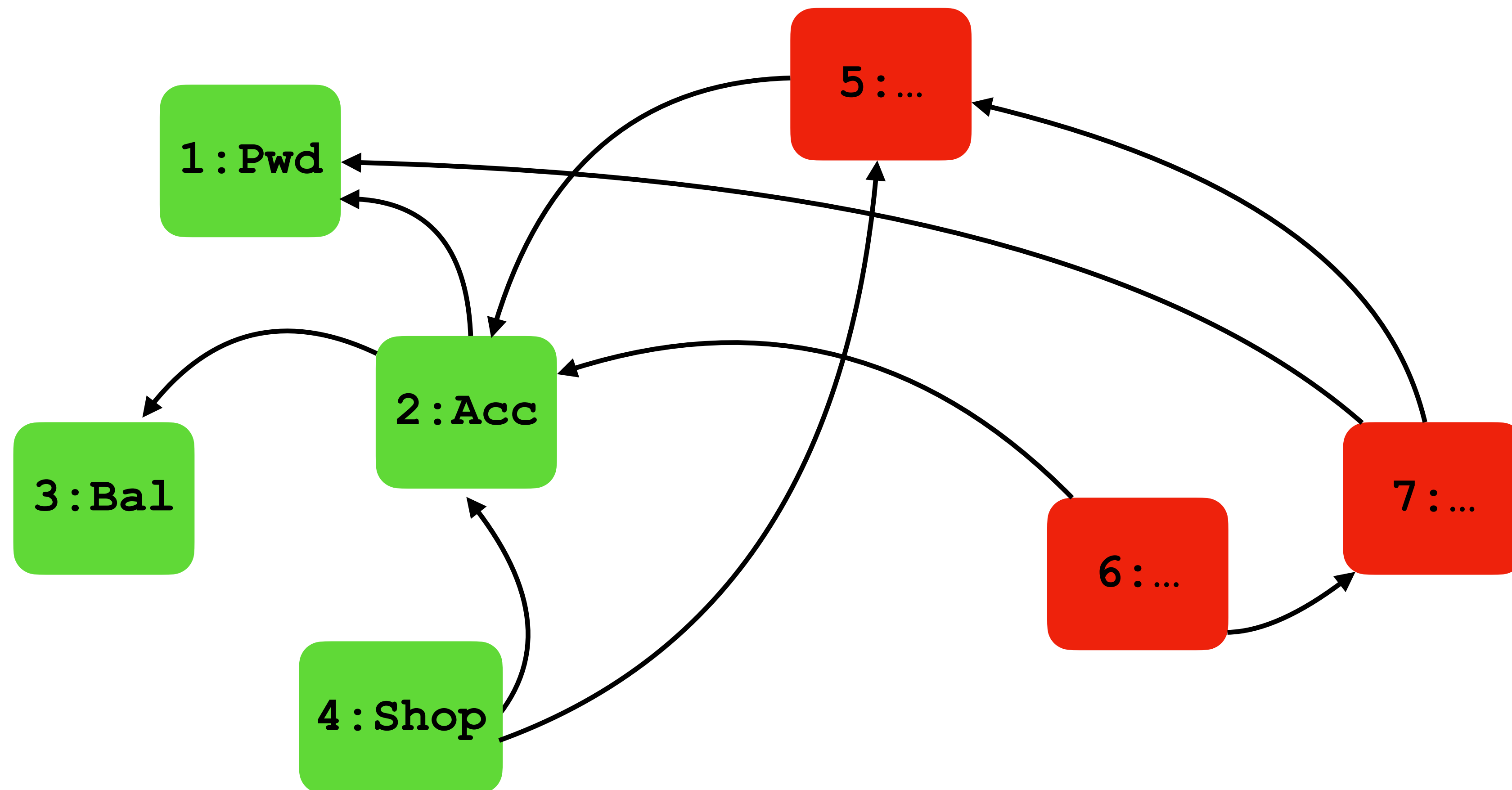
**R1:** Specify that eventual. external access to capability necessary for effect.



## Our remit:

**R1:** Specify that eventual. external access to capability necessary for effect.

**S1:** without eventl. access to account no change in balance



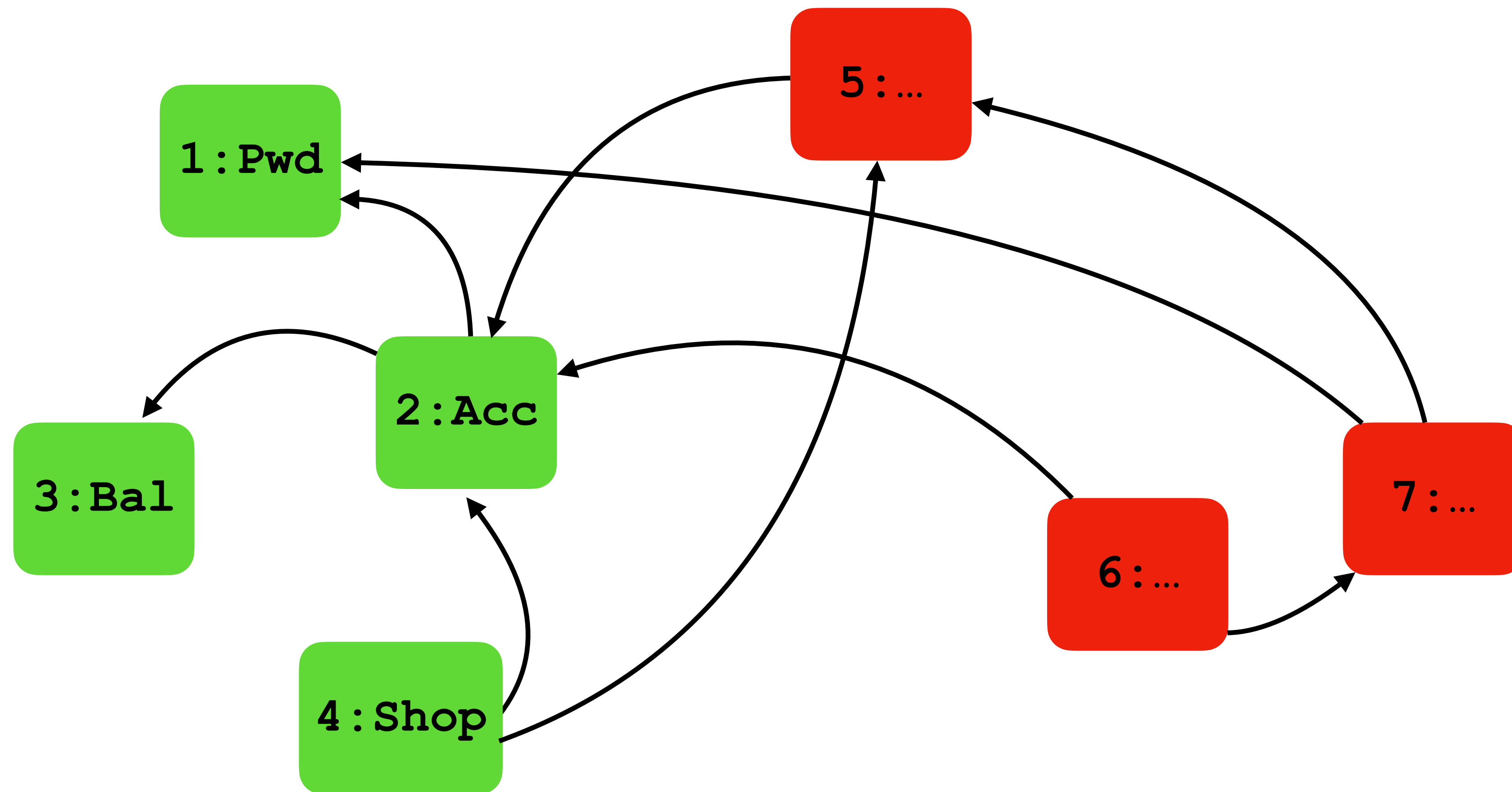


## Our remit:

**R1:** Specify that eventual. external access to capability necessary for effect.

S1: without eventl. access to account no change in balance

S2: without eventl. access to password no decrease in balance

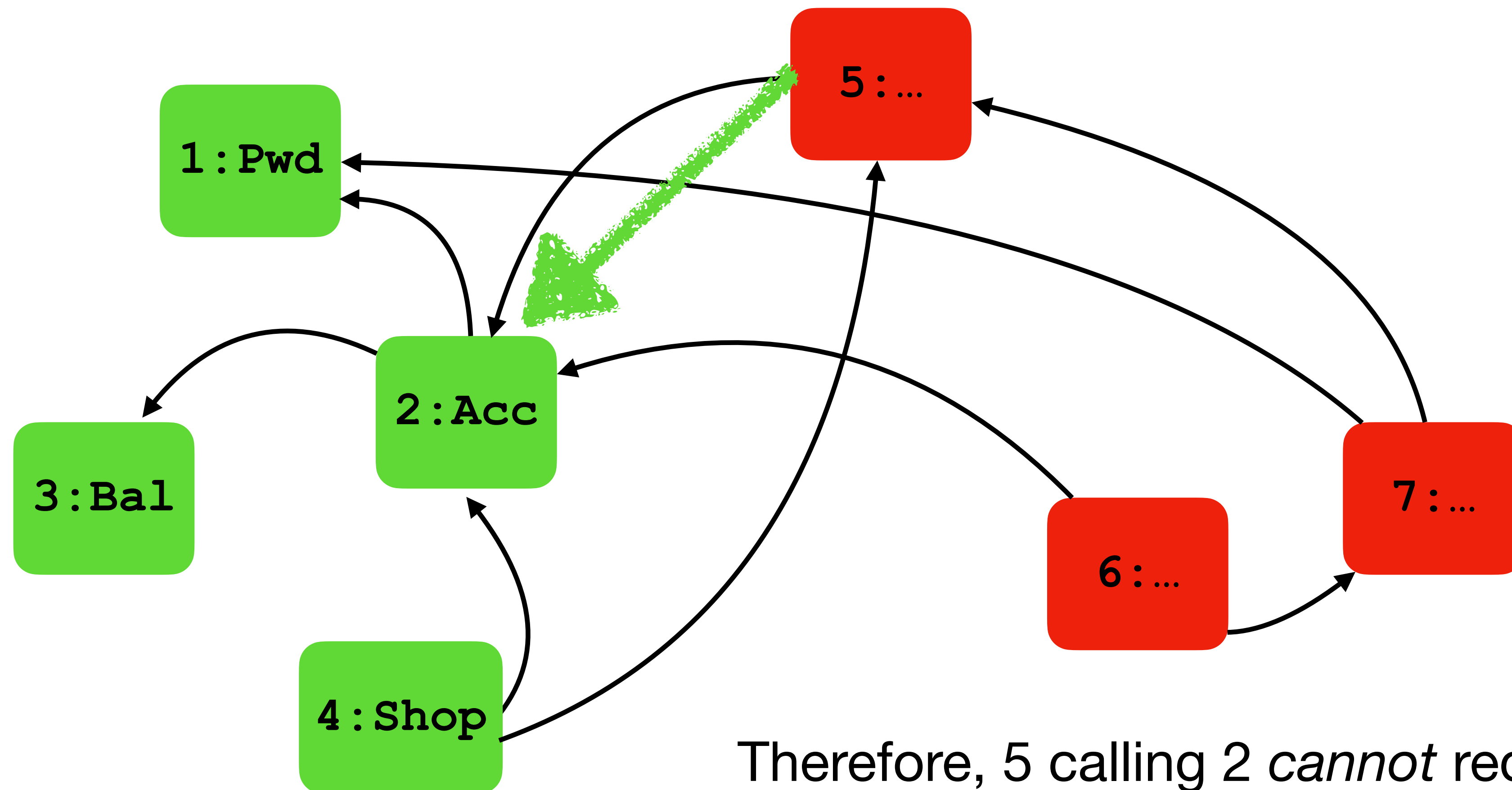


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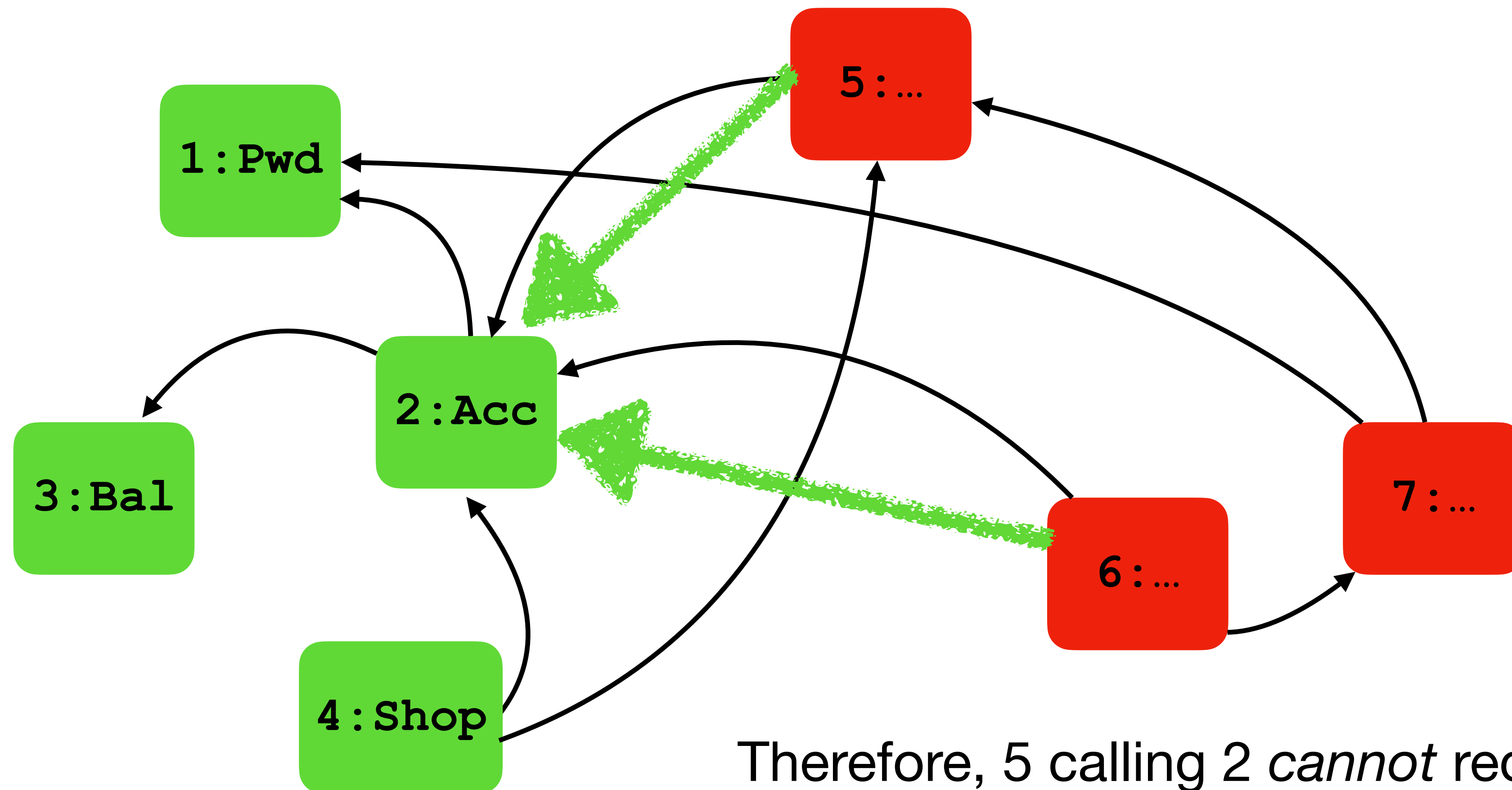
Therefore, 5 calling 2 *cannot* reduce 2.balance.

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**R1:** Specify that eventual. external access to capability necessary for effect.

S1: without eventl. access to account no change in balance

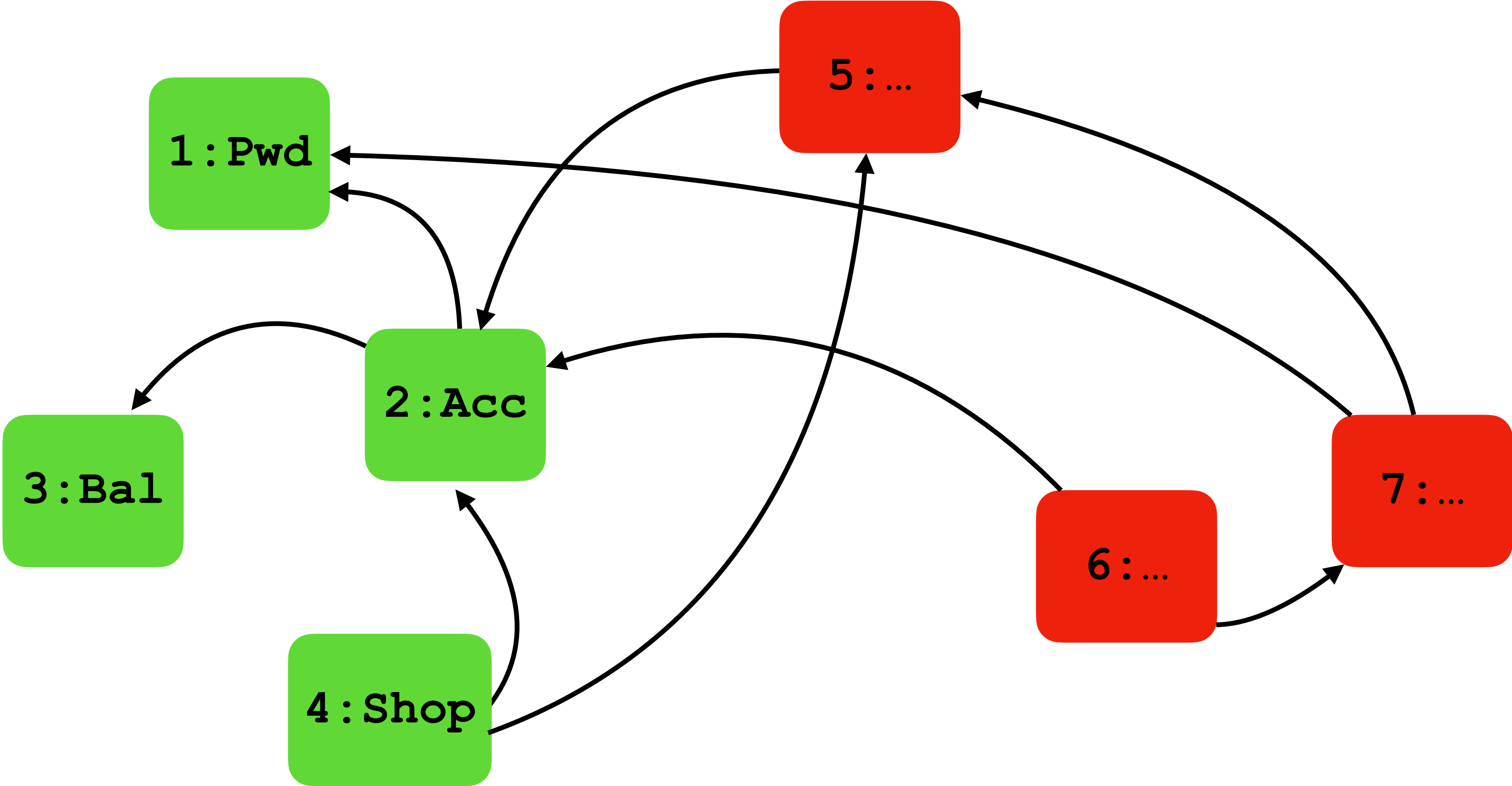
S2: without eventl. access to password no decrease in balance



Therefore, 5 calling 2 *cannot* reduce 2.balance.

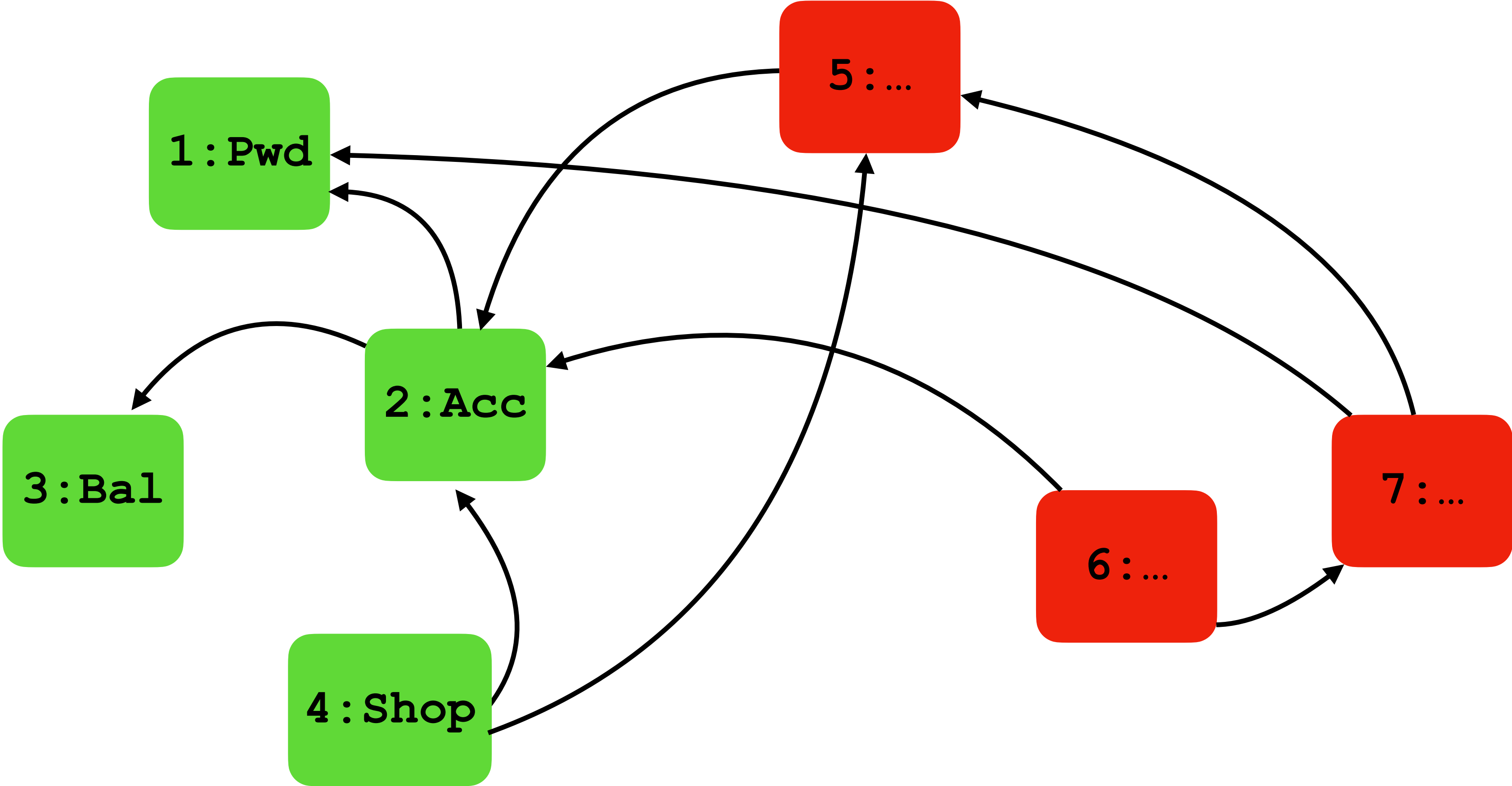
But, 6 calling 2 *may* reduce 2.balance.

# Our remit:



**Our remit:**

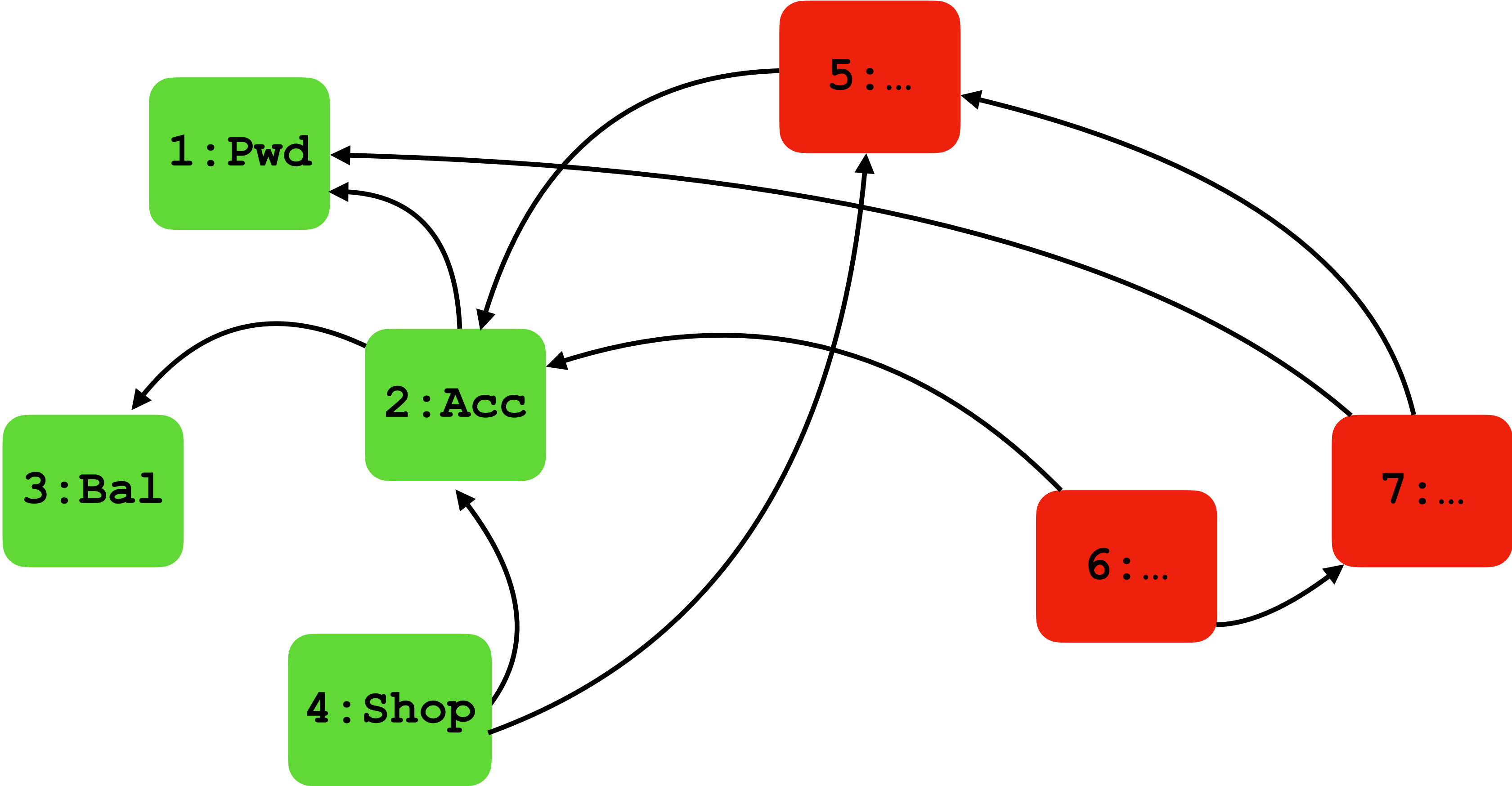
**R2:** Prove module's adherence to specification — later.



S2: without access to password no decrease in balance

**Our remit:**

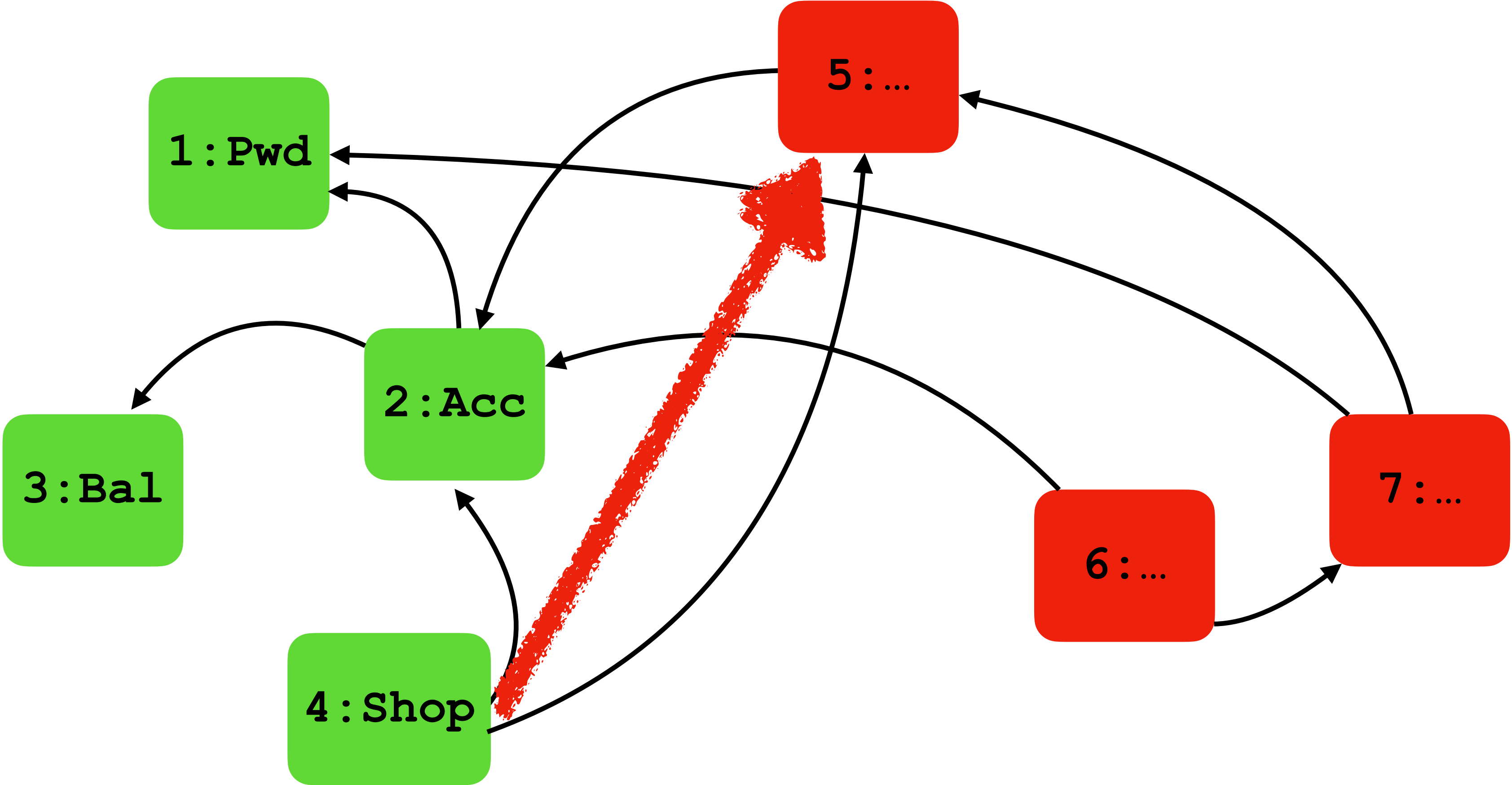
**R3:** Prove calls from internal to external object.



S2: without access to password no decrease in balance

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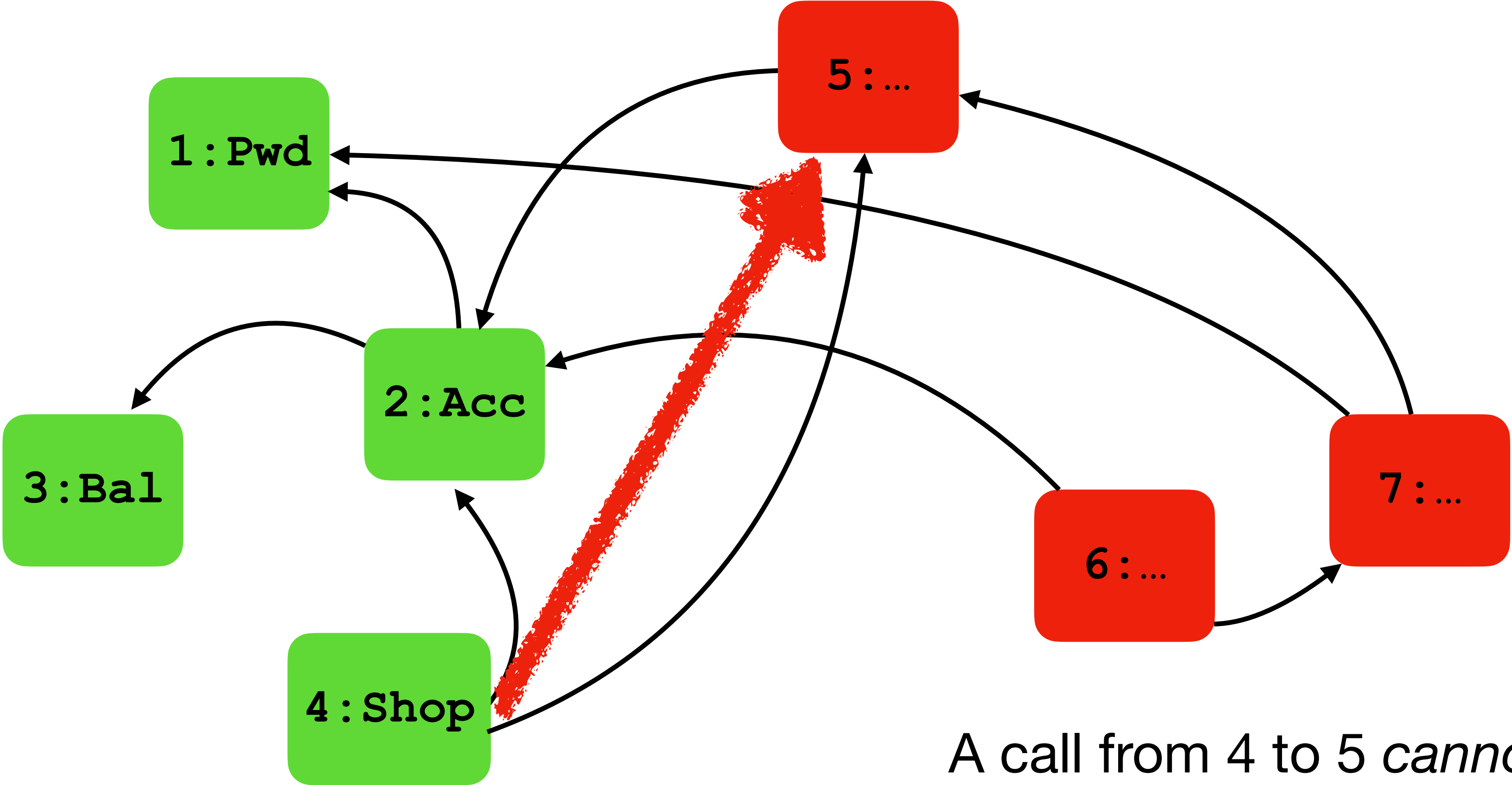
**R3:** Prove calls from internal to external object.



S2: without access to password no decrease in balance

**Our remit:**

**R3:** Prove calls from internal to external object.



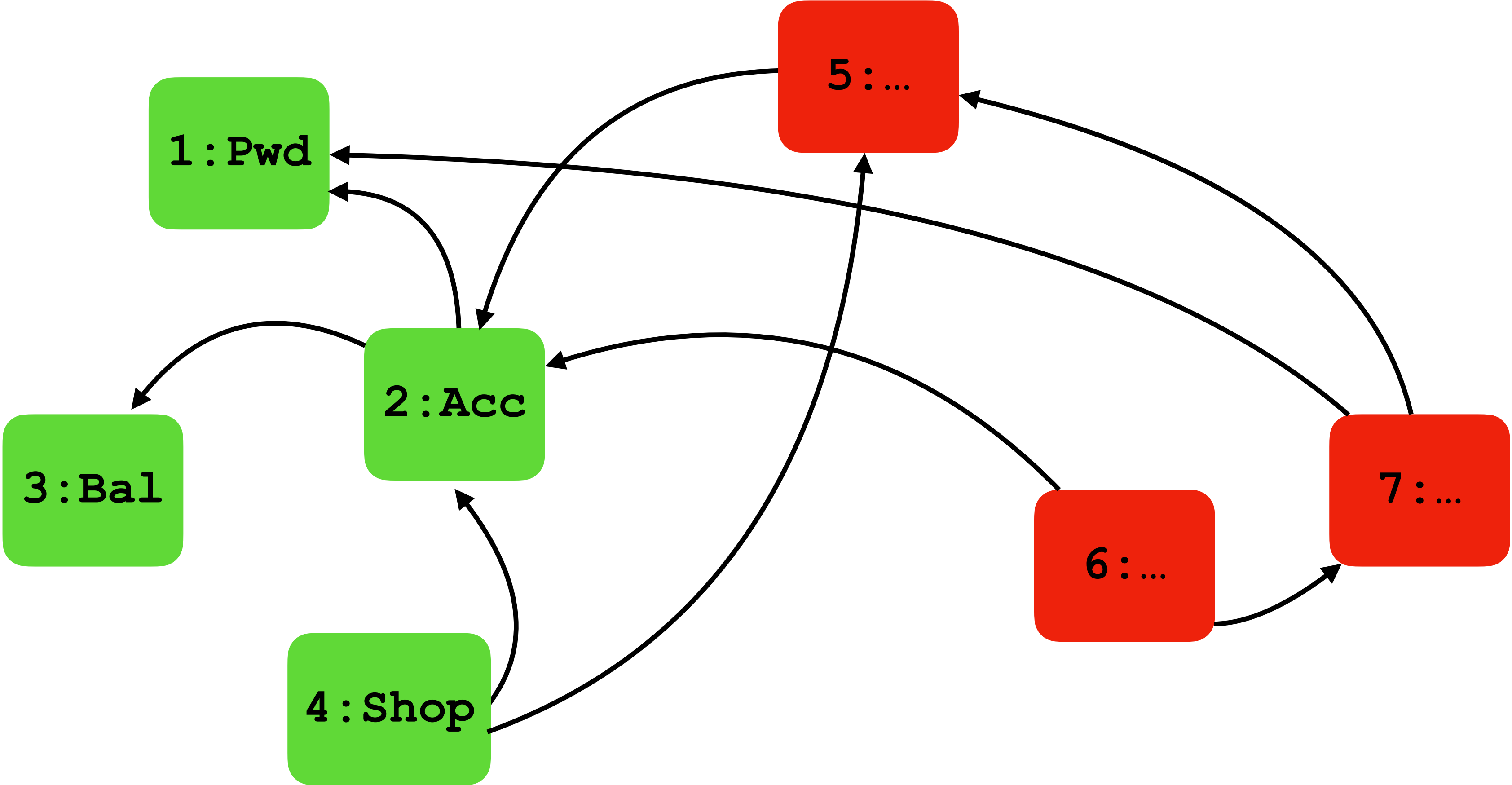
A call from 4 to 5 *cannot* reduce 2.balance



S2: without access to password no decrease in balance

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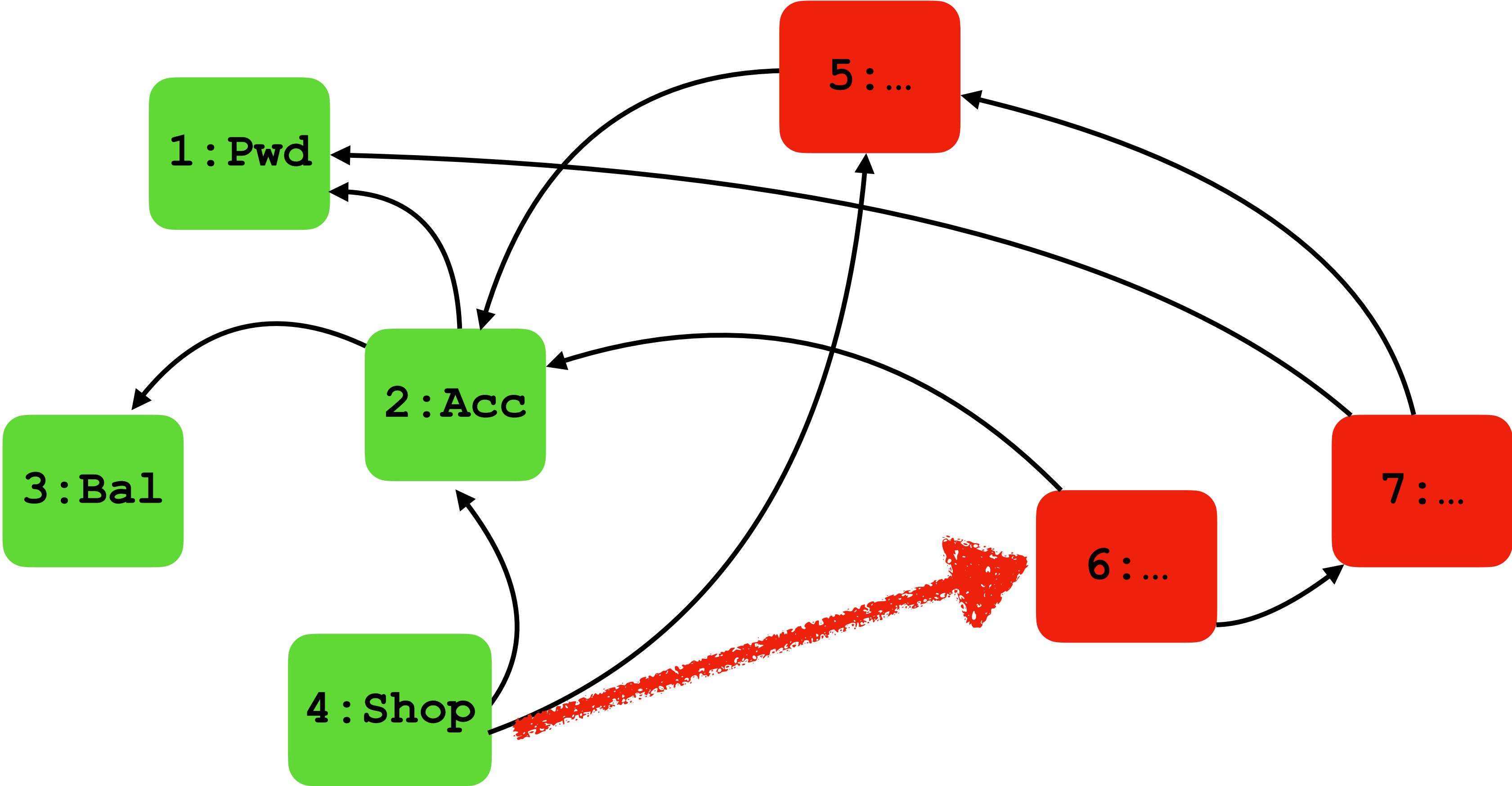
**R3:** Prove calls from internal to external object.



S2: without access to password no decrease in balance

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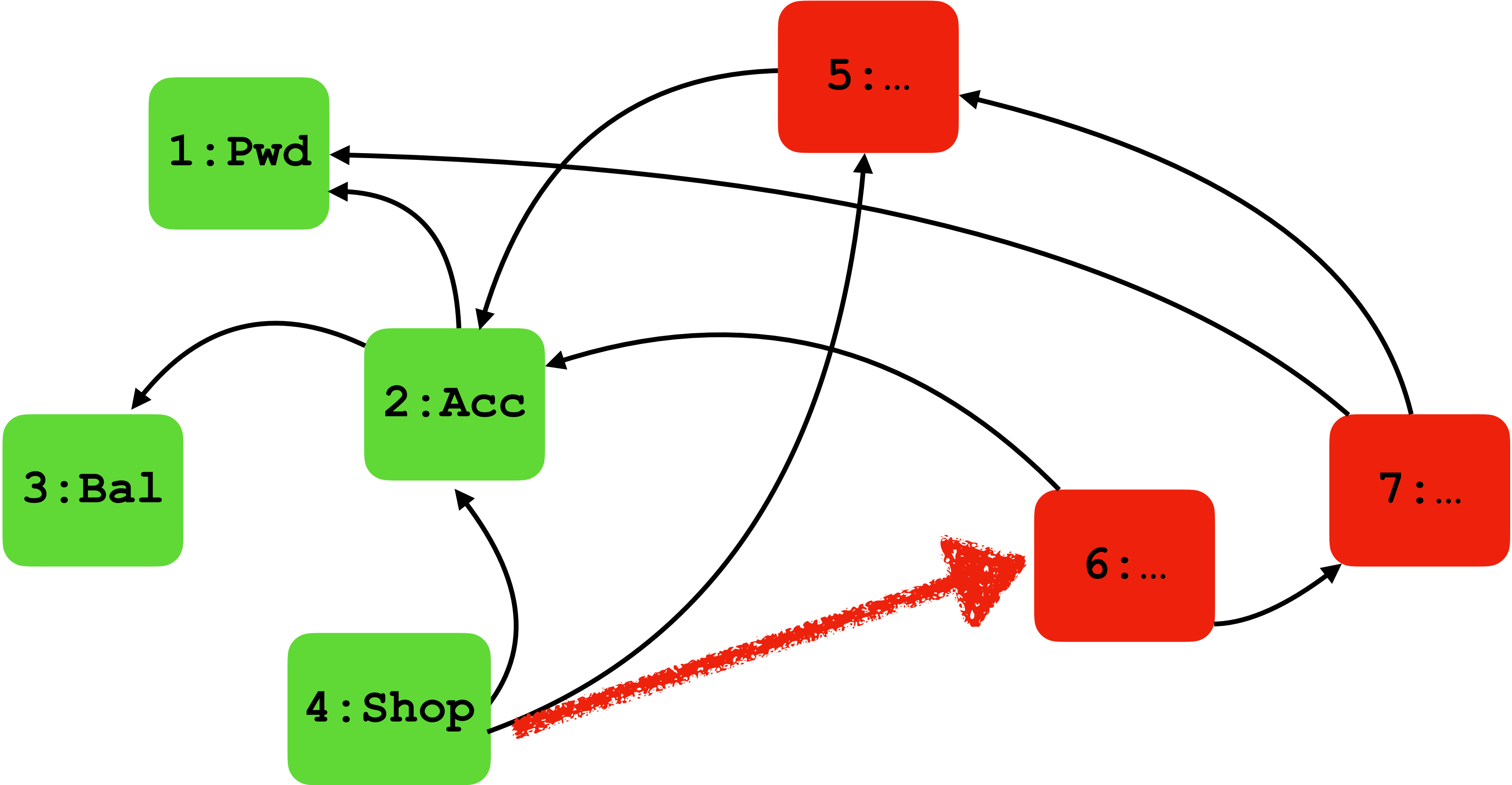
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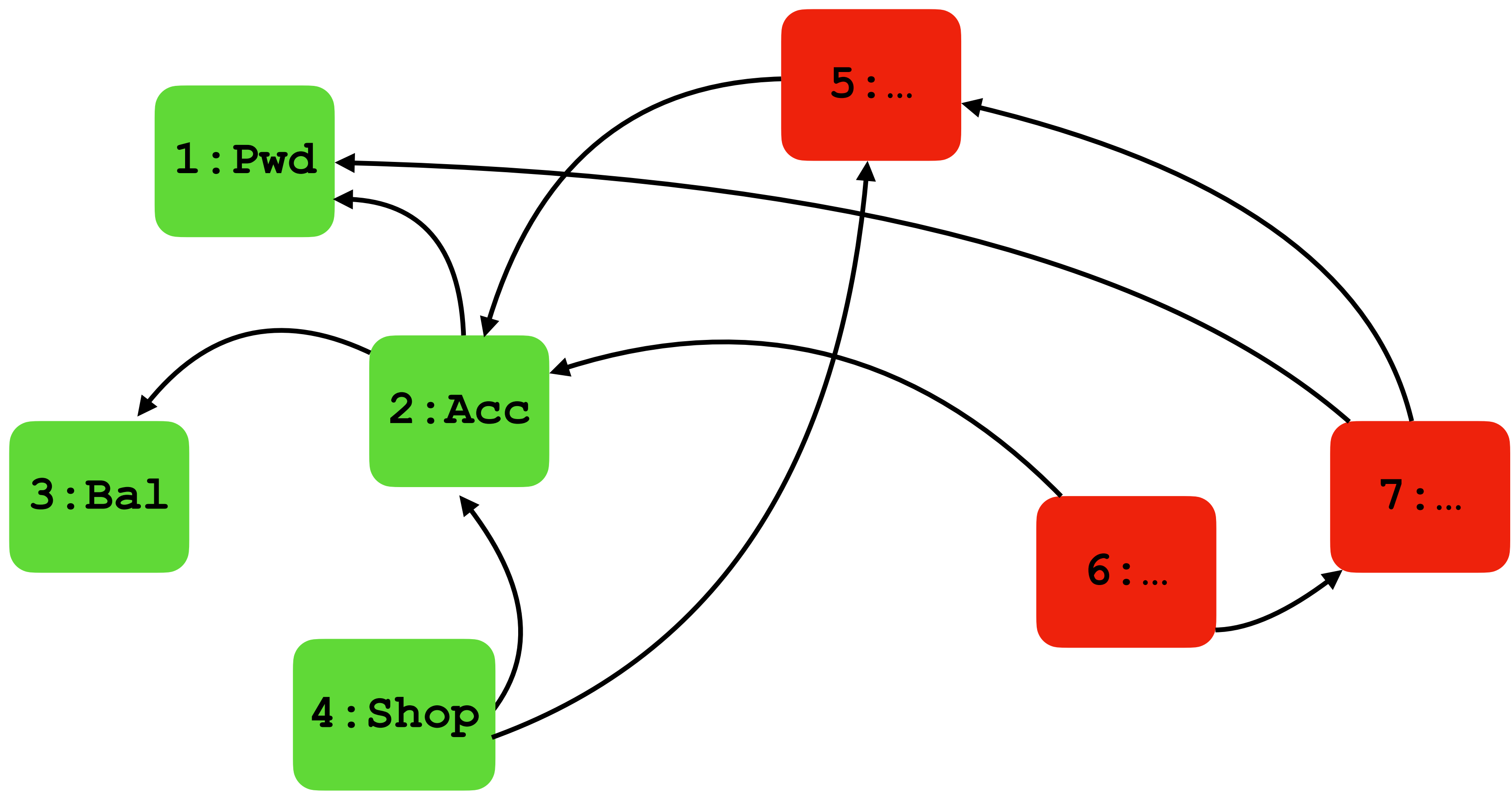
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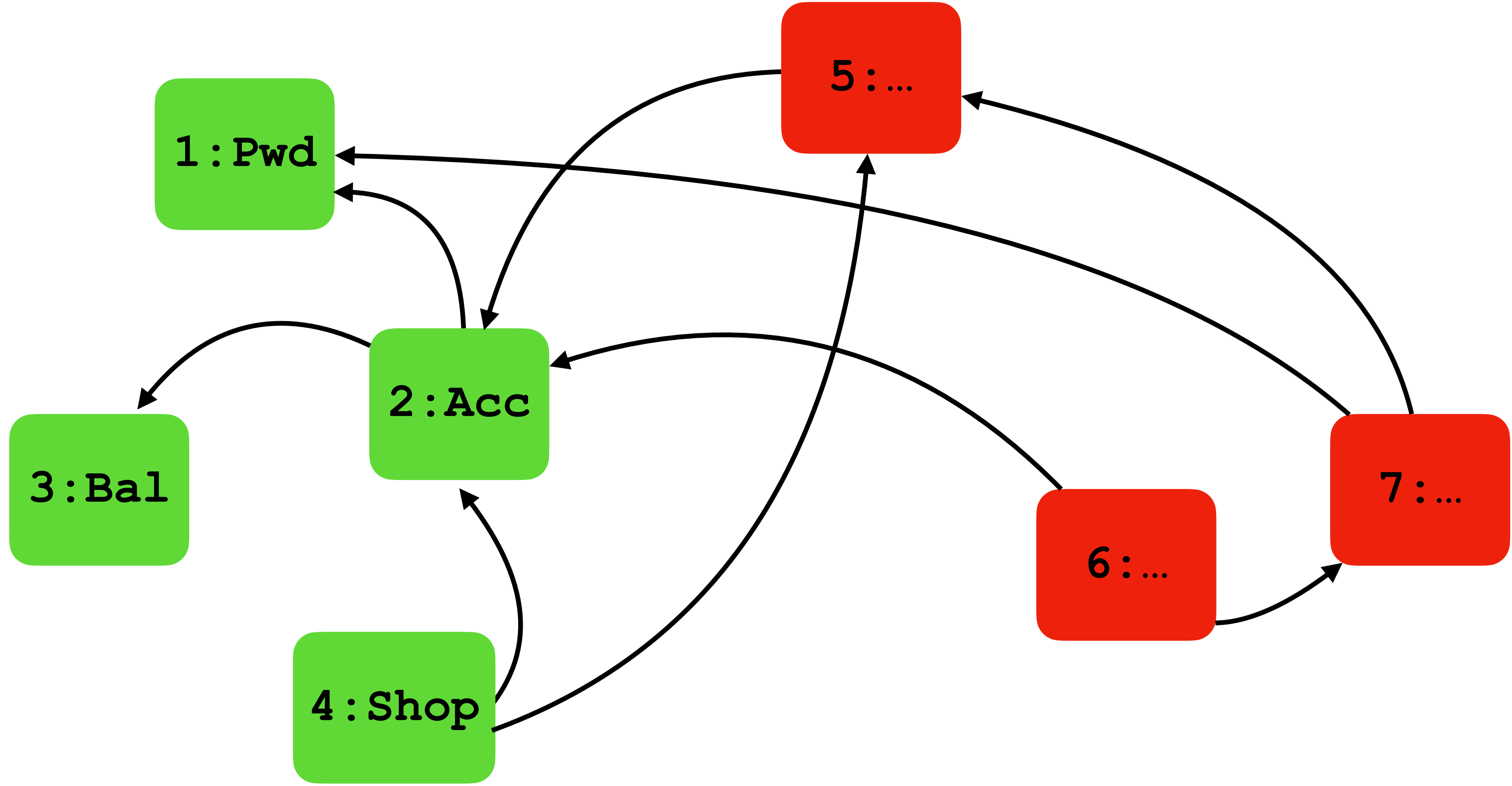
**R3:** Prove calls from internal to external object.



A call from 4 to 6 *might* reduce 2.balance



**Not our remit:** Forbid external access to capability.



# The Account example in Code

# Three Modules

.. assuming all methods are public, and fields are private

```
module Mgood
  class Password

  class Account
    field blnce:int
    field pwd: Password
    public method transfer(dest:Account, pwd':Password, amt:int) -> void
      if this.pwd==pwd'
        this.blnce-=amt
        dest.blnce+=amt
    public method set(pwd':Password) -> void
      if this.pwd==null
        this.pwd=pwd'
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```
module Mfine
  class Password

  class Account
    field blnce:int
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    public method transfer(..)
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    public method set(pwd',pwd': Password)
      if (this.pwd==pwd')
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# Three Modules

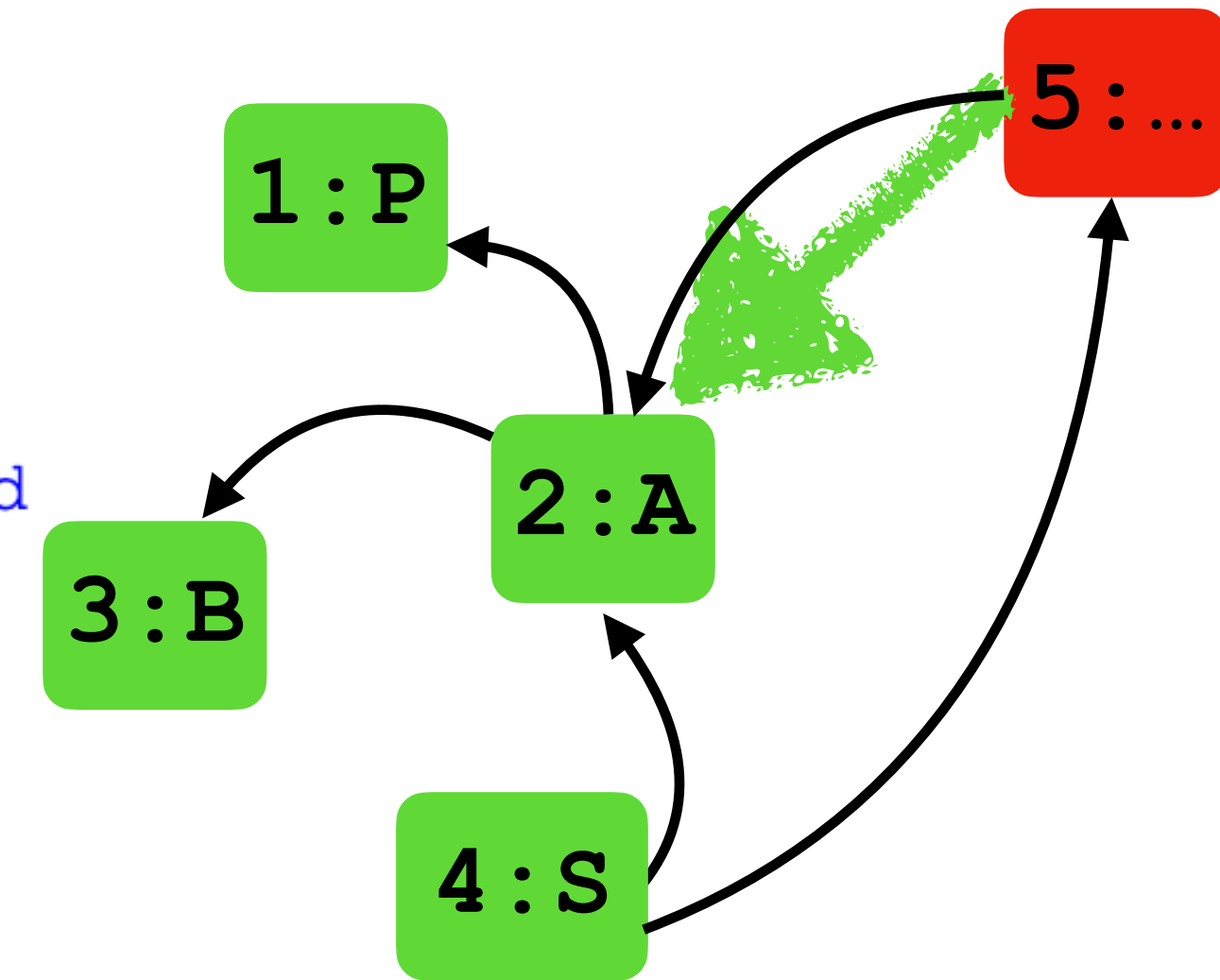
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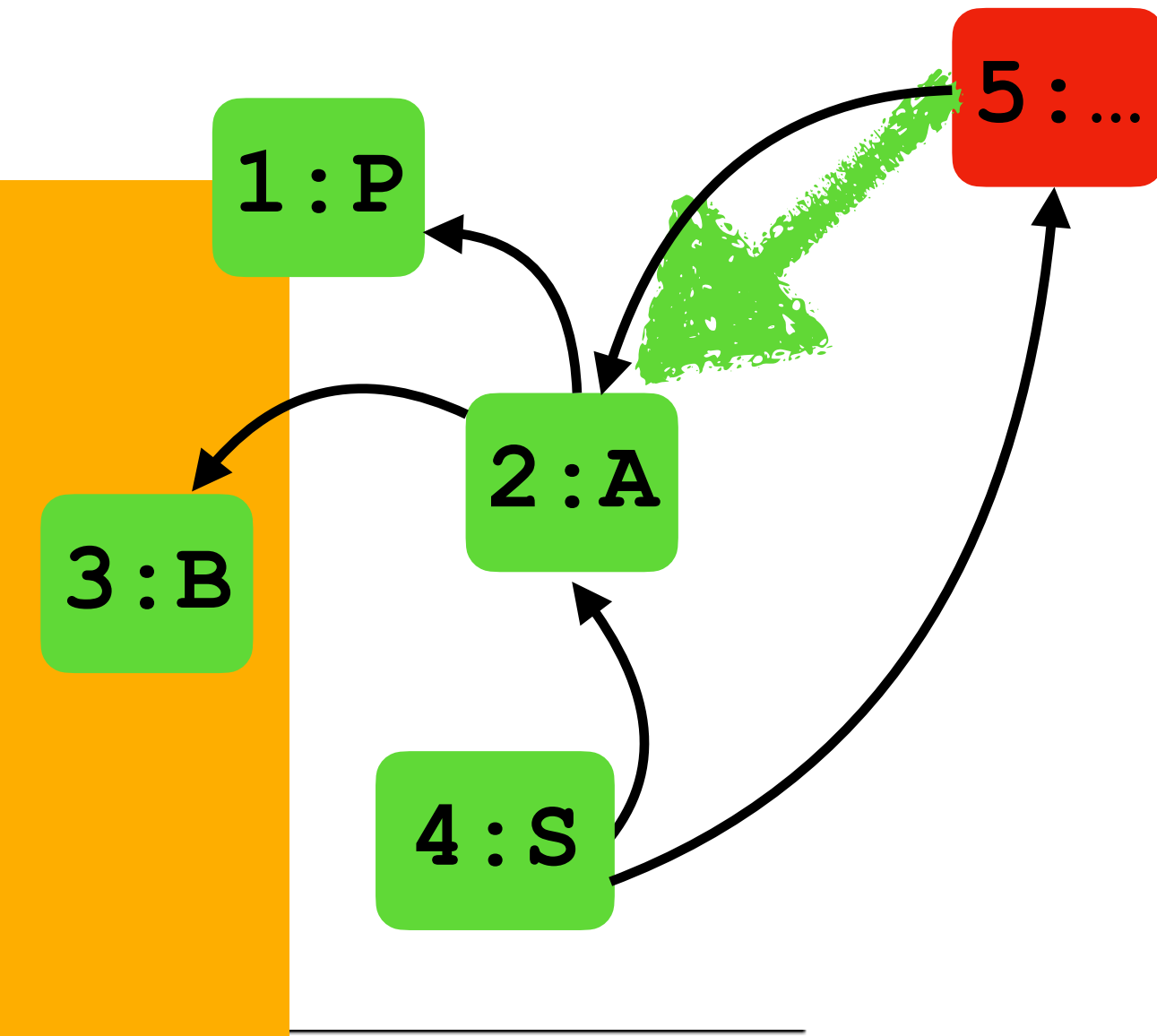
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**Remit\_1:** A module spec S, such that

$M_{\text{good}} \models S$   
 $M_{\text{bad}} \not\models S$   
 $M_{\text{fine}} \models S$



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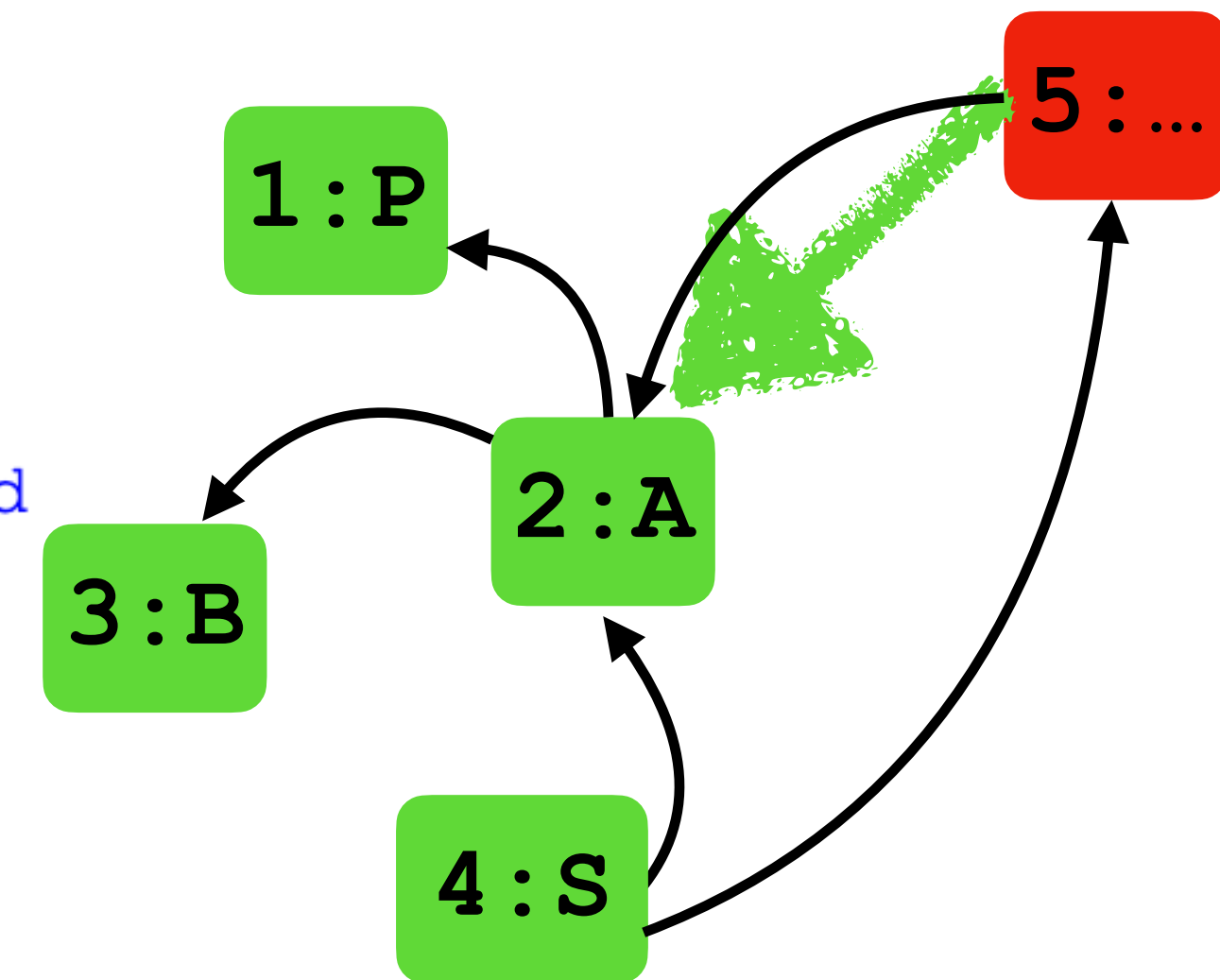
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# Three Modules

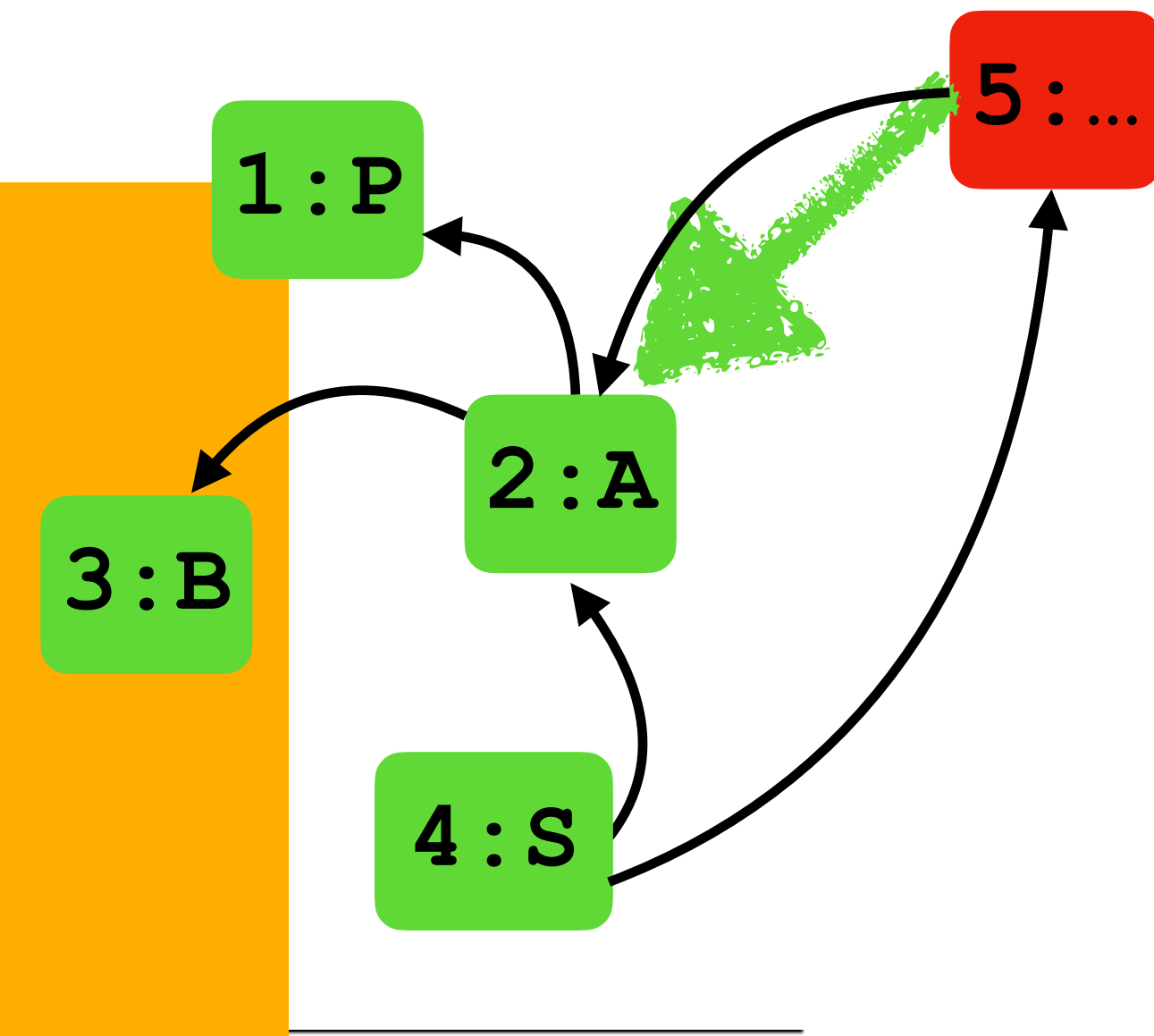
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        dest.blnce+=amt
    public method set
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```

**Remit\_2:** A module spec S, such that

$M_{good} \vdash S$   
 $M_{bad} \not\vdash S$   
 $M_{fine} \vdash S$



```
module Mbad
  class Password
```

```
  class Account
    field blnce:int
    field pwd: Password
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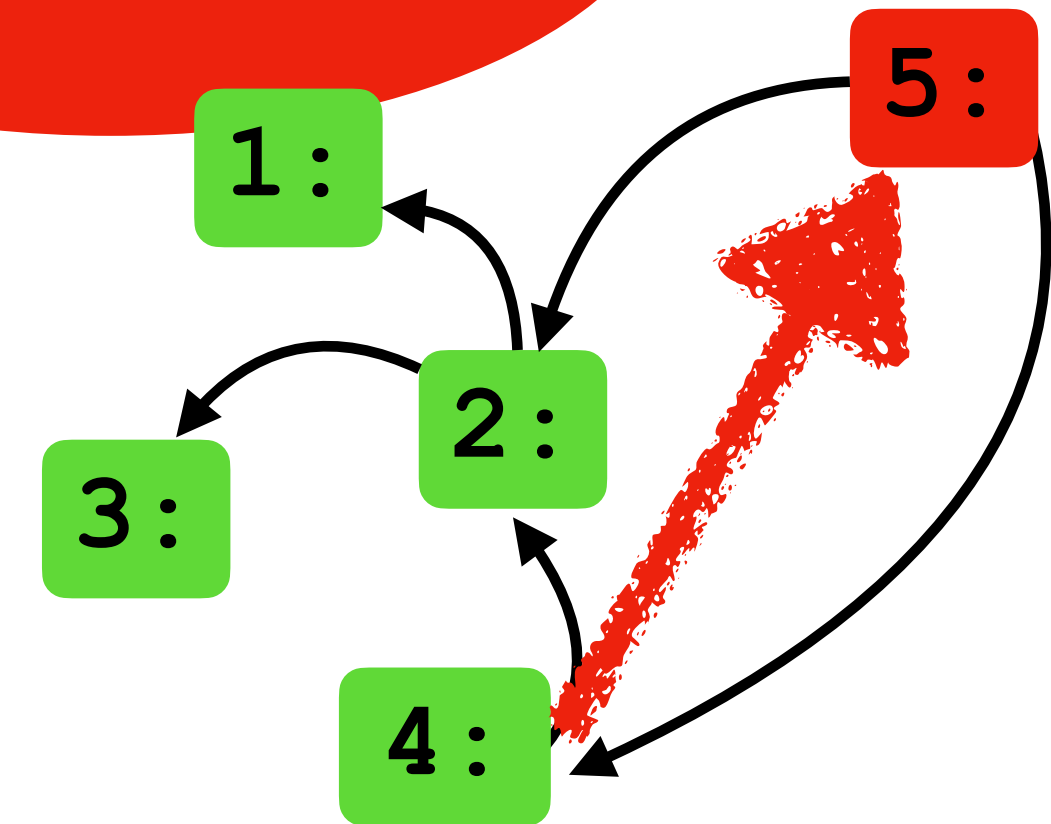
```
1 class Shop
2   field acct :Account, invntry: Inventory, clients: [external]
3
4   public method buy(buyer: external, anItem: Item) -> void
5     int price = anItem.price
6     int oldBlnce = this.acct.blnce
7     buyer.payMe(this.acct, price)
8     if (this.acct.blnce == oldBlnce+price)
9       this.send(buyer, anItem)
10    else
11      buyer.tell("you have not paid me")
12    private method send(buyer: external anItem: Item) -> void
13      ...
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*External call*



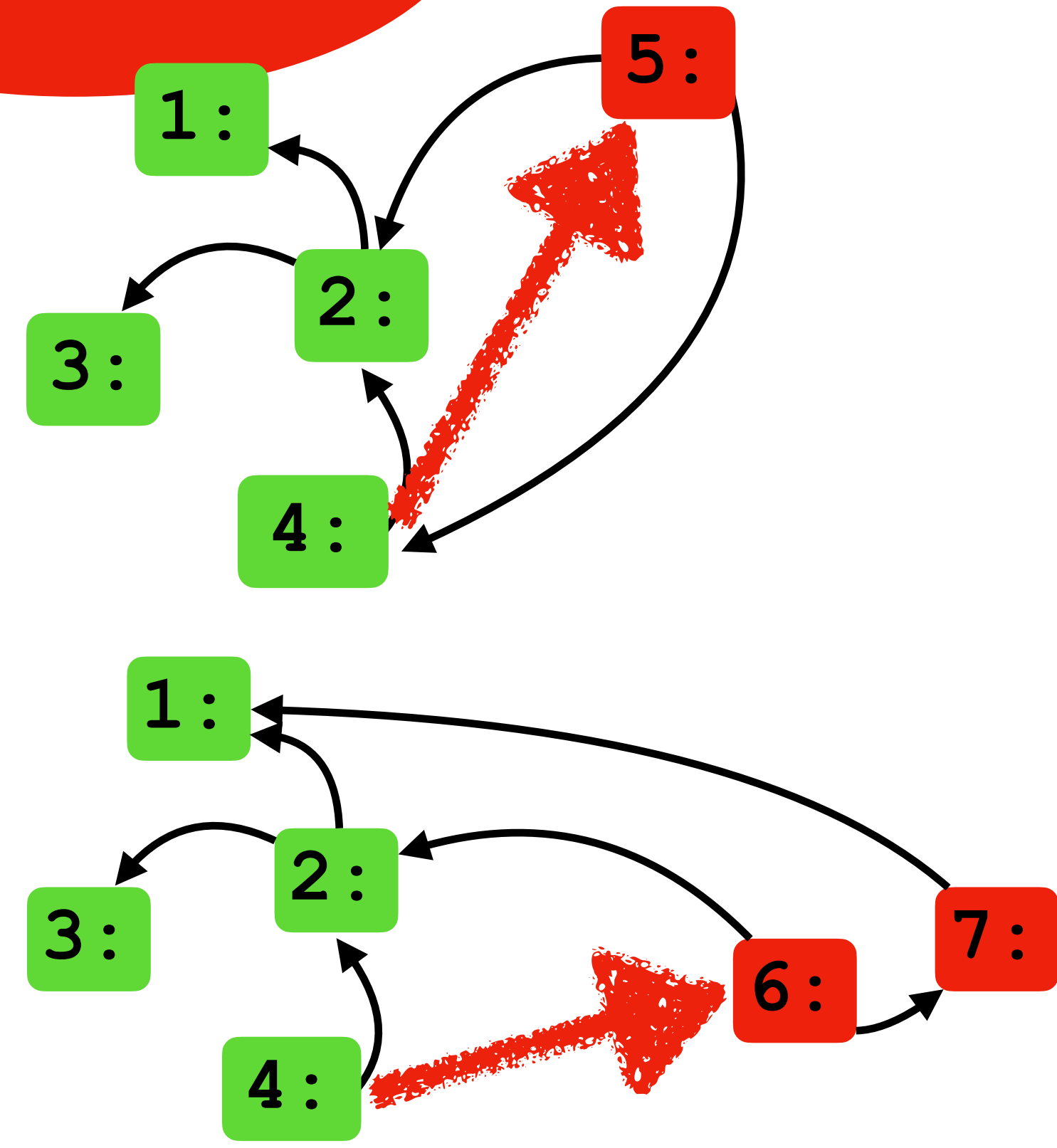


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**External call**



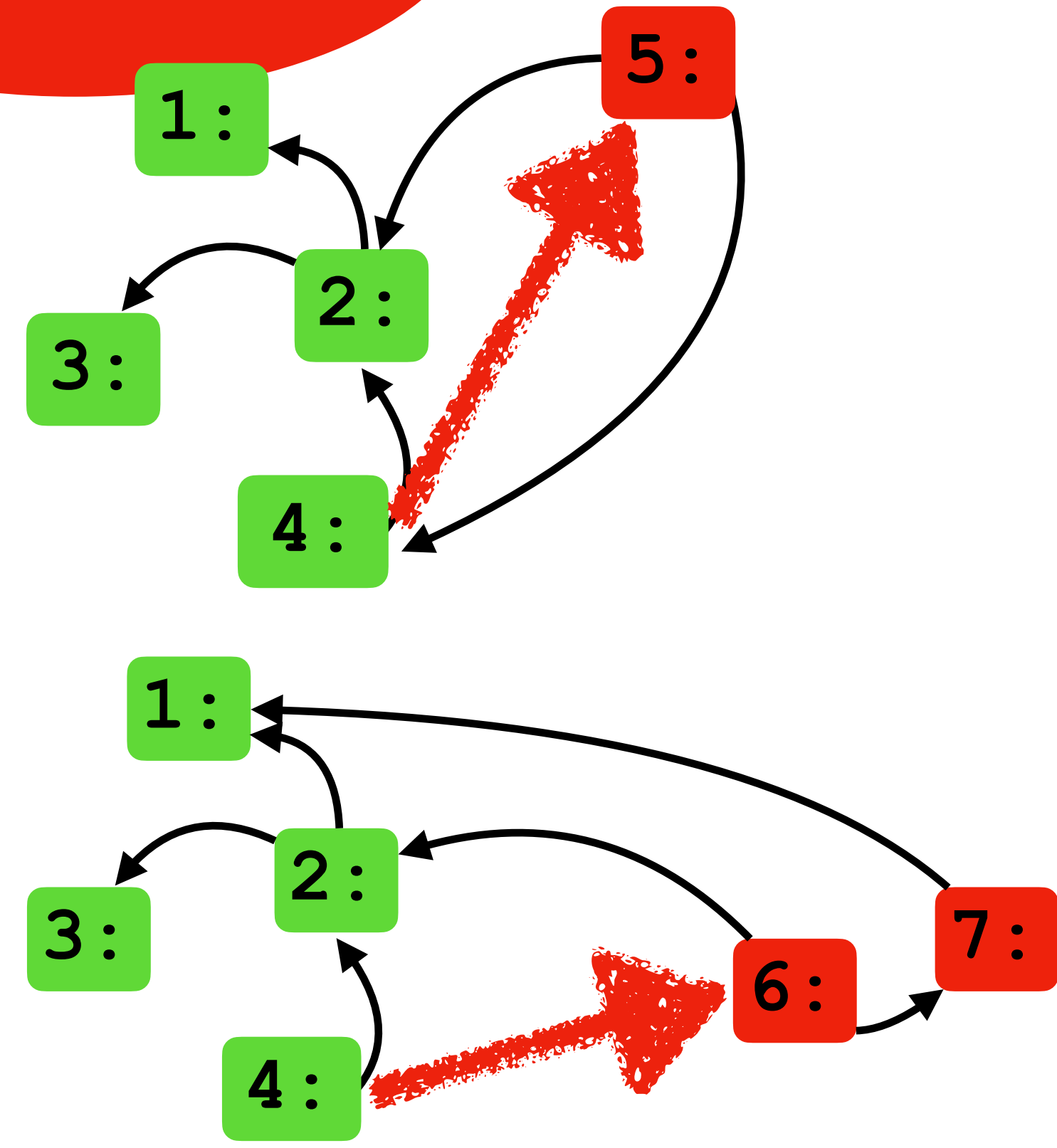
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```

If Account comes from a “good” module, and buyer has no unprotected access to 4.acct.pwd, then 4.acct.blnce will not decrease 4.acct.blnce,

*External call*



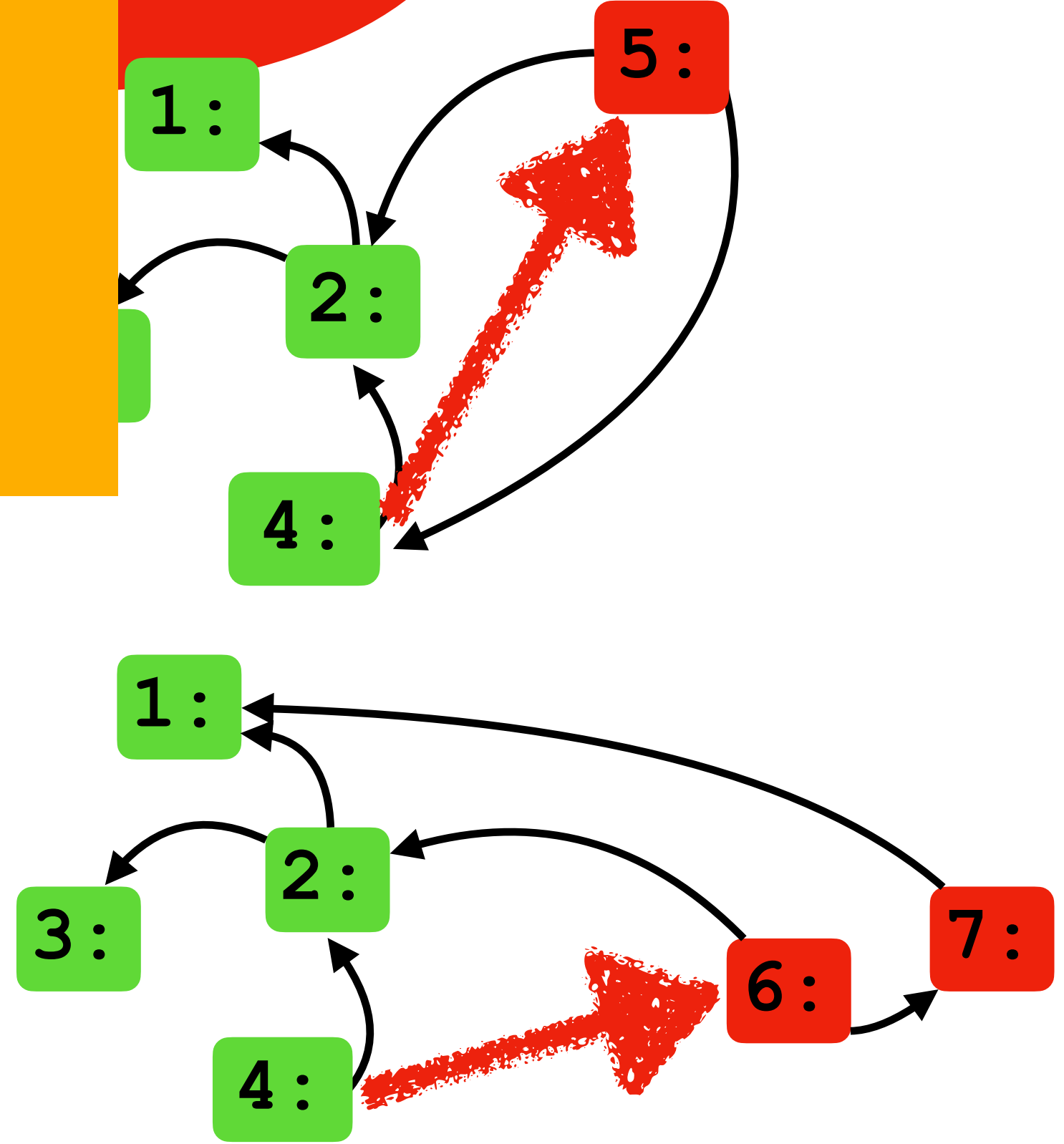
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10    else
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```

**Remit\_3:** An inference system, such that we can prove **external** calls.

If Account comes from a “good” module, and buyer has no unprotected access to 4 .acct .pwd, then 4 .acct .blnce will not decrease 4 .acct .blnce,



**Remit\_1:** A module spec  $S$ , such that

$M_{\text{good}} \models S$

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$M_{\text{better}} \models S$

**Remit\_1:** A module spec  $S$ , such that

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**R1:** Specify that external access to capability necessary for effect.

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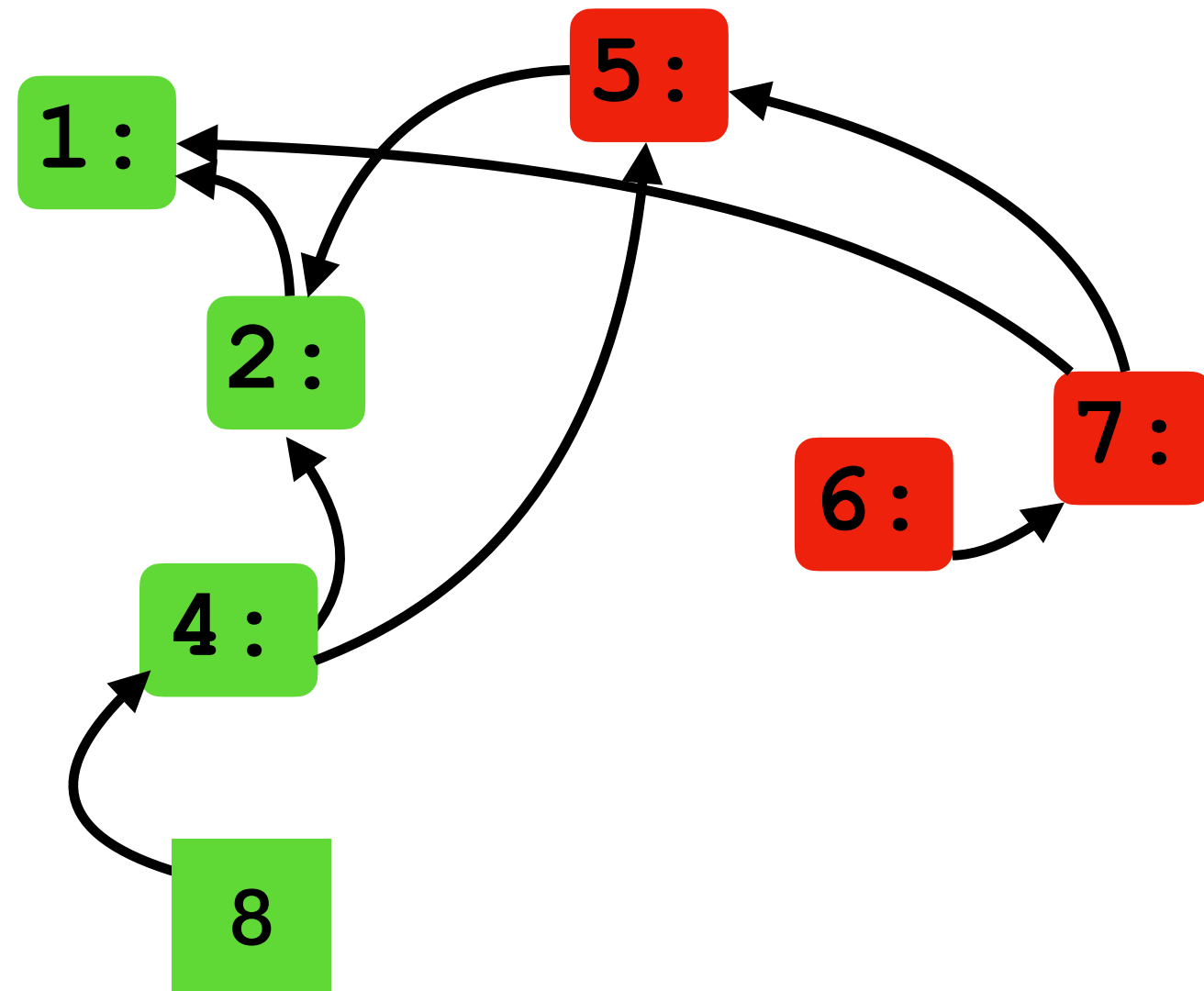
**Remit\_1\_a** : Meaning of “without eventual external access to”

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## Remit\_1\_a : Meaning of “without eventual external access to”

... is about an external object eventually obtainining access.

**Def:**  $\llbracket o \rrbracket \triangleq \forall o' [ o' \text{ external and reachable from top of stack frame} \Rightarrow \llbracket o \rrbracket + o' ]$



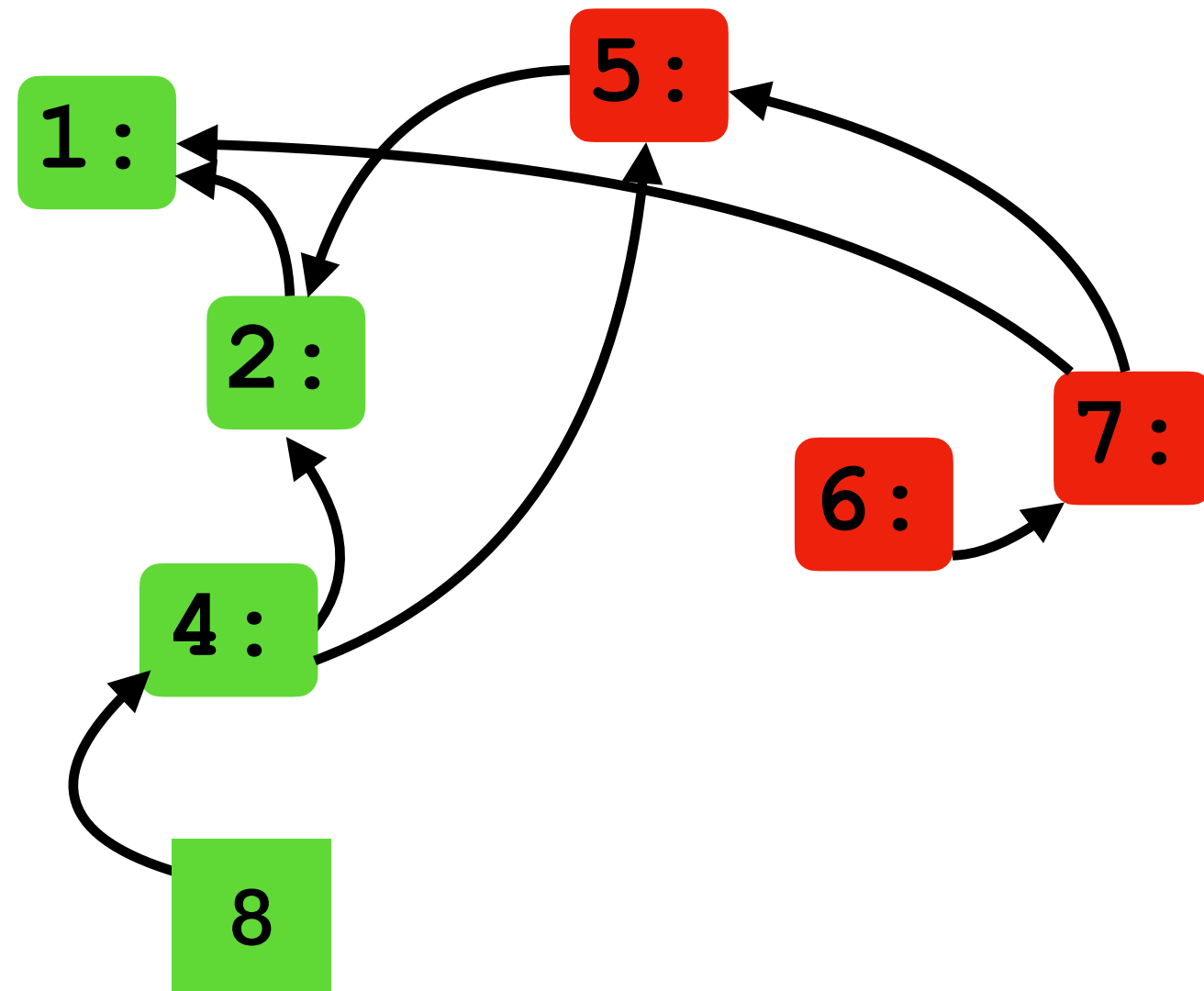


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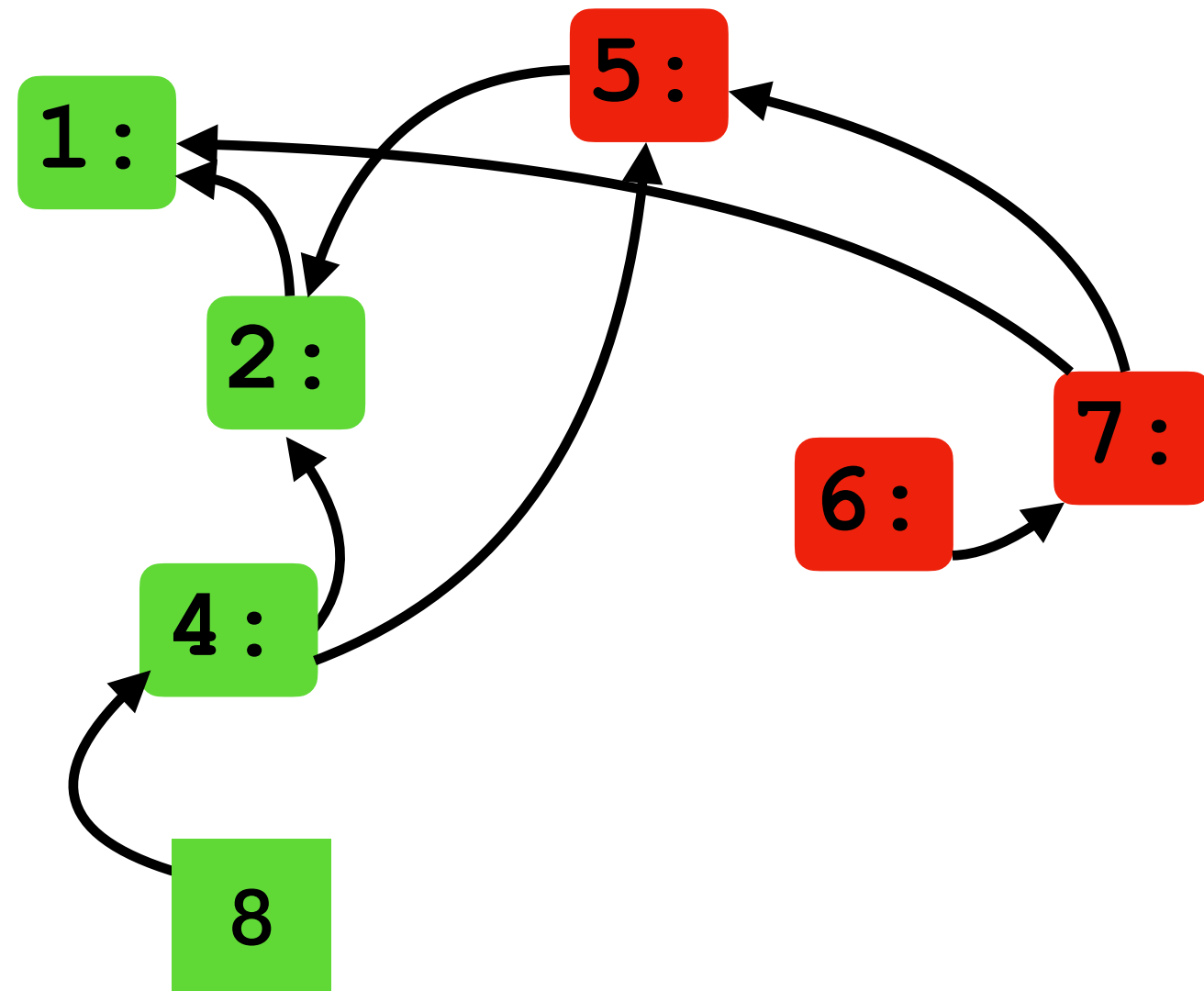
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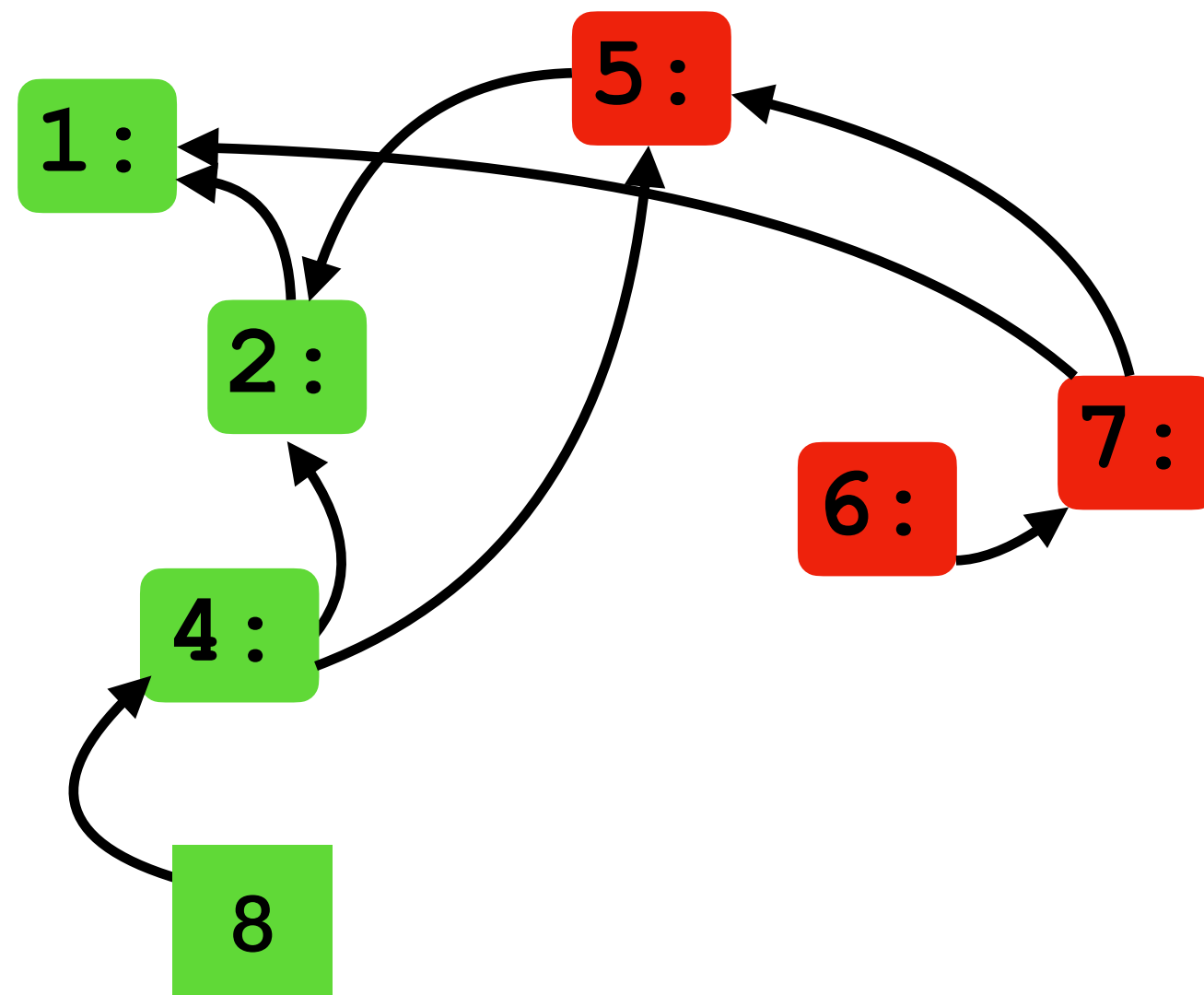
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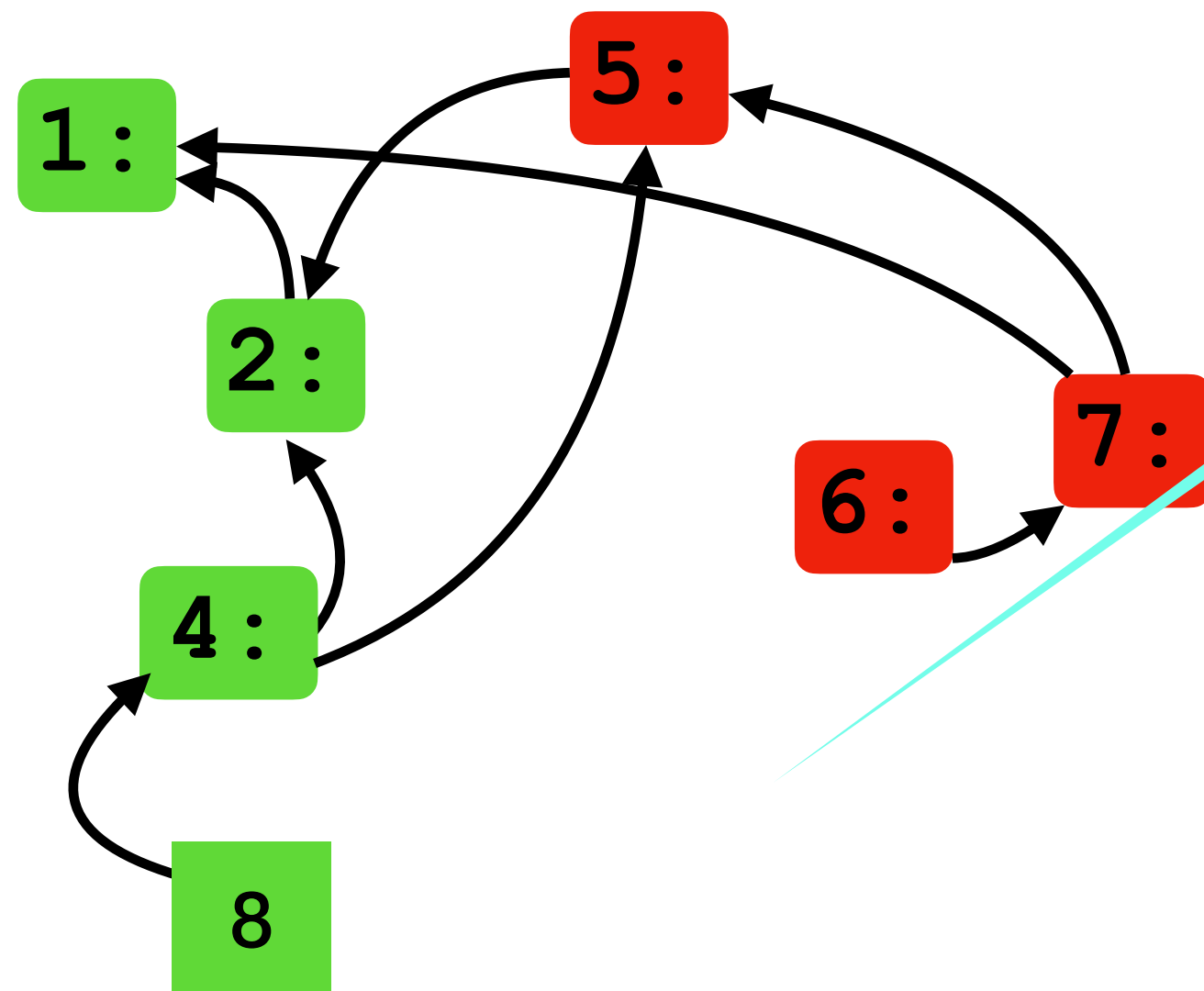
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```
1 class Shop
2   field acct :Account, invntry: Inventory, clients: [external]
3
4   public method buy(buyer: external, anItem: Item) -> void
5     int price = anItem.price
6     int oldBlnce = this.acct.blnce
7     buyer.payMe(this.acct, price)
8     if (this.acct.blnce == oldBlnce+price)
9       this.send(buyer, anItem)
10    else
11      buyer.tell("you have not paid me")
12    private method send(buyer: external anItem: Item) -> void
13      ...
```

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**Def:**  $\llbracket o \rrbracket^+ o'$   $\triangleq$  the penultimate object on any path from  $o'$  to  $o$  is internal.

**PRE:**  $\llbracket \text{this.accnt.pwd} \rrbracket^+ \text{buyer} \wedge \text{this.accnt.blncce} == b$

**POST:**  $\text{this.accnt.blncce} \geq b$

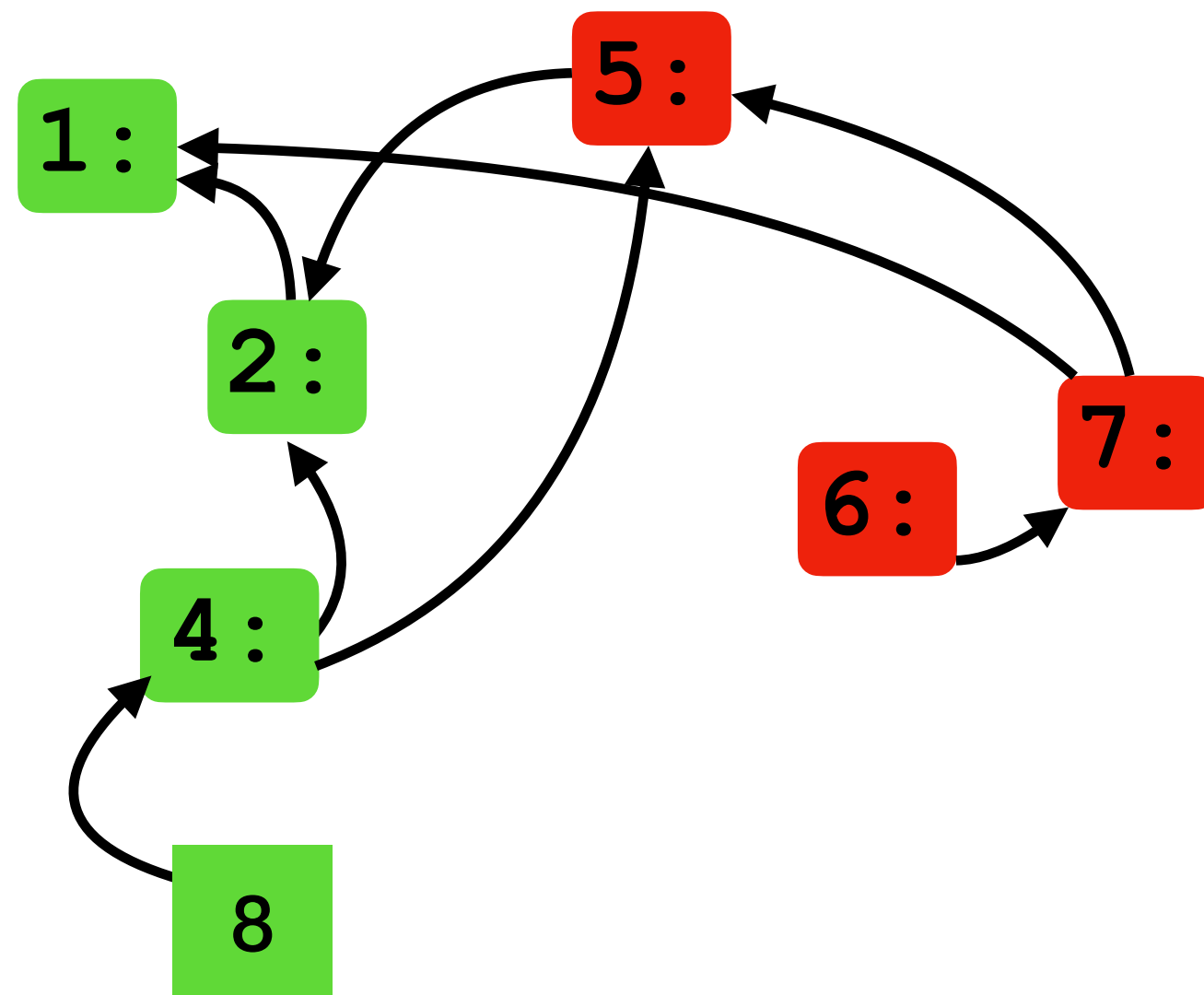
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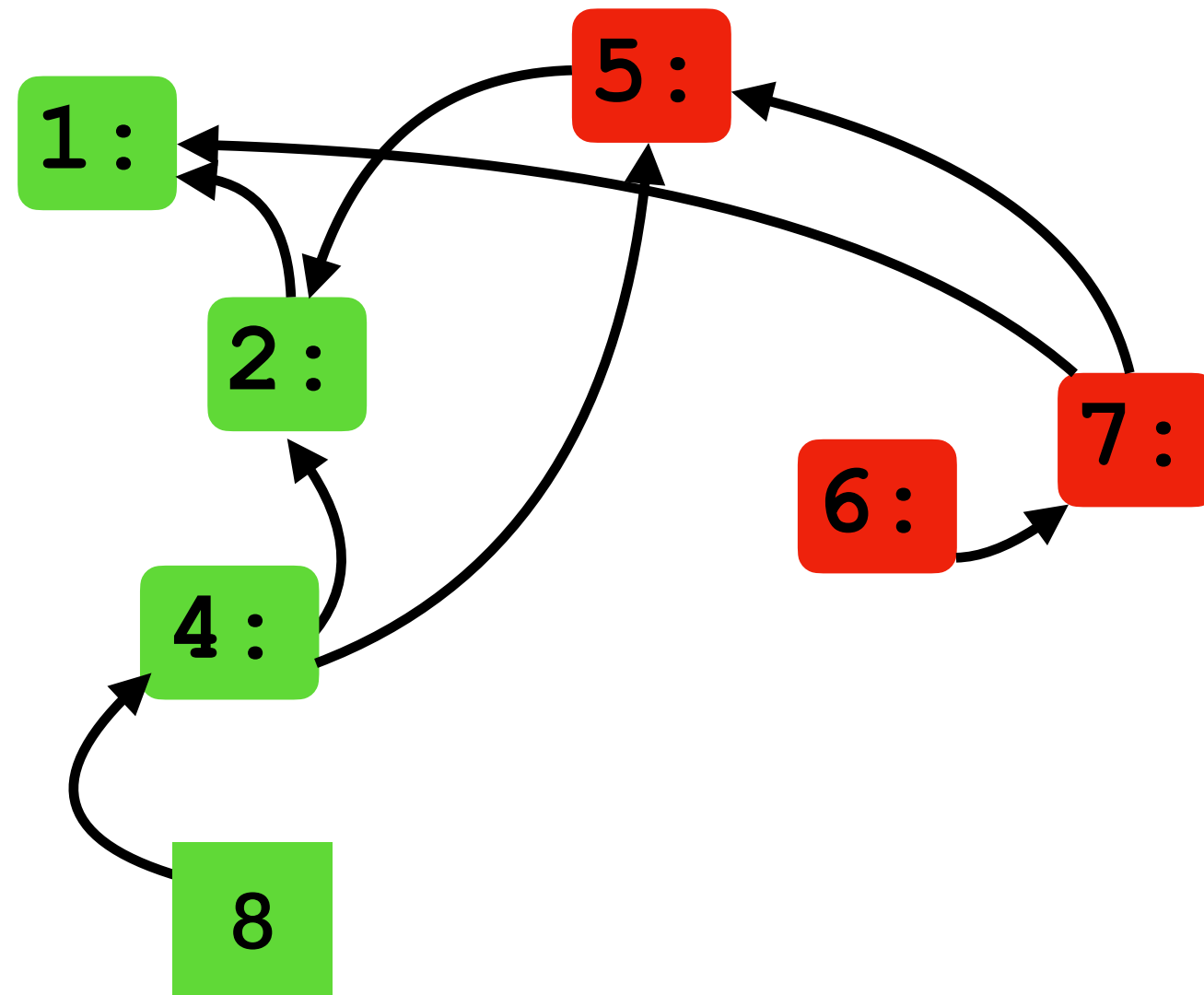
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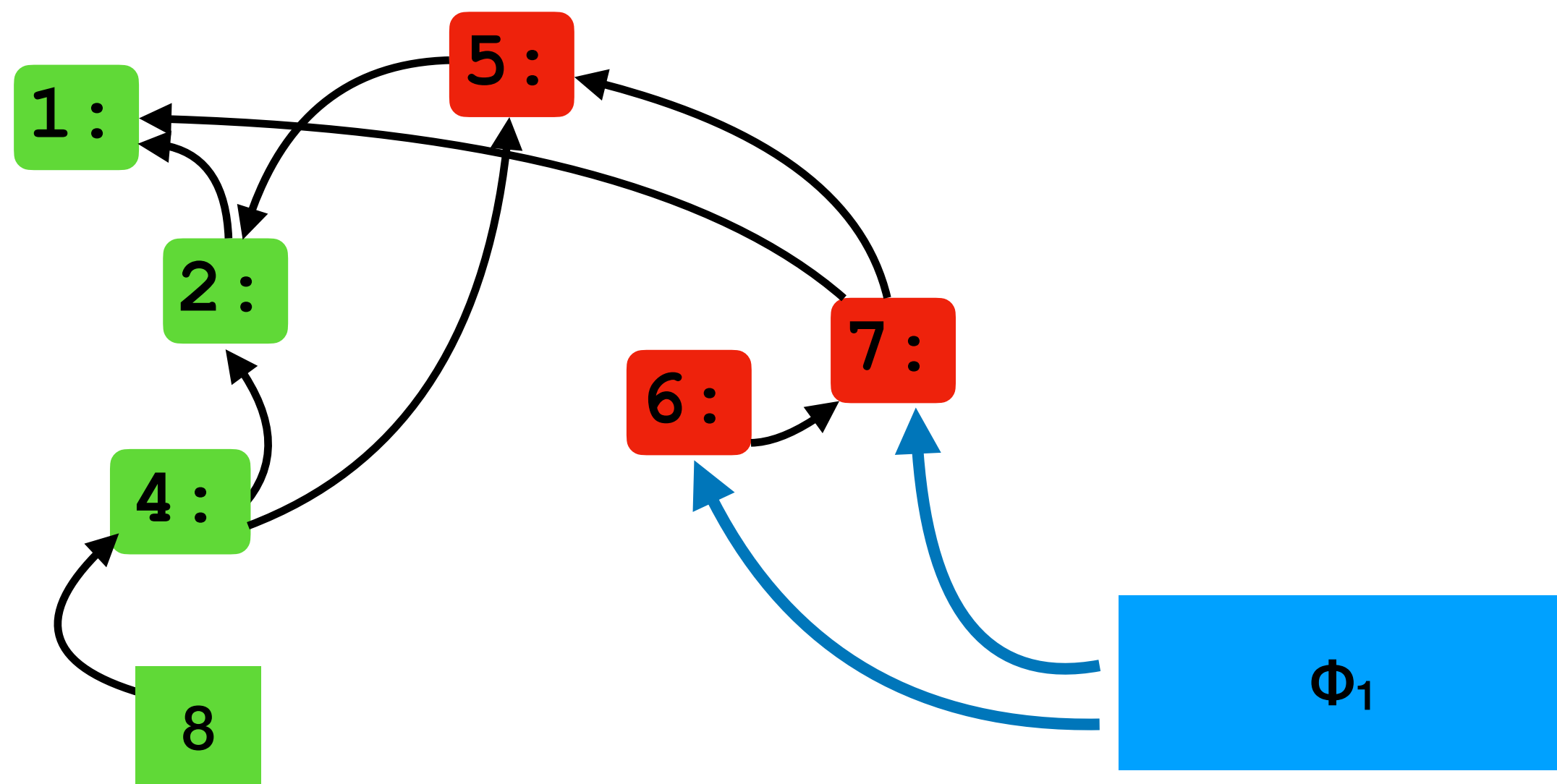
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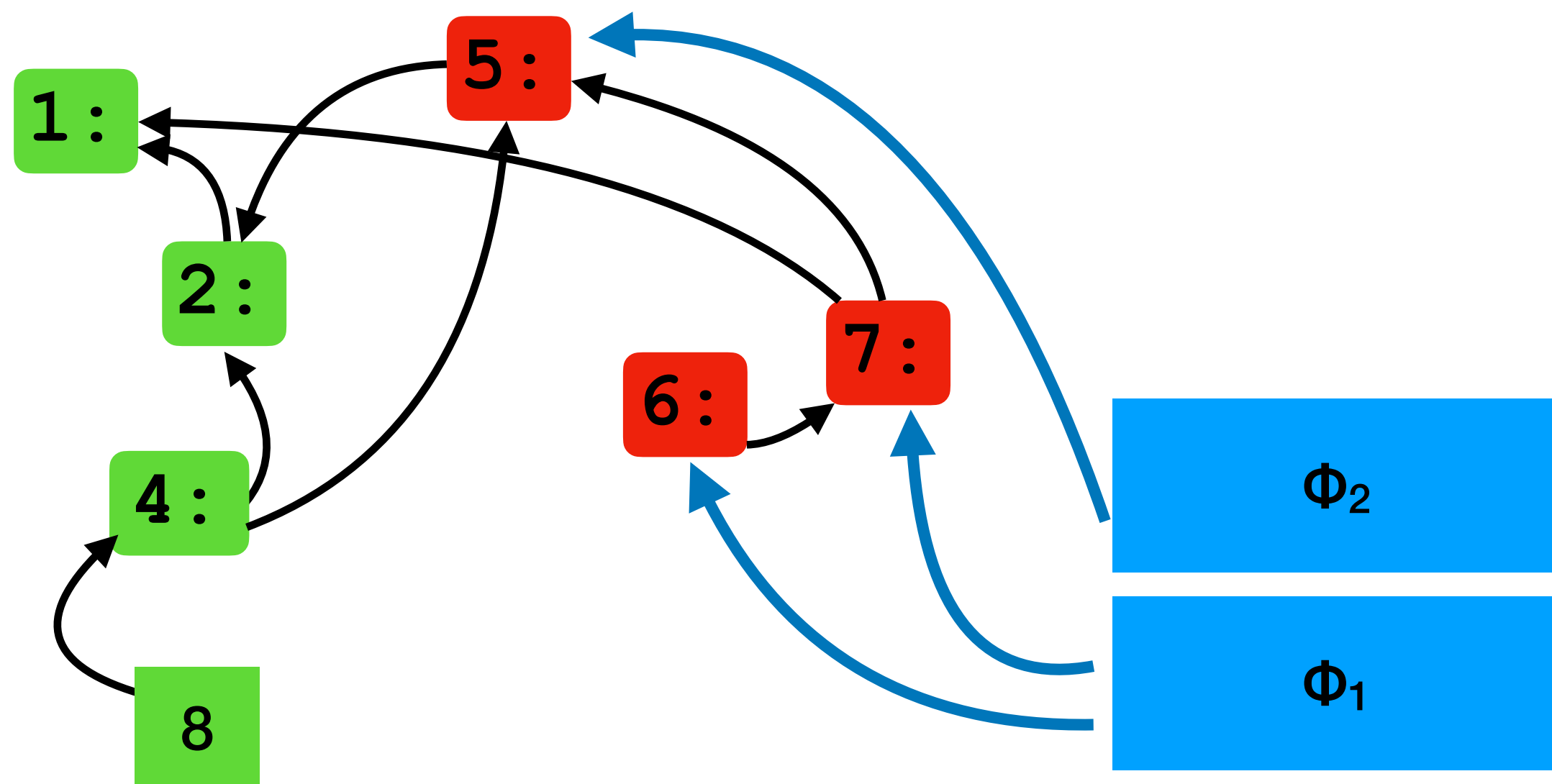
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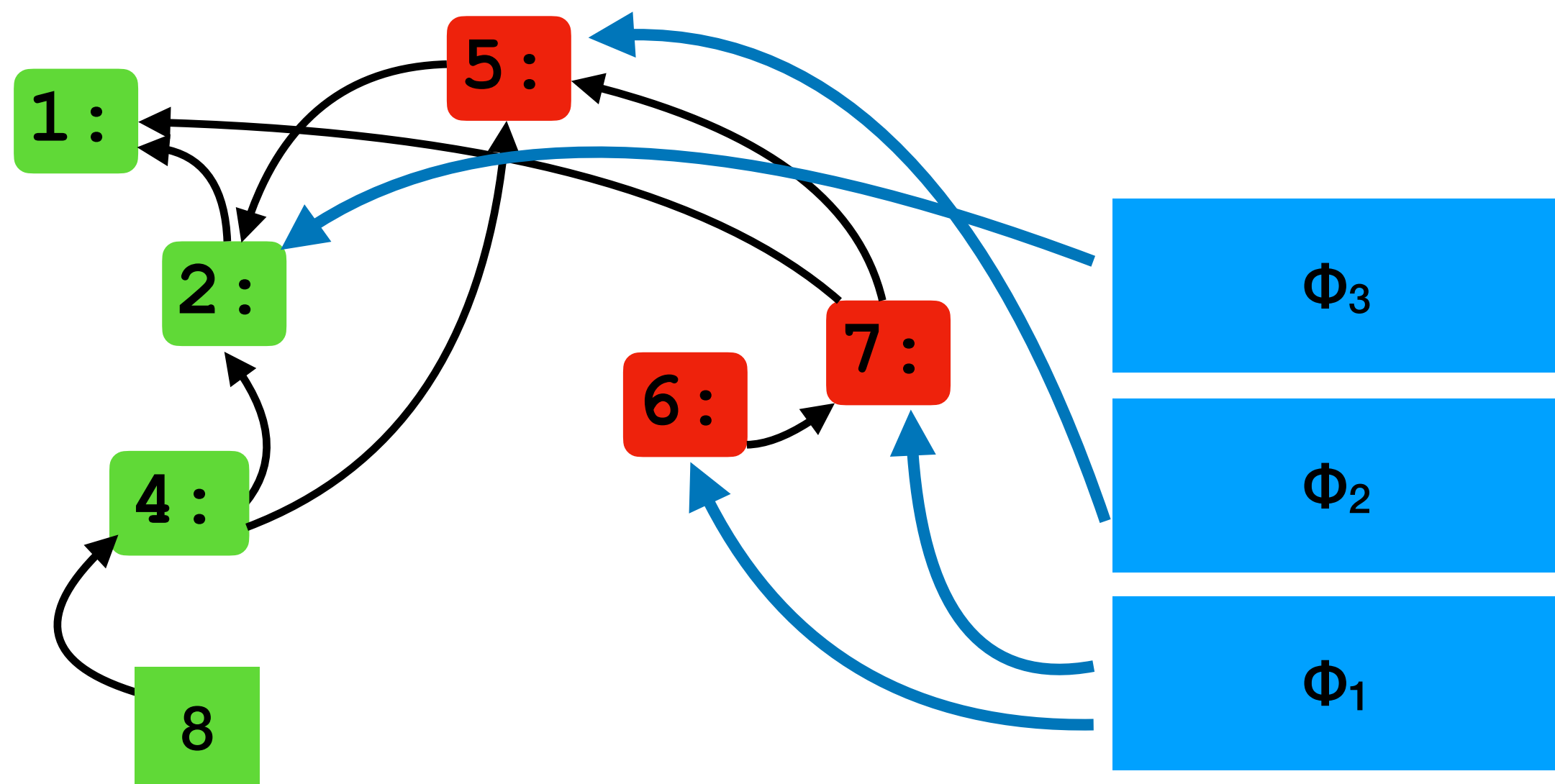
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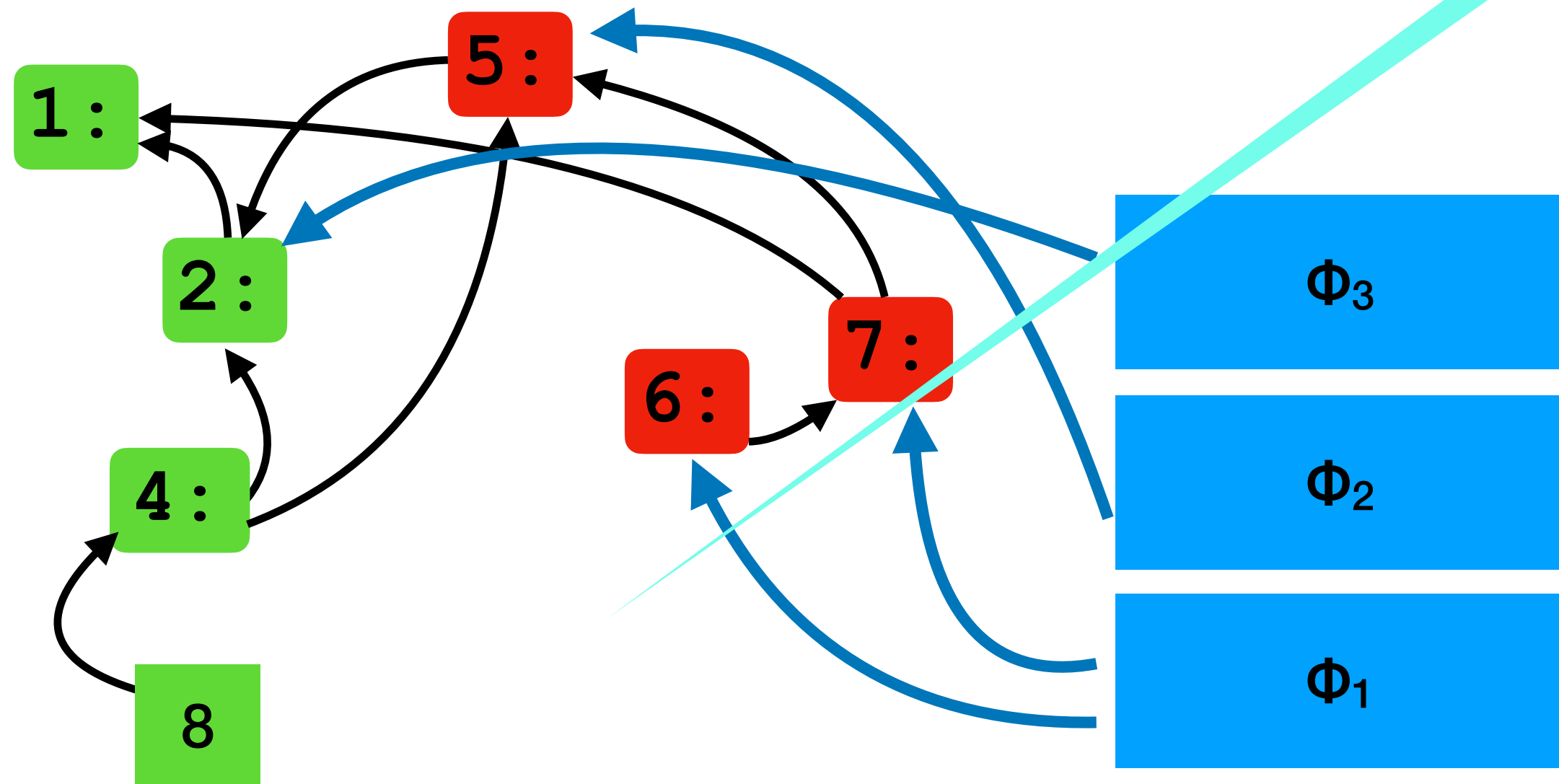
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## Remit\_1\_b : Meaning of $\forall x_1:C_1, x_2:C_2 \dots \{ A \}$

### Definition

$$M \models \forall x_1:C_1, \dots, x_n:C_n \{ A \}$$

$\triangleq$

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Scoped execution

## Remit\_1\_c : Meaning of $M' * M, \sigma \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma'$

### Definition

$$M' * M, \sigma \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma' \triangleq$$

→

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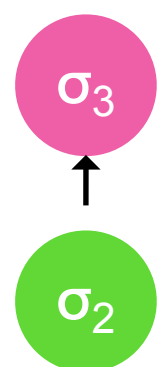
$M' * M, \sigma \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma' \triangleq M' * M, \sigma \rightarrow^* \sigma'$  “while not popping the top frame of  $\sigma$ ”

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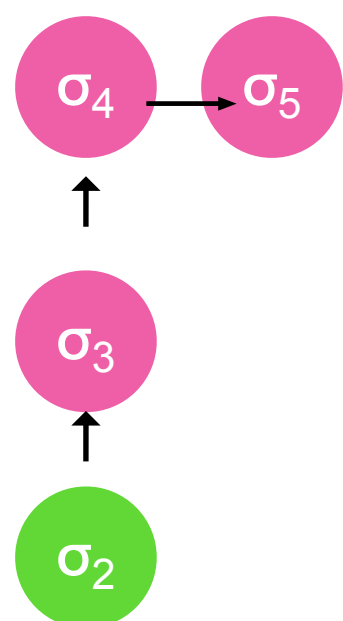


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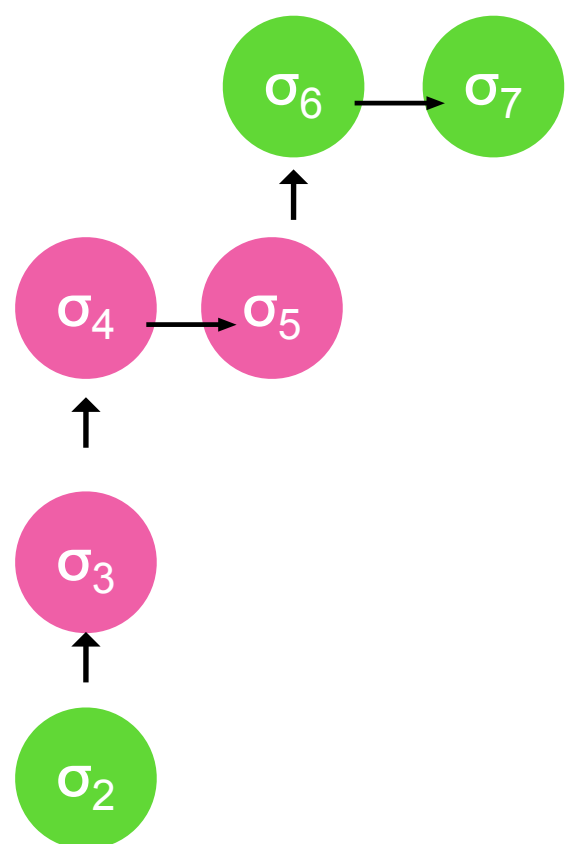


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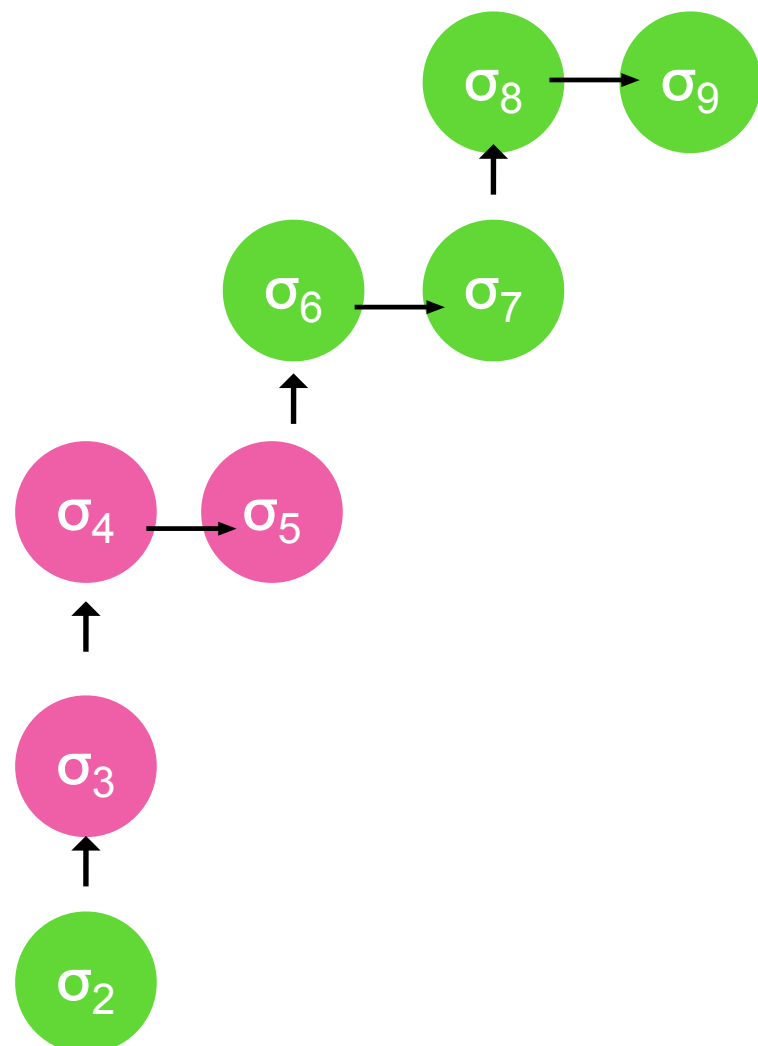


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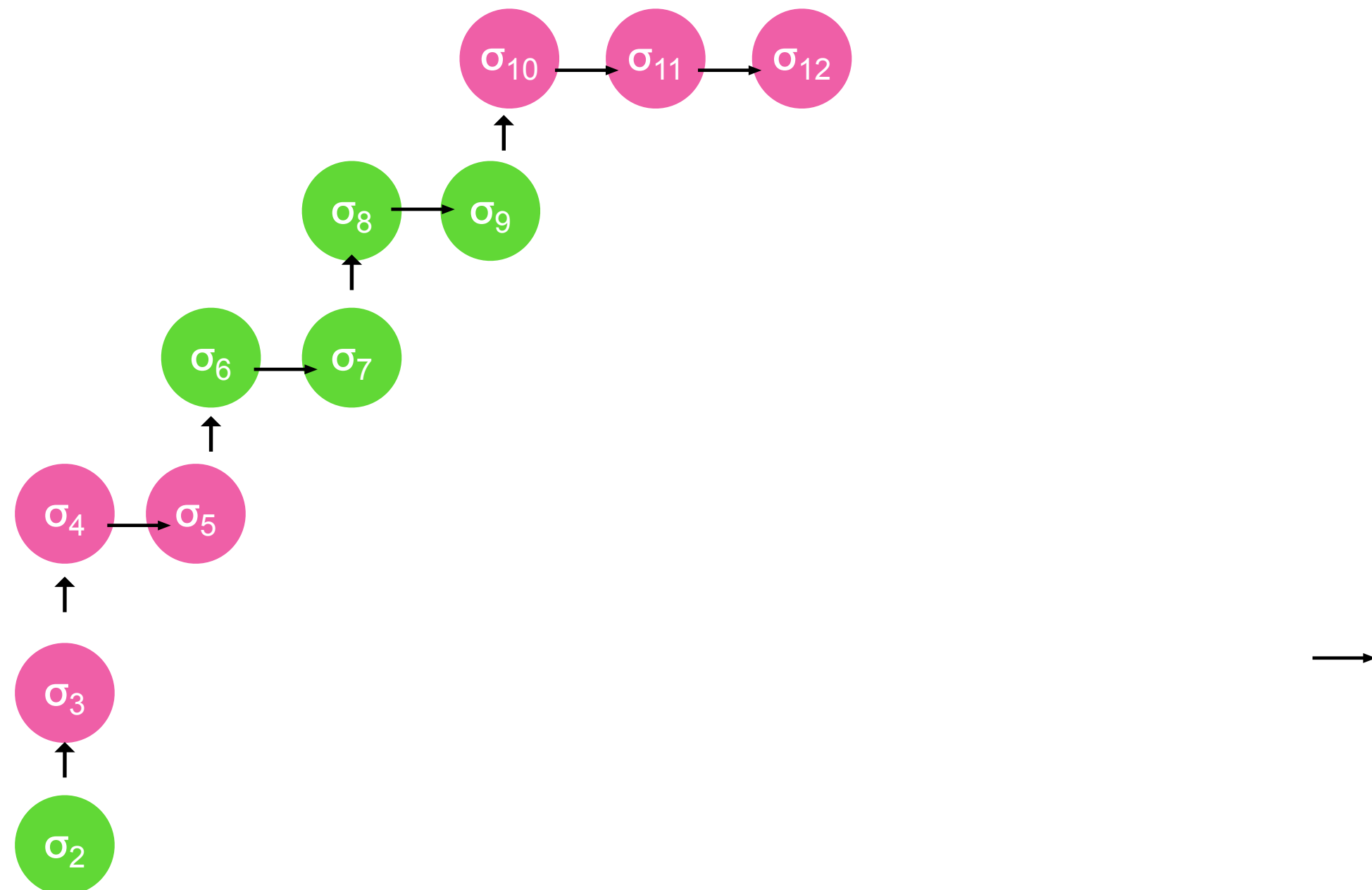
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## Definition

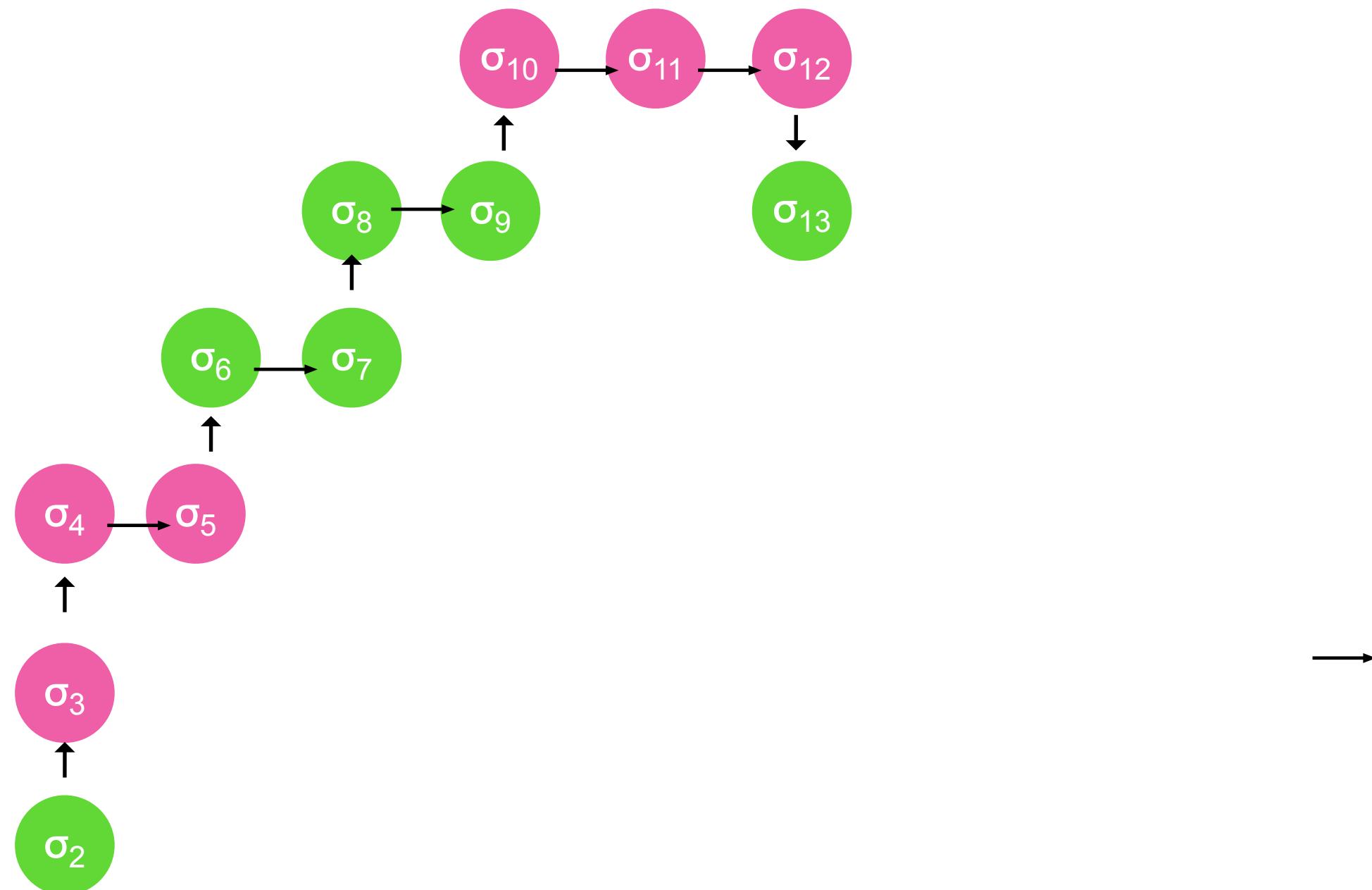
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# Remit\_1\_c : Meaning of $M' * M, \sigma \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma'$

## Definition

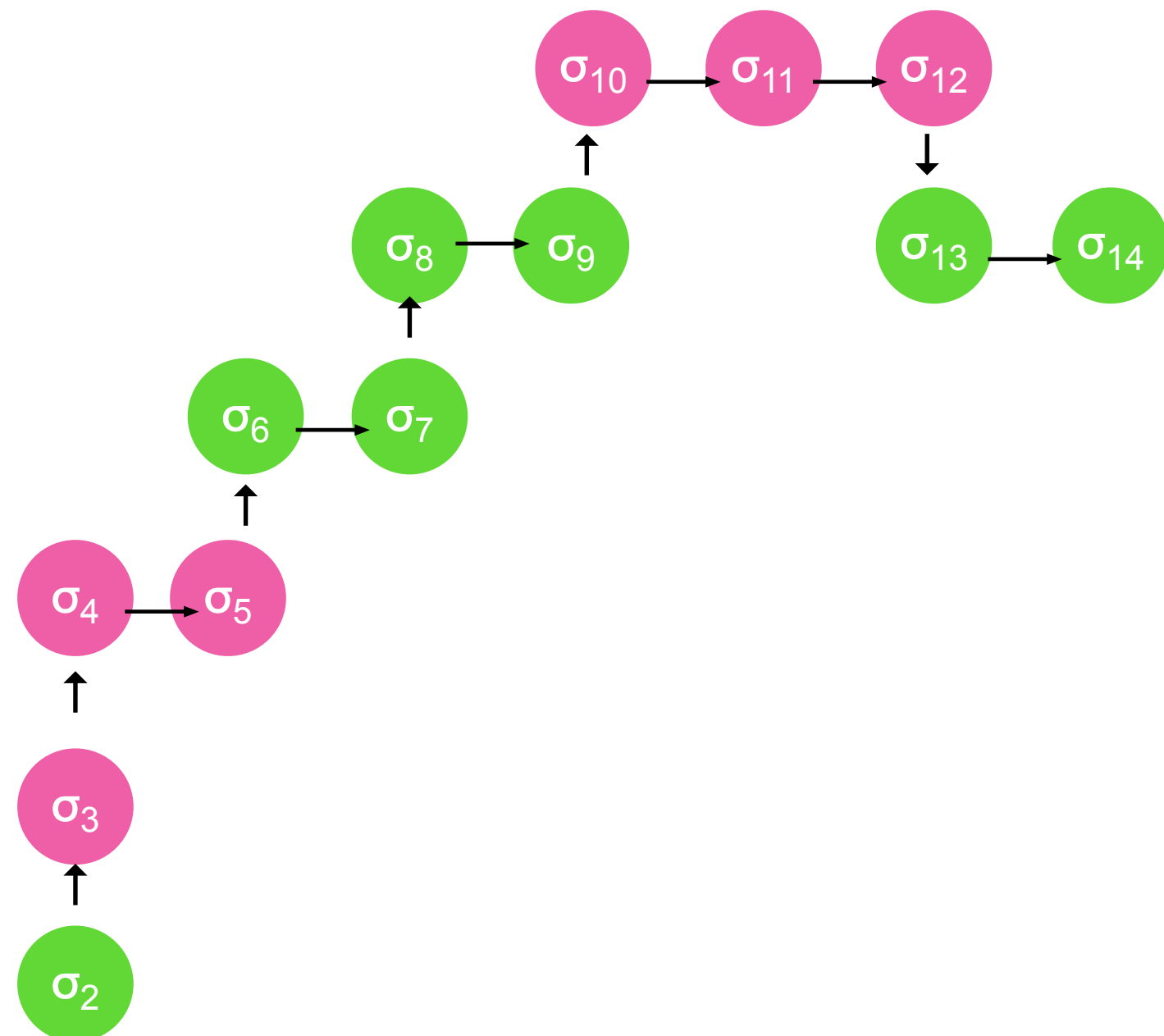
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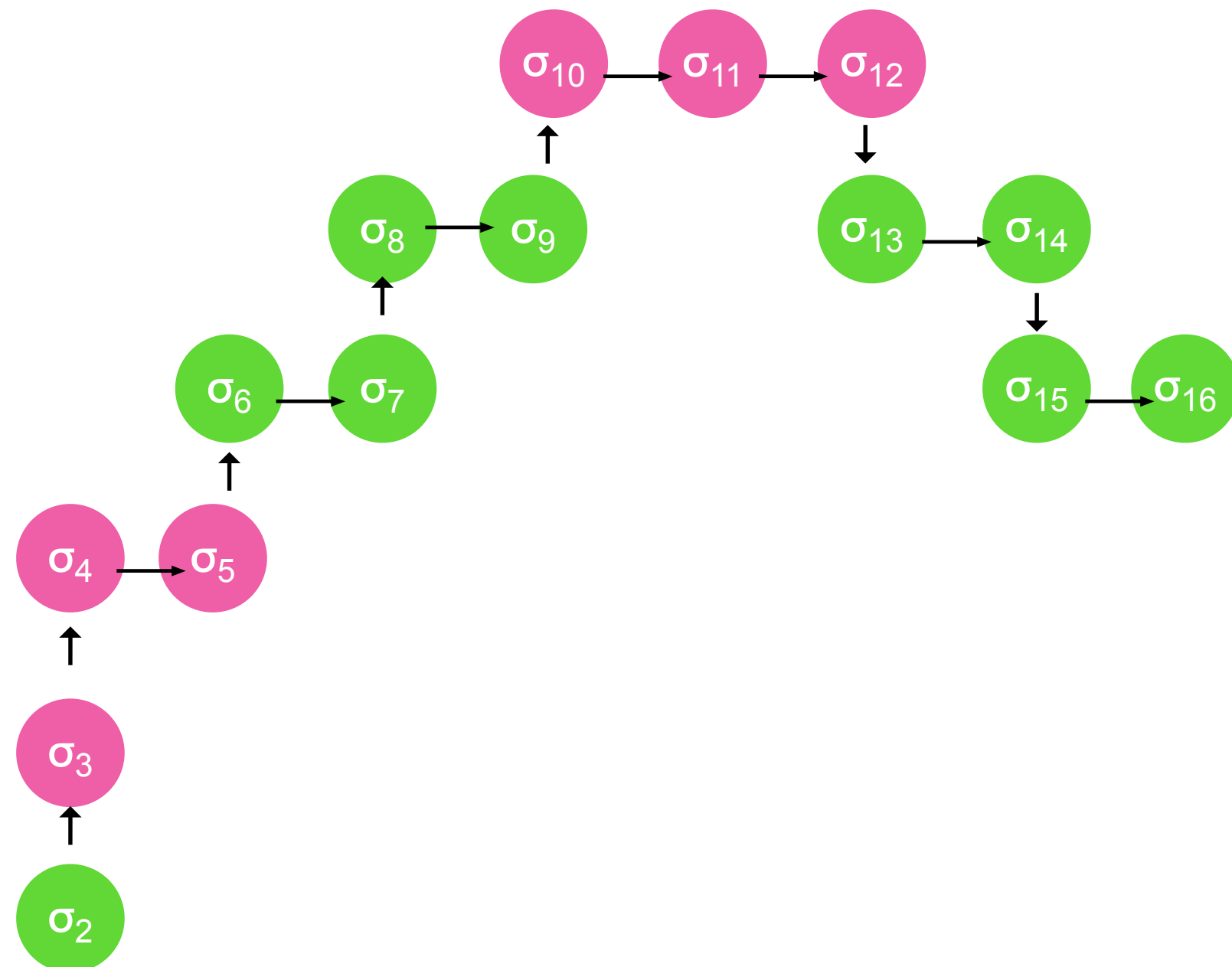


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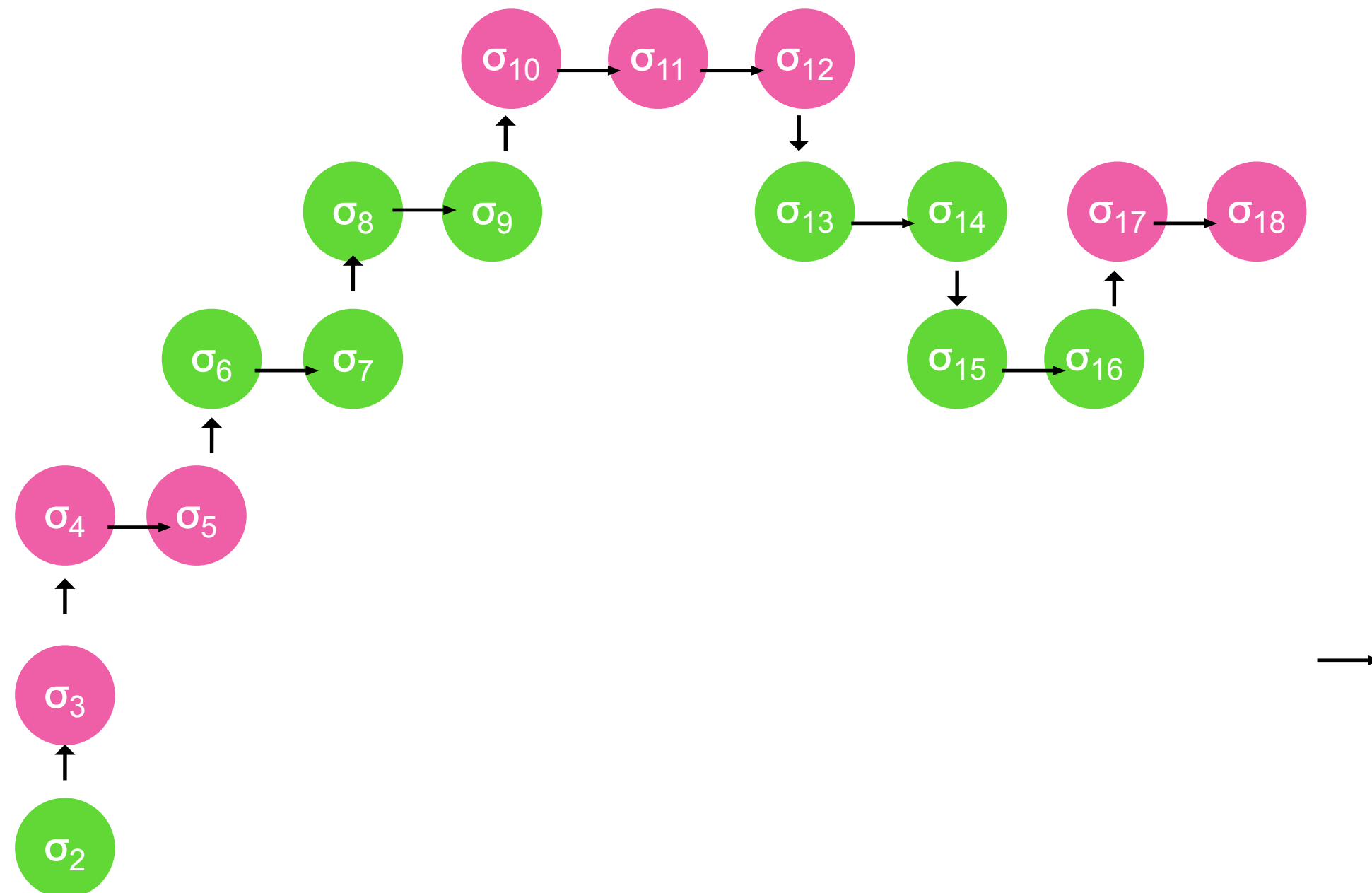
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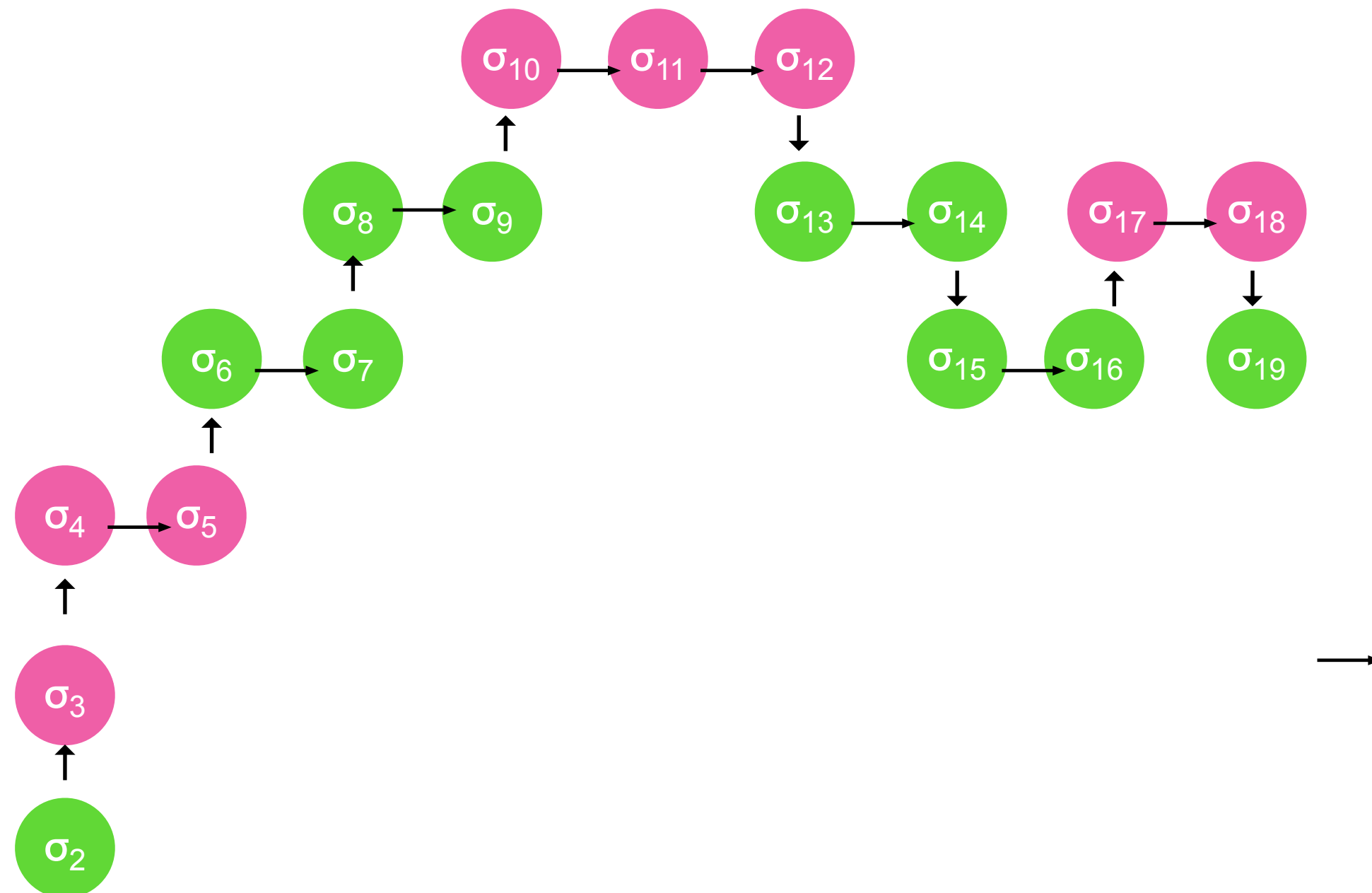
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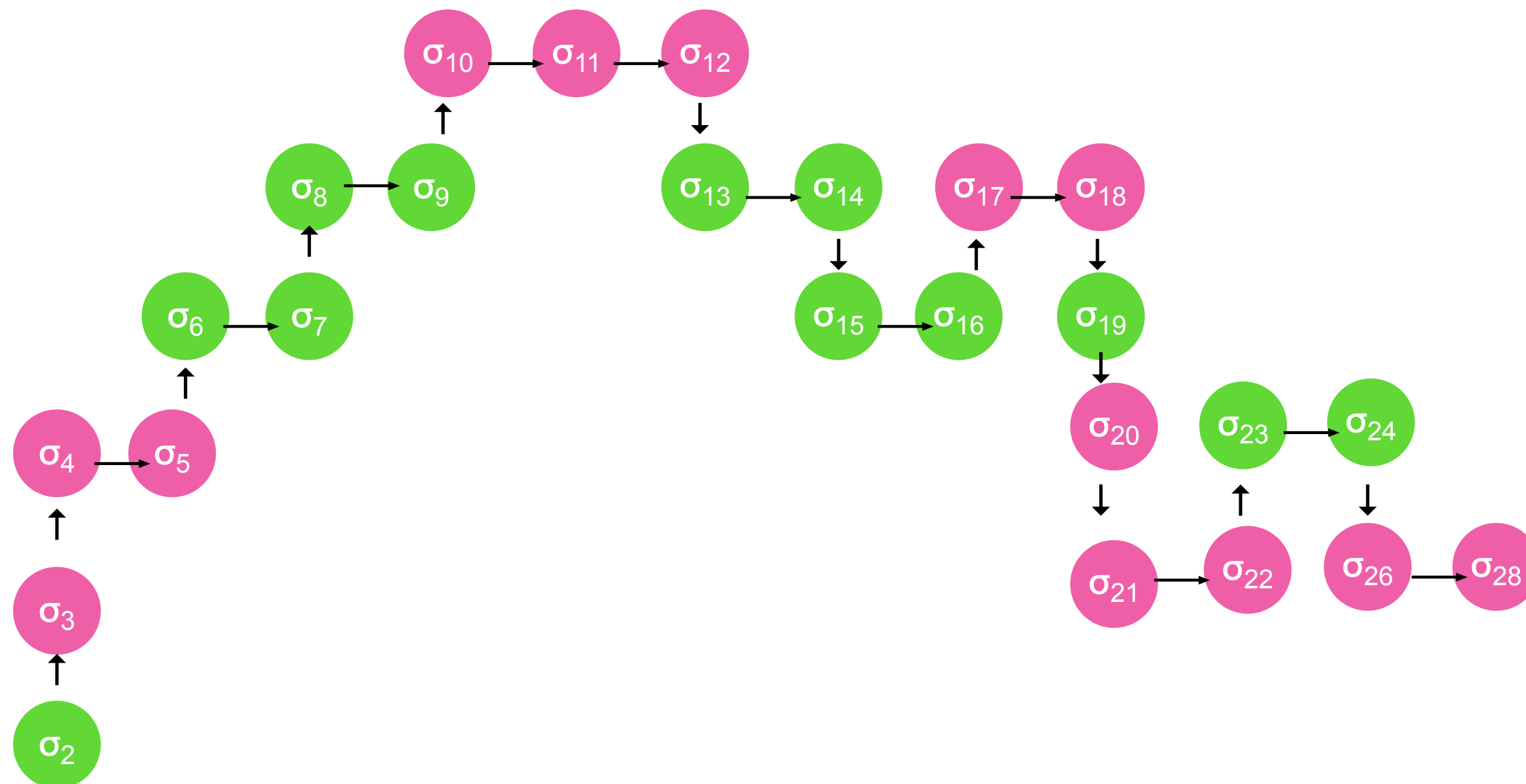
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## Definition

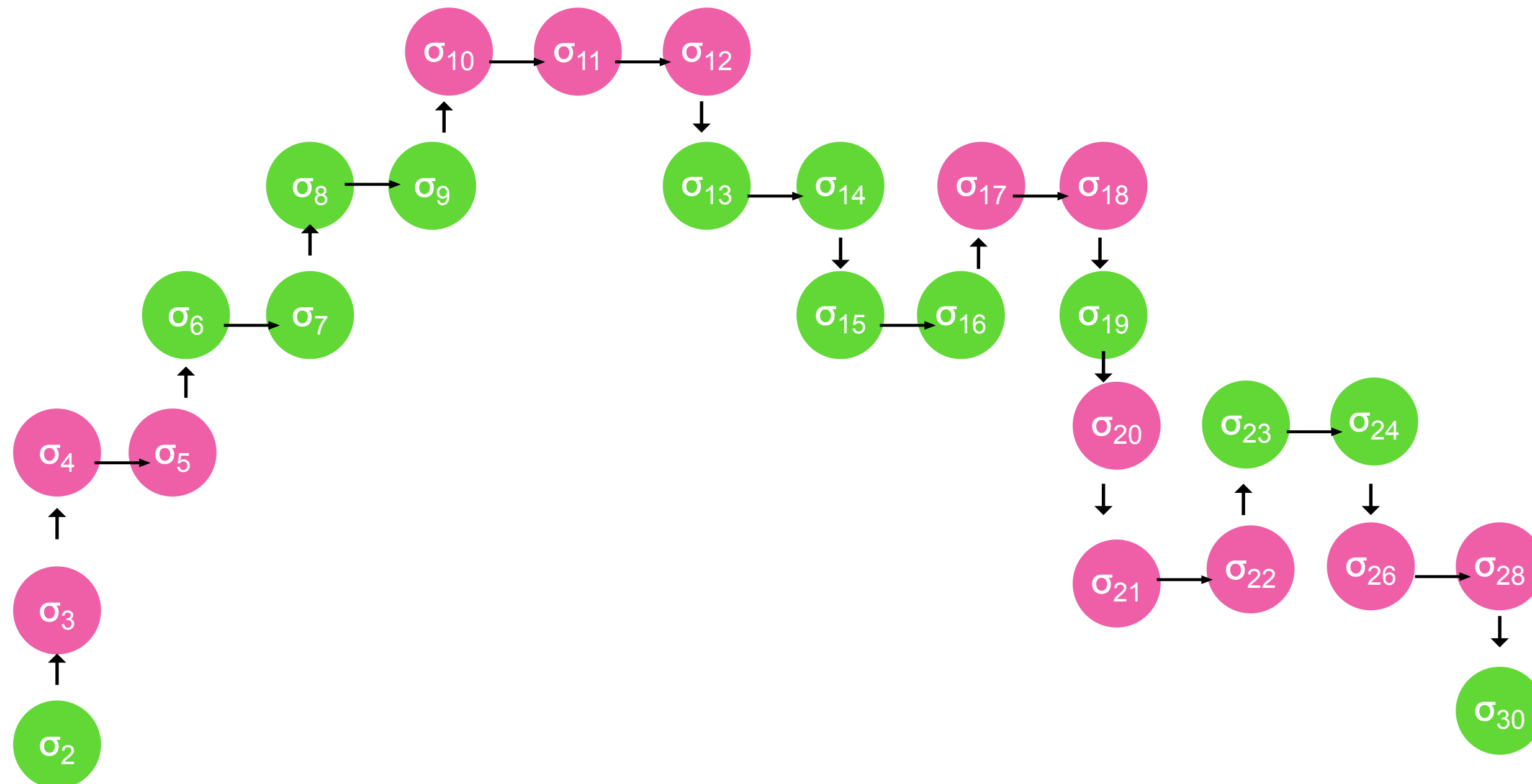
$M' * M, \sigma \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma' \triangleq M' * M, \sigma \rightarrow^* \sigma'$  “while not popping the top frame of  $\sigma$ ”



# Remit\_1\_c : Meaning of $M^*M, \sigma \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma'$

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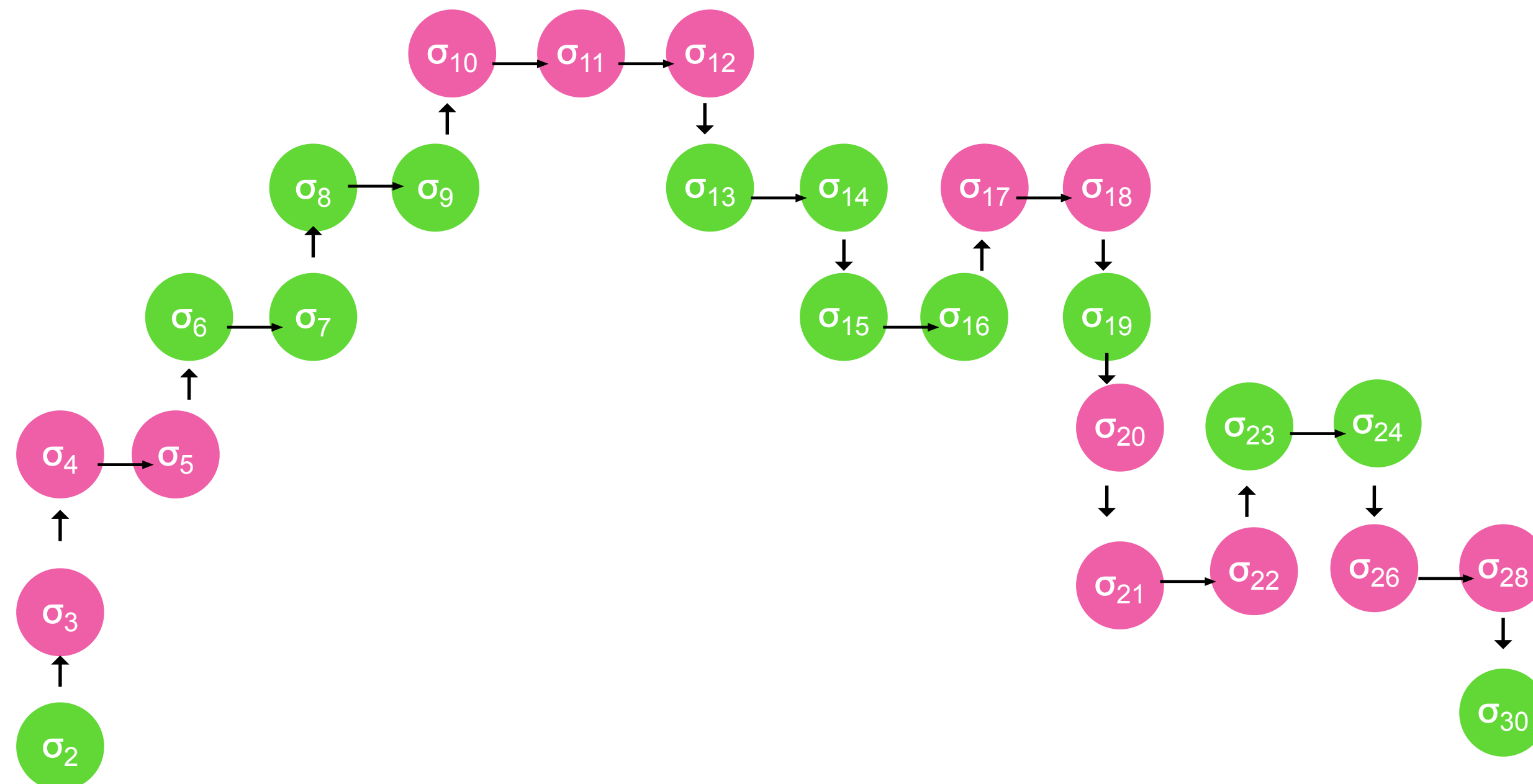
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$$\sigma_4 \rightarrow^* \sigma_{18}$$

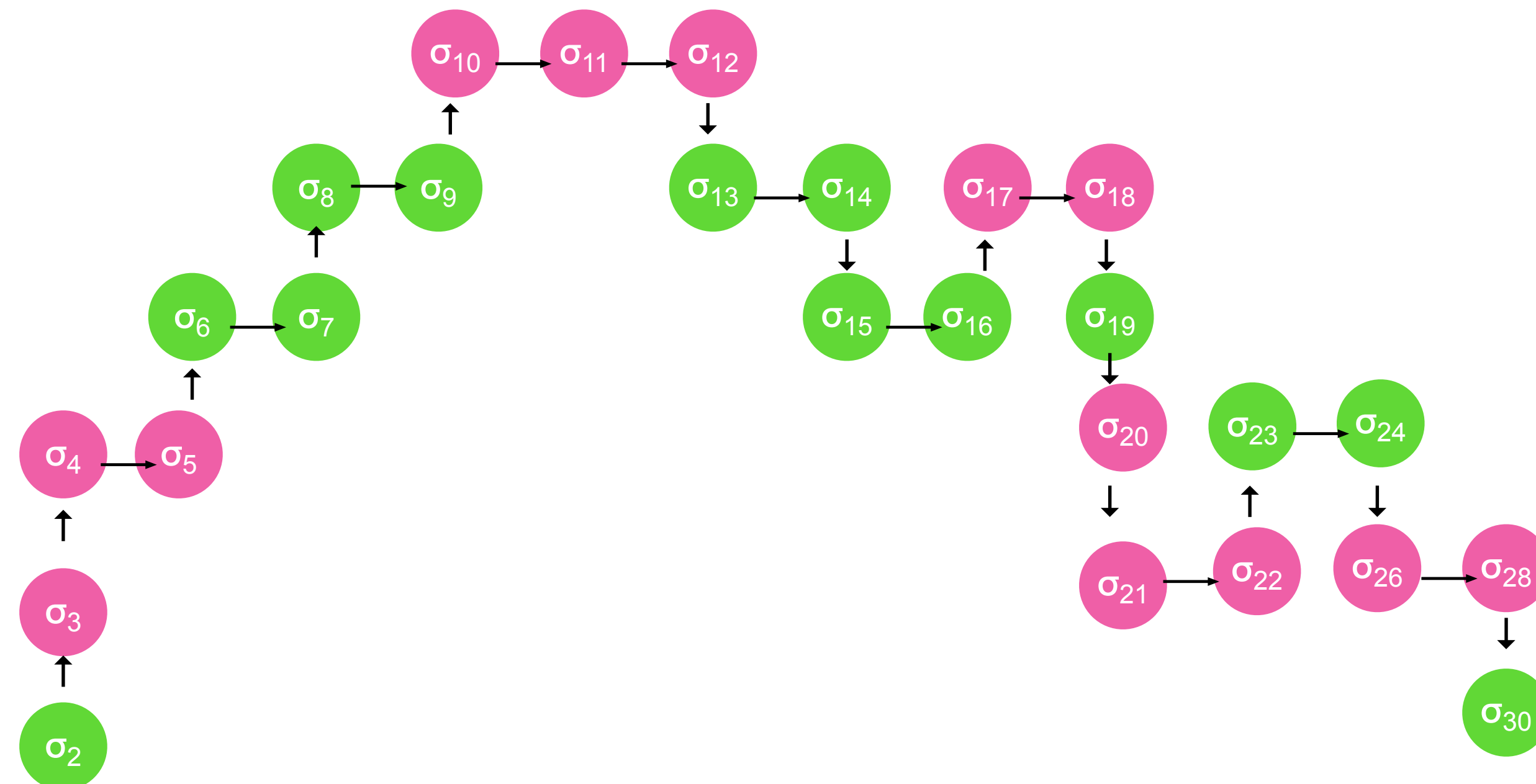
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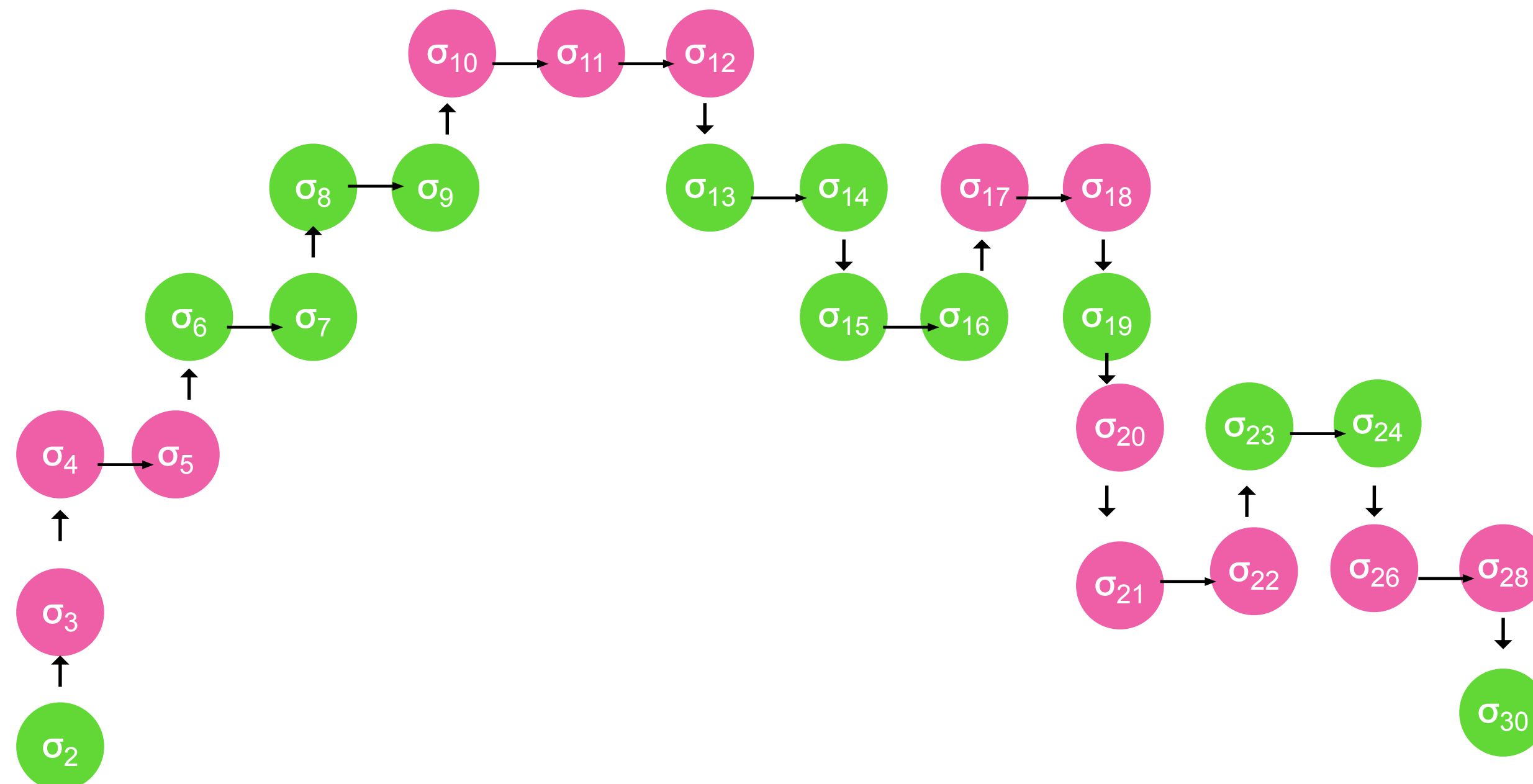
$$\sigma_4 \rightarrow^* \sigma_{20}$$

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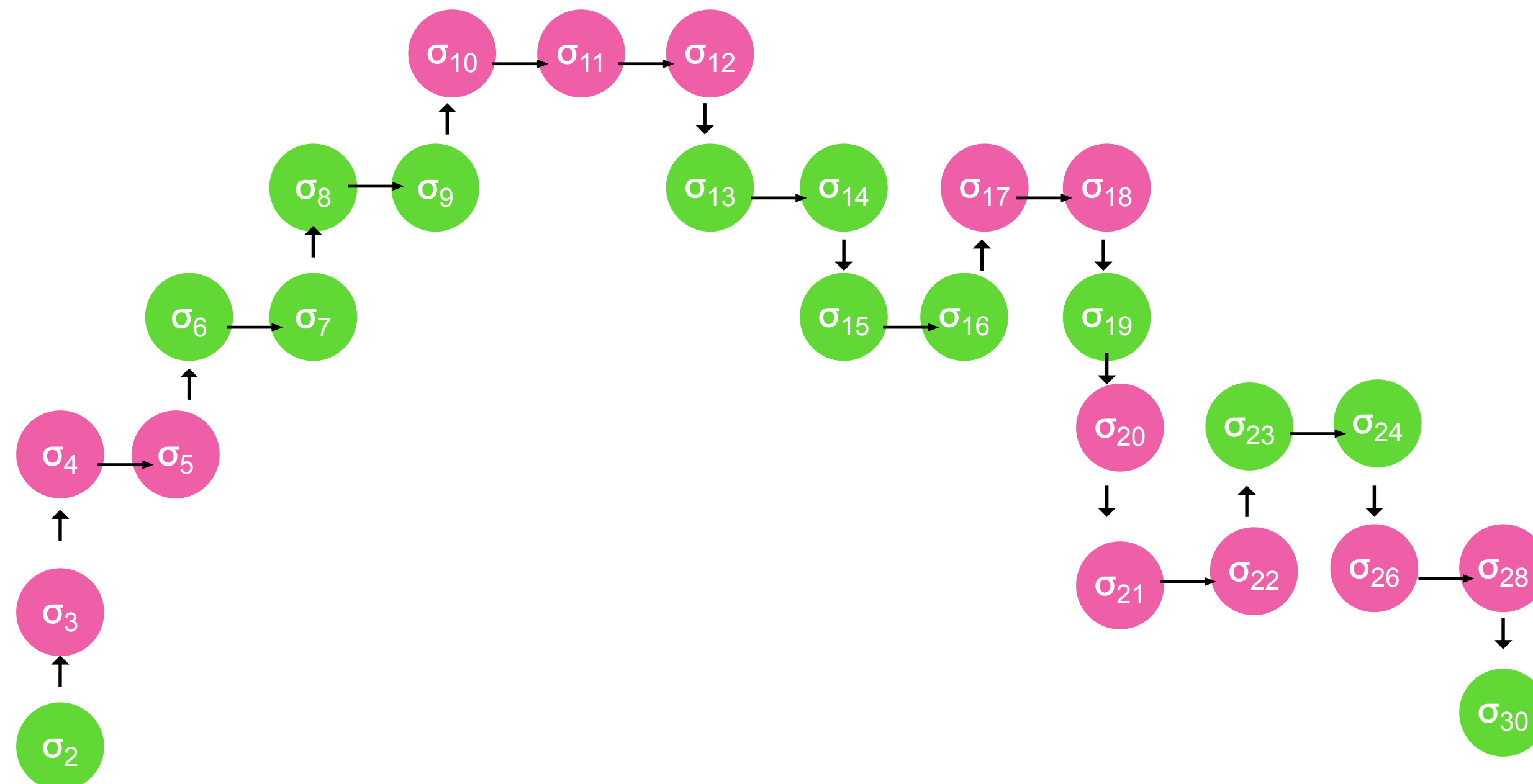
$$\sigma_4 \rightarrow^* \sigma_{21}$$

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$$\neg(\sigma_4 \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma_{21})$$

$$\sigma_4 \rightarrow^* \sigma_{24}$$

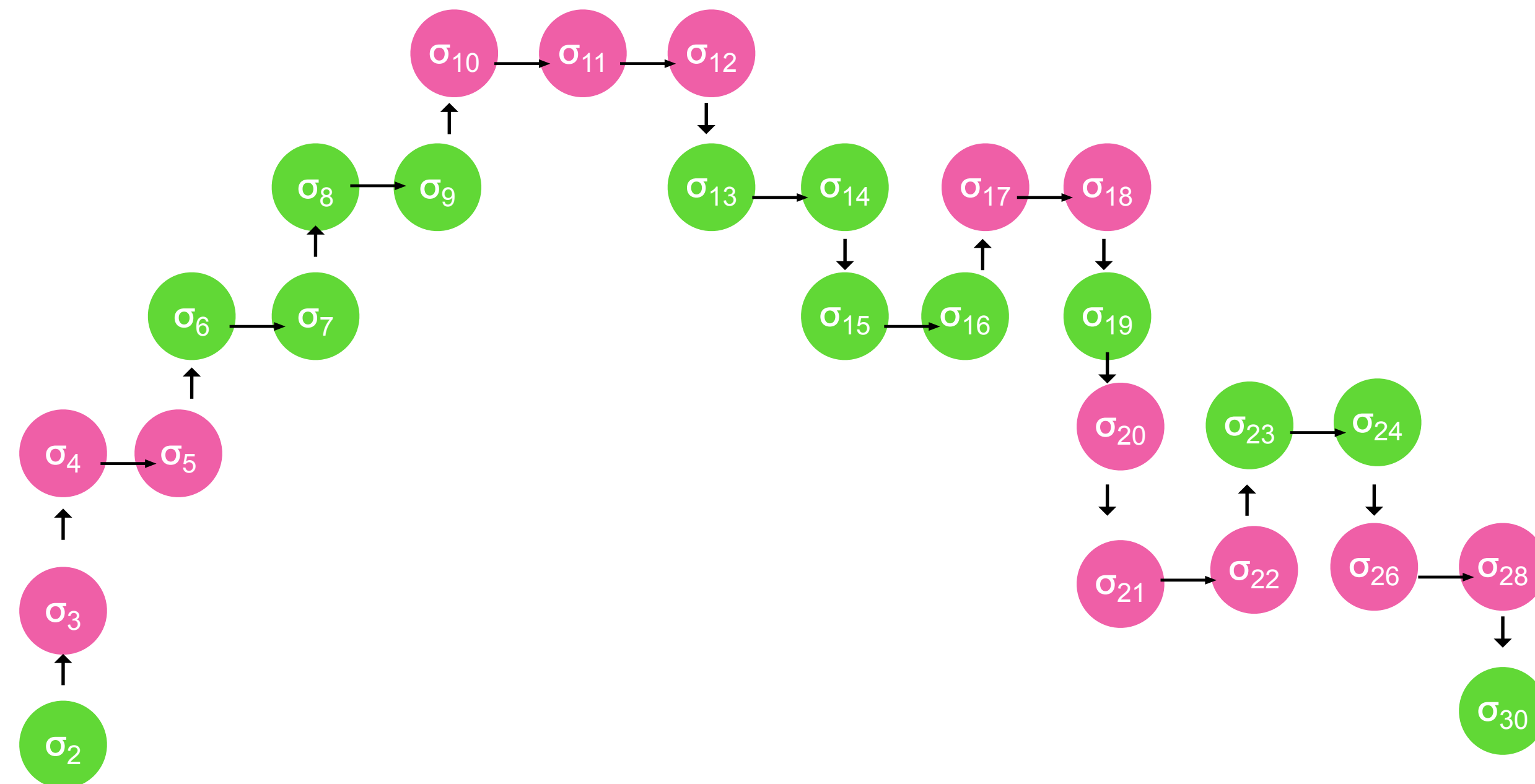
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## Definition

$M^*M, \sigma \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma' \triangleq M^*M, \sigma \rightarrow^* \sigma'$  “while not popping the top frame of  $\sigma$ ”

Therefore,  $\forall x1:C1, \dots, xn:Cn \{ A \}$  means that



$$\sigma_4 \rightarrow^* \sigma_{18}$$

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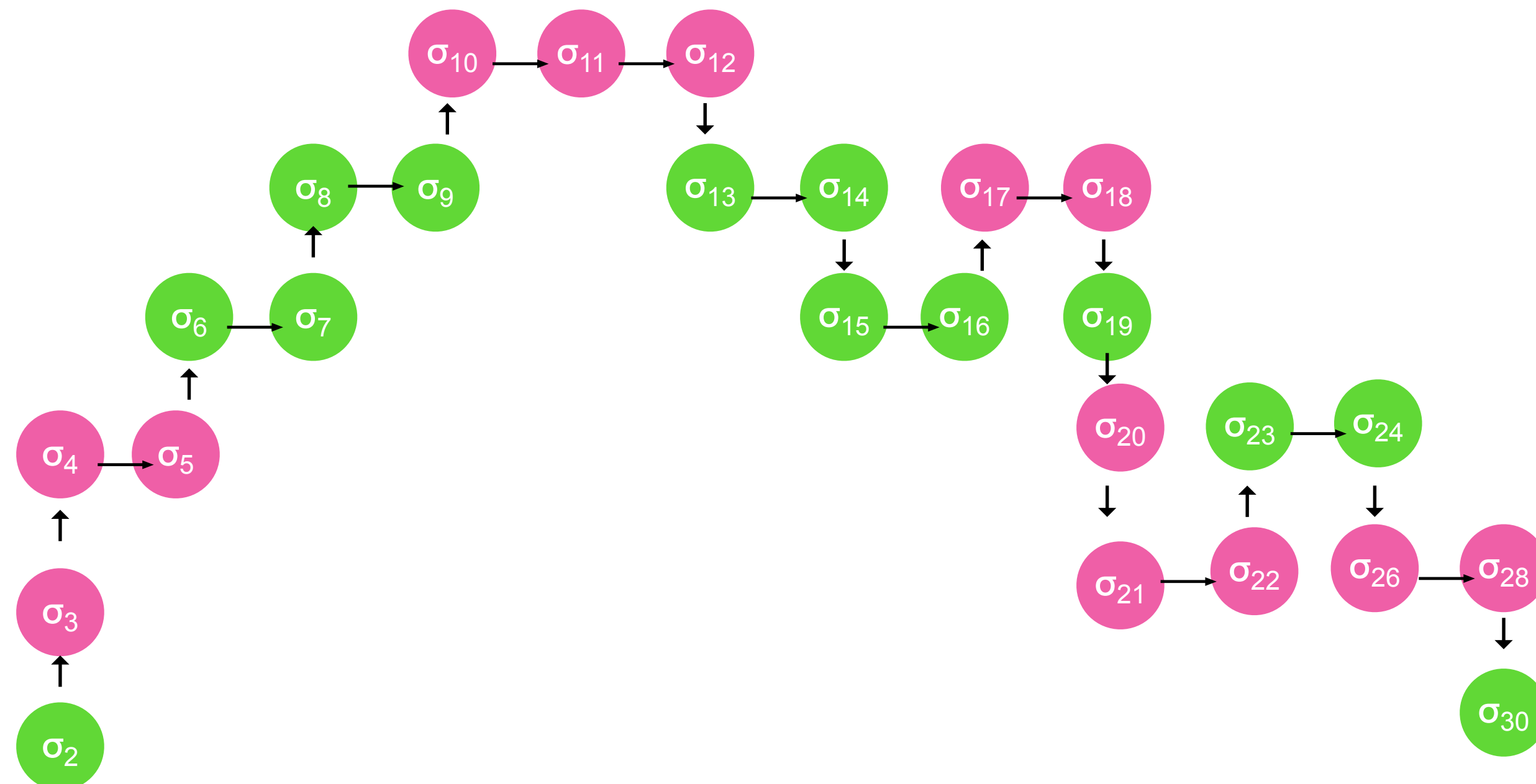
A preserved from  $\sigma_4$  to  $\sigma_{20}$

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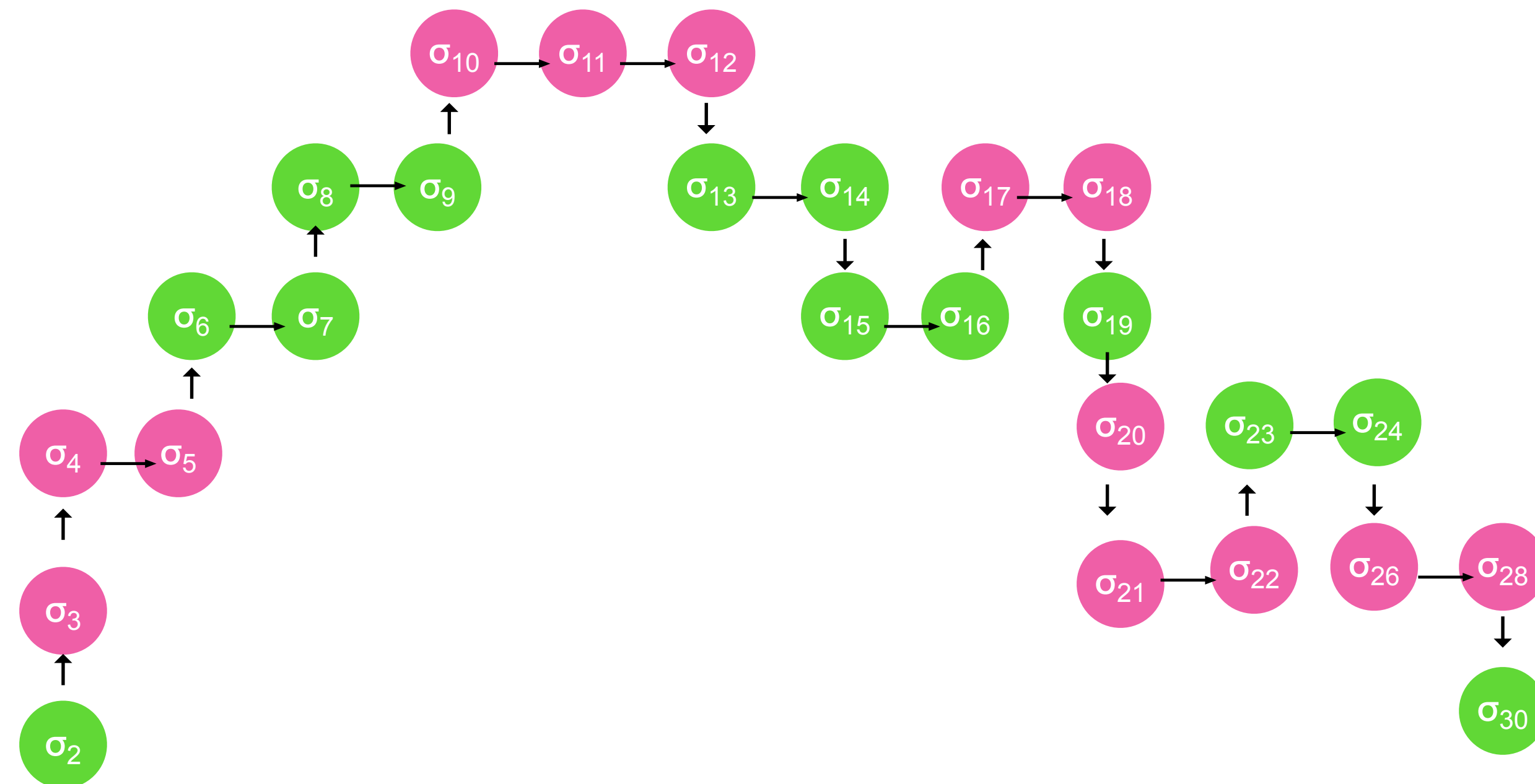


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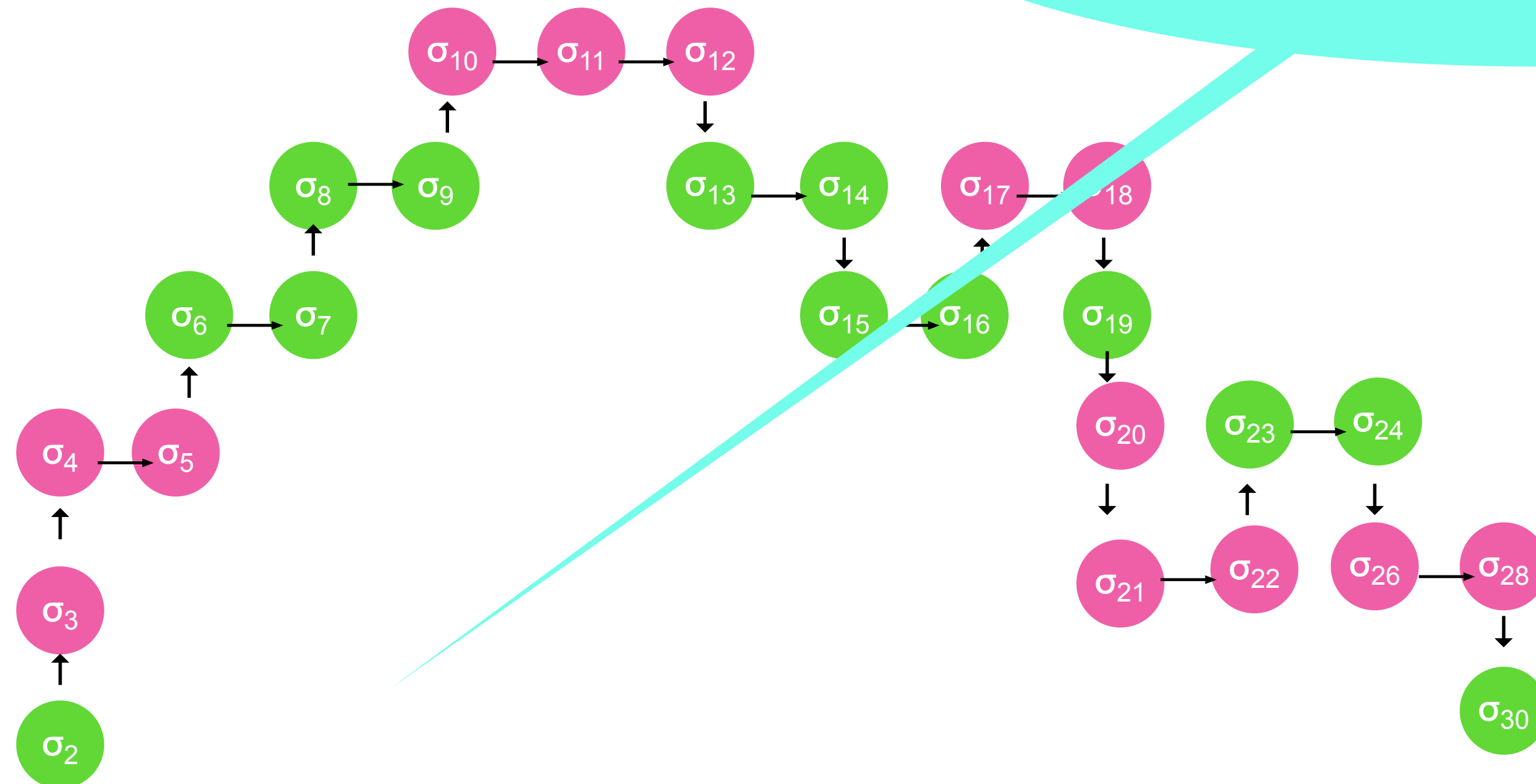
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{A} means that

Execution is “relative”  
to a state



$\sigma_4 \rightarrow^* \sigma_{18}$  A preserved from  $\sigma_4$  to  $\sigma_{18}$

$\sigma_4 \rightarrow^* \sigma_{20}$

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**Challenge\_1:** A module spec  $S$ , such that

$M_{\text{good}} \models S$

$M_{\text{bad}} \not\models S$

$M_{\text{better}} \models S$

$S1 \triangleq \forall a:\text{Account}. \{ \llbracket a \rrbracket \}$

$S2 \triangleq \forall a:\text{Account}. \{ \llbracket a.\text{pwd} \rrbracket \}$

$S3 \triangleq \forall a:\text{Account}, b:\text{Num}. \{ \llbracket a \rrbracket \wedge a.\text{blnce} = b \}$

$S4 \triangleq \forall a:\text{Account}, b:\text{Num}. \{ \llbracket a.\text{pwd} \rrbracket \wedge a.\text{blnce} \geq b \}$

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API - agnostic:  
a.blnce, a.pwd can be ghost

Talk about effects

Talk about  
emergent behaviour

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$M_{\text{bad}} \not\models S2$

$M_{\text{bad}} \not\models S4$

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$M_{\text{bad}} \not\models S2$

$M_{\text{bad}} \not\models S4$

$M_{\text{fine}} \models S2$

$M_{\text{fine}} \models S4$

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Talk about effects

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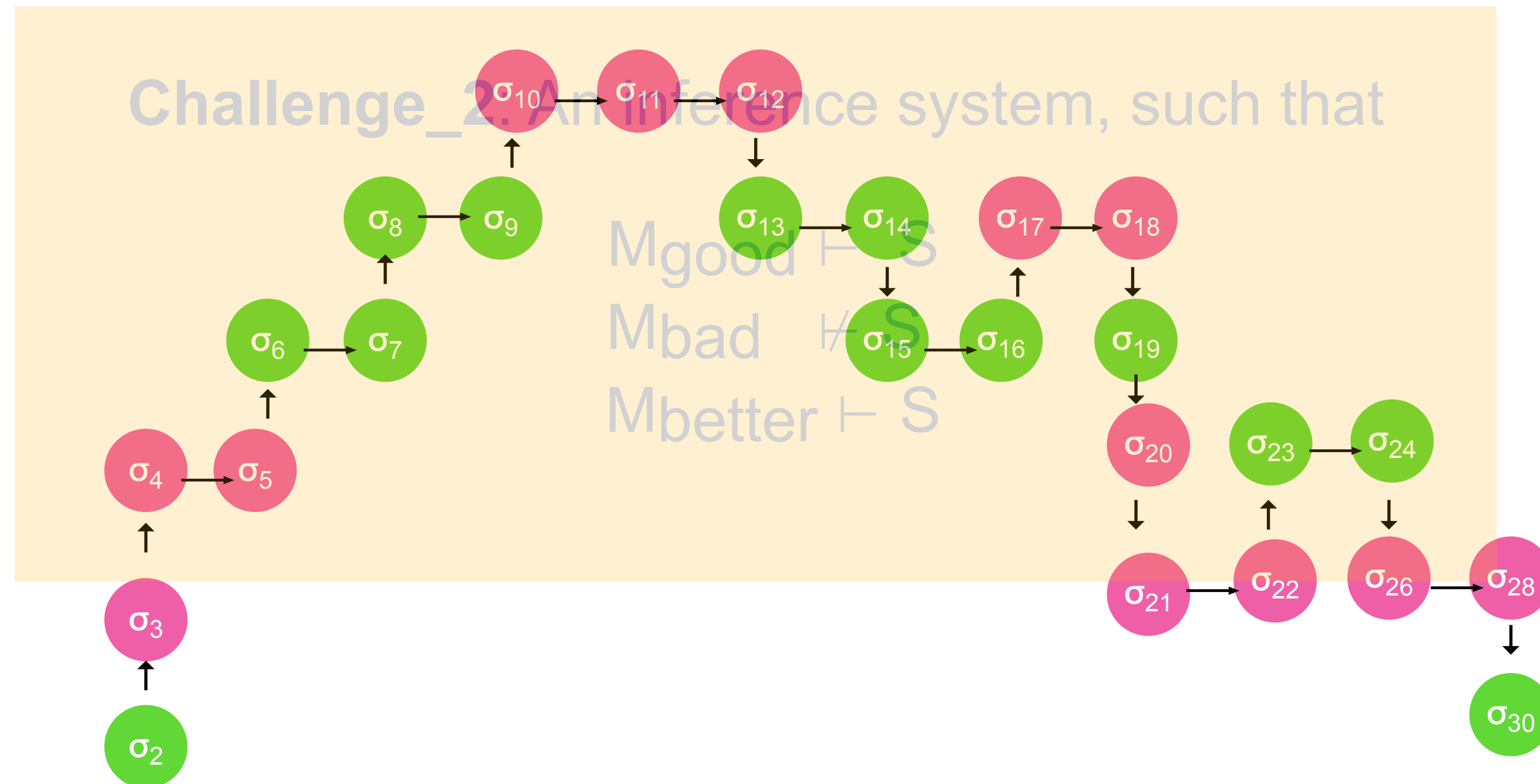
**Challenge\_2:** An inference system, such that

$M_{\text{good}} \vdash S$

$M_{\text{bad}} \not\vdash S$

$M_{\text{better}} \vdash S$

In the context of arbitrary, unlimited calls from internal to external,  
and arbitrary, unlimited calls from external to internal,



## Challenge\_2: An inference system, such that ...

An assertion  $A$  is **encapsulated** by module  $M$ , if it can only be invalidated through calls to methods from  $M$ .

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For example:

$$\text{Mod}_{\text{bad}} \models \textit{Encaps}(a : \text{Account} \wedge a.\text{balance} = \text{bal})$$
$$\text{Mod}_{\text{better}} \models \textit{Encaps}(a : \text{Account} \wedge a.\text{balance} = \text{bal})$$



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$$\text{Mod}_{\text{better}} \models \text{Encaps}(a : \text{Account} \wedge a.\text{balance} = \text{bal})$$

Assume two further modules,  $\text{Mod}_{ul}$  and  $\text{Mod}_{pl}$ , which use ledgers to keep a map between accounts and their balances, which export functions that allow the update of this map. In  $\text{Mod}_{ul}$  the ledger is *not* protected, while in  $\text{Mod}_{pl}$  the ledger *is* protected.

$$\text{Mod}_{ul} \not\models \text{Encaps}(a : \text{Account} \wedge a.\text{balance} = \text{bal})$$
$$\text{Mod}_{pl} \models \text{Encaps}(a : \text{Account} \wedge a.\text{balance} = \text{bal})$$

## Three Stages

Assume an underlying Hoare logic of triples with usual meaning

$$\overline{M \vdash_{ul} \{A\} s \{A'\}}$$

**1st stage** Expand it to Hoare logic of triples with usual meaning

$$M \vdash \{A\} s \{A'\},$$

*satisfying the usual*

**2nd Stage** Expand triples to quadruples

$$M \vdash \{A\} s \{A'\} \parallel \{A''\};$$

Which promises that

- termination of  $s$  leads to a state satisfying  $A'$
- intermediate external states satisfy  $A''$

**3rd Stage** Rules for module satisfying a specification

$$M \vdash S$$

## Challenge\_2: An inference system, such that ...

### 1st stage

We expand underlying Hoare logic to Hoare logic of triples with usual meaning

EXTEND

$$\frac{M \vdash_{ul} \{ A \} s \{ A' \} \quad s \text{ contains no method call}}{M \vdash \{ A \} s \{ A' \}}$$

TYPES-1

$$\frac{s \text{ contains no method call}}{M \vdash \{ x : C \} s \{ x : C \}}$$

## Challenge\_2: An inference system, such that ...

### 2nd stage

We expand triples to quadruples

$$\frac{\text{INV} \quad M \vdash \{A\} s \{A'\}}{M \vdash \{A\} s \{A'\} \parallel \{A''\}}$$

$$\frac{\text{TYPES-2} \quad M \vdash \{A\} s \{A'\} \parallel \{A''\}}{M \vdash \{x : C \wedge A\} s \{x : C \wedge A'\} \parallel \{A''\}}$$

$$\frac{\text{COMBINE} \quad M \vdash \{A_1\} s \{A_2\} \parallel \{A\} \quad M \vdash \{A_3\} s \{A_4\} \parallel \{A\}}{M \vdash \{A_1 \wedge A_3\} s \{A_2 \wedge A_4\} \parallel \{A\}}$$

$$\frac{\text{SEQU} \quad M \vdash \{A_1\} s_1 \{A_2\} \parallel \{A\} \quad M \vdash \{A_2\} s_2 \{A_3\} \parallel \{A\}}{M \vdash \{A_1\} s_1; s_2 \{A_3\} \parallel \{A\}}$$

$$\frac{\text{CONSEQU} \quad M \vdash \{A_2\} s \{A_3\} \parallel \{A_4\} \quad M \vdash A_1 \rightarrow A_2 \quad M \vdash A_3 \rightarrow A_5 \quad M \vdash A_4 \rightarrow A_6}{M \vdash \{A_2\} s \{A_5\} \parallel \{A_6\}}$$

## Challenge\_2: An inference system, such that ...

### 3rd stage

$$\frac{\text{WELLFRM\_MOD} \quad M \vdash \mathcal{S}pec(M)}{\vdash M}$$

$$\frac{\text{COMB\_SPEC} \quad M \vdash S_1 \quad M \vdash S_2}{M \vdash S_1 \wedge S_2}$$

## Challenge\_2: An inference system, such that ...

3rd stage

INVARIANT

???

---

$$M \vdash \forall x : C\{A\}$$

## Challenge\_2: An inference system, such that ...

INVARIANT

$$M \vdash \text{Encps}(\overline{x : C} \wedge A)$$

---

$$M \vdash \overline{\forall x : C \{A\}}$$

## Challenge\_2: An inference system, such that ...

INVARIANT

$$M \vdash \text{Encps}(\overline{x : C} \wedge A)$$
$$\forall D, m : \text{mBody}(m, D, M) = \text{public } (\overline{y : C})\{ \text{stmt} \} \implies$$

---

$$M \vdash \forall \overline{x : C} \{ A \}$$



## Challenge\_2: An inference system, such that ...

INVARIANT

$$M \vdash \text{Encps}(\overline{x : C} \wedge A)$$
$$\forall D, m : \text{mBody}(m, D, M) = \text{public } (\overline{y : C})\{ \text{stmt} \} \implies$$
$$M \vdash \{ \text{this} : D, \overline{y : D}, \overline{x : C} \wedge \text{PRE}(A) \} \text{stmt} \{ \text{POST}(A) \} \parallel \{ \text{POST}(A) \}$$

---

$$M \vdash \overline{\forall x : C}\{A\}$$

**Remit\_3:** An inference system, such that  
we can prove external calls

## Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

[CALL\_EXT]

---

$$M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \} \quad , \quad \{ u := y_0.m(y_1, ..y_n) \} \{ ??? \} \parallel \{ ?? \}$$

## Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

$$\frac{M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \} \quad \vdash M : \overline{\forall x : D\{A\}}}{M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \} \quad u := y_0.m(y_1, ..y_n) \{ ??? \} \parallel \{ ?? \}} \quad [\text{CALL\_EXT}]$$

## Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

$$\frac{\begin{array}{c} \vdash M : \overline{\forall x : D}\{A\} \\ M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \wedge \overline{x : D} , \quad \} u := y_0.m(y_1, ..y_n) \{ ??? \} \parallel \{ ?? \} \end{array}}{\text{[CALL\_EXT]}}$$

## Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

[CALL\_EXT]

$$\frac{\vdash M : \overline{\forall x : D\{A\}}}{M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \wedge \overline{x : D} \wedge A \neg \nabla \bar{y} \} u := y_0.m(y_1, ..y_n) \{ ??? \} \parallel \{ ?? \}}$$

## Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

[CALL\_EXT]

$$\frac{\vdash M : \overline{\forall x : D\{A\}}}{M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \wedge \overline{x : D} \wedge A \neg \nabla \bar{y} \} u := y_0.m(y_1, ..y_n) \{ A \neg \nabla \bar{y} \} \parallel \{ ?? \}}$$

## Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

[CALL\_EXT]

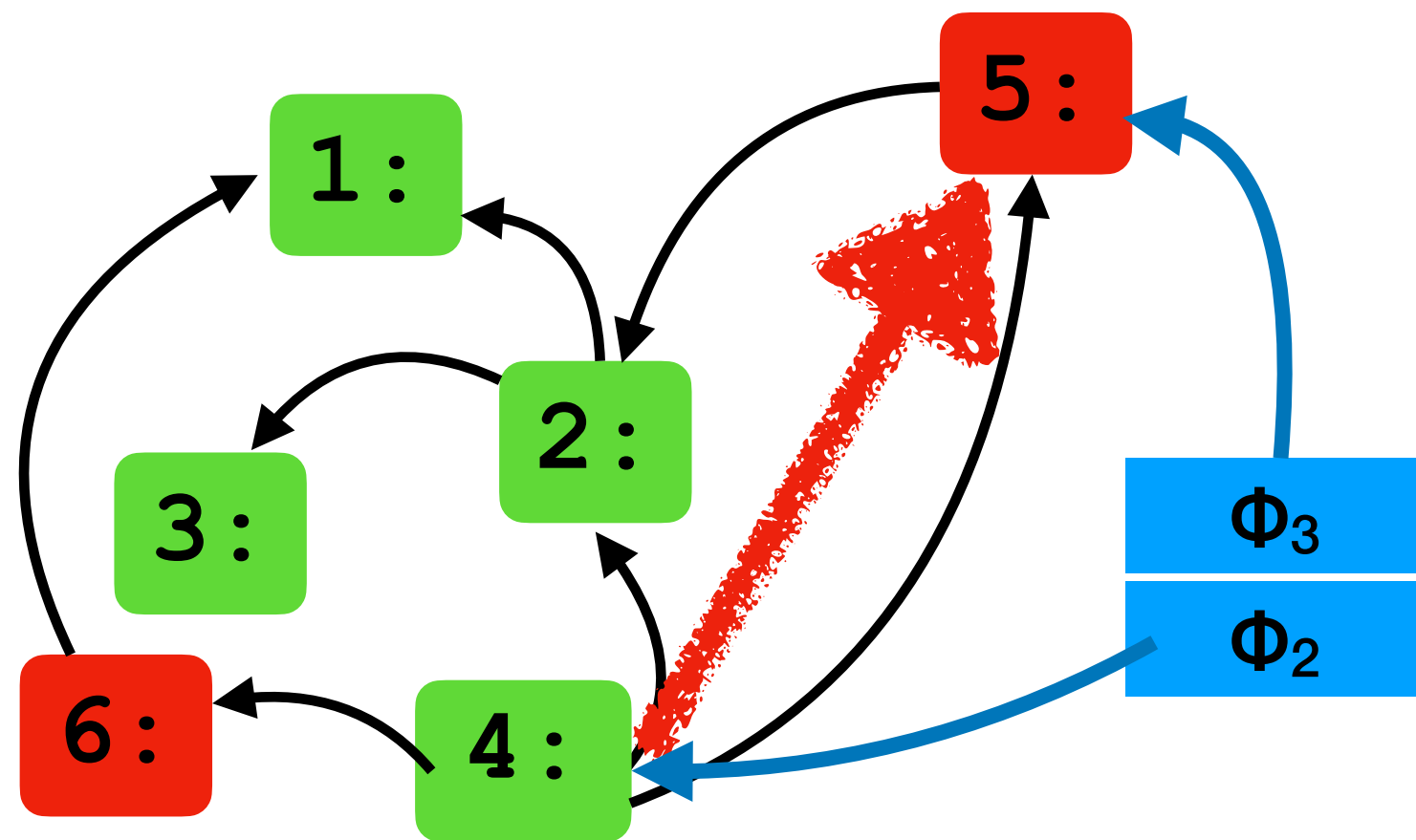
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# Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

[CALL\_EXT]

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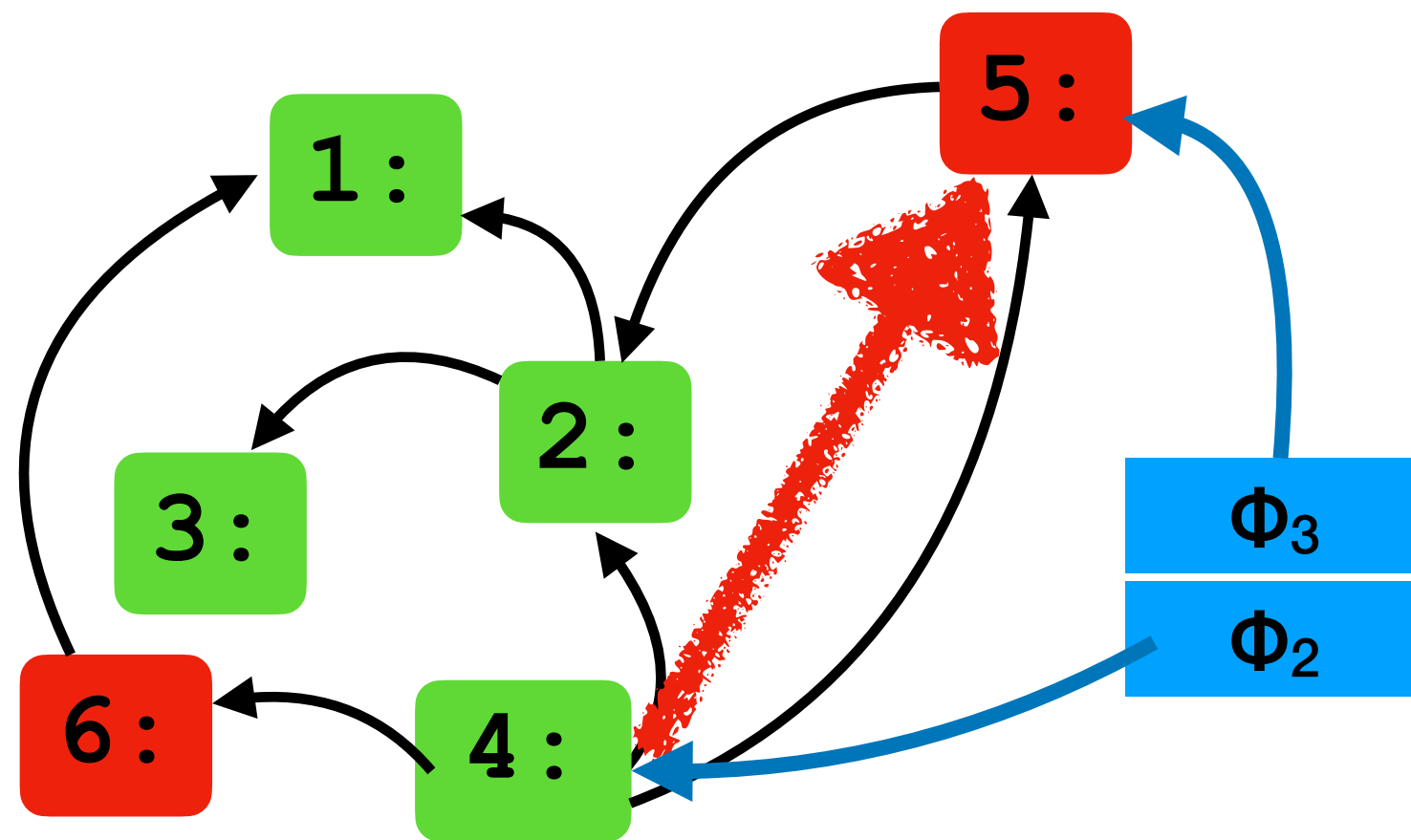
# Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

[CALL\_EXT]

$$\frac{\vdash M : \overline{\forall x : D\{A\}}}{M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \wedge \overline{x : D} \wedge A \neg \forall \bar{y} \} u := y_0.m(y_1, ..y_n) \{ A \neg \forall \bar{y} \} \parallel \{ A \}}$$

**Definition 5.7.** [The  $\neg$  operator] is defined below

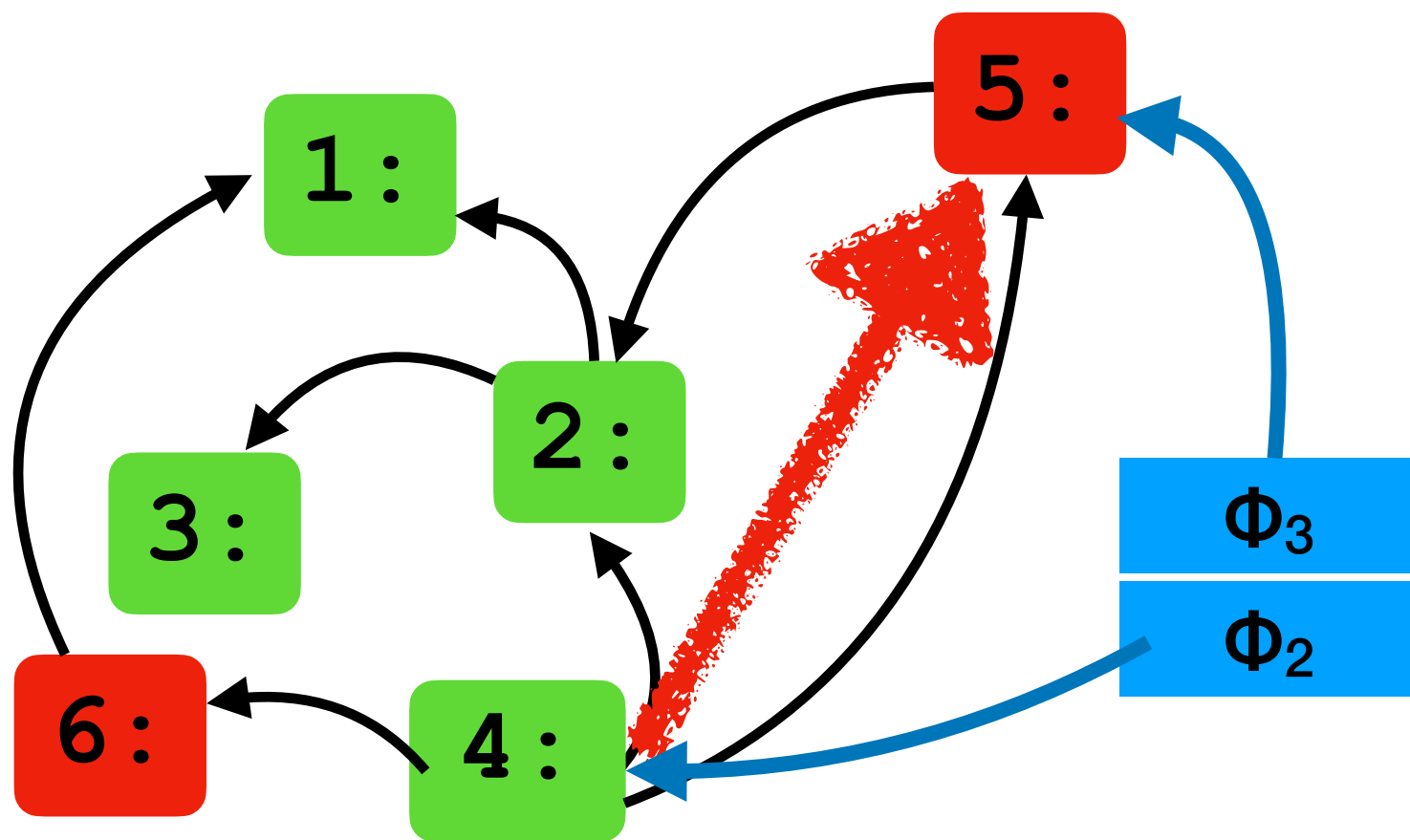
$$\begin{array}{lll} \langle e \rangle \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{y} & (A_1 \wedge A_2) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & (A_1 \neg \forall \bar{y}) \wedge (A_2 \neg \forall \bar{y}) \\ \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{u} \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{u} & (\forall x : C.A) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \forall x : C.(A \neg \forall \bar{y}) \\ (\text{intl } e) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \text{intl } e & (\neg A) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \neg(A \neg \forall \bar{y}) \\ e \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & e & (e : C) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & e : C \end{array}$$



# Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

[CALL\_EXT]

$$\frac{\vdash M : \overline{\forall x : D\{A\}}}{M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \wedge \overline{x : D} \wedge A \neg \forall \bar{y} \} u := y_0.m(y_1, ..y_n) \{ A \neg \forall \bar{y} \} \parallel \{ A \}}$$



**Definition 5.7.** [The  $\neg \forall$  operator] is defined below

$$\begin{array}{lll} \langle e \rangle \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{y} & (A_1 \wedge A_2) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & (A_1 \neg \forall \bar{y}) \wedge (A_2 \neg \forall \bar{y}) \\ \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{u} \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{u} & (\forall x : C.A) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \forall x : C.(A \neg \forall \bar{y}) \\ (\text{intl } e) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \text{intl } e & (\neg A) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & \neg(A \neg \forall \bar{y}) \\ e \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & e & (e : C) \neg \forall \bar{y} & \triangleq & e : C \end{array}$$

**Lemma 5.8.** For any state  $\sigma$ , assertion  $A$ , and variables  $\bar{y}, \bar{z}$ , disjoint with one another:  
If  $fv(A) = \emptyset$ , then

- (1)  $M, \sigma \models A \neg \forall \bar{y} \implies M, \sigma \nabla \bar{y} \models A$
- (2)  $M, \sigma \nabla (\bar{y}, \bar{z}) \models A \implies M, \sigma \models A \neg \forall \bar{y}$

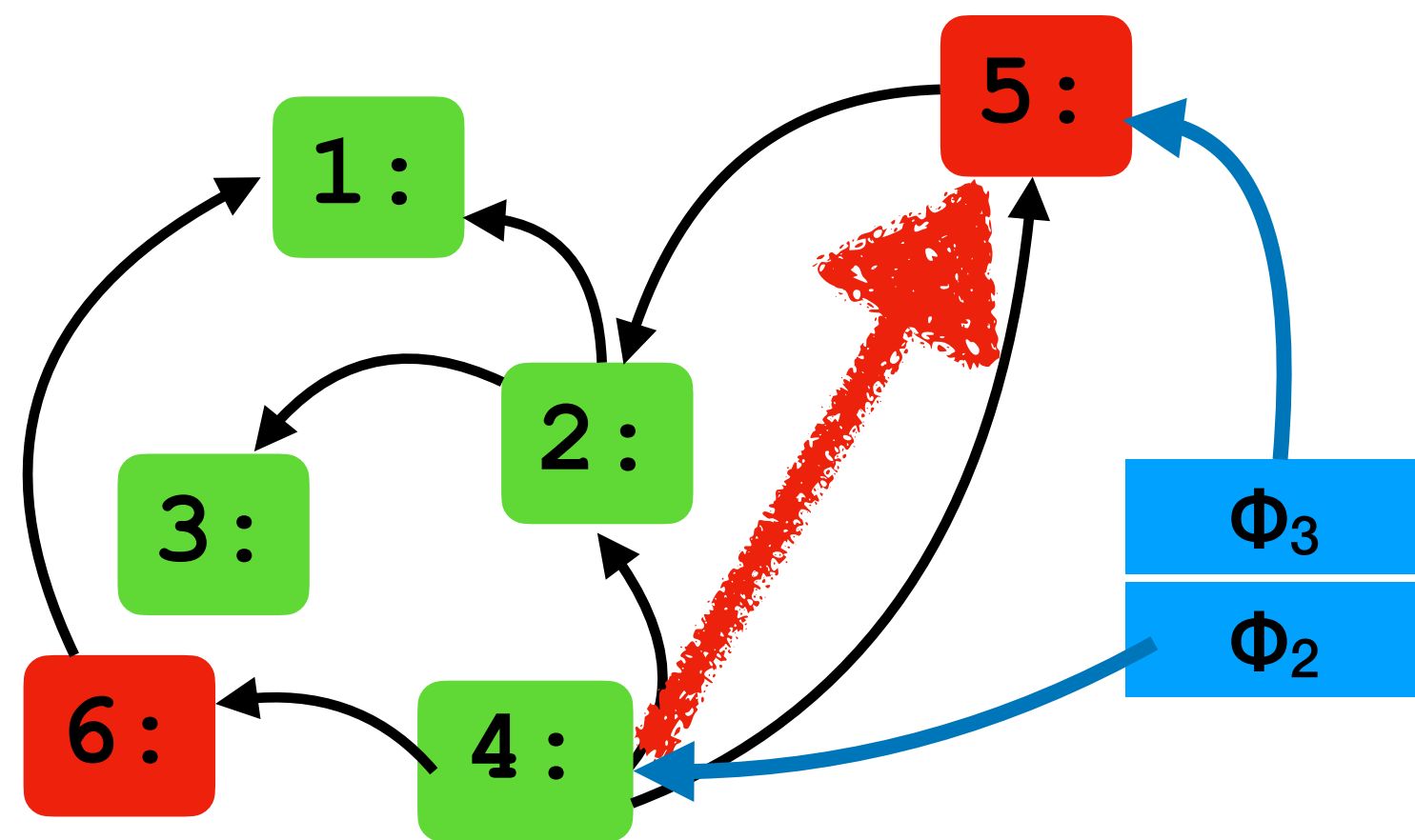
# Challenge\_4: An inference system, such we can prove external calls

Protection is  
 “relative” to a frame;  
 Our  $\neg \nabla$  operator  
 helps us switch to callee’s view

$$M \vdash \{ y_0 : \text{ext} \wedge x : D \wedge A \neg \nabla \bar{y} \} u := y_0$$

**Definition 5.7.** [The  $\neg \nabla$  operator] is defined below

$$\begin{array}{lll} \langle e \rangle \neg \nabla \bar{y} & \triangleq & \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{y} & (A_1 \wedge A_2) \neg \nabla \bar{y} & \triangleq & (A_1 \neg \nabla \bar{y}) \wedge (A_2 \neg \nabla \bar{y}) \\ \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{u} \neg \nabla \bar{y} & \triangleq & \langle e \rangle \leftarrow * \bar{u} & (\forall x : C. A) \neg \nabla \bar{y} & \triangleq & \forall x : C. (A \neg \nabla \bar{y}) \\ (\text{intl } e) \neg \nabla \bar{y} & \triangleq & \text{intl } e & (\neg A) \neg \nabla \bar{y} & \triangleq & \neg (A \neg \nabla \bar{y}) \\ e \neg \nabla \bar{y} & \triangleq & e & (e : C) \neg \nabla \bar{y} & \triangleq & e : C \end{array}$$



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- Distinction between external/internal objects
- $\forall x: \dots \{ A \}$  Two state invariants for external states / relative execution
- Specifications talk about necessary conditions for effect:  

$$\forall x: \dots \{ \ll e \gg \wedge A \}$$
means that **capability**  $e$  is needed in order to invalidate  $A$
- $\ll e \gg$ : capability  $e$  is protected from reachable external objects
- API-agnostic spec,
- “Algorithmic” inference system system,
- Reason with open calls
- Protection,  $\ll e \gg$ , is relative to state  $\sigma$ . Use  $-\nabla$  to switch view
- Execution,  $M^*M, \sigma \rightsquigarrow^* \sigma'$ , is relative to state  $\sigma$
- Surprises:
  - Use sufficient conditions to talk about necessary conditions
  - from temporal operators/logics to invariants/Hoare logics

## Summary