

When ChatGPT loses your file

Nobody deleted it. It rented a room that gets cleaned **every half hour**. Keep this card outside the chat.

```
you ask
|
v
+-----+
| a throwaway room, 30 min old |
| the file is built in here    |
+-----+
|                               |
| a link to it                 |
|                               |
v
+-----+
| 15-30 minutes, nobody clicked |
| same room, swept clean        |
| link: opens                   |
| file: not inside              |
+-----+
```

```
10:12:46 "An error occurred inside
          the visualization"
          preview broke, file lived

10:15:09 "Failed to download file.
          Please try again later."
          the download lost its handle

10:16:29 "Couldn't load this file"
          and a Retry button
          the room was already swept

10:18:21 download fails,
          then it will not open
          no room left by the click

10:18:41 both errors again,
          on repeat
          nothing left to click
```

FIVE WAYS BACK, QUICKEST FIRST

1. **Ask for the text, not the file.** This one never expires.
Give me the complete file again as one code block,
no truncation, same code.
Paste it, save as `name.html`, double-click.
2. **Regenerate, then click inside seconds.**
The sandbox expired – write the file again, run the
code, send the link.
No refresh between the link and the click.
3. **Open the link in a clean window.** Private window, ad
blockers off. It lands there → the gate was in your
browser.
4. **Look in Library.** Left sidebar → Library keeps uploaded
and generated files, up to 20 GB on Plus, apart from the
chats. Deleting a chat leaves the file.
5. **Export the lot.** Settings → Data controls → Export. The
archive arrives by email with your conversations inside.

TEST THE CLAIM IN 10 SECONDS

Open the download link from yesterday. It still opens →
the file behind it does not.
That is the whole bug, and a second copy on your disk
is the whole fix.

WHY THE ROOM GETS SWEEPED

1. **The room is a machine, not your account.** A
sandbox is recycled after 15–30 quiet minutes. The link
looks permanent while the file behind it is gone: a 404,
a spinner that never ends, a download of 0 bytes.
2. **A refresh builds a new room.** Files made in the
old one stay in the old one.
3. **The code never ran.** No `python` block, no *Analyzed*
under the reply → the download link is decoration.
4. **Your browser said no first.** Downloads arrive from
`files.oaiusercontent.com`, not `openai.com`. Ad
blockers, proxies and antivirus refuse that host without
a word.

SIX RULES SO IT STOPS HAPPENING

- **One permanent door** — every app opens from a fixed
place, never a link inside a conversation
- **Old versions stay** — a new build never overwrites the
last one that worked
- **It files itself** — a new app registers on arrival
- **Tested restore** — a recovery path that was actually
walked
- **Survives a reboot** — it opens again after the machine
restarts
- **No chat in the loop** — built once, it runs with the
conversation closed