Almost simplicity of commensurators of free and surface groups

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Abstract: The group $Aut(F_n)$ is a prominent character in geometric group theory. The goal of this talk is to advertise a larger group, namely the group of abstract commensurators of F_n, denoted by $Comm(F_n)$. Bartholdi and Bogopolski have shown that $Comm(F_n)$ is infinitely generated. A. Lubotzky has asked whether $Comm(F_n)$ is simple. I will explain that $Comm(F_n)$ is almost simple. The relative commensurator of F_n in the automorphim group of its Cayley tree, and commensurator groups of surface groups, will also be mentioned.