KICKSHAWS

DAVID MORICE
Iowa City, Iowa

Readers are invited to send their own favorite linguistic kickshaws to the Kickshaws Editor (new address: PO Box 3382, Iowa City IA 52244). All answers appear in the Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue. Guest editors will appear occasionally.

Adventures of a Bookseller

"Dayyy-Oh! Dayyy-Oh! Books come in and me wan' go home!"

With that song, Ralston Bedge and I shelved new books in the morning at Iowa Book and Supply. We made bookselling, well, not a career, but an adventure. Some examples:

If a customer came up and asked for help in the philosophy section, we sang a rousing rendition of "Philosophical Turkey in the Straw", which began "If you wanna get some knowledge / but you don't know where to start / just open up the pages / of Jean-Paul Sartre / If you think the world is beautiful / and everything is peachy / just read a couple chapters / cf Friedrich Nietzsche." And then the refrain, with gusto: "Being and Essence, Da-da da-daaa! / Being and Essence, Da-da da-daaa! / If you don't know / who you might be / then you'd best try nothingness / and you will see!"

During the late 1960s, students protested in front of the store, which became known as Iowa Book and Crook. They took it as a symbol of the capitalist system ripping off the students. One afternoon Tom Kinney, the floor manager, went into the used book room to find a book in the alphabetized shelves, but instead he found a Molotov Cocktail. It had been lit, but the cloth had burnt out before the flame could ignite the gasoline. Trembling, he went to the supervisor's office and said, "Bob, there's something I think you should see in the M's."

Ralston, Tom, and I set up book displays. At first, they were the usual kind: Best Sellers, Biographies, etc. But soon we took an avant-garde approach: Worst Sellers, Most Boing, Longest Titles, Shortest Titles, Most Tattered Covers, Ugliest Cover Designs, Books With Z in the Title, Books with Gold Covers, Books with Hands Pictured on the Covers (i.e., Hand Books). My favorite category was Best Smelers, with the top honor going to an incense-drenched volume of The Upanishads from Pondicherry, India. You could reach enlightenment after a few whiffs.

Occasionally, a miracle would happen. One night Ralston left a stack of thick textbooks on a cart. The next morning, due to a slight earth tremor, the books were rotated to form a perfect spiral stairway with a picture of a elephant.

Then there was the time that Ralston was on a boat in Dick. Blushes.

One busy day a publisher came to help her - elephants of Stylus.

When I was a publisher, Ralston sent "Are" by Maurice Sendbacks.

We had a people trying to promote the idea of an electric everスピーカー behind detective novels. Yes, I see. screams. For 이것 is . For her, Bob Sub growl. True there a voice shouting.

And so turn.

The Ugliest Word

What is the ugliest word of Lists want to REPULSIVE seems quite high. But none of the that UGLIEST LIER is even. That means UGLIER and UGLIEST can be eliminated. Because it's UGLIEST. In certainly isn't that.

I'll opt for CAMPHOPHENIQ SUBGUM. Also BRIAGE, OOF.

All other words BEAK, or THIEF, or FRESHET).
laric kickshaws
Solutions at
Iowa City
n' go home!"

I took it as
of the store,
ntestive novels, gunfire. For psychology, a voice saying "Um-hmm. Yes, I see. Um-hmm." For horror, harpsichord music pierced by screams. For romance, heavy breathing. For humor, peals of laughter. For history, sno' ring. Jokingly, we suggested the idea to the boss, Bob Sutherland, whose main form of communication was a growl. True to form, he growled "How about for the business books a voice shouting 'You're fired!!'"

And so turned the pages of a bookseller's life.

The Ugliest Word

What is the ugliest word in the English language? The Book of Lists wants to know. After giving it a lot of thought, I feel that REPULSIVE is rather repulsive. On the other hand, HIDEOUS seems quite hideous. I also find OFFENSIVE very, very offensive. But none of those three is the ugliest. My immediate response is that UGLIEST is the ugliest. However, when I think about it, UGLIER is even uglier than UGLIEST, and it's also uglier than UGLY. That means UGLIER is the UGLIEST of the three, which makes UGLIER and UGLIEST synonyms. So UGLIER, as a variant of UGLIEST, can be eliminated. Now UGLIEST is more ugly than UGLY. Why? Because it's UGLIER. But UGLIER has been excluded, and so should UGLIEST. In that case, it all boils down to UGLY, and UGLY certainly isn't the ugliest word in English.

I'll opt for KAKKAK instead. Or LUGUBRIOUS, PHLEGM, GUTTERAL, CAMPHOPHENIQUE, FOOFORAW, PERSIMMON, TEENSY-WEENSY, and SUBGUM. Also CALIGINOUSNESS, TAXES, EPISTEMOLOGY, FLICK, UMBRIAGE, OOF, EXPYROJAMQUIZDTCUKL and SKUNK. All other words range from being sort of pretty (such as DIN, BEAK, or THE) to extremely beautiful (like PELLUCID, NEBULA, or FRESHET). But that's my own subjective opinion.
Psychological experience could be a factor in influencing an individual's choice. LOVE may be the ugliest word if a person has been unloved; on the other hand, EAT wouldn't be the ugliest word just because a person has been uneaten.

I have stronger feelings about French. The French word for "happy" is to my mind one of the ugliest words ever to be blurted on the face of the earth: HEUREUX. In spite of its meaning, it sounds like you're throwing up when you speak it. To me, "Je suis heureux" translates as "I am blaaaaaagghhh!"

Auto Accident Humor

Awkwords and Verbal Play is the title of O. V. Michaelsen's comprehensive book of wordplay. Unfortunately, it hasn't been published yet. Among the delightful pages of anagrams, palindromes, puns, and word squares, Michaelsen includes a list of excerpts from accident reports collected by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in 1989. Hop in your car, put on your seatbelt, and read these gems as you race down the highway.

I saw the slow-moving sad-faced old gentleman as he bounced off the hood of my car I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law and headed over the embankment An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my vehicle, and vanished The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him Coming home, I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have The pedestrian had no idea which direction to go, so I ran over him I had been driving my car for forty years, when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident A pedestrian hit me and went under my car The indirect cause of the accident was a little guy in a small car with a big mouth

Keep Doors Closed

Chris McManus has found a door sign that defies linguistic analysis. KEEP DOORS CLOSED may sound simple enough on the surface, but its deep structure is murky. Chris suggests the following interpretations:

Nearby is a dungeon (a keep), whose doors closed in the past
The doors of that keep are closed today
"Doors Closed" is a poetic inversion of "Closed Doors", and the sign is an injunction to keep any closed doors you find
"Doors" is a restricted social club (like Yale's "Bones"), and the sign urges members to fight any changes
The Keep family's door store, called "Keep Doors", went bankrupt
Mr. Keep Doors (the name looks Boer) is being congratulated because he just closed a deal, or closed on a house
Influencing an if a person is the ugliest

If a word for blurted meaning, it To me, "Je

Michaelsen’s hasn’t been palindromes, Life Insurance for seatbelt, and

So who’s surprised? After all, it was the Year of the Palindrome.

Open That Pangrammatic Window!

In the following century, in 1071, the Byzantine army was defeated decisively by Islamic Seljuq’s at Malzgird, allowing people of Turkey at the expense of the declining Byzantine Empire to settle into the region now

You Bet Your Life

The popular game show "You Bet Your Life", originally hosted by Groucho Marx, recently made its debut on British television. Peter Newby switched on the tube to catch the closing moments of the first show. Bill Cosby, the new host, posed the question "Who, after seeing Eskimos preserving fish, invented frozen foods?" The puzzled couple eventually got the answer "General Electric". Peter wondered how many other creative military geniuses there might be. Can you figure out the ones he found by answering these questions?

Who invented the diesel engine?
Who invented the guillotine?
Who invented the Garden of Eden fig leaf?
Who invented baseball?
Who painted Washington Crossing the Delaware?
A Word Becomes a Tale

Peter has devised three ways to make the leap from WORD to TALE. The first is an anagram-synonym chain, the second is a doublet (word ladder), and the third is a triplet (insertion-deletion chain).

WORD state TASTE drop PROD stick TICKS taps PAST late TALE
WORD WARD WARE TARE TALE
WORD WOR OR 0 AO A AE ALE TALE

I, Scipio

Chesterfield dates back to Roman times, according to Peter Newby. While digging in his Chesterfield back garden, he unearthed a carved stone inscribed I, SCIPIO. Peter showed it to his wordy comrade, Bert N. Weepy, who wondered why the lettering was spaced I SC IP IO, making it look for all the world like a partially-faded InScrIPtIO.

Limericked

Harry Partridge sent some limericks and a parody of a well-known poem by A.E. Housman.

Said a homely young girl yclept Ella,
"I do have a lovely glabella,
So on it I'll sock a Vermillion tilaka
And maybe I'll catch me a fella."

An insectophile Ethiopian chef
Found twelve weevils awade in his teff.
Said he, "Lest they eat it, I'd tell them to beat it,
But most likely they all are quite deaf."

With 'roo my hart is laden
For frozen friends I had,
For many a nose-nipped maiden,
For many a kibe-foot lad.
In nooks too cauld for heating
The kibe-foot lads are splayed;
The nose-nipped maids are bleating
Like seals with noses frayed.

Timely Lines

In dental circles, one of the great jokes is "What is the time for a dental appointment?" The answer: "2:30" (tooth hurty). A jaw-breaker like that demands a nervy response. Here are some timely lines. Can you provide other examples, especially for the hours not represented here?

1:01 Here's a joke, 1:01 ever heard before
1:04 We 1:04 all odds
1:10 Stop that 1:10 behavior
from WORD to second is a insertion-deletion TALE

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hury). A

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is the time

hurtly). A

are some

is the time

hurtly). A

are some

is the time

hurtly). A

are some

is the time

hurtly). A

are some

Kay, I - yes! yes!
Double? You owe Hardy.

Now for the big picture. Can you see the word behind these words? They sound like half a telephone call, but they spell perfectly.
Hey, Auntie Idy, aye. Yes, he is tea. Hey, bee! Hell, eye is sage. Emmie in tea, eh? Awry, eh? In eye, yes! Him!

Politics, TV Shows, and Anagrams

Coming next, four political anagrams and four TV show anagrams by Jed Martinez.
O COOT (CLINTON) RECEIVED IN MANHATTAN The Democratic National Convention
ASININE MEN; PEROT’S IDLE Presidential Nominee
MANY VOTED; BUSH RETIRED! Tuesday, November Third
IS PREXY INTENTION? Perot In Ninety-Six
I’D AIR SCENE OF ME (IN VHS) TO AMUSE America’s Funniest Home Videos
O, NUTTLER TV? YES AND NO! Tiny Toon Adventures
LATE HIT; HE’S GOT HIT: “JOHNNY WHO?” The Tonight Show with Jay Leno
ONLY MUSED TV SERIES Unsolved Mysteries

Televised Wordplay

Rarely do anagrams appear on TV shows. Jed Martinez tuned into a couple of recent occurrences. “The Simpsons” cartoon series occasionally features an anagram, such as a sign that was changed from DANGER to GARDEN, or Bart Simpson's tampering with a menu at a seafood restaurant to change the letters in COD PLATTER to COLD PET RAT.

Going beyond Bart, the November 18th episode of the situation comedy “Home Improvement” showed the Taylors mulling over the signing of a will. Tim Taylor had reservations about it. The next-door neighbor didn’t help the situation when he mentioned that the letters in TIM TAYLOR are the same as MORTALITY and the letters in JILL TAYLOR (his wife) become JOLLY TRAIL.

Fair Trade

Turning to the American westward expansion, here’s a four-line spin-off of an old song. Music, maestro!
Oh, give me a home
Where the buffalo roam,
And I'll give you a shack
Overrun by yak.

Corn

In a field of corn, Farmer Onetwothree is talking over this year's crops with Farmer Fourfivesix.
"Didn't get two much rain this year," Farmer Onetwothree complains.

"Enough four the crops," Farmer Fourfivesix replies.

"If five said it once, I've said it a thousand times, you can't predict the weather."

"Shoot, we all eight well enough last year, didn't we? Always had three square meals a day."

"And apple pi for dessert."

"Hey, I heard a good one. What do you get when you fall asleep in an empty field?"

"I dunno. What?"

"Z-rows."

**Diamonds Are Forever**

Charles Linnet writes "I met a lady whose nickname is Cookie. It led me to say 'That diamond broach must have cost a fortune, Cookie.'"**

**A Tale of Two Trolls**

The first troll said, "I'm Rigmarole."

His hand was clenched around a pole.

Behind him stood a female troll.

"I'm Casserole." Her voice was droll.

Her long, thick hair was black as coal.

"Hey, stranger, would you trade your soul," said Rigmarole, "for this rare scroll?"

He pulled it from a pigeonhole

Behind him in a cubbyhole.

My eyes were on the golden bowl

The female held. I had a goal:

To take the bowl from Casserole.

I said, "I'd rather stroll

Away alone across the knoll."

Just then I saw an armed patrol

Of angry trolls upon the shoal.

I heard a bell begin to toll

For me. I felt my nerves unroll

Like coiled snakes, and on the whole

I felt like crawling in a hole.

Instead, I spurred my trusty foal

And, quickly lifting Casserole,

Away, away, away we stole!

**The Paradox Box**

The Paradox Box has no opening, no window. Inside there's a single lightbulb. By means of a telekinetic sensor, the light goes on when the operator is thinking, "The light is off." It goes off when the operator is thinking, "The light is on."

The operator knows how it works, but can he or she ever know...
whether the light is on or off? What happens to the light when the operator isn't thinking about it? And what if the operator could open the box and watch?

New Wave Genealogy

If your father's father is your grandfather, and your daughter's daughter is your granddaughter, then shouldn't your brother's brother be your grandbrother and your sister's sister your grandcousin? In that case, when there are only two boys in the family, say Bill and Joe, then Bill is Bill's brother's brother, or his own grandbrother. And Joe is Bill's brother and greatgrandbrother. And so on. You didn't know that you had so many relatives, did you?

Comic Onomatopoeia

Ross Eckler developed a taxonomy of sounds that appeared in comic books and included a brief description of the actions producing each sound. How sound is your judgment? Match the noises on the left with the descriptions on the right. All of them appeared in the comics, but - KREEGAAA!!! - it's a tough quiz.

| 1. sffffffwopp | a. bread pops out of toaster |
| 2. moosh mummph moomph | b. anteater tongue shoots out, catches fly |
| 3. ppbpbpbpbpt | c. tweak dog's nose |
| 4. blut | d. food (as a fast-moving object) |
| 5. slor-slor-slor-slor | e. strain to lift weights |
| 6. pum pum bam bam | f. eat cream puff |
| 7. zronknklnrk | g. laugh |
| 8. au ooga | h. beanie propeller |
| 9. shoof | i. smoke alarm |
| 10. hupunnnnggg | j. man falls in outhouse pit |
| 11. phwonk | k. head hit by pie |
| 12. wizzeew zwosh wish | l. sucking cheese off lasagna |
| 13. yakakakakaka | m. clam gurgles |
| 14. pop rock badoola blam | n. heart through stethoscope |
| 15. thpt | o. snore |
| 16. splloosh | p. idling car |
| 17. oggle oggle | q. Bronx cheer |
| 18. thbbpthppth thbbpthppth thbbpthppth | r. loose shirt falls around one's ears while standing on head |
| 19. sluuuck | s. blow nose |
| 20. bwoing | t. drink last juice through straw |
| 21. rrghhmphffg | u. car horn |
| 22. woo-op w-p-p w-woo | v. shove bottle into baby's mouth |
| 23. tswaannng | w. gargle |
| 24. zot | x. objectionable radio music |
| 25. heh hee hoo har snork ho | y. eyes bug out in surprise, terror |
| 26. brummmmmummmummmum | z. eat rapidly |

A Likely Story

Similes, like metaphors, are linguistic delicacies. The usual form is "A is B" or "B is C" of epic goa and similes.

Like balls of fire, the earthquake blacked out the sky. The sound of the quake was like the zing of a broken tennis racket, not as holy as it should be.

The accordion was being played by seasoned hands, and the room was full of foot-licking odors, for it was a black and white world.

Speaking of similes, there was a man who always said, "I like it." A simile was a lie, unlike his, it was not always true.
The light when the operator da ughter's ur brother's grand­ relatives, did

When the meal, like a ceremony at a superpower summit, was properly pre pared, calling to mind a Boy Scout, who is always prepared, like a mailman, who delivers the mail even on a sweltering sum mer's day or a snowy winter's night, I carried in the dishes, like flying saucers, such as the ones spotted every so often by people all around the world, which orbits the sun with eight other planets, and set them on the table.

Speaking of those people, who may actually be seeing an illusion, similar to that produced by a magician's sleight of hand, my guests made the food disappear, gobbling it up like vultures, which are far different from pelicans, snipes, dodos, and rocs, the last of which sounds like a synonym for stones, as in the Rolling Stones, who never sound like rolling rocks, except when they're stoned.

I enjoy such scenes, where everything resembles everything else, but that's a cliche, like "Truth is beauty" or "Let sleeping dogs lie", unlike George Washington, who always told the truth, which is not always similar to similes, like these, beginning with a word like like, like the word my guests used to describe the meal, saying "I like it."

The Accident Very Bad

When I was learning Spanish, I had to think in English and then translate. But my English was rearranged to fit the Spanish structure. Adjectives came after nouns, verbs had no subjects, and slang became literal. The following story shows that form of "Learner's Spanglish".

Two cars blue and one car green had an accident very bad. The car of the police arrived, and the police them saw.

"Of whom is this the fault?" asked the first police.
"His!" shouted the man more tall. "The man the yellow driving!"
"No, not I hit anyone never!" shouted the man more loud. "My yellow not it caused."
"Then the fault must be of her," said the second police.
The woman out of her car climbed and smiled. Was being afraid.
Walked up to the car of the police.
"To me not myself please," said the woman. "I was driving very slowly, when these gentlemen hit my poor little."
"I may see your license for driving?" asked the first police.
"Yes, Mister. Here is."
"Are shaking your hands," said. "Not makes cold today."
"What a pity!" replied. "The accident me made to have fear, and the drivers are blamed. But I it didn't do."
"Not yourself bother," said the other police. "As your spouse, I know that not was able to have been your fault."
Then her kissed. Into his ear whispered, "I you love, my little rich fat."
Replied, "I, too, my heart."
"Hey!" said. "To us what is going to happen?"
To him answered the police who to the woman was married, "My brother, the judge, this case difficult will decide."
The two men frowned. More late were found to be guilty. Had to buy a car new for the lady relieved. Were very, very angry.

Follow-ups

Wooden you know that a Word Ways reader wooded eventually come through with the answer to my postcard query in the November 1991 Kickshaws? Leonard Ashley writes

'Yew-ed be board knot at all with a dictionary of slang. Even today twig in United Kingdom slang means "catch on". The United Kingdom expression twiggy-vous? is equivalent to the United States do you get it?"

Alan Frank found a bunch more of those trigram heads and tails words given in November 1992: ANTiconvulsANT, ANTidepres­sANT, ANTiplAINT, BLEAcharABLE, CALendricAL, EINstEin, ENTablemENT, ENThralmENT, ESsentialNESS, INGestINg, INGolNG, INGraftING, IN­GrainINg, INGratiating, INGrowth, MEPhytogeograPHY, PHYtogeograPHY, RESecures, TESTates, and UNDeRFUND. He also provided four of the four-letter kind: EIINsteINs, MuckAmuck, OUTSHOUTs, and URICosURIC.

Overlaps

Recently, I began toying around with arranging number words in grid form. Some of the results have interesting patterns [Editor: see "Crossnumber Forms" elsewhere in this issue]. Peter Newby tried his hand at this form of logogeometry and discovered the following, which he calls Overlaps, since the words sometimes cross over each other in spelling out the numbers. The Maltese Cross uses TEN-ELEVEN, and the Diamond uses SEVEN-TEN-ELEVEN. Peter raised the question of whether a "perfect" grid can be found, that is, a grid of four or more different number words with let-
"living!"

My yellow being afraid.

driving very police.

I have fear, and your spouse, my little

eventually come the November

 slang. Even m". The Uni-

to the Uni-

m heads and, ANTidepres-

ENTableMENT, DraitNG, [N-

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letter kind:

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ars [Editor:

Peter Newby
discovered the

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The Maltese

TEN-ELEVEN.

can be found, words with let-

ters totalling to the numbers themselves. This can be done, but only if the grid does not require connections at all four corners. The open-cornered third square is such a grid, perhaps the only one. Can you find another?

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The Book of Truth

Once I read a book of 100 numbered pages with one sentence on each page. Page 1: "The sentence on page 2 is true." Page 2: "The sentence on page 3 is true." And so on to page 100: "The sentence on page 1 is false."

On the second reading, page 100 changes the entire book. If page 1 is false, then the truth is "The sentence on page 2 is false." Likewise, page 2 becomes "The sentence on page 3 is false." And so on to page 100, which now should be read as "The sentence on page 1 is true."

What happens on the third reading?

Birds of Language

PIDGIN ENGLISH is a term for an amalgam of English and another language, developed out of necessity by people who don’t speak the same tongue. Some pidgins based on other languages are Portuguese ANGOLAR, Spanish PALENQUERO and Arabic KI-NUBI. PIDGIN is an alteration of "business", and, according to Webster’s Seventh Colleague, one definition of PIGEON identifies it as an alteration of PIDGIN. If PIGEON ENGLISH can be used instead of the more prosaic PIDGIN ENGLISH, other languages can be identified by the same format. Here is an aviary of freshly-hatched birds of language:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hen</th>
<th>Cornish</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peacock</td>
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<td>Puffin</td>
<td>Russian</td>
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<td>Whitethroat</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
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<td>Falcon</td>
<td>Maltese</td>
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<td>Pterodactyl</td>
<td>Sumerian</td>
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<td>Bird of Paradise</td>
<td>Polynesian</td>
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<td>Flamingo</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>Catbird</td>
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<td>Dodo</td>
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<td>Chickadee</td>
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<td>Budgerigar Bulgarian</td>
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<td>Sandpiper Sanskrit</td>
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<td>Duck Mandarin</td>
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<td>Popinjay Portuguese</td>
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<td>Turkey Turkish</td>
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<td>Roadrunner Gaelic</td>
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<td>Phoenix Phoenician</td>
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