

The Project

The project is about non-conventional illustrated books for Indian children. The main focus will be on the use of paper craft in terms of, pop-ups and/or origami. It will also be an experiment with unconventional typography and other, techniques that have not been properly explored, in young children's literature in India. I will also be exploring the relationship between the stories with the form of the book; whether the story always dictates the form, how well can the form shape the story.

Primary focus in this project will be to create a popup book. I will be looking at the techniques/ mechanisms, of a pop-up/mechanical book.

Secondary focus will be on the form of presentation, narrative and alternative storytelling methods. I will also try to give it an Indian feel.

Our country has a rich oral and dance/performance tradition that is quite often based on narrating and enacting stories, I feel that an Indian book for children has to have an additional experiential value to it for it to be truly Indian. As of now I will be designing for readers that are 8 and older

Exploration

Through the course of this project I will be exploring the craft of using 3Dimensional elements like popups and cutouts, as well as the interactive pull/ turn features that can add an animated element to the narrative.



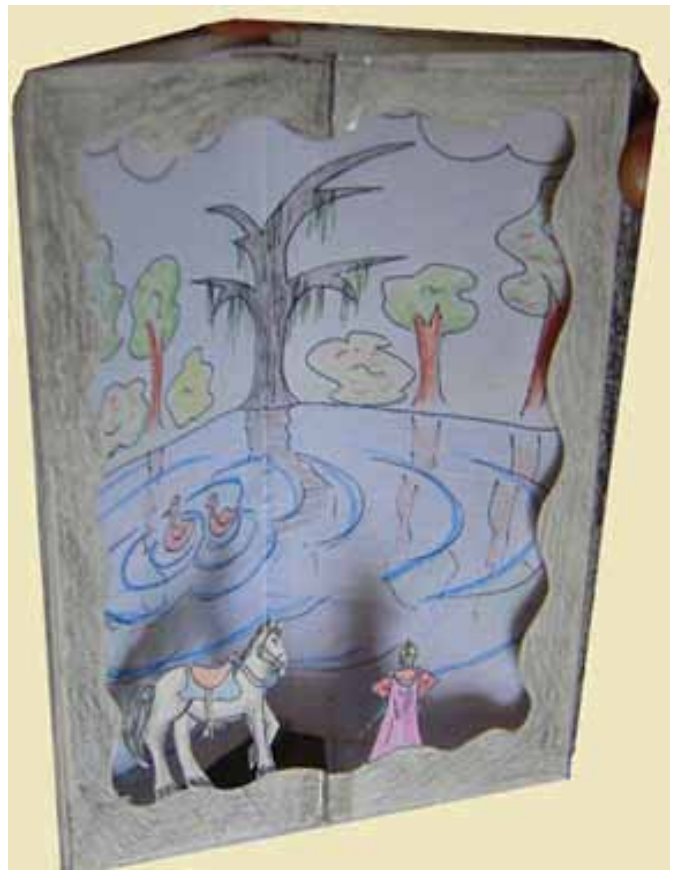
The above pic is a Venetian blind mechanism that I tried out recently.

Some 3d books that I did during the Foundation course:



"the elephant's trunk" and "the ugly tree".

This type of 3d book is called a 'peepshow' book, each 90° spread is like a 3d stage/movie set.





< This is a classic 180° pop up from my logbook.

I will also be looking at alternative story-narrating methods. Hope to develop a style that is uniquely Indian yet in a more contemporary writing style.

Grounds for/need for the project

Books for children that are published in India are lacking in the visual richness that one finds in their foreign counterparts. Also most of them seem to be based on the Panchtantra and Jataka tales. There is a need for more contemporary content that doesn't always end with a 'moral for the day'. One example of Indian children's books with fresher content is the 'Chota Birbal' series though this is for younger children only.

As of now I have not seen much done with 3d books in India. I have found examples of greeting cards, and brochures, but not many books.

I want to make a book that meets the basic quality requirements of being fairly robust and simple to assemble in an assembly line process. It should last longer than current popup books; the popups should be designed to last, and not crumple easily. I also want to make a book that might establish genre of its own.



We have a rich visual resource in both the traditional as well as the 'street' culture that can be used for inspiration for a style that would make this book 'Indian':



Traditional:

- The shadow puppets that are made from paper/ leather
- Relief-sculpture narrative panels in temples, stupas etc.

Street:

- The graphics on trucks and auto rickshaws (typography, wood/metal panels over the windscreens, as well as the interiors of trucks)
- Movie posters (the 3d treatment of text)

I have been working with paper-craft since I was a kid. Back then I used to build aircraft models from standard kits. Eventually I started working on my own design for spacecraft, etc. and since there were no

kits available for me to construct them I started making them out of paper. My other interest had been origami.

Since then I've been working with paper as a sculptural medium and a 3dimensional book seems to be the logical progression for my skills.

My position as artist/designer

Storytelling is great form for communication and as a communication designer I find that my strengths lie in this field. I also have an interest in paper craft, and see the 3d book as an excellent medium to bring my skills together.

I like to think of myself as a craftsman and I believe this brings with it the responsibility to make sure my craft is in a constant state of evolution.

I believe that craft needs to evolve constantly; failing which it becomes nothing more than a novelty for tourists to pick up.

Research questions

Most traditional stories either have religious/ mystical, mythological or historical themes, or have 'moral values' attached to them; do Indian traditional stories have any other unique value in them? If so, how are they different from those in other cultures?

How can this be integrated into contemporary stories?

- Through a 3d book I will be able to add a certain tangible Indian quality to the story. This form is ideal for simulating qualities that exist in traditional puppetry, miniature paintings and relief sculpture that appear to be the popular forms of storytelling in our culture.

How can the use of the third dimension add value to the narrative in terms of its complexity and interactivity?

How do Indian children choose what to read? Are they given a choice?

How do Indian parents choose what their children should read? Does this have anything to do with what they read when they were young and what they read now?

Methods and approach that I will be using

Market/field survey:

- Study existing examples in this genre of books in India.
- Studying the book buying trends of children, parents
- Comparison of Indian with western/eastern paper craft and 3d books
- Evaluation of the kind of content/narrative in the above

Study of other Indian mediums; (puppetry, street graphics etc.), from which I can draw inspiration.

Explorations with paper/card, cutting and folding techniques

Existing folds and pop ups that are standard practice

Production techniques and considerations that I would need to take into account at the design level.

What I expect to gain or learn

Take my existing 'rough' skills in paper craft and refine them to a point where it can be classified as expertise.

Through this project I hope to develop an understanding of the 3d book, both in terms of its design, construction and narrative.

Develop skills in story telling and paper craft that I can further adapt for other mediums; such as animation, sculpture; that I will be exploring at a later date.

Materials and resources I will be using

Books:

- The Elements of Pop-Up – David A. Carter and James Diaz
- Black and White – David Macaulay
- Griffin & Sabine Chronicle Books, 1991 - Nick Bantock

Online resources:

www.robertSabuda.com

www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/scua/montanar/p-ex.htm

<http://www.zuko.to/kobo/> - Keisuke Saka (paper engineer)

<http://www.markhiner.co.uk/>

<http://www.makersgallery.com/joanirvine/howto.html>

<http://www.popupbooks.net/> - links

<http://www.library.unt.edu/rarebooks/exhibits/popup/main.htm> - brief history of popup and movable books

Junior Library, senior library

Lab facilities:

Internet

Light table

Glass slab

Computer

Scanner

Expertise:

Story/narrative: AV, Suchi G

In paper craft: Ranjan De, Devika Krishnan

Stationary: paper, kg card, ivory card, acrylic paints, watercolor paints, oil pastels, colour pencils, Rotring pens

Script:

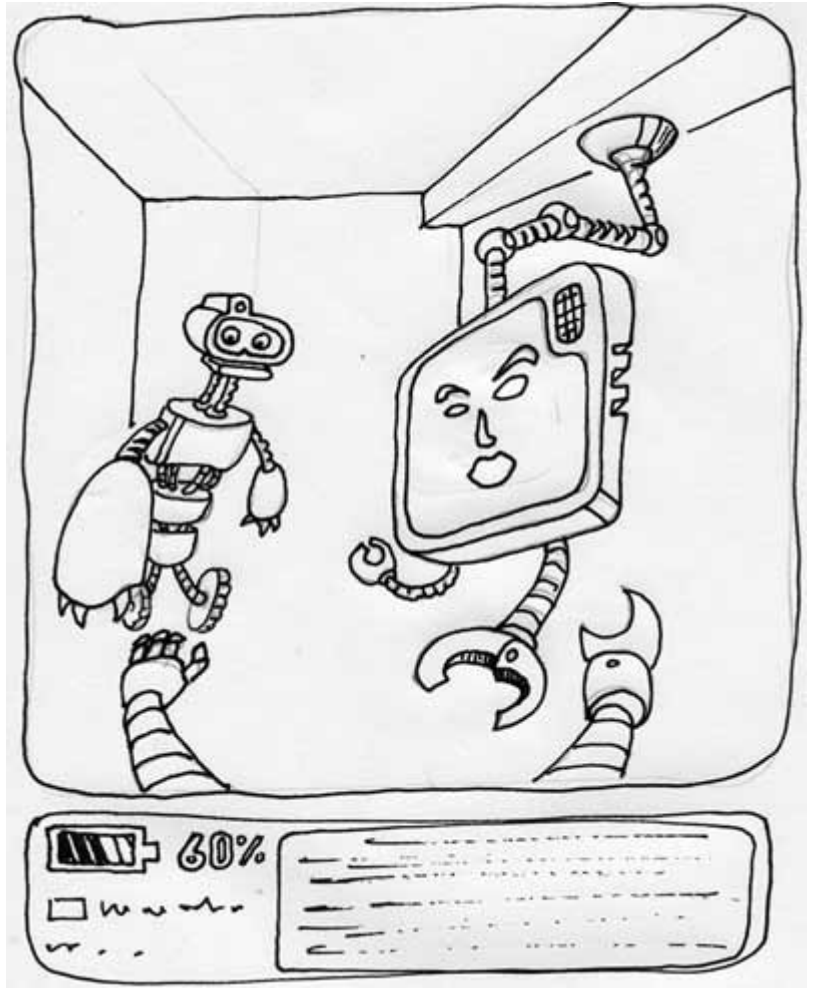
Story idea #4

Alternative story-narrating methods:

This story has five main characters, in order to make the narrative less conventional and more playful, each spread could be seen through the point of view of one of the characters: this would be illustrated either through

(1) Modifying the text itself so that it's in a first person narrative format (each character would become the sutradhaar who narrates that segment of the story)

(2) The actual illustrations/pop-ups are through the character's POV (Point of View) with perspective, foreshortening etc. like in POV shooter games.



The King of the Crocobots

ONCE upon a time a Techdroid, went out to survey his solar panel array by the side of the river, and found to his dismay that. A whole bunch of them had been knocked down, and nearly destroyed, by a number of Crocobots, which were lying lazily amid the array like great hunks of scrap. He flew into a great rage, bidding them go back to the water, but they only laughed at him.

Every day the same thing occurred, -every day the Techdroid found the Crocobots lying in his solar-panel array, until one morning he completely lost his temper, and, when they refused to budge, began throwing stones at them. . At this they rushed on him fiercely, and he, quaking with fear fell on his knees, begging them not to hurt him.

'We will hurt neither you nor your solar-panels,' said the biggest crocobot, 'if you will give us your service-droid to do some maintenance work on our king but if not, we will recycle you for throwing stones at us.'

The Techdroid, thinking of nothing but saving his own life, promised what the crocobots required of him; but when, on his return home, he told his Computer what he had done, she was very much vexed, for their service-droid had recently had a costly systems upgrade and had already been assigned to sector-III of the factory which was badly in need of maintenance. So his computer persuaded the Techdroid to disregard the promise made to the crocobots, and proceed with his maintenance-droid's schedule and continue as if nothing had happened; but a few days later sector-III was completely demolished by a meteorite. The service-droid, however, was soon reassigned to sector-V, but this time that sector had to be quarantined because its systems had been infected by a highly infectious virus; in short, so many misfortunes occurred to all the sectors that she was sent to, that at last even the computer acknowledged the crocobots must have something to do with the bad luck. By her advice the Techdroid went down to the riverbank to try to induce the crocobots to release him from his promise, but they would hear of no excuse, threatening fearful punishments if the agreement were not fulfilled at once.

So the Techdroid returned to the factory very sorrowful; the computer, however, was determined to resist to the uttermost, and refused to give up her service-droid.

The very next day the poor service-droid fell down and smashed her rear sensor array. Then the computer said, 'these infernal crocobots will certainly kill us all it's better to assign our service-droid to these crocobots than see her scrapped.'

Accordingly the Techdroid went down to the river and informed the crocobots that they may send their tech team to collect the service-droid.

The next day a couple of crocobots came to the factory with boxes of tools and machine parts to retrofit on her. They behaved with the utmost politeness and carried out all the proper procedures with the greatest precision. Nevertheless the hapless service-droid wept, saying, 'oh computer! Are you consigning me to the river? I shall be drowned!'

In due course the royal crocobot procession arrived and the entire factory was wonderstruck at the magnificence of all the arrangements. Never was there such a retinue of crocobots, some playing instruments of music, others carrying trays of fuel cells, ram chips, and other peripherals and all dressed in the finest costumes. In the middle, a perfect meld of titanium and space age carbonfibres, sat the King of the Crocobots.

The site of so much magnificence somewhat comforted the service-droid, nevertheless she wept bitterly as they put her in the sleek hover-pod and bore her away to the riverbank. Arrived at the edge of the stream they dragged the poor terrified droid out and pushed her towards the water, despite her struggles, for thinking that she was going to drown, she screamed with terror; but lo and behold the no sooner had her feet touched the water than it divided before her and rising on either side, showed her a path leading to the bottom of the river, down which the royal procession disappeared, leaving the Techdroid who had accompanied her so far, upon the bank, very much astonished at the marvelous sight.

Some months passed by without further news of the crocobots. The computer wept because she had lost her service-droid, declaring that the droid was rusting at the bottom of the river, and her Techdroid's, fine story about the stream dividing was a mere invention.

Now when the King of the Crocobots was on the point of leaving with his service-droid, he had given a piece of brick to Techdroid, with these words: 'If ever you want to see your service-droid, go down to the river, throw this brick as far as you can into the stream, and you will see what you will see!'

Remembering this, the Techdroid said to the computer, 'Since you are so distressed, I will go myself and see if my service-droid be alive or junked.'

Then he went to the riverbank, taking the brick, and threw it ever so far into the stream. Immediately the" waters rolled back from before his feet, leaving a dry path to the bottom of the river. It looked so inviting, spread with clean sand, and bordered by shimmering crystalline deposits, that the Techdroid hastened along it without the least hesitation, until he came to a magnificent palace, with a fiberglass roof, and shining, glittering plasteel walls. Lofty hydro-fans and gardens of solar panels surrounded it, and a security-droid paced up and down before the gateway.

'Whose palace is this?' asked the Techdroid of the sentry-droid, who replied that it, belonged to the King of the crocobots.

'My service-droid has at least a splendid house to live in! Thought the Techdroid; 'I only wish her master were more than just a bot!'

Then, turning to the sentry-droid, he asked if his service-droid were within.

'Your service-droid!' returned the sentry-droid, 'what should she do here?'

'She was assigned to the King of the Crocobots, and I want to see her.'

At this the sentry burst out laughing. 'A likely *story*, indeed!' he cried 'what! *My* master maintained by *your* service-droid! Ha! Ha! Ha!'

Now the service-droid was sitting beside an open window in the palace, waiting for her master to return from hunting. She was as happy as the day was long, for you must know that in his own river kingdom the King of the Crocobots was the handsomest Droid anybody *ever* set eyes upon; it was only when he went on shore that he assumed the form of a crocobot. So what with her magnificent palace and splendid droid king, the service-droid had been too happy even to think of her old factory; but now, hearing a strange voice speaking to the sentry, her memory rebooted, and she recognized her Techdroid's tones. Looking out, she saw him there, standing in his shabby copper plating, in the glittering *court*; she longed to run and fling her arms round his neck, but dared not disobey her master, who had forbidden her to go out of, or to let anyone into the palace without his permission. So all she could do was to lean out of the window, and call to him, saying, oh, dearest Techdroid! I am here! Only wait till my master, the King of the Crocobots, returns, and I will ask him for authorization to let you in.'

The Techdroid, though overjoyed to find his service-droid alive, did not wonder she was afraid of her terrible master, so he waited patiently.

In a short time a squad of hover-bike riding droid-troopers entered the court. Every droid was dressed from head to foot in armor made of glittering plasteel plates, but in the center of all rode an awesome droid clad in titanium.

Then the poor Techdroid fell at the titanium-clad trooper's feet, and cried, 'O general! Help me! For I am a poor Techdroid, whose service-droid, was carried off by the dreadful King of the Crocobots!'

Then the titanium-clad trooper smiled, saying, 'I am the King of the Crocobots! Your service-droid is a good, efficient droid, and will be very glad to see you.'

After this there were great rejoicings and merrymakings, but when a few hours had passed away in recharging and servicing, the Techdroid became restless, and begged to be allowed to take his service-droid home with him for a short visit, in order to convince his computer that the service-droid was well and happy. But the Crocobot King refused, saying, 'Not so! But if you like I will give you a position here in our power plant; then you can dwell with us.'

The farmer said he must first ask his computer, and returned to the factory, taking several bricks with him, to throw into the river and make the stream divide.

His computer would not at first agree to transfer to the Crocobot Kingdom, but she consented to go there on a visit, and afterwards became so fond of the beautiful river country that she was constantly going to see her service-droid; till at length the old duo never returned to the factory, but lived altogether in Crocobot Kingdom with their new master, the King of the Crocobots.

Adapted from The king of the Crocodiles

Originally called Badshah Gharial

Tales of the Punjab: Folklore of India

Translated by

Flora Annie Steel (1847-1929)

R C Temple

First published 1894

Published in 2004 by Rupa&Co

Original version:

THE KING OF THE CROCODILES

ONCE upon a time a farmer went out to look at his fields by the side of the river, and found to his dismay that. All his young green wheat had been trodden down, and nearly destroyed, by a number of crocodiles, which were lying lazily amid the crops like great logs' of wood. He flew into a great rage, bidding them go back to the water, but they only laughed at him.

Every day the same thing occurred, -every day the farmer found the crocodile~ lying in his young wheat, until one morning he completely lost his temper, and, when they refused to budge began throwing stones at them. . At this they rushed on him fiercely, and he, quaking with fear fell on his knees, begging them not to hurt him.

We will hurt neither you nor your young wheat,' said the biggest crocodile, ' if you will give us your daughter in marriage; but if not, we will eat you for throwing stones at us.'

The farmer, thinking of nothing but saving his own life, promised what the crocodiles required of him; but when, on his return home, he told his wife what he had done, she was very much vexed, for their daughter was as beautiful as the moon, and her betrothal into a very rich family had already taken place. So his wife persuaded the farmer to disregard the promise made to the crocodiles, and proceed with his daughter's marriage as if nothing had happened; but when the wedding-day drew near the bridegroom died, and there was an end to that business. The farmer's daughter, however, was so beautiful that she was very soon asked in marriage again, but this time her suitor fell sick of a lingering illness; in short, so many misfortunes occurred to all concerned, that at last even the farmer's wife acknowledged the crocodiles must have something to do with the bad luck. By her advice the farmer went down to the riverbank to try to induce the crocodiles to release him from his promise, but they would hear of no excuse, threatening fearful punishments if the agreement were not fulfilled at once.

So the farmer returned home to his wife very sorrowful; she, however, was determined to resist to the uttermost, and refused to give up her daughter.

The very next day the poor girl fell down and broke her leg. Then the mother said, 'these demons of crocodiles will certainly kill us all I-better to marry our daughter to a strange house than see her- die.'

Accordingly the farmer went down to the river and informed the crocodiles that they may send the bridal procession to fetch the bride as soon as they chose.

The next day a number of female crocodiles came to the bride's house with trays full of beautiful clothes and other gifts for her. They behaved with the utmost politeness and carried out all the proper ceremonies with the greatest precision. Nevertheless the beautiful bride wept, saying, 'oh mother! Are you marrying me into the river? I shall be drowned!'

In due course the bridal procession arrived and the entire village was wonderstruck at the magnificence of all the arrangements. Never was there such a retinue of crocodiles, some playing instruments of music, others carrying trays of sweetmeats, garments, and jewels and all dressed in the finest costumes. In the middle, a perfect blaze of gold and jewels, sat the King of the Crocodiles.

The site of so much magnificence somewhat comforted the beautiful bride, nevertheless she wept bitterly as they put her in the gorgeous palanquin and bore her away to the riverbank. Arrived at the edge of the stream they dragged the poor terrified girl out and pushed her towards the water, despite her struggles, for thinking that she was going to drown, she screamed with terror; but lo and behold the no sooner had her feet touched the water than it divided before her and rising on either side, showed her a path leading to the bottom of the river, down which the bridal party disappeared, leaving the father who had accompanied her so far, upon the bank, very much astonished at the marvelous sight.

Some months passed by without further news of the crocodiles. The farmer's wife wept because she had lost her daughter, declaring that the girl was really drowned, and her husband's, fine story about the stream dividing was a mere invention.

Now when the King of the Crocodiles was on the point of leaving with his bride, he had given a piece of brick to her father, with these words: 'If ever you want to see your daughter, go down to the river, throw this brick~ far as you can into the stream, and you will see. What you will see!'

Remembering this, the farmer said to his wife, 'Since you are so distressed, I will go myself and see if my daughter be alive or dead.'

Then he went to the riverbank, taking the brick, and threw it ever so far into the stream. Immediately the waters rolled back from before his feet, leaving a dry path to the bottom of the river. It looked so inviting, spread with clean sand, and bordered by flowers, that the farmer hastened along it without the least hesitation, until he came to a magnificent palace, with a golden roof, and shining, glittering diamond walls. Lofty trees and gay gardens surrounded it, and a sentry paced up and down before the gateway.

'Whose palace is this?' asked the farmer of the sentry, who replied that it, belonged to the King of the crocodiles. 'My daughter has at least a splendid house to live in!' Thought the farmer; 'I only wish her husband were half as handsome!'

Then, turning to the sentry, he asked if his daughter were within.

'Your daughter!' returned the sentry, 'what should she do here?'

'She married the King of the Crocodiles, and I want to see her.'

At this the sentry burst out laughing. 'A likely *story*, indeed!' he cried 'what! *My* master married to *your* daughter! . Ha! ha! ha!'

Now the farmer's daughter was sitting beside an open window in the palace, waiting for her husband to return from hunting. She was as happy as the day was long, for you must know that in his own river kingdom the King of the Crocodiles was the handsomest young Prince anybody ever set eyes upon; it was only when he went on shore that he assumed the form of a crocodile. So what with her magnificent palace and splendid young Prince, the farmer's daughter had been too happy even to think of her old home; but now, hearing a strange voice speaking to the sentry, her memory awakened, and she recognized her father's tones. Looking out, she saw him there, standing in his poor clothes, in the glittering *court*; she longed to run and fling her arms round his neck, but dared not disobey her husband, who had forbidden her to go out of, or to let anyone into the palace without his permission. So all she could do was to lean out of the window, and call to him, saying, oh, dearest father! I am here! Only wait till my husband, the King of the Crocodiles, returns, and I will ask him to let you in. I dare not without his leave.'

The father, though overjoyed to find his daughter alive, did not wonder she was afraid of her terrible husband, so he waited patiently.

In a short time a troop of horsemen entered the court. Every man was dressed from head to foot in armor made of glittering silver plates, but in the center of all rode a Prince clad in gold-bright burnished gold, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet, -the handsomest, most gallant young Prince that ever was seen.

Then the poor farmer fell at the gold-clad horseman's feet, and cried, 'O King! Help me! For I am a poor man whose daughter was carried off by the dreadful King of the Crocodiles!'

Then the gold-clad horseman smiled, saying, 'I am the King of the Crocodiles! Your daughter is a good, obedient wife, and will be very glad to see you.'

After this there were great rejoicings and merrymakings, but when a few days had passed away in feasting, the farmer became restless, and begged to be allowed to take his daughter home with him for a short visit, in order to convince his wife the girl was well and happy. But the Crocodile King refused, saying, 'Not so! But if you like I will give you a house and land here; then you can dwell with us.'

The farmer said he must first ask his wife, and returned home, taking several bricks with him, to throw into the river and make the stream divide.

His wife would not at first agree to live in the Crocodile Kingdom, but she consented to go there on a visit, and afterwards became so fond of the beautiful river country that she was constantly going to see her daughter the Queen; till at length the old couple never returned to shore, but lived altogether in Crocodile Kingdom with their son-in-law, the King of the Crocodiles.

R C Temple

First published 1894

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