The distinction is probably a sign that Christianity still lingers with the hand, and not just because the foot hurts more.

Similarly, a kick is considered more insulting than a blow.

The Irish believe that the soles of one's feet may have rubbed and communicated smells of hygiene. Along one edge of every short they stich.

Prize came the sheers which people here use for rear.

And unaware of me,

I tend to be completely taken up with the dirty washing.

I met him at the laundry again today. He pre-
the simple reason that it is farther from heaven. Only the sexual organs are treated with less respect, and here there is some mystery.

Next came pillowcases with dark impressions in the middle. Then towels, which unlike pillowcases get dirtier round the edges, and, last of all, a colorful bundle of crumpled personal linen. At this point he started tossing his stuff in at such a rate that I couldn't take a good look. Either he was afraid of giving away a secret, or else he was ashamed, as people always are, to exhibit objects directly pertaining to his legs. But it was suspicious, I thought, that he had worn his clothes so long without getting them laundered. Ordinarily hunchbacks are clean. They are afraid that their clothes may make them still more repulsive. But this one, surprisingly, was such a sloven that he wasn't like a hunchback at all.

The woman who checked the laundry had seen everything. The marks left by the rarest of juices were old acquaintances to her. But even she couldn't help saying quite loudly: "What are you shoving it under my nose for, citizen? If you can't sleep properly, do your own laundry!"

He paid his money without a word and rushed out. I didn't follow him, because I didn't want to attract attention.

At home things were as usual. The minute I got into my room Veronica appeared. She bashfully suggested that we should have supper together. It was a bit awkward for me to say no to the girl. She's the only one in the apartment

who treats me decently. It's a pity that her sympathy is grounded in sexual attraction. I'm absolutely convinced of this after what happened today.

"How's Kostritskaya?" I asked, steering the conversation on to common enemies.

"Oh, Andrei Kazimirovich, she's been making threats again."

"What's wrong?"

"The same as before. Light on in the bathroom and the floor all splashed. Kostritskaya informed me that she's going to complain to the superintendent."

The news infuriated me. I make less use of the plumbing than any of the others. I hardly ever go into the kitchen. Can't I make up for it by using the bathroom?

"Well, let her get on with it," I answered sharply. "She burns light by the kilowatt herself. And her children broke my bottle. Let the superintendent come."

But I knew very well that an appeal to the authorities would be a very risky business for me. Why draw attention to myself unnecessarily?

"Don't upset yourself, Andrei Kazimirovich," said Veronica. "I'll look after any trouble with the neighbors. Please don't upset yourself."

She put out her hand to touch my forehead, but I managed to dodge. "No, no, I'm quite well, I haven't got a temperature. Let's have supper."

Food stood on the table, steaming and stinking. The sadism of cookery has always amazed me. Would-be chickens are eaten in liquid form. The innards of pigs are stuffed
nobody loved me.

boss anyone who doesn’t love him enough. How I wish that
in love to feel humbled and loved with the right to
be humble, shining, nothing of the kind, a man only has to feel
dimmest. Is there any people in love at all the

Don’t read somebody else’s story or demand a reward.

This sake he asked me the head bookkeeper. She

promised, I know you will.”

This was too much, I pleaded a mitigating and asked her

Your lies, my lies, I said Victoria, wearing her hand as a

sleeves.

He had broken the window. I jumped and hit the

throwingichte on your window sill!!!

and you are a genius. What a joy of being you are.

Don’t think it’s just on my part. He’s just as much of a genius

as you are. I’ll be here, Victoria asked. I love you, the

mood. And you know what? It’s not a question of

Jennifer Kaizimovitch, are you very lonely? asked

where it was all for.

of a fish, a jet of water on a hook. They all knew

and strangers. Kaizimovitch is a beast in comparison with the

matters for dinner. Yes, the position of Chief. Is this

infect of them. Stuck him with his own brazen face

What about pretending a man in the same suit?

B noisy. I said Victoria, said Jennifer Kaizimovitch.

If, yes now. Anything Kaizimovitch, said Jennifer Kaizimovitch.

serenade with senate?

"Can you now, another Kaizimovitch, said Victoria, Ca-

it, crush it to dust.

Whether it is treated more immaturely still they can’t bear

written down. Grown men, women, or children—what does when you think of it, is

"I brought off a corner interest in myself,

with their own tears, a man, it’s swallowed itself furnished

FANTASTIC STORIES
When I was alone I set about watering my cacti from an enamel mug. I fed them slowly, my little humpbacked children, and relaxed.

It was two o'clock in the morning, when, faint from hunger, I crept on tiptoe along the dark corridor to the bathroom. But what a splendid supper I had then!

It isn't at all easy, eating only once a day.

That was two weeks ago. Since then Veronica has informed me that she has two beaus: a lieutenant and an actor at the Stanislavsky Theater. But it hasn't stopped her showing her predilection for me. She has threatened to shave her head so that I can't keep saying how stupid it would be to sacrifice her beauty to an old freak. Now she has got around to spying on me, lying in wait for me on the way to the bathroom.

"Cleanliness makes hunchbacks handsome"—that's my stock answer when she keeps asking why I take so many baths.

Just in case, I have started blocking up the frosted window between the bathroom and the lavatory with a piece of plywood. I always try the bolts before undressing. I couldn't stand the thought of somebody watching me.

Yesterday morning I wanted to fill my fountain pen, to continue my irregular diary, so I knocked at her door. Veronica wasn't up yet. She was reading *The Three Musketeers* in bed.

"Good morning," I said politely. "You'll be late for your lecture."

She closed her book. "Do you know," she said, "that the whole house thinks I'm your mistress?"

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*Pkhentz*

I said nothing, and then something horrible happened. Veronica, her eyes flashing, threw back the counterpane, and her whole body, completely uncovered, stared up at me angrily. "Look what you've turned down, Andrei Kazimirovich!"

Fifteen years ago I came across a textbook on anatomy. I wanted to know what was what, so I studied carefully all the pictures and diagrams. Later on, I had an opportunity of watching little boys bathing in the river at the Gorky Park of Culture and Rest. But, as it happened, I had never seen a naked woman in the flesh and at such close quarters.

It was—I repeat—horrible. I found that her whole body was of the same unnatural whiteness as her neck, face, and hands. A pair of white breasts dangled in front. At first I took them for secondary arms, amputated above the elbow. But each of them terminated in a round nipple like a push button.

Farther on, and right down to her legs, the whole available space was occupied by a spherical belly. That is where the food swallowed in the course of a day collects in a heap. Its lower half was overgrown with curly hair like a little head.

The problem of sex, which plays such a major role in their intellectual and moral life, had long troubled me. For safety's sake, I suppose, it has been wrapped from ancient times in a veil of impenetrable secrecy. Even the textbook on anatomy has nothing to say on the subject, or says it so vaguely and cursorily that no one can guess what it truly means.

So now, overcoming my confusion, I decided to take advantage of the opportunity, to take a look at the place
When the rest of them were, though they were monsters
my back. I couldn't be certain of the direction, though
I couldn't be sure of the direction to show him my legs
and at least put a pump on my sleeve to show him my fingers. I
would find a place, I couldn't find a place, but I

But in their place, I wouldn't shed my coat, let

body into the angry, deep,

peach, or ginger, or peony, or marmalade, or any
flavor, but of course more beautiful but at least more modest
not of course more beautiful but at least more modest
and the same time

shared, all her, is, without, fundamentally, that it is a

and it's understanding that he is, fundamentally, that it is a

so, why did you behave with such ruthless candor?"

"Oh, were so cruel as to fall in love with me? Why

"Oh, were so cruel as to fall in love with me? Why

emotions, I referred in her imagination.

just, there were, but the, were already, in nobody's body, but the, was of the people, I was of the

my behavior, I had to change my position, so I took a

my behavior, I had to change my position, so I took a

up, and, together, stuck at the shoulders, intertwined by

red luxuty of a walk in the open in wet weather,

and in about those minutes I was damp orange

the street, it ran right down my neck, cool and delicious,

I found a lovely dress shirt and sat down, and


Dejectedly I made my way to Herzen Street. My hunchback lodged there in a semi-basement opposite the Conservatoire. For six weeks now I had had my eye on this gracefully vaulted person who was so unlike a human being, and reminded me somehow of my lost youth.

I had seen him three times at the laundry and once in a flower shop, buying a cactus. I had been lucky enough to find out his address from a receipt which he had tendered to the laundress.

The time had come to dot the i's.

I told myself that it was impossible, that they had all perished and that I was the sole survivor, like Robinson Crusoe. Why, I had liquidated, with my own hands, all that was left after the crash. There were no others here but me.

But what if they'd sent him to look for me? Pretending to be a hunchback, in disguise... They hadn't forgotten me! They'd realized what had happened and mounted a search!

But how could they know? After thirty-two years. By local time, but still. Alive and well. That was quite something.

But why here precisely? That was the question. Nobody had meant to come here. Quite a different direction. It couldn't happen. We missed our way. Back of beyond. Seven and a half months. Then it happened.

Perhaps it was accidental. Exactly the same mistake. A deviation from course and the winter timetable. Any port in a storm. Do coincidences happen? Alike as two peas. Where none had set foot. It can happen, can't it? Disguised as a hunchback. Exactly like me. Even if there were only one, exactly like me!

The door was opened by a lady like Kostritskaya. Only this Kostritskaya was bigger and older. She exuded a smell of lilac, ten times normal strength. Perfume, that was.

"Leopold will be back soon. Come in, please."

An unseen dog was barking at the other end of the corridor. It couldn't make up its mind to spring at me. But I had had nasty experiences with animals of this kind.

"What's wrong? She won't bite. Down, Niksa, quiet!"

We wrangled politely while the animal raged, and three heads emerged from side doors. They looked me up and down with interest and cursed the dog. The din was awful.

I got through to the room, at great risk, and found there a small child armed with a saber. When he saw us he asked for berries and sugar and set up a yell, wriggling and pulling faces.

"He's a sweet tooth. Just like me," Kostritskaya explained. "Stop whining, or this man will eat you."

To please my hostess, I said jokingly that for soup I drank children's blood, warmed up. The child was quiet at once. He dropped his saber and cowered in the far corner. He didn't take his eyes off me. They were full of animal terror.

"Is he like Leopold?" the Kostritskaya asked, as though casually, but with a hoarse tenderness in her voice.
Laura answered evasively.

"How long were you there?"

"I don't know."

"Well, then."

"I heard him, I asked him straight out: my reaction on the face. I asked him straight out: when we were alone, except for the."

When we were alone, except for the. Suddenly his shoulders slumped as though releasing the weight that had been hanging heavy in his shoulders. He looked up, reaching the head-tilt and mouthed "It is over."

"I'm a companion in misfortune. With whom have you been?"

"That's enough, "No, you're wrong, our lunch is Pushkin's twin."

"And you can see the Lopodd's desert's lighthouse, in my heart."

"I could hear the wave, surfing the cove of his."

Can you see it, I'm a bit of a hunchback too."

"Yes, yes. So you're another Kazhminovich, and my name, my name, my name, my name."

Phrases
enough to hide their spines and proud enough not to suffer because of it. I thought that he hadn't pulled himself together yet, and that from inertia he was wearily keeping up the pretense of being something other than his true self.

"Cut it out," I said quietly. "I recognized you at first sight. You and I come from the same place. We're relatives, so to speak. PKHENTZ! PKHENTZ!" I whispered, to remind him of a name sacred to us both.

"What did you say? ... You know, I thought there was something rather familiar about you. Where could I have seen you before?"

He rubbed his brow, frowned, twisted his lips. The mobility of his face was almost human, and again I envied his extraordinarily well-rehearsed technique, although these cautious habits were beginning to irritate me.

"Of course!" he exclaimed. "Didn't you work once in the Stationery Supplies set-up? The director there in 'forty-four was Yakov Solomonovich Zak—such a nice little Jew . . ."

"I don't know any Zak," I answered curtly. "But I know very well that you, Leopold Sergeevich, are not Leopold Sergeevich at all, and no hunchback, although you keep flourishing your hump all over the place. We've had enough of pretenses now. After all, I'm taking just as big a risk as you are."

It was as though the devil had got into him:

"How dare you tell me who I am? Spoiling my relations with the landlady, and then insulting me as well! Go and find yourself a gorgeous woman like that," he said, "and then you can discuss my physical defects. You're more of a hunchback than I am! You're more disgusting. Monster! Hunchback! Wretched cripple!"

Suddenly he burst out laughing and clapped his hand to his head: "Now I remember! I've seen you at the laundry. The only resemblance between us is that we got our clothes washed in the same place."

This time I didn't doubt his sincerity. He really did think that he was Leopold Sergeevich. He had entered too fully into his part, gone native, become human, over-adjusted to his surroundings, surrendered to alien influences. He had forgotten his former name, betrayed his distant homeland, and unless somebody helped him he was as good as lost.

I grabbed him by his shoulders and shook him carefully. I shook him, and implored him in a gentle, friendly way to remember, to make an effort and remember, to return to his true self. What did he want with that Kosaritskaya, who oozed such a poisonous odor? Even among humans bestiality was not respectable. And besides, betrayal of the homeland, even without malice aforethought, even out of ordinary forgetfulness . . .

"PKHENTZ! PKHENTZ!" I said over and over again, and repeated other words which I still remembered.

Suddenly an inexplicable warmth reached me through his Boston jacket. His shoulders were getting hotter and hotter, as hot as Veronica's hand, and thousands of other hot hands which I have preferred not to shake in greeting.

"Forgive me," I said, relaxing my hold. "I think there's some mistake. A regrettable misunderstanding. You see,
I have been asked to perform an important role in a play. I am not an actor, but I have experience in theater. I will be playing the part of a character named "Flint." I am not a natural actor, but I have been told that I could do it. I am nervous, but I am determined to do my best. I will be wearing a costume and makeup that is appropriate for the character. I will be performing in front of a large audience, so I am practicing my lines and movements. I am not a professional actor, but I am putting in the effort to prepare for the role. I am grateful for the opportunity to perform and I am looking forward to the experience.
In fact we had no intention of flying into space. To put it crudely we were going to a holiday resort. Then, on the way, something occurred—let’s say it was a meteorite to make it easier for you—well then, we lost buoyancy and down we fell, into the unknown, for seven and a half months we went on falling—our months, though, not yours—and by pure chance we landed up here.

When I came to and looked around—all my fellow travelers were dead. I buried them in the prescribed way, and started trying to adapt myself.

Everything around was exotic and unfathomable. A moon was burning in the sky, huge and yellow—but only one moon. The air was wrong, the light was wrong, and all the gravities and pressures were strange. What can I say? The most elementary pine tree affected my otherworldly senses as a porcupine affects you.

Where could I go? I had to eat and drink. Of course, I’m not a man and not an animal; I incline more to the vegetable kingdom than to anything else you have here; but I too have my basic needs. The first thing I need is water, for want of a better form of moisture, and preferably at a certain temperature, and now and then I want the missing salts added to my water. And besides I felt a growing chill in the surrounding atmosphere. I don’t have to tell you what Siberian frosts are like.

There was nothing for it, I had to leave the forest. For some days past I’d been looking at people from behind the bushes, sizing them up. I realized at once that they were rational creatures; but I was afraid to begin with that they might eat me. I draped myself in a bunch of rags (this was my first theft, and it was pardonable in the circumstances) and came out of the bushes with a look of friendship written all over me.

The Yakuts are a trusting and hospitable people. It was from them that I acquired the simplest human habits. Then I made my way to more civilized regions. I learned the language, obtained an education, and taught arithmetic in a secondary school in the town of Irkutsk. I resided in the Crimea for a time, but soon left because of the climate: it’s oppressively hot in summer, and not warm enough in winter, so that you still need a room with radiators, and conveniences of that sort weren’t too common there in the ’twenties and cost a lot of money, more than I could manage. So I made my home in Moscow, and I’ve been here ever since.

If I were to tell this sad tale, no matter to whom, no matter how skillfully edited for the general reader, nobody would believe me, not at any price. If I could only cry as my story requires. But though I’ve learned to laugh after a fashion I don’t know how to weep. They’d think I was a madman, a fantasist, and what’s more they might put me on trial for having a false passport, forging signatures and stamps, and other illegal activities.

And if, against all reason, they did believe me it would be worse still.

Academics from all the academies everywhere would flock in—astronomers, agronomists, physicists, economists, geologists, philologists, psychologists, biologists,
Phrases

Everybody had gone to bed and I could hear snores from next door. When I walked in, the lights were off. So when the baby woke up, the baby woke up right away.

But I was incredibly hungry, and Kosatskaya had

sent them an enormous cake, with butterhild and some
her sake, and on their wedding day I went to the
her father's place. I got through the wall. I was generous, I
to
my ears through the thin wall. I was generous, I
to
my ears through the thin wall. I was generous, I
to
my ears through the thin wall. I was generous, I
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my ears through the thin wall. I was generous, I
to
my ears through the thin wall. I was generous, I
to
my ears through the thin wall. I was generous, I

But when I come to the point I can understand nothing. It's
the best and the very best with metaphors. I can only do what
I can only do. I can only do what I can only do. I can only do what
I can only do. I can only do what I can only do. I can only do what

I can only see a short, solid, correct, hear a rapid, cut-
I can only see a short, solid, correct, hear a rapid, cut-
I can only see a short, solid, correct, hear a rapid, cut-
I can only see a short, solid, correct, hear a rapid, cut-
I can only see a short, solid, correct, hear a rapid, cut-

But in spite of this, I understand a little. How could they
But in spite of this, I understand a little. How could they
But in spite of this, I understand a little. How could they
But in spite of this, I understand a little. How could they
But in spite of this, I understand a little. How could they

Calvina! of course! Of course! Calvina!
Calvina! of course! Of course! Calvina!
Calvina! of course! Of course! Calvina!
Calvina! of course! Of course! Calvina!
Calvina! of course! Of course! Calvina!

I'm not a freak. I tell you, just because I'm different,
I'm not a freak. I tell you, just because I'm different,
I'm not a freak. I tell you, just because I'm different,
I'm not a freak. I tell you, just because I'm different,
I'm not a freak. I tell you, just because I'm different,
the floor above and the floor below and all the rooms either side, I took Veronica's washtub off its nail in the lavatory, where it hangs with all the neighbors' tubs. It banged like thunder as I dragged it along the corridor, and somebody downstairs stopped snoring. But I finished the job, boiled a kettle in the kitchen, drew a bucketful of cold water, carried the lot into my room, bolted the door and stuck the key in the keyhole.

What pleasure it gave me to throw off my clothes, remove my wig, tear off my genuine India-rubber ears, and unbble the straps which constricted my back and chest. My body opened out like a potted palm brought home from the shop in wrapping paper. All the limbs which had grown numb in the course of the day came to tingling life.

I installed myself in the tub, seized a sponge in one hand to squeeze water over all the dry places, and held the kettle in my second hand. With my third hand I grasped a mug of cold water, added some hot to it, and tried it with my fourth and last remaining hand to see that it wasn't too hot. What comfort!

My skin freely absorbed the precious fluid pouring down on me from the enamel mug, and when the first pangs of hunger were allayed I decided to inspect myself closely, and wash off the unhealthy slime which had seeped out of my pores and concealed in some places in dry mauve clots. True, the eyes in my hands and feet, on the crown of my head and the nape of my neck were getting appreciably dimmer, from being covered up in the day time by rough clothes and false hair. The friction of my right shoe had cost me the sight of one eye back in 1934. It wasn't easy to carry out a really thorough inspection.

But I swivelled my head, not limiting myself to a half-circle—the miserable 180 degrees allotted to the human neck—I blinked simultaneously all the eyes which were still intact, driving away fatigue and darkness, and I succeeded in viewing myself on all sides and from several different angles at once. What a fascinating sight it is, and what a pity that it is only accessible to me in the all-too-short hours of night. I only have to raise my hand and I can see myself from the ceiling, soaring and hovering over myself as it were. And at the same time I keep in view my lower parts, my back, my front, all the spreading branches of my body. If I hadn't been living in exile for thirty-two years I should probably never dream of admiring my exterior. But here I am the only example of that lost harmony and beauty which I call my homeland. What is there for me to do on this earth except delight in my person?

Yes, my rear hand is twisted by its permanent duty of representing a human hump. Yes, my fore hand is so maimed by the straps that two fingers have withered, and my old body has lost its former suppleness. I'm still beautiful for all that! Proportionate! Elegant! Whatever envious carpers may say.

These were my thoughts as I watered myself from the enamel mug, on the night when Kosritchakaya took it into her head to murder me by means of a cracked bath. But by morning I was ill. I must have caught cold in the tub. The worst time in my life had begun.
Petra, I thought. Why water?

I recalled the water. The water was not just any water, it was the water that I used to drink before I left my home. The water that was so precious to me, a source of comfort and solace. I had forgotten how much I needed it.

But now, as I stood there, staring at the empty bottle, I realized that I had made a mistake. I had forgotten to fill it. And now, I was left with nothing.

I closed my eyes, trying to remember what had happened. But the only thing that I could recall was the feeling of inadequacy that I had felt when I realized that I had left my home without the water.

I reached for the bottle, but it was empty. I looked around, but there was no sign of it. I searched every corner of the room, but it was nowhere to be found.

I felt a wave of panic wash over me. I had to find the water. I had to fill the bottle. I had to do something.

I turned on the tap, but there was no water. I looked around, but there was no sign of it. I searched every corner of the room, but it was nowhere to be found.

I started to cry, feeling like a failure. I had lost the one thing that I needed to survive.

I closed my eyes, trying to remember what had happened. But the only thing that I could recall was the feeling of inadequacy that I had felt when I realized that I had left my home without the water.

I searched every corner of the room, but it was nowhere to be found. I turned on the tap, but there was no water. I looked around, but there was no sign of it. I searched every corner of the room, but it was nowhere to be found.

I felt a wave of panic wash over me. I had to fill the bottle. I had to do something.

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Pkhentz

exams. Outside the voices of nannies are shrill and hysterical. The air has a tang in it. The Kostritskaya smell—in a low concentration—is all pervading. Even the cacti on my windowsill have a lemony aroma in the mornings. I mustn’t forget to make Veronica a present of them before I leave.

I’m afraid my last illness has done for me. It hasn’t just wrecked my body, it’s crippled me spiritually as well. Strange desires come upon me at times. I feel an urge to go to the pictures. Or else I think I should like a game of draughts with Veronica Grigorievna’s husband. He’s said to be a first-class chess player.

I have reread my notes, and am not happy about them. The influence of an alien milieu is felt in every sentence. What good to anybody is this idle chatter in a local dialect? Another thing I mustn’t forget before I leave—to burn them. I’ve no intention of showing them to people. And my own kind will never read them or hear anything about me. They’ll never fly such an unearthly distance to this outlandish place.

It’s getting harder and harder for me to recall the past. Only a few words of my native tongue have survived. I’ve even forgotten how to think as I used to, let alone read or write. I remember something beautiful, but what exactly it was I don’t know.

Sometimes I fancy that I left children behind at home. Ever such bonny little cacti. Mustn’t forget to give them to Veronica. They must be quite big now. Vasya’s going to school. What am I saying, school! He must be a sturdy adult. He’s gone in for engineering. And Masha is married.

Lord, oh Lord! I seem to be turning into a man!
Phebe

There is no time off. I

The day after tomorrow, when everything is gone to

be and hide me. If I see anything on the stage, I shall do nothing

day which one of them?... Who knows? I will face all the

and pleasant rights. And many days in the summer sky,

But that’s a long time off. There will be many warm

He is at one end of the

When the first frost begins and I see that the time is

myself and will. Not a single human thought will I think,

blest up the grandpater. I will sit down in the hope, when

we made when we fell. Pull wood all round it. Summer

There was a house. I'll search till I find it. The hope

If I want to.

Water right beside me. Drown myself three times a day

here a pool. If it's about 300 kilometers and all by river, I'll

make it somewhere or other. For part of the way I'll

book will take me in and hide me. You'll see of me. FORESURE, JORESURE as green as my mother's

the station. A hour of the whistle—and that's the latest

that I shall leave the house unoccupied and take a ride to

whether

The day before yesterday, when everybody’s gone to

...take pictures once and for all time. And I have no capacity

on a year coast, not on the coast or colleagues. I shall go

the winter on snows book. I didn’t spend anything

something of money. I’ve 60, I've 70. I can’t picture to

Everything is ready for my departure. My ticket and

Took Phebe, my cow, away. I’ve got 167 tables

in the pictures once in all time. And I have no capacity

on a year coast, not on the coast or colleagues. I shall go

the winter on snows book. I didn’t spend anything

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