IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE GAME CHANGE THE RULES



ALTERNATIVE MODES OF VIDEOGAME PRODUCTION

MARIE LEBLANC FLANAGAN

"If You Don't Like The Game, Change The Rules" is a fictional story rooted in the real experiences of game workers.

This comic draws from 88 interviews and surveys with members of worker co-operatives, game developers in the process of starting a worker co-operative, studios exploring co-operative values, game union organisers, industry labour experts, and other people who make games.

We hope to add to the important conversations happening within our communities about how we work together.



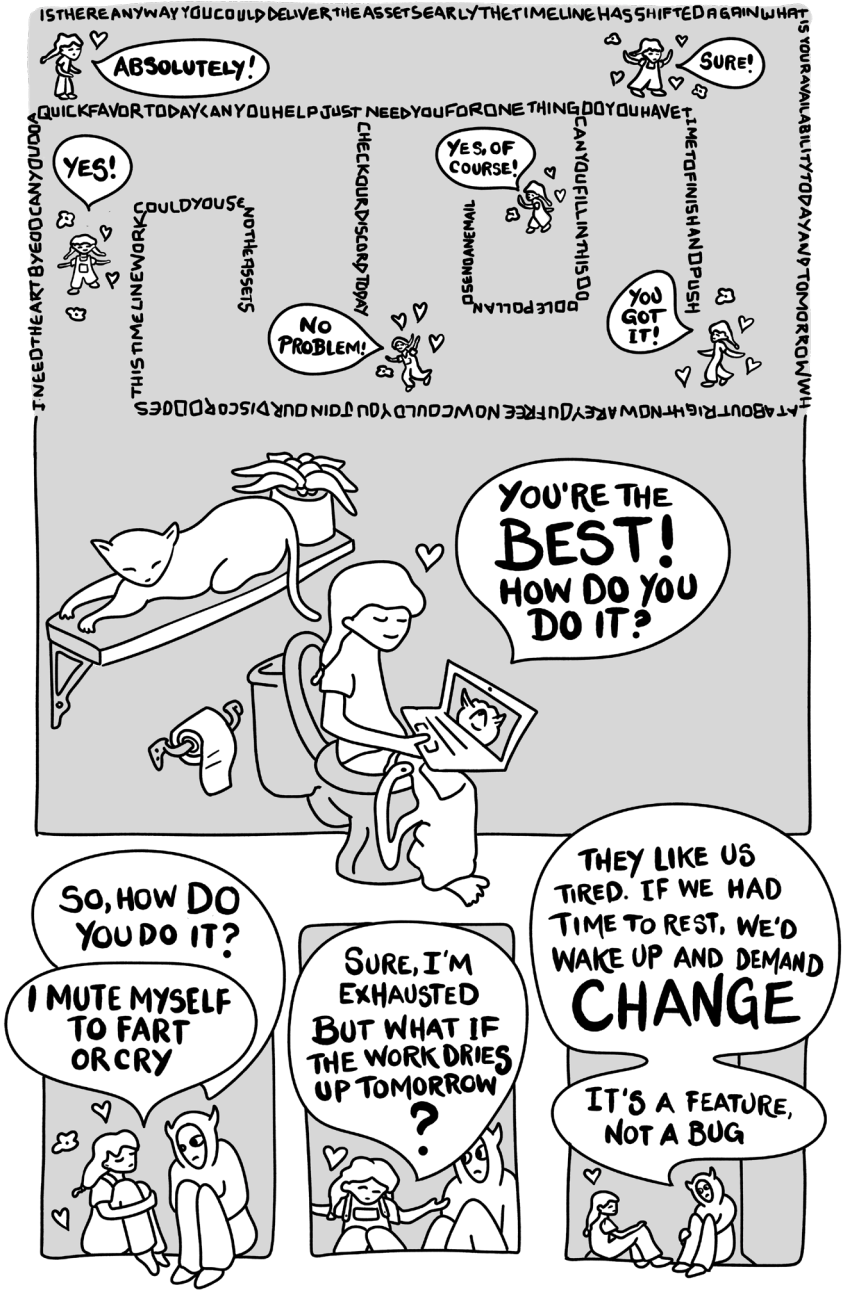

MEET BEE
IT IS TIME TO RISE
RISE AND SEIZE OUR OWN DESTINIES
AWAKEN FROM OUR QUIET DESPERATION
WE MET AT A GAME JAM AND SPARKED A REVOLUTION
NOW WE'LL SHOW THE WORLD WHAT TRUE COOPERATIVE POWER CAN DO! !!!!!
IGDC
STAR INDIEPAID
AWARE
G3C
HELLLLO

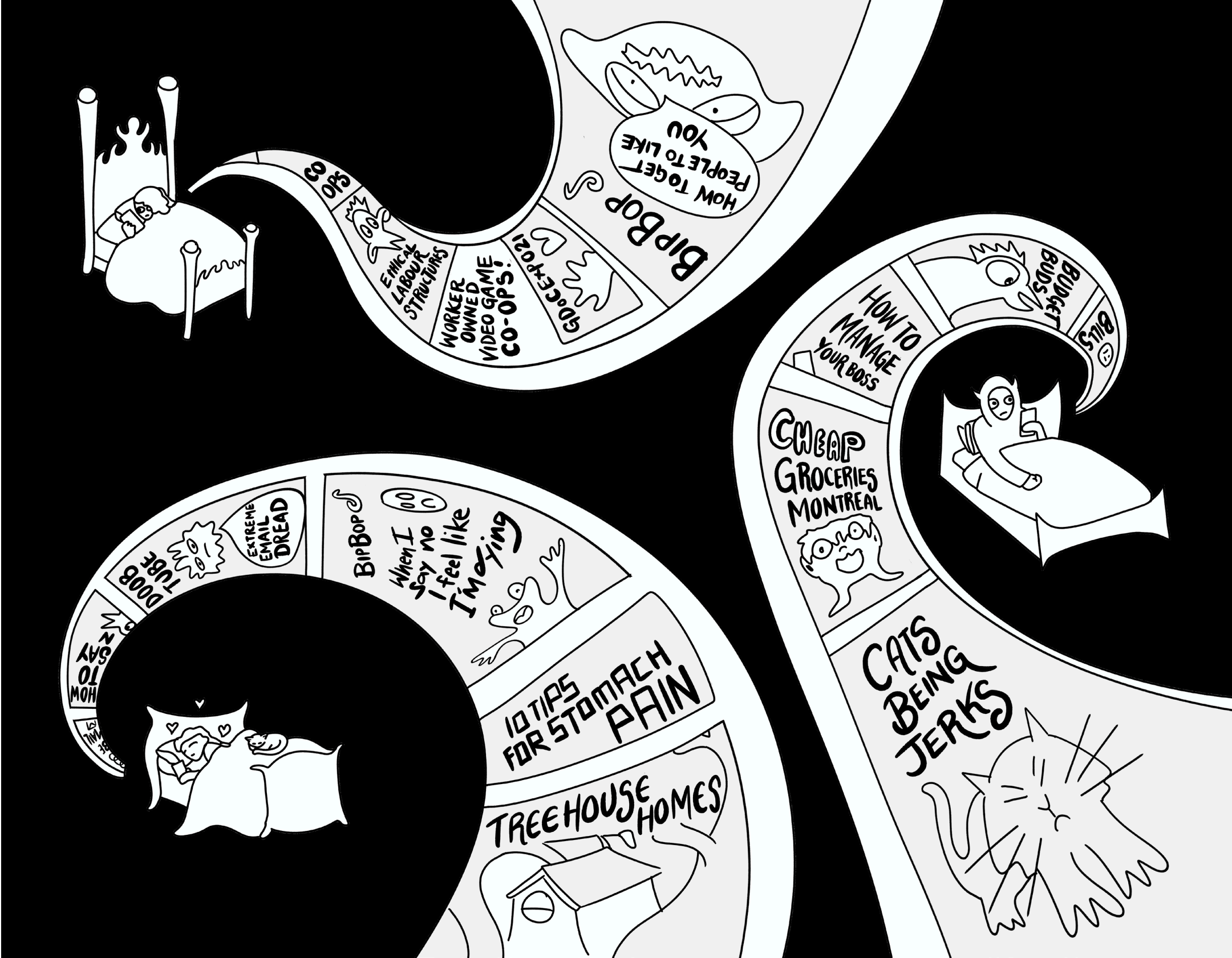

BE GAY. DO CRIME.
I'M BUSY, DAD
GDC
STAR
KNOCK KNOCK WE NEED TO TALK
DAYDREAMS AND INTERNET FRIENDS AREN'T A GOOD CAREER STRATEGY. WE CAN'T KEEP SUPPORTING YOU FOREVER
I HAVE A PLAN DAD CAN WE TALK LATER?
COUNT ON IT


MEETZED
JEUX JUTEUX
888
YO ROCKSTARS! ONE MORE PUSH! I WANNA SEE SMOKE COMING FROM THOSE KEYBOARDS
LET'S MAKE IT FREE TO PLAY BUT CHARGE FOR EVERY TAP!
UGH
WE NEED MORE JUICE!
JUST HIRE AN INTERN TO DO IT
UGH
LET'S HUNT SOME WHALES!
DOPAMINE?
UGH
888
ÉPICERIE HARICOT'S
1929

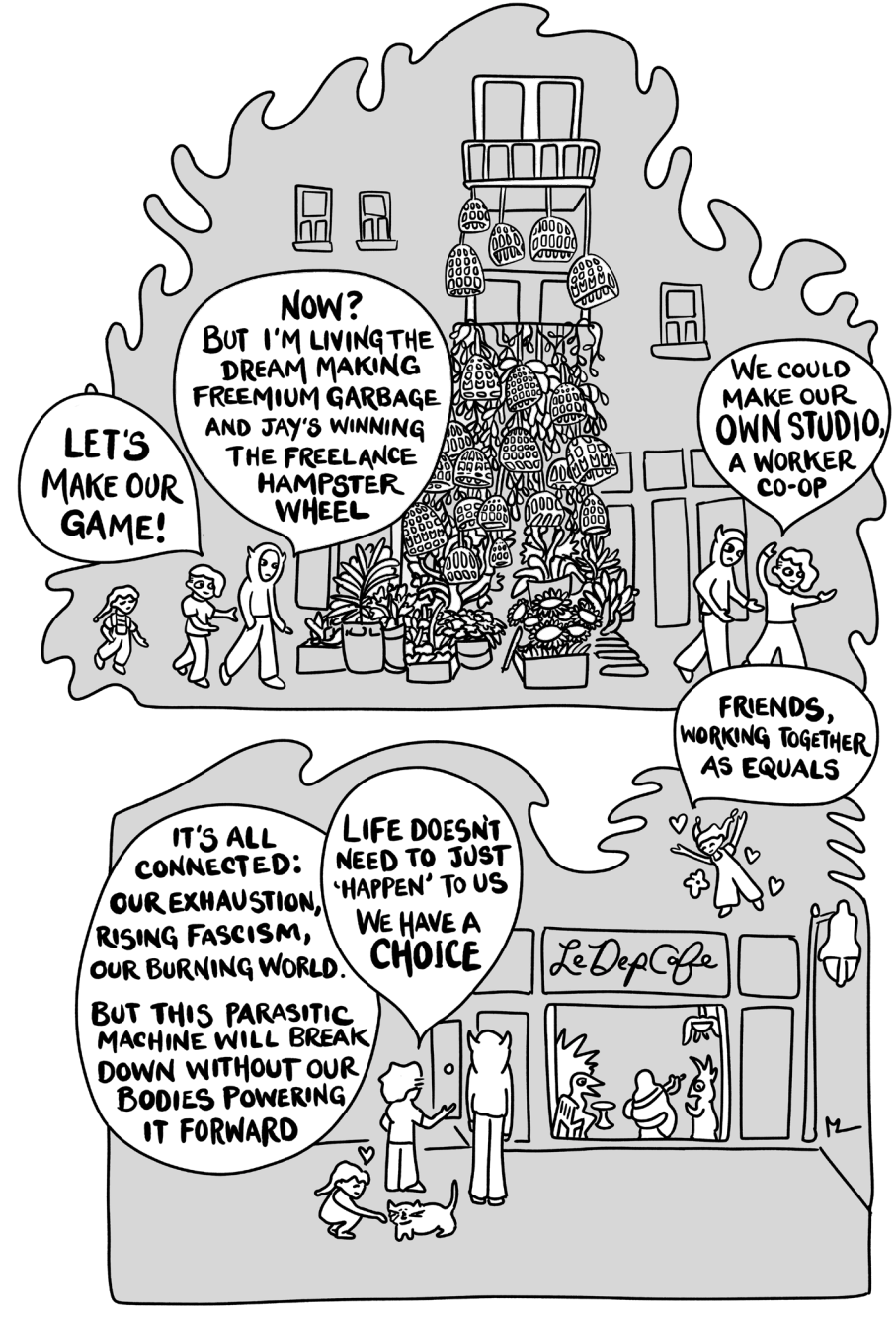

CAREFUL WITH THE KNIFE
LOWER THE HEAT?
THAT'S ENOUGH ONIONS
YES GRANNY
YES GRANNY
YES GRANNY
MAGIC
SALT
PEPPER
SOMETIMES ADDING SOMETHING NEW CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING
MAGIC
WE'RE TOO BROKE FOR CHANGE
I JUST WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY. LOOK AT ME, I JUST JOINED A GRANNY DJ CREW


MEET JAY
I NEED YOUR HELP!
BANDWIDTH FOR A QUICK SYNC NOW?
CAN YOU REDO THE AVATAR RIGGING?
I NEED HELP ASAP
TAX OVERDUE
URGENT CHECK DISCORD?
QUICK ANIMATION FAVOUR?
NEW ART
ZOOM
URGENT
DOODLE POLL!
421 9 NEW EMAILS
RENT
HELPPI
I NEED YOU!
88


ABSOLUTELY!
SURE!
QUICK FAVOR TODAY CAN YOU HELP JUST NEED YOU FOR ONE THING DO YOU HAVE 1 ME TO FINISH AND PUSH
CAN YOU FILL IN THIS DOODLE POLL
YES, OF COURSE!
SEND ANEMAIL
YES!
CHECK OUR DISCORD TODAY
NO PROBLEM!
COULD YOU USE NOT THE ASSETS
THIS TIMELINE WORK
I NEED THE ART BY EOD CAN YOU DO A
AT ABOUT RIGHT NOW ARE YOU FREE NOW COULD YOU JOIN OUR DISCORD DOES
IS THERE ANY WAY YOU COULD DELIVER THE ASSETS EARLY THE TIMELINE HAS SHIFTED AGAIN WHAT
IS YOUR AVAILABILITY TODAY AND TOMORROW WH
YOU GOT IT!
YOU'RE THE BEST! HOW DO YOU DO IT?
SO, HOW DO YOU DO IT?
I MUTE MYSELF TO FART OR CRY
SURE, I'M EXHAUSTED BUT WHAT IF THE WORK DRIES UP TOMORROW?
THEY LIKE US TIRED. IF WE HAD TIME TO REST, WE'D WAKE UP AND DEMAND CHANGE
IT'S A FEATURE, NOT A BUG


BipBop
How To Get People To Like You
GDC Expo '21
Worker Owned Video Game Co-Ops!
Ethical Labour Structures
Co Ops
Bills :(
Budget Buds
How To Manage Your Boss
Cheap Groceries Montreal
Cats Being Jerks
BipBop
When I say no I feel like I'm lying
10 Tips For Stomach Pain
Treehouse Homes
Extreme Email Dread
Doob Tube
How To Say


LET'S MAKE OUR GAME!
WE WON THE GAME JAM WITH A BROKEN PROTOTYPE
WHAT IF WE PUT REAL TIME INTO IT?
COSMIC CATS CRADLE
THE CYBERCATS REARRANGE THE STARS TO WEAVE OUR SHARED FATE
Jeans Jeans Jeans
PLAYERS TWIST A HUGE LOOP OF STRING INTO ELABORATE SHAPES REVEALING HOW WE ARE BOUND TOGETHER
TRANSFORMING OUR DESTINIES FOREVER
SCOPE PLEASE
SCOPE PLEASE!


LET'S MAKE OUR GAME!
NOW? BUT I'M LIVING THE DREAM MAKING FREEMIUM GARBAGE AND JAY'S WINNING THE FREELANCE HAMPSTER WHEEL
WE COULD MAKE OUR OWN STUDIO, A WORKER CO-OP
FRIENDS, WORKING TOGETHER AS EQUALS
IT'S ALL CONNECTED: OUR EXHAUSTION, RISING FASCISM, OUR BURNING WORLD. BUT THIS PARASITIC MACHINE WILL BREAK DOWN WITHOUT OUR BODIES POWERING IT FORWARD
LIFE DOESN'T NEED TO JUST 'HAPPEN' TO US WE HAVE A CHOICE
Le Dep Coffe

CAFÉ MEETING






LOOK, IT'S A FACT PEOPLE ARE COMPETITIVE AND SELFISH
SESAME 25¢
PAVOT 25¢
CANNELLE 25¢
BLÉ ENTIER 25
ROMARIN 50¢
MAGIE **
1 MILLION BAGELS
POUR $20
SAINT BEAU FAIR
GAME THEORY! TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS!
NO WAY! ELINOR OSTROM WON THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR PROVING THAT PEOPLE CAN CO-MANAGE RESOURCES
Gnocci Della Nonna $5
SURE, PEOPLE ARE SELFISH WHEN THEY ARE SCARED AND THE GAME IS RIGGED TO REWARD THE RUTHLESS
BUT THE GAME ONLY COMES INTO EXISTENCE WHEN WE PLAY IT
WILENSKY
AND COMMUNITY WINS ARE MORE INTERESTING THAN INDIVIDUAL ONES
KEMCOBA


FINE, BUT WE'RE STUCK IN THE MORASS OF CAPITALISM
ANYTHING WE MAKE IS BUILT INSIDE OF THIS MESS
BEAUFAIR
IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE GAME CHANGE THE RULES
I DON'T LIKE THE GAME
BEAUFAIR
CHANGE THE RULES

CO-OP 101

WHAT IS A CO-OP?

A WORKER CO-OP IS A BUSINESS THAT IS **OWNED AND DEMOCRATICALLY CONTROLLED BY THE WORKERS.**

EVERY CO-OP IS UNIQUE, THE MEMBERS DECIDE ON THE STRUCTURE AND CORE RULES IN THE BYLAWS.

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

ALL CO-OPS ARE BASED ON SHARED CORE VALUES: SELF-HELP, SELF-RESPONSIBILITY, DEMOCRACY, EQUALITY, EQUITY, AND SOLIDARITY.

THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES ARE:

- ✔ OPEN AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP
- ✔ DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL (ONE MEMBER, ONE VOTE
- ✔ MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
- ✔ AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE
- ✔ EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND INFORMATION
- ✔ COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES
- ✔ CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY



MYTHS

CO-OP MYTHS

MYTH 1 THERE ARE NO LEADERS IN CO-OPS
WORKERS DECIDE ON ANY HIERARCHIES AND VOTE IN ANY BOSSES OR BOARDS.

MYTH 2 CO-OPS REQUIRE INFINITE MEETINGS
WORKERS DECIDE TOGETHER ON DECISION MAKING AND HOW MANY MEETINGS THEY WANT TO HAVE.

MYTH 3 ALL CO-OPS ARE GOOD AND ONLY DO GOOD
CO-OPS REFLECT THE NEEDS AND VALUES OF MEMBERS. THEY AREN'T A MAGICAL FIX FOR SOCIETAL PROBLEMS.

MYTH 4 ALL CO-OPS ARE WORKER-OWNED
ALL CO-OPS INVOLVE SOME SHARED OWNERSHIP, BUT ONLY WORKER CO-OPS ARE COMPLETELY RUN AND CONTROLLED BY THE WORKERS! FOR EXAMPLE, CONSUMER CO-OPS ARE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT!

MYTH 5 CO-OPS CAN'T GET FUNDING
CO-OPS CAN GET FUNDING, LOANS, AND SOCIAL FINANCE GRANTS!

MYTH 6 EVERYONE MAKES THE SAME SALARY
WORKERS DECIDE TOGETHER HOW TO DISTRIBUTE MONEY! SOME CHOOSE FLAT SALARIES, SOME PAY MORE FOR SENIORITY, SPECIFIC SKILLS, OR HOURS WORKED.

MYTH 7 CO-OPS ARE THE SAME AROUND THE WORLD
EVERY REGION HAS THEIR OWN LAWS ABOUT CO-OPS, BUT THE CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES ARE SHARED WORLDWIDE.


GREAT JOB ZED! ONE BUG SQUASHED, 87 TO GO! TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAMWORK!
WANT TO GET COFFEE, FRIEND?
AS LONG AS WE DON'T HAVE TO COME BACK
WE NEED TO DISRUPT OURSELVES BEFORE SOMEONE DOES IT FOR US!
DID YOU UPDATE YOUR TICKETS?
WHYYYYYYYY
IT'S STRANGELY WARM FOR MARCH
ONE BUG SQUASHED HUH?
I LOVE WRITING CODE. EVERYTHING HAS A REASON. EVERYTHING HAS AN ANSWER.
BUT I WANT TO WRITE CODE FOR GAMES THAT MATTER, GAMES I'D WANT TO PLAY
AND THE CRUNCH IS KILLING ME. WE'RE WORKING 100 HOUR WEEKS OF 'VOLUNTARY' OVERTIME, AND 10 000 NEW GRADUATES ARE CLAWING FOR MY JOB.
I JUST NEED TO GET MY CREDIT
I CAN'T EVEN AFFORD THERAPY
YEAH, $300/YEAR COVERS ABOUT TWO HOURS


SOME OF THE QA FOLKS ARE TALKING ABOUT A UNION
BUT WE NEED HELP, WE NEED DEVS ON OUR SIDE
WHAT IF I LOSE MY JOB?
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT
WHAT ABOUT GRANNY?
WHAT IF I END UP ON A BLOCKLIST?
CAFÉ DEI CAMPI
CAFÉ
UNIONIZED WORKERS HAVE ON AVERAGE 15-25% HIGHER WAGES!
IT'S NOT ABOUT 'NICE' BOSSES. EVERY PENNY THAT GOES TO US DOESN'T GO TO THEM
IT'S ADVERSARIAL WHETHER WE WANT IT OR NOT.
ALONE, WE ARE DISPOSABLE TOGETHER WE HAVE THE POWER TO CONTROL OUR LIVES
PUSH YOUR CHANGES! WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?
STEPS FOR STARTING A UNION
1. WORKPLACE MAPPING AND CHARTING (START CONVERSATIONS AND LISTEN)
2. BUILD AN ORGANIZING CULTURE THAT CENTERS RACIAL, DISABILITY, GENDER JUSTICE
3. FIND EXTERNAL SUPPORT (CONSIDER IATSE/UFCW/CWA/CODE/GWU/IWW)
4. GROW THE GROUP
5. REQUEST FORMAL RECOGNITION

LE NOMBRE D'APPELS ÉTANT ACTUELLEMENT ÉLEVÉ, NOUS VOUS REMERCIONS DE CONTINUER À PATIENTER

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LE NOMBRE D'APPELS ÉTANT ACTUELLEMENT ÉLEVÉ NOUS VOUS REMERCIONS DE CONTINUER À PATIENTER

LE NOMBRE D'APPELS ÉTANT — BONJOUR? BONJOUR?

BONJOUR — UM JE VEUX SAVOIR, UM, UNEMPLOYMENT -UM — I'M SO SORRY — CAN I SPEAK ENGLISH?

UM — SOLIDARITÉ SOCIALE CONTRAINTES SÉVÈRES —

I KNOW EVERYONE HAS BAD DAYS. YES, I'M WORKING NOW BUT I'M HEADED FOR A **CRASH**

2 MAIL OURGENT! OASAP?

NO, I CAN'T GET A DOCTOR TO SIGN OFF, I CAN'T **GET** A DOCTOR

YOU NEED TO GET YOUR DOCTOR TO SIGN OFF ON YOUR SICKNESS BENEFITS, **THEN** WHEN THAT ENDS YOU NEED TO REQUEST FOR REGULAR BENEFITS, **THEN** AFTER A YEAR YOU CAN APPLY FOR WELFARE, AND **THEN** TO SIGN A NEW PAPER PERMANENT DISABILITY FROM WORKING AND APPLY FOR SOCIAL SOME SUPPORTING COURSE, FROM YOUR

BUT I DON'T HAVE A DOCTOR

YOUR DOCTOR WILL NEED SAYING YOU DO HAVE A THAT PREVENTS YOU ONLY **THEN** YOU CAN SOLIDARITY, WITH DOCUMENTS, OF DOCTOR —

I'M HELD TOGETHER BY DEADLINES AND DREAD

I TRIED TO FIND OUT ABOUT SOLIDARITÉ SOCIALE TODAY

IT WOULD BE EASIER TO START A CO-OP IF I HAD A SAFETY NET

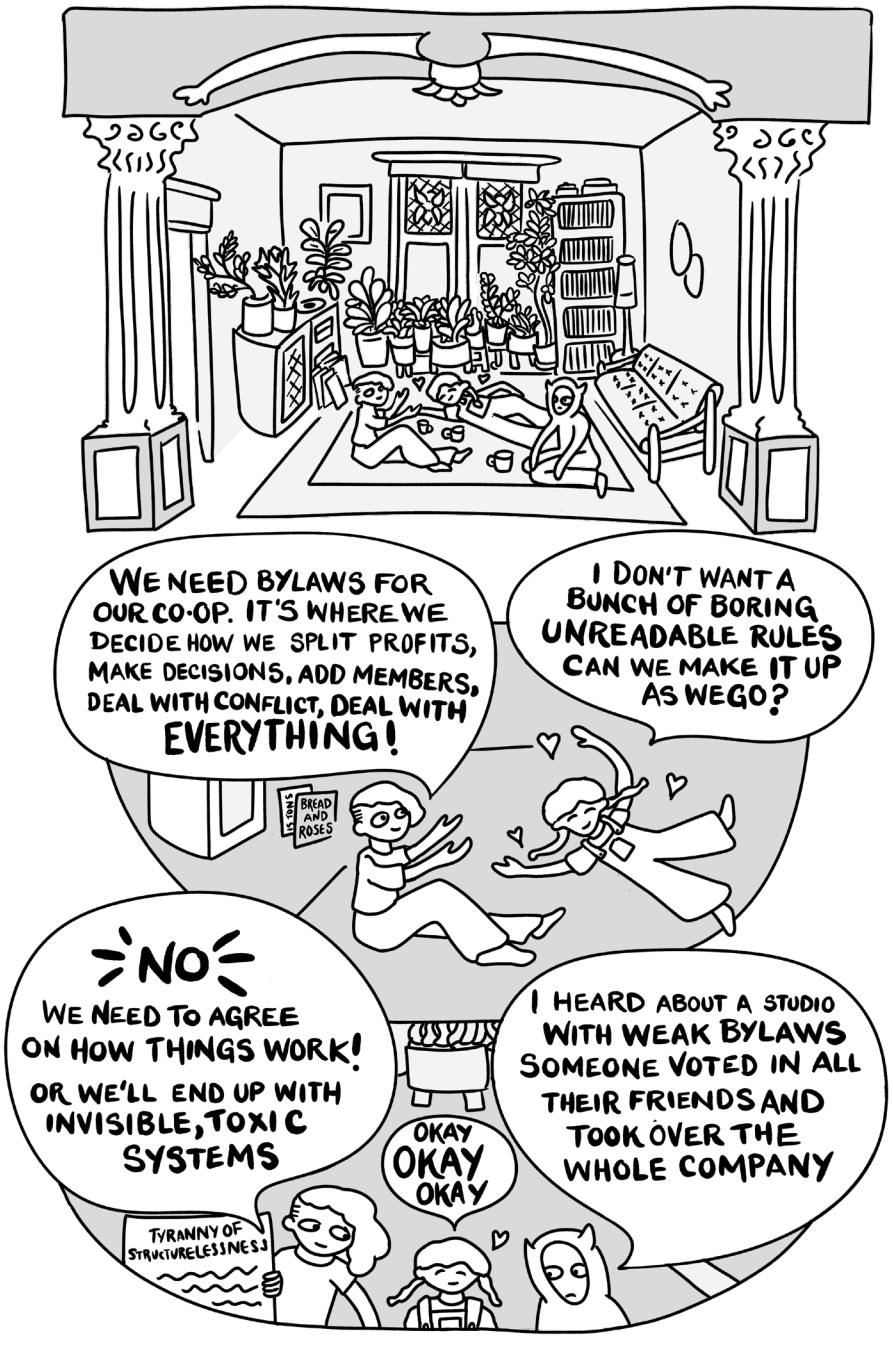
YOU MIGHT FEEL LESS ALONE IF YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR WORK

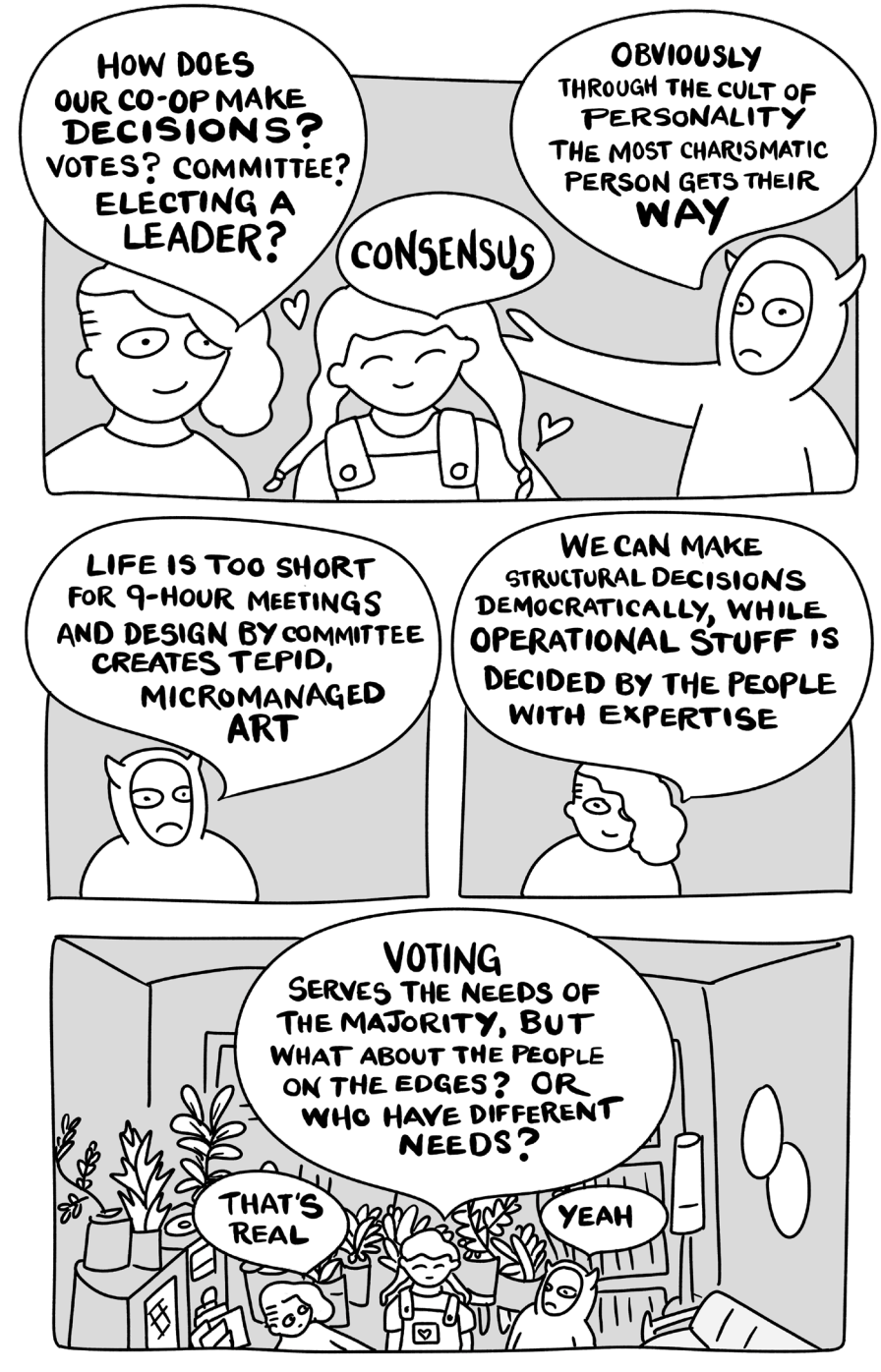
RUELLE VERTE

WELL, I'M WORKING ON [NDA NDA]. IT'S REALLY [NDA NDA NDA] BECAUSE OF [NDA NDA NDA] BUT I CAN'T [NDA] BECAUSE [NDA]

IT'S NOT HELPING

LIVING ROOM MEETING






TIME TO BE ICONIC
I'VE ALREADY PROMISED THE PUBLISHERS
I KNOW YOU CAN MAKE THIS WORK
PLAY HARD SLAY HARD
BUG!
GUICY GAMES
JEUX JUTEUX
DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE UNION?
SHHHHH
WE NEED TO HIT THIS DEADLINE NO MATTER WHAT
OUR TOP PRIORITY IS EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION, JUST LOOK AT OUR INTERNS
THE WORK YOU ARE DOING IS HIGHER THAN THE VALUE YOU ARE BEING PAID. THATS THE WHOLE POINT
SHHHH I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE MY JOB


THE JUICE IS WORTH THE SQUEEZE!
I DON'T CARE ANYMORE SOMETHING NEEDS TO CHANGE!
I JUST WANT...
SHHHH
RENDERINGGG PIPELINEEE
SHIP IT!
I LOVE MY BOSS
BOOK ROOM 4
NEW ASSETS
ALL HANDS IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM TOMORROW AT 9 MANDATORY!



FUNDING IDEAS

PUBLISHERS
- PROS: WILL FUND A CO-OP, NO LOSS TO US IF THE GAME FLOPS
- CONS: PROJECT BASED, COMPETITIVE, TAKE 30%+ OF REVENUE

ANGEL INVESTORS
- PROS: BIG BUCKS! DAD KNOWS SOME
- CONS: WON'T WANT US BECAUSE THEY WANT EXPLOSIVE GROWTH, VOTING CONTROL, AND EQUITY

ARTS COUNCILS
- PROS: CREATIVE FREEDOM
- CONS: COMPETITIVE, PROJECT BASED, PREFER TO FUND INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS, SOME DON'T THINK GAMES ARE ART (UGH!)

CANADIAN MEDIA FUND
- PROS: BIG BUDGETS
- CONS: COMPETITIVE, ADMIN OVERHEAD, HARD FOR A NEW STUDIO TO GET

CROWDFUNDING
- PROS: GET FUNDED BY THE FANS
- CONS: UNPAID WORK, PRESSURE, OFTEN UNSUCCESSFUL

BANK LOANS
- PROS: GET MONEY
- CONS: BIG RISK, WOULD NEED A COSIGNER (UGH, DAD)

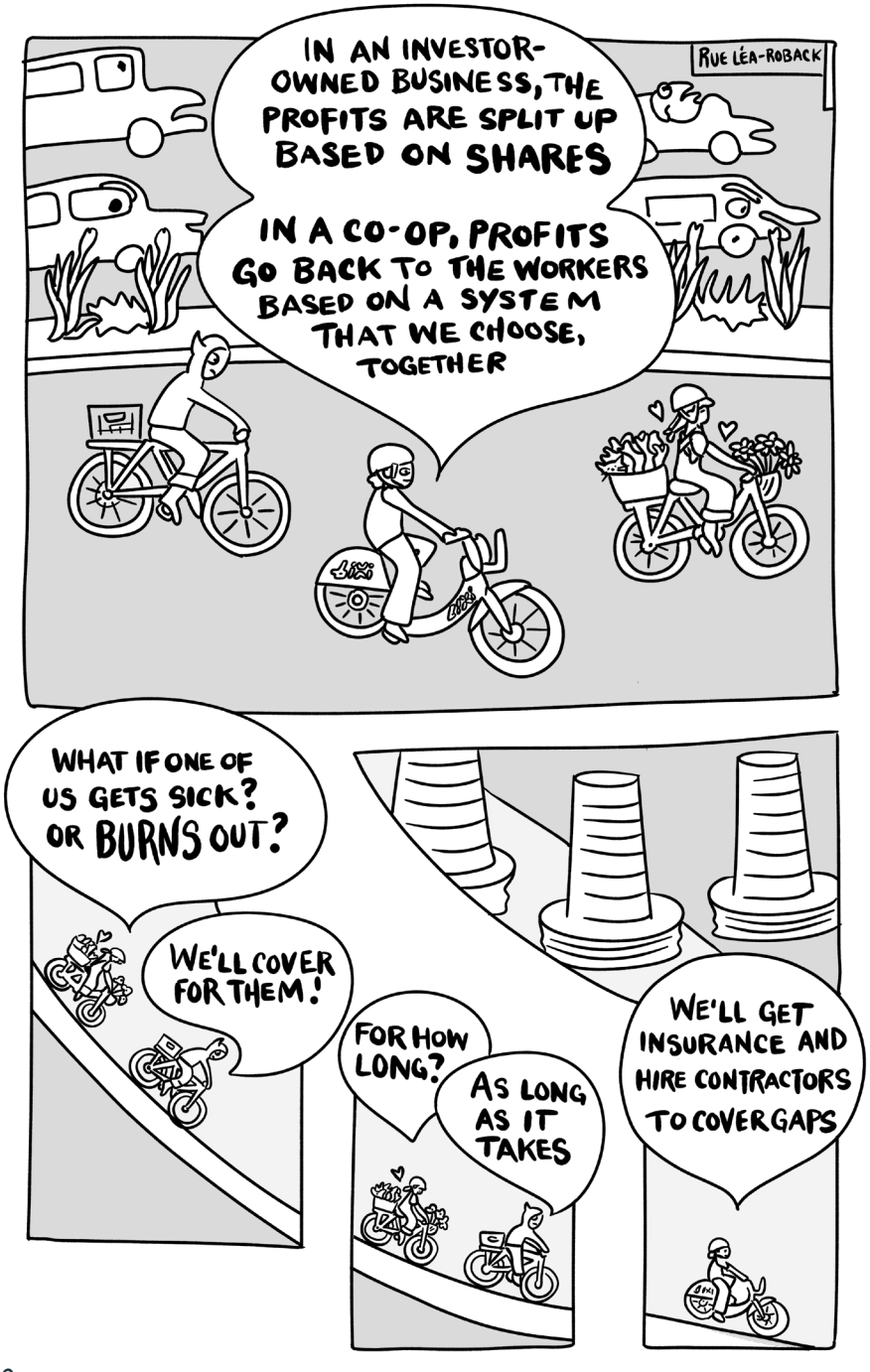
BANK OF DAD
- PROS: NOT VERY COMPETITIVE
- CONS: DAD'S NOT GOING TO SAY YES

SOCIAL FINANCE FUND? IMPACT FUNDS? PHILANTHROPIC FUNDS?

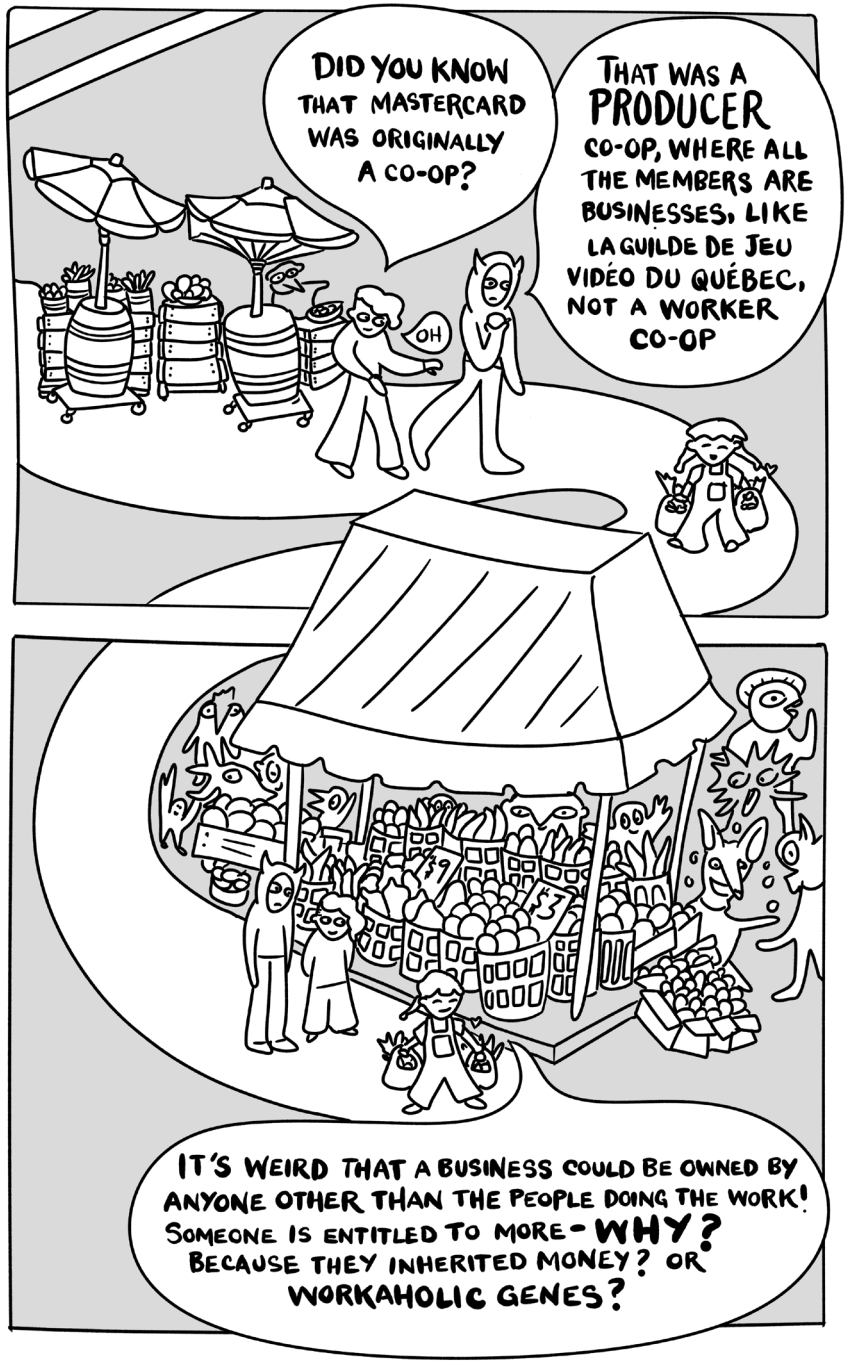
ZEPHYR


I'LL KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT!
I LOVE THE FINAL BOSS AVATAR — ONE TINY THOUGHT - WHAT IF WE GOT RID OF THE FINAL BOSS ALTOGETHER?
WE JUST NEED TO BE SCRAPPY
CAN YOU SQUEEZE ME IN OVER LUNCH?
I LIKE IT BUT IT NEEDS MORE TIME IN THE HOPPER
LET'S LEAVE IT IN AS A STRETCH GOAL
YOUR CAMERA IS OFF
ZMAIL
789 NEW EMAILS
HELP...
URGENT...
QUICK CALL...
BOOM
HELP
INVOICE
MAY 1
COLOUR
BISCORD
LENDER
LINK IN THE CHAIN
16TONS
URGENT
YOU HAVE NO BOUNDARIES

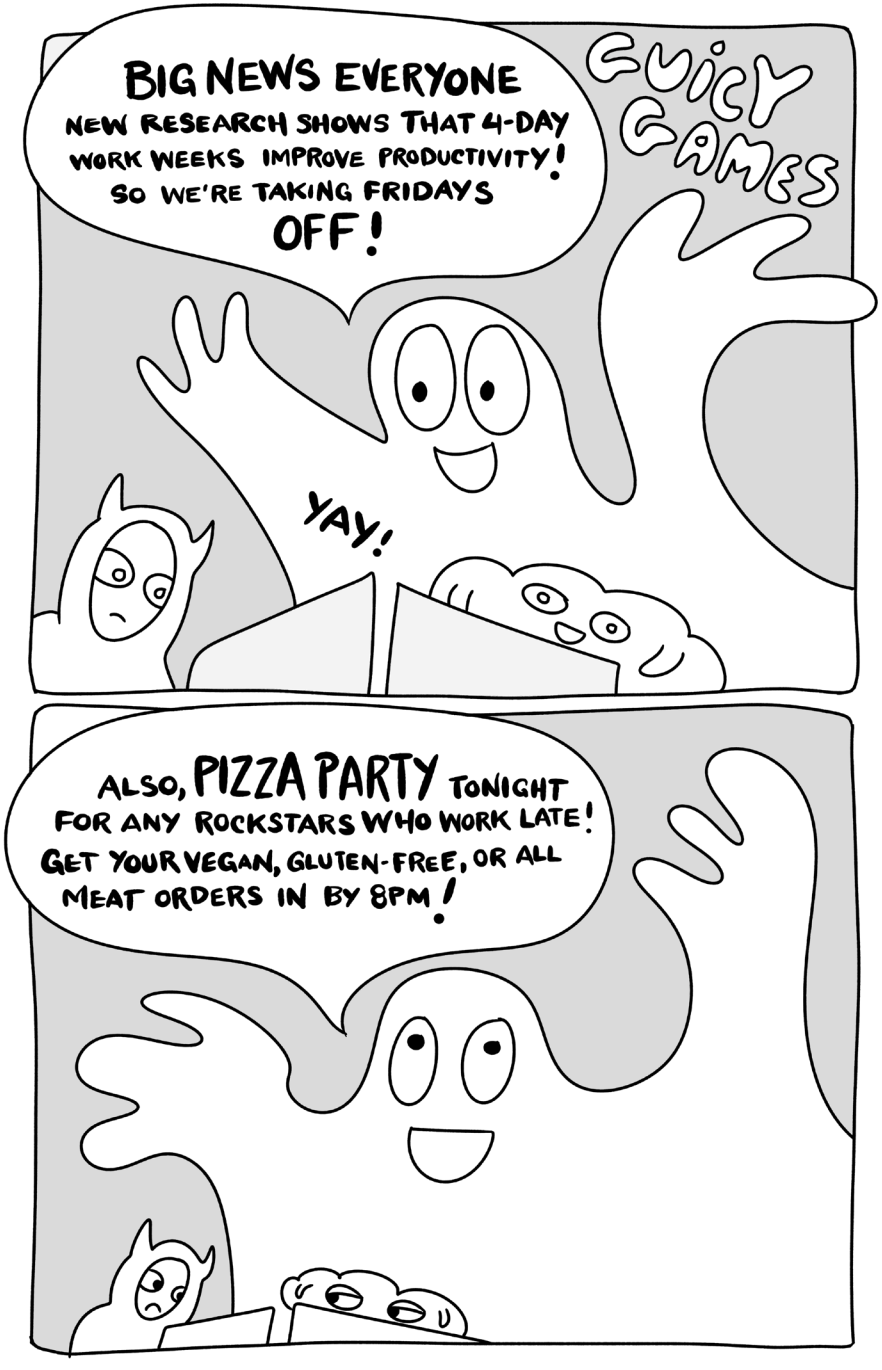

AT NIGHT I DREAM THAT THE WHOLE WORLD WILL CLOSE, SHUT DOWN, IMPLODE
BUT IN THE MORNING I DRINK TEA AND THE SUN COMES IN THE WINDOW AND THE STEAM CURLS IN THE EARLY MORNING LIGHT


IN AN INVESTOR-OWNED BUSINESS, THE PROFITS ARE SPLIT UP BASED ON SHARES
IN A CO-OP, PROFITS GO BACK TO THE WORKERS BASED ON A SYSTEM THAT WE CHOOSE, TOGETHER
RUE LÉA-ROBACK
WHAT IF ONE OF US GETS SICK? OR BURNS OUT?
WE'LL COVER FOR THEM!
FOR HOW LONG?
AS LONG AS IT TAKES
WE'LL GET INSURANCE AND HIRE CONTRACTORS TO COVER GAPS

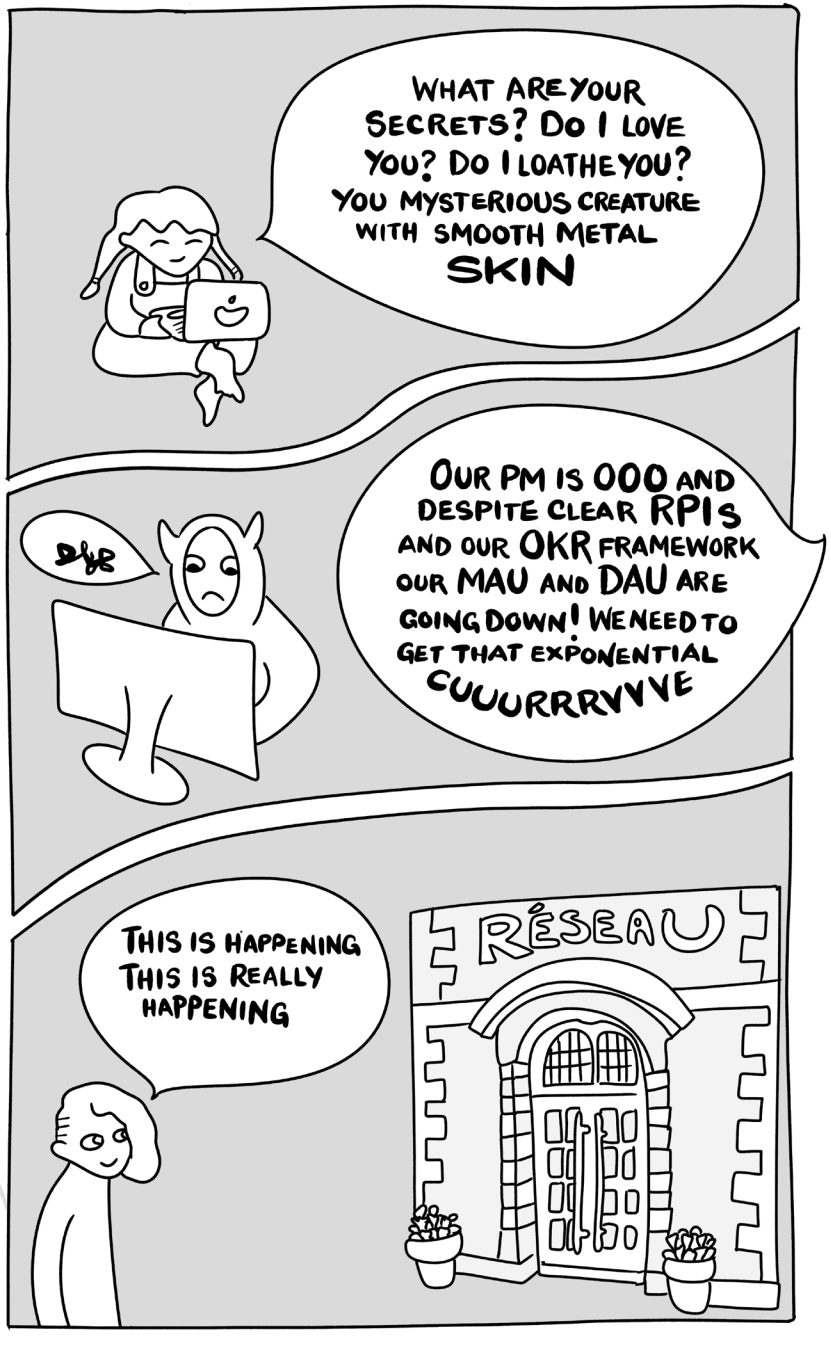

CONTRACTORS? SO WE'LL BRAND OURSELVES AS A CO-OP BUT WE'RE A THREE-HEADED BOSS EXPLOITING A PILE OF CONTRACTORS?
GREEN BOTTLE ST
WELL, MAYBE OUR CONTRACTORS SHOULD UNIONIZE
THE REALITY OF GAME FUNDING MODELS IS THAT IT COMES IN LONG CYCLES OF FEAST AND FAMINE AND SOMETIMES WE NEED SPECIALIZED SKILLS WE CAN'T FIX EVERYTHING AT ONCE SOME CONTRACTORS MIGHT NOT EVEN WANT TO JOIN US
AT LEAST WE'RE MAKING JOBS, RIGHT?
WAIT, WHY IS IT A GOOD THING TO MAKE JOBS?
ISN'T MORE WORK A BAD THING?
MARCHÉ JEAN-TALON
WE'LL GIVE THE CONTRACTORS REV SHARE TO COMPENSATE
YEAH, I'M WORKING ON FUNDING

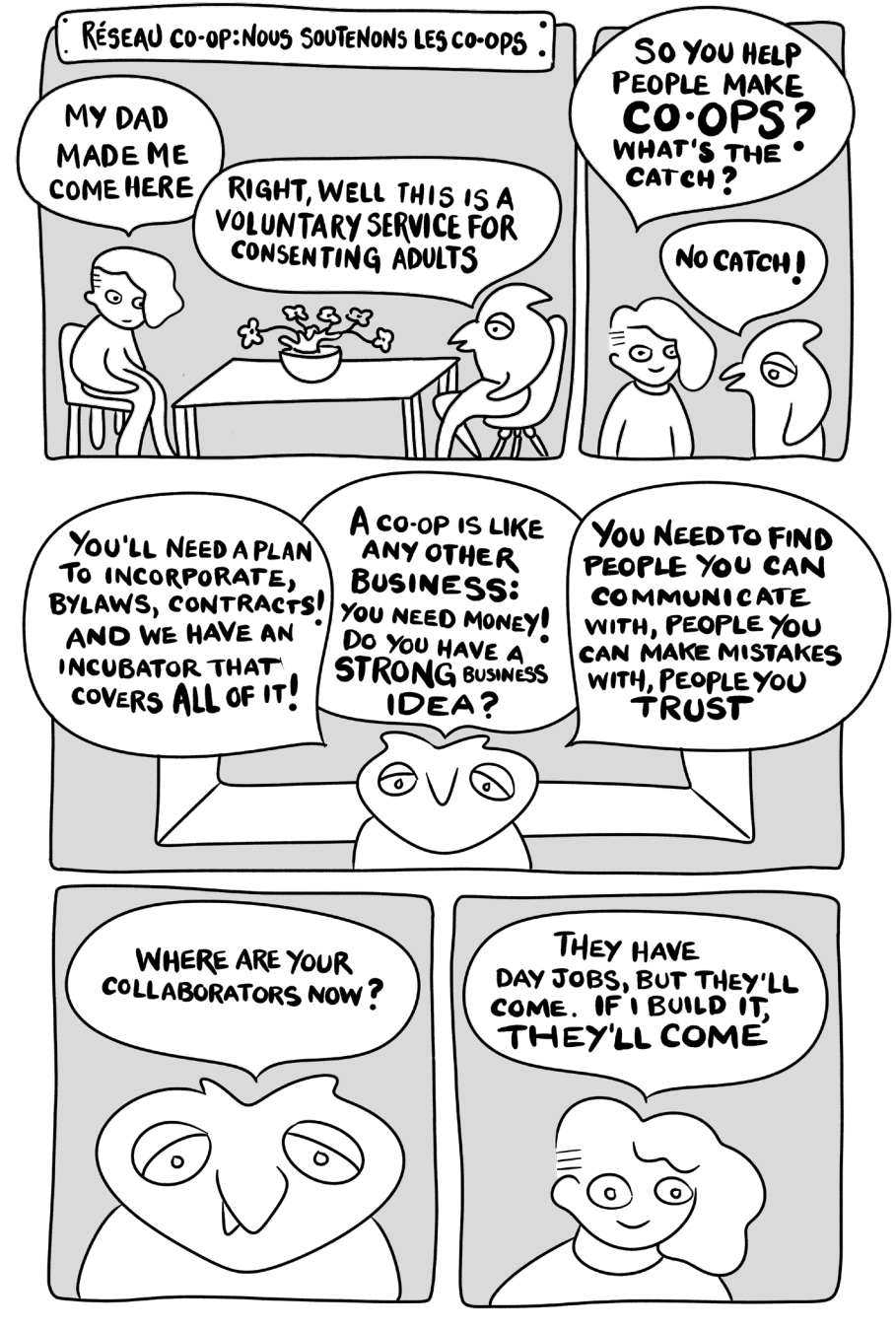

DID YOU KNOW THAT MASTERCARD WAS ORIGINALLY A CO-OP?
OH
THAT WAS A PRODUCER CO-OP, WHERE ALL THE MEMBERS ARE BUSINESSES, LIKE LA GUILDE DE JEU VIDÉO DU QUÉBEC, NOT A WORKER CO-OP
IT'S WEIRD THAT A BUSINESS COULD BE OWNED BY ANYONE OTHER THAN THE PEOPLE DOING THE WORK! SOMEONE IS ENTITLED TO MORE - WHY? BECAUSE THEY INHERITED MONEY? OR WORKAHOLIC GENES?

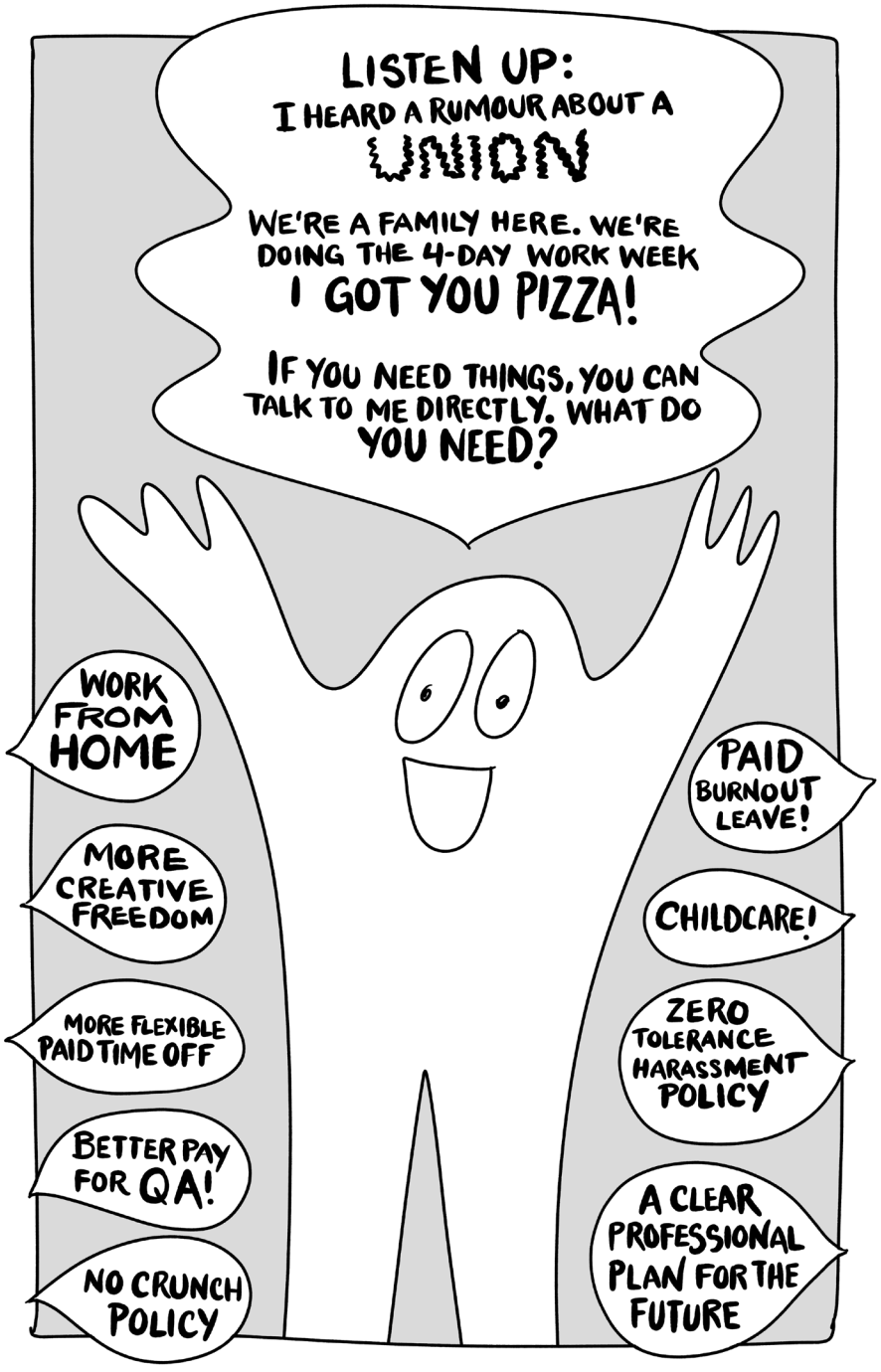

ARE CO-OPS ONLY FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN AFFORD THE RISK? ARE WE ESCAPING INTO OUR OWN BUBBLE WHILE THE WORLD BURNS?
MAYBE, YOU'D FEEL BETTER IF YOU JUST SAY ALL YOUR CONCERNS AT ONCE?
I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING IN CHARGE OF MYSELF
WHO DOES THE ADMIN WORK? I MEAN, WHO WASHES THE DISHES IN THE PUNK KITCHEN?
WILL THERE BE A LOT OF LOOOONG MEEEEEETINGS?
HOW LONG CAN WE SUPPORT EACH OTHER WHEN WE INEVITABLY BURN OUT OR GET SICK?
WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CO-OPS AND UNIONS IN THE FIGHT FOR LABOUR JUSTICE?
WHAT ABOUT GRANNY? WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T PAY OUR RENT
WILL WE ACCIDENTALLY EXPLOIT PEOPLE OR REPRODUCE THE SYSTEM?


BIG NEWS EVERYONE
NEW RESEARCH SHOWS THAT 4-DAY WORK WEEKS IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY! SO WE'RE TAKING FRIDAYS OFF!
GUICY GAMES
YAY!
ALSO, PIZZA PARTY TONIGHT FOR ANY ROCKSTARS WHO WORK LATE! GET YOUR VEGAN, GLUTEN-FREE, OR ALL MEAT ORDERS IN BY 8PM!


HI DJ GRANNY IS ZED HOME?
ZED'S WORKING LATE AGAIN. COME IN, SWEETIE
WE CAN LISTEN TO MY NEW MIX AND EAT SOUP
HYDRO QUEBEC
I NEED TO CALL THE UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE BUT TO CALL THEM I NEED TO GET MY HEALTH CARD RENEWED, TO GET IT RENEWED, I NEED TO SORT THROUGH THE DREADED BOX OF PAPERS, TO SORT THROUGH IT I NEED TO FIND MY GLASSES, MAYBE I LOST THEM, I NEED NEW GLASSES BUT TO GET THEM I NEED MY HEALTH CARD, OHHHH NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO.
SOMETIMES THINGS JUST NEED TIME TO SIMMER, HAVE SOME SOUP
RAVE
BILL
BILL


WHAT ARE YOUR SECRETS? DO I LOVE YOU? DO I LOATHE YOU? YOU MYSTERIOUS CREATURE WITH SMOOTH METAL SKIN
OUR PM IS OOO AND DESPITE CLEAR RPIS AND OUR OKR FRAMEWORK OUR MAU AND DAU ARE GOING DOWN! WE NEED TO GET THAT EXPONENTIAL CUUURRRVVVE
THIS IS HAPPENING THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING
RÉSEAU


RÉSEAU CO-OP: NOUS SOUTENONS LES CO-OPS
MY DAD MADE ME COME HERE
RIGHT, WELL THIS IS A VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR CONSENTING ADULTS
SO YOU HELP PEOPLE MAKE CO-OPS? WHAT'S THE CATCH?
NO CATCH!
YOU'LL NEED A PLAN TO INCORPORATE, BYLAWS, CONTRACTS! AND WE HAVE AN INCUBATOR THAT COVERS ALL OF IT!
A CO-OP IS LIKE ANY OTHER BUSINESS: YOU NEED MONEY! DO YOU HAVE A STRONG BUSINESS IDEA?
YOU NEED TO FIND PEOPLE YOU CAN COMMUNICATE WITH, PEOPLE YOU CAN MAKE MISTAKES WITH, PEOPLE YOU TRUST
WHERE ARE YOUR COLLABORATORS NOW?
THEY HAVE DAY JOBS, BUT THEY'LL COME. IF I BUILD IT, THEY'LL COME


LISTEN UP:
I HEARD A RUMOUR ABOUT A
UNION
WE'RE A FAMILY HERE. WE'RE DOING THE 4-DAY WORK WEEK
I GOT YOU PIZZA!
IF YOU NEED THINGS, YOU CAN TALK TO ME DIRECTLY. WHAT DO YOU NEED?
WORK FROM HOME
MORE CREATIVE FREEDOM
MORE FLEXIBLE PAID TIME OFF
BETTER PAY FOR QA!
NO CRUNCH POLICY
PAID BURNOUT LEAVE!
CHILDCARE!
ZERO TOLERANCE HARASSMENT POLICY
A CLEAR PROFESSIONAL PLAN FOR THE FUTURE


MORE MONEY!
UNLIMITED SICK DAYS
NO MORE RACIST JOKES IN THE OFFICE
PAID SICK DAYS
REAL MENTAL HEALTH COVERAGE
TRAINING BUDGET FOR PERSONAL GROWTH
SALARY TRANSPARENCY
NON-TOKEN DIVERSITY ON THE TEAM AND IN LEADERSHIP
RESIGN AND GIVE FULL OWNERSHIP OF THE COMPANY TO US!
LAND BACK
MINIMUM 4 WEEKS OF VACATION
MENSTRUATION LEAVE
OFFICE CATS
HORMONE THERAPY
BETTER SUPPORTS FOR ADHD
FIRE CREEPY MIKE

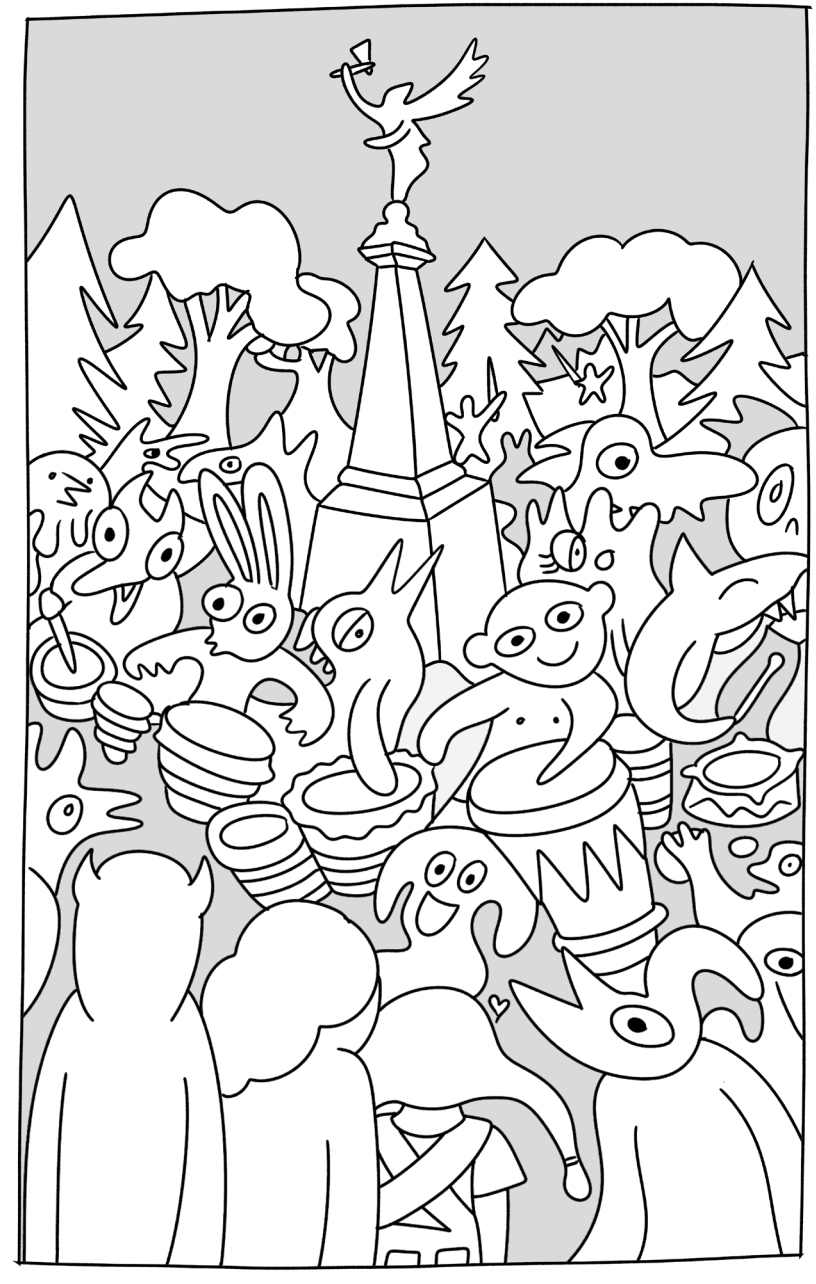

FARINE
FIVE ROSES
EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE OKAY
YOU JUST SAID WE'RE FUCKED


WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH A GAME ABOUT CLIMATE DREAD. WE HAVE A HUGE BUDGET AND YOU'D HAVE TOTAL CREATIVE FREEDOM!
THE DEADLINE IS IN 90 DAYS WHAT DO YOU SAY?
BOOM
UM
CAN I THINK ABOUT IT AND GET BACK TO YOU?
SAY NOOOOOOOO


CAN I STAY HERE? I DON'T WANT TO BE ALONE
BILL
BILL
BILL
HYDRO
I KNOW I'M DOING IT WRONG
BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
EVERYONE SAID IF WE WORKED HARD AND WENT TO UNIVERSITY WE'D GET GOOD JOBS THAT EVERYTHING WOULD BE OKAY
I'VE WORKED MY WHOLE LIFE: BERRY PICKING, PAPER ROUTES, DISHWASHING, SERVING, RETAIL, OFFICE WORK, BARS, DIRECTING. I'VE DONE IT ALL.
NO ONE TOLD ME HOW BAD IT IS. I GUESS I COULD HAVE KNOWN, LOOKING AT MY MOM'S EXHAUSTED FACE AS SHE CHANGED OUT OF HER WORK CLOTHES

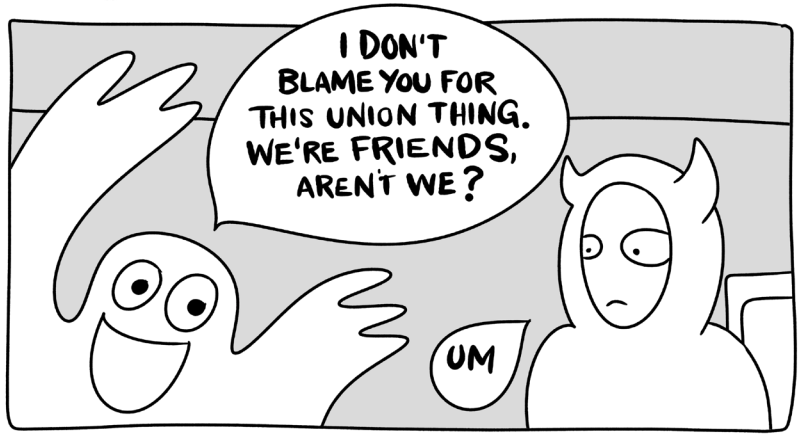

I KNOW THIS ISN'T WORKING, BUT AT LEAST FREELANCE LETS ME WORK ON MY OWN TIME, KEEPS ME FREE TO CHOOSE, TO WORK ON THINGS THAT BRING ME TO LIFE
I LIKE DANCING ON THE EDGE, SPINNING ON THE SHARP BLADE OF POSSIBILITY
OUR WORK IS BEING ATOMIZED, SMALLER AND SMALLER. FIRST WITH FORD, AND WORKERS BECOMING COGS IN AN ASSEMBLY LINE. NOW THEY WANT US ON CALL, FOR HIRE, REPLACEABLE, DISPOSABLE.
SOON WE'LL ALL BE MICROCONTRACTORS, HIRED JUST-IN-TIME, BY THE MINUTE OR THE SECOND. THEY USE US, THEY DISCARD US, THEY MOVE ON.
YOU'RE DANCING ON THE EDGE, AND THE EDGE GETS THINNER AND THINNER. WILL YOU DANCE UNTIL YOU FALL OFF?
IT DOESN'T MATTER PEOPLE LIKE ME ALWAYS FALL OFF, IN THE END


THE HARDEST PART OF WORK ISN'T THE WORK, IT'S MY BOSS
I RESENT MY BOSS IN A WAY THAT I DON'T WANT TO RESENT YOU
I DON'T WANT TO HAVE A BOSS AND I DON'T WANT TO BE THE BOSS AND I DON'T WANT TO DO IT ALONE
I'VE HAD 3 DIFFERENT BOSSES BE [illegible] WITH ME
I HAD A BOSS [illegible] AND ANOTHER [illegible] AND ANOTHER [illegible]
I HATE IT
I HATE IT
WANT TO WALK UP THE MOUNTAIN?




AAAAAAAAAHHHH!!!
I DON'T WANT TO LOOK BACK ON MY LIFE KNOWING THAT I COULD HAVE FOUGHT FOR SOMETHING REAL
IT ALL JUST FEELS LIKE AN IMPOSSIBLE GRIND
I DON'T HAVE A SAFETY NET!
ALL THIS NOISE KEEPS US FROM IMAGINING SOMETHING DIFFERENT.
WE'RE WORLD DESIGNERS, WHY CAN'T WE DESIGN A WORLD WE'D WANT TO LIVE IN?
I ALMOST HAVE A PITCH READY FOR THE INVESTORS
I DON'T WANT TO SPEEDRUN LIFE

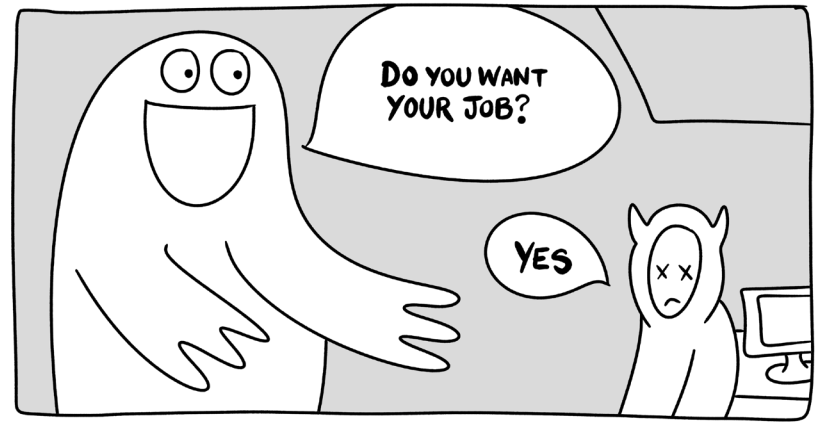

WE GOTTA DOUBLE-CLICK ON THAT TO GET TO THE NORTH STAR
DO YOU HAVE A QUICK MOMENT TO CHAT?
WAIT, NOT NOW, I'LL COME TO FIND YOU IN A BIT


I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR THIS UNION THING. WE'RE FRIENDS, AREN'T WE?
UM


I'M TRYING MY BEST, HERE! I'M TRYING TO KEEP EVERYONE EMPLOYED


I'M TRYING TO HELP PEOPLE LIVE THEIR DREAMS OF MAKING GAMES
OK


I'M NOT THE ENEMY HERE. YOU WOULDN'T WANT MY JOB. DO YOU WANT MY JOB?
NO


DO YOU WANT YOUR JOB?
YES


THANKS FOR MEETING ME! OUR GAME IS ABOUT CYBERCATS WHO USE STRING TO FORM SHAPES AND REVEAL THE WAYS WE ARE BOUND TOGETHER!
OUR CO-OP TEAM INCLUDES A SEASONED DEV, A FAN-FAVOURITE ARTIST WITH TEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, AND ME - AN AWARD-WINNING GAME DESIGNER!
PITCH
I LOVE THE TALENT!
BUT INVESTING IN GAMES IS LIKE PLAYING THE SLOTS. I TOLD YOUR DAD I'D TALK TO YOU, BUT INVESTING IN A CO-OP DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. I NEED 100x RETURNS
PITCH

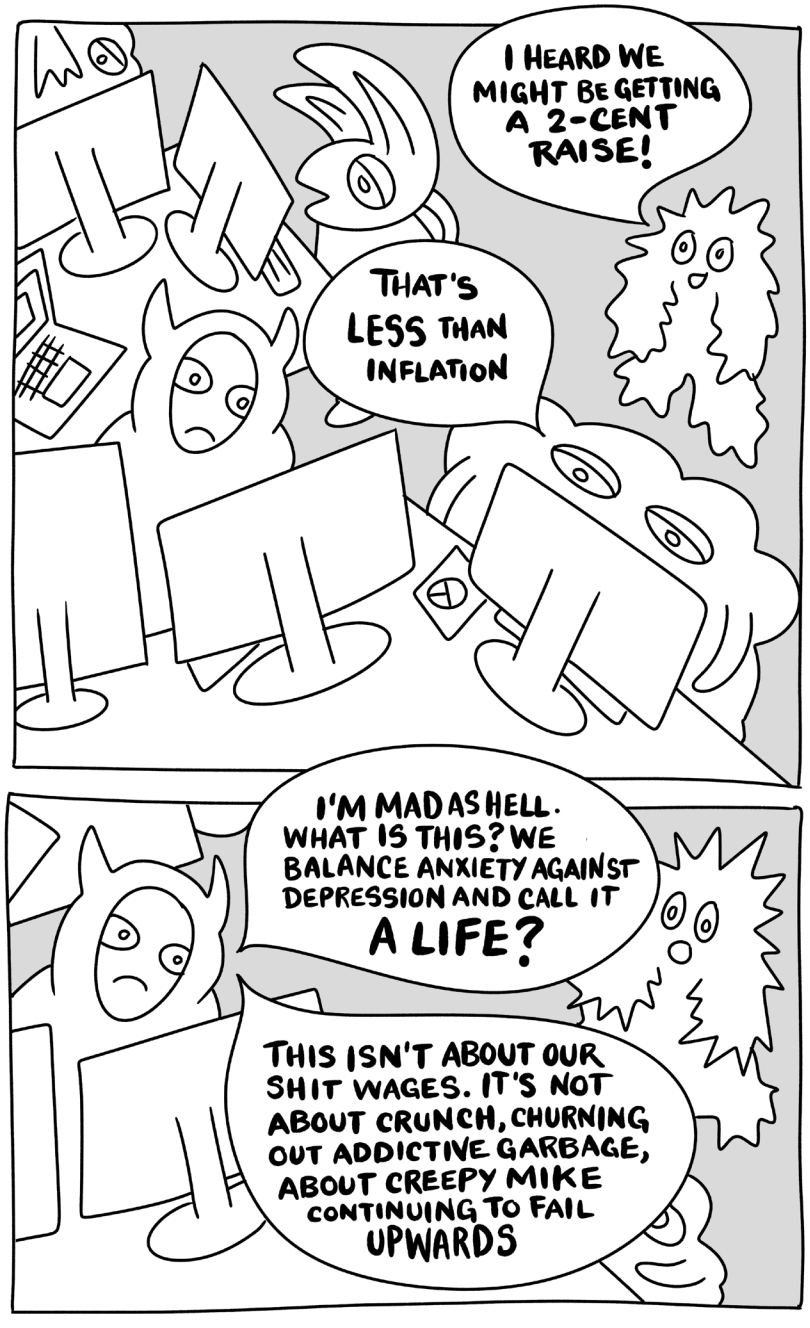

EVEN IF YOU WEREN'T A CO-OP MOST INDIE DARLINGS ARE ON THE PRECIPICE OF FAILURE, STAYING AFLOAT WITH FAMILY WEALTH AND SIDE GIGS FOR GIANT MEDIA MULTINATIONALS.
COULD YOU SPIN IT AND REVOLUTIONIZE PLAY BY GAMIFYING GIGIFIED WORK THROUGH AI SOCIAL ENGINEERING ON THE CHAIN? NOW THAT'S SOMETHING I COULD FUCK WITH
I'M OUT OF TIME
GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR COMMUNE OR WHATEVER!
PITCH
NO LAPTOPS AFTER 6PM


WHAT IF IT ALL WORKS OUT?

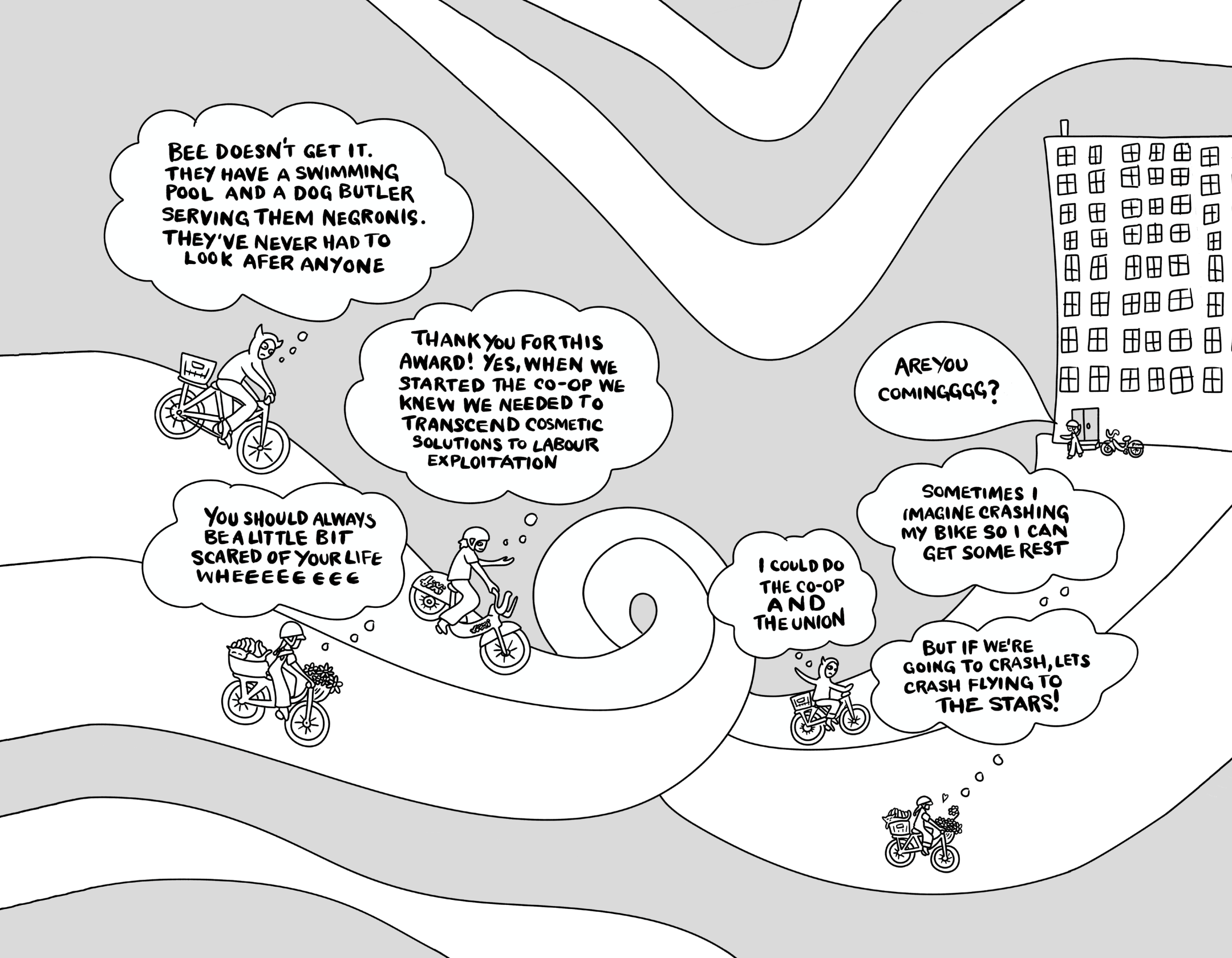

I CAN TRUST MY FRIENDS. AND IF I FLAME OUT, I'D RATHER DO IT MAKING OUR DREAMS COME TRUE THAN SECRETLY WASHING DISHES IN A ZOOM CALL
THANK YOU FOR THE OFFER BUT I CAN'T TAKE THE JOB
FINALLY!!!

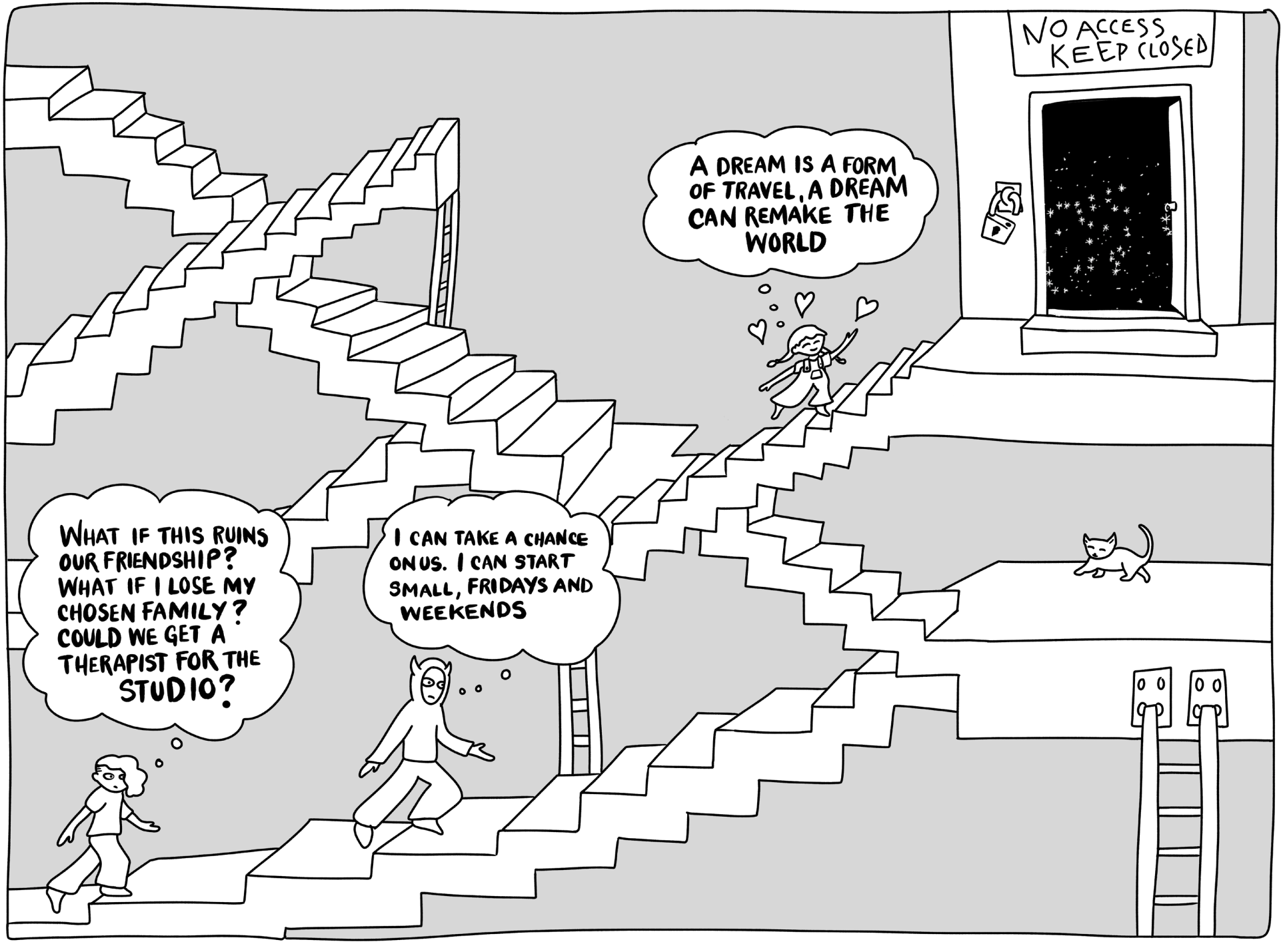

I NEED MONEY, DAD
I'M SHOCKED
I HAVE A PLAN. THE INVESTORS WANT OBSCENE GROWTH. I JUST NEED A BOOST TO GET STARTED. AFTER 5 YEARS, 90% OF CO-OPS ARE STILL IN BUSINESS, COMPARED TO 3-5% OF TRADITIONAL BUSINESSES
I NEED YOU, DAD. HAVEN'T YOU EVER WANTED SOMETHING MORE?

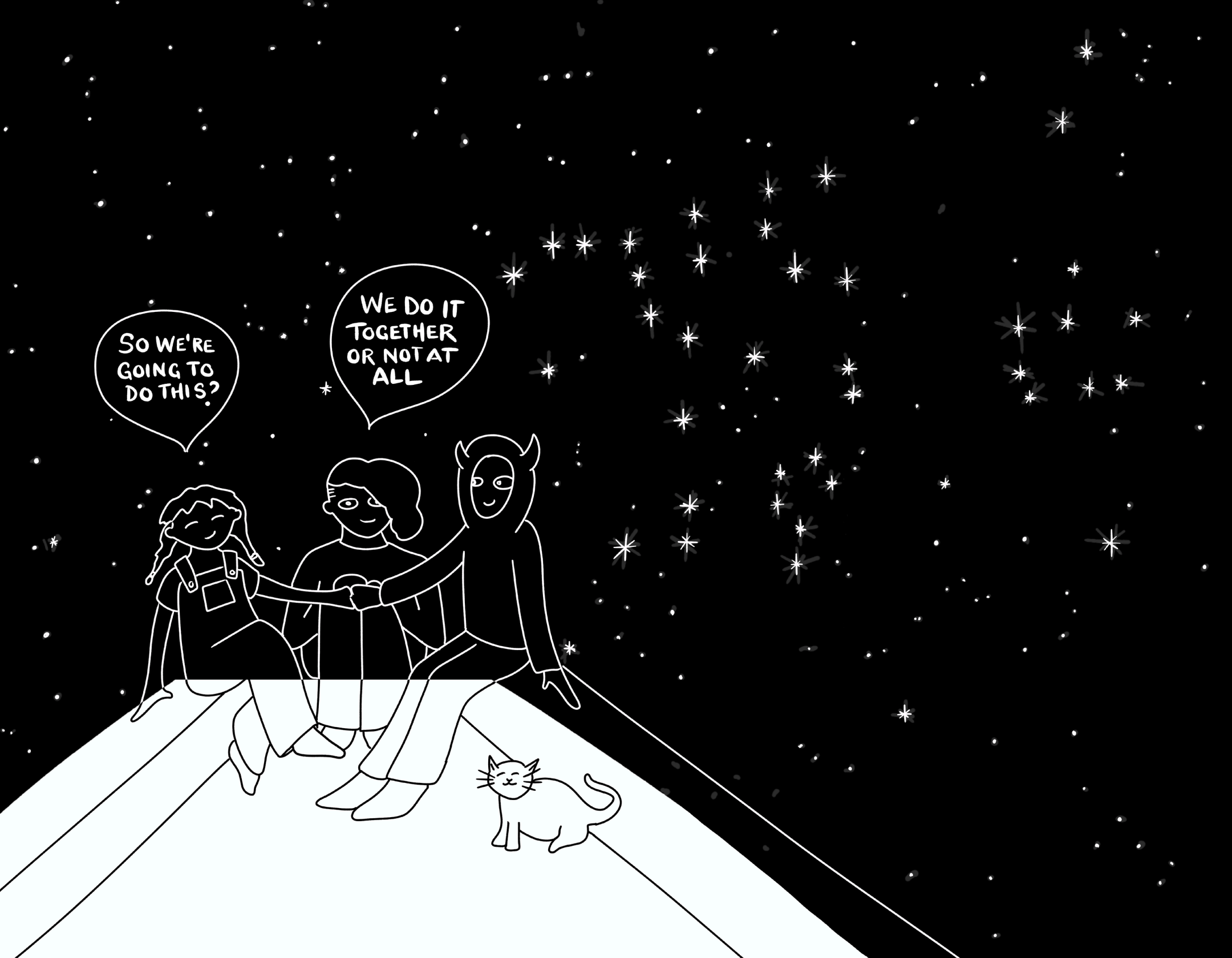

THIS IS A LOAN! I EXPECT EVERY PENNY BACK, WITH INTEREST. YOU'LL NEED A STRONG BUSINESS PLAN, I'LL NEED TO MEET YOUR CO-FOUNDERS AND YOU'LL NEED TO DO THE RÉSEAU CO-OP INCUBATOR
I UNDERSTAND


I HEARD WE MIGHT BE GETTING A 2-CENT RAISE!
THAT'S LESS THAN INFLATION
I'M MAD AS HELL. WHAT IS THIS? WE BALANCE ANXIETY AGAINST DEPRESSION AND CALL IT A LIFE?
THIS ISN'T ABOUT OUR SHIT WAGES. IT'S NOT ABOUT CRUNCH, CHURNING OUT ADDICTIVE GARBAGE, ABOUT CREEPY MIKE CONTINUING TO FAIL UPWARDS


I WANT MORE THAN A 4-DAY WORK WEEK, MORE THAN A RAISE. I WANT IT TO BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO OWN OUR PRECIOUS LIVES. I WANT US TO RIP THIS WHOLE ROTTED THING ROOTS. WE DESERVE BETTER!
WE JUST NEED 50% OF US TO SIGN THE UNION CARDS, AND THEN-
BIG NEWS! WE'VE BEEN AQUIRED BY BOOBYSAFT! WE'LL BE RESTRUCTURING TO FIND A SYNERGISTIC MERGE
LOYAL ROCKSTARS HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! THIS IS A WIN FOR ALL OF US!
WE'LL KEEP FIGHTING AT BOOBYSAFT, I HAVE FRIENDS THERE
WE WONT GIVE UP, WE'LL NEVER GIVE UP


BEE DOESN'T GET IT. THEY HAVE A SWIMMING POOL AND A DOG BUTLER SERVING THEM NEGRONIS. THEY'VE NEVER HAD TO LOOK AFER ANYONE
THANK YOU FOR THIS AWARD! YES, WHEN WE STARTED THE CO-OP WE KNEW WE NEEDED TO TRANSCEND COSMETIC SOLUTIONS TO LABOUR EXPLOITATION
ARE YOU COMINGGGG?
YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BE A LITTLE BIT SCARED OF YOUR LIFE WHEEEEEEEEE
SOMETIMES I IMAGINE CRASHING MY BIKE SO I CAN GET SOME REST
I COULD DO THE CO-OP AND THE UNION
BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO CRASH, LETS CRASH FLYING TO THE STARS!


NO ACCESS
KEEP CLOSED
A DREAM IS A FORM OF TRAVEL, A DREAM CAN REMAKE THE WORLD
I CAN TAKE A CHANCE ON US. I CAN START SMALL, FRIDAYS AND WEEKENDS
WHAT IF THIS RUINS OUR FRIENDSHIP? WHAT IF I LOSE MY CHOSEN FAMILY? COULD WE GET A THERAPIST FOR THE STUDIO?


SO WE'RE GOING TO DO THIS?
WE DO IT TOGETHER OR NOT AT ALL

Thanks for reading!

If you'd like to dive deeper into this research, check out our free companion whitepaper, full of crunchy data, parsable charts and candid quotes: gameartsinternational.network/ctr or email info@gameartsinternational.network.

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GAMEDEV
CRUNCH
CHANGE
WE'RE WORLD DESIGNERS WHY CAN'T WE DESIGN A WORLD WE'D WANT TO LIVE IN?
CREATIVE CONTROL
???
HI
$
AAA
FREELANCE
SOLO DEV
UNION?
WORK WORK WORK
HELP
CO-OP
INDIE
WHY?
SO TIRED
BURNOUT
FOUR-DAY WORK WEEK
GAIN
Game Arts International Network