

Makers Bible

Written By

Ryan Somma

Ryan Somma
PO Box 96
Occoquan, VA 22125
(252) 207-5768
ideonexus@gmail.com



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Summary

Makers is a family-friendly sitcom that follows the Glasper's, a family comprised of two geeky, mixed-race parents who work as software developers. Nef, the mother, telecommutes on various IT contracts from her makerspace/gaming shop that has been in the red for so long the IRS has made her downgrade it from a business to a hobby. Zack, the father, works in Laboratory Information Management systems, and is a heavy-gamer off-hours. They have two young children, Sagan and Ada, named for Carl Sagan and Ada Lovelace. There are also numerous regulars in the shop as well as coworkers/competitors in India and in local offices.

Setting

The Makerspace/GameShop is packed with tech and gaming supplies. Drawers filled with wires, arduinos, raspberry pi's, and other tech line the walls, alongside comic and RPG books. A semi-circle of couches surround a big-screen TV, setup stadium style. A DIY MAME arcade system with an old CRT monitor and an old electromechanical pinball sit against a far wall. Behind the counter, Nef has a tower of six monitors setup showing code and the web applications she is working on. Also behind the counter is a snackbar of healthy snacks advertising their calories. Two 3D printers, one filament-based the other resin-based, run full time on a table at the end of the counter. Long tables are setup throughout the shop, with gamers playing card games or gathered around boardgames. While makers solder electronics or hot-glue recyclables together into geometric art and other projects. PAT is always at one of the tables, either sitting and sorting his collectible card games or dispensing gaming wisdom to the kids in the shop.

Cast

Nefertiti (Nef): Spends her day unsuccessfully trying to get her hours in for her day job as a web applications developer while running her makerspace/gaming shop and being an attentive mother to her kids.

Zack: Nef's husband. Works on-site for a food safety laboratory. He convinced Nef to add gaming to her maker shop to increase profits. He is on a mission to explore all things geek.

Sagan: Their older son. He is perpetually saving quarters for whatever latest toy or game catches his fancy and is speaking truth to power only the way a young child can.

Ada: Their younger daughter, who often speaks in sign language because she lacks the spoken vocabulary to express herself. She asks the questions some audience members might have about the show's sometimes obscure references, allowing other characters to explain them to her (and the audience).

Pat: After making a killing off of working on the Year 2000 Bug, Pat now spends his retirement playing various board, RPG, and card games. Regularly expressing his disdain for computers, he also has many fascinating stories to tell of his adventures with mainframes and the early days of the World Wide Web.

Grace: Regular at the shop. Loves tinkering with electronics and eating Chinese food. Has a bit of a weight problem, but the boys in the shop have a crush on her for being such a nerd.

Don: Young, hip, bleeding-edge contractor in a neighboring office. He likes to come into the shop under the pretense of talking tech with Zack and Nef, but really just wants to show off his cutting-edge knowledge and savvy contracting skills.

Hanuma: Nef's coworker in India. A new father with a strong work ethic. They meet in mornings and nights as one is coming online and the other is going off due to time differences.

Gary: Nef's employer. Always seen onscreen from exotic locations sipping cocktails as he spends the money she and Hanuma bring in from contracting.

The Joneses: Nef's parents. Hard-working, elderly African Americans who Nef appreciates for giving her opportunities they did not have and inspire Nef to pay it forward to her own children. The Glaspers and the Joneses have strong disagreements about parenting styles and allowing children access to technology and fandom.

Episode Ideas

Torrent Troubles: Someone is pirating media on Friday nights on the shop internet connection and the internet provider is sending letters. One more notice and they will throttle the shop's connection. Some argue Nef should invest in an anonymous VPN, but she's bothered by the principle of the thing. Others note that she has a DIY MAME arcade cabinet that violates copyright, but she sees that as digital preservation. Others note that kids are swapping MP3s all the time in the shop. Other kids have PDFs of all the RPGs that are for sale, which hurts the shop. Zack considers his use of a research-paper torrenting site an act of civil disobedience. Episode explores all the complexities of copyright and sharing information.

The Muggles: anti-video game, anti-D&D, anti-computer in-laws leave their kids with Nef and Zack for a weekend. How they try to balance respect for their in-laws parenting with how infused these things are in their own lives. They try to find acceptable comic books, but find everything has violence or sexism in it. They try to find non-violent collectible card games, but find that even Pokemon is, at it's heart, a game that glamorizes dog-fighting. They find non-violent, educational video games, cooperative board games, and collaborative storytelling RPGs to fill the weekend and learn some things from the challenges to improve their own parenting as well.

Don't Feed the Trolls: Nef ejects a bully from a Collectable Card game torrent for threatening another player. Later that night, she finds the bully has gone all over the internet writing one-star reviews and accusing her of "political correctness" in running her shop. He soon rallies others to his cause and the shop starts getting abusive phone calls, police-visits from false reports, and online rants. At the end of the episode, when the trolls have found other targets for their rage,, Nef asks Zack, "How do we raise our kids to not grow up and become trolls?"

H1B1 Invasion: Don hires an H1B1 worker, Haiyao, from China, who Nef has to collaborate with on a project. Nef quickly finds the worker calling her at all hours of the night struggling to meet unreasonable deadlines Don sets for him. Nef sees the work demands as abusive, but Haiyao has a family to support and would have to go back to China to begin the application process all over again if he quits. Episode will touch on the work-life balance all professionals struggle with. Nef teams up with Haiyao to force Don into setting more reasonable hours and deadlines.

The Baby Bummers: Nef's parents come to visit. They are clearly critical that the kids are allowed to play video games and that they are not learning the skills they were taught as young children like counting physical money, cursive handwriting, and reading physical books. Nef doesn't think those skills are relevant anymore. Why use a library card-catalog system when you can google things? Why write cursive, when you can type much faster? Why use germ-covered physical money when you can use debit cards? Explores the conflict of generations, the need for appreciating the skills of our elders, and wonders what skills will Millennials learn that will one day be obsolete.

Code Switching: Nef gets a social-networking friend request from her boss, Gary, and doesn't know what to do. Zack doesn't understand what the big deal is. She explains that her social networking friends are all gamers and makers, with the obscure humor that comes with that community. Friending Gary would mean mixing her professional face with her geek face. Her parents explain the concept of "code-switching," where African Americans take on certain mannerisms depending on whether they are at work or with other black people. Eventually Nef befriends Gary only to discover that he spends all day posting right-wing memes, many of which she finds offensive and must now figure out how to respond to them.

Simulation's Discontents: Zack picks up a digital pinball machine and brings it into the store to set it right next to the Bally Time Zone pinball. Nef doesn't like it. Zack doesn't understand why since she's okay with her MAME arcade. Pat complains that no one wants to play RPGs with him in the store and everyone's gone off to those accursed MMORPGs. Other customers complain that their comic books and collectable cards have dropped in value since PDF and online-gaming versions of them have popped-up online. Episode explores the trend towards digitizing everything, the fantastic benefits of the trend, but also how it impacts local communities which are forgotten and neglected in the rush to be part of the world community.

Time Thieves: All the kids in the shop have gotten addicted to a new video game that exploits pavlovian conditioning to get them to perform repetitive tasks for constant small rewards. Soon the shop is filled with zombies staring at their phones. Nef and Pat must break them out of it and rehabilitate them. Episode explores how we have a finite amount of time in this life, and we must remain ever-vigilant and mindful of how we spend this precious resource.