Makers

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## 

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INT. MAKERSPACE - DAY

NEF leans over a mass of wires and blinking lights, counting parts at the counter. Across from her, GRACE bounces impatiently on her heels.

NEF

(Half-mumbling)

38… 39… 40… 41… 42 jumper wires.

(Scribbles this down)

I keep telling you Grace, you could save a lot of money by stripping wires instead of burning through all my jumpers.

(Begins counting crimps)

Eight… nine… ten… 11--

GRACE

(Alarmed)

Wait! What happened to one through seven?

Nef

(Points to the trash can)

You threw one through seven in the trash can over there.

GRACE

I have to pay for those?

NEF

I had to pay for them.

GRACE

But… but...

NEF

(Scribbling)

28 crimps.

(Looks up)

You know. If you would learn soldering, you could save a lot of money on crimps too.

GRACE

(Rolls eyes)

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. How much is it?

NEF

(Calculating)

Jumpers… crimps… hot-glue… LEDs… plus one arduino and power source--

GRACE

It’s pronounced ‘are-djew-ween-o.’

NEF

Pardon me, one ‘are-djew-ween-o’--30 bucks.

GRACE

(Eyebrows shoot up)

30?!? Can’t you give me a discount?

NEF

(Defensive)

I rounded down. Technically you owe me $32.25.

GRACE

(Pulls out a card, stares at it and sighs)

Okay… I guess it’s ramen noodles for dinner again tonight.

NEF

(Sighs and rubs the bridge of her nose)

Just give me $25 and we’ll call it even.

GRACE

That’s very kind of you. Then I could buy some peanuts to put in the noodles for protein… of course, I won’t have any vegetables for nutrition.

NEF

(Sternly)

I’ll give you the creativity discount. Okay? $20. This...

(Waves at the mass of wires and blinking lights)

...thing is pretty cool.

GRACE

(Puts card away, pulls out a $20)

This is a portal from a 1973 Bally Time Zone Pinball machine. I’ve programmed it to randomly light these colored LEDs in the center. Essentially making it a 1d6.

Nef stares at her.

GRACE

(Perturbed.)

A 1D6? You know… six-sided-dice? Don’t you know anything about the gaming side of this shop?

NEF

That’s Zack’s forte.

(Puts the $20 in the register)

Whatever it is, it’s cool. And now you are essentially getting it at cost.

GRACE

(Sincerely)

Thank you Nef.

Grace begins to exit.

NEF

(Grinning)

You’re welcome kiddo.

(Calling out after her.)

I better not see you with chinese food later!

PAT

(Shuffling MTG cards from his table)

And THAT’S why the IRS made you demote this shop from ‘business’ to ‘hobby.’

NEF

(Defensively)

It wasn’t ‘demoted,’ it was recategorized.

Pause. Nef sighs.

NEF & PAT

(Look at each other)

It was demoted.

ZACK comes in, carrying a kicking and squirming SAGAN under one arm. Zack holds the door open for ADA, who comes inside quietly.

SAGAN

(Tantruming)

But I want it!

ZACK

(Calmly)

No.

SAGAN

But I need it!

NAME

No you don’t.

SAGAN

(Pleading)

I doooooo! I need it!

ZACK

You don’t need it.

(To Nef)

Hi Sweetie.

NEF

(Quizzically)

Hi..? I’m afraid to ask...

ZACK

One of the kids at school showed him a video of her new quad-copter.

NEF

Oh no...

Zack puts Sagan on his feet. Sagan looks at him resentfully. Zack starts to take off his backpack. Sagan bolts for the door, but Nef and Zack slap hands like professional wrestlers tagging in and out. Nef leaps over the counter and blocks his escape.

NEF

(Crouching, arms spread defensively.)

Oh no you don’t!

SAGAN

(Looking to Nef)

But I need it!

NEF

Daddy said no.

SAGAN

(Trying to get around her.)

Then I’m gonna go live with a family that lets me have quad-copters!

NEF

(Pointing to the debris left by Grace on the empty work tables.)

I’ll give you a quarter if you clean up that workbench.

SAGAN

Uh… um… huh?

(Suddenly distracted.)

Two quarters!

NEF

Okay. That’ll get you two-quarters closer for your lightsaber fund.

SAGAN

(Looking determined.)

It’s a quad-copter fund!

Sagan runs off. Zack watches, impressed. He is sitting down, taking off his boots and undoing his bow tie.

ZACK

(Sighing, exhausted.)

Thank you for running interference.

NEF

(Bends down to give him a peck on the lips.)

Parenting is a tag-team sport.

They high-five. At the nearby table, Ada is talking with Pat.

PAT

(Leans over her with an evil grin. Pokes her in the belly.)

Hmmmm… Still not ripe for eating yet. Mwa-ha-ha!

ADA

(Giggles.)

NEF

(Muttering.)

He never gets tired of that joke.

ZACK

(Shrugs.)

Neither does she.

ADA

(Looking over his cards.)

Whatcha doing?

PAT

(Energized to be talking about his hobby.)

Ah! I am constructing a deck around Birds of Paradise. Since the birds provide one mana of any color, I use their ability to pump them up with enchantments of various colors--

ADA

(Politely nodding her head.)

Huh-huh.

ZACK

(Over his shoulder.)

He takes a little bird and makes it a big bird monster.

PAT

(Mocking to Zack.)

Silence naive!

(To Ada, in a hushed tone.)

I take these little birds and pump them up into big mean scary birds!

(Announcing aloud.)

I’m dubbing this deck, “Mana-Chickens of DOOM!”

NEF

(To Zack)

Still think it was a good idea to let the gamers into my maker shop?

ZACK

(Shrugging)

He does make things interesting, no?

(Sits up.)

Oh! I just remembered.

(Pulls out his laptop.)

I need your help.

(Shows Nef the screen.)

Remember that app I wrote to run in the system tray and stream results from the lab thermometers and scales into the computer?

NEF

(Nodding.)

Yeah. The one I helped you setup the TCP listening for.

ZACK

(Grinning.)

Yeah! Well, now one of the middle managers is upset that the staff have to click a button on the app to copy that data and then paste it into the web browser. They want just a button on the web form that does it all.

NEF

(Grinning.)

Of course! Standard Kaizen. The Japanese art of improving efficiency through the reduction of movements.

(MORE)

NEF (CONT’D)

Six mouse-clicks multiplied against 400 thermometer readings a day reduced to one button-click saves you 2,000 clicks. Kaizen!

ZACK

(Sarcastically.)

Glad to see you approve of this laziness initiative

NEF

Laziness is a virtue if executed properly.

ZACK

(Tabbing between screens.)

So it looks like I might be able to do it with a java applet, but only if I make some security exceptions to allow the applet to access the clipboard.

NEF

(Suddenly frowning.)

That’s a pretty big exception. That would give java programs access to anything the client copies to the clipboard… even passwords.

ZACK

(Nodding.)

Right… but these are lab computers on an internal network. No one is going shopping on them or anything like that.

NEF

(Cross arms over her chest, thinking.)

Hmmm… How about… Mayyyybeeee…

ZACK

(Hopeful.)

You have something. I can tell.

NEF

(Nodding suddenly.)

Got it.

ZACK

(Sitting up.)

Yes?

NEF

(Holding up her hands to illustrate.)

We’ll get some mice from the pet shop and train them to execute the copy-and-paste commands for the lab workers.

ZACK

(Slumping.)

Oh… That would be easier than what I’m trying.

NEF

(Wiggling fingers to pantomime mice scurrying back and forth.)

Eeep. Eeep. Eeep. Control-C. Eeep. Eeep. ALT-Tab. Eeep. Eeep. Eeep. Control-V… Hmmm… We’ll have to make sure the mice are compatible with an ISO-standard keyboard.

ZACK

(Smiling weakly.)

What’s the ISO standard for trained rodents?

NEF

Wait!

(Pointing to the system tray.)

Why not just make your app a webserver? SHABAM!

ZACK

(Leaning into screen.)

You can do that?

NEF

(Nodding.)

Sure! Have the app run a little website with the data and then have the web form hit localhost to get the data.

ZACK

(Frowning.)

Hmmm… I don’t know.

NEF

Oh?

ZACK

(Still frowning.)

That sounds way too easy. Let me mourn my rube-goldberg java hack for a bit before trying your easy button solution.

NEF

(Laughing.)

You got it.

PAT

(Shuffling cards.)

A better solution is to hit it with a brick.

NEF

(To Pat.)

Thank you Pat. That is your standard solution to all things computer-related.

ZACK

(Looking up, alarmed.)

Brogrammer alert.

NEF

(Suddenly irritated.)

It’s the askhole.

DON enters the shop. He has a bit of a swagger and an energy drink in one hand. He nods to Nef and Zack, and takes a sip before speaking.

DON

Sup Zack. Sup Nef. What’cho up to?

ZACK

(Shrugs.)

Oh… Not much. Just wrapping up for the day.

DON

(Looking down on Zack condescendingly.)

Really?

(Checks his phone.)

It’s not even 5:30. I’m just getting started. Got a sweet gig with that government contracting shop that just opened up offices in town.

ZACK

Wow. That’s really great.

DON

Gonna be a lot of hours. I could probably throw some work your way if you’re interested.

ZACK

(Shaking head, holding up hands.)

Oh no. I don’t have the resources.

DON

(Confused.)

Resources?

NEF

He’s referring to time.

DON

Oh. You probably waste time on sleep and stuff.

NEF

(Sarcastically.)

And being a dad.

DON

(Shrugs dismissively.)

I think this money’s too good to pass up, but that’s just my opinion. We all gotta set our priorities.

ZACK

(Fixed smile. Gestures to the kids.)

And we have ours.

NEF

(Irritated.)

Our kids are only going to be this young once. No amount of money is worth trading this time with them now.

DON

(Shrugs dismissively and turns to Zack.)

Oh hey. I got a tech question for you.

PAT

I can fix it! Just hit it with a brick!

Everyone looks to PAT.

PAT

What?

(Muttering as he shuffles cards.)

That’s what I wish I’d done back when I worked on the stupid Y2K bug.

ADA

What’s the why two kay bug?

PAT

(Leaning to address Ada.)

It was when computers were so stupid many of them almost broke because they didn’t know what year it was.

NEF

Pat made enough money off the Y2K bug to retire.

DON

(Shrugs dismissively.)

Meh. So anyways…

Don turns his back on Nef, cutting her out of the conversation. Behind Don, Nef starts making faces at the back of his head.

ZACK

(Seeing Nef and trying to keep a straight face with Don.)

Yes. Your question. What’s that?

DON

So the client’s got this old legacy system--

NEF

(Quietly.)

Redundancy alert!

DON

--for human resources. It’s all PHP and MySQL and stuff.

ZACK

(Nodding.)

An AMP solution.

DON

Yeah. Really antiquated and stuff. And they want it to expose a web service with employee ids and names to integrate with some learning management system--

ZACK

An LMS… I follow.

DON

And I’m just like… I dunno… It’s all old code and it’s hard to follow. So I’m thinking I’ll probably just rewrite the whole thing in Ruby or Python or something. You know, modernize it.

Nef’s eyes go wide.

ZACK

(Confused and alarmed.)

Oh… Um… Wait. You’re going to rewrite a comprehensive human resources web application…

DON

(Nonchalant.)

Yeah.

Nef makes a “dude” face, imitating Don.

ZACK

(Trying to make Don see the error in his thinking politely.)

From scratch…

DON

Uh huh.

ZACK

Instead of just… writing a simple web service to expose the data…

DON

(Clueless.)

Right.

Nef gets serious.

ZACK

(Holding up a finger.)

You know… one file… a database call… outputting some data…

DON

Right on.

NEF

(Stepping into the conversation.)

Don… I think what Zack is trying to say is… a human resources application is a really big system with lots of really complex functions… and the fact that it’s really old means that it probably has a lot of customizations in it… probably years’ and years’ worth of code in there.

DON

(Nodding.)

Right on.

NEF

(Leaning in to see if he gets it.)

Do you understand what we’re trying to say?

DON

(Still nodding.)

Oh yeah. I get it. I better get to work.

(Takes a chug off his energy drink.)

It’s gonna be a long weekend if I’m gonna get this rewrite done by Friday.

Don leaves with a wave. Nef and Zack look to one another.

NEF

(Shaking her fists in frustration.)

Ohhh… Can you believe him?

ZACK

(Shaking head.)

I know.

NEF

(Speaking in a “dude” voice.)

“I’m gonna chug some energy stars and pound out a human resources application this weekend.”

ZACK

Instead of just writing one-file’s worth of PHP.

NEF

(Pacing away.)

He’s totally going to screw this up.

ZACK

He is.

NEF

(Pacing toward ZACK.)

If only I could be there to fix this when he drops the ball.

ZACK

It’s unfortunate.

NEF

(Rushes over to her desktop.)

I wonder if the contractor has anything on their website.

ZACK

(Sitting up.)

Wait, what?

NEF

(Typing. Tabbing through screens.)

You know… someone we can reach out to there.

ZACK

(Coming over. Worried.)

Reach out to why?

NEF

(Looks at him.)

To warn him about Don.

ZACK

(Shaking head.)

Yehhh… I’m not comfortable with this.

NEF

(Frowning.)

Why not? Is this like that salary thing?

ZACK

What salary thing?

NEF

That guy-thing where you think it’s wrong to talk about how much you make with your coworkers.

ZACK

It’s not a guy-thing. It’s practical. Prevents people from getting hurt feelings and whatnot. With this thing with Don… I’m just not sure it’s the most ethical thing to try and steal his contract.

NEF

I’m not trying to steal his contract. I’m simply offering my services to the client in the event that Don drops the ball on this. That’s not unethical, that’s fair competition.

ZACK

I get that… but Don is kind of our friend. He trusts us enough to talk about his contracts. Would this be betraying that trust?

NEF

And I get that… but what about the ethics of letting an incompetent contractor deliver a shoddy product to their client?

They both frown in silent thought for a moment. Her computer chimes and a call request pops up.

NEF

(Looking to it.)

Ah… It’s Hanuma! Let’s see what he thinks.

(Clicks accept. Hanuma’s photo appears on the screen.)

Hi Hanuma.

HANUMA

(Voice only.)

I can’t see you! Enable video!

ZACK

(Smiling.)

That depends.

HANUMA

On what?

NEF

Are you dressed?

HANUMA

Oh come on! That was one time and I didn’t even know the video was enabled!

Nef laughs and clicks to open the video. Hanuma appears on the screen. He sits in a dark room, illuminated by his computer monitor, and cradles a baby in the crook of one arm.

NEF

(Fawning.)

Awwww… Is that Sirisha?

HANUMA

(Holds the baby up to the monitor.)

Yes! This is the little bundle of joy… my little crying, pooping, keeping me up all night bundle of joy.

ZACK

(Leaning over Nef’s shoulder to see.)

What time is it over there?

HANUMA

(Smiling.)

It’s 3 A.M. I figure since I’m up, I might as well get some hours in. Nefertiti, do you have the requirements for that geomap visualization?

NEF

(Holds up her hands.)

I got the documentation from the SME this morning, but first I have a question for you.

HANUMA

Yes?

NEF

How much do you make?

HANUMA

(Eyebrows go up.)

Oh! Um… Well…

ZACK

Don’t answer that Hanuma!

(To Nef.)

The kid’s in India. The whole reason Gary outsources to him is to pay him less.

NEF

(Sighs.)

Okay. Okay.

(MORE)

NEF (CONT’D)

(To Hanuma.)

Second question: do you think it’s unethical of me to offer my services to a potential client who’s about to waste money on an incompetent contractor?

HANUMA

I see nothing wrong with that. That’s just good business.

ZACK

What if the incompetent contractor is a friend and the only reason you know about it is because they asked for help on it?

HANUMA

Oh… Well, that seems a little rude.

NEF

What if the incompetent contractor only asked for help to give him an opening for bragging about getting the contract and showing off his bleeding-edge tech knowledge?

HANUMA

So you’re not talking about Pat.

PAT

(Offscreen.)

Hit it with a brick!

HANUMA

Is this that askhole you were telling me about?

NEF

Yes!

HANUMA

That’s a tough one. It could make things extremely awkward for you if he found out about it.

ZACK

Which is why I vote we stay out of it. This is an ethical quagmire.

NEF

I get it. Don just gets me so heated with his brogrammer nonsense. He’s still our neighbor, and we don’t need the drama in our lives.

HANUMA

I am very drama-adverse too.

NEF

Thanks Hanuma. I’ll email you the requirements document shortly.

HANUMA

Can I bill an hour for this chat?

NEF

Technically we have to chat for 15 minutes to bill for it.

HANUMA

(Mildly disappointed.)

Okay.

NEF

(Squinting at the call window.)

But I think 3 A.M. calls should be billable no matter how long they are.

HANUMA

(Bounces in chair.)

Yay!

Sirisha starts crying. Hanuma’s eyes go wide.

HANUMA

(Whispering.)

I mean… yayyyyy…

Nef ends the call, turns to Sagan, who is just running up to them.

SAGAN

(Holding out hand expectantly.)

Quarters please!

ZACK

(Pulling out quarters to hand him.)

Quarters for the quadcopter! Four quarters make a dollar. Four rotors make a Quadcopter. Four babies make quadruplets. Four legs make a quadruped.

NEF

Drawn and quartered makes--oh, nevermind!

SAGAN

When can we go get my quadcopter?

ZACK

(Stooping down, eye-to-eye.)

When you have enough quarters saved up… but also when you have enough fine motor skills.

SAGAN

(Frowning.)

What fun motor sails?

ZACK

You need to practice more video games to get your hand-eye coordination up so you can remote control the quadcopter.

SAGAN

Oh! Like how you need to practice because you suck at Halo!

ZACK

I what?

SAGAN

You know! You’re always dying at Halo and all those people call you noob.

ZACK

They do?

SAGAN

(Taking ZACK’s hand, pulling him along)

It’s okay Daddy. We can practice together! Come on!

ZACK

(Looks to Nef.)

Is everything okay with us.

NEF

(Nodding and smiling.)

Yep. I’m over it and we already have enough drama in our lives. Let’s go play with our kids.

Grace enters, a bag filled with chinese takeout swinging from one arm. She sees Nef and freezes.

NEF

(Perturbed.)

Didn’t I tell you no Chinese? Don’t you know that stuff is just deep fried sugar?

GRACE

What are you still doing here? Shouldn’t you be playing with your kids? What kind of a mother are you?

Grace makes a hasty exit. Nef rolls her eyes.

LATER, it’s early morning. The sun is shining through the front windows of the shop. Nef is sitting at her desk, talking with Hanuma. Ada sits on her lap, typing at a keyboard.

NEF

Okay Hanuma. Thanks for the demo. I think everything looks good to go to QA for review.

HANUMA

Excellent. I will get the code up on the test environment.

NEF

Good night. Hope Sirisha lets you sleep tonight.

HANUMA

(Looks to sounds of baby crying in the background.)

We shall see. Good morning to you! Have a great day!

Nef hangs up the call. Zack enters from back of the shop, pulling Sagan along.

SAGAN

(Struggling.)

But I want to wear my 3D Printing Nerd shirt!

ZACK

You wore that shirt all weekend! It’s filthy!

SAGAN

But I don’t want to wear the robot shirt! It sucks!

ZACK

The robot shirt was your favorite shirt last week!

SAGAN

(Pouting.)

Robot shirt sucks!

NEF

(Not looking up from her computer.)

I’ll give you a quarter if you wear the robot shirt.

SAGAN

(Rushes up to the counter.)

Two quarters!

NEF

(Reaches over and shakes Sagan’s hand.)

Sold.

ZACK

Wait. Isn’t there a principle of this thing or something we should be sticking to?

NEF

Do you want principles or do you want your son out the door in time to catch the bus?

ZACK

Got it. Principles can suck it.

(Confused.)

Are you letting Ada play with your keyboard?

ADA

(Slapping keys.)

I’m dot-com-ing!

NEF

(Holds up a loose wire.)

Decoy keyboard. Real one is behind the monitor.

ZACK

Ohhhh… clever. I remember that time she got your computer speaking German.

NEF

Ugh. Took me an hour to figure out how to set it back.

ZACK

Well, I think you’ve achieved parenting level 12 now.

NEF

Stole the idea from your parenting hack. Remember the decoy Playstation controller?

SAGAN

I’m a big boy now. I can tell when the controller isn’t plugged in.

ZACK

(Wistfully.)

I remember those days… back when I could immerse myself in amazing virtual worlds for hours on end… shooting aliens… solving puzzles… exploring epic landsca--

SAGAN

It’s time for school!

ZACK

(Shakes head as if waking from a dream.)

Right! Let’s go. Come on Ada.

Ada gives Nef a big hug and a kiss before climbing down from her chair. Sagan comes over to Nef.

SAGAN

(Arms outstretched.)

Hug!

Sagan and Nef hug.

SAGAN

Kiss!

They take turns kissing on the cheek.

SAGAN

Cthulhu kisses!

Sagan and Nef each put their hands in front of their mouths, wiggling their fingers like tentacles. They each make slurping noises as their fingers touch.

NEF

Have a great day sweetie!

Zack comes around to give Nef a kiss.

NEF

(Looking up at him with obvious love.)

You have a great day too.

They kiss again.

ZACK

I love you sweetheart. You have a productive day.

NEF

I will try.

Don comes stumbling into the shop. His eyes are swollen and he looks around blearily. His shirt is halfway untucked. Zack looks at him, concerned. Don squints at him uncomprehendingly. Zack looks to Nef.

NEF

(Sighs.)

I got it.

Zack waves and leaves through the front door with Ada and Sagan.

NEF

(Leaning over the counter to try and make eye-contact.)

Hi Don? Rough weekend?

DON

(Grunts affirmative.)

NEF

(Gesturing to the snacks behind her.)

You… uh… want some coffee?

DON

(Makes a face of disgust and holds up hands. Mutters in a raspy voice.)

Noooooo...

NEF

How’d the rewrite go? Did you get the HR system migrated to RWBY or Python or NodeJS or whatever it was?

DON

(Clears throat.)

I… uh… I got the… ummm… I got that one screen done… that one where you enter the name… and the… um… password…

NEF

(Incredulous.)

You got the login screen done.

DON

Yeahhh… and I made some progress on a dashboard… I just… I had to get the business model set up… and the um… the uh… there was other stuff too.

NEF

Yeah… with an HR system there’s probably lots of stuff. There’s probably even stuff you haven’t found yet. Normally for a complete application migration, I would need a team of people. I would have someone going line-by-line through the code and documenting all the business rules programmers have been adding into it over the years. Then there’s the Quality Assurance. You need someone testing and retesting everything. This is a Human Resource application.

(MORE)

NEF (CONT’D)

A lot depends on it. Paychecks, benefits, people’s livelihoods. You can’t just bang something like that out in a weekend.

Don just stares into space, blinking.

NEF

Do you need a hug?

Don nods. She comes around and gives him a hug.

DON

I don’t think I’m gonna make my deadline.

NEF

You’re just exposing some data with a service. I don’t know PHP, but I’m sure we can figure it out. Go get your laptop and let’s knock out some code.

LATER The front of the store is now in the afternoon shade. Nef is working at her computer. Zack comes in towing Sagan and Ada. He pauses to look at Don, who is snoring on one of the couches.

ZACK

(Looks to Nef.)

Oh dear. That doesn’t look good.

NEF

(Getting up, starts hugging each of them.)

It’s all good. He’s just catching up on some much needed rest.

ZACK

His rewrite not go the way he’d hoped?

NEF

No, but we got his client what they needed… even if it was a few hours past the deadline. And maybe Don got some experience in the process.

ZACK

We’ve all made our bone-headed mistakes. He’s young. Wisdom comes with age.

PAT

Ha! I sit here as a living contradiction to that assertion! Phooey on your wisdom! Phooey I say!

SAGAN

Yay Pat! Phooey on wisdom!

ADA

Phooey!

Zack and Nef look to one another. Touch hands tag-team style.

ZACK

Time for some active parenting.

PAT

You know I can’t let this whole adulting thing go easy for you.

NEF

Let’s run them around outside.

(To Pat.)

Hold down the fort for us Pat.

PAT

Well that is certainly not wise.