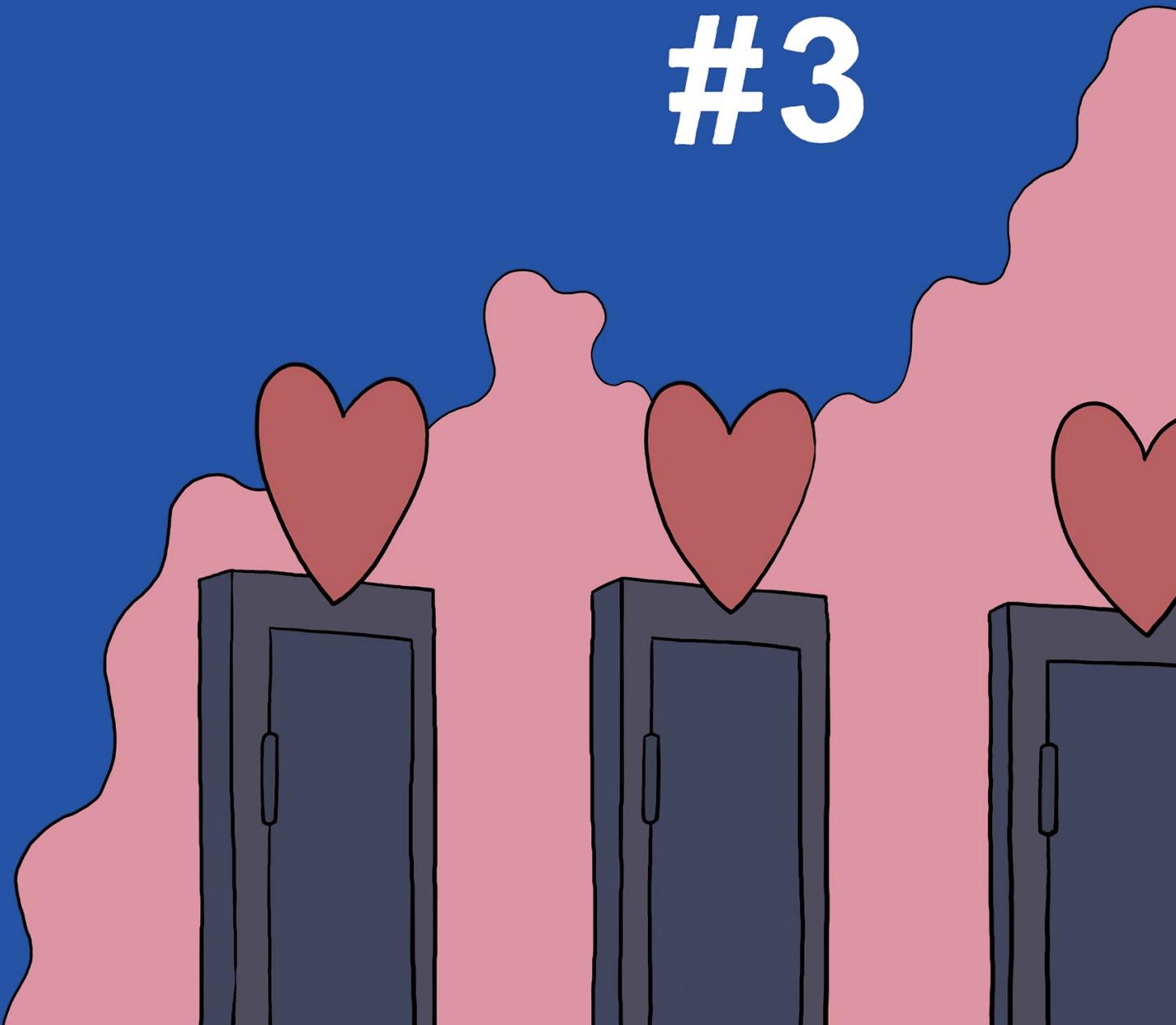


#3



Previously...

Willy and Froggy arrived in Blupetania, where they are spending a week at Dolphina's family's lakeside home. The Finlopia residence is usually a relaxing place to take a vacation, but in recent years it has become clouded with tension due to a problem with poachers. As Guardian of the Lake, it's Mr. Finlopia's responsibility to stop these thieves from illegally harvesting an endangered plant species that is an integral part of the lake's ecosystem.

Froggy loves adventure, so he's convinced Willy that the two of them should try to help Mr. Finlopia. Specifically, Froggy wants to solve the mystery of who's been shutting down the lake's high-tech security system—allowing the poachers to steal the rare blue seaweed.

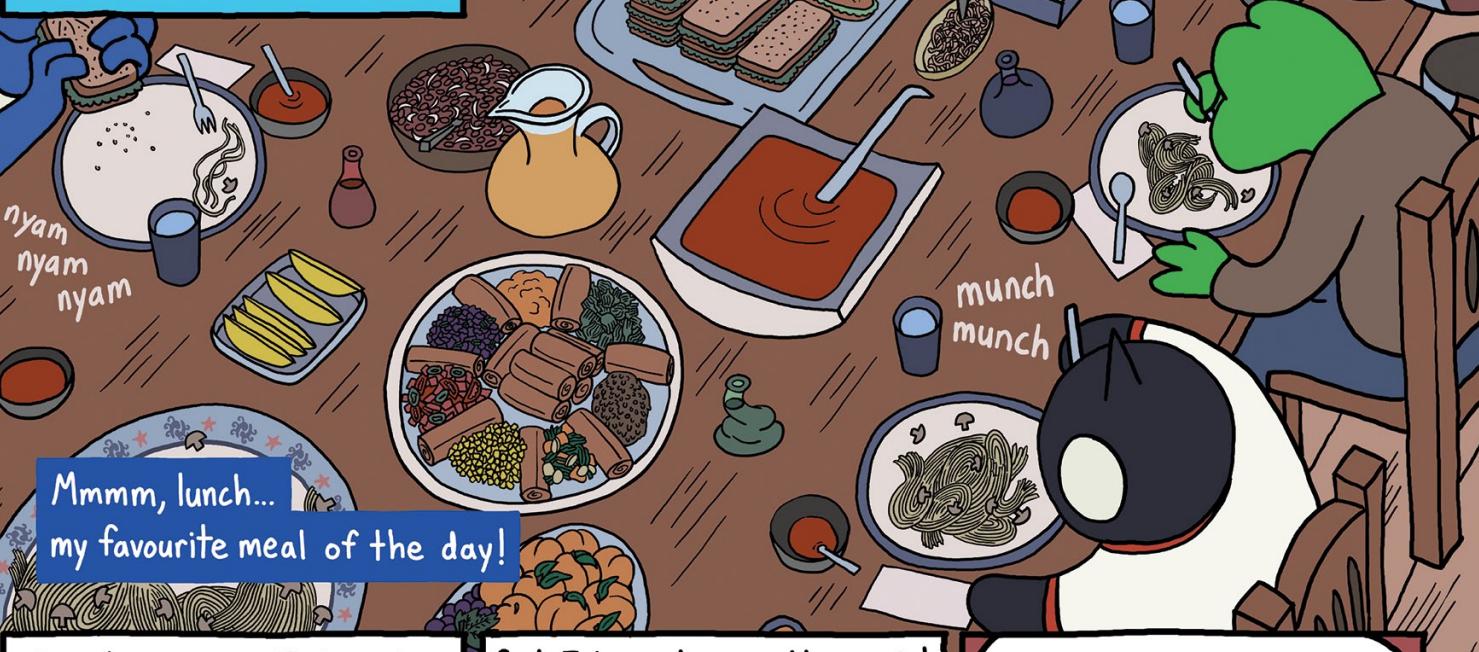
Willy is only half-heartedly committed to Froggy's plan. He's more interested in spending time with Dolphina—with whom he has long been infatuated. Willy intended to use this trip as an opportunity to tell Dolphina his true feelings, only to learn that she already has a boyfriend, Dogminder.

Will Froggy be able to solve the mystery of who's been aiding the seaweed thieves? Does Willy have a chance at winning over Dolphina's heart?

Let's find out...



gulp!



Mmmm, lunch...
my favourite meal of the day!

Great meal, Mrs. Finlopia!

Oh, thanks...

But I have to give the credit
to Grandpa Barry, he did
most of the work.

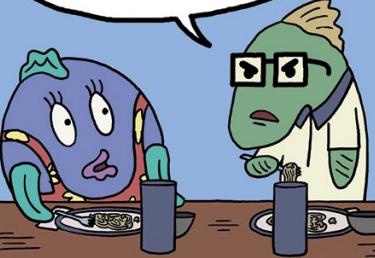
THAT'S
RIGHT!!

I ALWAYS end up doing
ALL the work!!

Nobody does ANY work around here except me!

Alright, calm down, Grandpa

...don't worry everyone. He's just upset about the whole... seaweed situation...

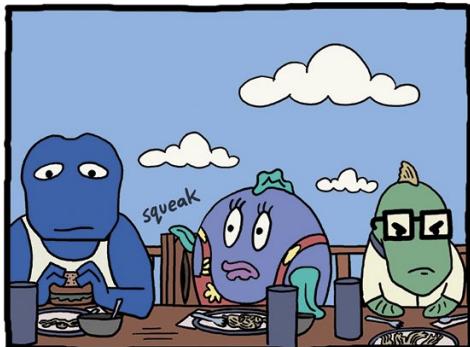


...and in less than a decade, this worthless lump has already lost HALF our lake's seaweed!!

In the old days, we took honour in protecting these lakes!! We would fight off seaweed thieves with our BARE HANDS!

We weren't out fishing all day...





Sorry about that, everyone.
He'll calm down eventually.

Oh yeah, he'll be fine...



He's usually not this cranky.
He just gets this way during
Environment Week.



Over the past few years,
this is around the time the
thieves have struck—since
there's so much seaweed
in the lakes right now.

Gramps is anticipating that
the thieves will be up to
something big,
Sometime
Soon.

That's why
he's so
irritable.

Oh,
I see...



You see, Environment Week
always coincides with the
8th full moon of the year—
since that's when the
seaweed is most
plentiful, and
the lakes
most vibrant.

Do you have to talk about
this stuff in front of our
guests, Pluto?!

Oop, sorry...



Finny! We've already
had one outburst
this meal. We don't
need another.

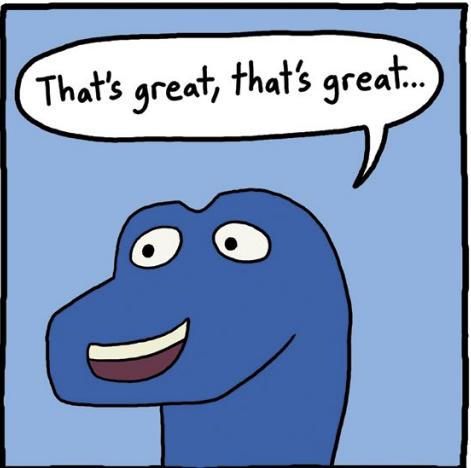
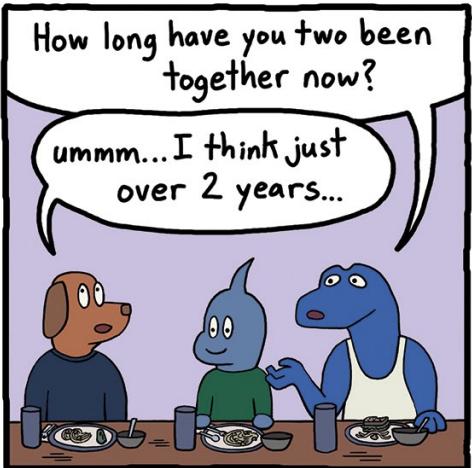


When we brought Slugmo into our home,
we promised that he would be joining
a loving, stable family!

Alright...

Can you pass
the bread?





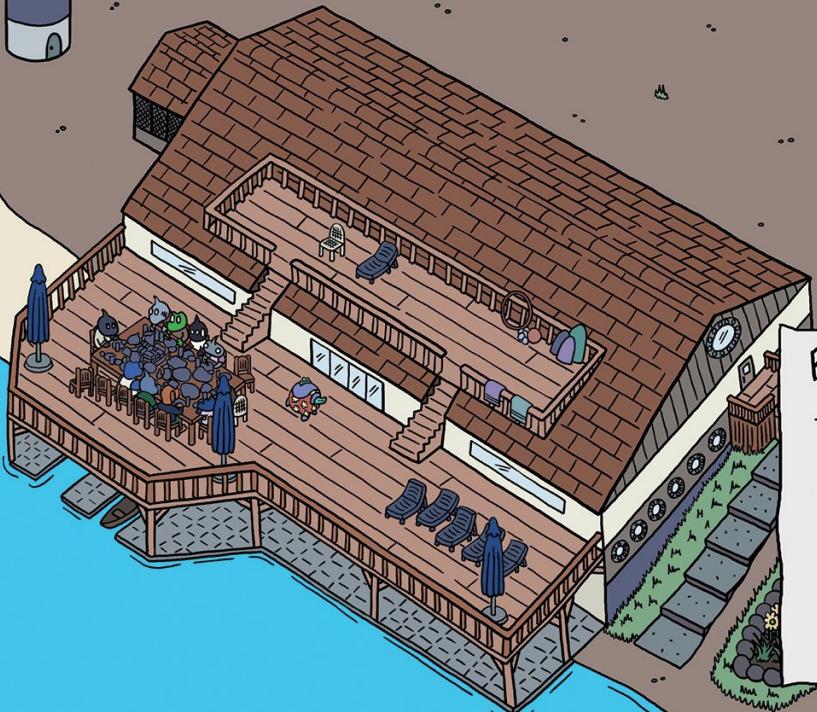
Sharker, do you think
you can be captain? I don't
think Gramps will be in
the mood to play...

Sure, that's fine with me.



Well, we should probably
start the game soon.

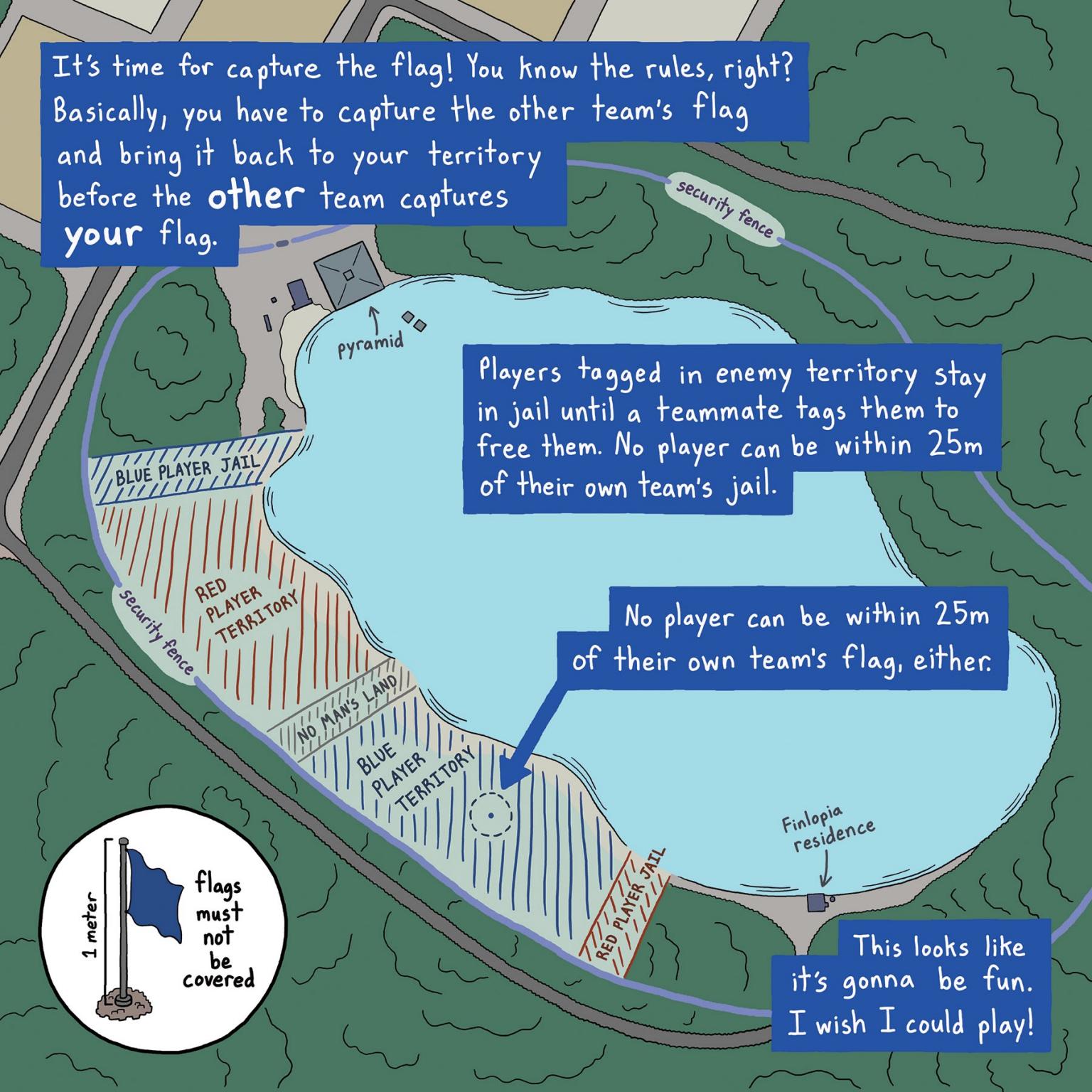
I'll go upstairs and
get the list of who's
on each team.



Blue Team:
— Grandpa —
Sharker
Willy
Froggy
Finette
Hammie

Red Team:
Finny
Dolphina
Dogman
Bluto
Bluena
Slugmo

It's time for capture the flag! You know the rules, right? Basically, you have to capture the other team's flag and bring it back to your territory before the **other** team captures **your** flag.



Players tagged in enemy territory stay in jail until a teammate tags them to free them. No player can be within 25m of their own team's jail.

No player can be within 25m of their own team's flag, either.



This looks like it's gonna be fun.
I wish I could play!

OK everyone, the game can last a long time, so take a sandwich!

thanks!

thank you

thanks

Alright, I think Willy and Froggy should be partnered on offense while Hammie and Finette defend the flag.

I'll move back and forth to help both groups out. We can switch up the positions after a while...

Blue Team captain

sure

great!

sounds good!

OK

10 minutes for the teams to hide their flags, then the game will begin!!

I know a good spot to hide the flag, follow me!



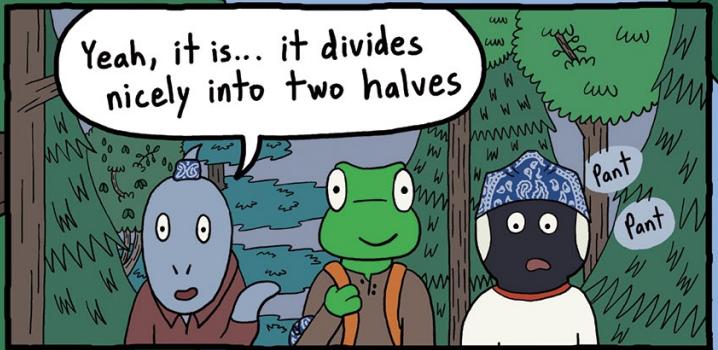
A short while later...



This is a great place to play capture the flag.



Yeah, it is... it divides nicely into two halves

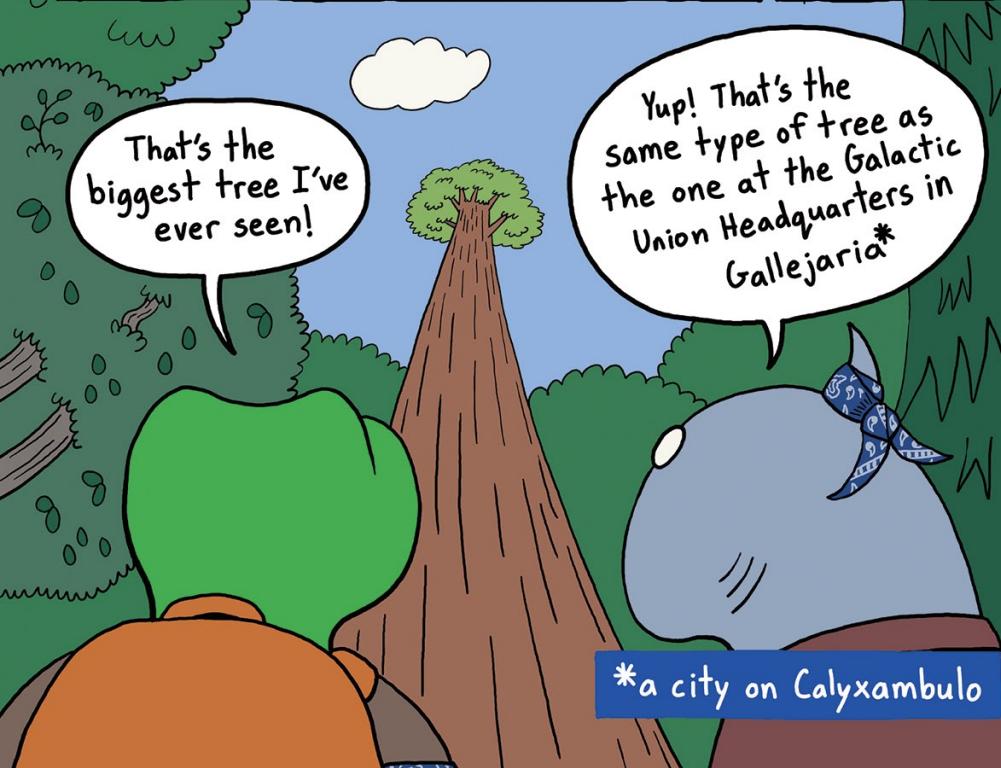


Wow, look at that!



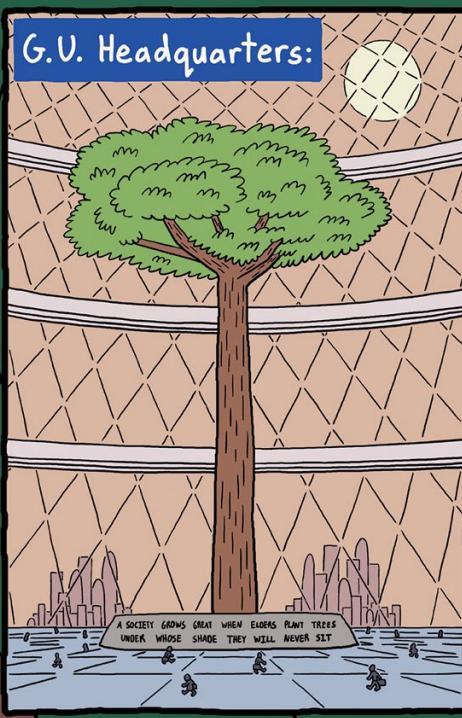
That's the biggest tree I've ever seen!

Yup! That's the same type of tree as the one at the Galactic Union Headquarters in Gallejaria*



*a city on Calyxambulo

G.U. Headquarters:



It starts out as a really small seed...

but grows to be humongous!

Anyway, I should probably give you guys the map, since you're new to the area.

thanks

I usually orient myself by looking for the lake, the pyramid, or that tall tree—since those are the easiest things to spot.

If you ever get lost, just look where two of those things are in relation to each other, and you should be able to find yourself on the map.

okay

If you get **REALLY** lost, don't move around. Stay in one spot and call for help once in while, and I'll come find you.

You guys should probably start your search in this area over here...

There're a lot of good spots where they might've hidden the flag over there.

Alright, sounds good!

Do you have any questions about anything, before I go check on the defense?

No, I think the map's pretty clear.

Actually, I have a question! ... You know this whole blue-seaweed-theft thing that's going on?

Uhu.

Do you have any idea who could be turning off the lake's security system?

not
really...

But, it would have to be someone on the inside, right? Like... someone in the family?

Yes... at least, I think so. At first I thought the security system was faulty, or that it was being hacked... but all the system logs say that it's being shut down manually, using our passcode.

Officially, only

Dad is supposed to know the passcode, but me, Grandad, Mom, Dolphina, Pluto, and a few other aunts and uncles all know it.

... maybe even more people, who knows?

Really...

Ya, Dad's a very trusting person...

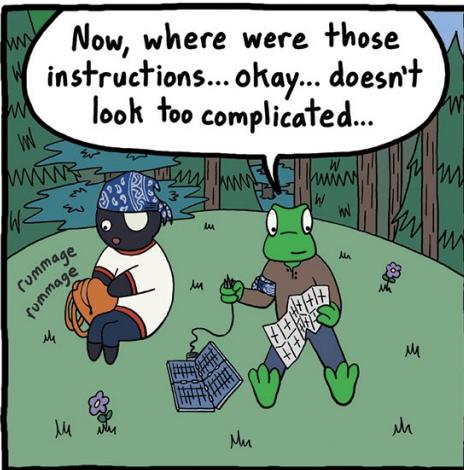
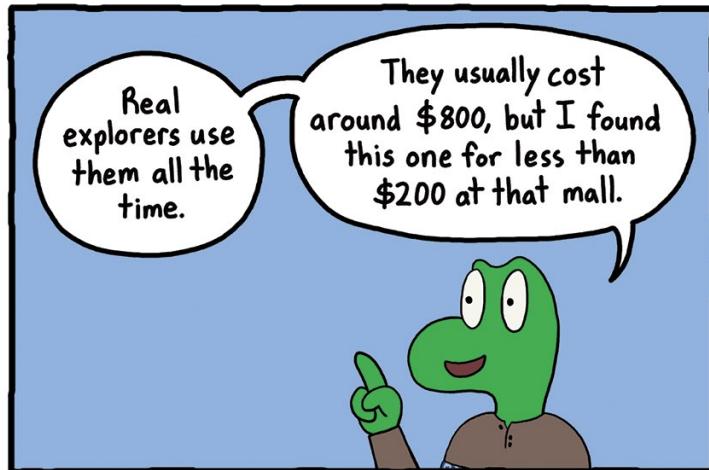
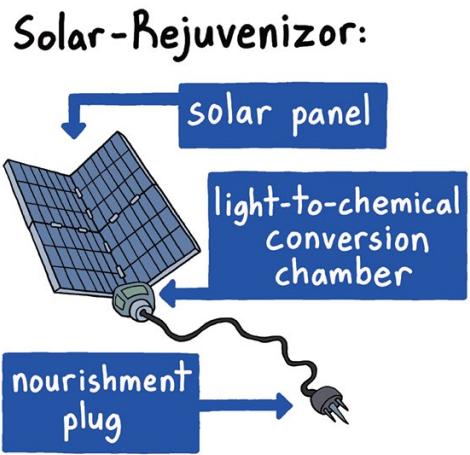
... kind of gullible, I guess...

hmm... For how long have you been losing seaweed from the lake?

Well, the numbers have been dropping since forever, but the most drastic losses have all occurred in the last... 2 years or so?











What is
this place?
Is it some sort
of campsite?



It looks like a
secret hideout...

There's dust everywhere
but the keyboard... it must
have been used recently.

Darn, you need a password.



=DING!=



TAP
TAP
TAP

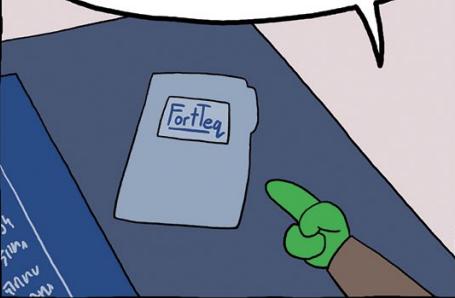


PASSWORD:

Hey, look at these documents over here...



FortTeq – that's the company that makes the security fences!



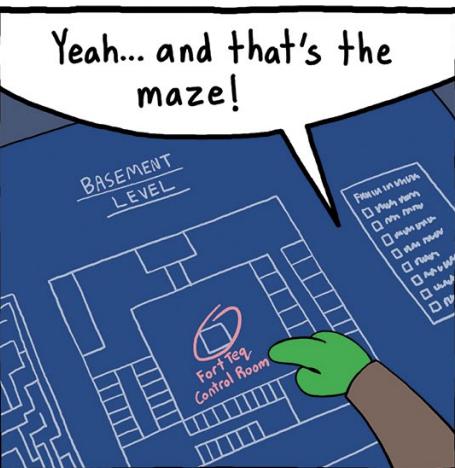
This place probably has something to do with shutting off the fences and stealing the seaweed.



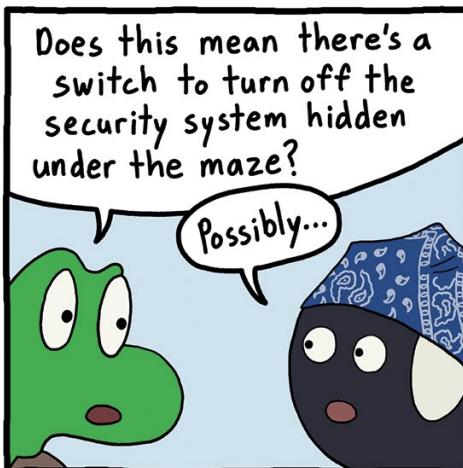
That looks like a map of the mall we went to...



Yeah... and that's the maze!



Does this mean there's a switch to turn off the security system hidden under the maze?



Another thing I noticed... and I could be way off here, but...



Isn't that the same gum Dogman always chews?





...he seemed preoccupied by this locked hatch-door-thing...



What!?

I don't know what it was...



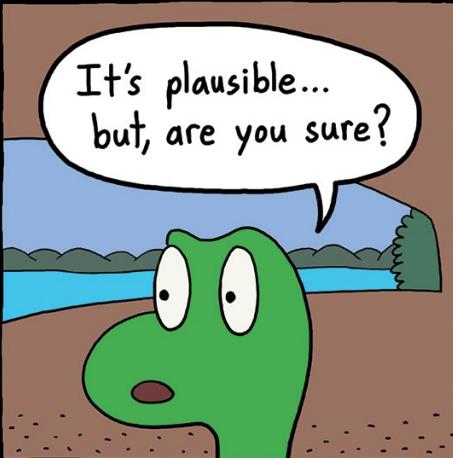
I just assumed it was a storage room or an electrical panel or something.



Dogman was probably trying to get into the control room and shut off the lake's security system!!



It's plausible... but, are you sure?



Think about it! Sharker said the seaweed theft started 2 years ago—that's when Dolphina and Dogman started dating!



So, Dogman is somehow involved in the seaweed theft...



We have to go tell Mr. Finlopia about this!



Not yet...



So far, this is all just speculation. We need to get some hard evidence before we say anything.



If Dogman finds out we're onto him, he may deny everything and cover up his tracks.



We need to keep an eye on him from a distance, until we can expose him!



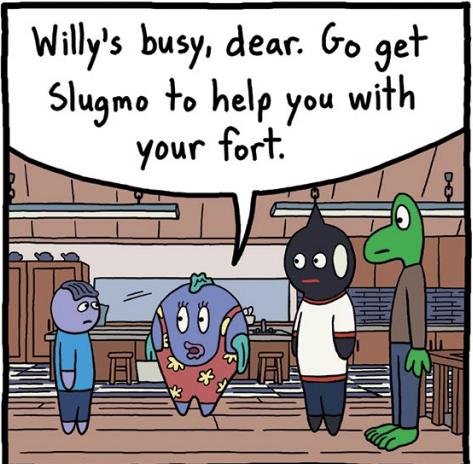
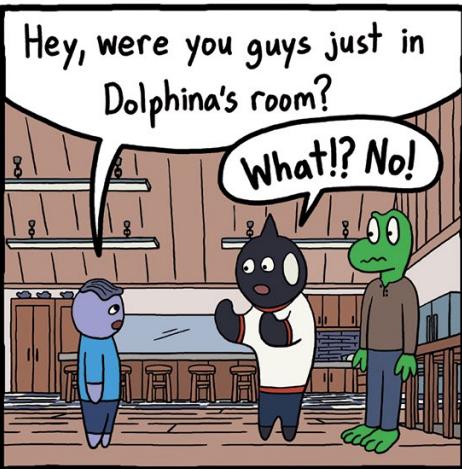
What a revelation! Who can pay attention to a game of capture the flag at a time like this?

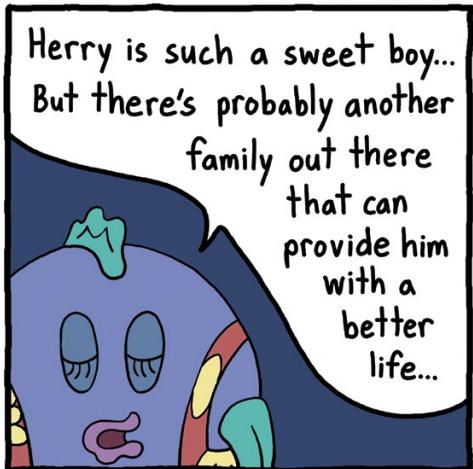
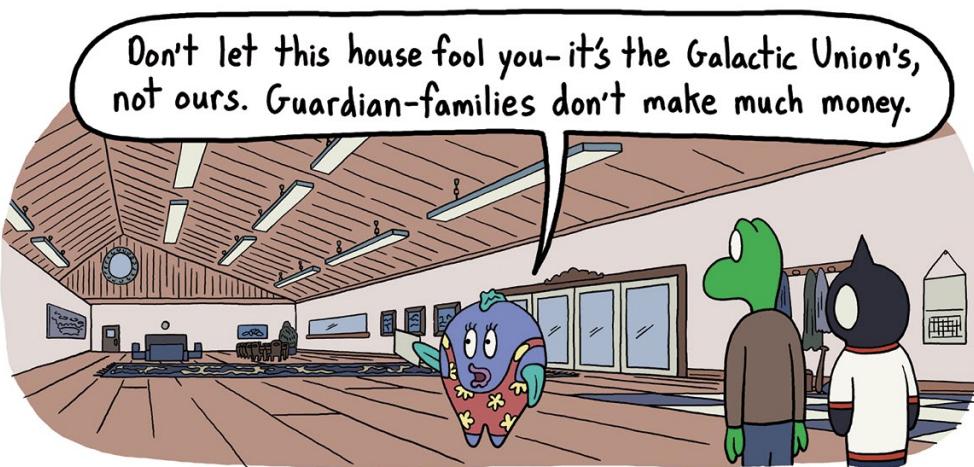
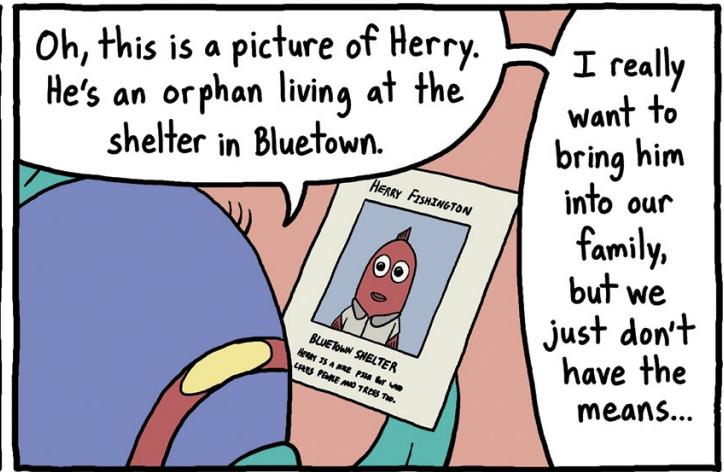
Let's fast-forward to this evening...

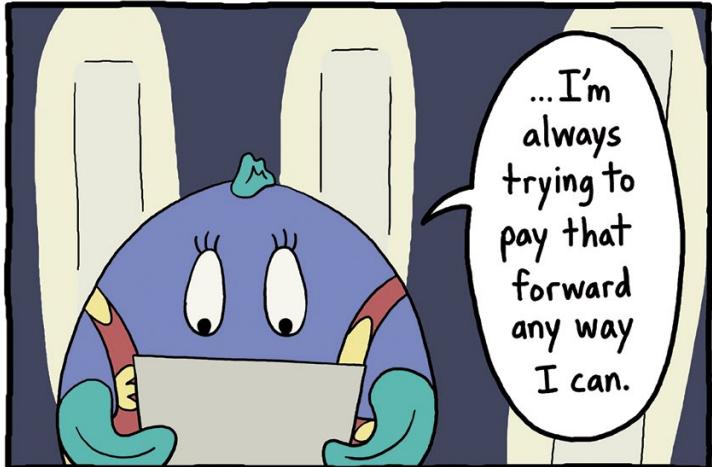
Dolphina and Dogman just went into town to buy a deck of cards. This is the perfect time for Willy and Froggy to search their room for clues!











Oh, you'll have a great time. Goodnight!



Goodnight!



A little bit later:

So, what do you guys wanna play?

Slapdash?
Bluetown Shuffle?
Counter-Clock Kerfuffle?

All great games!

I'm okay with anything.

yeah,
me too

Let's play Kerfuffle, then. It's the one I'm least skilled at.

...so I'll only win 80% of the time.

ha ha ha

shuffle shuffle

So, what's new with you, Pluto?
It's always nice to catch up
with you, every year...

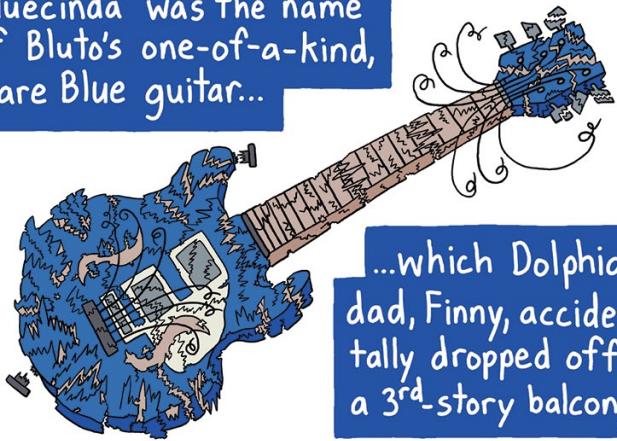
Oh, same old,
same old...

We're getting the
jazz band back
together—which is
exciting—but other
than that, not much.

Oh!
That's great
news!

I'm still really sorry
about what happened
to Bluecinda...

"Bluecinda" was the name
of Pluto's one-of-a-kind,
Rare Blue guitar...



...which Dolphia's
dad, Finny, accidentally
dropped off
a 3rd-story balcony.

Oh, haha,
that's ok!

Dogman,
can you beat
the table?

nope

Yeah, so, I had a really beautiful, one-of-a-kind guitar, and, unfortunately, it broke... but, hey, what can you do, right?

Oh no! Is there any way you
can get it fixed?



Well, it's in about a thousand pieces, so it would be rather difficult to fix...

I've contacted a few guitar makers, but they refuse to work on it!



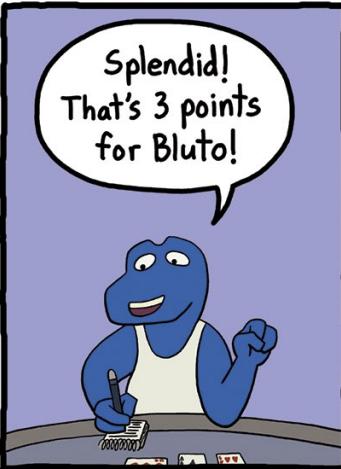
It's a Royal Sandalwood body with Rare Blue stain—both of which are illegal building materials, since they come from endangered plant species. I only had it because it was a family heirloom.



Can anyone beat that?

No?

Splendid! That's 3 points for Pluto!



Here ya go!



Shuffle
Shuffle

Bluto...

yeah?



I...I hate to bring up the whole...seaweed theft thing...but, isn't there a security fence around the whole lake? Why doesn't it stop the thieves?



Umm...that's a good question...Yes, there is an electric fence around the whole lake... There are cameras...alarms...drones...

So... Do you think someone is hacking into the system and shutting everything off?

Oh, no! It's a state-of-the-art system—you couldn't hack into it. No, it's much more likely that...

...someone who knows the passcode is turning off the security system precisely when the thieves begin their illegal harvest.

But, doesn't that mean it's someone on the inside!

How come no one is talking about this?

Well...

That's just the way it is around here, I guess...

Shuffle shuffle

Mr. Finlopia is in a very difficult position. I feel bad for him.

You see...

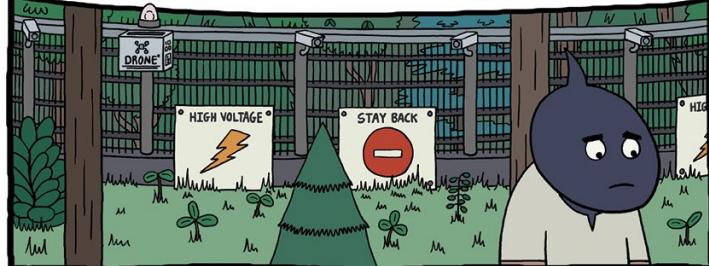
Normally, under these circumstances, a Lake Guardian is supposed to tell the G.U. about the security breach, and ask for a new passcode...



But Finny has already done this 2 years in a row, and it hasn't helped! He can't ask the G.U. for a third passcode change—they'd think he's incompetent and replace him!



None of the other Lake Guardians are having trouble with their passcodes—and they all have the same security system! So, it really doesn't look good for Finny...



...are you suspicious of anyone?



Alright!! You've been shuffling for, like, 20 minutes. Let's go!!



Later, as everyone gets ready for bed...

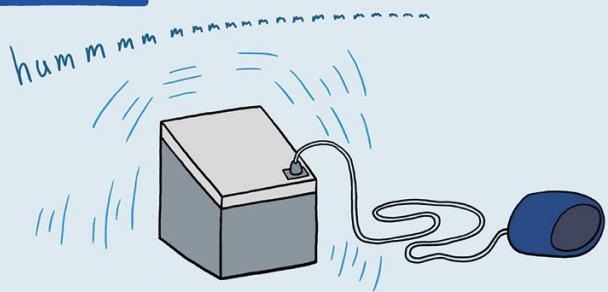
Once everyone falls asleep, we can go and search the pyramid for evidence to use against Dogman.

Researchers from Buddiolia Explorer Institute have found...

I'll set the alarm for 1am

If you're wondering what that armband-thing is- Willy has a chronic condition called "scoobliosis", for which he has to take IV medication once every 5 nights...

It's no big deal. The machine makes a humming noise that is actually very calming...



What are you watching?

Oh, it's a news story on that thing Minky was telling me about when I saw him...



It appears to be...

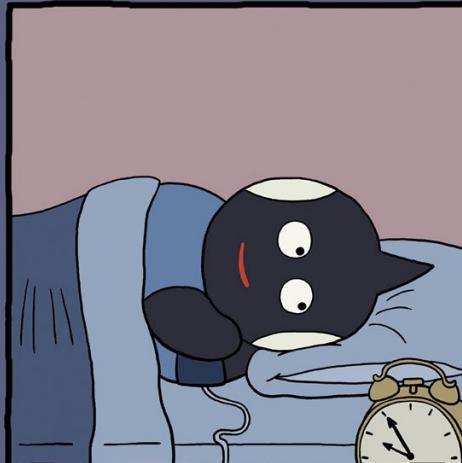
They found a satellite that they think is a digital time capsule from an ancient civilization. It could be the greatest discovery this generation of exploring...

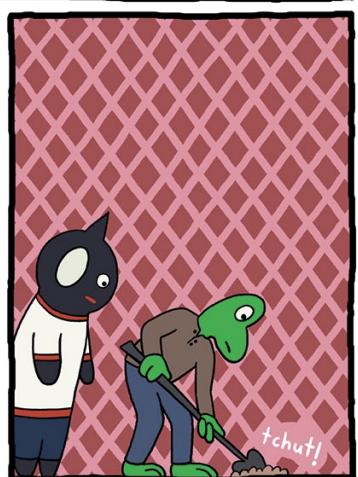
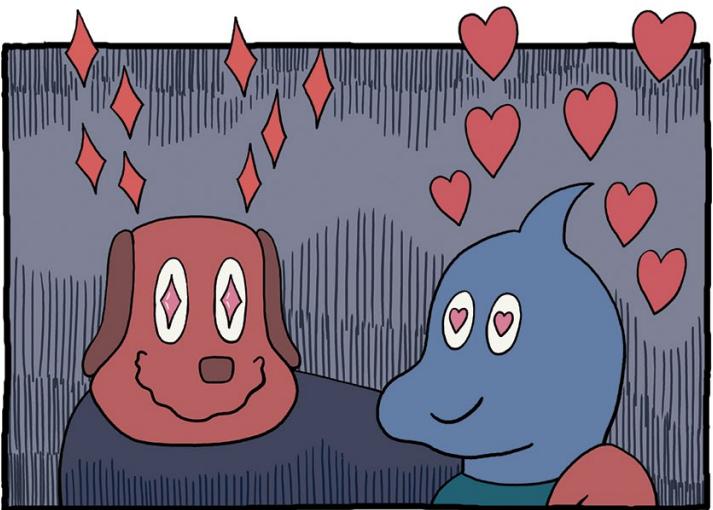
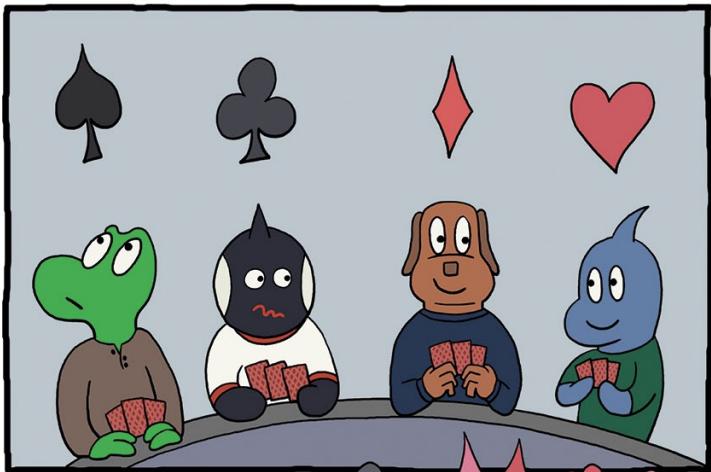


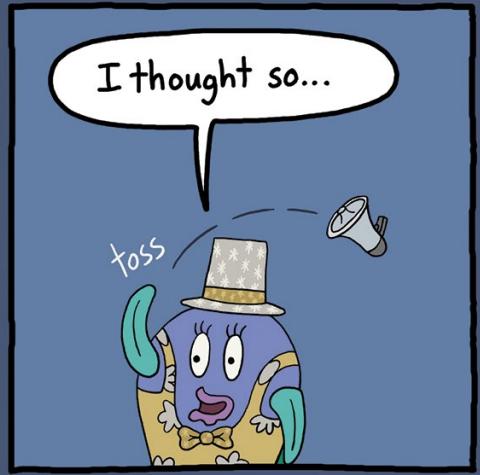
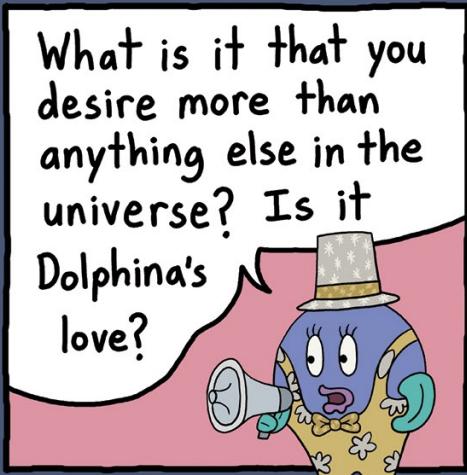
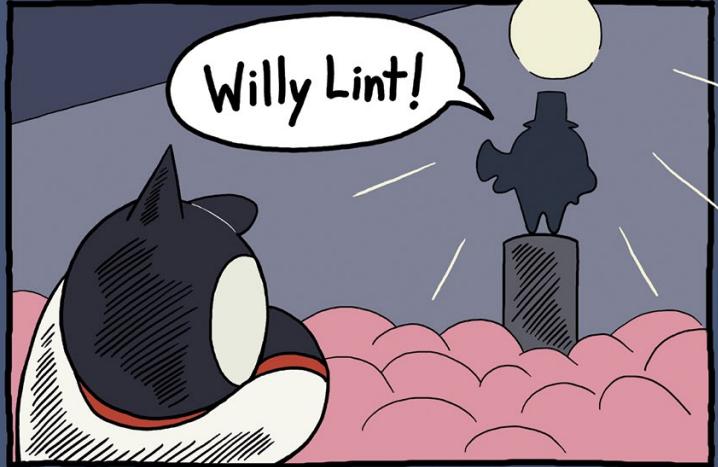
If I had made it into explorer school, I'd probably be a part of this...

But that doesn't matter. Tonight we're gonna be searching for evidence that will incriminate a thief on a different planet. This is the type of adventure explorers dream of!!

Thanks for helping me with this, buddy!







There are 9 doors before you. Behind one of them is Dolphina's love!

Choose a door.
If you pick the right one, Dolphina's love will be yours!!

So,
pick a door!
Any door!!

umm...

that
one!

Door
number
3, eh?

Why don't you come up
and see if you chose
correctly!

3



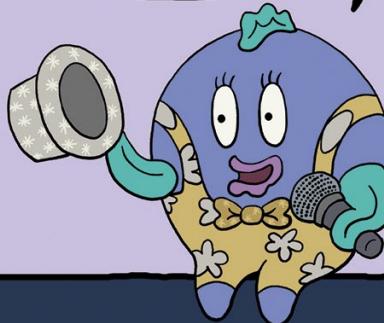
hu hu

wait!

3

shut!

Let's make things a bit
more interesting... just
for fun...



Before we open door #3,
let's look behind some
of the other doors!

toss



Well, would you look at that!
Dolphina's love wasn't behind
any of those doors.

It looks
like you
still have
a chance!

But let's not look behind your door just
yet. Let's make things even **more**
interesting...

Let's keep door 3 closed,
but open three of the
remaining four doors!



Whadda ya know!? Only 2 doors
left, and we still haven't found
Dolphina's love....

scratch
scratch



Well, Willy, we're gonna look behind your door very soon, but first, I'm gonna give you an important decision to make, alright?

I'll let you switch doors, if you're having second thoughts about door 3.

Whaddaya say?

Stay with door 3?

...or choose door 8?

The choice is yours!

Inhale

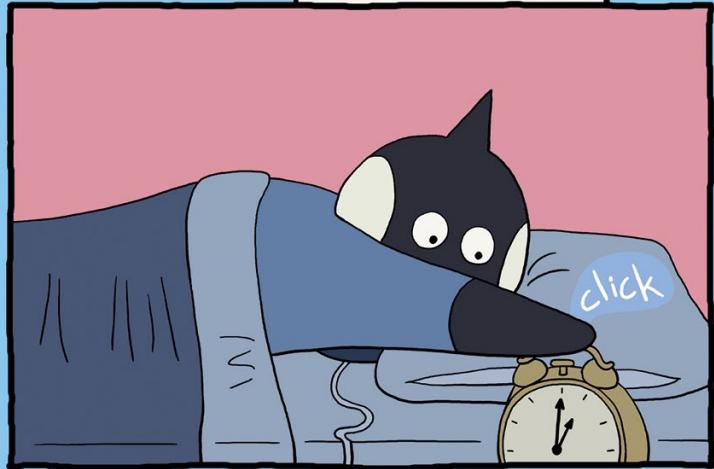
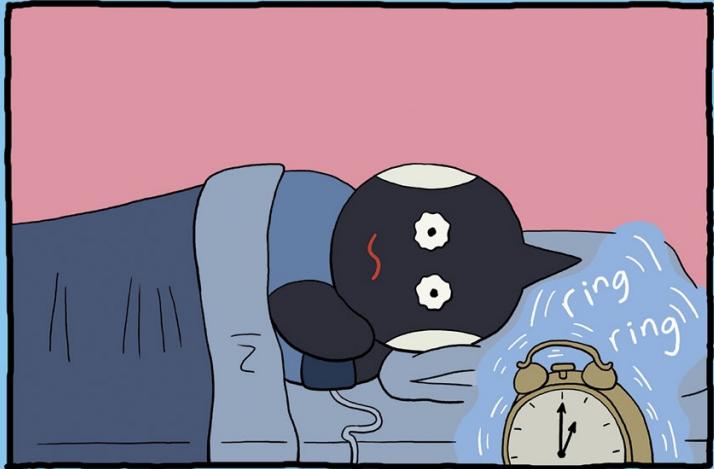
PFFOOO

I'm gonna stick with my gut...

Door 3!

...are you sure?

yes!



What a strange dream... I'm sure
that's what Willy is thinking as
he and Froggy head towards
the pyramid...



To be continued...

**For more comics, visit:
www.willyandfroggy.com**