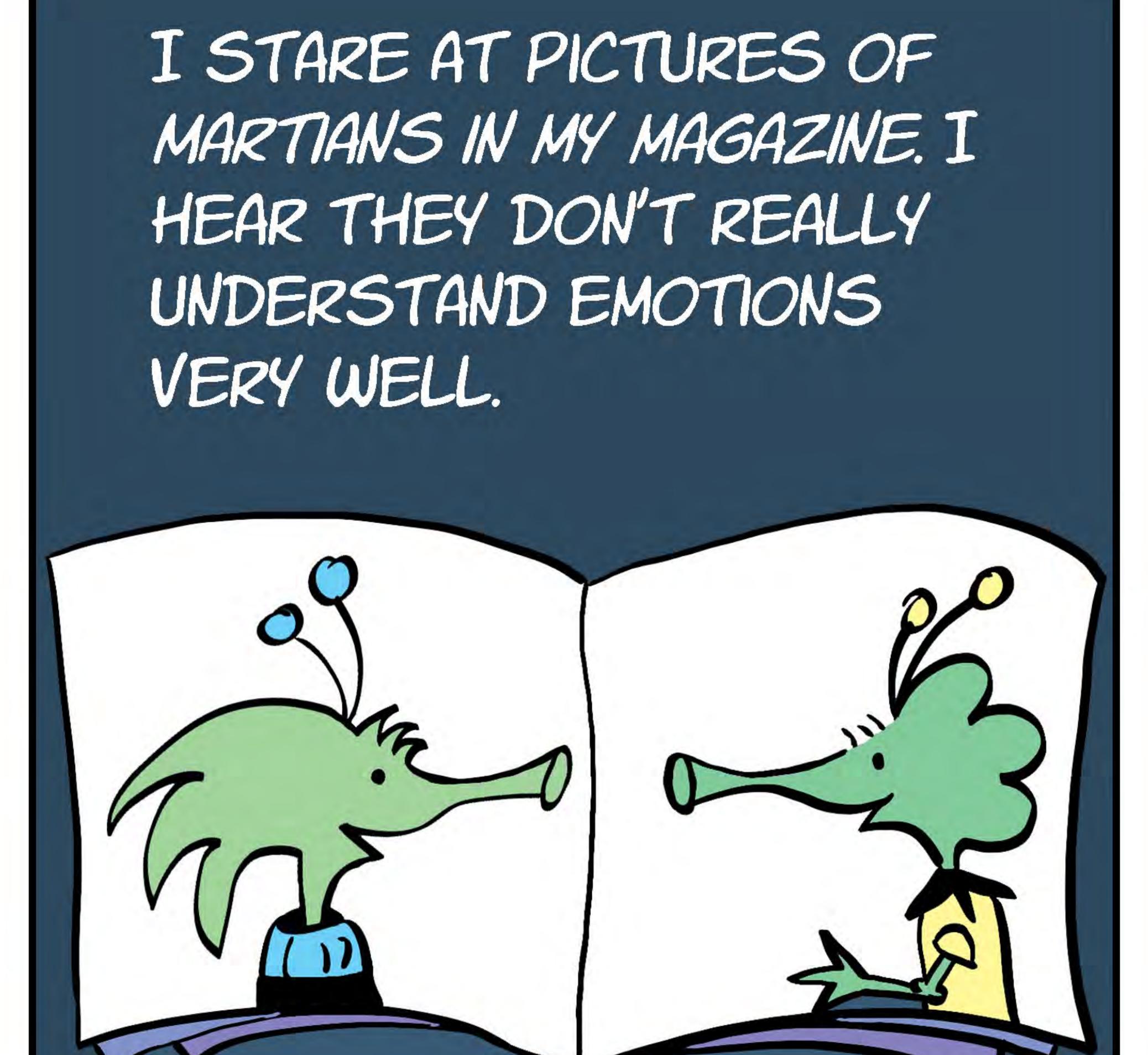


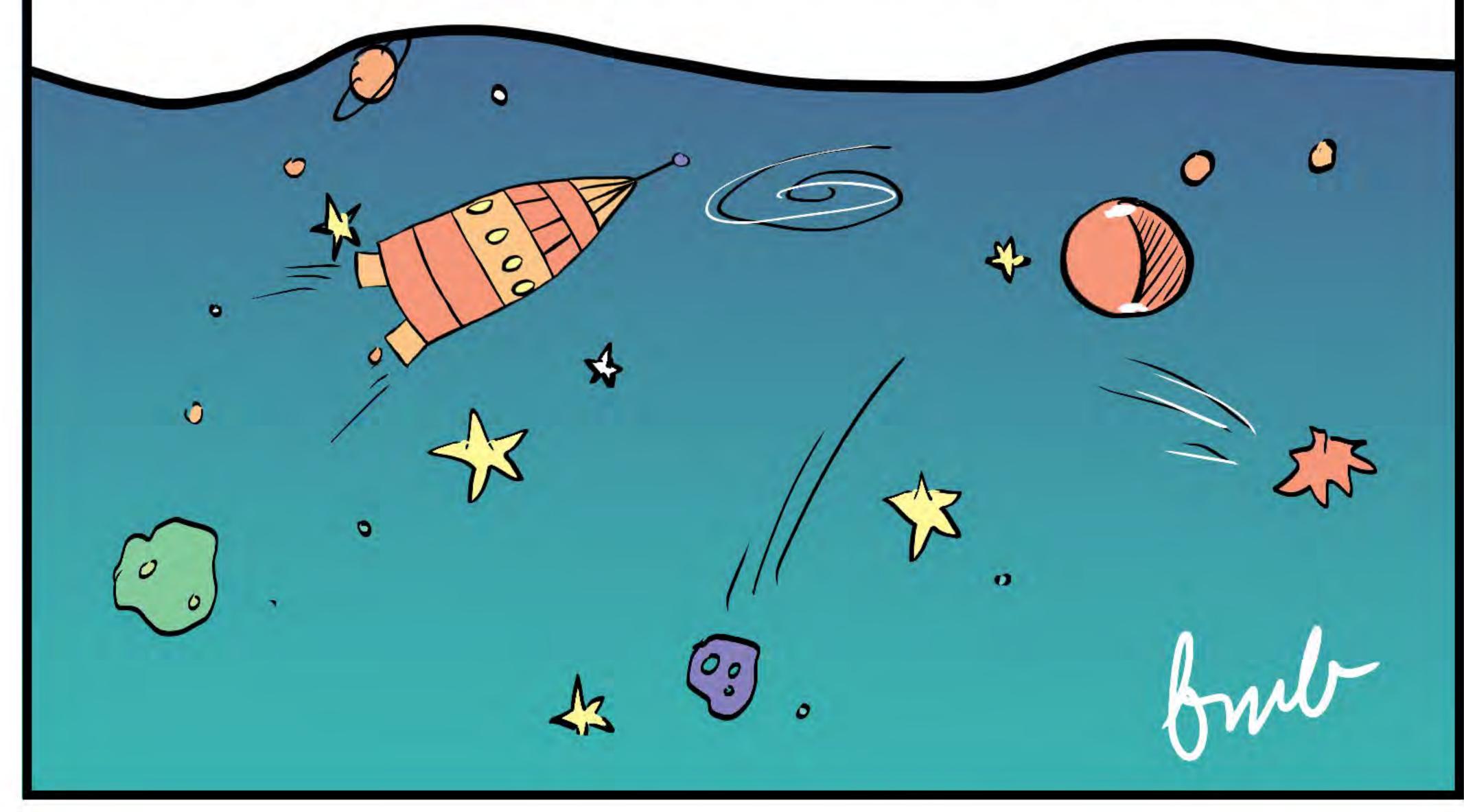
I WANTED TO WIN THAT SCIENCE COMPETITION SO BADLY SO I COULD VISIT ANOTHER PLANET. BUT NOW? I'M SCARED... I'M LEAVING BEHIND EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE I'VE EVER KNOWN!

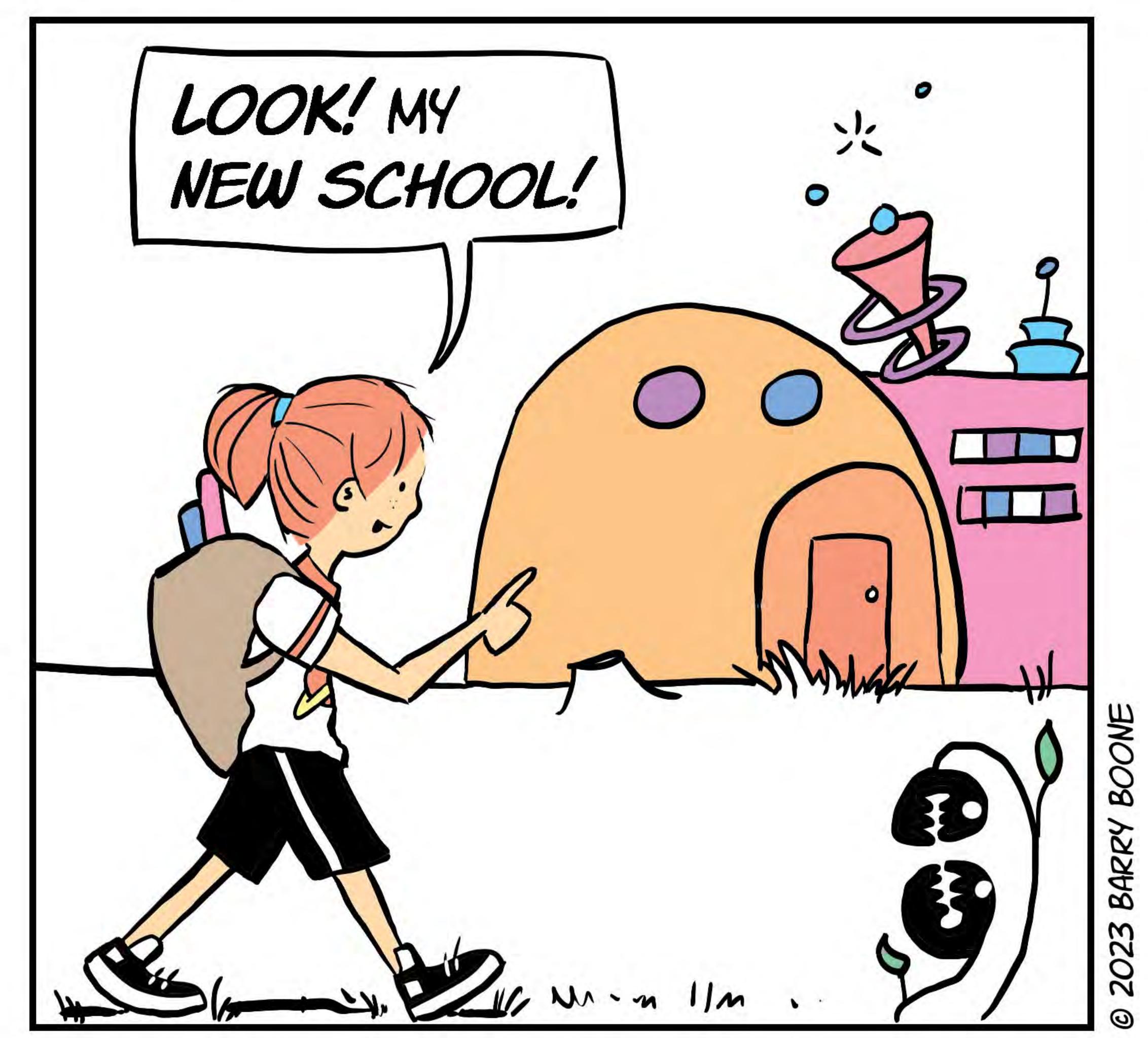






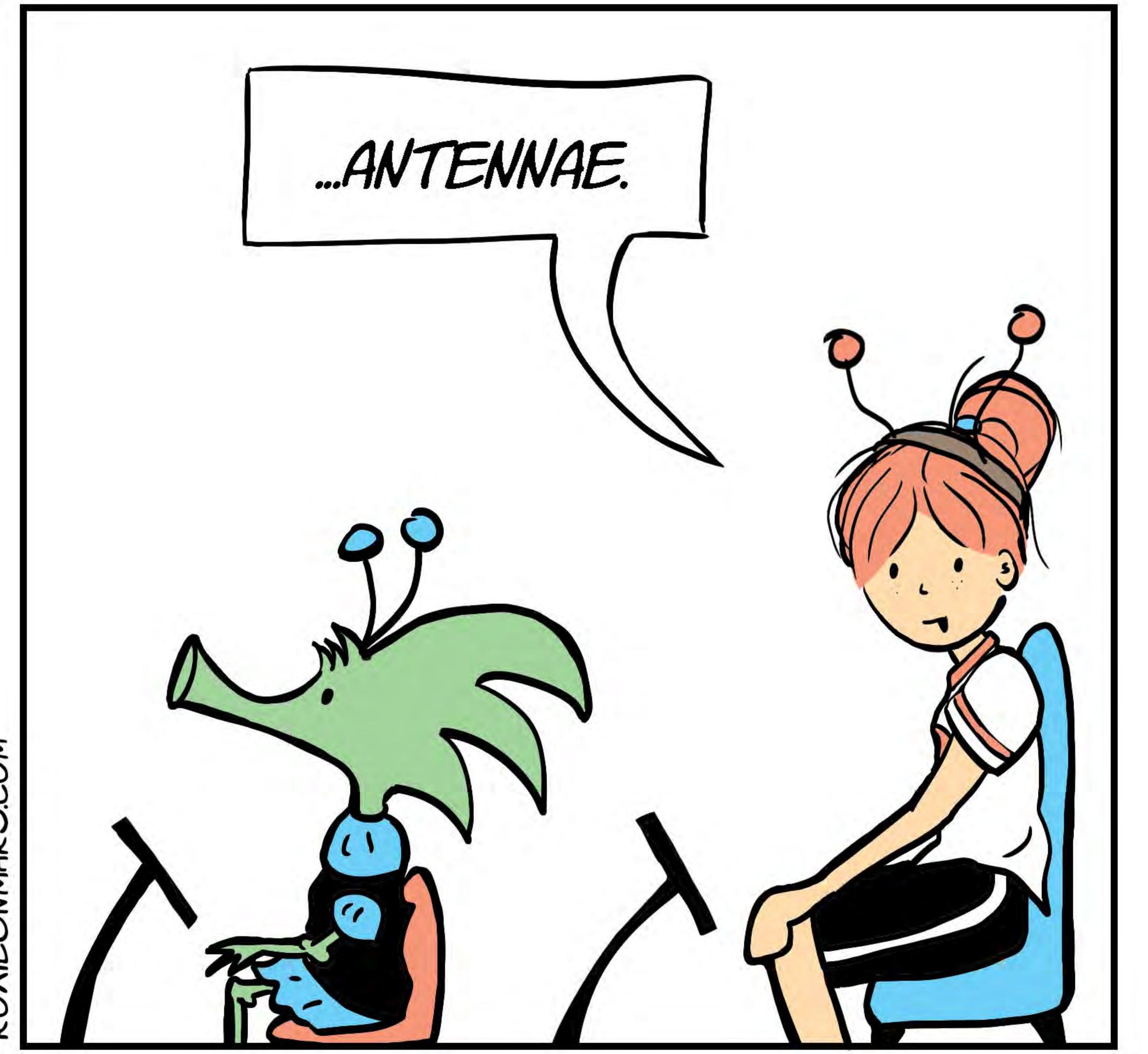
WILL I MAKE NEW FRIENDS? WILL I FIT IN? WILL I BE HAPPY? OH, MARS! YOU ARE BIG, BUT MY HOPES, FEARS AND DREAMS MAY BE EVEN BIGGER THAN YOU ARE.





I BROUGHT EVERYTHING I NEED TO FIT IN WITH MY NEW CLASSMATES! COMPOSITION BOOKS, PENCILS, WATER BOTTLE ...





WHY'S YOUR PLANET SO GREAT, ROXIE EARTHLING? WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT WE DON'T?



WELL, WE HAVE SHOES WITH WHEELS -- WE CALL
THEM ROLLER SKATES! WE HAVE CHERRIES, VIOLINS,
POETRY, MAPLE TREES, PAINTINGS, OCEAN BEACHES,
GIRAFFES, ROSES, SCRATCH PROGRAMS, CHOCOLATE
CAKE, HOT SPRINGS, BUBBLE GUM, SNOW LEOPARDS,

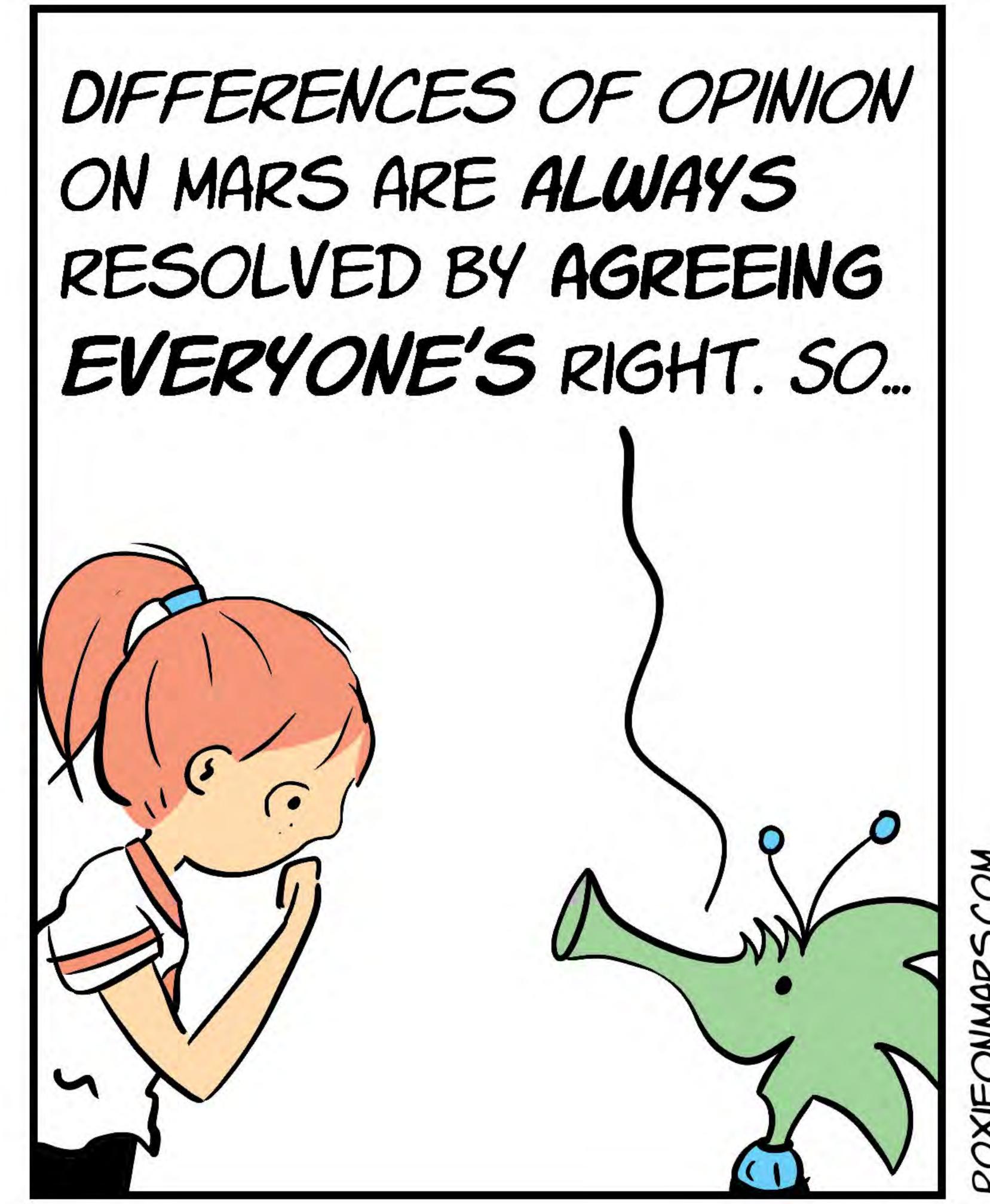
POP SONGS, MINI-GOLF, DANCING,
SNOWBALL FIGHTS, KITTENS,
COMICS, SURFING, JELLY DONUTS,
BASEBALL, VIDEO GAMES,
BUTTERSCOTCH, FIREFLIES...

STOP, STOP!!

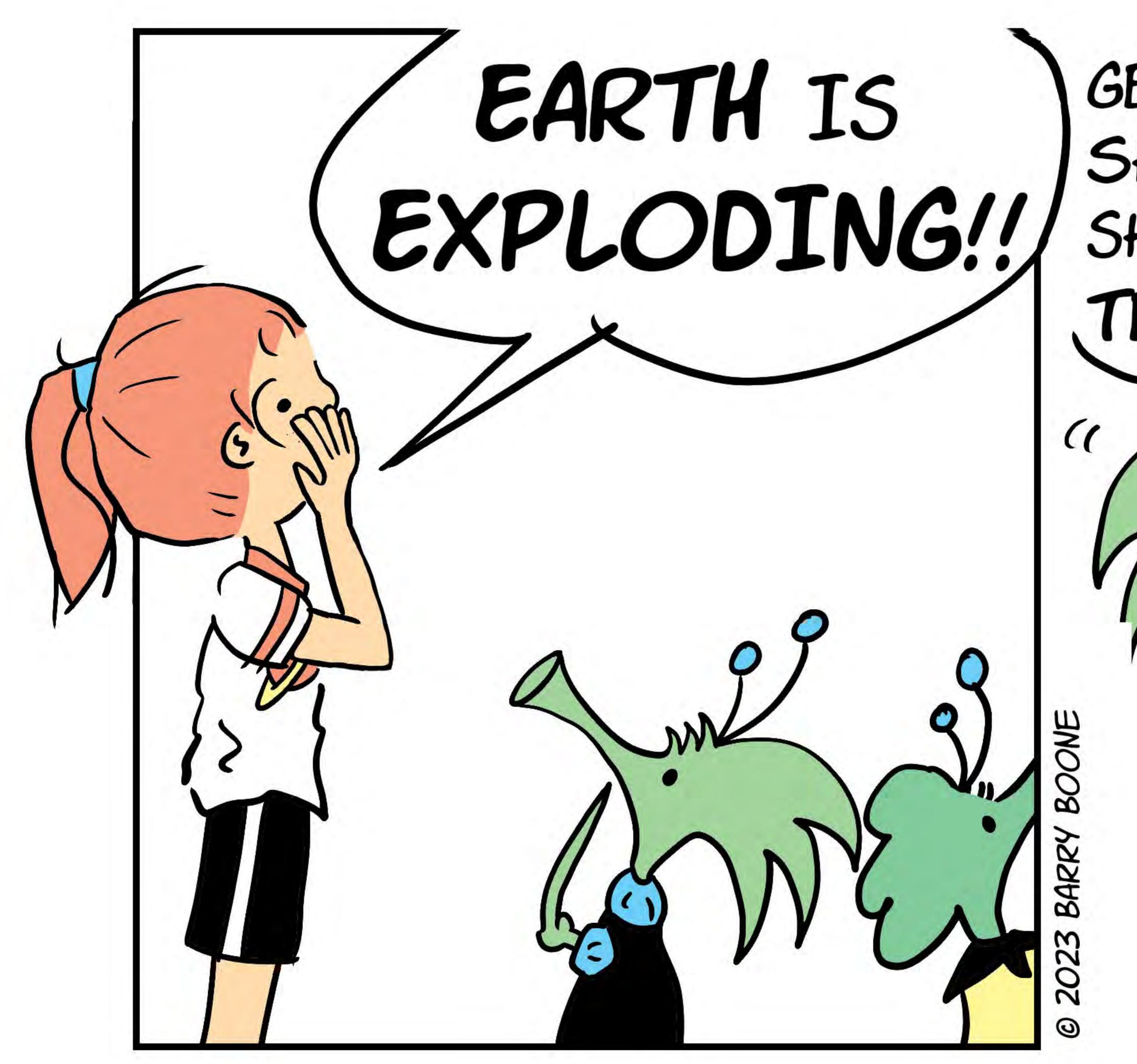




I DON'T THINK THEY'RE CELEBRAT-ING, ZINNIA! IT LOOKS LIKE EARTH 15... EXPLODING!







GEE, I THINK SHE'S RIGHT. SHE MUST FEEL TERRIBLE!

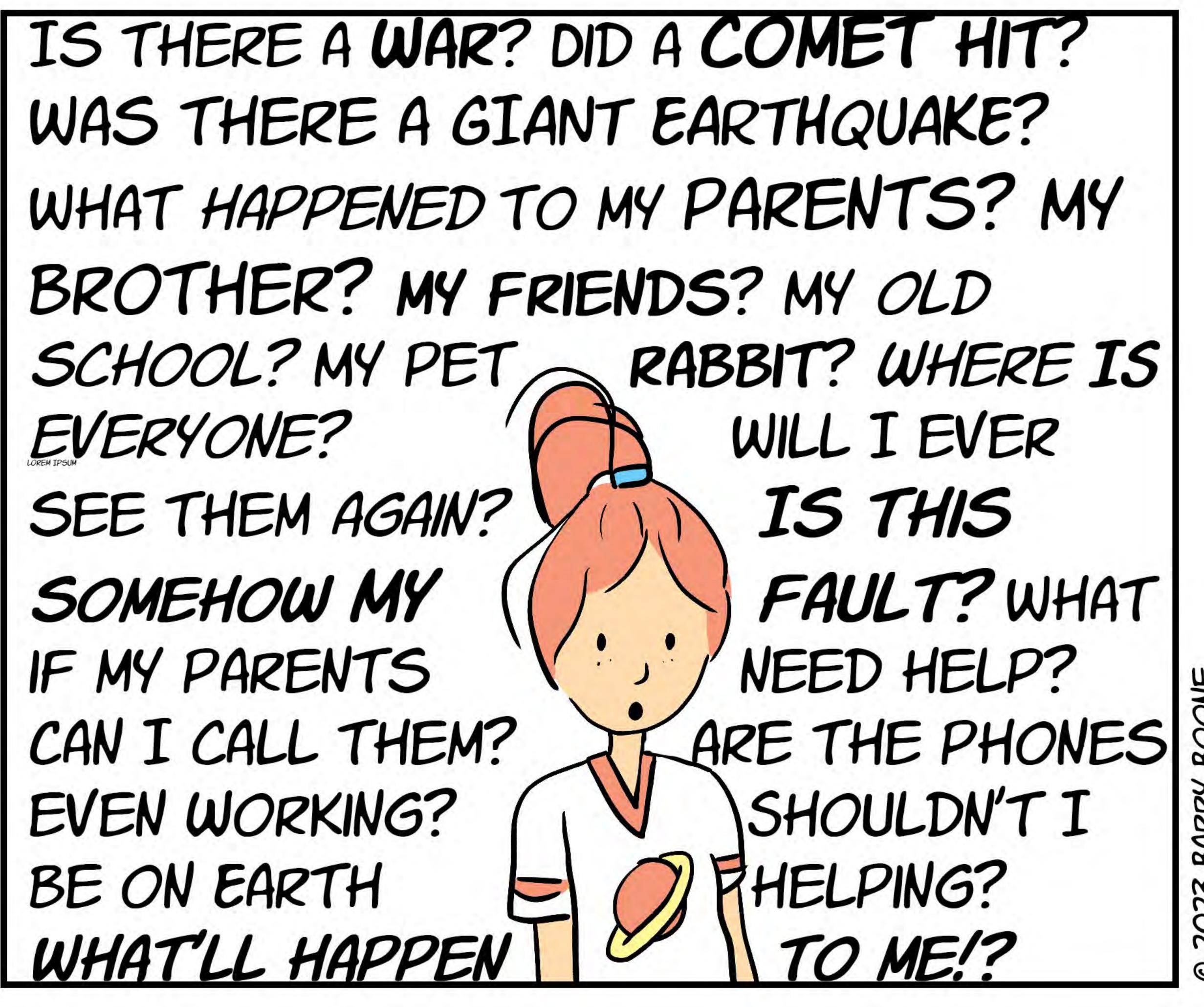


QUICK, ZINNIA! THINK OF SOMETHING NICE TO SAY TO HELP HER FEEL BETTER!



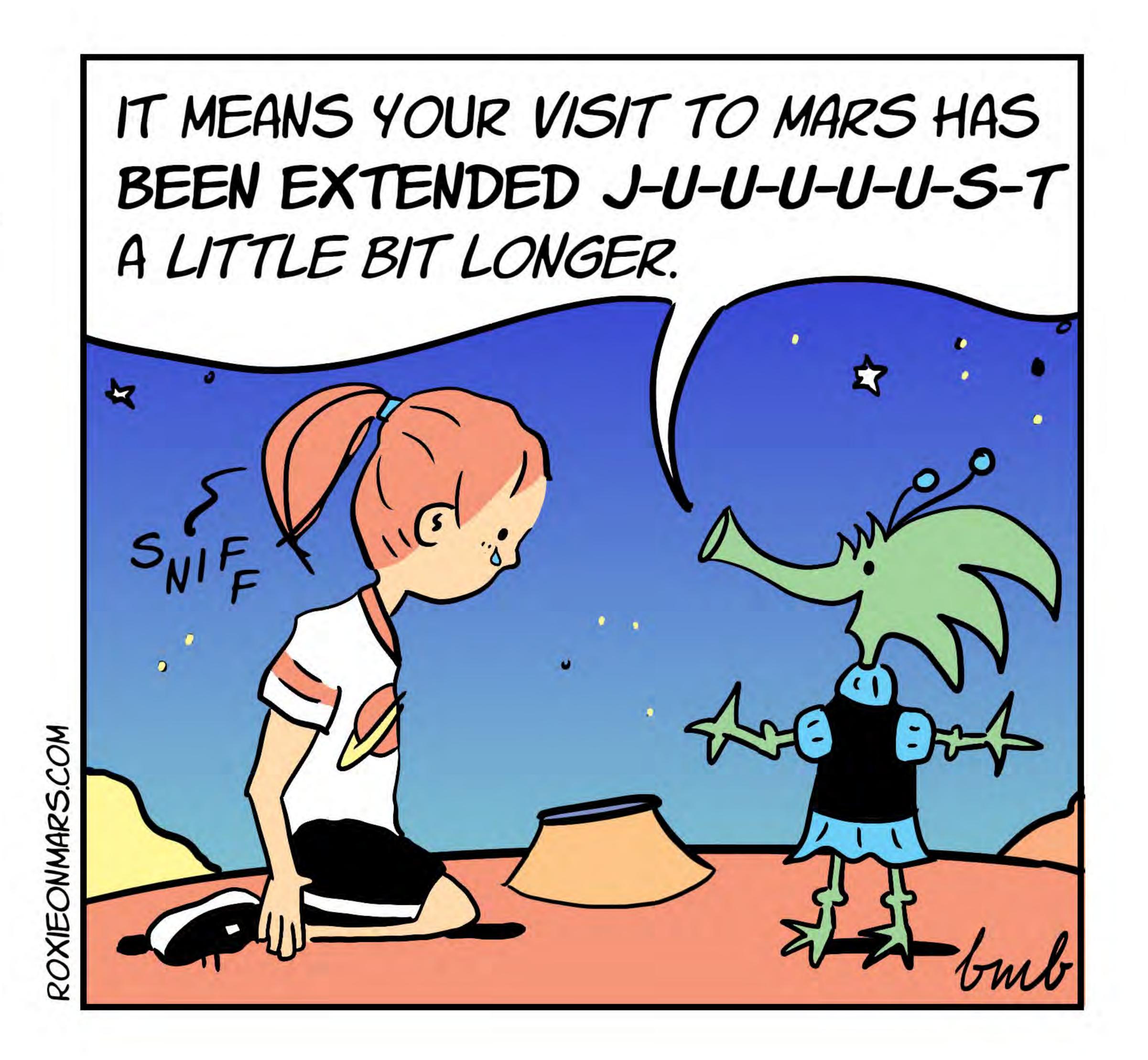
YOUR PLANET IS
SO PRETTY
WHEN IT BLOWS
UP, ROXIE!



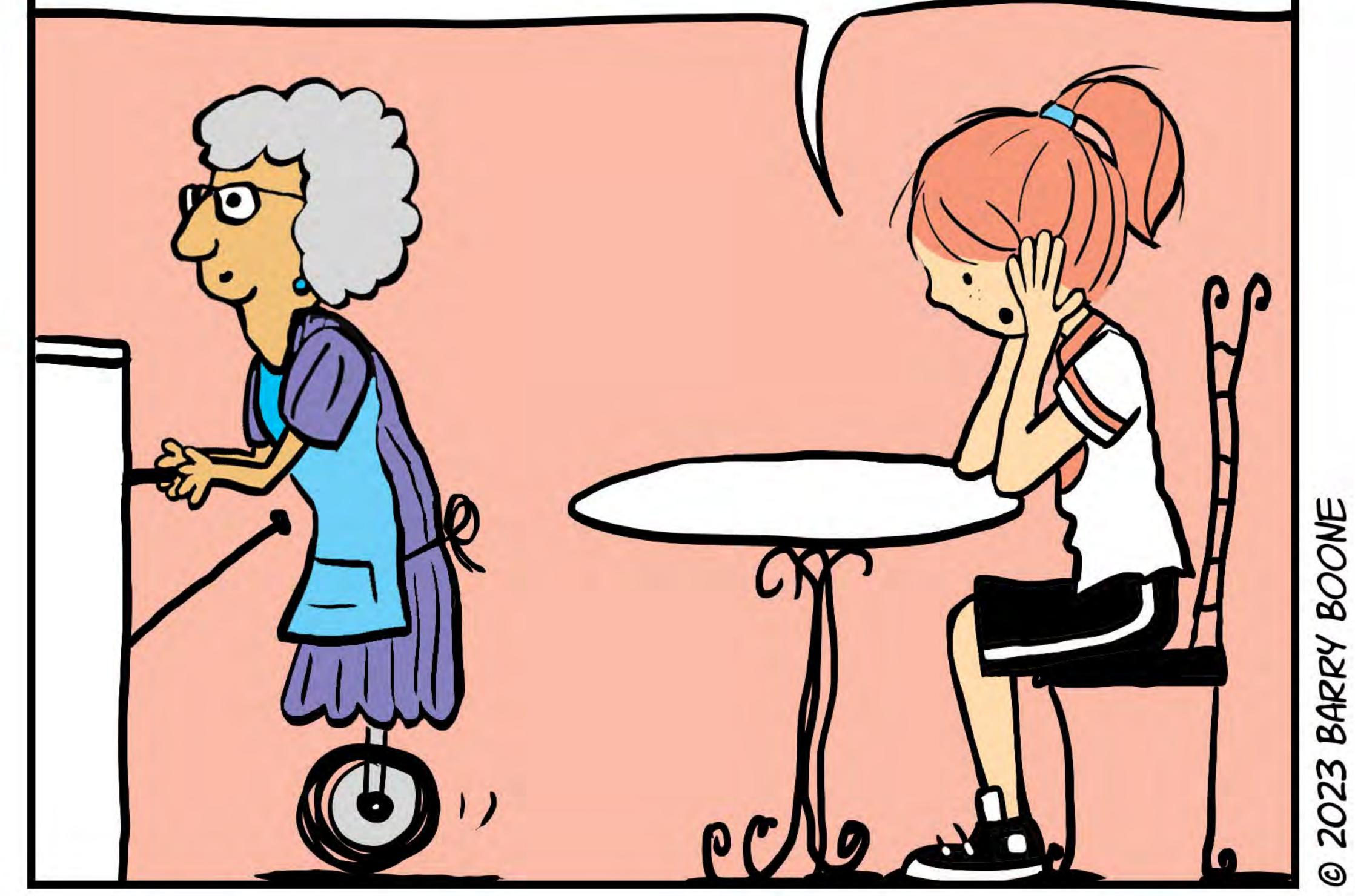


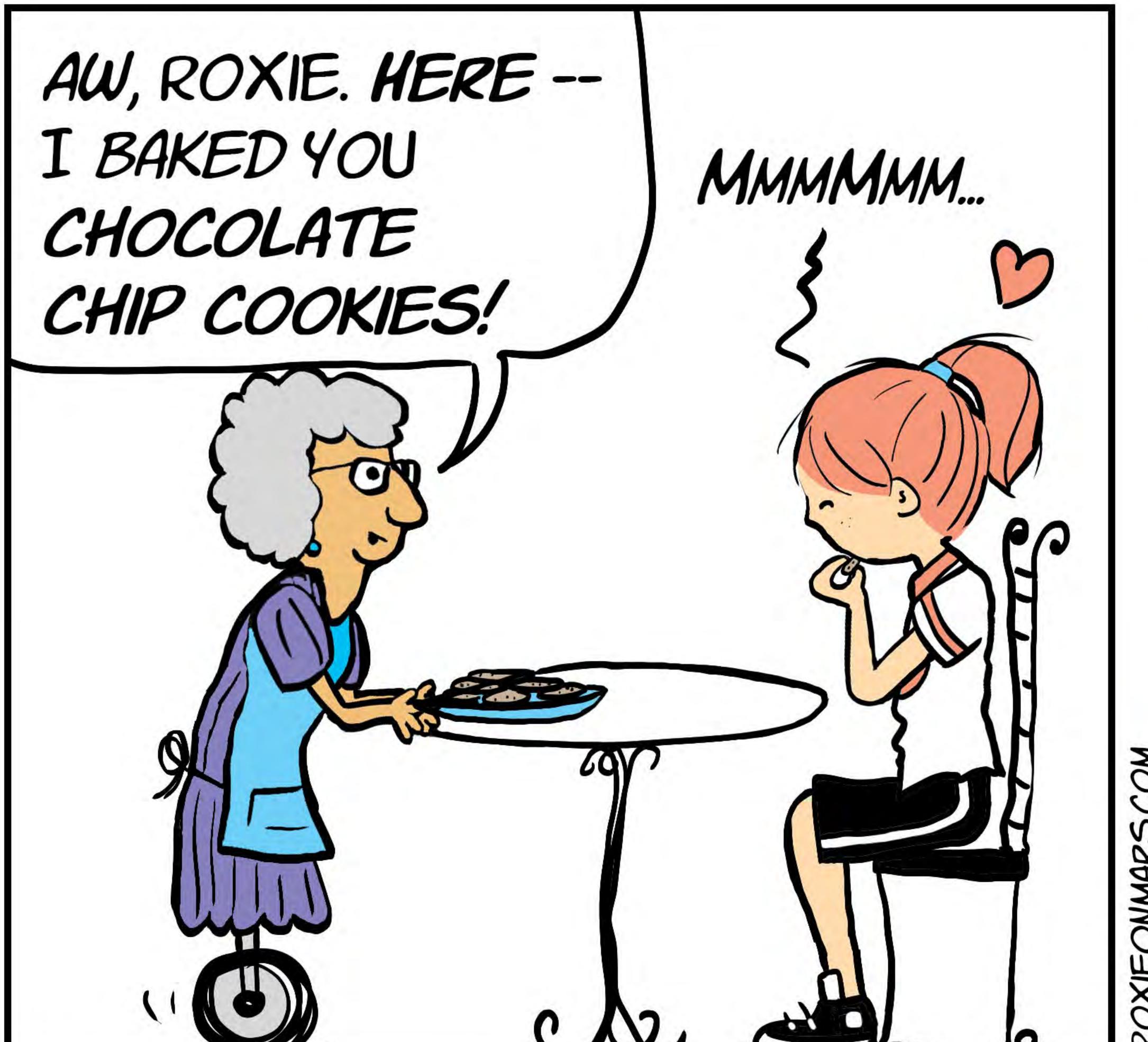
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN??!





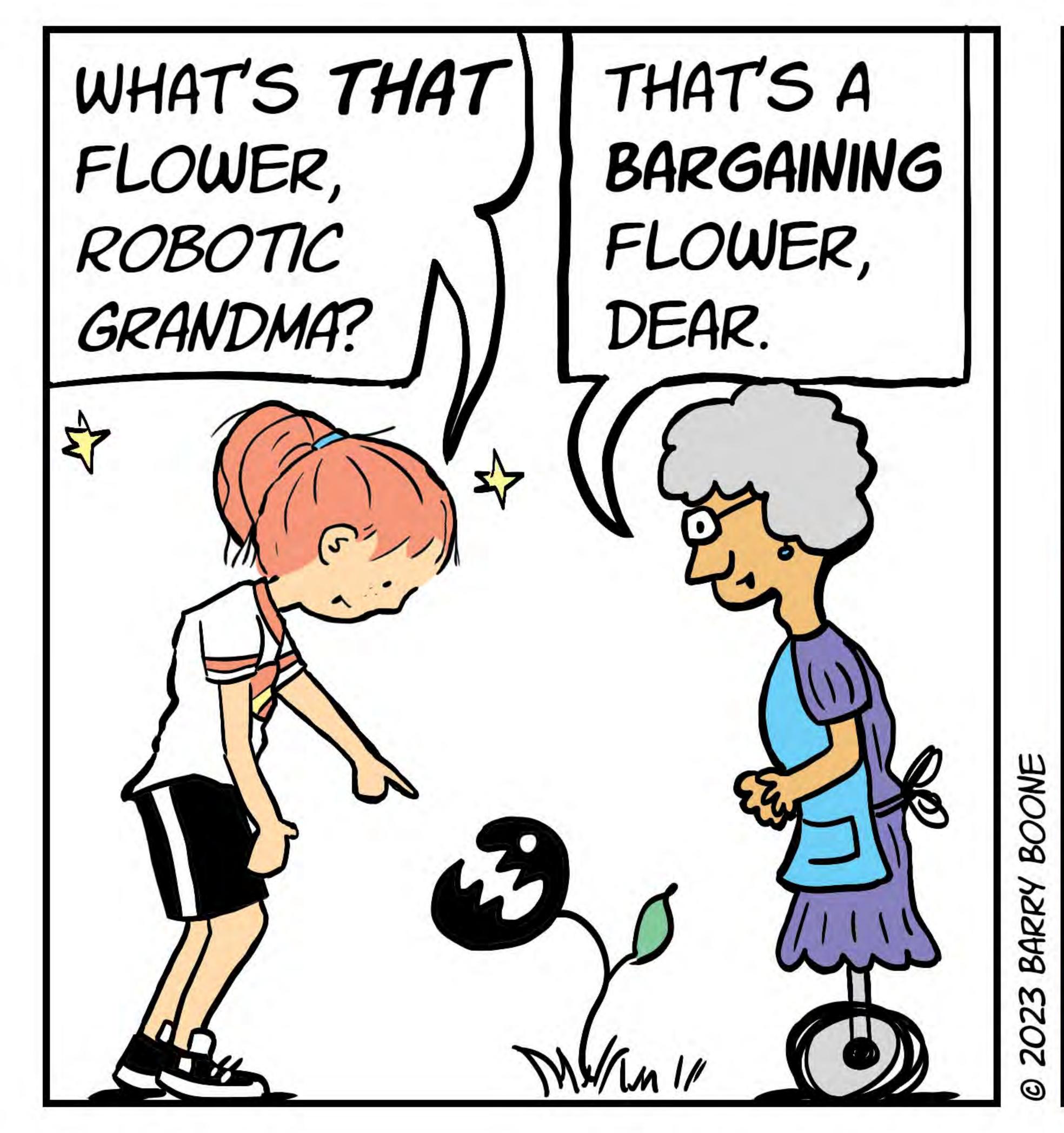
OH, ROBOTIC GRANDMA. THINGS HAVE GOTTEN A LITTLE OVERWHELMING.





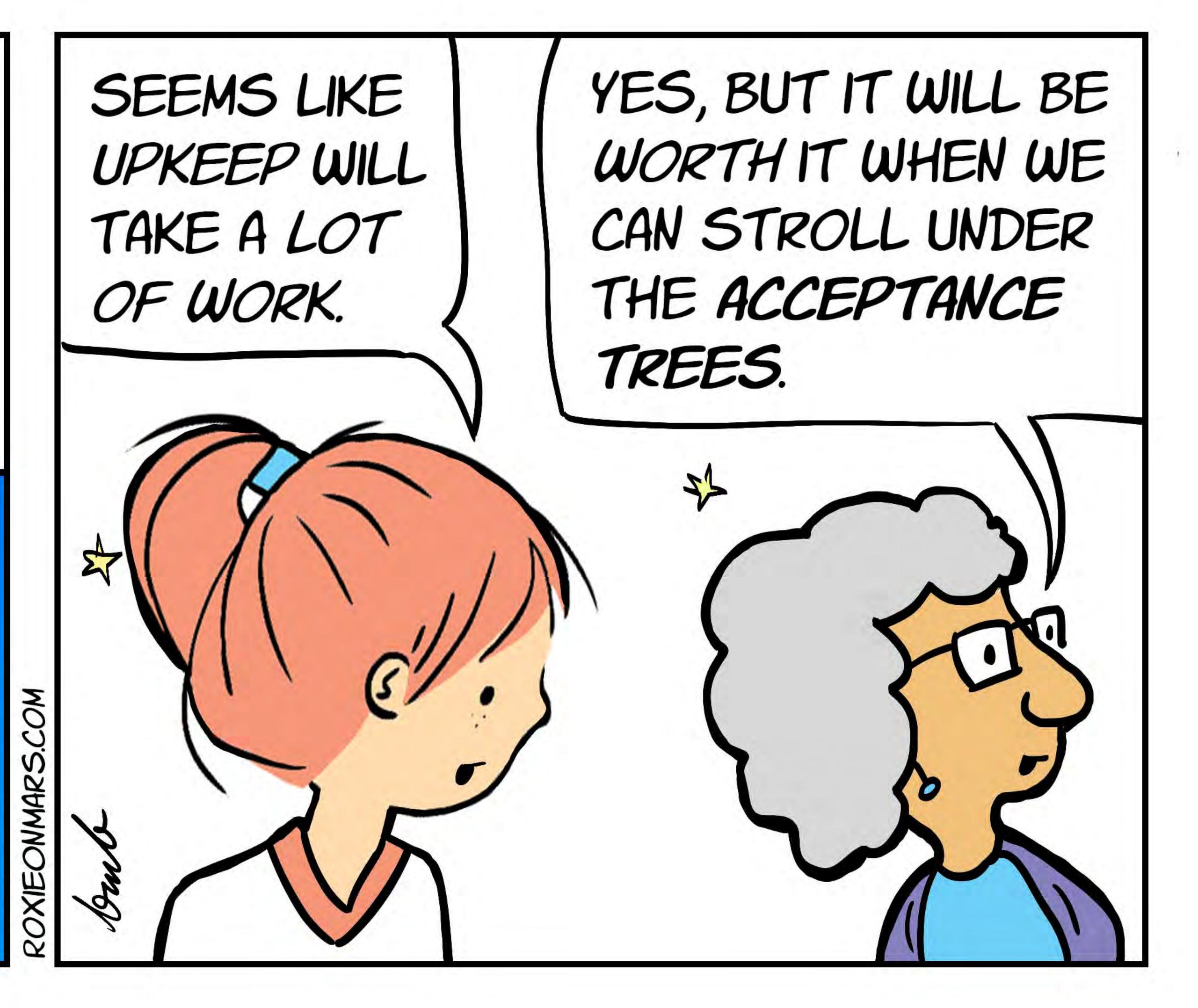
GRANDMA'S KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T FEEL OVERWHELMED WHEN YOU'RE EATING CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES.

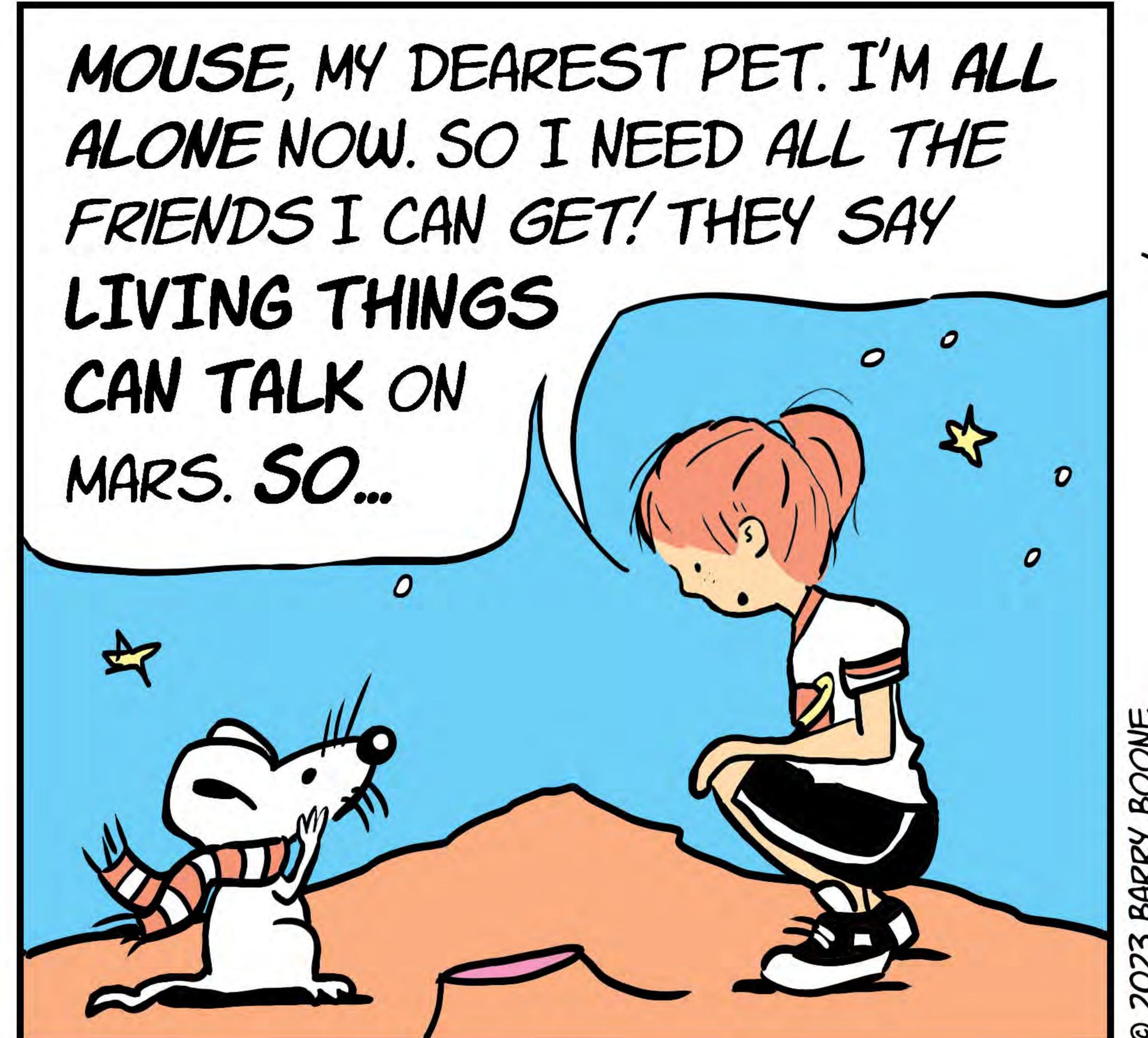




I'M GROWING A HEALING GARDEN FOR YOU, ROXIE. OVER THERE IS A DENIAL BUSH, THOSE ARE ANGER WEEDS, AND THAT'S A DEPRESSION BLOSSOM. STAGES OF GRIEF ARE LITERAL ON MARS, DEAR.

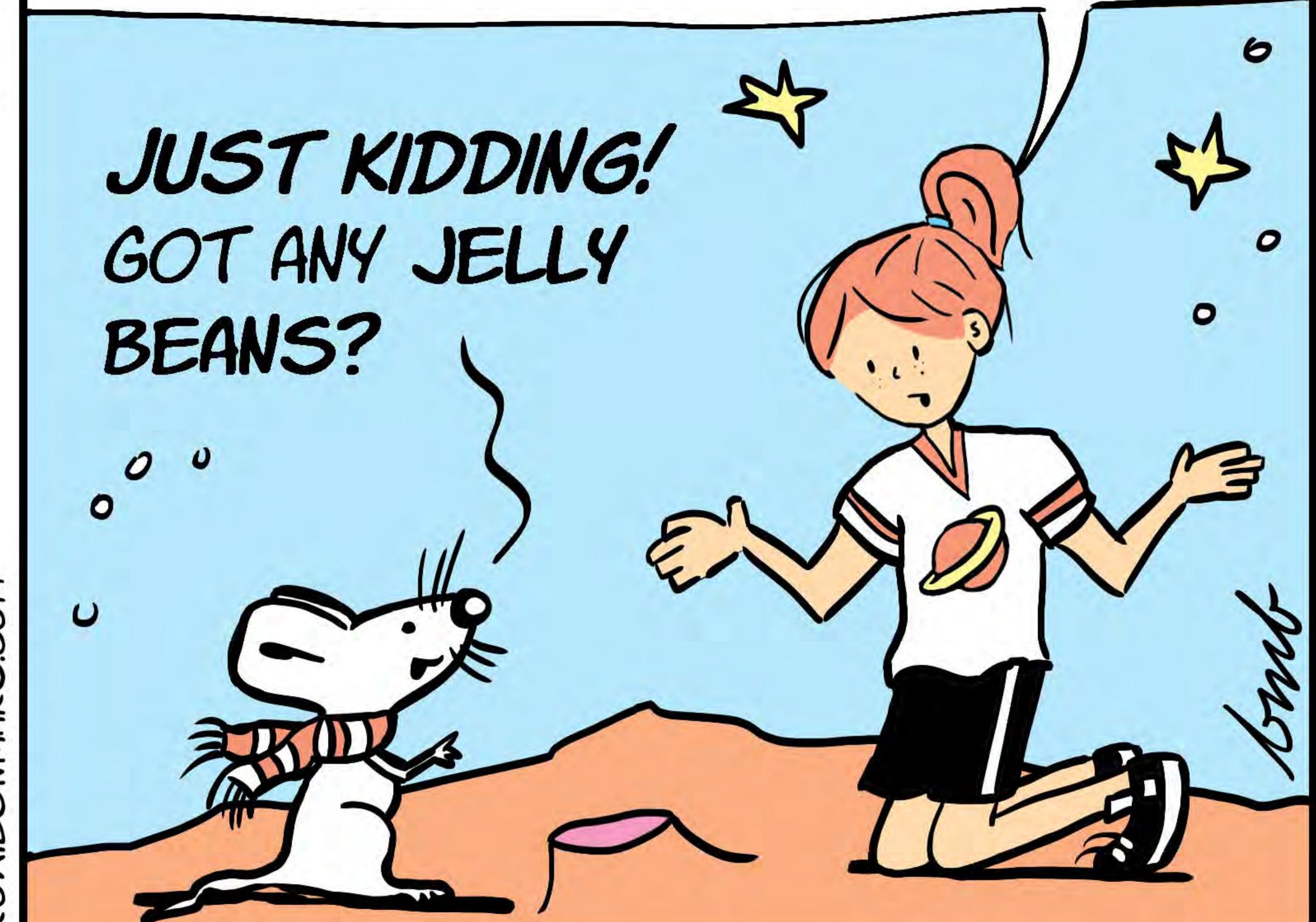


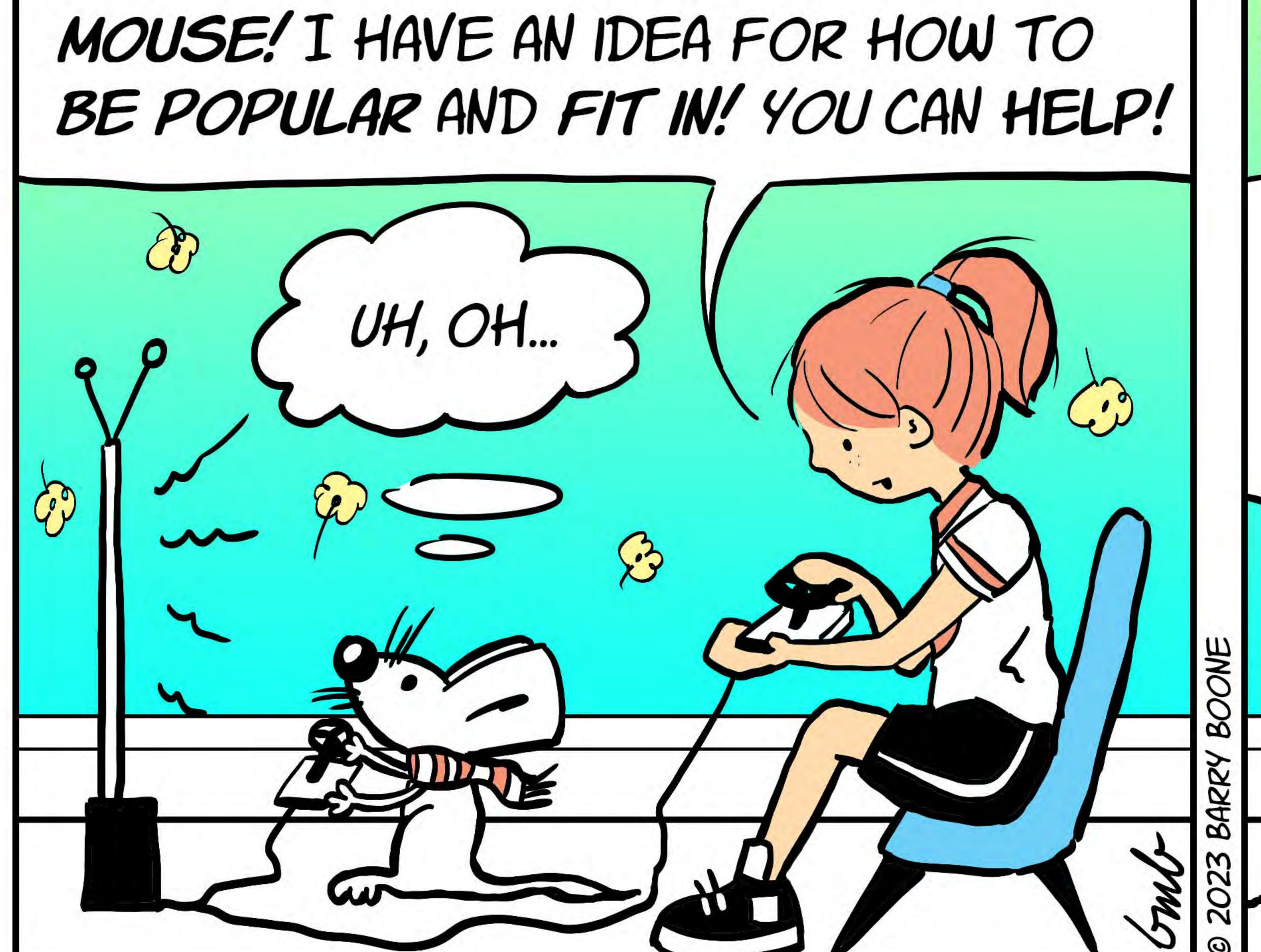


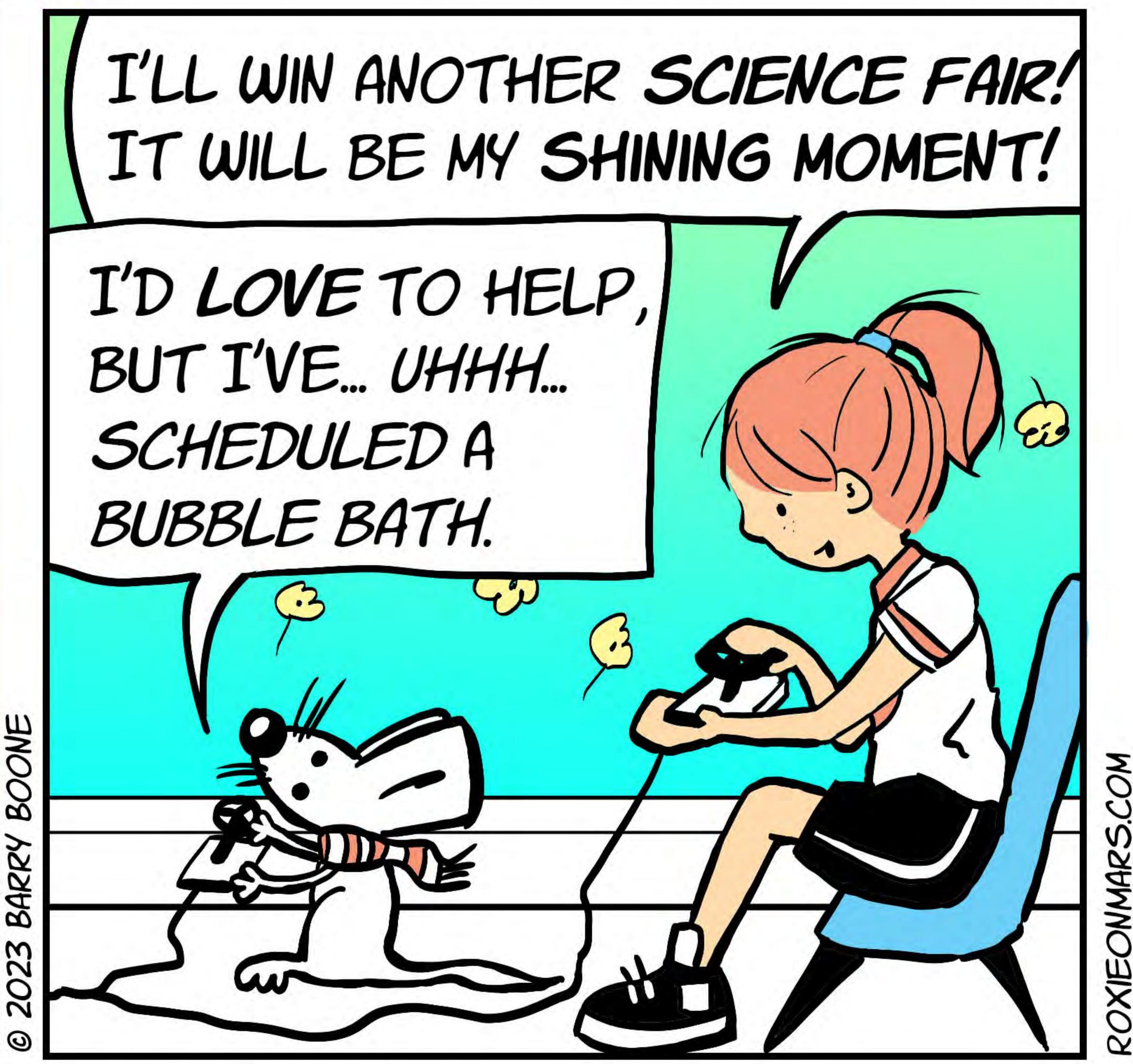




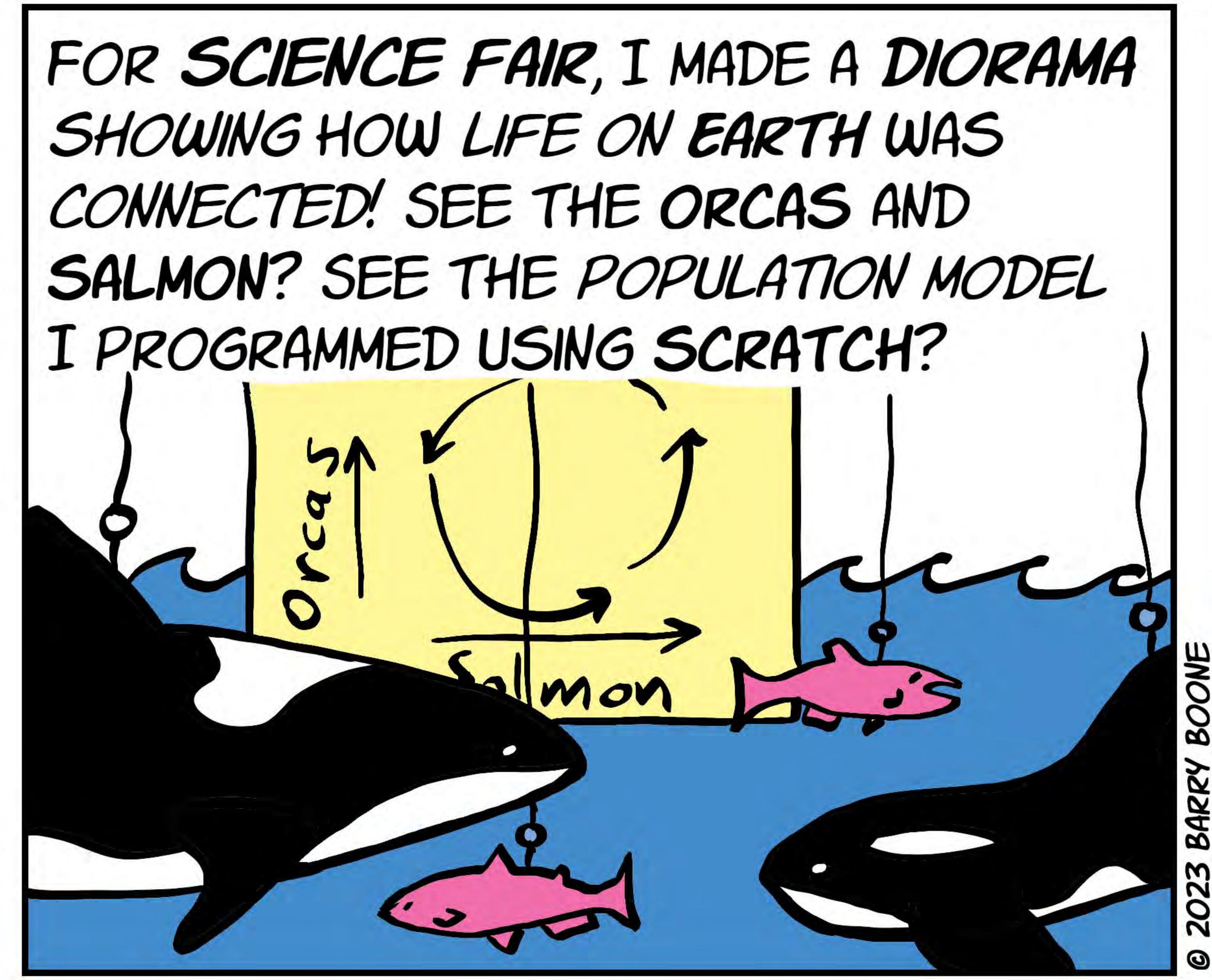
OH, MOUSE. I'M SO DISAPPOINTED.
I WAS REALLY HOPING THAT MAYBE...

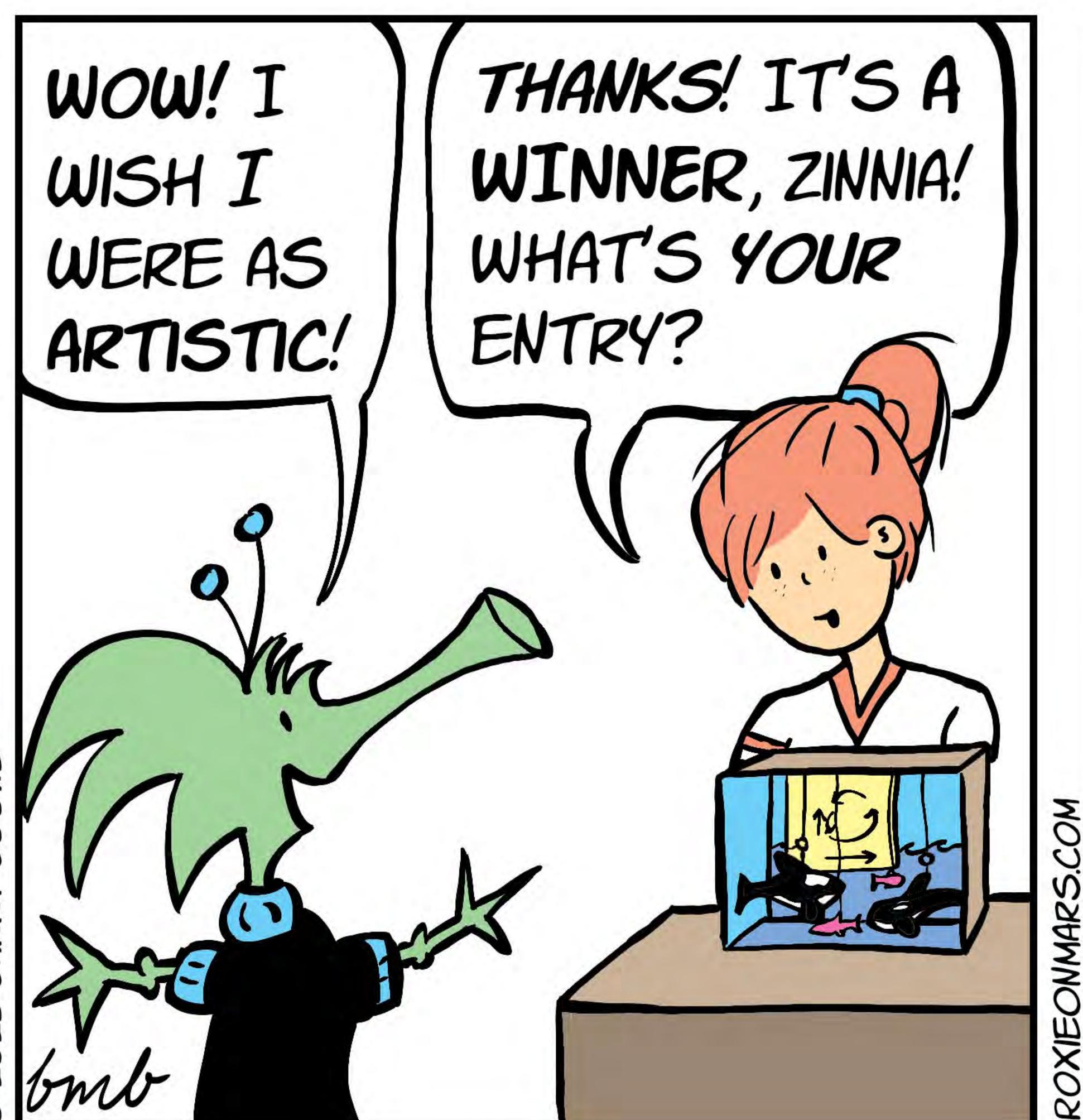


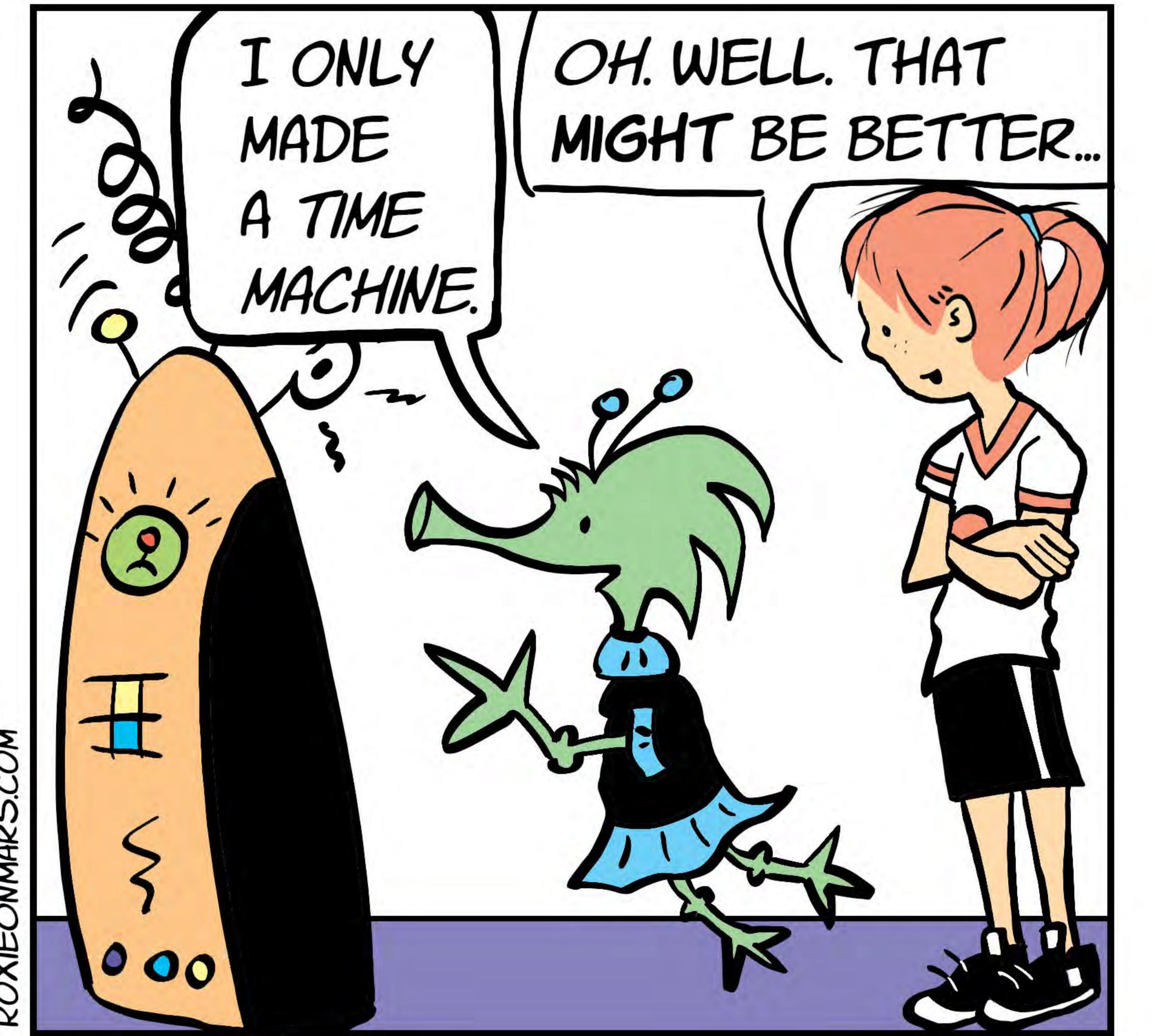


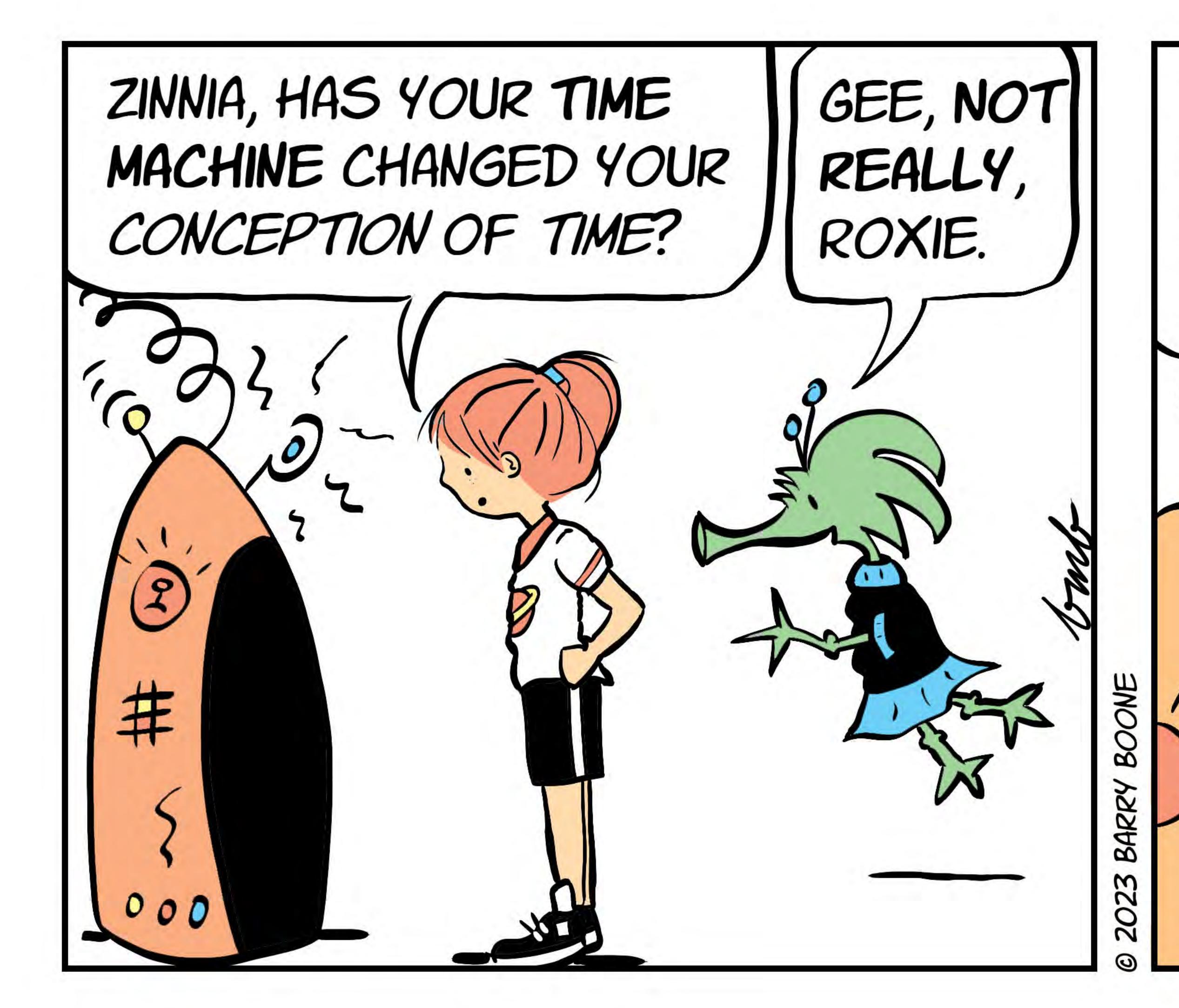




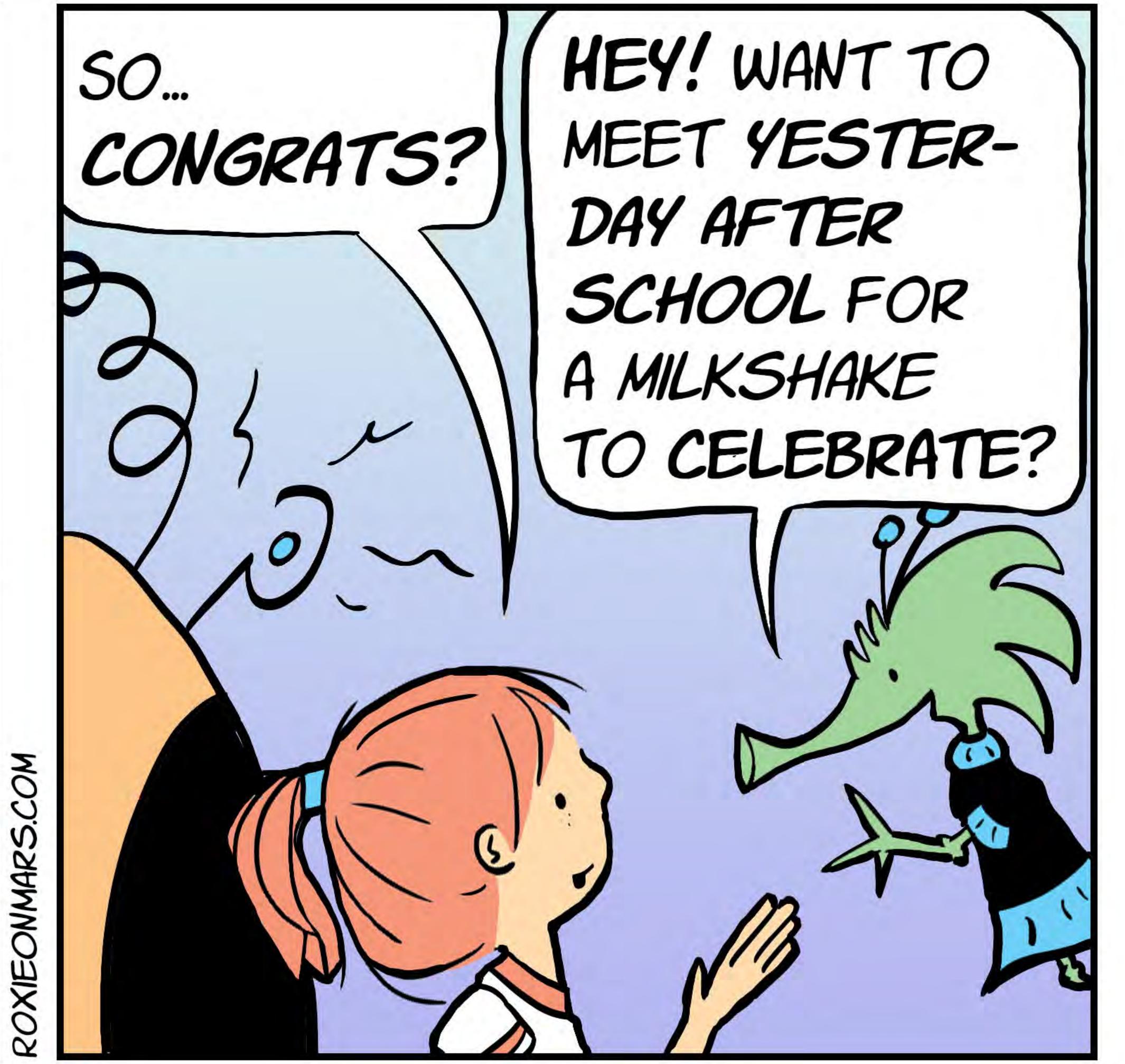


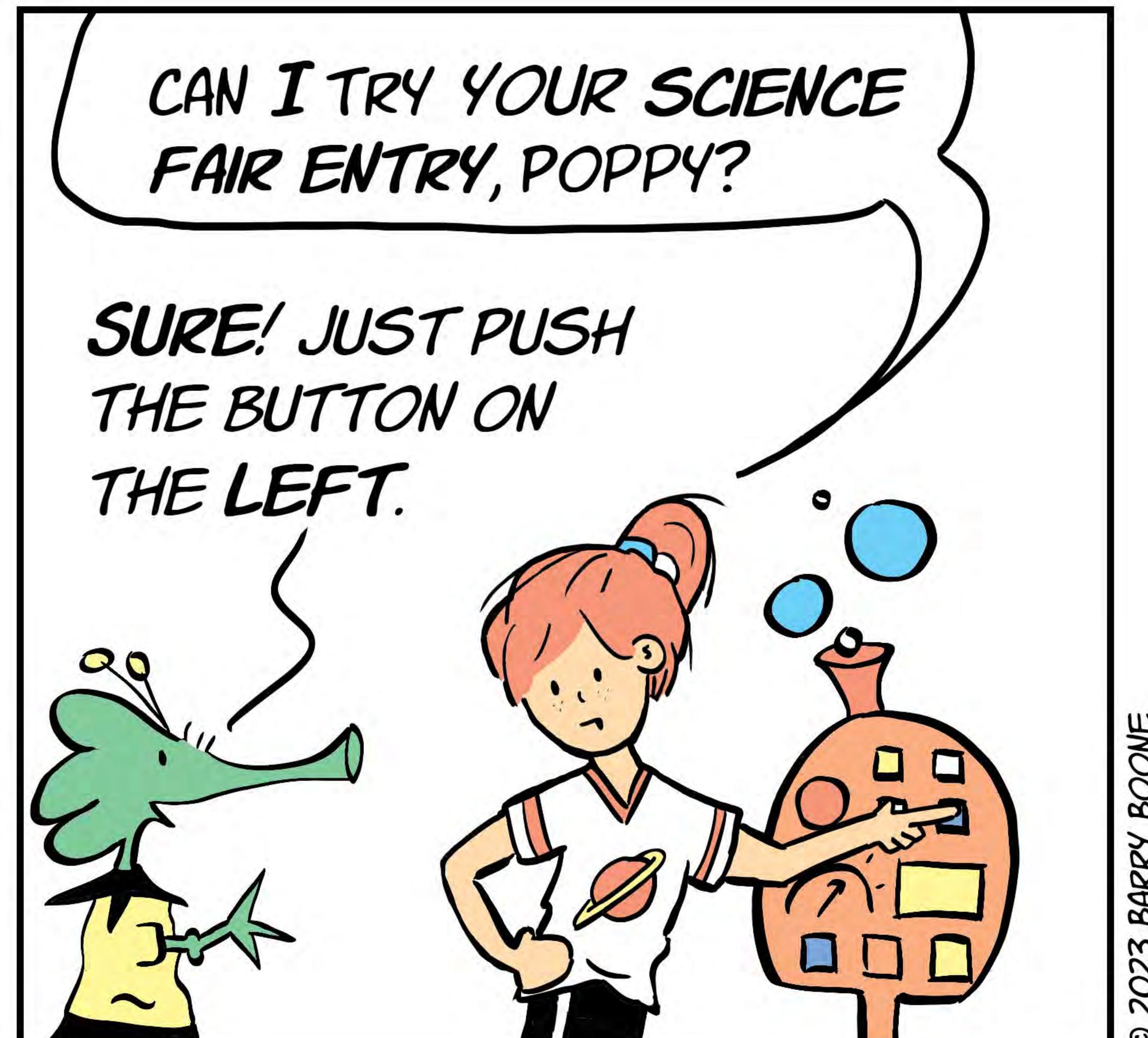


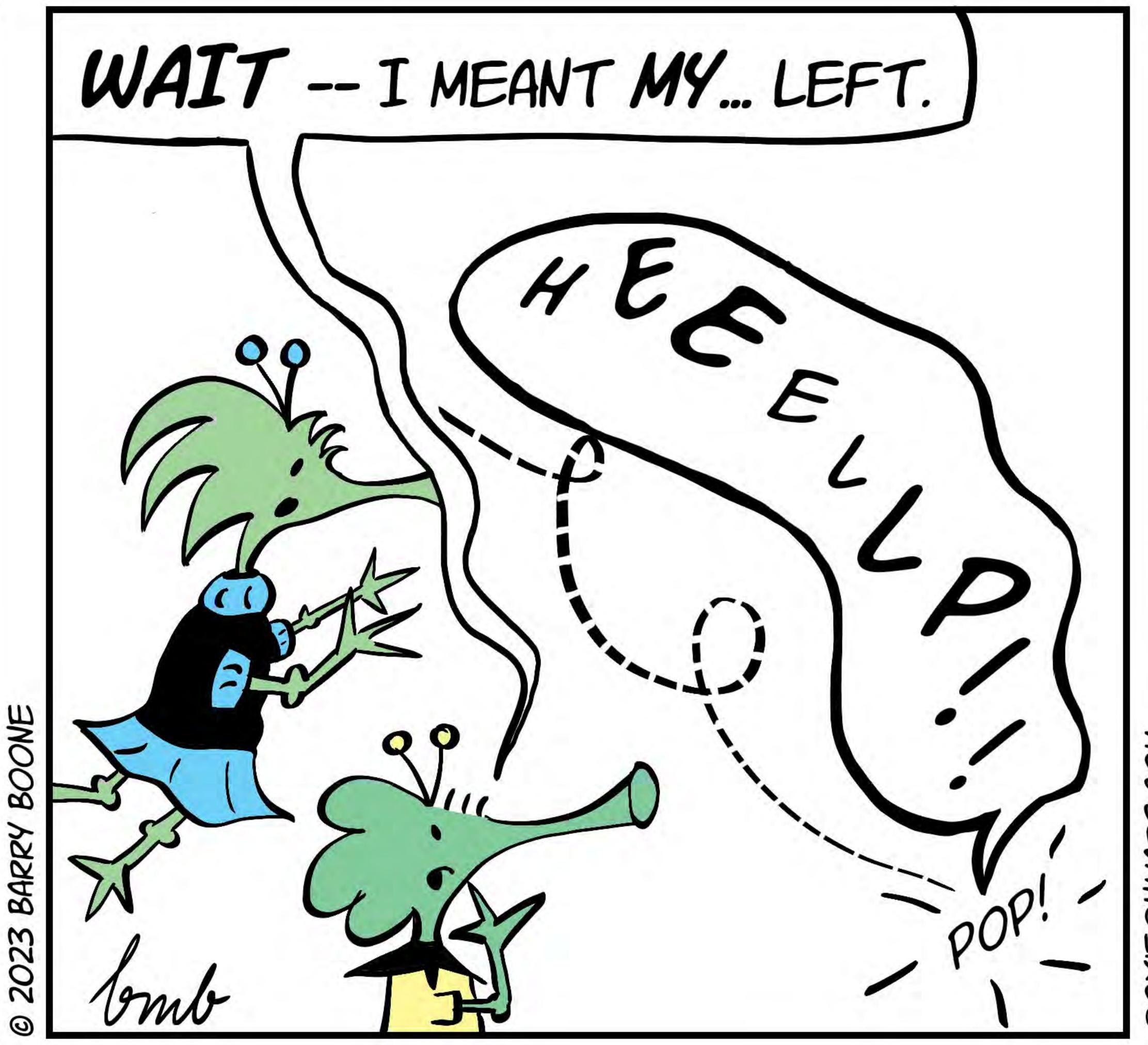




I MEAN, I TESTED IT TOMORROW AND IT WORKS GREAT. OF COURSE, I'VE KNOWN ALL NEXT WEEK I ALREADY WON THE SCIENCE FAIR.







WOW! SHE'S BEEN SUCKED INTO A WARP BUBBLE! THINK THAT'LL CHANGE THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM, AND WE'LL SOON FORGET SHE WAS EVER HERE?

TOO BAD I FELL INTO ONE OF POPPY'S WARP BUBBLES! NOW THIS IS MY DARKEST HOUR!



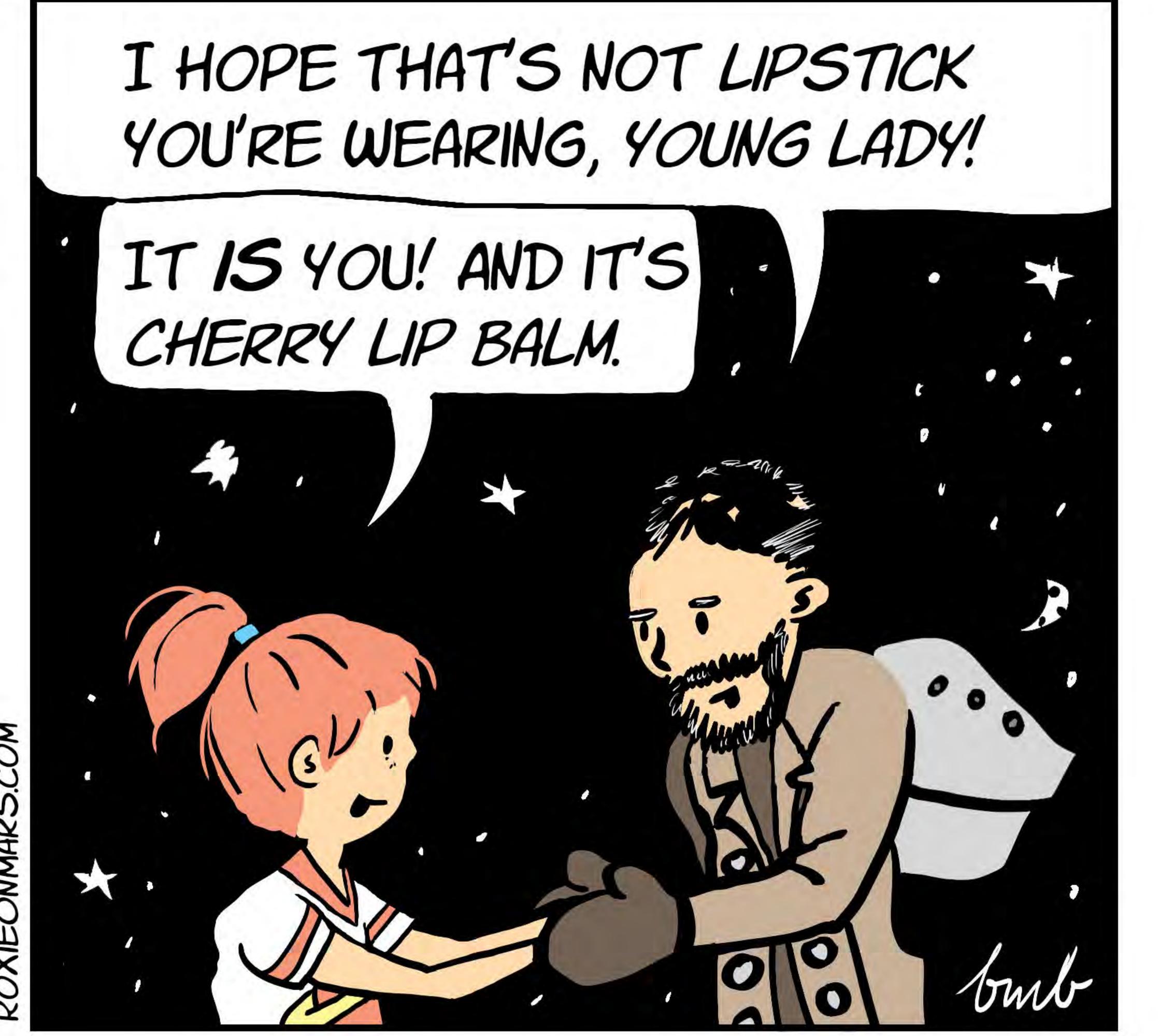
LOOK! BECAUSE OF THE WARP IN TIME, I SEE MY DAD MINING ASTEROIDS! MAYBE FALLING I'M IN THE ABSOLUTE ELSEWHERE. | INTO THE WARP BUBBLE WILL ALL BE WORTH | YOU WANT TO HEAR IN YOUR LET'S LEARN FRACTIONS! OR PRACTICE PIANO SCALES! OR CONJUGATE VERBS!

DADS MEAN WELL, BUT THEY DON'T ALWAYS SAY WHAT DARKEST HOUR.





HONEY, I WISH WE COULD SHOOT SOME HOOPS OR WATCH AN OLD HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL TOGETHER. I MISS YOU SO MUCH! BUT ARE YOU REALLY HERE WITH ME?



GOOD-BYE, DAD! I AM FLOATING IN AN OCEAN OF ALL POSSIBLE UNI-VERSES! I MISS YOU MORE THAN EVER! OHH, THIS IS AWFUL! HOW DID I EVER GET INTO THIS MESS?



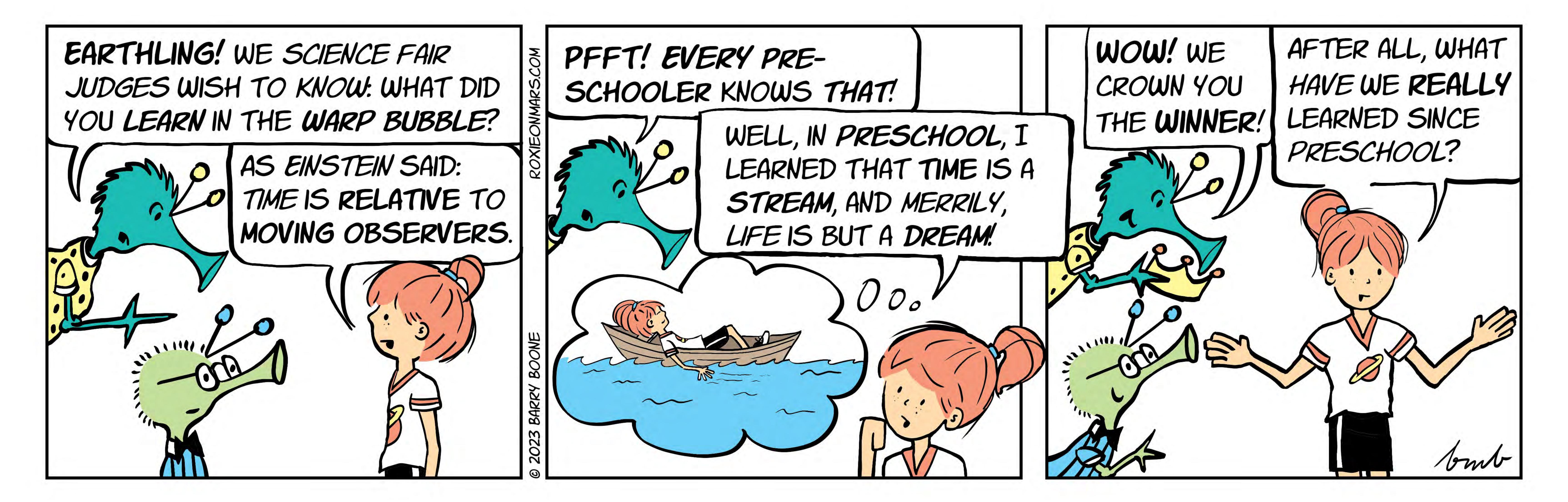
MARTIANS GOT ME INTO THIS! I HATE MARTIANS! WHY DIDN'T ZINNIA WARN ME ABOUT WARP BUBBLES? OOOH... ZINNIA, YOU WILL BE MY ENEMY! FOREVER!!

ROXIE! OVER HERE! I CAME TO RESCUE 40U!

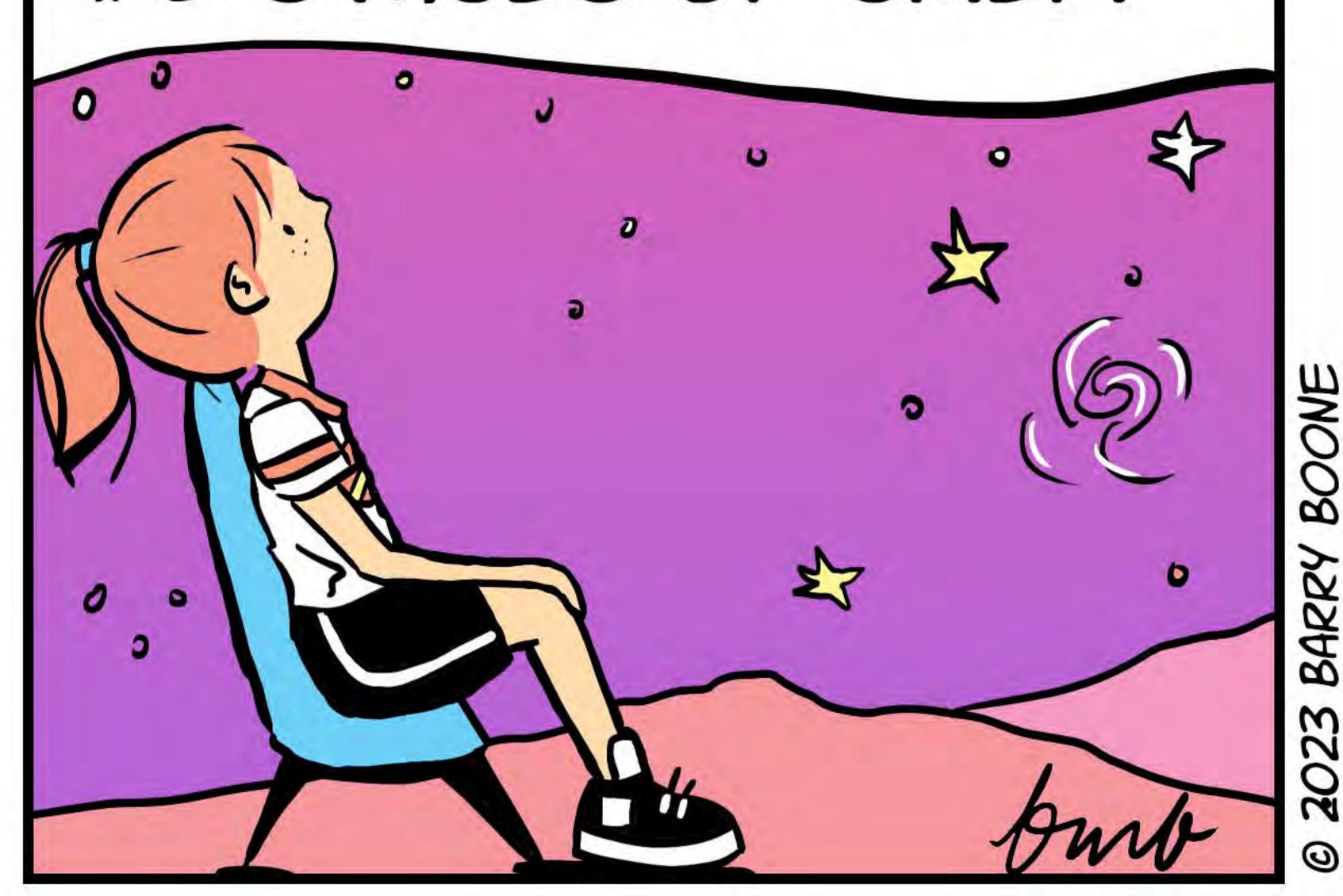
ZINNIA! MY DEAREST, DEAREST FRIEND! SOB = I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!!!







I TOLD GRANDMA I'VE BEEN ANGRY, AND IN DENIAL, AND DEPRESSED SINCE EARTH BLEW UP. SHE SAID THAT'S NORMAL, AND THAT THESE ARE STAGES OF GRIEF.



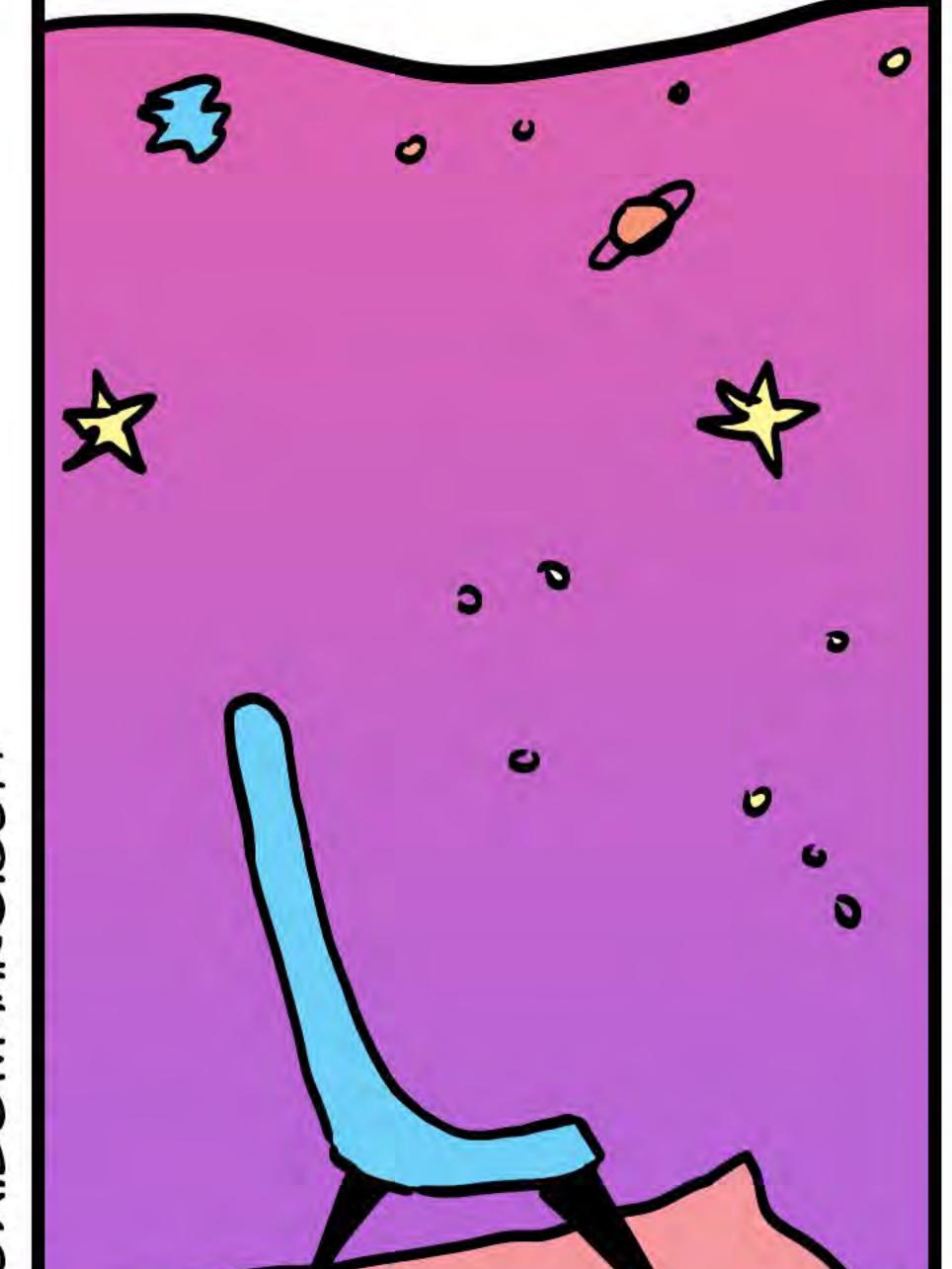
SHE SAID BARGAINING AND ACCEPTANCE ARE OTHER STAGES I'LL ALSO EXPERIENCE. I TOLD HER I'LL NEVER FEEL ACCEPTANCE. SHE SAID ACCEPTANCE DOESN'T MEAN NOW YOU'RE HAPPY OR THAT EVERYTHING'S OKAY. IT'S ABOUT ACCEPTING THAT THIS IS NOW REALITY.



SO, I TOOK THAT TO HEART AND MADE A BIG LIFE DECISION.

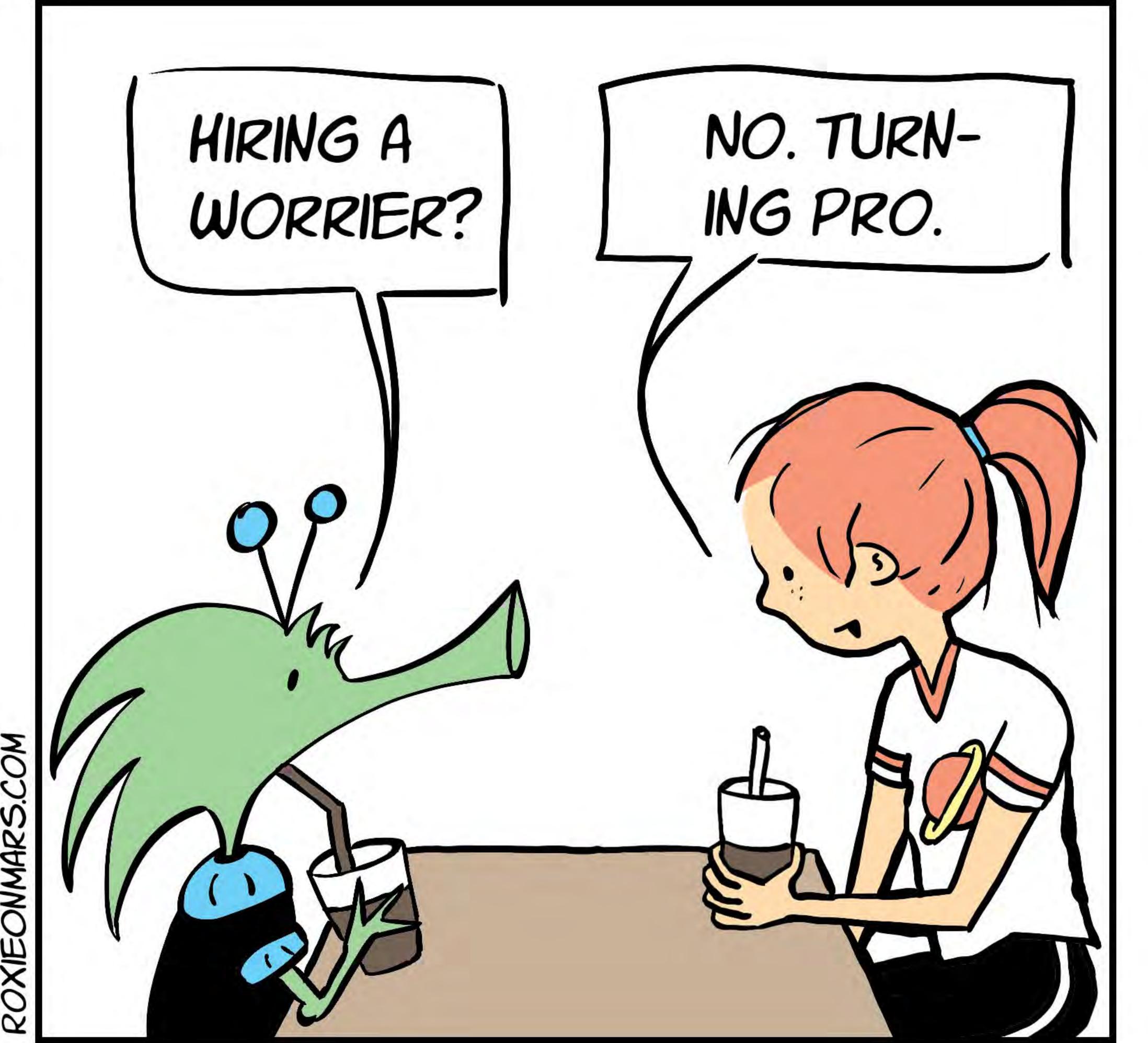


I DECIDED I'M
NOT QUITE
READY TO LIVE
IN REALITY YET.



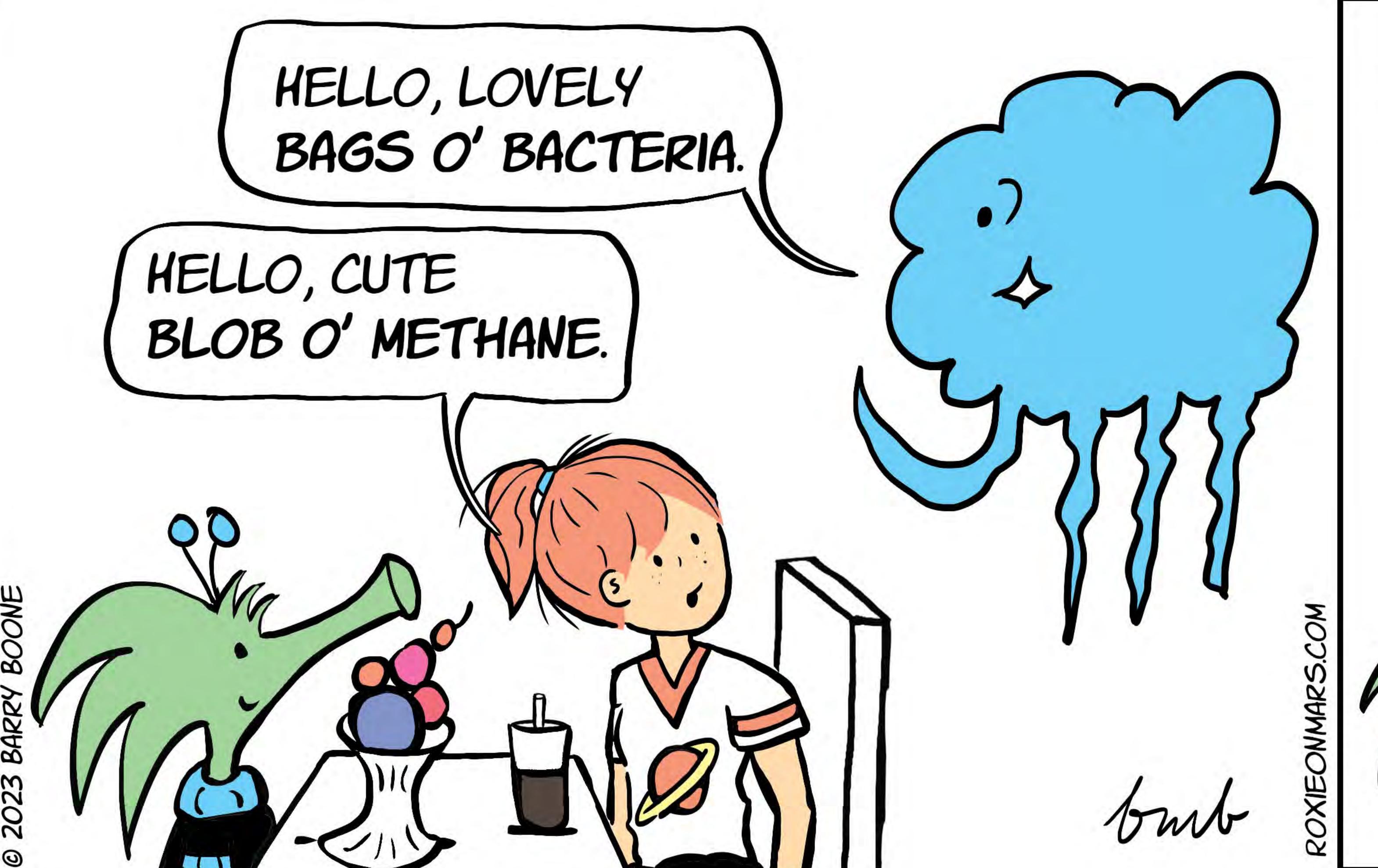


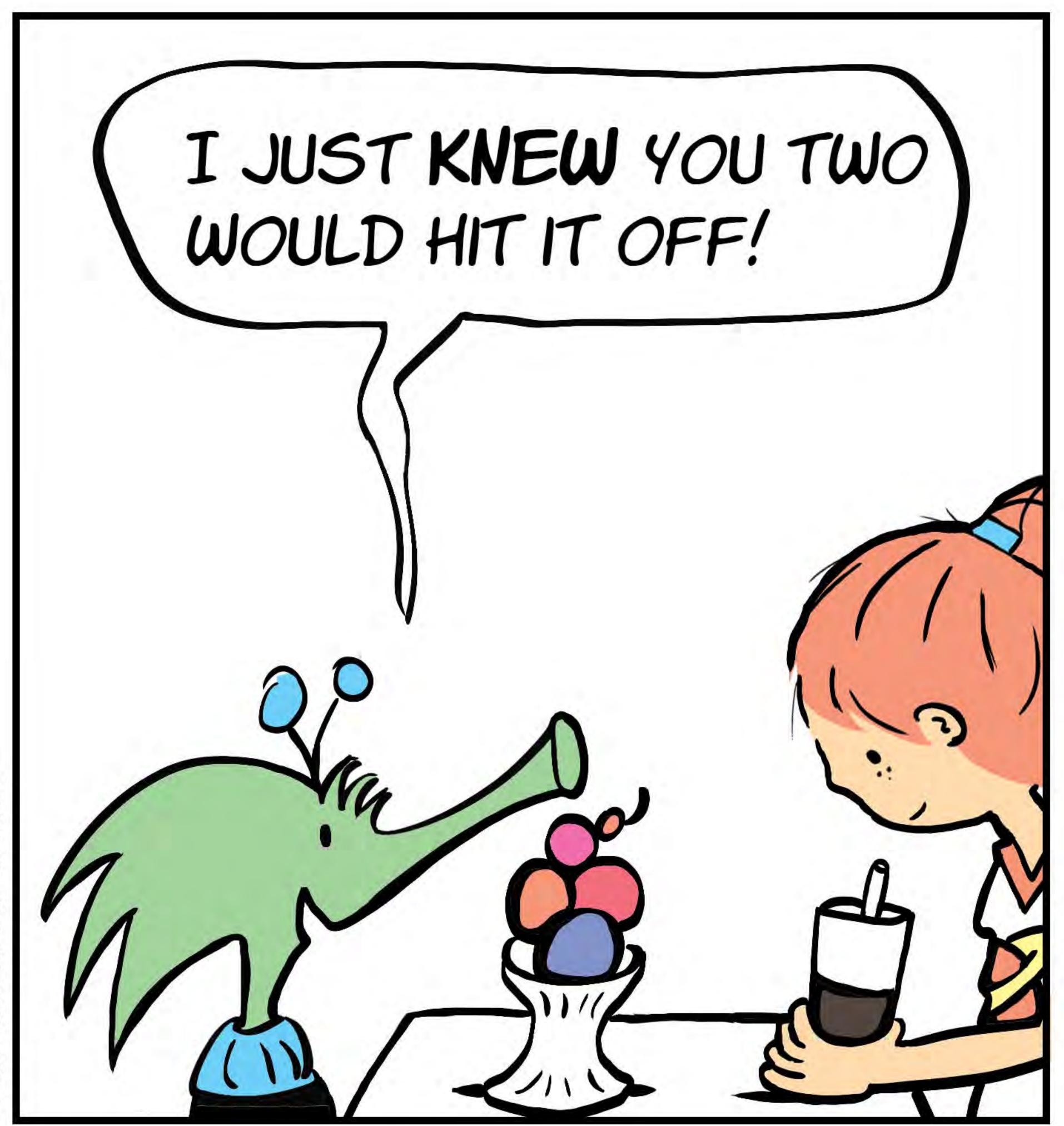


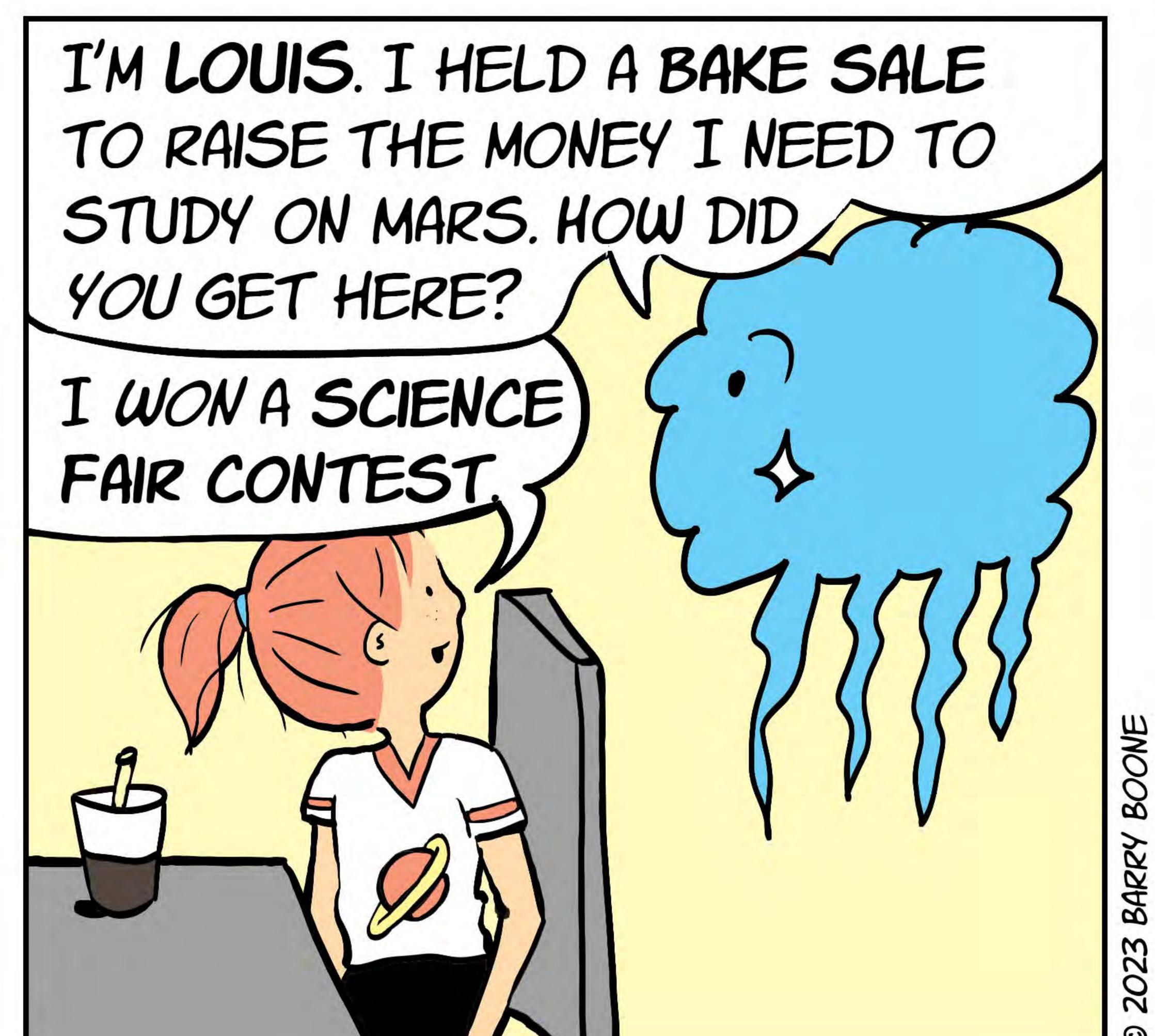


LOOK! THERE'S AN
EXCHANGE STUDENT.
WHAT A CUTIE - FOR A
CLOUD OF GAS FROM
NEPTUNE! HERE HE
COMES! ACT NATURAL!

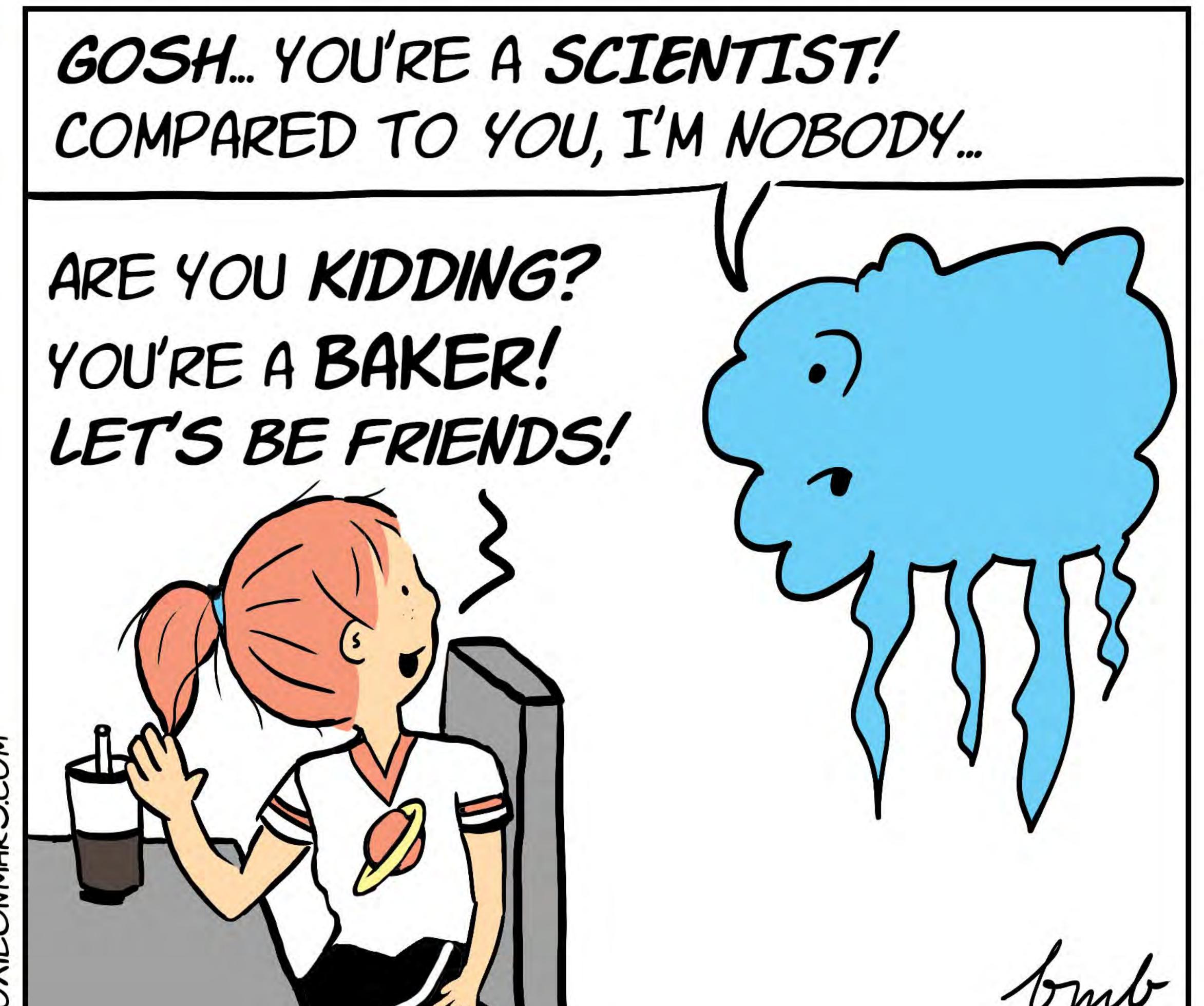


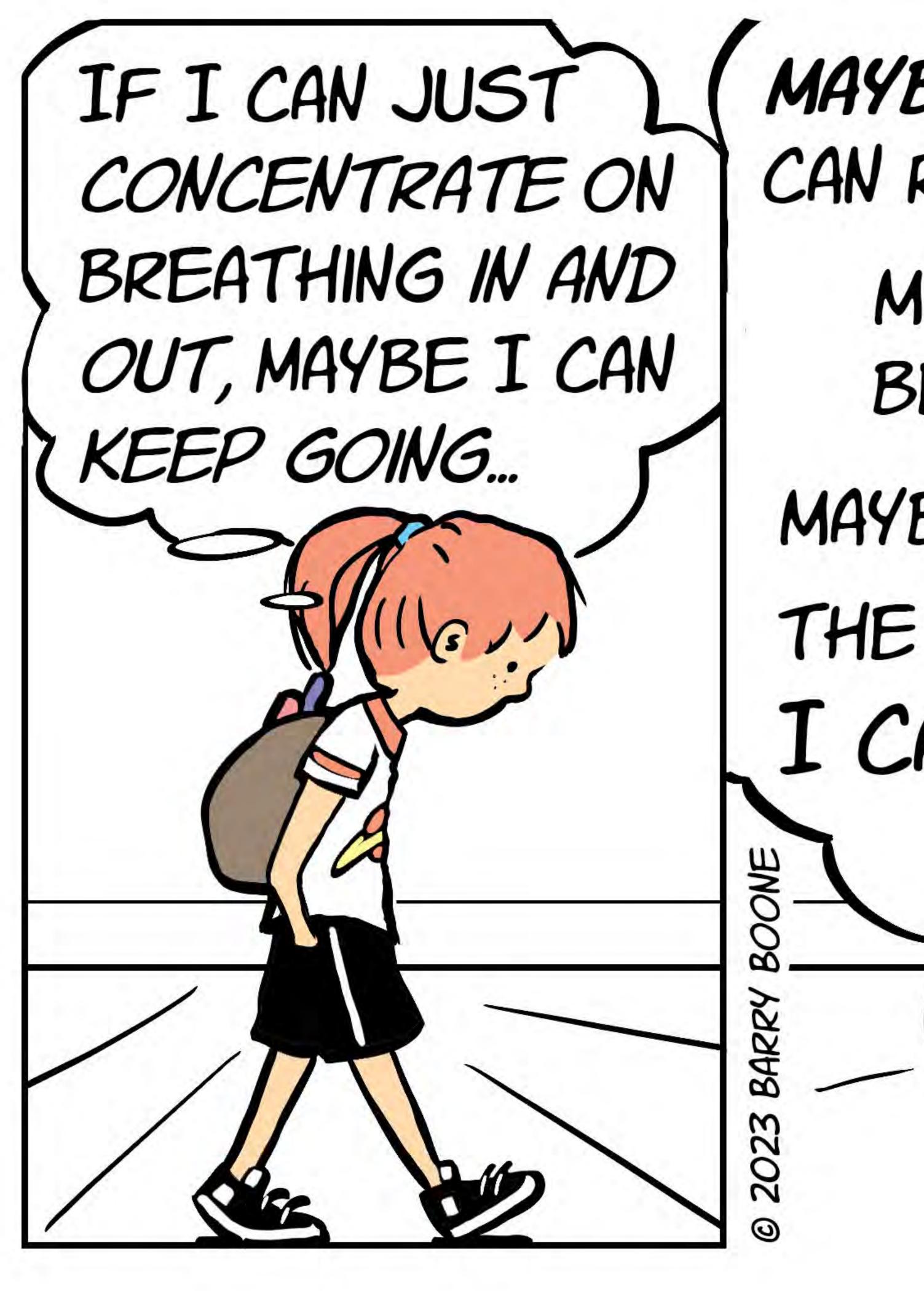










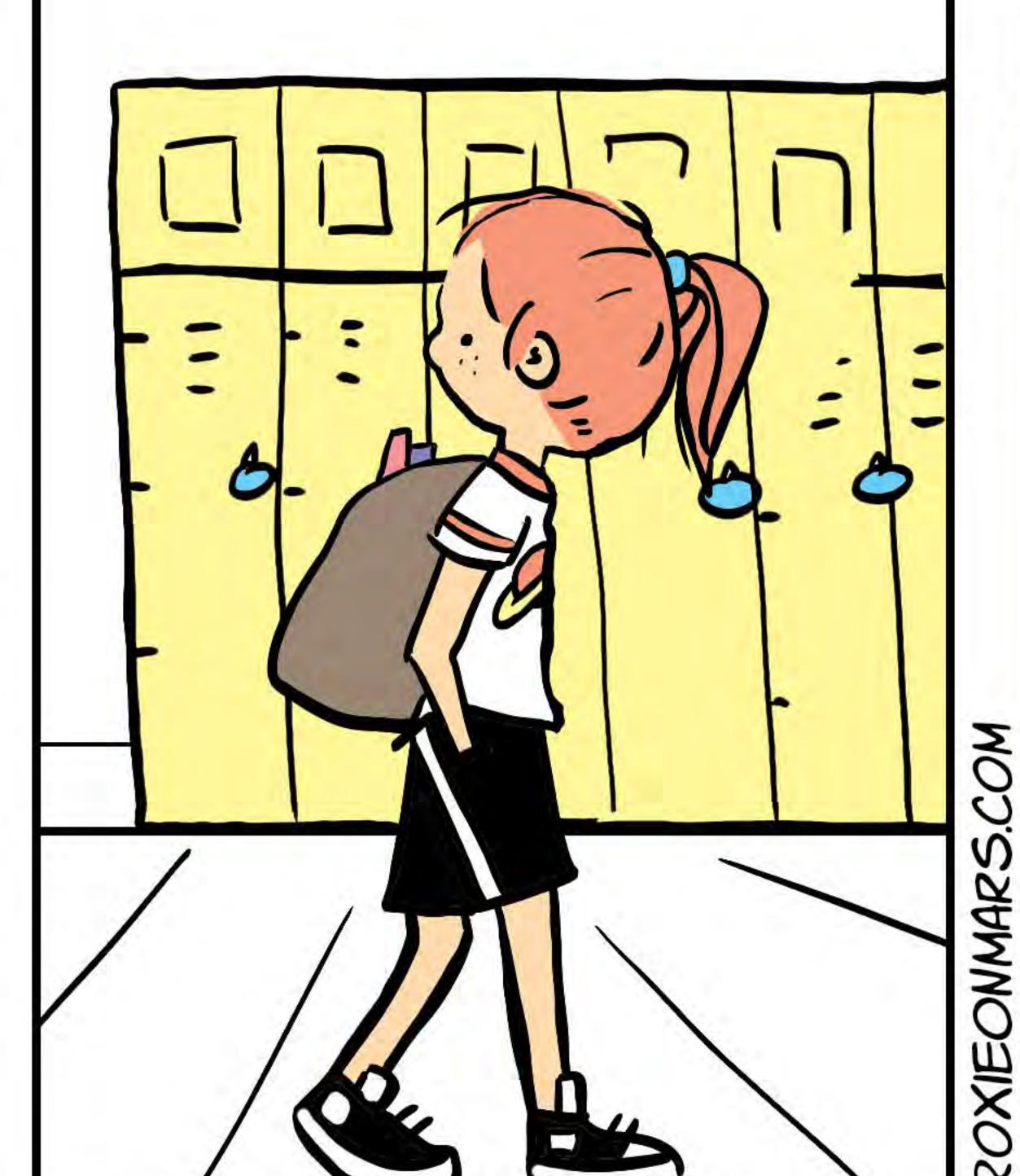


MAYBE THEN I CAN RALLY ... MAYBE I CAN EVEN BE OPTIMISTIC...

MAYBE I CAN BE



YOUR PET MOUSE ARE BOTH DORKS!

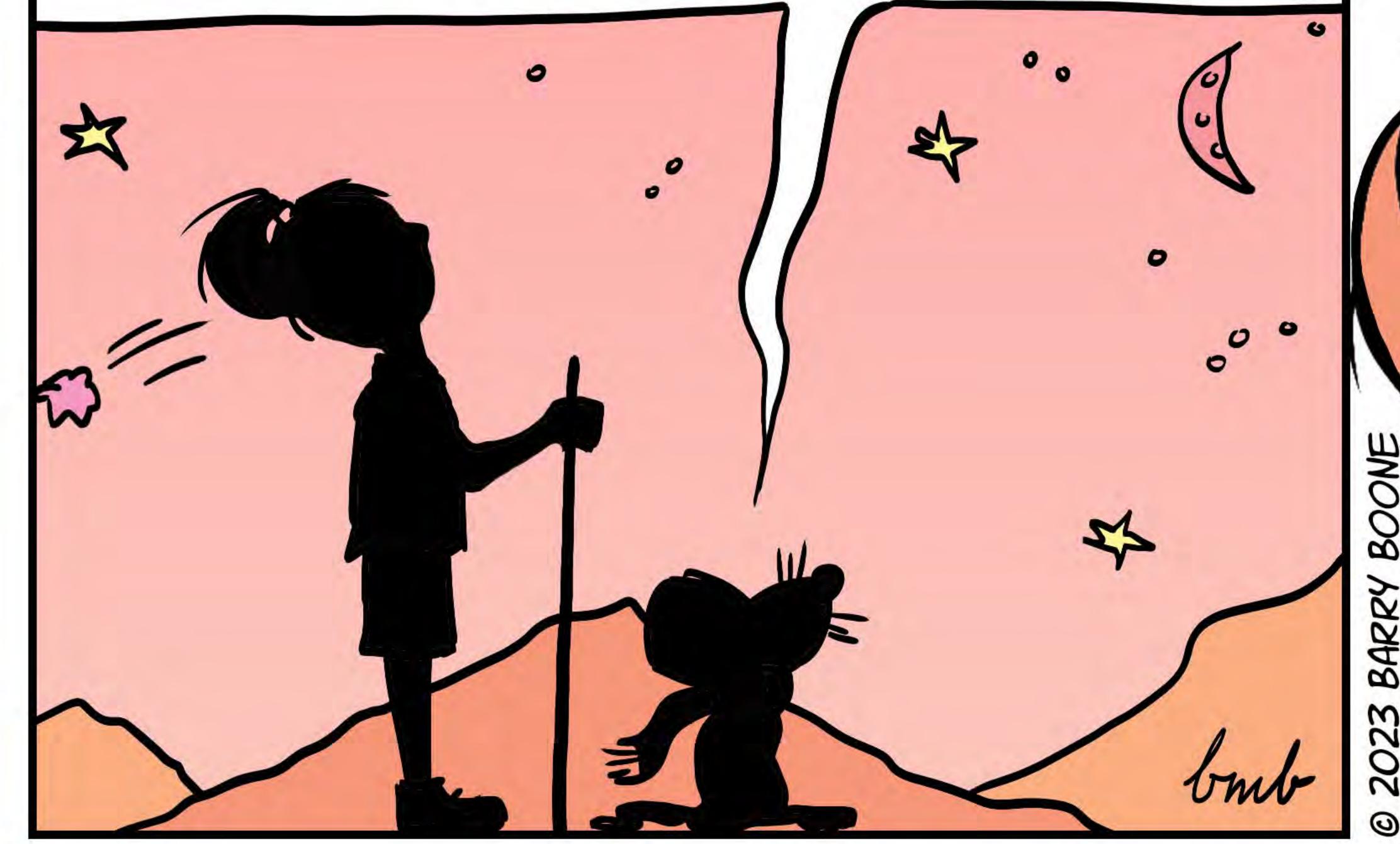


IF I CAN JUST CONCENTRATEON BREATHING IN AND OUT, MAYBE I CAN KEEP GOING ...

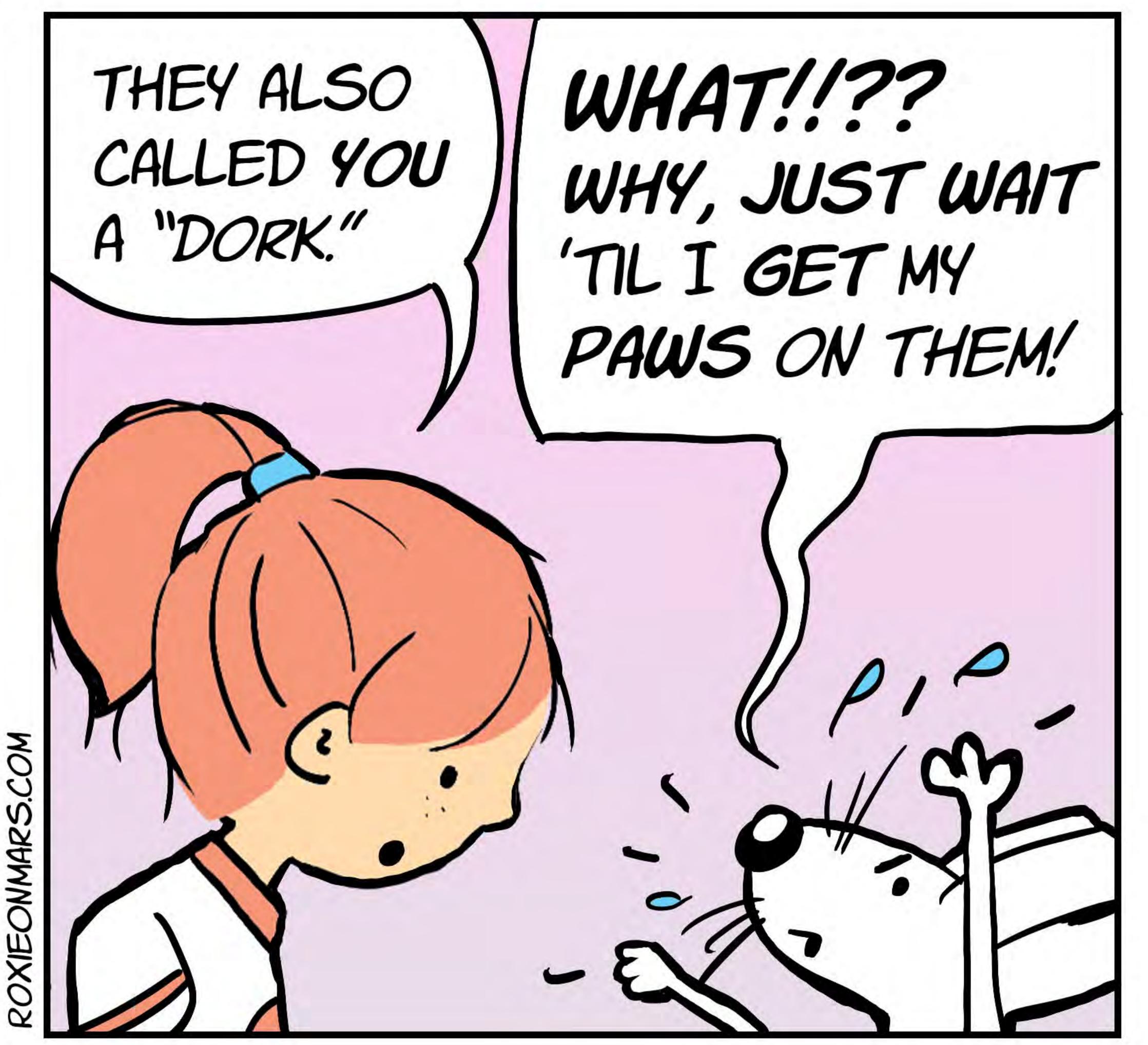




DON'T LISTEN TO BULLIES, ROXIE.
THE STOIC EPICTETUS SAID: "DON'T
LET THE FORCE OF AN IMPRESSION
CARRY YOU AWAY."



BUT... THEY RELAX, ROXIE. IT'S CALLED ME NOT IMPORTANT. A "DORK." NEXT TIME, JUST CALMLY QUOTE THEM EPICTETUS!

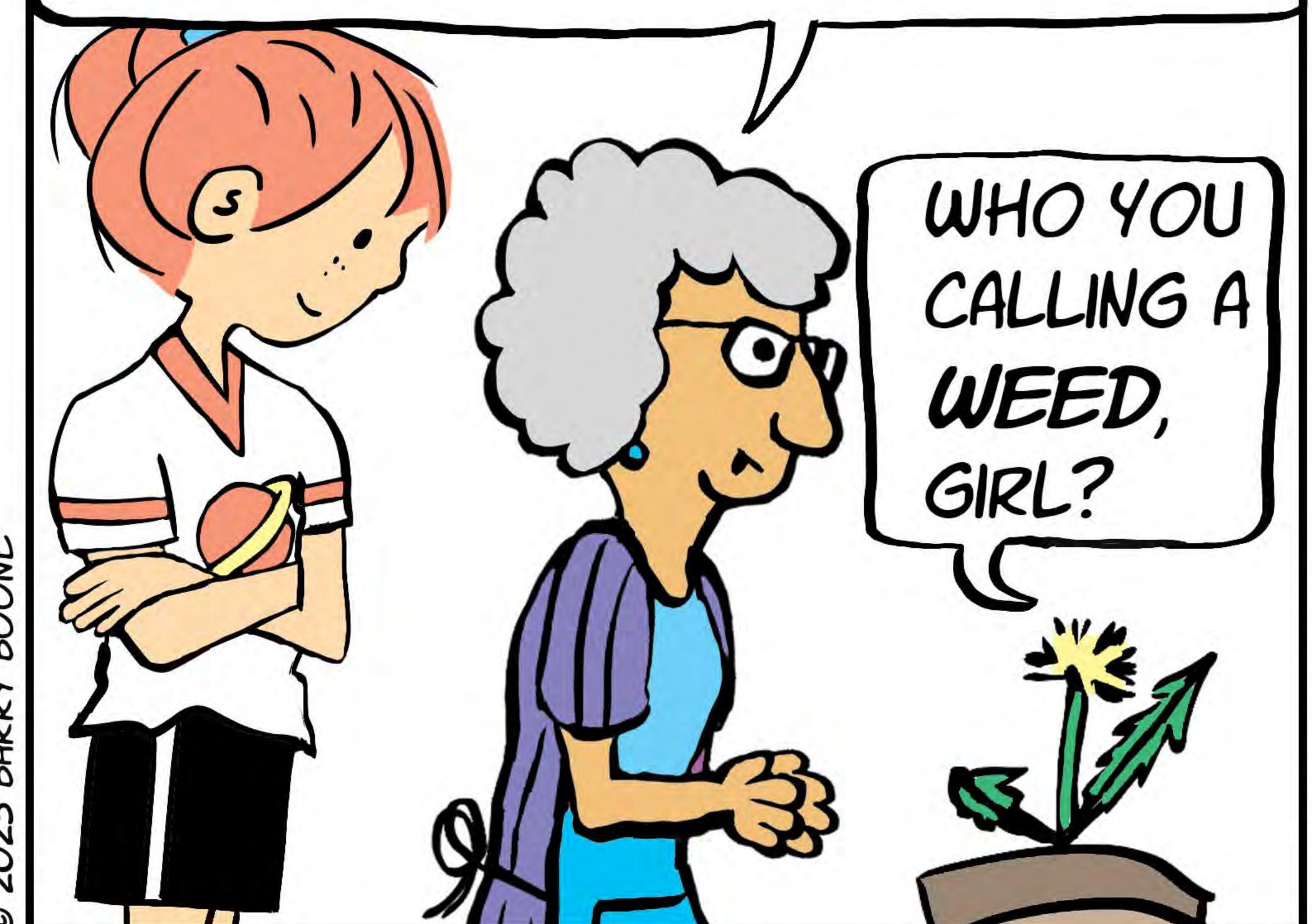


I TRIED TO GROW A FLOWER, ROBOTIC IT'S A BEAUTIFUL, UNDERRATED, GRANDMA, BUT I ONLY GREW A WEED!

> A DANDELION IS A FLOWER, HONEY.

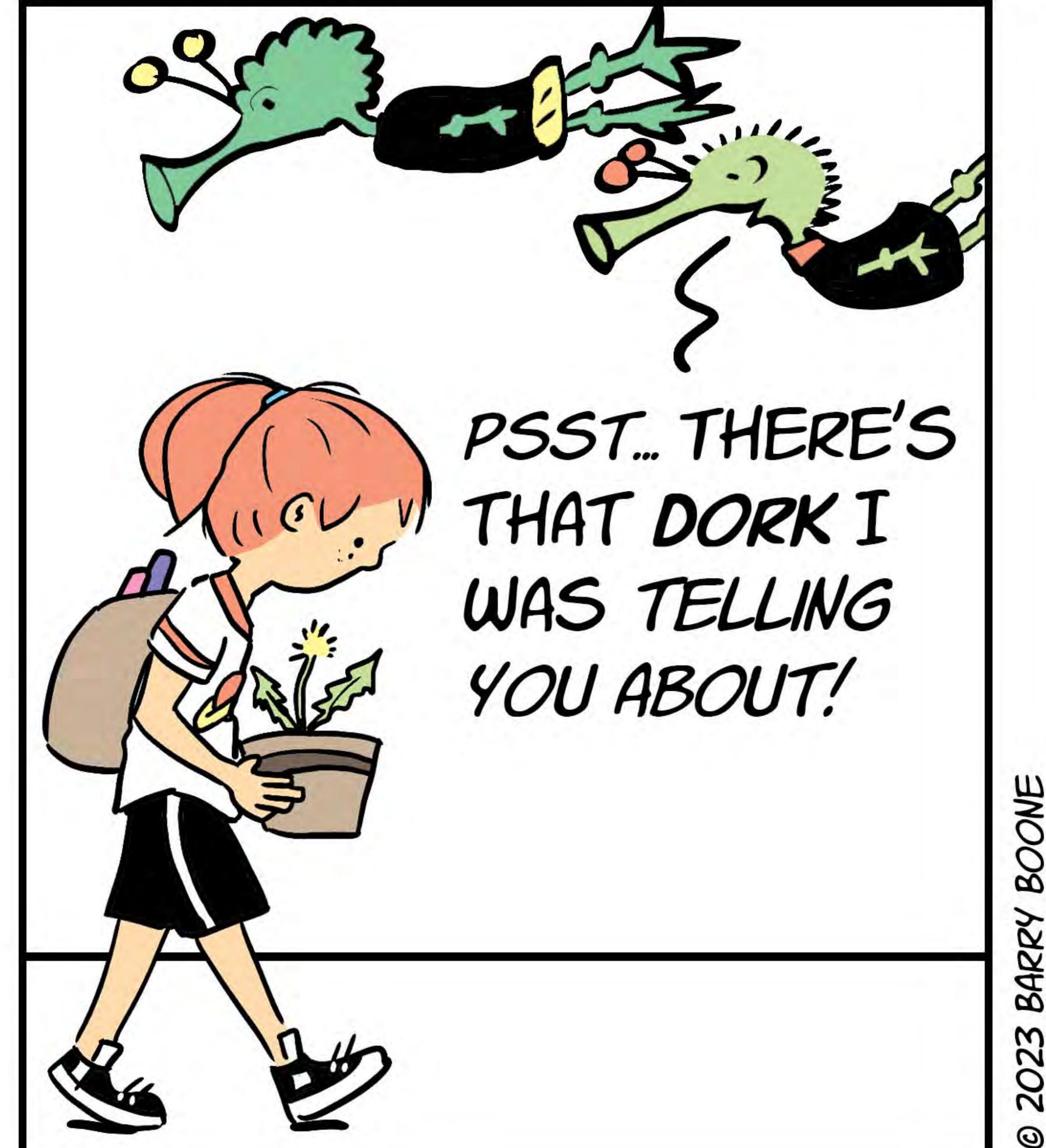


OPTIMISTIC BURST OF SUNSHINE THAT THRIVES DESPITE ALL ODDS.

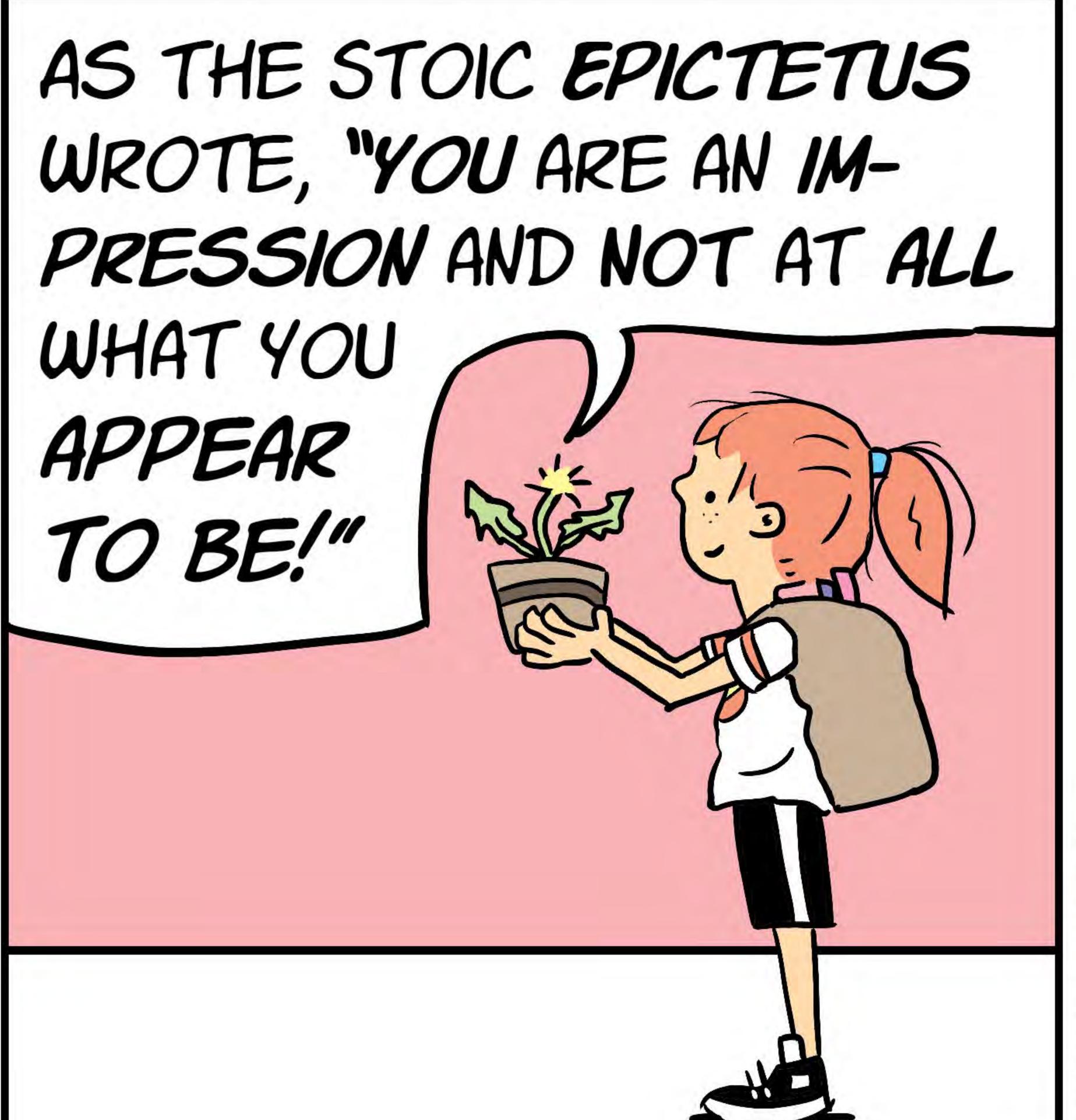


I JUST REALIZED, LITTLE DANDE-LION. YOU'RE MY NEW ROLE MODEL! I'LL TEACH YOU EVERY-THING I KNOW.



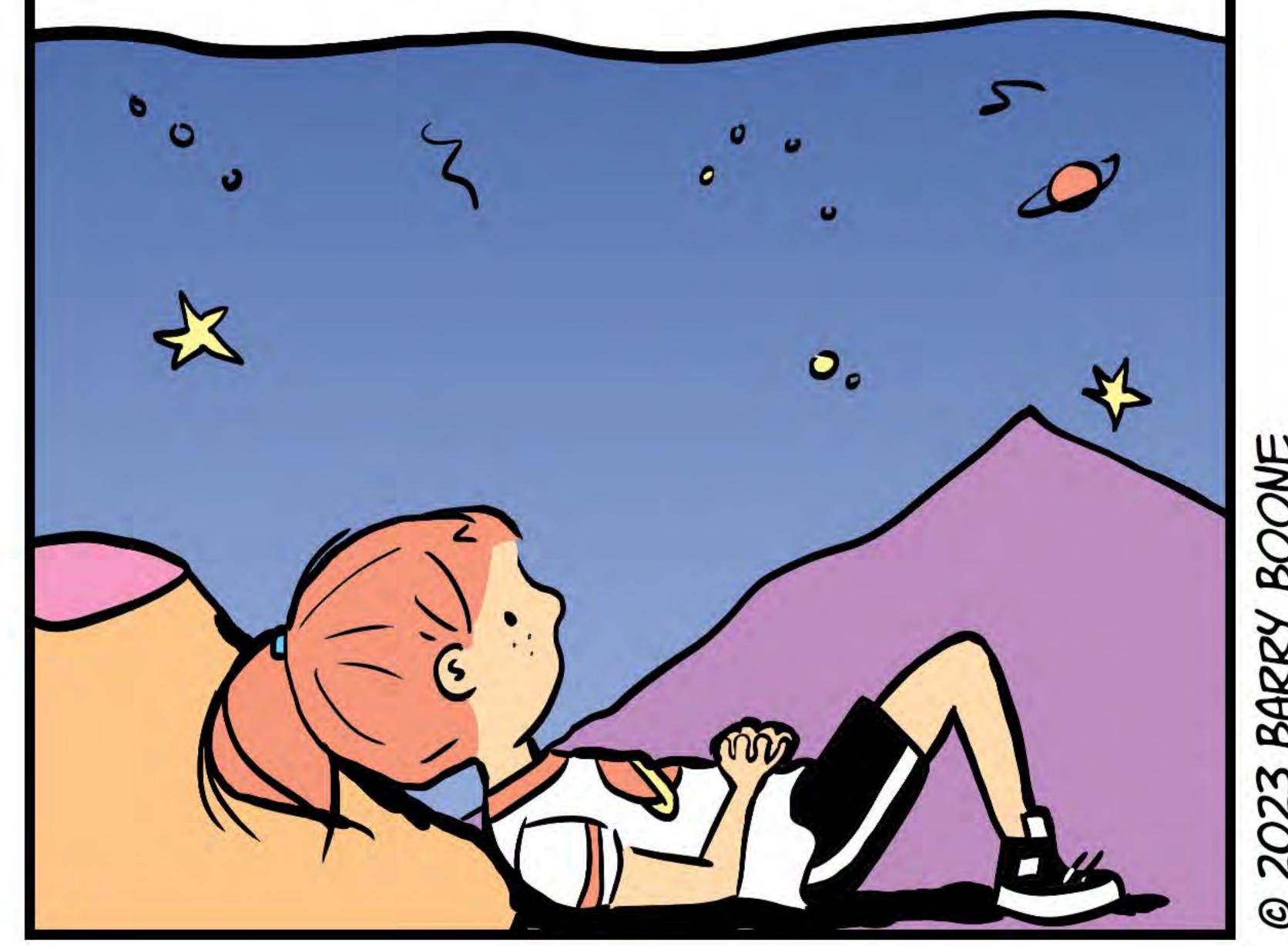




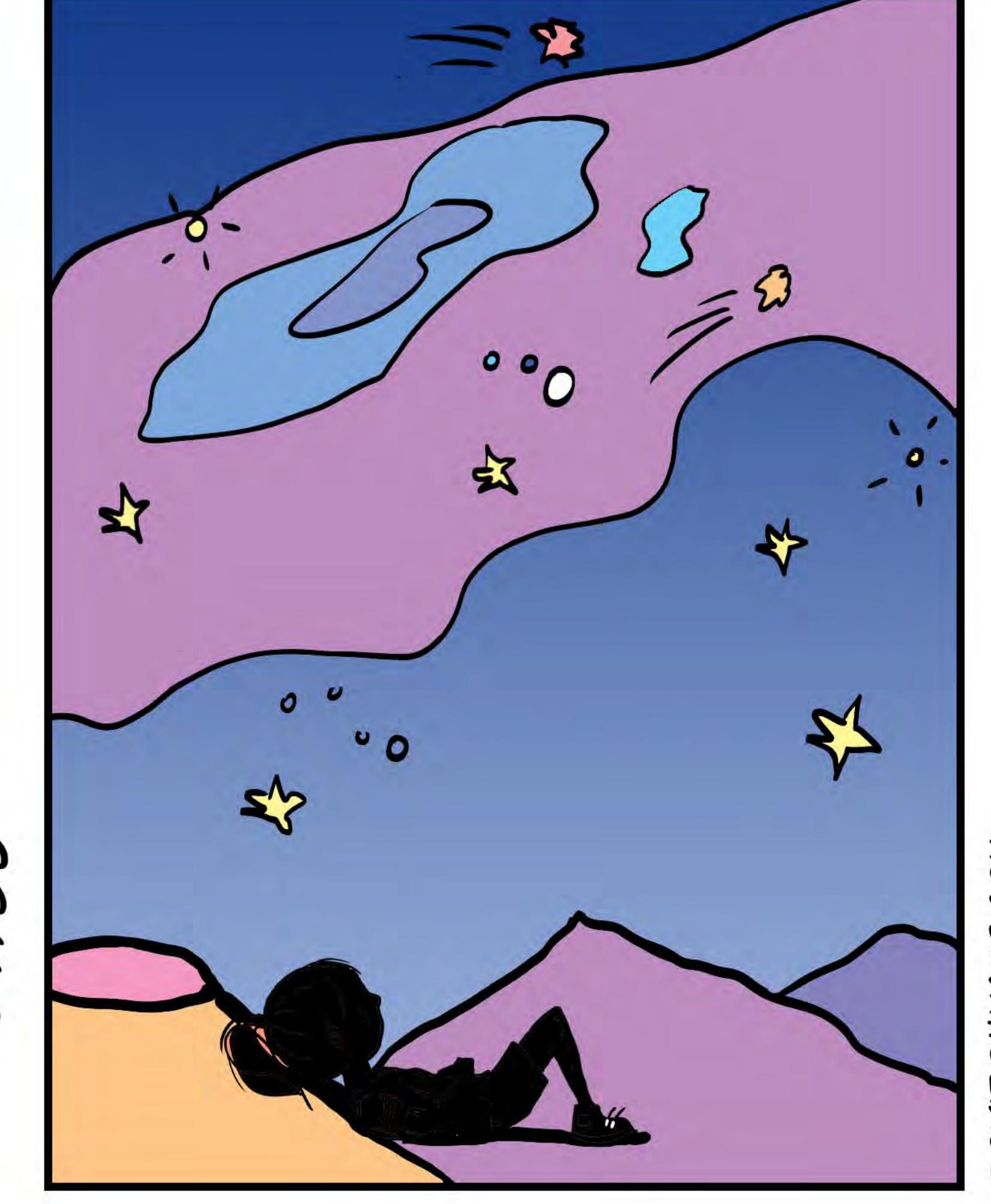




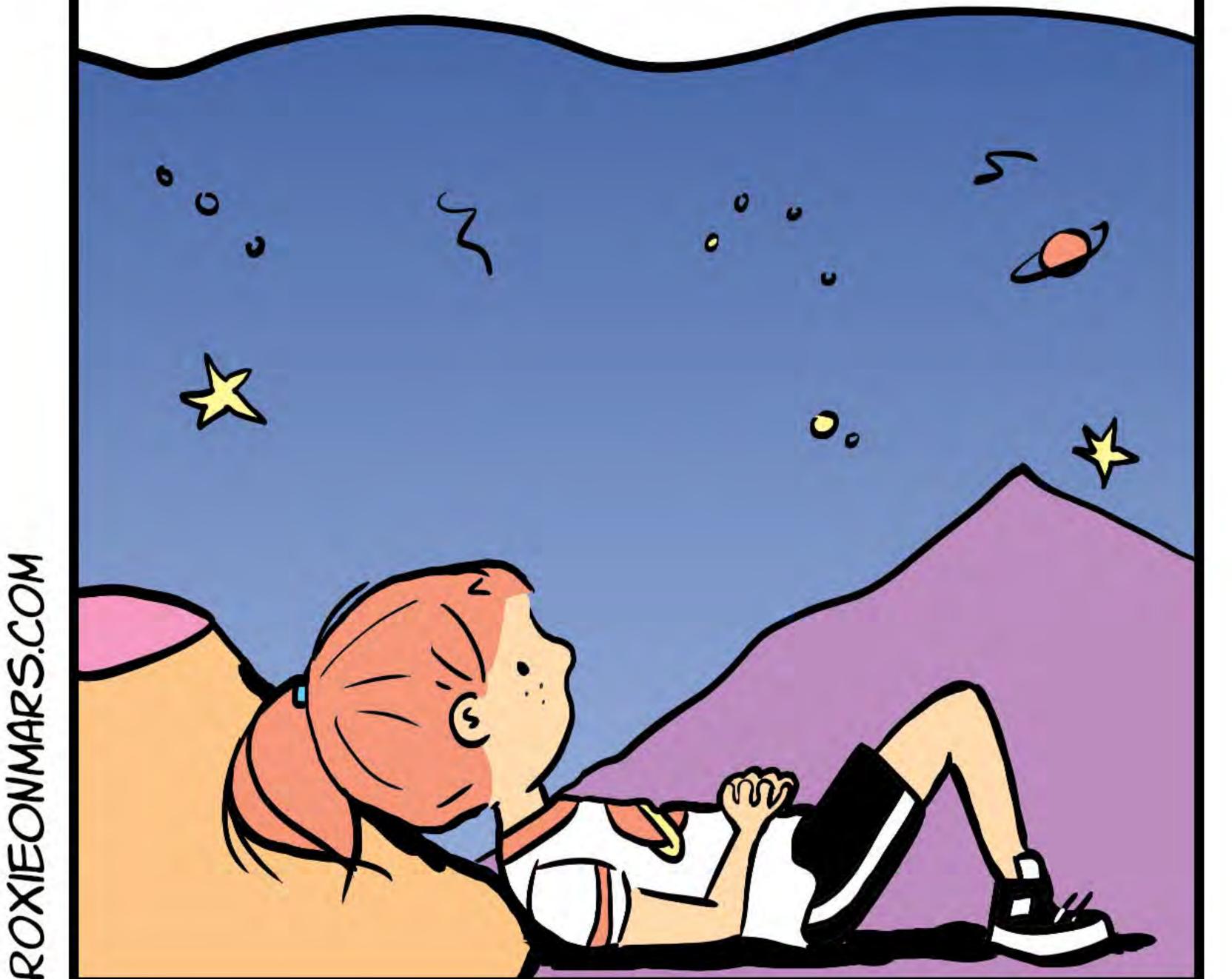
I KEEP TRYING TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. BUT I'M FEELING EVEN MORE ALONE THAN EVER. WHEN I TOLD GRANDMA, SHE SAID:

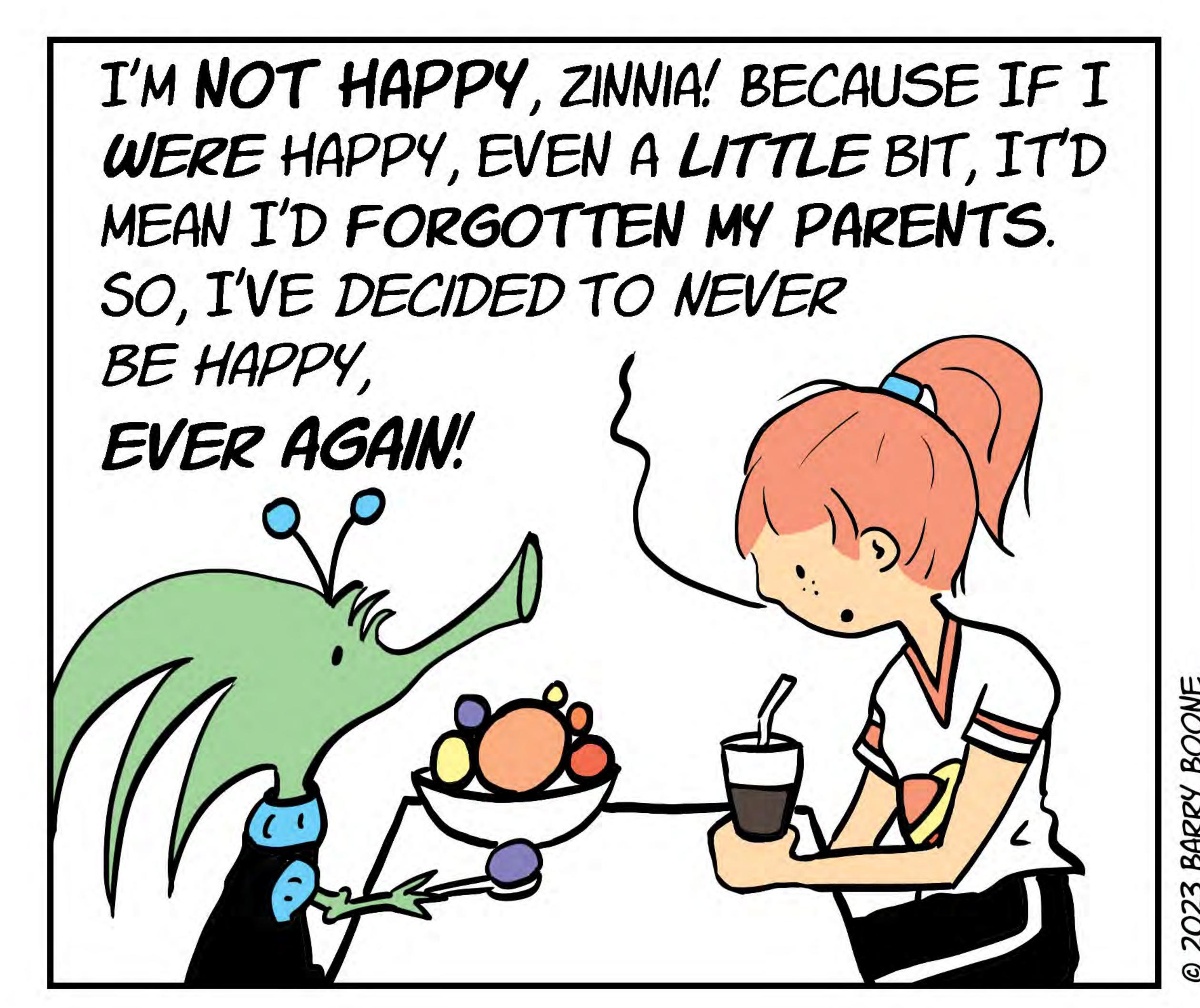


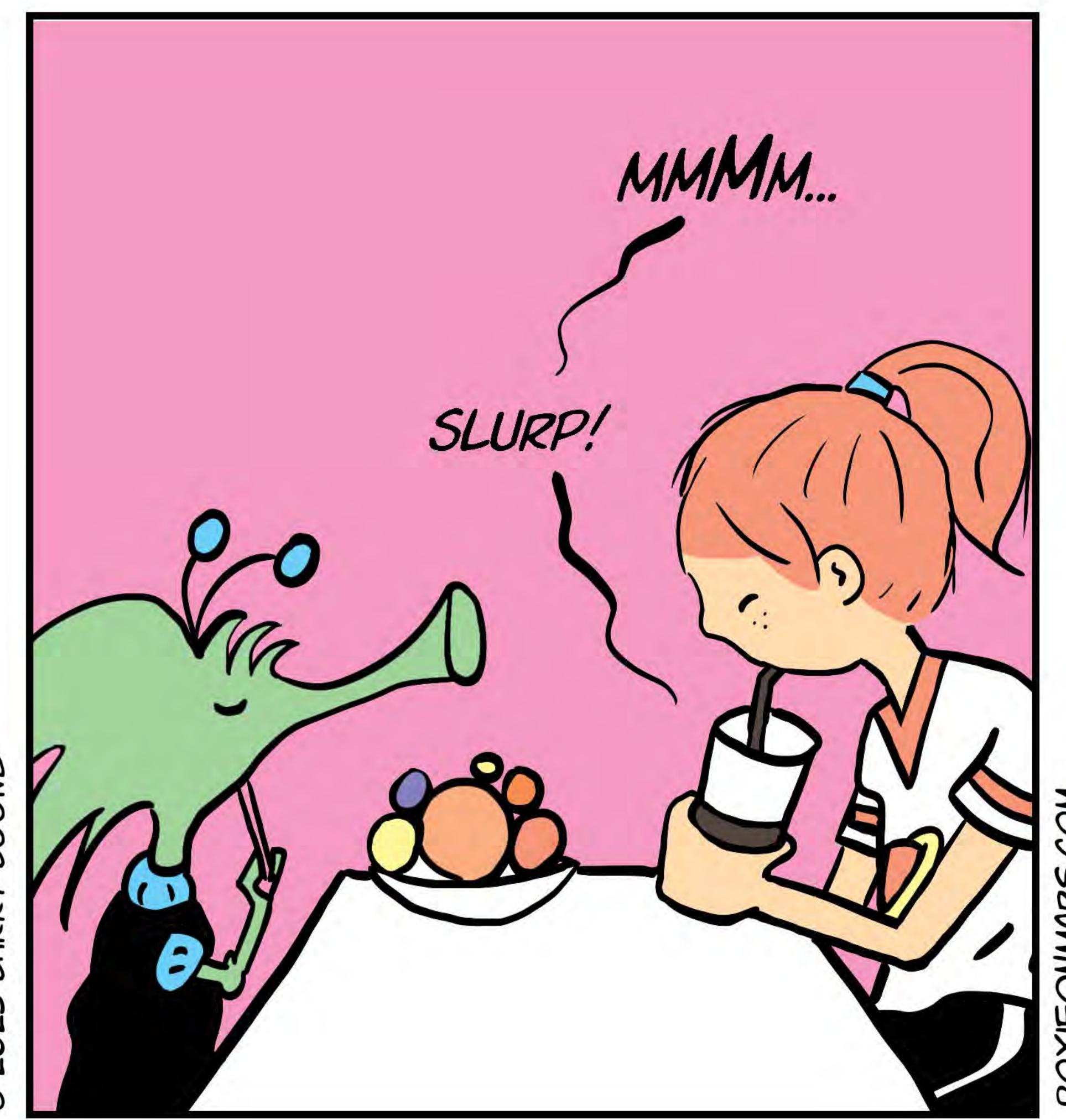
"ROXIE, YOU'RE TRYING SO HARD TO FIT IN WITH MARTIANS. WHY NOT TRY TO FIND THE BEST THAT YOU ARE



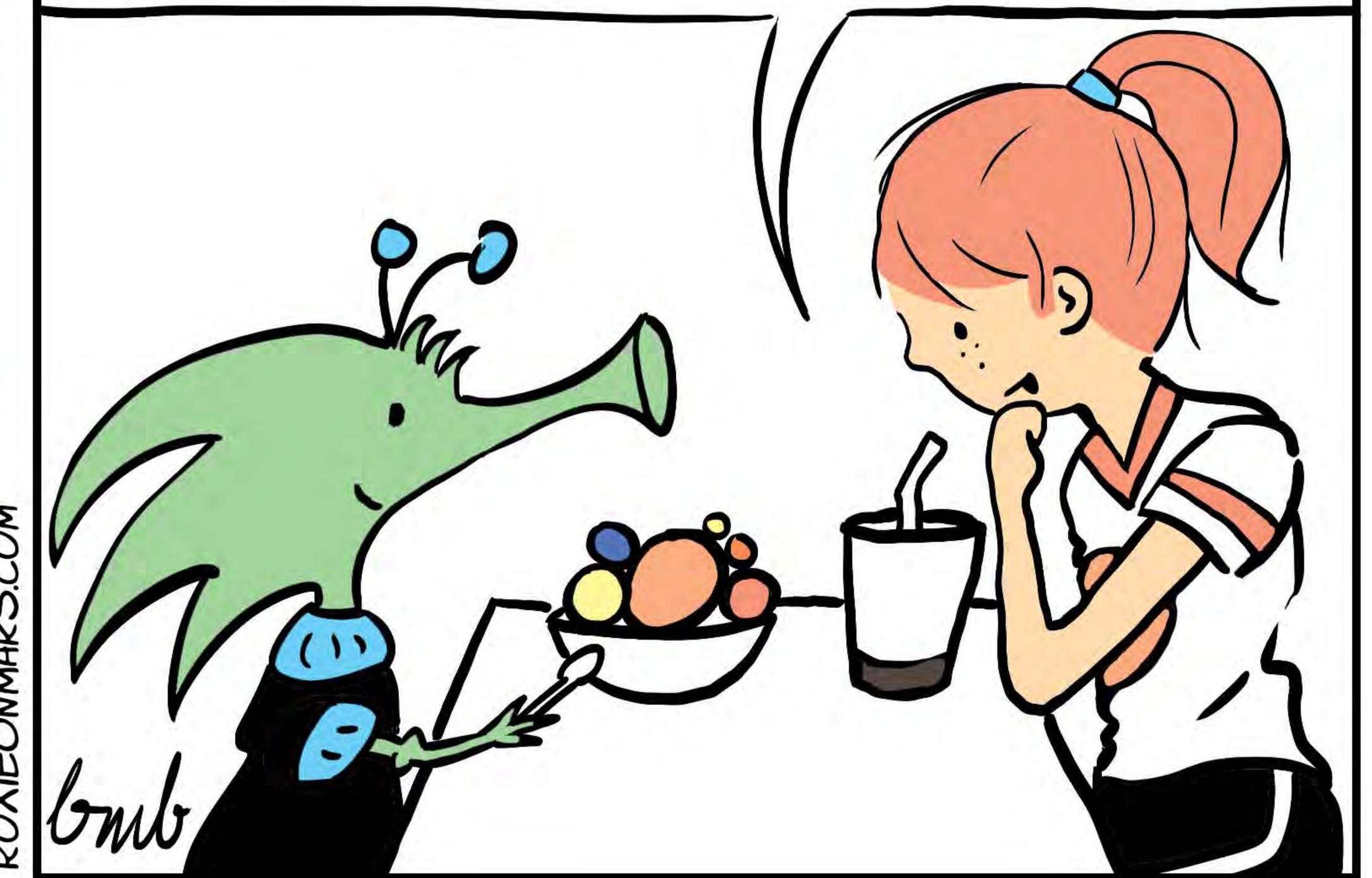
GRANDMAS CAN SAY THE SIMPLEST THINGS AND STILL GIVE YOU A LOT TO THINK ABOUT...



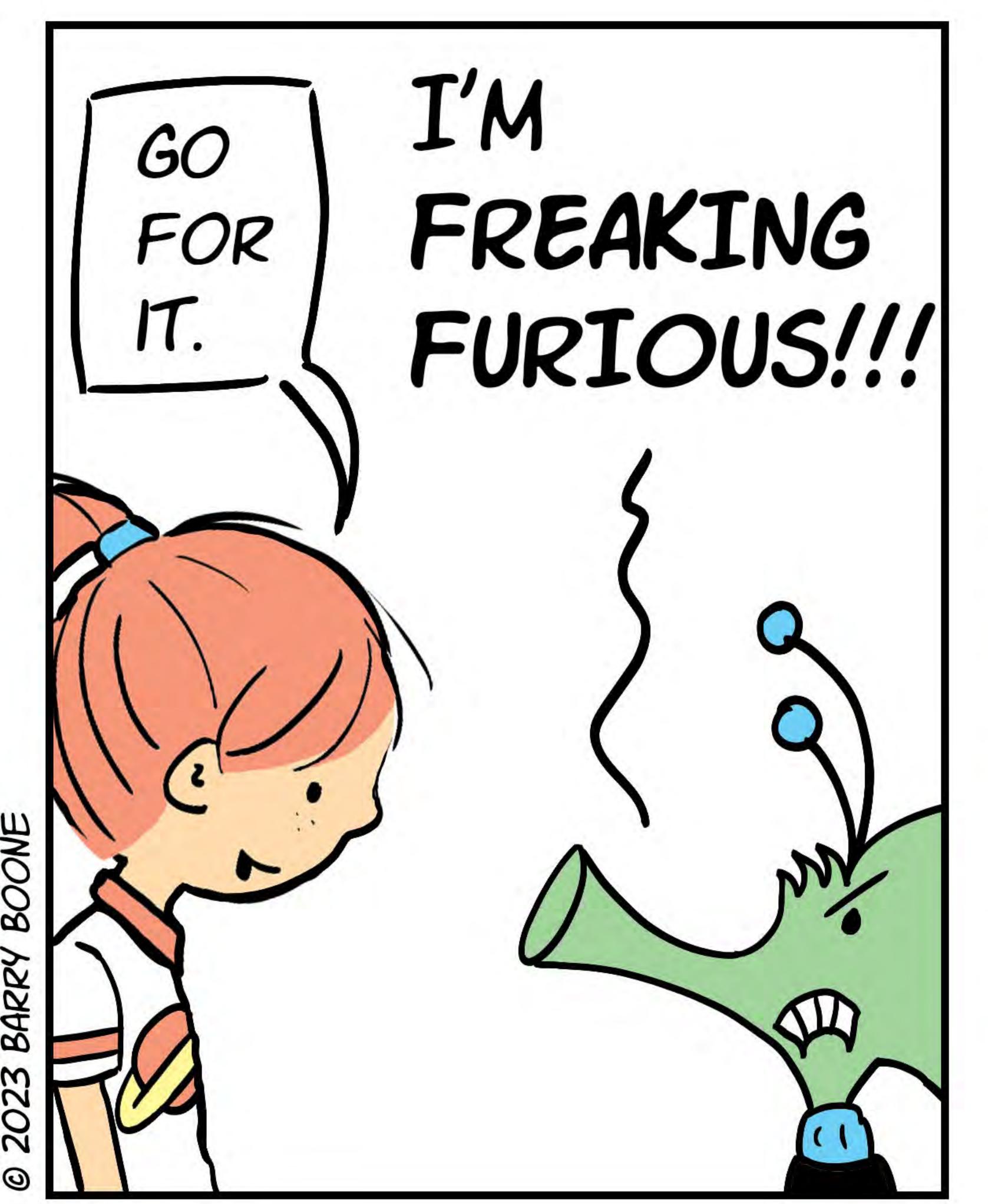




OH, ZINNIA. IT'S HARD TO STAY NOT HAPPY WHEN YOU'RE DRINKING A CHOCOLATE MILKSHAKE.

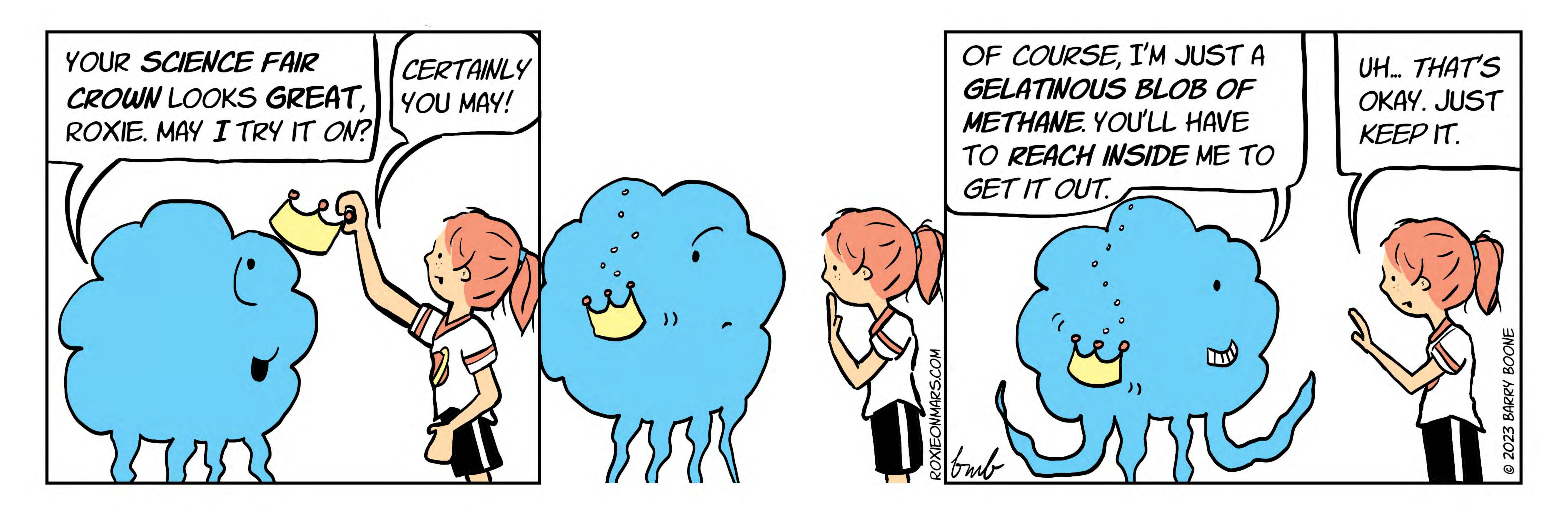


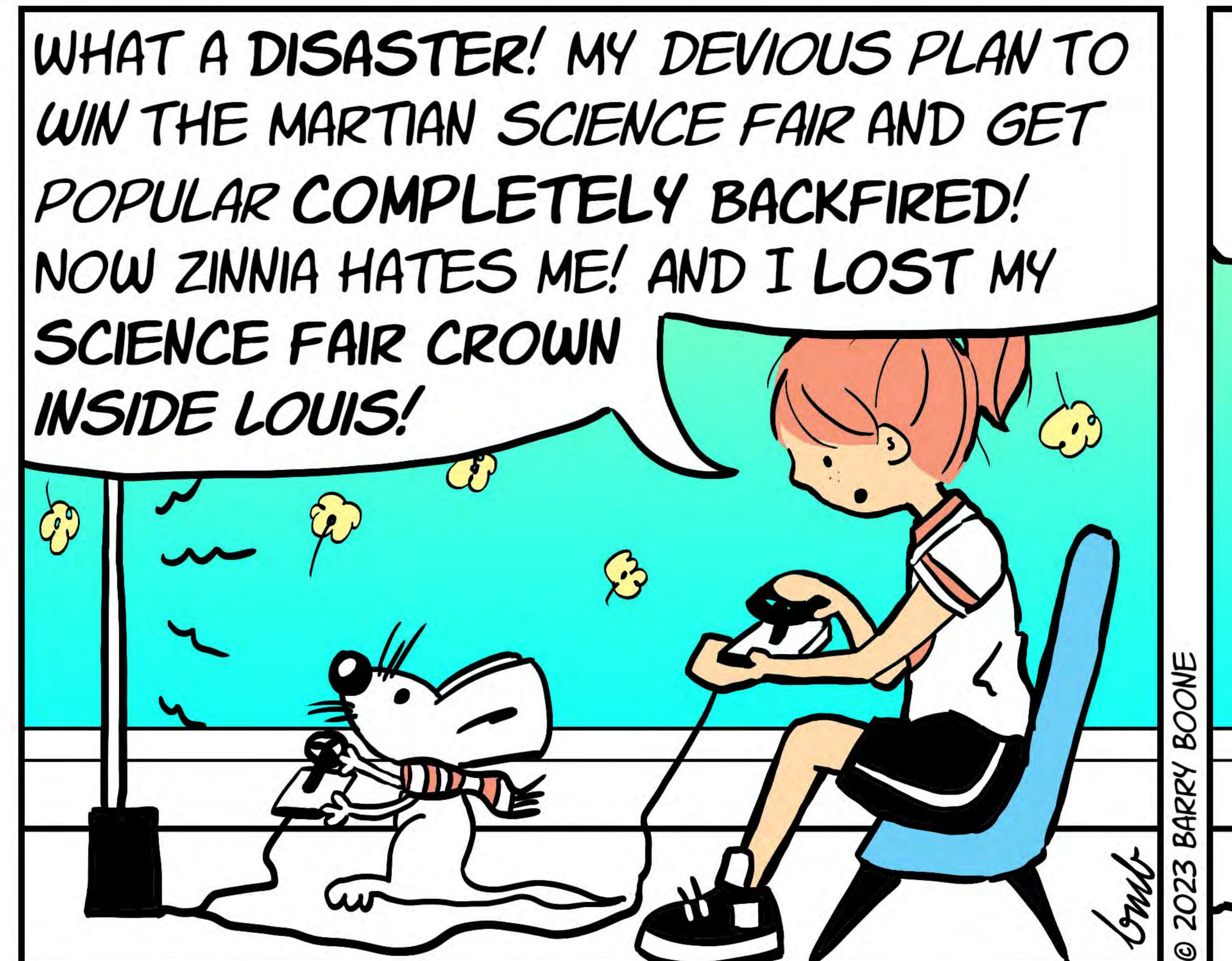


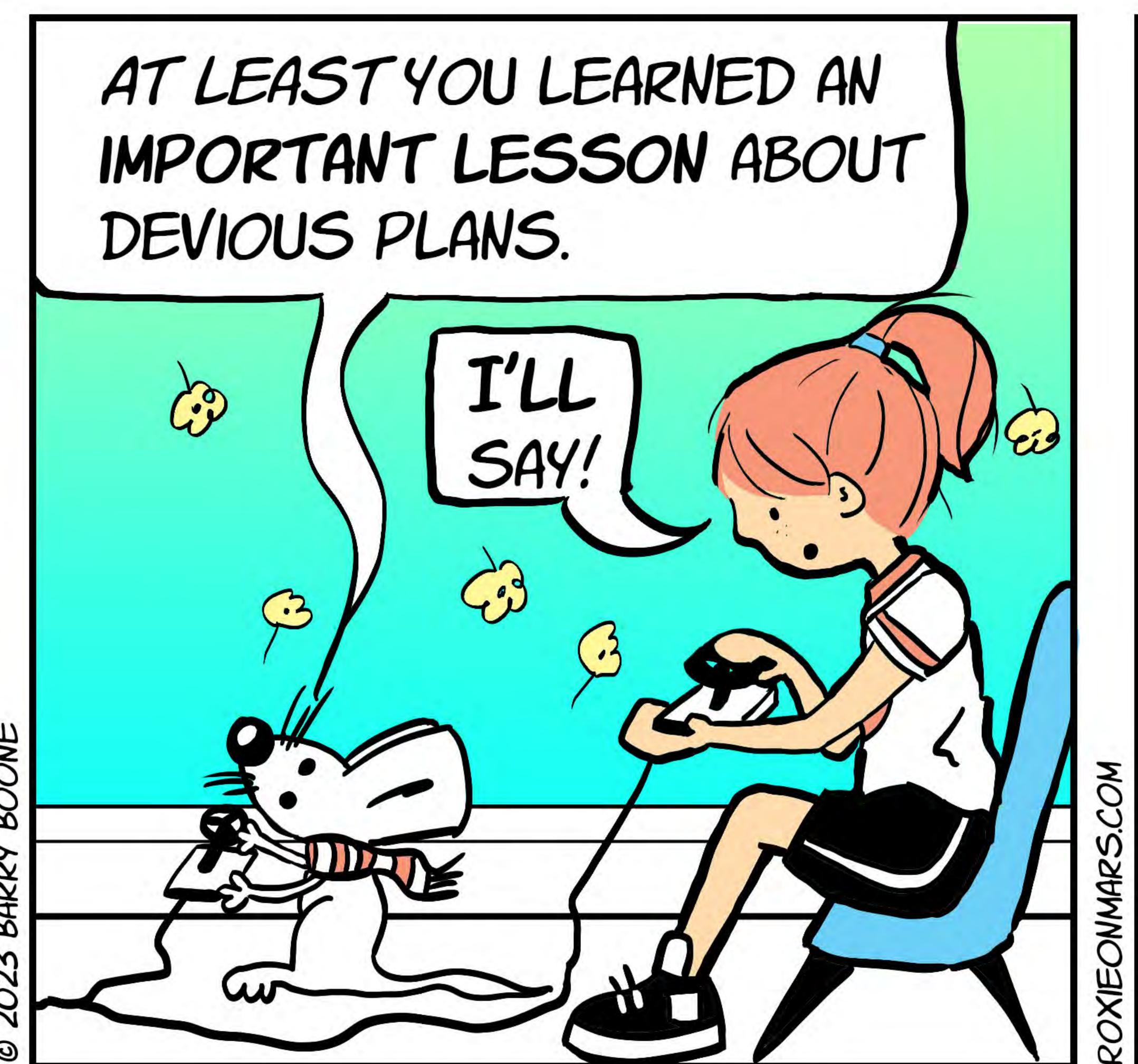










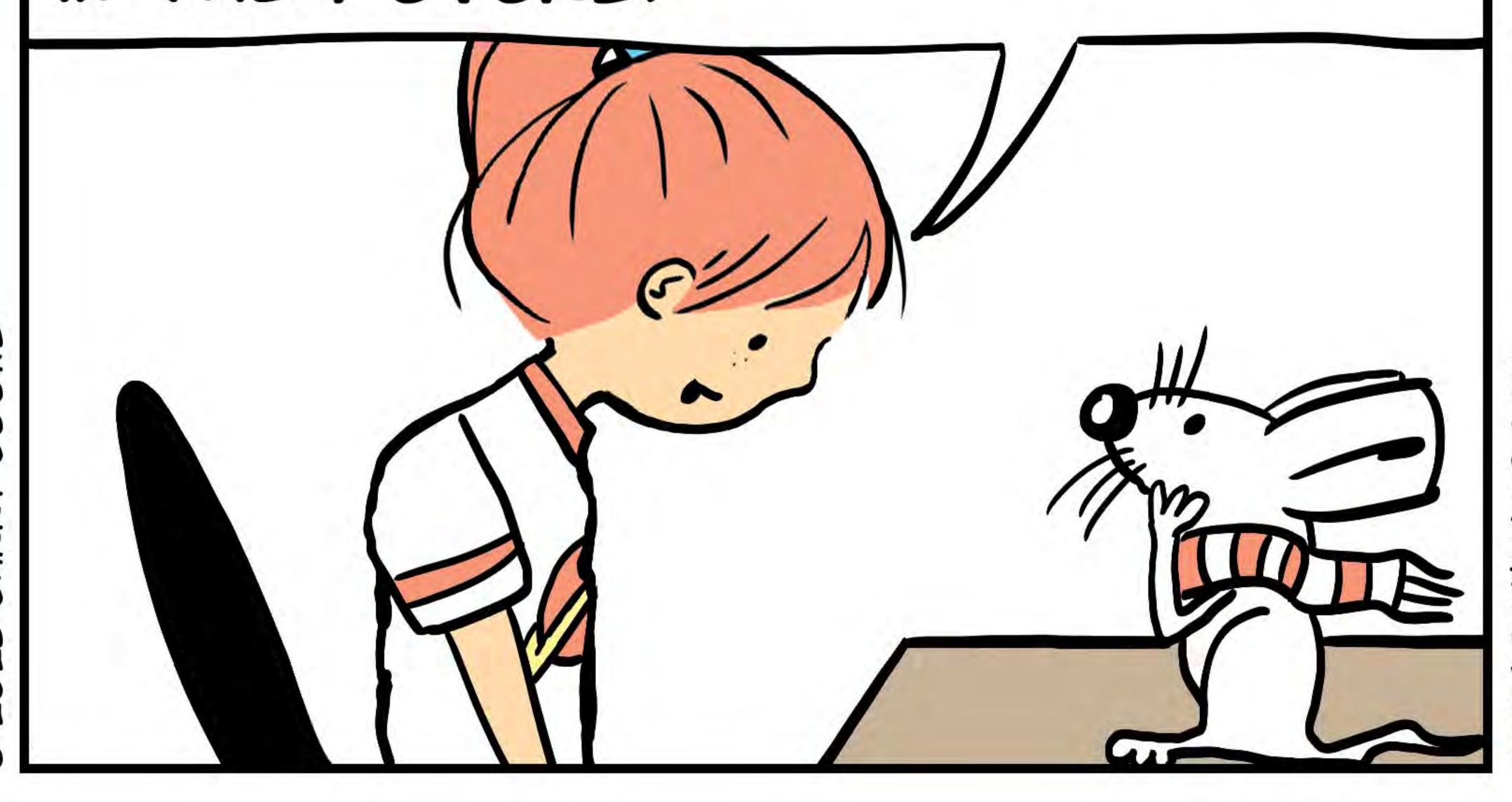




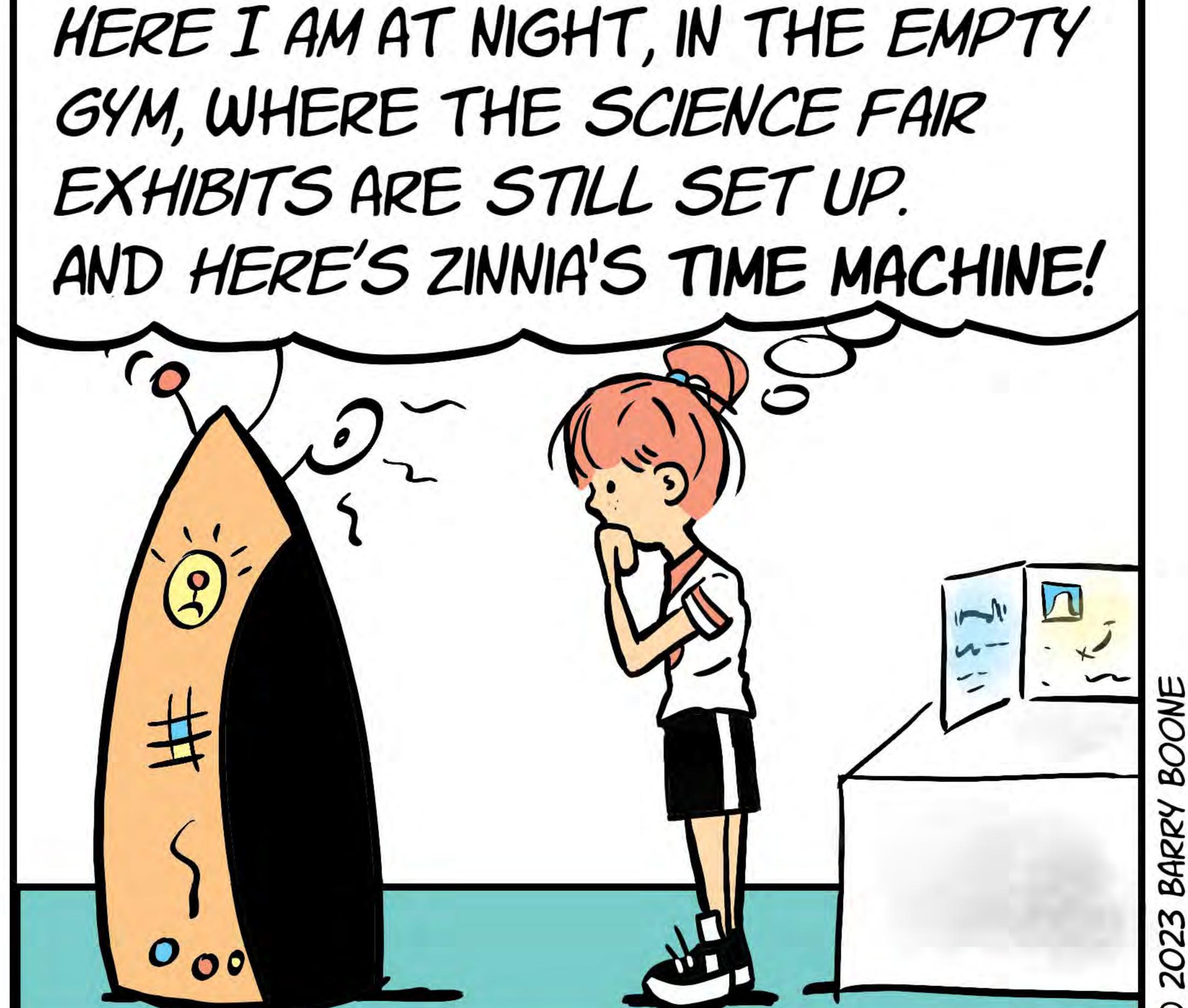
I'VE MADE A NEW DEVIOUS PLAN!
I'M GOING TO GO BACK IN TIME AND
NOT FALL INTO THE WARP BUBBLE.
THEN I WILL NEVER WIN THE
SCIENCE FAIR IN THE FIRST PLACE!

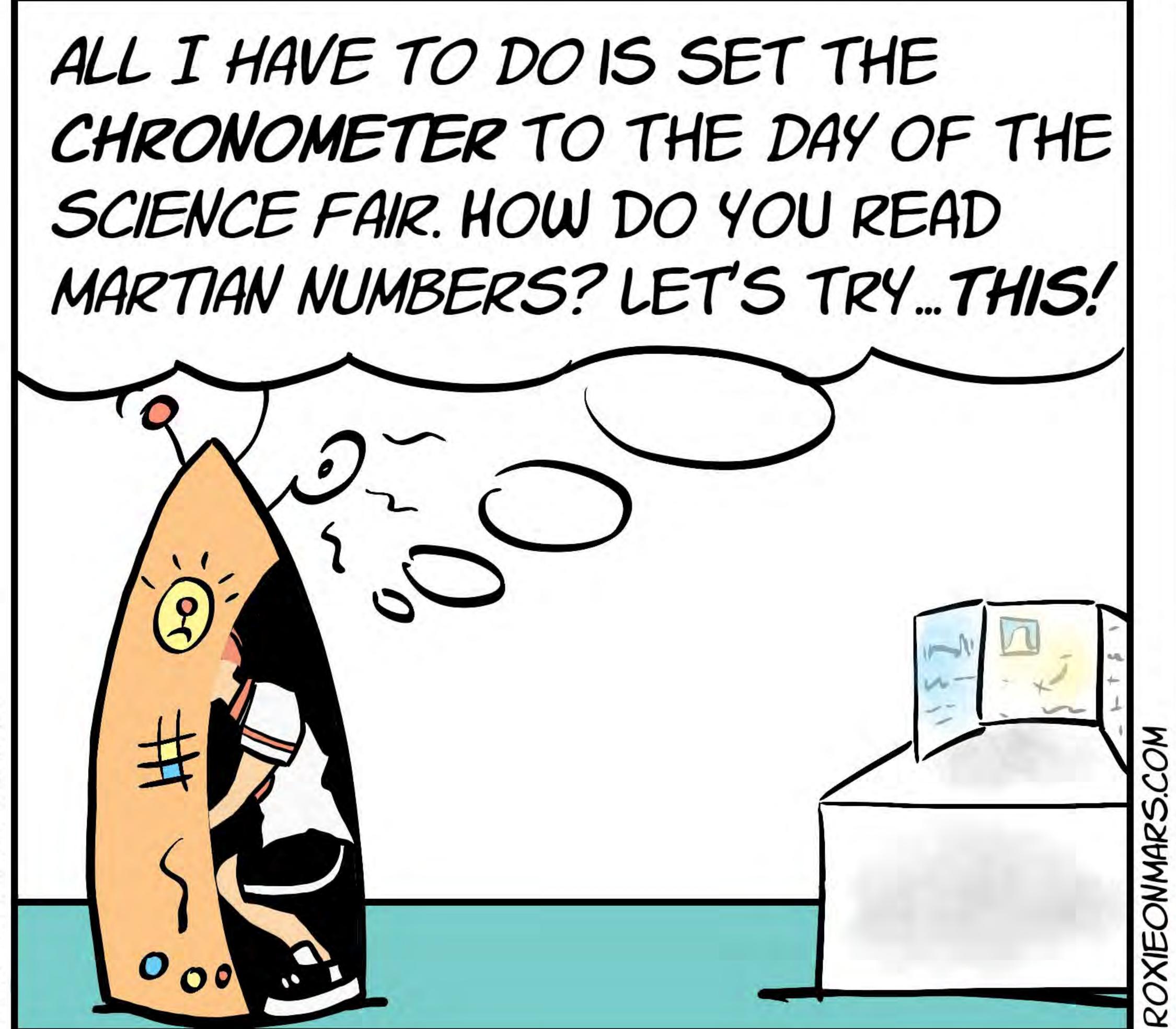


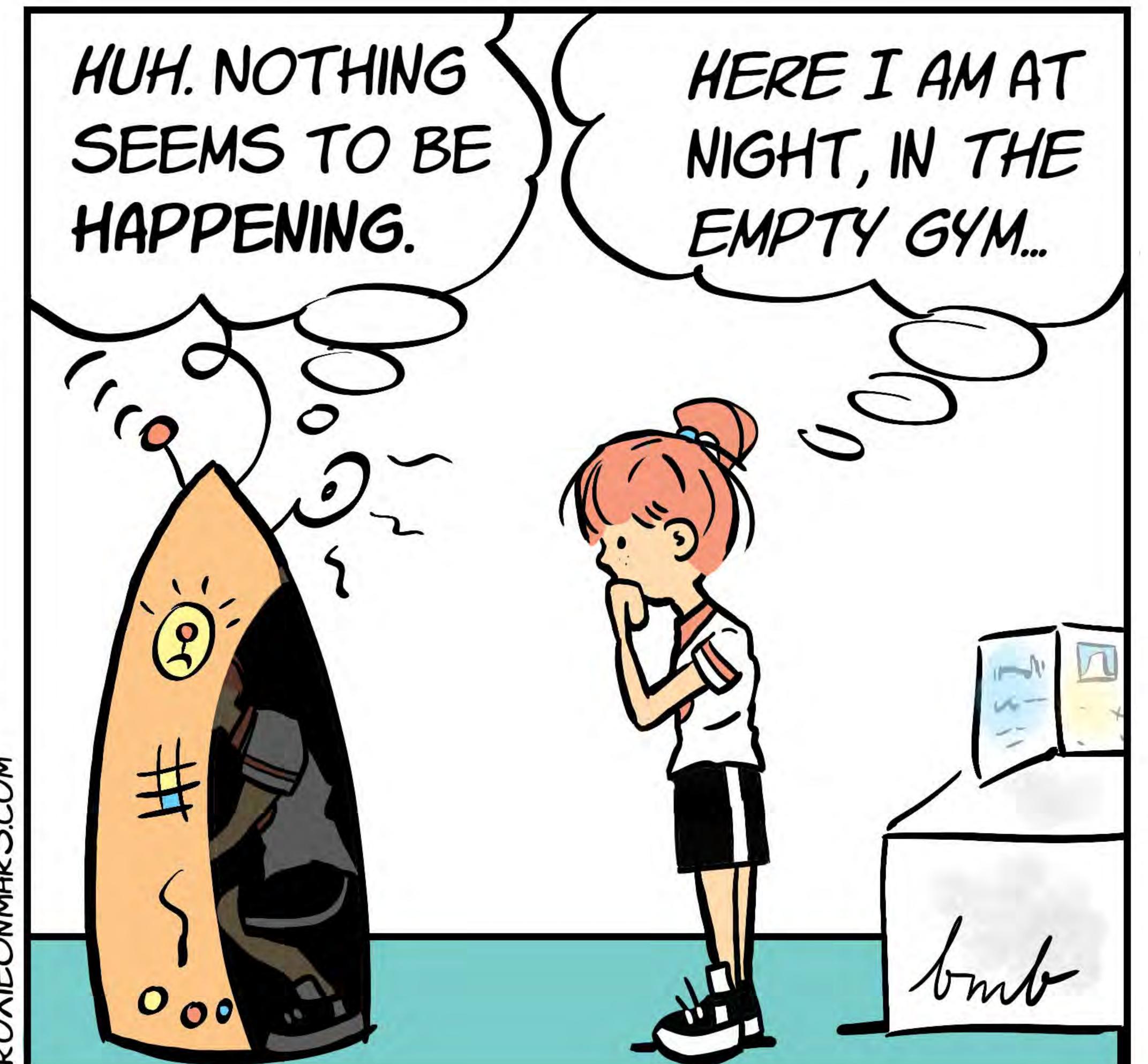
ACTUALLY, IT'S LESS COMPLICATED!
BECAUSE BY TOMORROW IT WILL BE
YESTERDAY, AND EVERYTHING WILL
BE WHAT IT WAS GOING TO BE
INSTEAD OF WHAT IT USED TO BE
IN THE FUTURE!



IT TURNS OUT THE MOST DIFFI-CULT PART OF THIS WHOLE PLAN IS FIGURING OUT WHAT VERB TENSE TO USE.

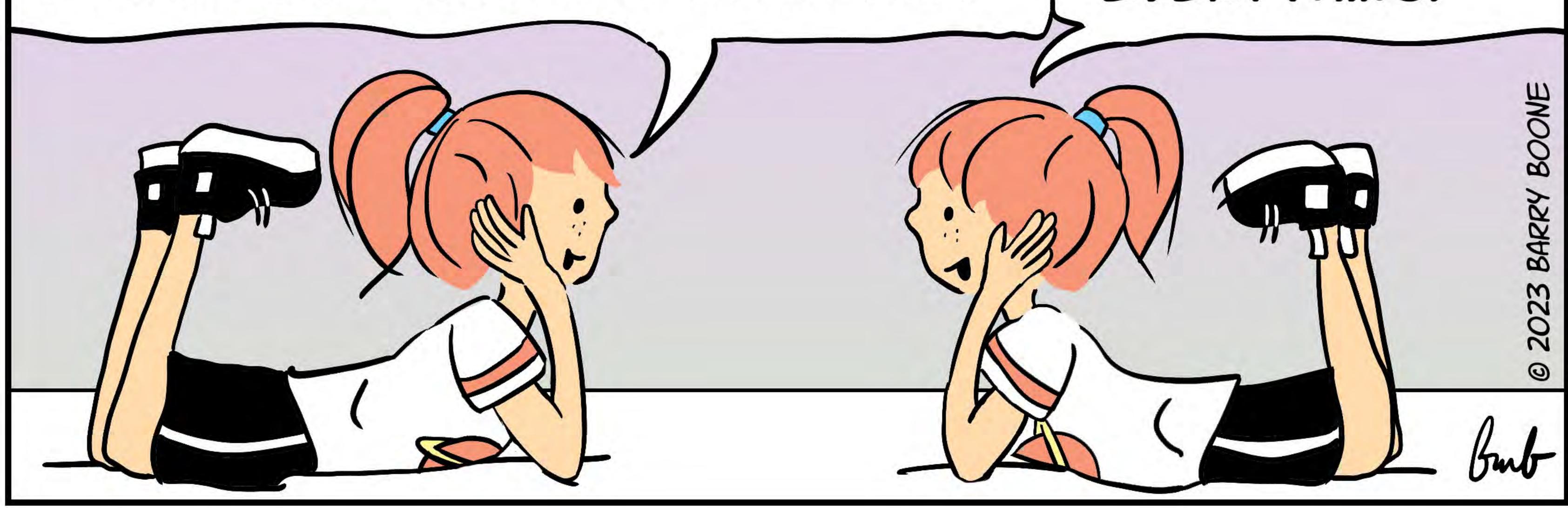


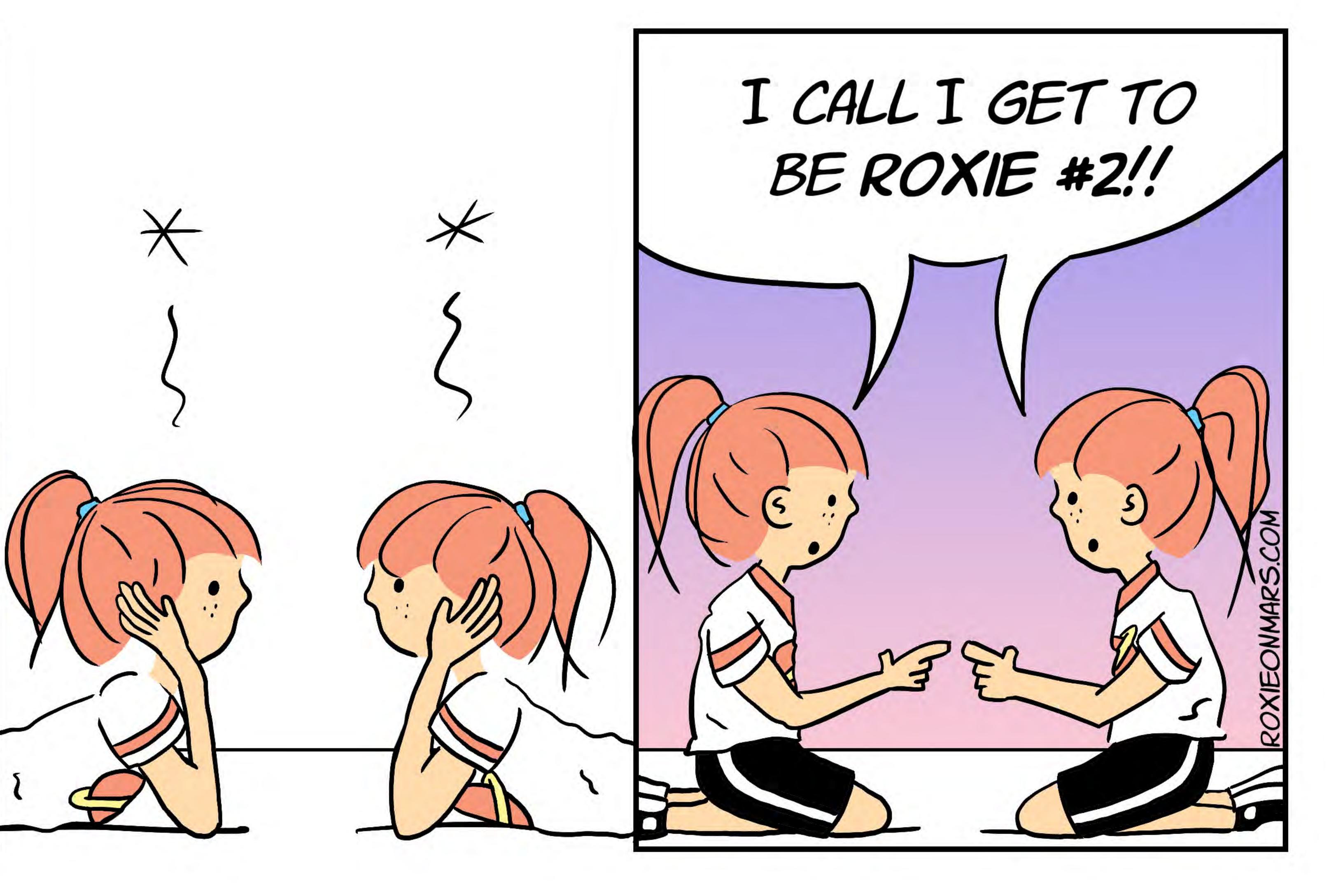


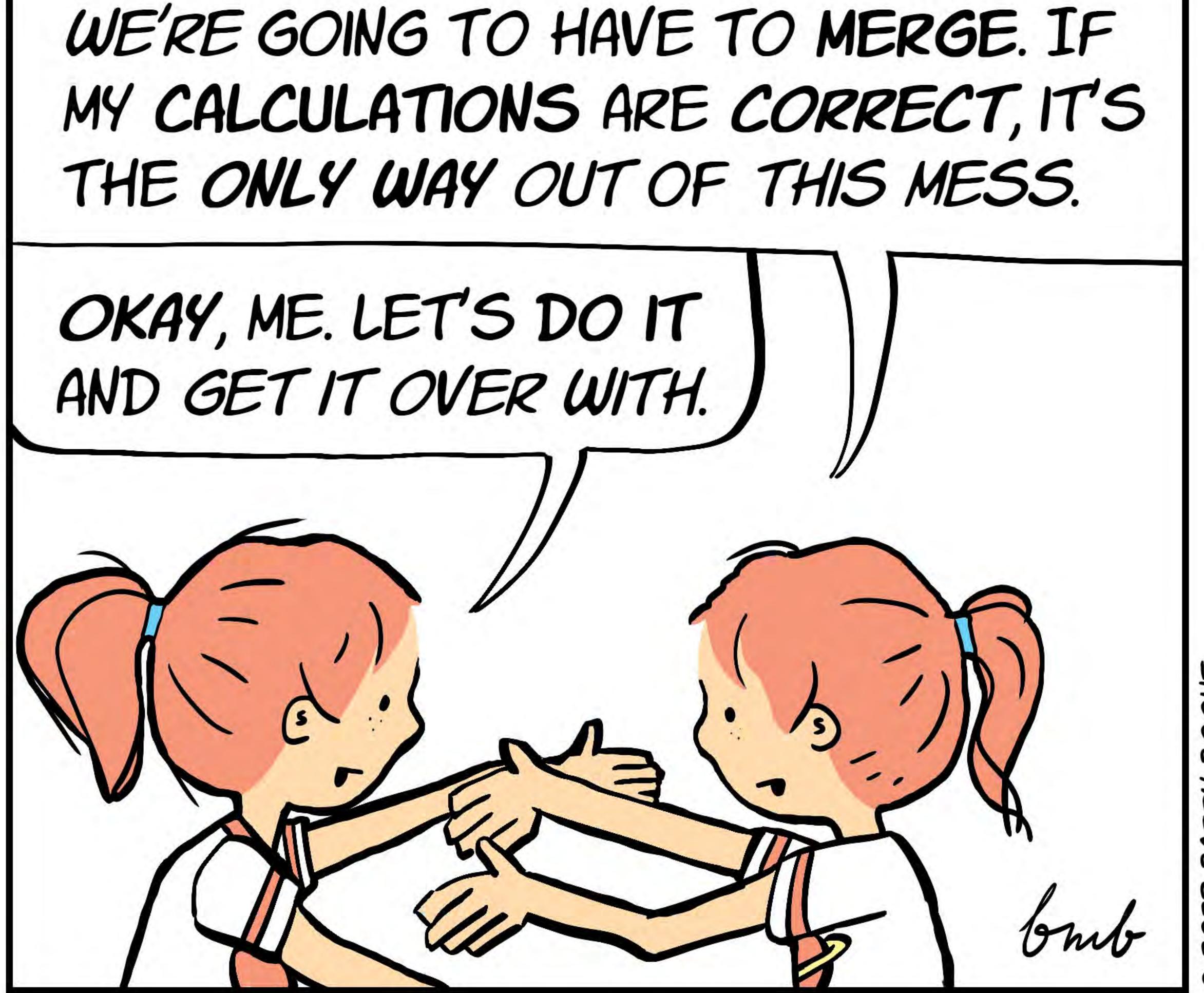


AS WEIRD AS THIS IS, THIS STILL ALL FEELS FAMILIAR! BECAUSE EVER SINCE EARTH BLEW UP, I'VE FELT LIKE TWO ROXIES ANYWAY. ROXIE #1 IS SAD AND DEPRESSED. ROXIE #2 JUST WANTS TO LAUGH AND HANG OUT WITH ZINNIA.

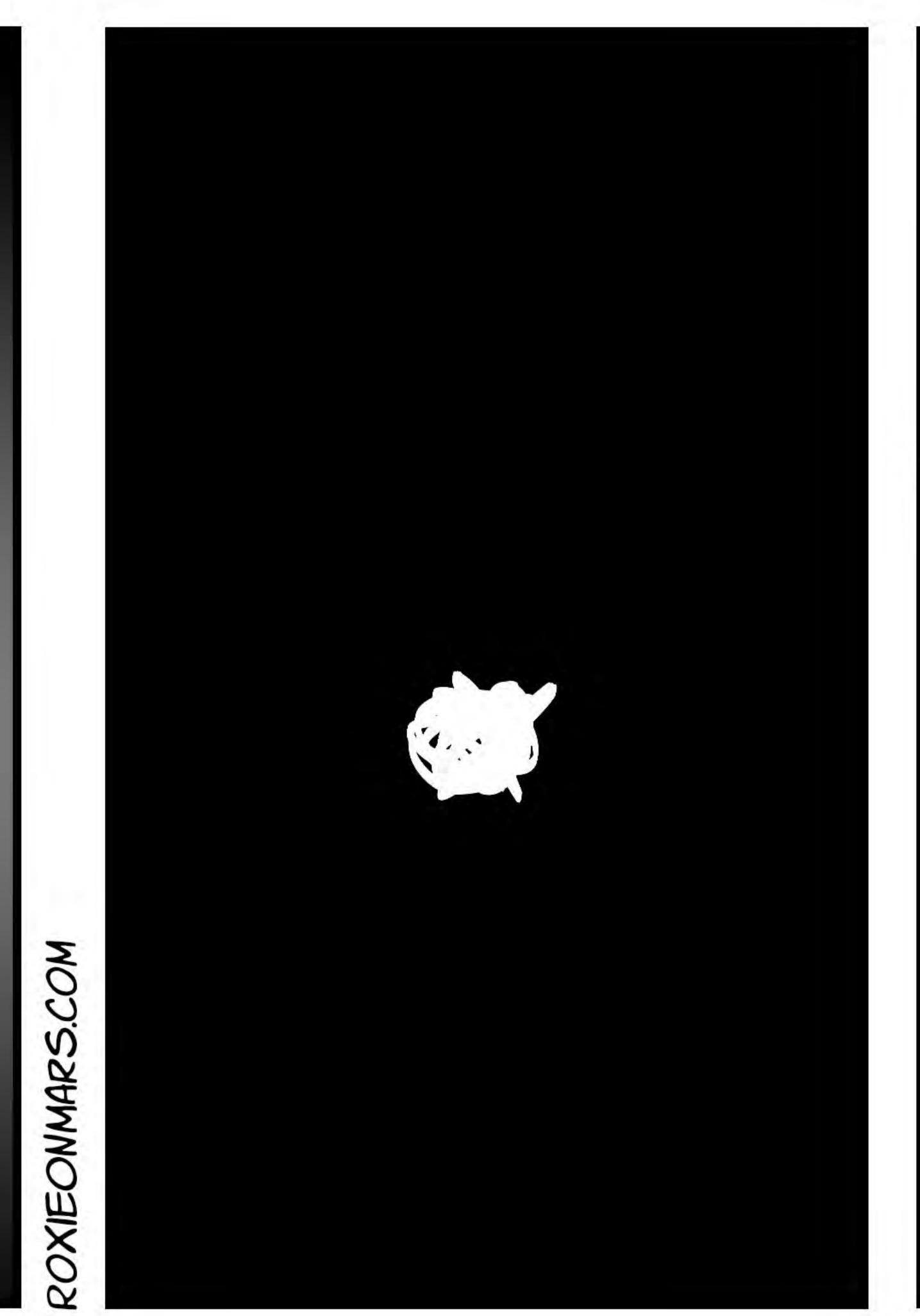
WELL, NOW THAT
THERE REALLY
ARE TWO OF US,
I GUESS THIS
SOLVES
EVERYTHING!



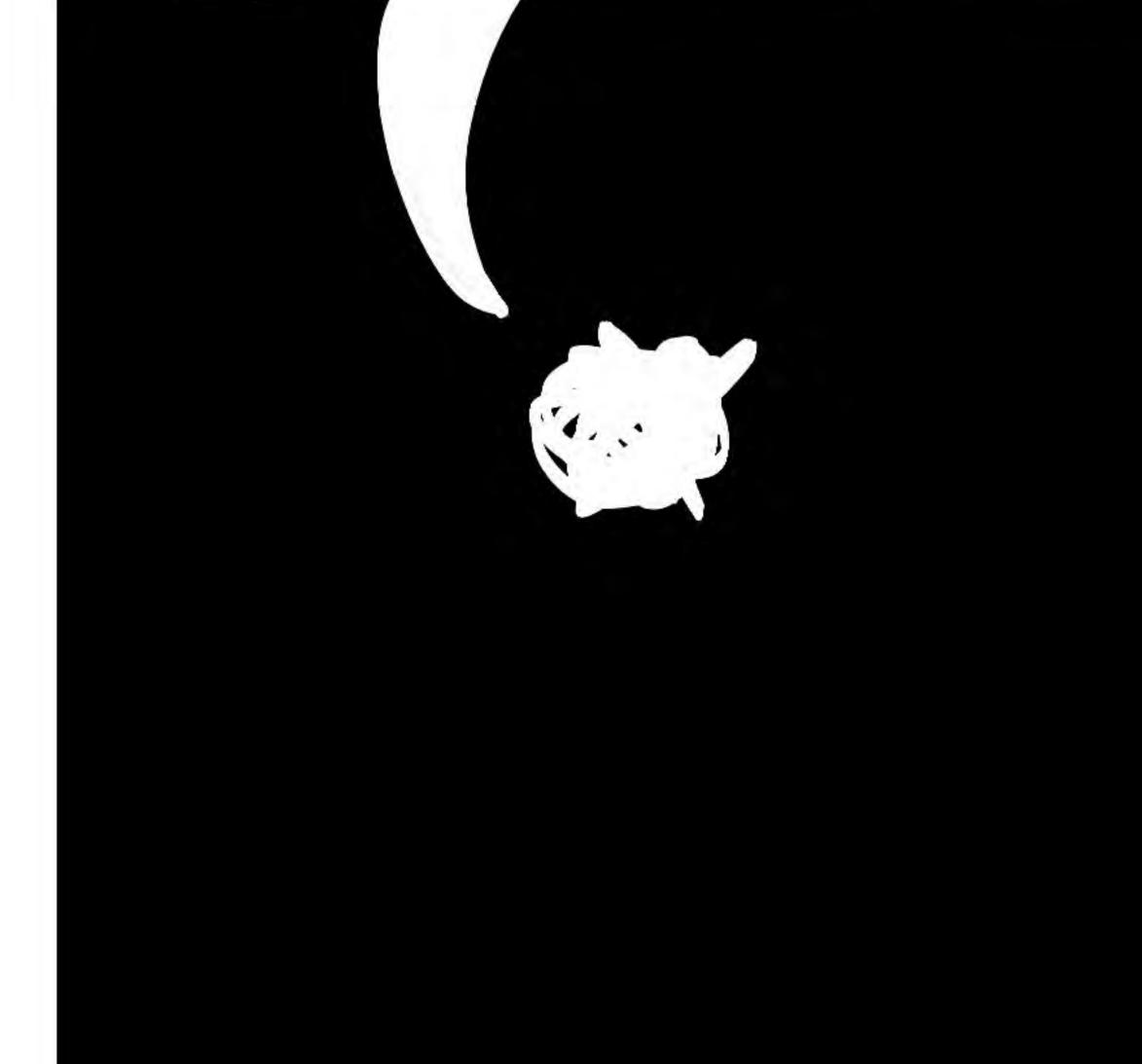








WHAT DO WE DO
IF YOUR CALCULATIONS ARE NOT
CORRECT...?

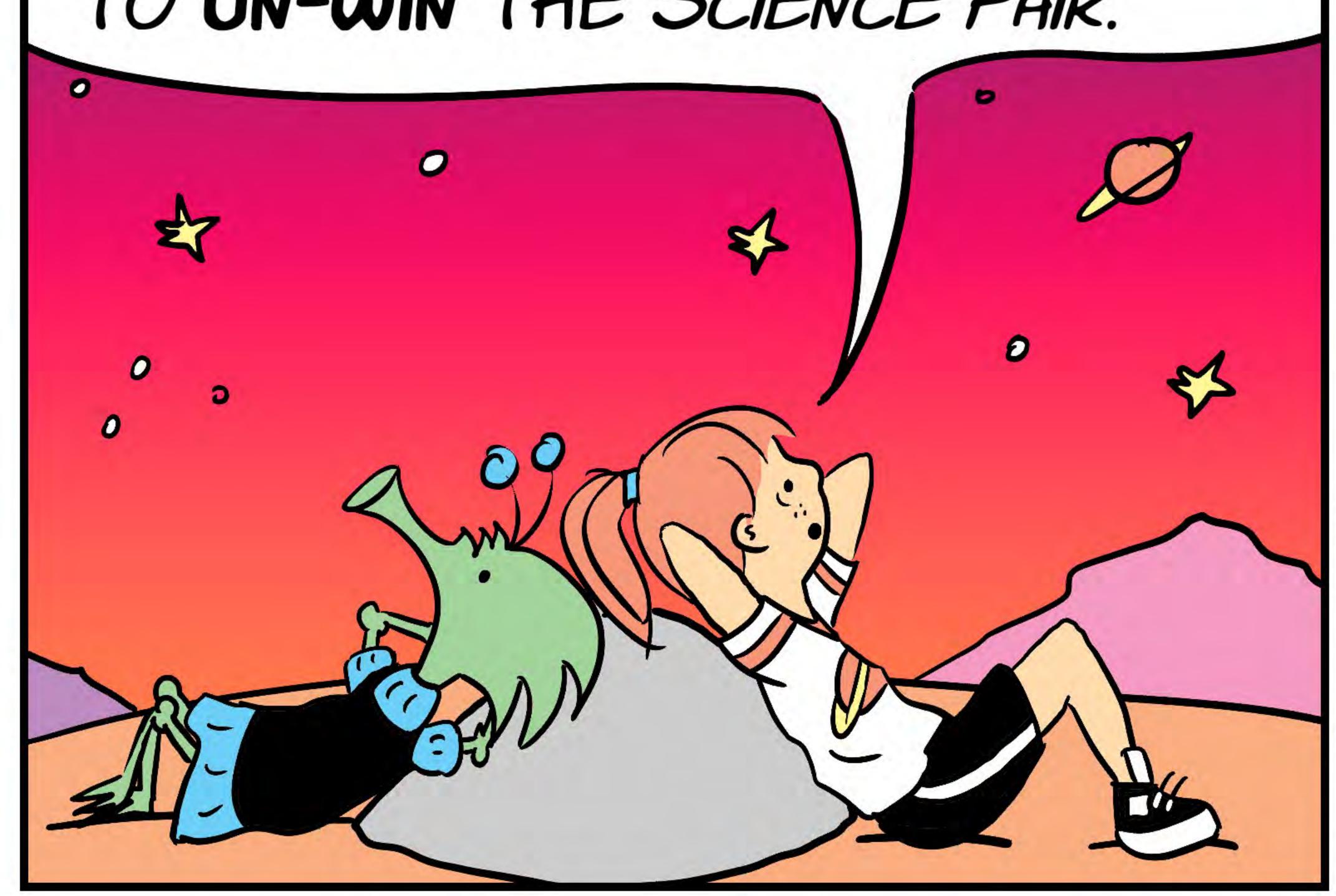


HERE I AM FLOATING IN A
LITTLE PUFF OF SPACETIME. I'M IN DANGER OF
WINKING OUT OF
EXISTENCE!



IF I CAN JUST... REACH OUT SAVED BY A WITH MY BOBBY PIN AND ... PONY TAIL! POP THE WARP BUBBLE...

ZINNIA, I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE. I WANTED YOU TO BE HAPPY. SO I TRIED TO GO BACK IN TIME TO UN-WIN THE SCIENCE FAIR.



BUT I MET MYSELF AND, WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THINGS GOT A LITTLE WEIRD AFTER THAT, AND MY PLAN FAILED. I'M SORRY.

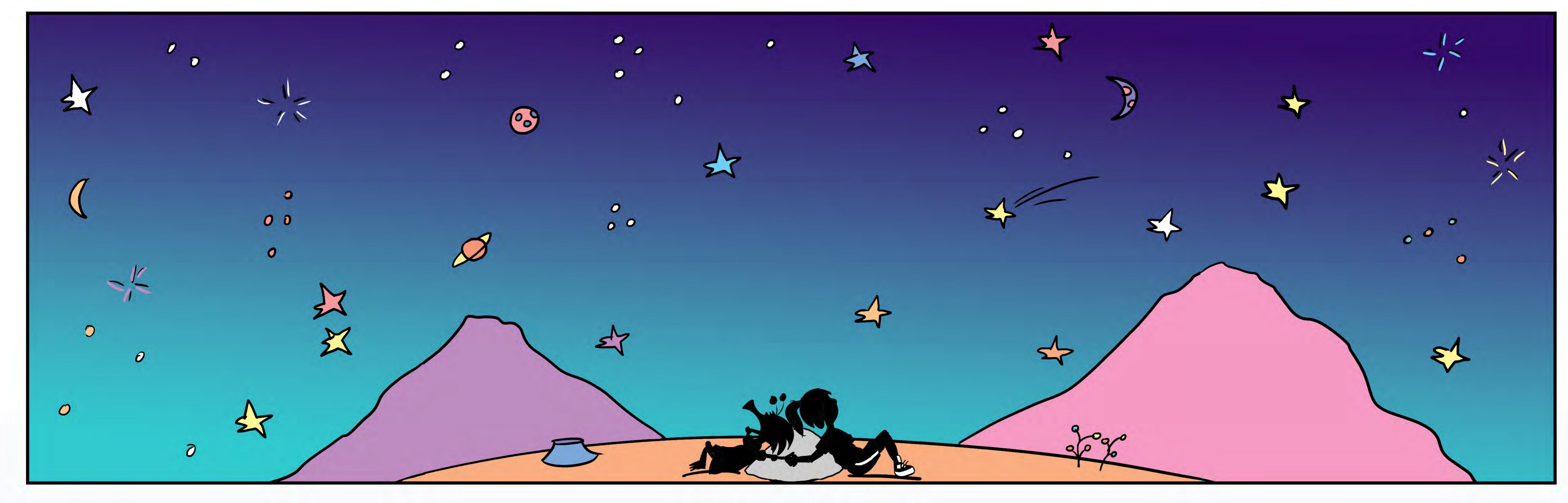


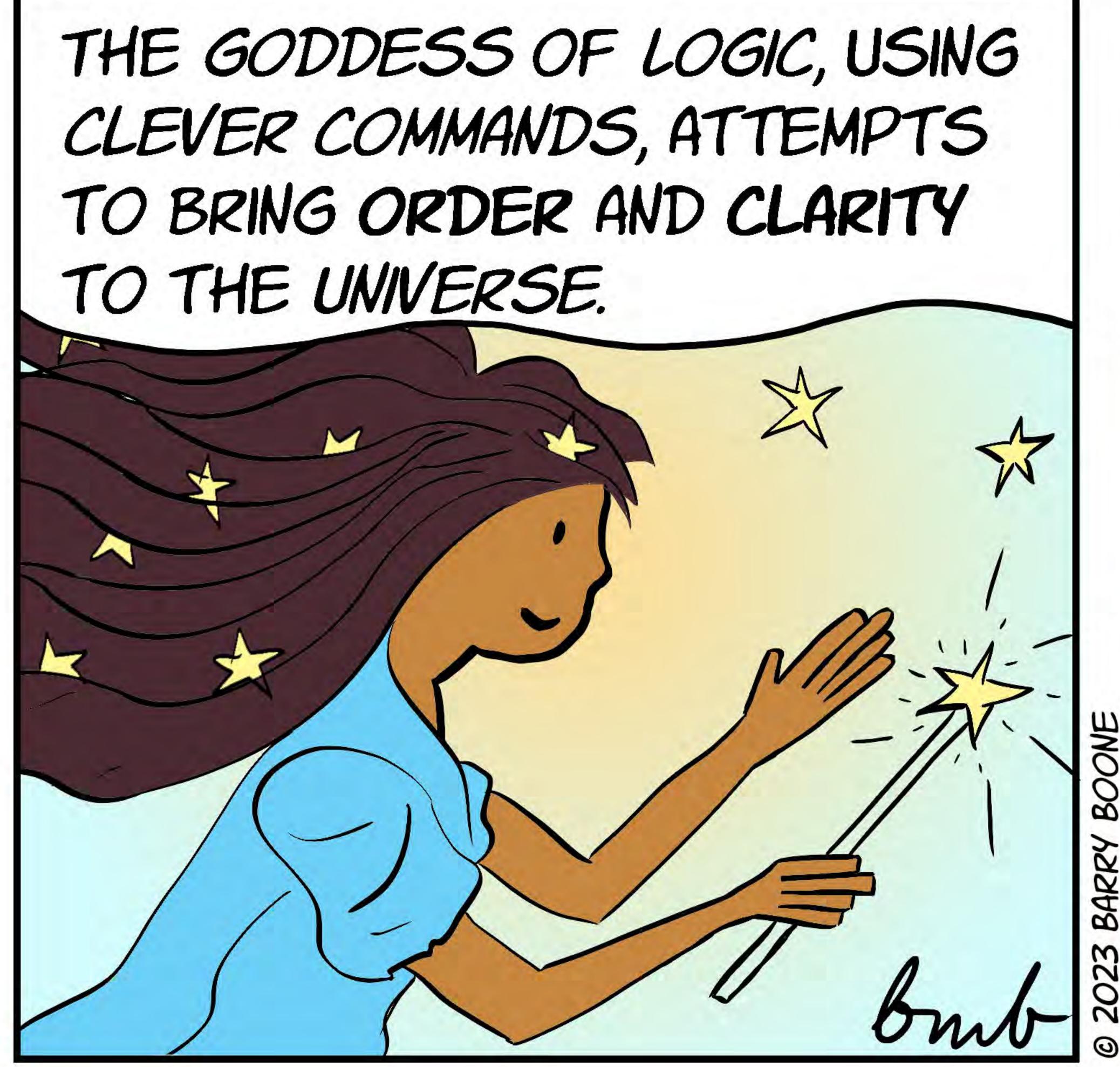
THAT'S OKAY, ROXIE. I'M GLAD YOU DIDN'T CHANGE THINGS. YOU WON THE SCIENCE FAIR AND THAT MADE YOU HAPPY. STRANGELY ENOUGH, IT MAKES ME HAPPY THAT YOU'RE HAPPY.

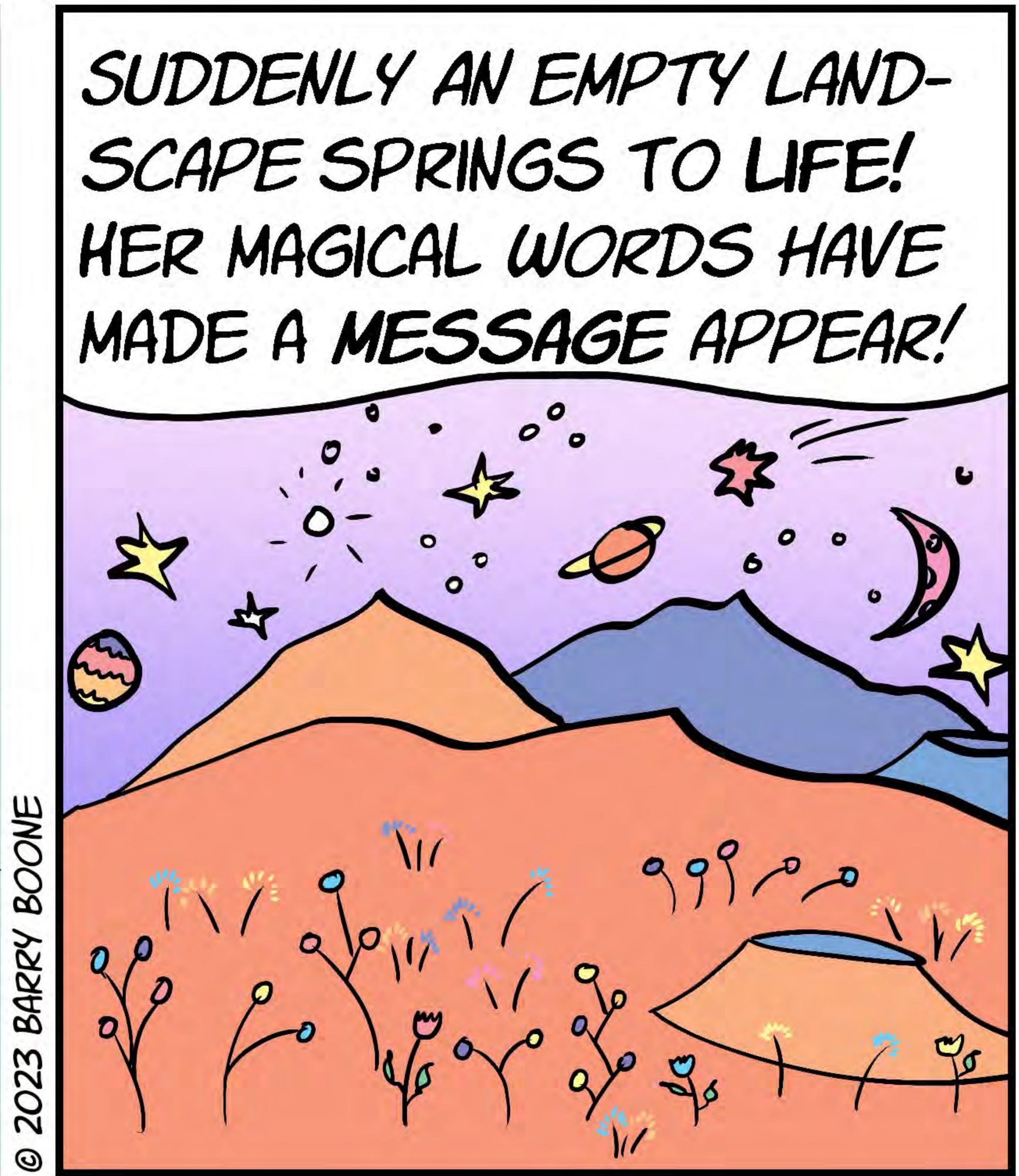




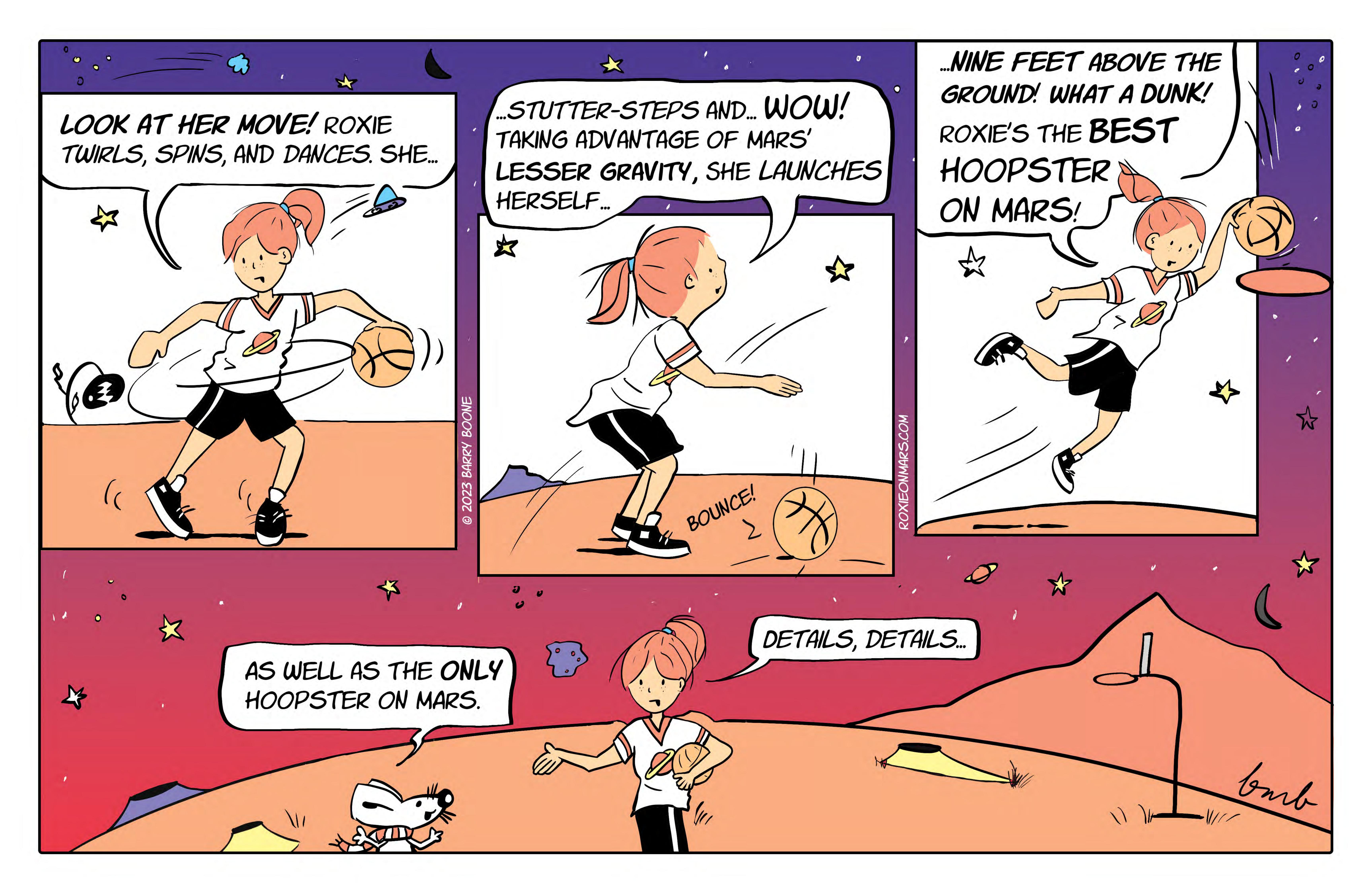




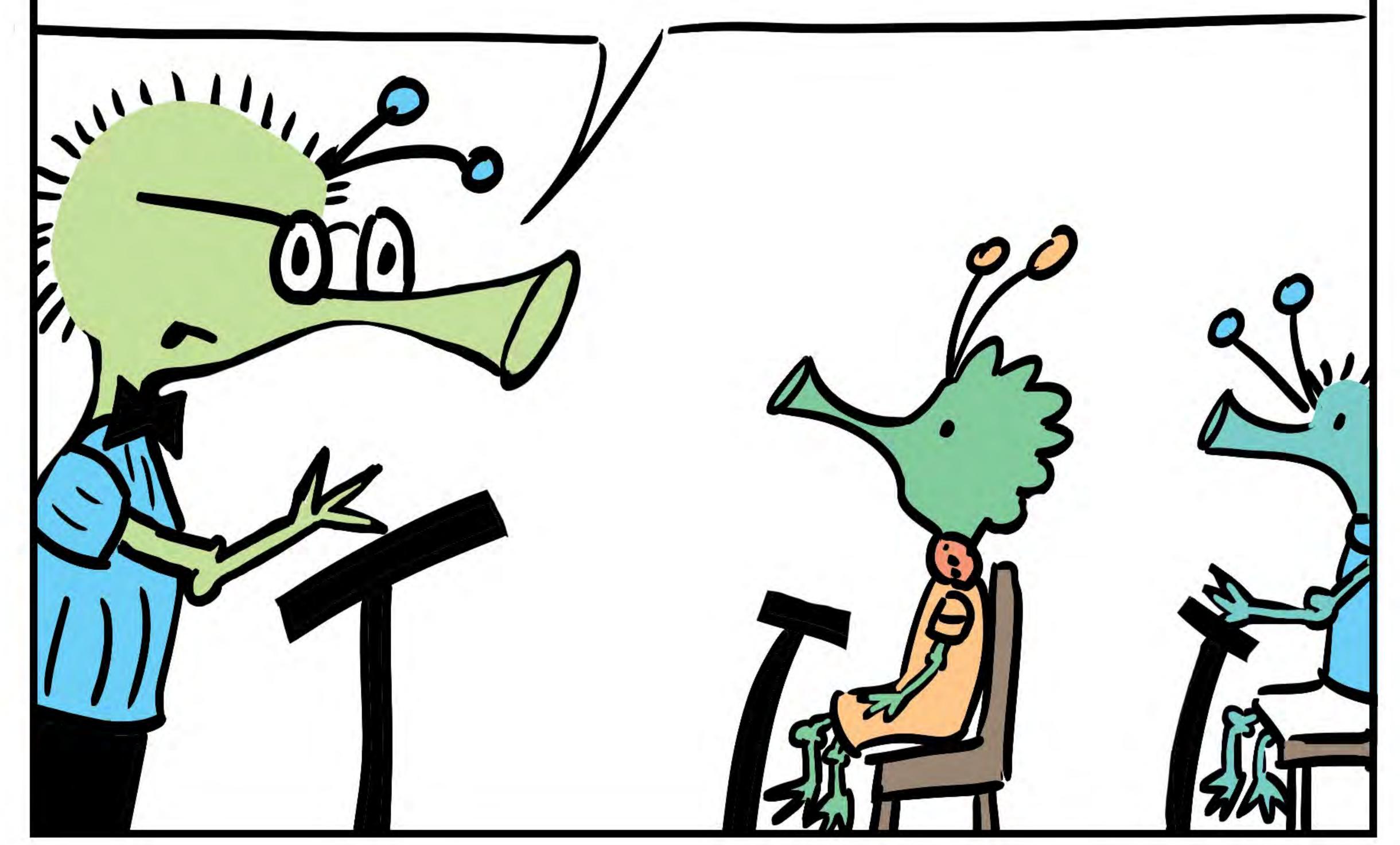


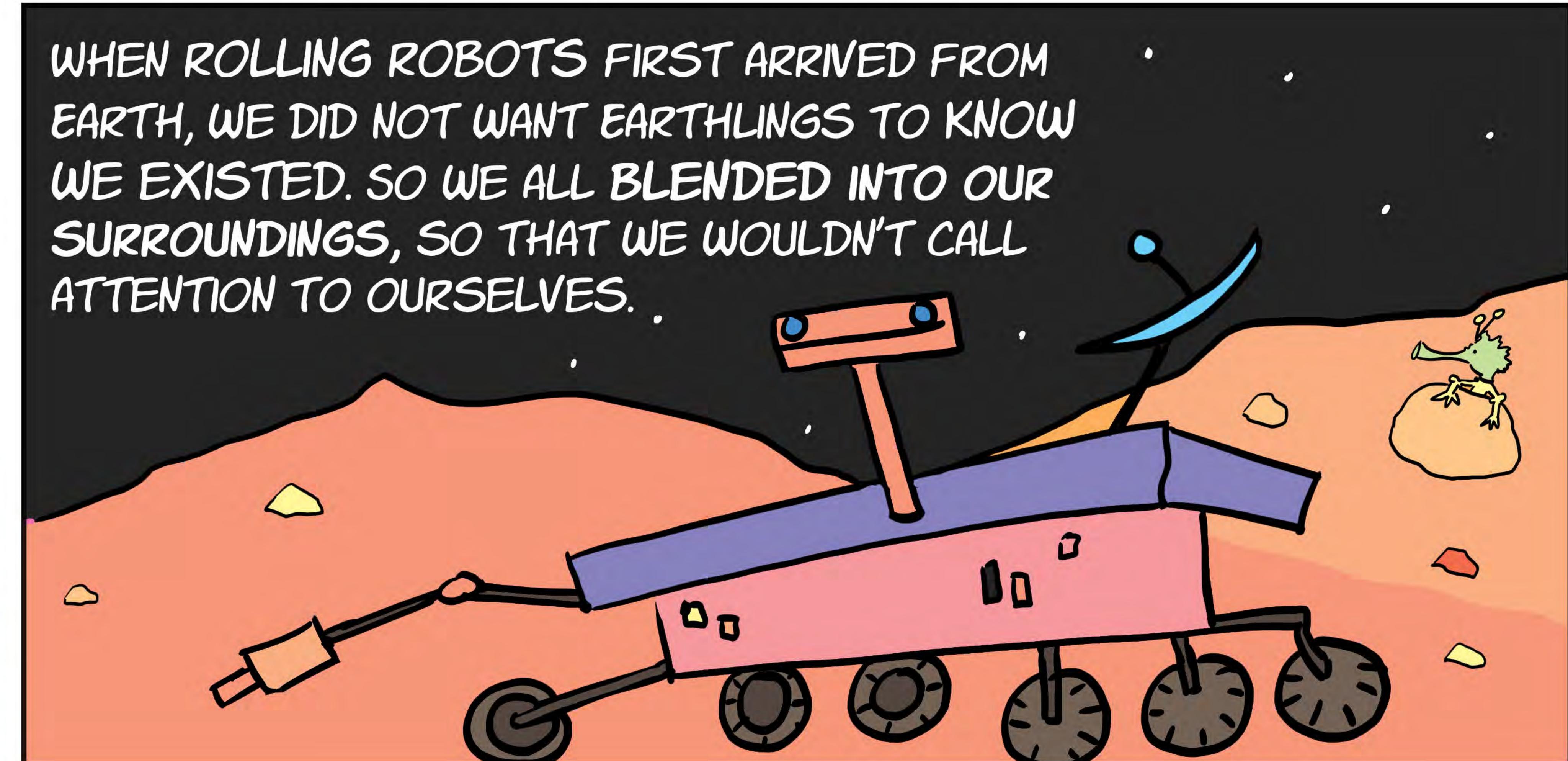






CLASS, TODAY WE WILL LEARN ABOUT THE TIME IN MARTIAN HISTORY WHEN WE BRAVELY DIDN'T MAKE EYE CONTACT!







THAT ERA WILL BE FOREVER KNOWN
AS THE GREAT HIDING. OF COURSE,
ROXIE, AS AN EARTHLING, PROBABLY
DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS.

