ISSUE 21

# VEEFRIENDS

## The Legend of the Articulate Armadillo

GARY VAYNERCHUK

D.J. COFFMAN

JAMIE JONES

THE LEGEND OF THE ARTICULATE ARMADILLO

ISSUE 21

# VEEFRIENDS

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BRETT BEAN

There's a long road that runs through small towns and hard times.

Most folks drive right past it.

But every now and again, a legend rolls in...

HMM... MAPS AND ME DON'T ALWAYS AGREE.... BUT I THINK THIS IS THE WAY.

ARTICULATE ARMADILLO! IS THAT YOU!?

WELL I'LL BE... IT *IS* YOU!

*IT IS I!*

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN, OLD FRIEND?

WHY, YOU HAVEN'T AGED A DAY!

LORD, IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE YOU PASSED THROUGH HERE.

WHAT CAN I SAY... TIME MOVES DIFFERENT ON THE ROAD.

MIND HELPIN' ME OUT? IT'S A LITTLE HARD FOR ME TO READ.

I'M LOOKIN' FOR THE *LITTLE DINER.*

HEARD THERE'S A PEACH PIE WORTH TRAVELIN' FOR.

YOU'RE HEADIN' THE RIGHT WAY. SAME ROAD AS ALWAYS.

TOWN'S IN TROUBLE, THOUGH.

BUSINESSES CLOSIN', NO JOBS...

FOLKS HANGIN' ON BY A THREAD, INCLUDING ME.

EVERY NOW AND THEN, MEN IN SUITS ROLL THROUGH PROMISING CHANGE, EVERY SIDE OF 'EM.

BUT NOTHIN' REAL EVER CAME.

I CAN'T EVEN AFFORD MY MEDICINE ANYMORE.

ALL I CAN DO IS PRAY I DON'T GET SICK.

HARD TRUTH IS... NOBODY'S REALLY COMIN' TO SAVE YOU. ESPECIALLY NOT WEARING SUITS.

YOU ALWAYS TELL IT STRAIGHT, ARTY!

WELL MAYBE THIS CAN HELP A LITTLE? CONSIDER IT A TRADE FOR THE HELP!

THAT'S- ***NO WAY!*** THAT'S WORTH A FORTUNE!

WHERE I'M FROM? JUST ANOTHER HEAVY ROCK.

NOW I GOTTA GO FIND ME THAT PEACH PIE!

POP

Soon...

"LET ME BUY YOUR PROPERTY!"

I buy & sell

THIS MUST BE THE PLACE... BUT...

I GUESS IT'S SEEN BETTER DAYS...

WISH YOU WUZ HERE!
-G.G.
P.S. GREAT PIE!

WELP...

"LET ME BUY YOUR PROPERTY!"

BILLY BUSINESS -
I buy & sell all day and night.

WELCOME IN, SIT ANYWHERE YOU LIKE.

FANTASTIC! I LOVE A GOOD COUNTER SEAT!

I'LL HAVE A BLACK COFFEE AND YOUR FAMOUS PEACH PIE, PLEASE!

I'M REALLY SORRY BUT-- WE'RE ALL OUT OF THE PEACH PIE.

OH...

THAT'S ALRIGHT. I WAS JUST HOPIN'. I CAN PICK SOMETHING ELSE.

I SHOULD PROBABLY TELL YOU... I'M NOT THE BEST READER.

WORDS GET A BIT JUMBLED UP ON ME, MIND TELLING ME THE SPECIALS?

UHM...

TRUTH IS... MOST OF THAT MENU'S GONE.

I CAN'T GET MOST OF THE INGREDIENTS DELIVERED ANYMORE.

I CAN DO COFFEE, PANCAKES, SOME FRUIT.

SOUNDS PERFECT, THANK YOU SO MUCH, LISA!

MENU

OH DEAR, I DIDN'T...

I DIDN'T... MEAN TO TROUBLE YOU!

YOU DIDN'T. IT'S NOT YOU.

*SIGH*.

IT'S THE PIE.

NO ONE SHOULD CRY ABOUT PIE!

IT'S MY GRANDMOTHER...

SHE MADE THAT PIE.

IT WAS HER RECIPE.

PEOPLE DROVE HOURS FOR IT.

SHE FED FOLKS WHO COULDN'T AFFORD TO EAT. TRAVELERS. STRANGERS. DIDN'T MATTER.

SHE WAS THE KINDEST SOUL.

WHEN SHE PASSED... SHE LEFT THE DINER TO ME.

TODAY'S MY LAST DAY OPEN.

FORGIVE MY MANNERS. I DON'T BELIEVE I'VE PROPERLY INTRODUCED MYSELF.

AHEM! MY NAME'S ARTICULATE ARMADILLO.

I TEND TO ROLL ON THROUGH PLACES... WHEN THE STORY'S GOTTEN A BIT STUCK.

AND WHAT YOU JUST TOLD ME? THAT'S NOT THE END OF A STORY.

IT'S THE MIDDLE, THE ***HARD*** MIDDLE.

THIS IS YOUR CHALLENGE.

AND AS A WISE OLD FRIEND ONCE TOLD ME... THE CHALLENGE BRINGS THE CHANGE.

SO WHAT IF... YOU DON'T CLOSE THE BOOK?

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I CAN'T EVEN MAKE THE PIE...

HMM... I SEE. I SEE. IN THAT CASE, MAYBE THE PIE ISN'T THE PRODUCT.

MAYBE THE ***STORY*** IS.

IF I HEARD ABOUT THAT PIE, I RECKON OTHERS HAVE TOO.

PROBLEM IS... THEY CAN'T TRAVEL HERE.

SO WHAT IF... YOU SEND THE PIE TO THEM?

I CAN'T. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I CAN'T EVEN FIND THE ORIGINAL RECIPE.

I'VE LOOKED EVERYWHERE.

IT'S GONE.

WOW, IS THIS YOUR GRAM ON MY POSTCARD? SHE LOOKS TO BE THE SAME AGE THEN AS YOU ARE NOW.

INCREDIBLE LIKENESS!

I WISH I COULD BE AS GOOD AS SHE WAS...

WHA??

NO WAY!

IT'S HERS! IT'S THE RECIPE!!!

THAT'S WHAT WE CALL KISMET.

The LITTLE DINER
Famous PEACH PIE!
1 big pie crust
3 pounds of sweet Georgia peaches
2/3 cups of sugar
tablespoons of unsalted butter
1 egg
sprinkles

OR MAYBE... FATE SAYIN' WE'RE ON THE RIGHT PATH!

IT'S LIKE A GAME.

THE MOMENT YOU BEGIN TO PLAY, IT PLAYS BACK.

SEE? WHEN YA DON'T GIVE UP, THE STORY KEEPS ON MOVING!

DON'T SELL THE DINER!
SELL THE STORY!
HUH?
YOU SELL THE STORY.
TELL IT FOR FREE.
THEN SELL THE RECIPE.
YOU'LL GO LIVE ON THE INTERWEBS.
DOCUMENT YOUR PROCESS IN REBUILDING THE DINER AND BRINGING BACK THE LITTLE PEACH PIE!
THIS BROKEN-DOWN LITTLE TOWN CAN BECOME YOUR WORLD STAGE.
YOU REALLY THINK PEOPLE WOULD WATCH?
IF I HEARD ABOUT THAT PIE...
I GUARANTEE OTHERS HAVE TOO.
DING-A-LING
POP
LISA LITTLE!
JUST THE PERSON I WAS HOPING TO CATCH!
I'VE SWEETENED THE OFFER SINCE WE LAST SPOKE. I'D LOVE TO BUY THE WHOLE BUSINESS HERE! ALL WE NEED IS YOUR SIGNATURE. YOU'LL BE SET FOR LIFE!

IT'S MORE THAN FAIR, MORE THAN YOU'RE LIKELY TO EVER SEE OTHERWISE.

ARMADILLO

BUDDY

TRANSFER of funds

TRANSFER of full and PERMANENT

ENTITY, PROPERTY, BRAND

PROPRIETARY, LIKENESS, AND RECIPE

MIND IF I TAKE A LOOK?

UH-HUH,... MMMM-HMMM... SO, I SEE. HMMM.. RIGHT HERE!

I THOUGHT YOU COULDN'T READ, MR. ARMADILLO??

"FULL AND PERMANENT TRANSFER OF PROPERTY, BRAND IDENTITY, LIKENESS, AND PROPRIETARY RECIPE..." SEEMS THEY ALSO WANT TO OWN YOUR GRAM'S NIL.

NIL-WHAT???

NAME, IMAGE, LIKENESS --

THAT'S NOT A SWEETENED OFFER. THAT'S LIKE SELLING HER SOUL!

NO WAY!

I'M NOT SIGNING THAT.

LISA... I'M TRYING TO HELP YOU.

I SAID NO. ***MY FAMILY ISN'T FOR SALE!***

OPPORTUNITIES DON'T WAIT FOREVER.

WHEN YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND... I WON'T BE AS GENEROUS!

THAT WAS EVERYTHING. THAT WAS MY LAST OPTION.

YOUR IDEAS ARE GOOD... BUT IDEAS DON'T BUY FLOUR. AND NOBODY'S COMING HERE TO EAT.

THEN THIS BUYS YOU TIME.

WHAT? I CAN'T TAKE THAT! IS THIS REAL GOLD?

IT'S HEAVY WHERE YOU STAND. WHERE I'M FROM? JUST A ROCK.

LISTEN TO ME CAREFULLY...

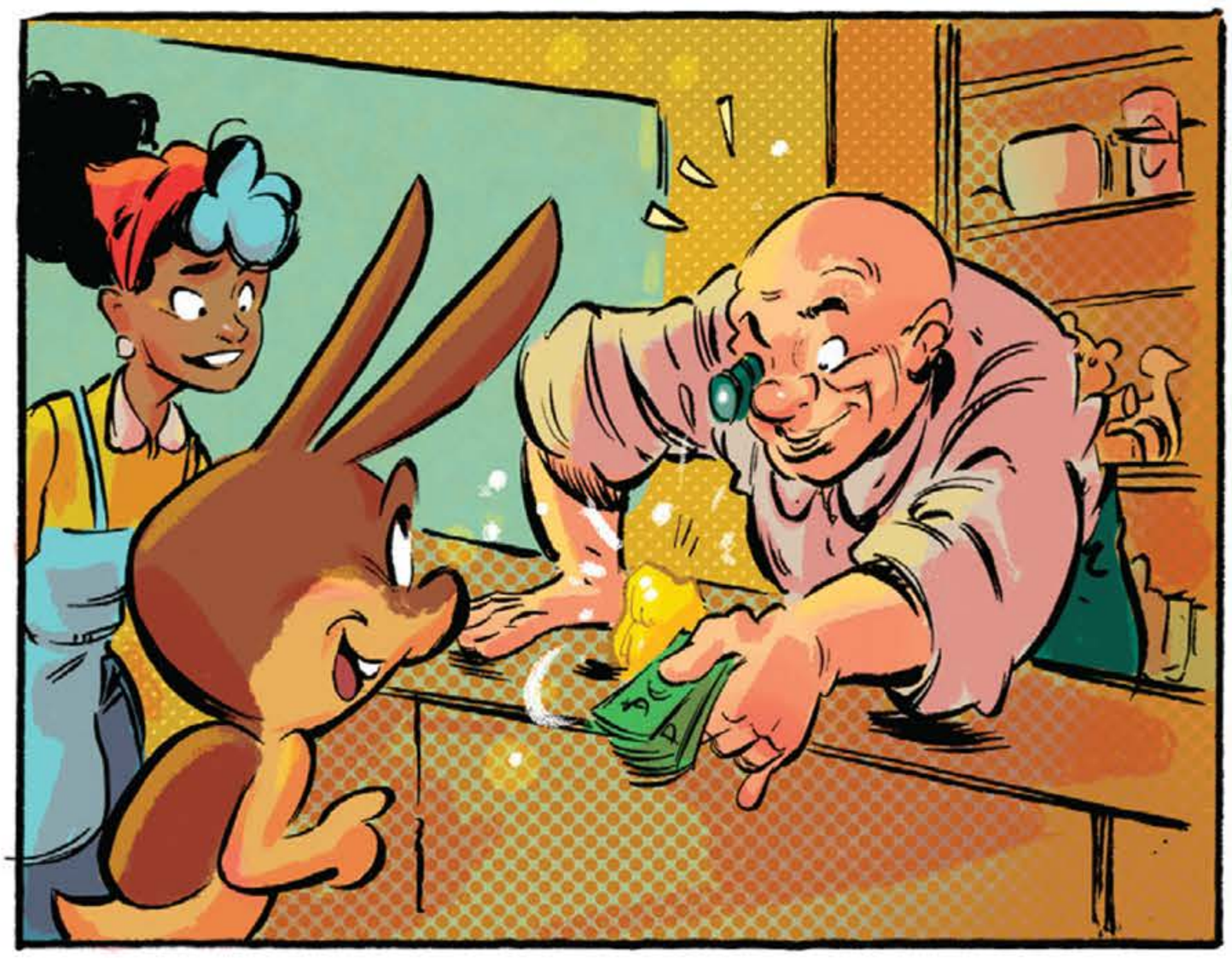
THE PIE ISN'T THE PRODUCT.

THE STORY OF THE PIE IS.

AND IF IT DOESN'T WORK?

AND WHAT IF IT DOES?

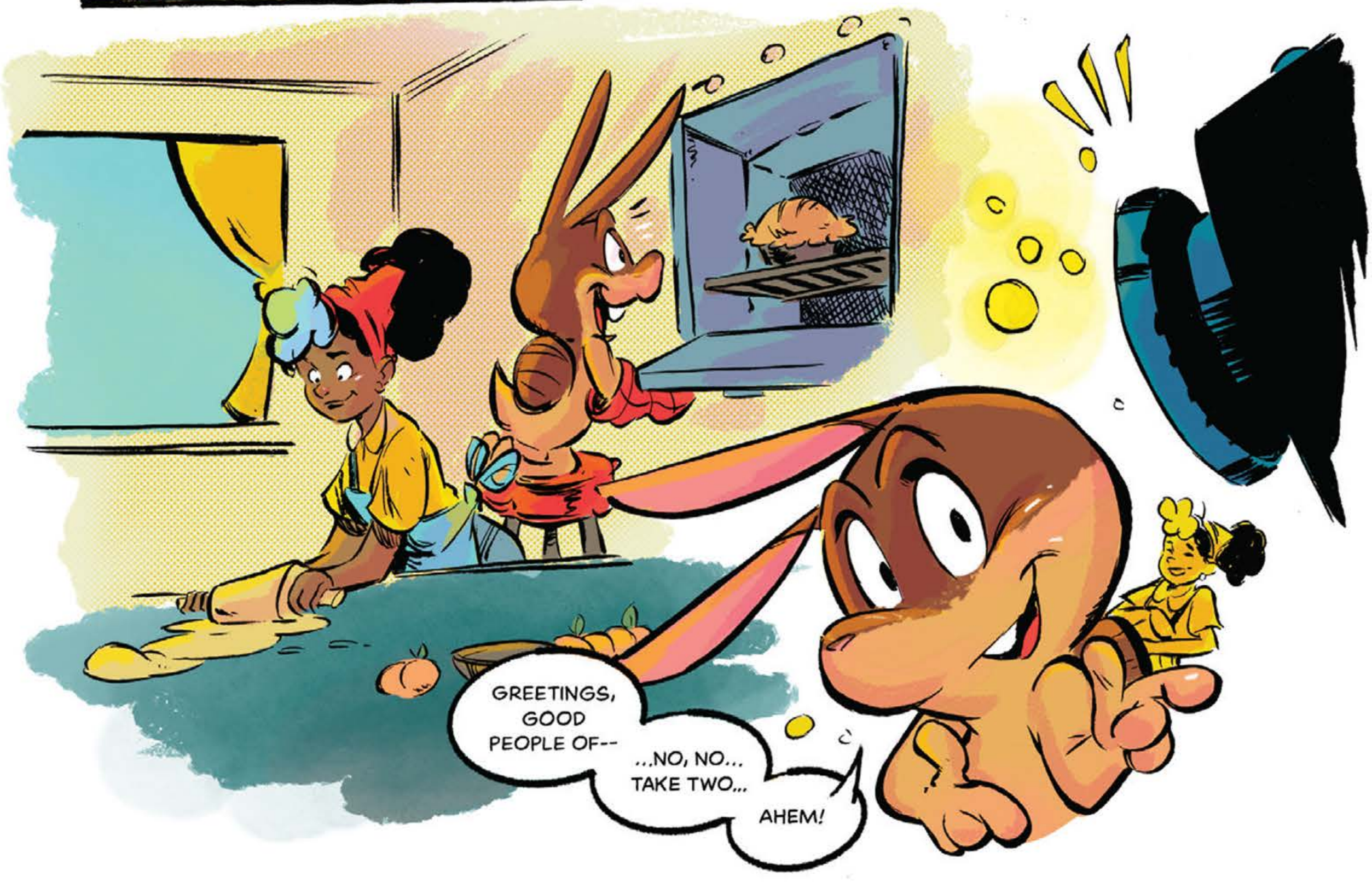
YOU NEVER KNOW TILL YOU TRY.










GREETINGS, GOOD PEOPLE OF--
...NO, NO... TAKE TWO...
AHEM!

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

WHAT IF ONLY ONE PERSON SHOWS UP? OR NONE?!

THEN WE START WITH *ONE.*

OKAY... WE READY TO DO THIS?

LET'S GO *LIVE!*

HI EVERYONE, I'M LISA LITTLE.

I'M COMING TO YOU LIVE FROM THE LITTLE DINER IN GEORGIA. AND TODAY... WE'RE BRINGING BACK MY GRANDMOTHER'S PEACH PIE.

MY GRANDMOTHER, LOIS LITTLE, FAMOUSLY FED ANYONE WHO WALKED THROUGH THESE DOORS.

DIDN'T MATTER WHO YOU WERE, OR HOW MUCH MONEY, OR NO MONEY AT ALL. AND ONE OF THE FAVORITES HERE FOR MANY TRAVELERS FROM ALL OVER WAS THE ***LITTLE PEACH PIE***...

HER ORIGINAL RECIPE WAS LOST FOR A WHILE... UNTIL NOW.

IN THIS SERIES, I'M GOING TO REFURBISH THIS FAMILY DINER. AND I'M DOCUMENTING THE WHOLE THING RIGHT HERE, LIVE.

LIVE

AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO TRY THE PIE YOURSELF.. WE'RE OFFERING THE DIGITAL RECIPE.

LIVE

LET'S BAKE ONE TOGETHER.

50 MINUTES LATER....

WOW, THAT WAS PRETTY EASY. I WAS JUST BEING MYSELF!

ARTY, ARE THESE NUMBERS REAL?!

HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO!

new order processing..

new order processing..

new order processing..

subscribers!

400...

2,000...

15,000!!!

WELL...I SUPPOSE CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER.

GREAT SHOW! I'LL DOUBLE MY OFFER.

NO.

I THOUGHT WE HAD AN UNDERSTANDING.

WE NEVER HAD A DEAL.

HIT THE ROAD, JACK! AND DON'T COME BACK!

I DON'T WANT TO BE FAMOUS. I JUST WANT THIS TOWN TO BREATHE AGAIN.

THE WORLD COULD USE MORE OF HER KINDNESS.

And so it was...

...The old Little Diner got fixed up. That sign has a new shine!

Folks started rollin' in from everywhere.

Just to taste a slice... and take a picture with that pie.

And the town remembered what it was good at.

GRAND REOPENING!
LITTLE DINER

THIS TOWN DIDN'T NEED SAVING, ESPECIALLY FROM ANYONE WEARING A SUIT! IT ONLY NEEDED TO REMEMBER WHO IT WAS!

YOU ARE ***MORE*** THAN NUMBERS IN SOMEBODY ELSE'S LEDGER.

***MORE*** THAN PROMISES ON PAPER.

YOU'RE BUILDERS, BAKERS, DREAMERS, CREATORS!

THE STORY DOESN'T END WHEN THINGS GET HARD. THAT'S WHEN IT GETS HONEST.

THAT'S WHEN IT'S ABOUT TO GET GOOD.

***KEEP BUILDIN'!***

And just like that...

The **Articulate Armadillo** rolled on.

OH, WHAT A HAPPPPPPY ENDING.

COULD'VE HAD IT ALL, IF IT WASN'T FOR THAT PESKY ARMADILLO.

THEY ALWAYS CHOOSE HOPE AT FIRST.

BUT *FEAR* IS PATIENT.

*LET'S SEE HOW LONG THAT COURAGE LASTS.*

♫♪

AH-HA! THERE'S THE DOOR I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!

WHY IF IT ISN'T KARMA KIWI! MY, YOU'RE FAR FROM HOME!

AFTERNOON, ARTICULATE ARMADILLO. BY CHANCE... IS THIS THE WAY TO THE LITTLE DINER?

SURE IS! I BET YOU CAME FOR THE PIE, DIDN'T YOU? !

BUT BE MINDFUL, THERE'S A LOT OF FEAR STILL SNIFFIN' AROUND.

THEN I SUPPOSE I'M RIGHT ON TIME.

REMEMBER FRIENDS, WHEN THINGS GET HARD, KEEP ON ROLLING!

# BUILDING CHARACTERS

## "NEW AMERICAN FOLKLORE"

That's what we call this kind of VeeFriends story.

We're not just telling stories, we're building new legends. The kind you remember. The kind that sticks with you and pops back into your head when life gets tough… especially in small towns.

American folklore has always had its wandering figures. Helpers. Travelers. Quiet legends passing through. From Johnny Appleseed to Paul Bunyan… and now, a small, well-spoken armadillo rolling down the road.

And speaking of travelers… keep an eye out. You might spot "hobo code" hidden in this issue, even on the cover. These were real symbols used by travelers to guide one another, marking safe places, warm meals, or roads worth taking, and dangers to avoid. A quiet visual language, left behind for those who knew how to see it.




Gary with his Original Drawing of Articulate Armadillo




VeeFriends Super Stickers Manga Series Articulate Armadillo, Yellow Splash Parallel




Articulate Armadillo TCG Card




VeeFriends Super Stickers Road to VeeCon 2024 Articulate Armadillo, Viper Parallel



Articulate Armadillo Mega Head Illustration

## BIRTH OF THE ARTICULATE ARMADILLO

At our comic offsites, Gary has a way of working.

We'll start tossing out VeeFriends names, one after another, until suddenly… he stops. Locks in. And just like that, a story starts forming.

Some characters take time to figure out. Others arrive fully formed.

Articulate Armadillo was one of those.

"He's always moving. Rolling from town to town. He listens. And by the end, he gives a speech that shifts everything. Whatever problem that town is facing… he helps them see their way through it."

But Gary didn't stop there.

Armadillo isn't a strong reader, he's a powerful speaker. He's dyslexic. What could've been seen as a limitation became his strength. He sees things differently. He speaks differently. And that difference is exactly what makes his words his super power.

That's also the power of comics.

Sometimes you don't need every word. Sometimes the feeling, the image, the moment… says more than a paragraph ever could. And for a lot of readers, comics are the gateway. The thing that makes reading click.

What did you think of this story? We want your feedback. Want to see more like this? Drop us a line at comics@veefriends.com

D.J. Coffman, June 2026

# COVER ANATOMY

Meet our Cover B Artist

## BRETT BEAN!



**Brett Bean** is a professional cartoonist, author, and character designer based in Los Angeles.
He is widely recognized for his work across comics, animation, and children's literature, frequently collaborating with major studios like Disney, Marvel, and Jim Henson's Creature Shop.

Brett isn't just any illustrator; he's the hand behind fan-favorites like I Hate Fairyland with Skottie Young, and the artist chosen for the massive Dungeon Crawler Carl graphic novel.

He's currently having a giant moment in comics right now (2026) as his Image Comics series D'ORC is selling out at the distributor, and going back for multiple printings. Brett is one of the most sought after cartoonists at this time, and incredibly busy, so we're honored he took the time to work on this cover for us.

**Process:**

See here: Brett starts with a "rough" sketch we approve.
Then we gave the greenlight to just let him go do his thing!




Sketch | Full Color | Final Cover

See what else Brett is up to at **brettbean.com**, and tell him VeeFriends sent ya!