To whom it may concern,

My intention with this letter is first; to achieve a level of transparency between creator, platform, and audience. Secondly; to express my hopes for a future where our relationship with WEBTOON is one we all celebrate, enjoy, and benefit from. Thirdly; this letter is meant to be a vent for the building pressure in our community, which continues to threaten us with burn-out and frustration. To that end, I wish to be as straightforward and blunt as possible and do not approach these concerns with any aggression or hostility. Rather, it is my love for being a creator and my love for a platform that has allowed us to tell our stories that compels me to speak out in pursuit of answers and positive change.

Recently, on August 13th, I sent WEBTOON's financial department an email requesting hard data on how our webcomic was performing on the platform. After failing to receive any type of acknowledgement that my email had been received at all, I followed up with a second email on August 31st, assuring that if I did not in some way hear back from them or get the data I had full rights to then I would begin reviewing my legal options. Finally, the next day I got word back saying "it looks like this was initially sent to the incorrect team" and that they're in the "final stages" of implementing a report program that would give creators access to their data and information.

I assumed, wrongly apparently, that the financial department would be the team I should ask for financial information from. This speaks to a much larger and ongoing issue that has frustrated creators from day one- inconsistent communication.

Throughout the past year, emails with updates about WEBTOON's intentions, plans, and developments are sparse. Some creators receive the emails while others just don't, despite their email addresses being on file and not having been changed, until someone mentions it and they realize they're out of the loop. They then have to email WEBTOON to ask for those missing updates. There are likely many Creators on the platform who never receive those email updates at all and do not know to ask for them to begin with. Additionally, creators with specific questions do not know and are not told who to contact for their resolutions. We've seen some progress in WEBTOON's attempts to be transparent but the team created to handle creator questions feels more like a bandaid at best and oftentimes feels more like a void where our questions can remain unanswered and tickets written off without solutions.

One of the biggest questions people have is regarding their performance on the platform, which we do not have any access to in the slightest. Access to our data and performance is critical, as it affects our pay directly. Ever since the introduction of the Minimum Revenue Threshold, we have felt taken advantage of and even frequently,

deliberately, lied to- as we simply have to take them at their word without any concrete information. We understand that the platforms hosting our stories must stay profitable to remain in business, but the Minimum Revenue Threshold (MRT) is an insult that continues growing worse. For those not aware- the MRT is a minimum amount of money each Original needs to generate before a creator gets to receive a portion of their Fast Pass Revenue. It is understandable that WEBTOON needs to make back the cost of hosting a new, untested comic… However, it's not only getting harder and harder to make that minimum number due to the lack of WEBTOON actively promoting the comics, but it refreshes at the beginning of each season. If a comic is doing well and is profitable, why are we forced to reset the counter? Why are we not entitled to money we are directly making WEBTOON after that threshold is met? Why is WEBTOON constantly changing what even counts towards that threshold and thus making it harder to reach at all?

There can exist only two answers. Either WEBTOON legitimately remains ignorant of the huge impact this makes on a creator's ability to support themselves, or they are deliberately employing predatory practices. A slow boil in a pot, changing small things at a time to take more earnings from the creator before they notice enough to ask questions or request compromise. Or - if they have questions and try to negotiate- the tactic seems to be to wait them out until the creator is no longer able to handle the delay financially. I want to believe it is ignorance, and that by expressing these concerns shared by so many of us, we can start a dialogue to alter this trend.

I will not specifically name creators in order to protect them, but some have begged, threatened and pleaded for *months* to be given access to their numbers, only to realize WEBTOON miscalculated, and they were due money not being given to them. If this was genuine human error then there's no fault as long as WEBTOON corrects the mistake… but failing to acknowledge that it's happened has bred distrust in many of us as to whether or not the MRT is being calculated fairly and correctly. How many of us are due fast pass and don't know? Is WEBTOON deliberately falsifying the numbers in order to continue denying us what we have earned for as long as possible? These are doubts we now struggle with every month. Doubts we should not have.

WEBTOON does not actually promote a great majority of its Originals. It is left in the hands of creators to make and post their own ads, drum up support and new readers, and try to drive traffic to the platform. If the MRT is not going towards the cost of promoting a new comic, what is it going to? What is this money being used for?

Creators do not make much money. Many of us suffer from burnout and physical injury due to an extremely demanding schedule. Some creators make less than 300$

USD for each 40 panel episode due to needing to pay out of their own pockets for assistants, and still will not have the boon of fast pass to make up for it even a little. One could argue that creators could just ‘work less and rest more often’.. Eat up their buffer, take a week off here and there, try to heal their arms and wrists- but they literally cannot afford to. They cannot pay rent, feed themselves, or handle their life’s responsibilities if they create less than 4 episodes per month. Nor can they get any other side jobs, because 40+ panels of work takes up too much time to allow for it. I cannot offer an excuse of ignorance- WEBTOON must know that it is taking advantage of creators who do not know to advocate for themselves and ask for what they are worth. If such things mattered, then all creators would be making roughly the same amount on their first contracts, with some wiggle room for panel number requirements/returning creators/length of seasons, instead of often hundreds of dollars difference between base episode fees.

Flatly, it is greed.

It is greed to drown readers in constant floods of new titles without a break to breathe and digest. Overwhelming the audience with quantity over quality only drives readers away and makes it that much harder for any comic to reach people… especially since it disables WEBTOON’s ability to promote their webcomics even if they wanted to, because there are just too many.

It is greed to construct contracts in a way that deliberately keeps its terms vague to handicap the creator. It is greedy to try and coerce creators into selling our IPs to WEBTOON in In return for loose or even nonexistent promises of adaptation just so that they are able to keep a firm grasp on our opportunities since it often feels like they don't wish for our success outside of them. This makes it difficult for many to proceed with opportunities that they have found for themselves without a ridiculous amount of strong arming or legal assistance (which most creators cannot afford).

It makes me think of TOKYOPOP, and its meteoric crash into loathed obscurity due to its shady practices and mishandling of creators.

Even if they wouldn’t consider it greed - merely “business” - it appears completely unsustainable in the long run to creators who have grown with the platform and adapted to its fast schedule. Constantly trying to fill this void with bright eyed new talent who do not yet realize the toll it will take on their physical and mental wellbeing is an unstable business foundation at best.

WEBTOON could be something incredible. In 2019 it seemed like it was a game changer, but something in the last couple of years feels less and less like we are working *with* WEBTOON and are instead being brought in with promises they can no longer fulfill (or don't wish to). We still want to be a part of that. **We want WEBTOON to be a place for the company, creators, and audience to thrive.** We want to be part of a company that cares for the people who bring in its money. Without creators there are no webcomics, and making us feel pressured, taken advantage of, paranoid, and used will only cause us both to fail. Your creators should not find it absolutely necessary to also have a Patreon just to make ends meet because of the company's insistence on bleeding us a little more with every new development and 'upgraded' contract.

Requests for banner slots and push notifications go ignored or missing. Interviews and social meet and greets done at YOUR headquarters and recorded by your staff never see the light of day.

Is that not embarrassing?

I want WEBTOON to be my platform of choice. I want to make us both money, and tell the stories I long to share with readers in the process. At its current trajectory, this is not a viable future for creators and will continue to drive more unique artists and writers away.

Ask us questions! Ask us what we need, what we think would work, what you can change to become a better and more compelling platform! We are a part of your company and the majority of us badly want to help build it into something amazing! We cannot put our hearts and souls into working for you if you cannot even give us the dignity of paying us what we rightly earn.

WEBTOON wants to make money. Creators want to tell their stories and make money too. All we are asking for is clear communication and fair treatment. We want to give the platform so much, and currently cannot afford to in the face of dubious legal practices and constantly shifting goalposts designed to take away more of our earnings. Creators work hard doing something we love very much, and are only asking for WEBTOON to love us back enough to be honest, and treat us like intelligent people.

Perhaps this is too much to ask of a company, but we continue to hope otherwise.

With love and optimism for our future together,
Us.