









Robert Brown holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Harvard University, specializing in econometrics. His early career included roles as a financial analyst at a major investment bank and an investment manager at a hedge fund. In 2010, he founded "The Studio," a collaborative platform for investor education and experience sharing. Recognizing the potential of artificial intelligence, he later founded the "NovaQuant Think Tank" in 2015. At NovaQuant, he leads a team in developing advanced AI-driven financial robots using big data and machine learning. These tools are designed to enhance market forecasting and optimize asset allocation. Mr. Brown is also a strong advocate for financial education, actively mentoring the next generation. His work embodies the fusion of deep economic expertise with cutting-edge financial technology.

Claire Miller is a highly accomplished financial analyst and quantitative expert, born on June 10, 1995, in New York. She holds a Joint Honors Bachelor's degree in Finance and Mathematics from the London School of Economics (2012-2016), where she excelled academically and participated in financial modeling competitions, earning a second-place award. Claire also earned a Master's degree in Financial Engineering from Columbia University (2017-2018), focusing her thesis on developing a machine learning-based quantitative investment strategy. During her academic career, she organized financial lectures and attended the New York Fintech Summit, expanding her industry network. Claire began her professional journey as a Quantitative Analysis Intern at Goldman Sachs in the summer of 2016, where she assisted in data collection and developed quantitative trading models. She then worked as a Financial Analyst at JPMorgan Chase from 2018 to 2020, conducting macroeconomic research and optimizing risk management systems. Currently, Claire serves as an Assistant at Nova Quant, collaborating with Dr. Robert Brown on teaching and developing innovative quantitative investment technologies. Her contributions have significantly enhanced the platform's user engagement and long-term growth.



Prologue

FIG, a Long Island Iced Tea of Price and Idealism

It was Friday night, July 25, 2025. The air in Manhattan felt like a damp rag soaked in heat, beer, and the smell of deep-fried corn chips. Inside the bar, the TV volume was low, barely audible—until one ticker rolled across the screen and all three of them looked up at once.

"Figma. Ticker FIG. Pricing range: \$25 to \$28," Lily read out loud, as if reciting an invitation. Her fingers slid swiftly across the iPad screen, navigating the S-1 like a gambler cross-checking a bet slip before placing chips on the table.

Joe didn't respond. He just knocked his beer can gently against the wood. "It's not aggressive, but it's not cheap either."

"Not cheap?" Lily shot back, raising an eyebrow. "This isn't just another Slack. Figma's a platform redefining how collaboration works."

Mike stirred his drink and looked over. "Sounds like you're more eager than A16z to exit in the first round." His tone was dry, but the words had a blade.



Lily didn't flinch. "If Figma isn't worth \$50, then every SaaS framework you've praised for a decade needs rewriting."

Joe watched them with a sigh. "Valuation's not about who yells louder. It's about who shows up to buy." "Wrong," Lily snapped. "This isn't noise. It's the early sound of directional truth."

Mike smiled, calmly tossing a log into the fire. "Then let's place a wager. If it closes above \$40 on listing day, what do you want from us?"

Lily raised her glass with a teasing spark in her eyes. "You two dance. I film it. Hashtag: #RepricedReality."



tango shoes, just in case."

Joe winced. "Are you planning to use social sentiment to drive valuation?"

"Still better than your nostalgia-driven spreadsheets," she said, barely turning, shooting the line straight into Mike's collarbone. He only chuckled. "You're making me want to order a new pair of



The bar lights poured down like liquid amber, glinting across the table like they were spotlighting an unsigned contract. On the TV, syndicate names scrolled by—lockup periods, greenshoe clauses, fund allocations. Every term felt like a mine planted four days ahead of the opening bell.

They each held a different thesis, and they knew this IPO wasn't about price alone. It was a public beta test of belief, a designer's bid to rewrite the logic of code, a gamble dressed like a debut.

It was a glass of Long Island Iced Tea—cold, smooth, dangerously loaded.

Chapter 1

\$28: A Price Tag on Possibility

"Twenty-eight dollars," Joe said, turning his glass slowly. "Not exactly conservative, not aggressive either. It feels like they're letting the market define its own face."

"Feels more like they're afraid to commit," Lily shot back, smirking. "They could've priced it at \$32 or even \$35, but they pulled it down to hedge against nerves."



Mike glanced up, voice casual, like critiquing a rehearsal. "Who's 'they'? Goldman, Morgan Stanley? Or the flippers lining up to unload on Day One?"

"Exactly the flippers," Joe nodded. "The ones who get IPO allocations and plan to dump the shares right out the gate. They can sell on Day One. Real VCs—those with more than 5% stakes—are locked up for 180 days. They're not even in the room yet."

Lily let out a small scoff. "So what we're really seeing is a pricing corridor designed to serve the flippers.

They're not investing in Figma—they're harvesting it."



Mike's voice dropped just enough to signal concern. "So what are we actually buying? The future of a company—or a compromise with market mechanics?"

Joe tapped his iPad and pointed to the S-1. "Only 25% of the float is for new fundraising. The rest? It's all about internal share allocation and

tradable liquidity. Not a mass exit, but structured to spotlight trading momentum. You get a first-day pop, a close at 38, media cheerleaders on cue, and the real players are already gone."



Lily didn't back off. "This is the game. Twenty-eight isn't a valuation—it's bait. It's the first move in a public psychology play. Everyone knows it's probably worth somewhere near forty. But as long as you start at twenty-eight, the story stays pretty."

Mike sighed. "You know what this reminds me of? Facebook. Same 'institutional-friendly' structure, and it still face-planted on Day One."

Joe shrugged. "Different era. Liquidity's scarce now. Every fund is waiting for a winner to break the drought."

Lily's eyes lit up. "FIG is that winner. You say it's expensive? I say it's as rationally priced as a tech-world Hermès."

Mike gave her a side glance. "Is that a compliment—or are you prepping the fanboys to lift the sedan chair?"

Lily leaned in slightly. "If you don't understand how collaboration platforms rewrite valuation logic, then yes, you're officially retired."

Joe raised an eyebrow. "That... kinda sounds like workplace harassment."



Mike grinned, lazy as ever. "Good thing I'm semi-retired. I'm legally available for inappropriate compliments."

On the TV, another SaaS IPO pitch was rolling. None of them looked. None of them cared. Not when FIG was the only number capable of stirring emotion.

They knew that \$28 wasn't a cushion—it was a signal flare. A soft-spoken provocation to belief. A number that sat quietly on the table like a poker chip, cool to the touch, hot underneath, waiting for the bell that would wake the market up for real.

Chapter 2

Adobe Didn't Buy It—Will the Market?

"So, the \$20 billion deal didn't happen," Joe said, like he was recapping a fight that got canceled at the last minute. "That was the last time Figma got an official price tag."

"Wrong," Lily shot back. "That wasn't a price tag—it was Adobe's panic."



She flicked through her iPad. "September 2022, just before the AI floodgates opened. Adobe realized their own collaboration tools were dead in the water. That \$20 billion wasn't a valuation—it was a ticket to survival. But antitrust said: not so fast."

Mike took a sip of his drink and nodded. "It wasn't Adobe buying Figma. It was Adobe trying to save itself.

And Figma? That was the future they couldn't catch."

Joe raised an eyebrow. "But regulators aren't the market. The question now is—without Adobe, is Figma still worth that much?"

"Absolutely," Lily didn't miss a beat. "Look at Notion, Miro, Asana... None of them turn design into real-time collaboration like Figma. It's not just SaaS—it's a shared operating system."

Mike shook his head slowly. "That \$20 billion included more than value. It had control premiums, peace-of-mind fees, and the privilege of no longer having to compete. Using that number as a valuation guide is like pricing someone's house based on the wedding they never had."

Joe chuckled. "You saying she's getting too sentimental?"



"I'm saying Adobe offered that number to end a war. Now the market has to decide if Figma can stand alone."

Lily leaned in. "This isn't about sentiment. This is the first chance Figma gets to be priced as a sovereign platform—not as a trophy asset."

Mike looked at her, something unreadable in his eyes. "Sounds poetic. But you know the market's emotions can be more erratic than any regulator."

She didn't reply. Just traced the rim of her glass slowly, like she was waiting for the bell to ring again.

Joe broke the silence. "Whether it's \$28 or \$45, the number doesn't come from Adobe anymore. It comes from the ones willing to hold the stock."

On the TV, a muted clip showed Adobe's CEO announcing the deal was off. His face was frozen mid-sentence—part relief, part resignation.

Mike murmured, "Sometimes, you don't walk away because the price is wrong. You walk away because you finally realize—you just can't keep up."





And in that second, Lily looked up at him. There wasn't triumph in her eyes—just the glint of someone already thinking about the next bet.

Chapter 3

The Golden Age of Collaboration: Tool or Platform?



"So what is it, really?" Mike asked, poking at his fries with a fork. "Design software? A collaboration app? Or some valuation bubble halfway between Figma and mythology?"

"Platform," Lily replied instantly.

Joe set down his glass. "Platform? Define that. We're not talking Airbnb here."

Lily slid her iPad toward the center of the table. "A platform has three things: user-generated content, network effects through interaction, and value creation beyond one-way service. Figma checks all three."



Mike studied the screenshots of the Figma Plugin Store on her screen. "So a plugin ecosystem is now definitive proof of platform status? Or just evidence that their product team knows how to play nice with the community?"

"This isn't a semantics debate." Her tone sharpened slightly. "You're looking at what it is. I'm looking at what it's becoming—a structural shift from tool to platform, from interface to operating layer."

Joe jumped in. "Sounds like you could slap the same argument on Notion, Miro, even GitHub."

"But they're not built at the design layer," Lily snapped. "Design is the entry point to every digital product on the planet."

Mike glanced over, the corner of his mouth lifting. "You sound like you're about to poach their chief architect."

"If I were running M&A," Lily said coolly, "Figma would already be an operating system."

Joe gave a wry smile. "So you don't just want to invest—you want to rewrite the SaaS syllabus."

"I want to kill the idea that a tool is just a tool." Lily leaned forward. "You guys are stuck in the old SaaS playbook: build a tool, sell a subscription, scale. You never saw the leap."



Mike swirled the ice in his glass, as if cooling her tempo. "Then tell me—what's the next leap?" She smiled. "Developer OS. Figma's not the destination—it's the gateway."

The bar light hit her face at an angle, slightly overexposed. Mike watched that line of light and said nothing for a moment.

Joe tapped open his laptop, pulling up Figma's user growth and plugin API metrics. "User base, session time, community activity—sure, it's at the upper bound of platform behavior. But here's the catch: real platforms generate nonlinear monetization. Figma's still stuck on subscriptions and plugin rev share." "It'll get there," Lily said, almost like a promise. "It's not part of collaboration. It's the front door to the next version of it."

As she spoke, she gave Mike a gentle tap on the arm—subtle, just enough to stop him from biting that same fry.

Mike smirked but didn't flinch. Instead, he said quietly, "If you really think it's the front door—maybe stop shouting from the porch."



The line hit with just enough warmth to register. In Lily's ears, it wasn't just teasing—it was a half-degree warmer. And on the table, that untouched fry sat like the mood: crisp on the outside, still hot underneath, waiting for someone to decide.

Chapter 4

Who's Selling, and Who's Waiting to Catch?

Joe stared at his laptop like he was defusing a live bomb. "Twenty-five percent of the IPO is fresh shares."

The rest? Internal allocations. Founders and major VCs are locked up for 180 days. So who's selling on

Day One? Basically, the flippers who got IPO allocations."

"In other words," Mike swirled his glass, "the first-day trade isn't about belief in the company. It's a reflex game. You're buying from the fastest hands, not the truest believers."

Lily tapped open the underwriter list. "Look who's running this—Goldman leading, BofA, Morgan Stanley, Jefferies backing. This is an allocation party for the primary market elite. Retail's not even invited."



Joe nodded. "They'll price it 'just right' within the range—tight enough to create FOMO at the open. First ten minutes: volume spike. Fifteen minutes: price pop. Thirty minutes: narrative lock-in."

Mike smirked. "And cue the media headlines—'Wall Street welcomes the new era of design collaboration."



Lily cut in. "Retail's late to the party, sure. But they're not clueless. They see a company that said no to being acquired, chose to go public on its own terms, and doesn't chase profitability at the cost of ecosystem depth. That posture? It earns loyalty."

Joe frowned. "Still, this IPO doesn't carry much new narrative weight. No big AI pivot. No tokenization hype. No modular SaaS reframe. It's like a New Year's show with no headliner."

Lily pushed back. "Not every act needs fireworks. Some companies trade on emotional calibration.

Figma's showing up to say, 'Hey, I'm still in your workflow.' That lands."



Mike looked over. "You say that like you're not buying the stock—you're buying the right to post about it." She smiled and nudged him lightly. "Maybe. But I'll catch it before you do."

The nudge was subtle, but Mike leaned half an inch closer without realizing.

Joe cleared his throat, scrolling down his buy-in criteria. "The real question isn't 'Will it drop?' It's 'Who's catching it on Day One—and holding it for six months?"

On the TV, a liquidity map from a recent high-profile IPO showed a steep rightward curve, tracing the moment when hype began to slide.



Mike murmured, "Behind every tradable float stands a variation of faith—not in fundamentals, but in timing and storytelling."

And for this story, someone was already lining up to write the ending before the first sentence hit the page.



Chapter 5

The A16z Play: How Venture Bets are Built

"They're not selling on Day One." Joe placed his phone on the table, like he was stating the obvious.

"Anyone holding over 5% is locked up for 180 days. Even if A16z wanted out, they can't move a single share."

"No one's saying they will," Lily said calmly. "But they've already won."

Mike turned his head slightly. "Won how?"



"They're not playing for liquidity. They're playing for narrative."

Lily pulled up a timeline of Figma's funding rounds. "Seed, Series

A, B, C... A16z got in at multiple stages. At IPO pricing, they're sitting on at least a 10x paper return."

Joe added, "And they don't need to cash out to declare victory.

What they need is the market to validate that early seat—that's for

their LPs, and for raising their next fund."



Mike nodded slowly. "So this IPO isn't an exit. It's a spotlight."

Lily smirked. "It's high-tier visibility farming. Before AI stole the show, they planted a flag in pure collaboration. Now that Figma's leading the IPO parade in B2B SaaS, they get narrative alpha. That's worth more than selling shares."

Joe shrugged. "They're not just betting on Figma. They're betting on a valuation model that doesn't require an AI storyline. If FIG hits \$45, the entire SaaS valuation stack will need a recalibration."

Mike chuckled. "They're not betting on a company. They're betting on market imagination."

Lily raised an eyebrow. "They're teaching the market how to imagine."

She tapped her glass softly, as if underscoring the point.

Joe scanned the underwriter breakdown. "Wouldn't be surprised if they shaped the roadshow strategy—city rotation, which client logos to feature, even what kind of retention math gets emphasized.

This isn't an exit—it's stagecraft."

Mike murmured, "Play the narrative right, price climbs fast. And when the lockup lifts, they walk out with a decade's worth of returns—clean."



Lily looked over. "If you were A16z, what would you care about right now?"

Mike replied without pause: "That the story holds for 180 days."

Lily leaned closer, like delivering a secret. "Then you'd better practice smiling. You'll need to act like the market's just fine—for a while."

Mike didn't move back. He tapped her glass in return. "Only if you promise to play the scene with me." She smiled, eyes flickering between mischief and fire.

And this performance? It hadn't even opened yet—but the spotlight was already on the VC's open palms.

Chapter 6

What Must Happen Before It Hits \$50?

"Let's just call it," Joe said, eyes fixed on the chart. "Going from \$28 to \$50? That's a 78% climb. Not impossible, but it's a gauntlet."

"First gate's sentiment," Mike said quietly. "If strong buying momentum doesn't lock in within the first three days, the market will quickly reframe it as a high-risk, overbought asset."



"Second is the float structure," Lily added. "Fifty dollars doesn't just need buyers—it needs holders. People who won't sell."

Joe nodded. "Exactly. The behavior of those IPO-allocation funds is critical. For this to climb, they've got to build positions—not flip them."

Mike rotated his glass slowly. "Third gate? Comps. FIG's not AI, not consumer-glamorous, and its revenue stack isn't exactly diversified. To justify \$50, you'll need to anchor it against something pricey—and convincing."

Lily pulled up her comparison sheet. "You're missing something. Design collaboration has way more stickiness than you think. Ask any startup—Figma's their first paid SaaS tool."

Joe stayed cool. "Stickiness isn't the problem. The problem is proving, in quarterly filings, that stickiness translates to predictable growth—and margins."

Mike interjected. "Or rather—how do you package a narrative stable enough to plug into a portfolio model?"



Lily exhaled, a touch impatient. "You're still looking at sell-side slides while ignoring user-side evolution. Figma's the OS for new-gen teams. When those companies scale, fifty won't be a ceiling—it'll be a pit stop."

Mike looked at her, voice low. "That's a great line for a shareholder letter. But right now, we're talking about market mechanics—not dreams."

She narrowed her eyes. "So tell me—what other gate are we missing?"

He leaned in slightly, smirking. "The one where you don't panic and bail before it gets there."

She looked at him, gaze catching just a spark. "Is that a question about conviction—or companionship?"



Joe pretended not to hear, biting into a spicy wing and muttering, "Last gate's always the same: time."

Mike picked up from there. "Getting to fifty isn't about a single spark. It's about keeping the fire lit—day after day, for 180 days straight."

On the TV, a financial show ran a bottom ticker: FIGMA IPO target price range—\$28 to \$55.

Lily stared at that "55" for a moment, then turned back and said, "Guess we'll see who makes it through—and who's still smiling at the finish line."

Chapter 7

After FIG, Does the IPO Window Swing Open?

"The question's not whether FIG will go up," Joe said, spinning his laptop around. "It's whether anyone dares to follow. There are over a dozen companies lined up—but they're all waiting to see if FIG takes the first bullet."

Mike flipped through an old notebook. "The IPO market's been comatose for 18 months. High rates, LP liquidity crunch, macro uncertainty... If FIG lands this punch, the queue reforms fast."

Lily took a sip of her drink. "It's not about landing—it's about volume. The market doesn't lack growth. It lacks companies brave enough to tell a story at this kind of interest rate."

Joe nodded. "That 2021 IPO boom was built on cheap capital. Now money's not just expensive—it's paranoid. No one's afraid of losses. They're afraid of missing the next long-cycle narrative engine."



Mike added quietly, "They're afraid of being wrong—again. Of being the punchline."

Lily leaned in. "FIG's not about share price. It's about whether you can carry a structural innovation narrative without leaning on AI hype."

Joe said, "And that depends on who buys next. If we see ETF inflows, or funds like ARK stepping in, then FIG didn't just open the design lane—it cracked open the IPO confidence trap."

Mike looked up slowly. "It's like a bottle of wine that's been sealed for years. You don't know if it'll pour sweet or sour. But once someone opens the first bottle, everyone else starts wondering if theirs might be

worth uncorking too."



Lily followed, "No one wants to be the first one poisoned."

Joe added, "That's why the focus isn't just FIG's price. It's on how the media scripts this moment. If it becomes the 'symbol of post-tightening resilience,' then the gains are just icing."

Mike nodded. "This isn't the start of a bull run. It's the beginning of a new narrative cycle."



Lily looked out the window, where the Manhattan heat shimmered like waves. "FIG's not the prize. It's the key."

And that key had already begun to turn in the long-rusted lock of a waiting bull market.

Chapter 8

Collaboration's Endgame: The Platform OS

"What do you think Figma will become in the end?" Lily set her glass down, voice suddenly softer.

"Not a design tool," Joe answered instantly. "And not just a collaboration app."

"If they're lucky—and bold," Mike said slowly, "they'll become the middleware between developers."

Lily nodded. "An OS layer. Not like Windows or macOS. I mean an operating system for the new

collaboration paradigm—connecting AI, modules, real-time inputs, and permission layers."

Joe raised an eyebrow. "The real test is whether they can break out of the design silo. Can they get

non-designers to build logic inside it?"



Lily flipped her iPad and pulled up a prototype—an AI collaboration interface built inside Figma. "They're already trying. Between multi-agent logic and real-time co-editing lies an entire interaction language. If they standardize that, they define the 'collaboration API layer.'"

Mike leaned in. "Then they're not just building SaaS. They're rewriting how software is composed."

Joe sighed. "But that kind of shift burns capital. It's not just platform play—it's a paradigm bet."

Lily smiled faintly. "And only paradigm shifts unlock asymmetric upside."

Mike looked over. "So you're betting the future of system orchestration will root itself in Figma?"

She leaned in too. "Not betting—inviting. I believe the next-gen systems should feel open, alive,

composable. Figma may be just the first entry point."

Joe eyed her. "Sounds like you're not just bullish on the company. You want it to be a prototype for a new kind of order."

She nodded. "If you've seen the current mess of AI agents and multi-surface APIs, you know the market's starving for a unified design-execute-optimize chain."

Mike said quietly, "Like Linux for servers, maybe Figma becomes the API layer for human collaboration."

Lily's eyes lit up, catching a flash of something romantic in the thought.



Joe, meanwhile, opened a dashboard showing the rise of new "collaboration OS" startups—each one building its own semantic model, interface engine, and command stack. "Looks like FIG isn't the destination," he said. "It's the gateway."

Mike stood up, maybe for another drink—or maybe just to let the weight of the thought settle in the space between them.

Epilogue

Not Just an IPO, But a Public Beta of Belief

It was just before midnight. The bar had emptied, save for a few warm amber lights still flickering against the wood panels. The air held a mix of alcohol, old timber, and the fading memory of heat from the day's relentless sun.



Lily leaned on the counter, her Long Island nearly gone—just a few drops left, like the last note of an ideal she wasn't ready to swallow.

On the muted TV, footage from Figma's roadshow played in a loop. No sound, just images: a founder gesturing, VCs nodding, sleek white slides moving like pages from a poem.

"This isn't an IPO," she said quietly. "It feels more like a public stress test... of belief."

Joe, packing up his laptop, paused. "Belief in what?"

"In us," Lily replied. "Whether we still have the guts to believe that a company built on trust, not hype... can still move the market."



Mike didn't respond right away. He stood by the bar, picked up her half-finished drink, and downed it with a small nod—more gesture than thirst. "You sound like a prospectus," he said finally. "Clear, structured, but just ambiguous enough to make me want to read it twice."

She smiled. Didn't flinch. "And you? The cynical Q&A guy at the back of the investor call?"



"Me?" He chuckled. "I'm the one who never bought the stock... but always watched the ticker."

Joe pulled open the door, and a warm night breeze blew in—soft, but insistent, like the market itself exhaling.

"This IPO," he said, looking at the empty street, "might not be a market climax. But it's definitely an echo of something... emotional."

Lily followed him, then turned back toward Mike, her gaze lingering just a second too long. "You know, sometimes I think the three of us—every debate, every dig—it's all just fragments of how the market feels."

Mike paused at the threshold. "Then tonight, we were trust, skepticism, and a bit of longing."

As the door clicked shut behind them, the TV screen froze on a final slide:

"Figma IPO: Writing the First Line of Code for the Future of Collaboration."

Their shadows stretched long into the night—like the opening scene of a love story Wall Street hadn't quite decided how to price.





Thank you for reading.

NovaQuant

Analyst's Disclosure: I wrote this article myself, and it expresses my own opinions. I am not receiving any compensation for it. I have no business relationship with any company whose stock is mentioned in this article.



