

# DIARY OF AN 8-BIT WARRIOR

## HOUR OF ENCHANTMENT



AN UNOFFICIAL  
MINECRAFT ADVENTURE

**CUBE KID**

ILLUSTRATED BY SABOTEN

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Published in French under the title *Journal d'un Noob – Héros*  
Tome VIII © 2025 by 404 éditions, an imprint of Édi8, Paris, France  
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The authorised representative in the EEA is Simon and Schuster Netherlands BV,  
Herculesplein 96 3584 AA Utrecht, Netherlands. (info@simonandschuster.nl)

Andrews McMeel Publishing  
a division of Andrews McMeel Universal  
1130 Walnut Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106  
www.andrewsmcmeel.com

ISBN: 979-8-8816-0342-7 hardback  
ISBN: 979-8-8816-0341-0 paperback  
ISBN: 979-8-8816-0906-1 kindle

Library of Congress Control Number: 2025935426

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• CUBE KID •

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Illustrations  
by Saboten



Andrews McMeel  
PUBLISHING®

In memory of Lola Salines (1986–2015),  
founder of 404 éditions and editor of this series,  
who lost her life in the November 2015 attacks on Paris.  
Thank you for believing in me.

—Cube Kid

## PREVIOUS BOOKS . . .

### Book One

That was my Noob period. At school, we were told that the top five students could become apprentice warriors. My dream! With my friend, Stump, we gave it our all to improve our skills in mining, combat, trading, architecture, crafting, and farming. I also met Steve and Mike, heroes from another world. Our village is often attacked by monsters. That's because Herobrine ("The Eyeless One") is back . . . If there's a school for evil sorcerers, he must have finished top of his class!

### Book Two

I met a lot of friends in this second book! First, Max, who's really super smart. Then Breeze, a weird, shy student who turned out to be the strongest of us all (level 98!). And I also met Emerald, a popular girl I didn't like at all at first . . . We all fought a horrible monster, Urkk Doomwhip, who attacked our village. How scary!

## Book Three

I made friends with Emerald, who left Team Pebble to join Team Runt (I'd rather not talk about Pebble; he doesn't deserve it . . . and in book four, he even tries to kill me!). Some humans arrived in the village: the Lost Legion, led by Kolbert. They wanted to fight Herobrine, but he wasn't there! But . . . then he arrived, too! LEAVE VILLAGETOWN ALONE!!! Then Notch, the great wizard who created Minecraft, made his way into our village too, and he began the battle against Herobrine. War is declared!

## Book Four

Steve and Mike are off to raise an army . . . we're going to need some help! As for me, it was almost the end of the school year. There were still several tests to be taken, including a redstone test. Fortunately, I made friends with Lola, who's the best at redstone. What more can I say? More fighting, lots of fighting, against zombies, for example. We finished school and had to choose our Path (that means a profession). Either the Path of the Sword, to become a warrior, or the Path of the Diamond, to become a captain (a sort-of leader of warriors). Tough choice! I chose the Path of the Diamond, of course!

## Book Five

I'm a captain, and so is Breeze (did I mention she's got magic in her? Mega cool). In this book, I successfully completed my first quest at the Owl's Reach! It was Kolb(ert) who asked me to go. Breeze joined me there, and all the better, because we had to explore the Tomb of the Forgotten King . . . so creepy! Over there, we met up with Pebble (who's a nice guy after all) and met S, an adventurer. All together, we fought the boss of the Tomb, a sorcerer named Urf (if that rings a bell, he used to be a teacher in my village). And we won! I've completed my first quest!

## Book Six

I found all my friends at Owl's Reach and we headed back to the village. Except it was attacked again, and the monsters destroyed the ice cream stand . . . Unforgivable! I've learned that Breeze is in fact an elf. How weird! Anyway, a message from the king has reached us: each village must send fifteen warriors to the capital, Aetheria, for training. Of course, Team Runt is going! If we train well, we'll surely be able to go and fight Herobrine . . . but only time will tell!



## Book Seven

When looking for Steve, a hero from another world who disappeared under mysterious circumstances, my friends and I discovered a massive maze beneath the city, filled with monsters enchanted by dark magic. After an intense battle with a fell boar, we realized that defeating them only earned us one XP! That was because Herobrine enchanted all the monsters so we couldn't level up by fighting them. It was brutal. But then Elodi, a friend of ours who just happens to be a king, decided to form a guild of adventurers to defeat Herobrine. And guess who the first members were! Us! Now we can go on epic adventures, battle horrible monsters, and save entire kingdoms! Herobrine better watch out!

# JOURNAL ENTRY 1



In the **capital**, on the north edge of town, you'll find what looks like a really large inn.

The banner is far too **heroic** for any inn, though. A winged, golden sword, displayed prominently above the front entrance. One look at a banner like that and you know this place offers **so much more** than comfy beds.

In fact, it also boasts a weapon shop, an armor shop, a café, and a potion shop. Along with two different dining halls. And most of all, a vast lobby with a board, like a bulletin board, filled with a countless number of **quests**.

Everything an aspiring hero needs, all under one roof. A place with the kind of name you might expect.

## The Adventurers Guild.

..... A guild for **adventurers**.

Upon hearing that, I'm sure some might ask: Is a guild for such people really necessary? Do adventurers truly need a center of operations?

I have a better question for you: **Who cares?!**

Really, who would ever question a place like this?!

It would be like asking: "Are waffles really necessary?" To which I respond with a resounding **"YES!!!!!"**

To think that only yesterday, I was still a student at the **Lorica Academy**. Months before that, a simple villager who only knew the farm. Watering crops. Gathering seeds.

And now, here I was, ready to call this place home.

Although I will admit, my first day here **wasn't** quite what I imagined.

Before I could **register**, I had to attend this introductory class with three other potential recruits.

They were from the Academy, too. Although I didn't really know them all that well. I'd only seen them around at school.

One was a **dwarf** named **Grom**. He was dwarven nobility, and had an **emerald** axe enchanted with **Sharpness V**. A dwarven **warrior**, clearly. A bit older than me. Fourteen, maybe? He looked rather strong for his age.

The one next to him was **Sorin**, in leather armor, a short **diamond** blade at his hip. He was roughly the same age as **Grom**, and gave me the impression of a **treasure hunter** or **rogue**.

Finally, a short boy named **Fimble**—a **gnome**—in a gray robe. He was a **mage**, and looked around the same age as me. Twelve or thirteen.



As for our “teacher,” that was **Lysana**.

A young woman in silver mail. Around her neck was a diamond pendant.

That meant she was a **Diamond**-ranked adventurer. Not the highest rank in the guild, but she had experience.

She first gave us a rundown on the world’s current situation. For me, this was **old news**, so as she spoke, her voice sort of droned on.

“ . . . ”

“ . . . World currently besieged by the **Wizard with White Eyes** . . . ”

“ His **lair** recently discovered, a dungeon below the capital . . . ”

Summoned heroes tried to investigate, but failed . . . Really **tough**

monsters . . . Kingdom's adventurers now tasked with investigation

. . . Struggling . . . Haven't made it past the first floor, and . . ."

And . . .

. . . . . *zzzzzz* . . . . .

. . . .

In short, our world **isn't doing too great**.

I was hoping I wouldn't have to think about that today.

Couldn't we just learn an ability or two? Anything to take my mind off current events.

"So it's a **classic dungeon** situation," said the dwarf, Grom. "Groups of adventurers head in, take out a few monsters, return to the city, rest up, **repeat**."

"Until the guild has cleared all the way to the lowest floor," the young mage added. **"Simple."**

"Well, **yes**, that would be the basic summary," Lysana said. "But I won't lie to you. The guild has been dealing with a lot of issues lately. The monsters there are **unlike any** we've ever seen."

According to her, they're called **eidolons**.

An entirely new **class** of monster. Completely unnatural.

Like evil spirits, almost. The latest creation of the **Wizard with White Eyes**.

Some have been appearing in the surrounding countryside, attacking farms and villages. But they're far more common in the city's dungeon.

Our instructor, upon offering this explanation, turned to me. "I heard **you fought one** the other day. Can you describe it?"

"It resembled a **green pig**," I said.

**Grom** made a slight laugh. "**A pig?** I thought we were talking about monsters?" I shrugged. "It was really **tough**."

"Sure, kid." The rogue named **Sorin** sighed and gave our instructor an **irritated** look. "Are we really going to sit around and talk about farm animals? Is that what this guild has been struggling with?"

"Aye, this is a complete waste of time," said the dwarf. "Here we are talking about pigs . . . Do you know what I fought back in my hometown?! **Slimes! A lot of them!**"

"As did I," said the young mage, **Fimble**. "Before I set out to the capital, I laid low a number of slimes with my fire magic! As well as a few spiders, and even **a creeper!**"

...

I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

It seemed their villages had only been attacked by the **simplest** of creatures.

They had also never set foot into the city's **labyrinth**. If they had, they would have been taking this far more seriously.

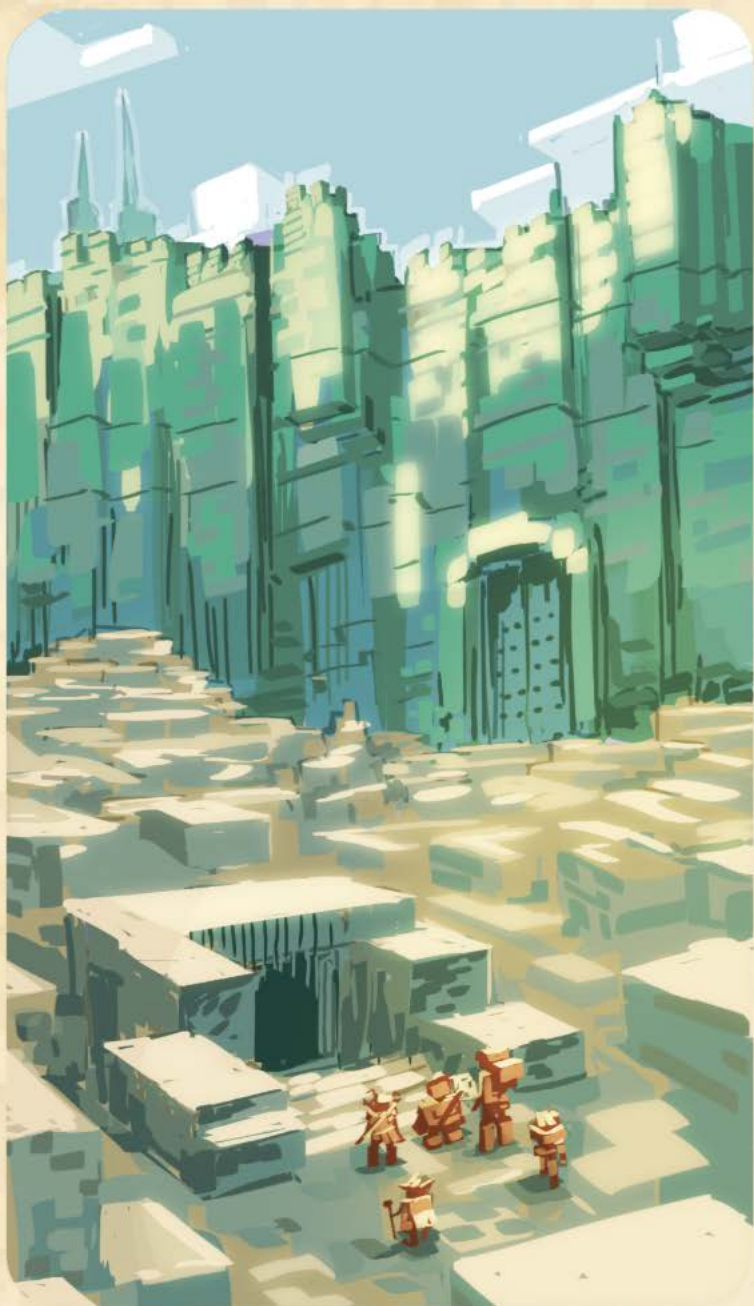
Lysana seemed **amused**. "We could go over this in great detail," she said. "But no amount of words would prepare you. For you to truly understand what we're up against, you **really need to see it** for yourself." Walking to the door, she looked back. "We'll be heading into the **Maze**. If, at any point, you feel like you no longer want to be a part of this guild, please let me know."

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The entrance to the Maze is on the north edge of Lorica, just past the north gate.

From the Adventurers guildhall, it's only about a ten- or fifteen-minute walk.





(Spooky music)



(Distant bat  
squeaking)



It was exactly like the last time I came here. Vast corridors of **faint blue** stone.

The rogue's first words upon seeing this place: "**Really?** I've seen **scarier** looking dungeons near my hometown."

According to the dwarf, though, the blue stone was highly **unusual**. Harder than bedrock. Not even the dwarves were **capable** of something like this.

"An **unnatural** place," he muttered. "I can feel it in my beard."

\*\*\*\*\*

The mage, **Fimble**, was looking around a bit nervously. "So if I understand the situation," he said. "The creatures found here serve as a form of **defense?** A security measure?"

Lysana nodded. "If you decide to join, you'll become a **Jade-**ranked adventurer. That's the guild's **lowest rank**. And each day, you'll be clearing out a few creatures in this area, where it's relatively **safe**. You'll also be checking for things like **secret doors** and other oddities."

Even here, of course, near the dungeon's entrance, monsters are quite common. So it wasn't too long before we ran into one.

It looked like an **ordinary green slime**.

One of medium size. Slightly larger than a block.

The kind of monster you'd find anywhere. Even so, Lysana had us stop at quite some distance away.



“A green slime?”

Sorin raised an eyebrow at our instructor.

“Is this some sort of elaborate **joke**?”

The dwarf laughed. “You’re telling me this is the sort of monster the guild has been having **trouble** with? I thought you said this place was filled with evil spirits?”

“Don’t let its appearance fool you,” Lysana said. “Maybe it was once an ordinary slime, but now . . .”

"Hhmm." The mage frowned. "Well, it doesn't look so scary to me."

Raising his little staff, the almost childlike gnome began uttering the words of a spell—**Identify**.

It's like an upgraded version of **Analyze** that displays detailed information on almost anything. You could even cast **Identify** on a block to view stats like hardness and so on.

A **silvery screen** appeared before the mage, filled with numbers and runes.

"Only **level two**," he said, gazing at the screen. "That means it should be about as strong as a skeleton. Yet it appears to have a **high amount of health** for a slime . . . **Twenty hearts?** Oh. It's affected by a number of spells. They're increasing its defense! Almost like it's enchanted!"

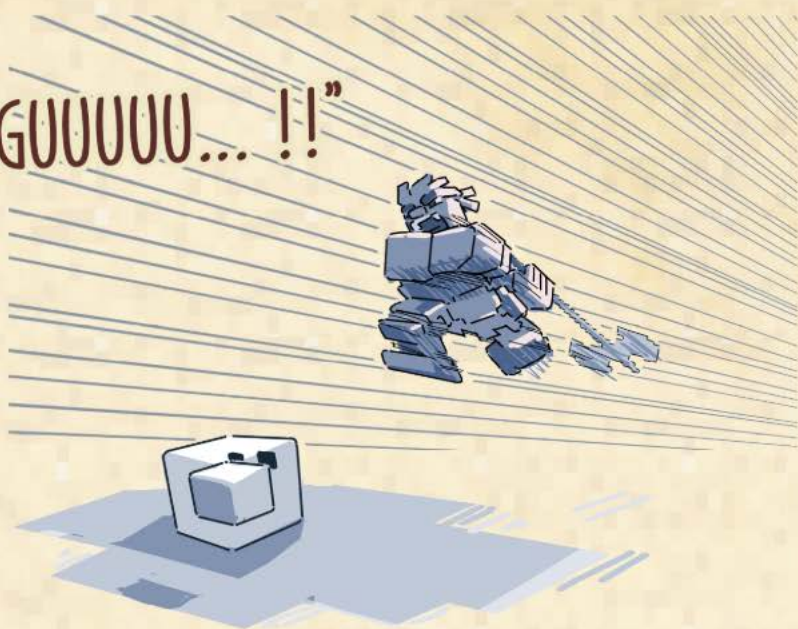
"Yeah?" Grom stepped forward, hefting his battleaxe.

"**Enchanted** or no, I'd like to see this sad blob withstand an edge of sharpened emerald!"

Without another word, the dwarf charged in. **Wait.**

Does his battle cry count as a word?

"H'GUUUUU... !!"



**A single point of damage.** Half a heart.

That was it.

An amount so low, it just **didn't seem right**. Especially considering his weapon. ". . . **Elven beards.**"

With this expression of total disbelief, the dwarf swung again. And once more, it was though he had struck a **block of iron** instead of a gelatinous green cube.

The situation didn't improve much when **Sorin** and I joined in.

Even with three of us landing strike after strike, the slime's health barely inched down. My heart sank when I saw its health inch back up.

. . . **It's regenerating.**

Imagine a slime with an **impossibly** high level of armor. Armor equal to two full sets of diamond mail. Add this to a **regenerative** effect—A strong one, comparable to **Regeneration V**.

That's what we were dealing with.

We kept swinging away, our weapons sometimes not even inflicting a single point. **Zero** damage.

Fighting this thing reminded me of this one time back in my village. The old blacksmith, **Leaf**, had an item chest that was overflowing with items. The lid wouldn't close, and he kept trying to smash down the pile by attacking it with a stick, over and over, grunting savagely with each strike.

It was the same thing here. The same **rage** and **frustration**.  
The same savage cries.

Although, an item chest doesn't have a maw filled with **jagged fangs**, and it will never try to bite you. Nor will it ever make the shrieks this thing made. Almost like the growl of a **zombie** mixed with the wail of a cat. Or maybe a scream.

"REEeEeEEeEeeEe . . . !!"

A sound no slime should ever make.

It wasn't long before the dwarf, beyond **frustrated**, used **the strongest** ability he knew.



Had this been a normal slime, it would have been completely **disintegrated** . . . .

And it looked like this one took an **extreme** amount of damage, bouncing up and down, shaking, the dwarf screaming endlessly, waves of golden light flying from his weapon, until the monster flattened into a pancake.

Then it **sprang right back into shape**.

**Three damage.**

On any normal creature, that would have been **thirty** or more.

“ . . . ”

Introducing one of the many **new creations** of Herobrine.

Only he could have made a thing of such **pure evil**. A monster so annoying, so infuriating to fight, it was clearly designed to **push heroes beyond their limits**.

Can you blame him, though? I mean, if I were an evil wizard with powerful spells, that's probably the first thing I would do. I would find a way to make nearly **invincible** minions. Okay, the first thing I'd do is conjure some sort of giant cake. Or maybe a sword made out of cake? Except, you know, really **strong cake?** Diamond strength. Which should be possible, because, um, **magic**.

Our instructor eventually stepped in to help us out, by the way.

However, even her diamond sword, with **Sharpness VII**, could barely scratch this thing.

As for **Fimble**, he kept trying to cast fire spells, but most of his attempts fizzled. I think he only managed to cast one spell the entire battle.



## Five minutes.

For a battle against a single monster on the labyrinth's first floor, **that's a very long time.**

I was just thankful it didn't **split up** into smaller slimes, the way normal ones do. **I would have run.** These people would have been on their own for that one, I would have popped a Swiftiness potion like that. And not a standard one. I'm talking the kind with the **extra speed** boost. I have one of these in my inventory, reserved for special occasions.

After the creature faded away, I looked around.

All of us were on the verge of collapse, especially **Fimble**. With how many spells he had tried casting, he was **almost out of MP**.

"That should give you **an idea** of what to expect," Lysana said. "The slimes here are among **the strongest**. Many of the creatures found on this first floor are about as tough, however."

According to her, they resemble animals and relatively **harmless** creatures. Like skeletons, slimes. Even bats and chickens. But they're **far stronger** than their appearance would suggest.

Adventurers have been struggling here for weeks, and they've only mapped a fraction of this first floor. The second floor, and every floor beyond, is still **unknown**. The guild hasn't made it that far yet.

For obvious reasons.

The way that slime screamed at me . . .

**What? It was terrifying!** Slimes aren't supposed to scream! They're slimes! I'm going to have nightmares after today.

"You know, I laughed when I first heard that otherworldly heroes were **fleeing** this city," Fimble said. "Now I totally get it. This is a troubling situation."

\*\*\*\*\*

Sorin laughed nervously. "**Troubling?!** This is a **nightmare**, kid!" He turned to Lysana. "Your city has a real dungeon problem, lady! **A reeeeeeeeeeeeeeal problem!** I'm outta here!"

". . . Hey, w-what's that?!"

The dwarf was staring wide eyed at something up ahead.

In the gloom, another creature had appeared. One resembling a **large blue chicken**. Its head, though . . . I don't want to give you nightmares, too. So I'm not even sure if I should include an illustration of what we were currently looking at.

Imagine a **chicken**.

Only **blue**, and two- or three-times normal size.

Now imagine this bizarrely colored chicken with not the sort of head you'd expect, but rather . . .

. . . **A creeper's head.**

At the sight of this abomination, all five of us started backpedaling.

"By **the twin braided beards of the Ender King**," the dwarf almost bellowed. "What foul magic has cursed this place . . . ?!"

When a second "**chicken**" appeared, Lysana once more drew her blade.

"These things only have **thirty HP**, and **Regeneration III**.

Although their armor is about the same as what we just fought. At least you guys will be getting some good practice in."

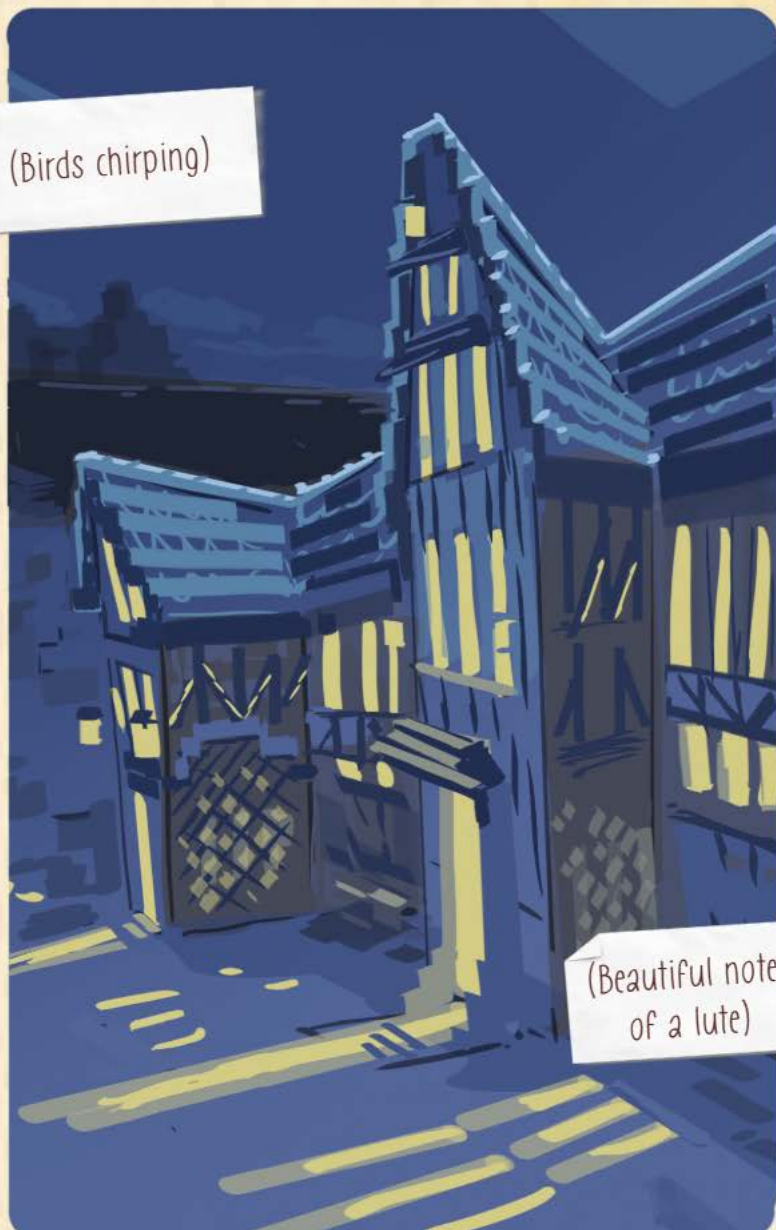
I sagged my shoulders.

Somehow I knew this was going to be a **very long day**.

"Oh, and by the way . . ." Our instructor looked back with a smile. "**Welcome to the guild!**"



(Birds chirping)



(Beautiful notes  
of a lute)



That about sums up my first day at the guild.

When we returned, I immediately went to my new room and **crashed** face down on the bed.

We fought a total of five . . . Of whatever those **things** are called. I refuse to use **creeper chicken**, that makes them sound almost **comical**. They just kept appearing, one after another. And now, I was so exhausted, I could only remain in bed and make an occasional zombie-like groan.

My sword arm hurt so much.

As for the other recruits, **Sorin** and **Fimble** quit the guild as soon as we got back. I'm not sure about the dwarf. I wouldn't be surprised if he **quit** as well.

I suddenly **missed** my friends.

They were still back in the Academy, though.

This morning, I barely said goodbye to them before rushing off here.

It feels **so weird** without them around. After all, this is the start of a brand-new journal. **My Adventurers Journal**. This first entry should have started out with us going on an all-new quest . . .

If they were with me today, I know it would have been so much **easier**. That I had been advanced to this guild, without any of them . . . That was almost like **a punishment**.

Why did Breeze have to take that fencing class? And why were the rest still struggling in school? When would they be finished with their training? **Why did I miss them so much?**

These are questions that only a wise, elderly sage with a very long beard could answer.

Sadly, I haven't seen any around.

. . .

Don't worry, though.  
One of them showed up before long.  
Just before nightfall, the door of my room flew open.  
The girl who came strolling in was none other than **Emerald Shadowcroft**, aspiring bard.

\*\*\*\*\*

She flashed the biggest smile. "I have to say, **this guildhall** is waaay better than that stuffy old school! I can totally live here! By the way, I'm just across the hall!"

"What are you doing here?"

"**What am I doing here?**" She looked annoyed. "I'm just as ready for guild life as you are! After all, not to brag or anything, but my **Magic** skill is fairly higher than yours. So I talked to the **head questmaster** about it. I also argued that it would be wrong to send you here all by yourself. I mean, let's face it, someone has to **look out for you!**"

...

Why couldn't that someone be **Breeze?**

But I **wasn't surprised** to see Emerald show up. Lately, she's like this **annoying** little sister who always has to tag along.

**At least** I wouldn't have to go through this alone, right? So I was actually rather glad to see Emerald right now. (Something I never thought I'd say.)

"So I heard you went into the dungeon," she said. "**Didn't go too well**, I take it?"

"Well, that boar we fought **wasn't even half as bad** as what I saw today," I mumbled. "Everything had so much armor, it was like trying to mine blocks of obsidian with a piece of sugarcane."

"Just like those zombies back in Villagetown."

"Yeah. **Only worse**. This slime had **Regeneration V**. And you don't even want to hear about what else we saw . . ."

I crawled out of bed and went over to the window. A dark sky filled with twinkling stars, mostly green, over a greenish horizon. Aetheria's green dusk.

"**What are we doing here?**" I asked.

Emerald joined me at the window. "What do you mean?"

"Have you seen the people in this guild? We're like clueless **newbies** compared to most, and even they're struggling. This one dwarf had an emerald axe with **Sharpness V**, and even he was struggling to do more than a single point of damage. So how are we supposed to make **a difference?**"

"Hey, we might be young, but we're smart, right? We'll find a place here. We'll figure something out. I'm sure of it."

### Figure something out.

What was there to figure out? It was a hopeless situation.

. . . Or was it? I recalled something from the Academy. Something about armor.

"All right, so **Herobrine's** latest minions all have an extremely high amount of armor," I said. "That's his latest trick. What does armor do, though?"

"It protects against physical damage?"

"**Physical** as in, sword, axe, arrow. What other damage types are there?"

"**Magic**, for one," Emerald said. "That new spell of mine really did wonders on the boar, remember? Armor really doesn't protect against magic damage. Still, that spell takes almost all of my mana. I wouldn't have been able to cast another without going **OOM**."

"So what we need are **free** spells," I said.

"As if such a thing would exist." Emerald frowned.

"**How about fire?**" I asked. "Good, old-fashioned fire. Also, Harming potions do magic damage, right? As well as poison . . . **Poisoned** arrows maybe? Or **wither** arrows?"

Emerald shrugged. "Surely the guild is already using these things. There's no way they aren't."

"We'll need to talk to people, then. See what they've come up with so far. And we need to consult **Breeze** and **Max**. And possibly **Lola**. Definitely Lola. Her redstone might come in useful here."

"More than consulting," she said, "we need to **get them into this guild.**"

"We will."

**All right.**

Put on your thinking caps, folks.

We're going to delve deep into the inner workings of Aetheria's laws, and answer the question:

**"What is the most effective way to deal with monsters that have an impossibly high amount of armor along with Regeneration II to VII?"**

Harming potions?

**Redstone contraptions?**

Or maybe clever **ability combos?**

"Whatever we end up trying," Emerald said, "just promise me you won't get anywhere near a brewing stand, huh?"



NORTH  
DINING HALL

"And I should mention,  
the food here is way better  
than the sludge they serve at the  
Academy. Crumbs just flew."

In her view, a brewing stand and potentially hazardous potion ingredients is the **most dangerous** combination she can think of. At least when I'm next to them. I corrected her, informing her that the most dangerous combination is actually her and any musical instrument.

Yeah, our conversation went downhill from there . . .

In other news, Emerald went to the guild's armor shop and picked up some new gear. A red, knee length tunic, a long cloak and a wide-brimmed hat with a pair of glasses, like a librarian's.

Everything has this enchantment called **Spellpower** that boosts her magic somewhat.

A bard that specializes in magic. She's really come a long way from **the clueless newbie** she once was. Although the same can be said for me.



## JOURNAL ENTRY 2



This morning, we talked to one of the clerks at the front desk.

It was the same clerk who helped me register yesterday. A young woman named **Calyssa**.

Like all of the guild's staff, she wore a professional looking white and red uniform with a red tie, and she had an overly **cheerful** personality.

She told us that one of the things adventurers have been using is the **splash Harming potion**. Well, in the guild, they're called **Blast potions**, but they're the same thing as a Harming potion.

"Creepers are pretty rare around here," she said, "so gunpowder is very expensive. But the Blast potion uses **sulphur**, commonly found in the mines west of here. Accordingly, a Blast potion only runs **five emeralds** in our item shop. You might want to stock up!"

"And these Blast potions deal **magic damage**?" Emerald asked.

Calyssa nodded. "They're one of the **more effective** ways of dealing with highly armored foes. You can also try poisoned arrows. You'll find those in our weapon shop." She smiled. "Keep in mind, the Blast potion doesn't have quite **the same radius** as a splash Harming. They're cheap for a reason."

"How small of a radius are we talking?" I asked.

"**Half a block**. You'll need to be rather accurate with them." Another smile. "Although both of you have **low** Throwing skills. I'd suggest working on that before using any kind of thrown weapon."

...

**Throwing skill.**

I learned about that back in the Academy, but forgot to mention it.

It's just like **skill** with a bow. And I'm sure you can recall how accurate I am with arrows. Emerald is just as **bad**. So arrows were out, too.

The two of us went to my room, where we sat around, thinking. Then I had an idea.

"What about **an enchantment?**" I asked. "One that does extra magic damage?"

"**Huh.**" Emerald had a thoughtful look. "Like fire damage?"

I nodded. "I vaguely recall an enchantment like that. One that dealt fire damage? Or lit monsters on fire? Or was it lightning damage?"

Where had I seen that?

Maybe someone I knew back in Villagetown had a weapon with an enchantment like that? Or was it in one of the many fairy tale series I've read? **Urg the Barbarian**, perhaps?

Yeah, **Urg** went on some quest into an ice cave. There were these ice zombies that had wildly high armor. So Urg ended up buying this sword that had some fire enchantment. With that sword, he **dropped** the cave's ice monsters left and right.

That was just a fairy tale, though.

Did enchantments like that really exist in our world?

If they do, they must be rare. We didn't even learn about them in the Academy.

However, Emerald, **being Emerald**, has this book called the **Aetherian Master Guide**, or **AMG**. Max loaned it to her the other day. It has detailed info on almost everything that pertains to an adventuring life in the world of Aetheria.

**One chapter** focuses on enchantments.



I scanned through the list.

PROTECTION.  
FEATHER FALLING.  
DEPTH STRIDER.  
FROST WALKER.  
COMFORT.  
REGENERATION.  
RESPIRATION.  
SOUL SPEED.  
BLAST PROTECTION.  
SWIFT SNEAK.  
MAGIC RESISTANCE?

That one seems **nice**. It gives you a slight chance to resist spells. There are also many different types of **specialized** Resistance, including Fire Resistance, Water, Earth, Air, Shadow, Light . . .

"You do realize these are all armor enchantments," Emerald said.

". . . Yeah."

What? So I get distracted easily. I turned the page.

In fact, there were three pages on armor enchantments alone. I turned the page again. As for weapon enchantments, there were five pages:

...

### **SHARPNESS**

Slightly increases a weapon's base damage, yadda yadda . . .

### **BANE OF ARTHROPODS**

Increases damage and applies Slowness IV to spiders, endermites, sword wyrms (giant centipedes) and other arthropods.

Most of the enchantments here I'd heard of.

**KNOCKBACK.**

**SMITE.**

**SWEEPING EDGE.**

**EFFICIENCY.**

**LOOTING.**

**IMPALING.**

There were a few that were **new** to me, however, such as:

### **PLANT SLAYING**

Extra physical damage to creepers, triffids, tree golems and other plant monsters.

### **DRAGON SLAYING**

Like Plant Slaying, only for dragons, snakes, lizards and other reptiles.

And finally—

### **FIRE ASPECT**

A powerful enchantment that imbues a weapon with magical flame. Each strike from a weapon so enchanted will set a monster on fire. One of Aetheria's many "lost" enchantments.

"...!!"

### **THERE IT IS!**

**I KNEW THERE WAS AN ENCHANTMENT LIKE THAT!**

**ARMOR DOESN'T PROTECT AGAINST FIRE DAMAGE. EVEN IF FIRE IS ONLY DOING 1 DAMAGE EVERY COUPLE SECONDS, AGAINST AN ENEMY WITH IMPOSSIBLY HIGH ARMOR, THAT'S A LOT OF DAMAGE . . .**

Truth be told, I almost fainted.

Then I read the enchantment's description again.

"Lost enchantment . . . ?" I looked at Emerald. "What does that mean?"

"A lot of knowledge was **lost** during that last war," Emerald said. "Including spells and enchantments. Most higher-level spells are a **total mystery**. Not even the greatest of living magicians knows how to cast them. I'm guessing the same is true for enchantments like **Fire Aspect**. We might be able to find a weapon for sale that has it. But any weapon like that must predate the war. We're talking extremely **rare** and **expensive**."

"How expensive, exactly?"

"I don't know. Probably at least **five figures**. You know, now that you mention it, I think I remember Max talking about a book that had an enchantment like this. It sold at the auction house for just over **ten thousand**."

"Ten thousand . . ."

I currently had just over **3,000 emeralds**. Spending a small fortune for an experiment like this was out of the question.

Still, I wasn't **giving up** just yet.

The **AMG** had a few other enchantments that seemed to hold promise.

## FLAMETONGUE

A minor enchantment. Each strike will deal half a point of additional fire damage (or one fourth of a heart). Seldom used by adventurers. Widely regarded as one of the weakest enchantments.

**A noob's enchantment**, in other words.

In normal times, an enchantment like that would be almost pointless.

You can only add so many enchantments to a weapon, and adding something like **Flametongue** just isn't worth it—half a point of extra damage pales in comparison to what **Sharpness** and **Smite** bring to the table.

Against a normal monster, anyway.

However, against this new highly armored type, maybe it's not so bad?

And I know, half a point of extra fire damage doesn't seem like much. But what if it were stacked with similar enchantments?

The **AMG** mentions another one called **Frostbrand**.

It's the same as **Flametongue**, only for cold damage. And there's another, **Shock**, that gives extra lightning damage.

By themselves, they're **extremely** weak. Combine all three, though, and you're dealing an **extra** one and half points of damage with each strike. And this damage should, in theory, completely ignore armor. Since it's **magical** in nature.

I explained all this to Emerald, who gave me the strangest look.

"So a weapon stacked with weak enchantments that deal tiny amounts of fire, frost, and lightning damage . . . I have to say, this is your **wildest idea yet**. Even more wild than you passing off dyed green eggs as emeralds."

And I just grinned. "Let's go shopping, huh?"

For this **experiment**, I ended up buying a new sword at the guild's weapon shop. A basic golden sword. It cost **one hundred emeralds**.

**Here's my logic**. A golden sword might deal **pathetic** damage, but even a diamond sword doesn't do much against really high armor. What really matters is how many enchantments can be thrown onto the weapon.

The thing about gold is, gold **receives** enchantments better than any other material and can hold more enchantments.

Overall, it will be easier to enchant.

I could have tried enchanting my main sword, **Eventide**, but it needs these expensive gemstones to be fully restored. That's a **future** project. For now, a golden sword seemed like a **better**, cheaper way to test things out.

### One minor **setback**:

The guild doesn't even have an enchanting shop.

And only one shop in the entire city was even capable of the specific enchantments I was looking for.

It took us **hours** to find.

A shop in the south of Lorica, run by an elderly woman named **Matoya**.

She had enchanted books with **Flametongue II**, **Frostbrand I** and **Shock I**. Even though they're low-level enchantments, the books are apparently hard to find. **Flametongue II** set me back one thousand emeralds, the other two were five hundred each, plus another three hundred for her to do all the enchanting.

I now have just over one thousand emeralds to my name.

Was it worth it? I will point out that **Flametongue II**, being second level, adds an entire point of fire damage. So each strike from this new sword should deal **two points of extra magical damage**.

One point of fire damage, along with half of a point of frost and lightning damage.





The **Wizard with White Eyes** must think he's so clever with his nearly indestructible minions. His latest **experiment**.

Now, I'm introducing **my** latest experiment.

**Sadly**, the sword didn't glow as strongly as expected. There was a slight **purple glow**, but you could barely notice it.

Yet every so often, a **pixel of fire** will fly from the blade and lazily float upwards.

That's from **Flametongue**. Other times, it's a blue pixel of frost, from **Frostbrand**, or a yellow pixel—a spark—from **Shock**.

This effect isn't immediately obvious. You'd have to really stare at the weapon to notice it.

The pixels of flame do appear more frequently than the other two enchantments, and appear slightly brighter, since **Flametongue** is at level two.

Matoya thinks there are even more enchantments like this. One is called **Fireburst**. It deals two points of extra fire damage but only has a **25% chance** to "proc" with each strike.

There are also more weak enchantments like Flametongue, except they deal different types of damage. Shadow. Light. Air.

She doesn't have books for any of those enchantments, and it's likely that no shop in the city offers them. They're quite **rare**. But they do show up at the **Auction House** from time to time.

Emerald and I are going to have to check that place out at some point. For now, though . . .

Well, what do you think I did immediately after obtaining this **new sword**? Maybe I headed back to the guildhall? Got a cup of tea? Sat around talking about enchantments?



Come on, there's a world that needs saving!



I'll never forget the  
first attack I made  
with this sword . . . .



When the blade hit the slime, there was a slight **fwoosh** from the extra fire damage, along with a **clink**, frost damage, and a **bzzzt**, lightning.

**Three damage from a single hit.** One physical, two magical. The same amount of damage that dwarf guy had dealt using his **extremely powerful** ability! With these low-level enchantments, I had effectively **tripled** my damage output.

Three damage, and no ability required! **No mana spent!**

The slime, after bouncing up and down from a barrage of attacks, hissed and moved backward. It was trying to **run**.

Even Emerald was amazed. **"It's working."**

It still took some time to bring this creature down, due to its strong **regeneration**. But it really wasn't anything worse than mining a block of stone. After the creature faded, I looked at Emerald.

"I can't believe no one ever thought of doing this."

She nodded. "You know, they say the people of Aetheria aren't creative at all, but still . . . **This seems like such an obvious thing.**"

"These enchantments are **permanent?**"

"I think so."

It was like having a free spell.

An infinite source of magical damage.

And there was no fumbling around with potions or arrows.

**“ReEeeEeeEeeEe . . . !!”**

Yet another creature emerged from the gloom with a terrible shriek.

If you're prone to nightmares, well, you may want to avoid looking at the following illustration. Because what I fought next was completely unnatural, a truly hideous **abomination**, straight from the underworld.

I'm warning you now, it's something that can't be unseen . . .



Can you believe I **actually** fought this thing?

Like everything else here, it had **high armor**. With my new weapon, though, fighting it was about as difficult as mining a block of stone.

Still challenging, sure, but a huge step up from “**mining obsidian with a piece of sugarcane**.” With each strike, the golden blade flashed brilliantly despite the gloom, golden arcs that left pixels of magical flame, frost and lightning.

Yet—

“...?!”

In my excitement, I had ignored one of the most widely known **properties** of gold.

There is a **very good reason** why your average adventurer doesn't use weapons made of this material. Especially in a dungeon like this.

While golden weapons have **low** base damage, there's something else that must be taken into account. Something more important than even a weapon's base damage or enchantability.

It's possible, while reading this, that you're **frustrated** right now.

Maybe you've been thinking about this ever since I mentioned buying a golden sword.

You might even be shouting something like “Why did you buy a weapon like that?!” because you already know what I’m referring to.

If you do, well . . .

You’re **much smarter** than I am.



My sword broke.

Shattering into **a hundred** golden pixels.

Luckily, it happened on the last hit, as I removed the last of the creature’s health.

So there was no need for me to fight with my bare hands. Or worse, have Emerald step in with her magic to save me yet again . . .

**I know**, right.

How could I have forgotten?

Everyone knows that gold has the **durability of a cookie**.

My new weapon, and three expensive enchantments. Almost two thousand emeralds. **Gone**.

Why didn't I think about adding **Unbreaking III**? Or at least **Unbreaking I**? Or why didn't I use an iron sword? It would have been harder to enchant, but at least this wouldn't have happened . . .

**Two thousand emeralds**.

Still, even if I suffered extreme financial loss, I'm sold on this enchanting idea.

I just need a **better** material. Something with high enchantability like gold, yet with higher durability, like iron or diamond.

Does something like that **exist**?

Maybe it was time to take a trip to that **secret shop**?

You know, the one where you have to jump onto the roof and climb down the chimney? The last time I tried that I **fell** into the water. So before heading there today, I bought five potions of **Swiftness III**.

Months ago, if you told me that I would be leaving my village, to attend a **prestigious** school then join a guild, and that at some

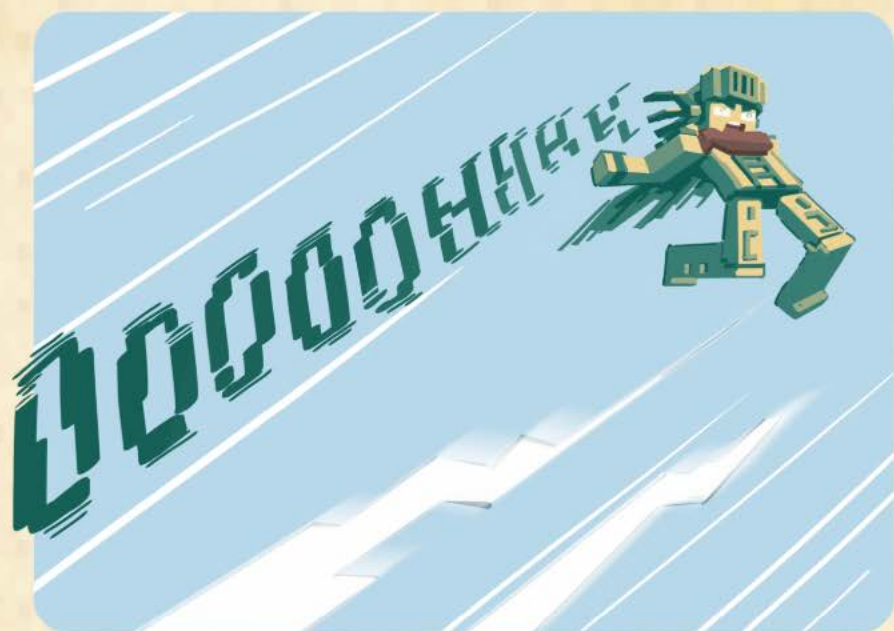
point I would be trying to jump onto the roof of a shop and climb down a chimney, and . . .

All right, so I'm **obsessed** with the idea of enchanting a sword with at least nine different enchantments! **So what?!** Who wouldn't be?! It's been a dream of mine since before I even started writing journals, and I'm going to make that dream a reality today! I'm going to chug potions of **Swiftness III** until I make that jump and enter that shop.

Not next week. Not tomorrow.  
Right now.

POTION OF  
SWIFTNESS III  
Increases speed  
and jump distance  
by 60%.





## JOURNAL ENTRY 3

"Is he all right?" I heard someone ask.

A familiar voice. That of my best friend, **Stump**.

Another voice, **Emerald's**: "Well, his legs are probably really sore."

"How many jumps did he make?"

"Fifty-two."

"That's a lot."

A girl's voice, although deeper than **Emerald's**: "All this effort for a sword?" That was **Breeze**.

And when I opened my eyes, she was there, as were the rest of my friends. **Breeze**, **Stump**, **Max**, **Lola**, **Ophelia**, and **Emerald**.



I appeared to be in my room at the **Adventurers guildhall**.

What happened yesterday? I remember leaping into the air and falling into the water. **Again and again**. Until I ran out of **Swiftness III** potions.

Then I went back to the guildhall and bought **some more Swiftness IIIs**. An entire stack. That was **expensive**. Emerald had to chip in. Followed by more jumping. Endless **failed** attempts.

Well, a total of **fifty-two**.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the end, all I can really remember is climbing down the chimney, completely soaked, then tumbling out into the shop, where I looked around in **awe** at all the weapons on display.

I opened my mouth to explain all this, but there was no need.

"Sounds like you've been **busy** here in the guild," Stump said.

That meant Emerald had already filled them in on recent events.

"Where's the new sword?" Breeze asked.

## The sword.

Yesterday, in the shop, I had only found **one suitable weapon**.

It was a sword made of **truegold**. A metal slightly more receptive to enchantments than even gold, and with the durability of iron.

This morning, it was currently under my bed, where I had stashed it last night. I crawled out of bed to retrieve it.



## NIGHTFOE WEAPON

XXX

DAMAGE: 3-6

MATERIAL:  
TRUEGOLD



Stump actually staggered back slightly. **"Nightfoe.** It even has a cool name . . ."

"It was supposedly once owned by a young Knight of Aetheria during the **last** war," I said, recalling what the shopkeeper told me. "Part of a **collection** of weapons sold at auction about a year ago."

"The blade is **truegold**," Emerald added, and looked at Max. "We could throw a **ton** of enchantments on this thing, right?"

The mage nodded. "I believe so. More than any other known material, in fact. Of course, the base damage is still **pitiful**, but I suppose that doesn't really matter against all these new creatures. With their high physical defense."

**"Truegold . . ."** Lola was looking at the weapon inquisitively. "I believe this metal is used in some of the more advanced **redstone** recipes. From what I remember, it's rather expensive."

"Yes, you need to **transmute** normal gold into this," Max said. He adjusted his glasses the way he always does when something catches his interest. "It's a long and **involved** brewing process."

Hearing that, Breeze raised an eyebrow—at me. **"How much** did this set you back?"

I had been **hoping** to avoid that question. How would they react? How would she react? Only two days ago we had talked about **saving** money, pooling our emeralds together, and now—

“. . . F-fifteen thousand,” I managed to say almost casually.

Breeze’s response, from tone to expression, was very un-Breeze-like: **“WUUUHHHH??!!”**

The rest, like her, were so **shocked**, they all looked like I had just transformed into a pink ender dragon.

**“Fifteen K?!”** Stump was totally bewildered. “Do you know how many enchanted cookies you could have bought with that?! **A lifetime supply!**”

“How did you manage to pay that, anyway?” Breeze asked. A **nervous** glance to my left and right. “About that . . .”

“The shopkeeper let him take out a **loan**,” Emerald said. “Because we’re in the guild. I guess that’s one of the **perks**. I don’t know.”

“I’m to **pay off** this debt in three months,” I added.

“And how are you going to do that?” Breeze asked. “It took us awhile to save up just **three thousand!**”

I shrugged. “I wasn’t exactly thinking about that at the time. I just figured if I could prove to the guild that this enchantment strategy really does work, others could make similar weapons . . . It could help out the guild. **The world.**”

“So you really think this enchanting thing can work?” Stump asked.

"Well, I haven't tested this one yet," I said. "But I enchanted this golden sword yesterday, and even that had **pretty good** results. Until it broke, anyway."

Emerald laughed. "You should've seen it, Stump. This slime started trying to run moments after it realized how much damage Runt was doing. **Pixels** of frost, fire, and lightning were flying with every strike. The monster's armor did nothing. And that's with a regular golden sword. Imagine what this thing can do once we get it **powered up!**"

"Well, once you test it out more," Ophelia said, "I hope the guild can reimburse you somewhat. Because right now, your net worth is currently around **negative** fifteen thousand emeralds."

"If it was fifteen hundy, it wouldn't be so bad," Stump said, "but fifteen thousand . . . **Wow.**"

Emerald turned to him. "**Hundy?**"

"Yeah. You know. Hundred? That's how they say it around here. They also use **hundo.**"

"**Hundo?** Really? Um, we've been here for three weeks, and I've never heard anyone say that. I think you're just making things up."

"Maybe you don't get out much."

"Maybe you're a **squid farmer.**"

"That's not even an insult," Stump said. "There are people out there who farm squids, and it's quite profitable."

"Who?!"

"Um, mermaids?"

...

... Yeah.

So I'm **in debt** fifteen thousand emeralds.

For anyone reading this, don't be like me. Never take on massive loans you have **no hope** of possibly repaying.

Unless, of course, the thing you're getting a loan for happens to be a really **cool** sword made of a special gold alloy that can easily be enchanted with nine or more different enchantments.

Then, and only then, **is it okay**.

Thinking about enchantments, I turned to Max.

"... Just how many enchantments can this sword possibly hold, anyway?"

"I've been wondering the very same thing," he said, his black glasses once more holding a sudden **gleam**. "I'm sure we'll find out soon enough. I might be able to add a few enchants myself, after all."

**That's right**, I almost forgot.

Max has been studying enchanting in the Academy.

He's always been interested in that, but lately, he's even thought about becoming an **Enchanter**. That's a wizard who specializes in that sort of thing.

If he really qualifies as that class, he's going to be so useful.

Because I'm not stopping until this new sword has at least **FIFTEEN** enchantments.

By the way, Breeze wanted to get **lunch** with me later. And once more, she strangely insisted on the two of us going out alone.

Which was fine. I finally **gave in**. Here's the thing, though. She wanted to go to that **fancy restaurant** again, with the magical spellcooking and **samurais** chopping vegetables.

Unfortunately, after buying so many **Swiftess III** pots, and paying what little I could for this new sword, I didn't have many emeralds left. Just over a **hundo** to my name.

So I suggested we go get some cheap street food.

These **fried onion pie** things. They're not bad, and it's the cheapest street food in the capital at one emerald each.

My reasoning was this: I figure, as adventurers, we need to **save** all of our money for armor upgrades, weapon enchants, weapon and armor repairs, new spells, tools, and so on.

Why spend so much on fancy food? What good is that going to do us? But when I asked her this, she got visibly **upset**. Why? What's so wrong about saving money?

Okay, so we couldn't sit down anywhere. And a donkey flew past us at one point, with a boy riding it, barely hanging on, guards

chasing after him, because you're not supposed to ride mounts in the city proper. I'll admit, some **pixels of mud** flew from the donkey's hooves, but only a **FEW** mud pixels landed onto our food, so it really wasn't that bad, I still ate mine.

Nothing to get so upset over, **right?** I was actually going to suggest that we start our own little farm somewhere, we could eat free carrots, straight from the ground, and save even more money, but I didn't want to press the issue . . .



... I know.

We should have gone somewhere **special** and ordered the **grandest** lunch, like a giant cake.

According to Stump, there's a place in Lorica where you can get one for only thirty emeralds. I'm talking a cake two blocks wide. As big as four normal cakes.

Why didn't we do that?

I owed Breeze that much, **didn't I?**

Was I wrong in wanting to **save** every last emerald for the essentials?

As we made our way back to the guildhall, she was still angry. We walked through the streets in silence.

No, it wasn't that **silent**. It had been windy all day, and now the wind was really picking up, **howling**. Many of those around us—ordinary townsfolk—were scrambling for shelter.

We haven't lived in the capital all that long, but long enough to know that when the weather starts **acting up**, you run for the nearest door. So we ran into a nearby potion shop.

It wasn't long before, at the shop's front window, we saw a green form outside. **A large green cube.**

**A slime?**

I instinctively drew my sword.

As expected, Breeze had already drawn hers.

However, what came tumbling through the street was not any sort of monster but . . .

“. . . **A leaf block,**” Breeze said. “Never seen that before . . .”

An **ordinary** block of leaves, oak leaves.

The wind was so strong, the leafen cube had been torn from a tree and was rolling across cobblestone.

To think our world was in such a sad state. Monsters **everywhere**. An evil wizard lurking beneath the city. Increasingly bad weather, with blocks of ice raining from the sky.

And now we’ve got leaf blocks rolling through the streets.

. . .

A **shrill** voice to my left: “. . . Are you adventurers? In the guild, I mean.”

A young boy, eight or nine. The shopkeeper’s son, maybe. I looked at him. At Breeze. At him again.

“We are,” Breeze said with a smile. “Well, he is. And I’m preparing to **join the guild** as well.”

The boy looked at us in **awe**. “I heard the **heroes** have all left the city . . . The summoned ones. My parents are so **worried**. The weather has been getting worse and worse. But I keep telling them the kingdom

still has knights. And now we have adventurers like you. I know you guys will help set things right."

How did he know about the **summoned heroes?**

And the Knights of Aetheria . . . I had wanted to become one.

But suddenly, after listening to this kid, being a humble adventurer didn't seem so bad.

After the boy took off, Breeze turned to me. "Here."

And handed me **two thousand** emeralds.

"That should be enough for at least a few good enchantments," she said. I looked at her in total disbelief. "Why?"

She was no longer upset. Smiling, even. **Slightly.** "I was **mad** about us not going somewhere fancy, but you're right. Fancy lunches can wait. We need to focus on what's important. Maybe this idea of yours really can help out the guild. I have faith in **y—YWAA!**"

That sound was made due to me giving her **the biggest hug.**

Yeah, we **hugged.** So what? If someone gave you two thousand emeralds so you could enchant a new sword (and possibly help save the world) you'd do the same thing!

"Thanks, Breeze."

But she wasn't the only one who supported me today. We met up with Max and all the rest at the guildhall, who, upon learning of Breeze's **generosity**, decided to chip in, too.



"Really hope this investment pays off," Stump said. His contribution: **Five hundred** emeralds. "That's my **entire** life savings."

Max added **three hundred**. "I'll work on my Enchanting skill," he said. "There are ways to enchant items **without the use of** magical

books. We'll need materials for that method, like lapis lazuli, but it's much cheaper."

Ophelia offered **two hundred**, and some advice: "That new sword has a decent amount of durability, but the first enchantment you add had better be **Unbreaking III**."

"Count on it."

Finally, there was Lola.

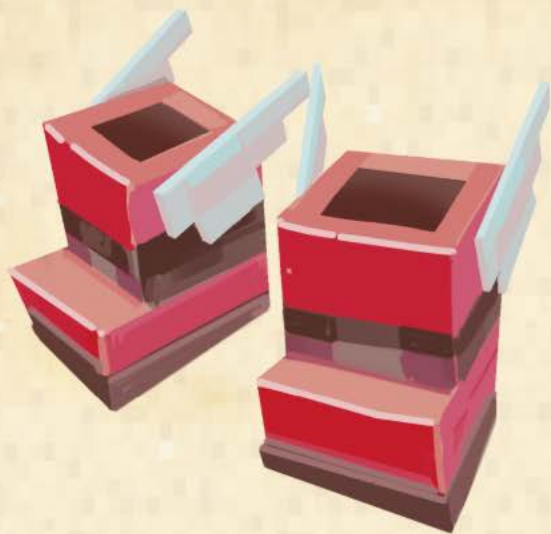
After I learned that spell, **Air Dash**, she started working on a project.

Even now, I have a hard time using that spell correctly, so she figured she could help me out.

After all, she's brilliant with redstone. In fact, she's on her way to becoming a **Gadgeteer**. A class that **specializes** in redstone engineering. They can craft many different types of redstone items.

Lola had just finished **crafting** one last night, and she gave it to me now: a pair of "**rocket boots**" utilizing the power of redstone.

They can be used to provide a sudden burst of speed, much like the **Dash** spell. Think of it like a potion of **Swiftiness twenty** that only lasts a fraction of a second.



"Should come in handy for **emergencies**," Lola said. "Or in the event you can't cast a Dash spell. Doesn't consume any mana, either."

"So it's like having a **free** spell," I said.

She nodded. "It has a long **cooldown**, though. You can only use it once per day."

"This was one of her projects at the Academy," Max said. "Needless to say, she received a perfect grade. She really is a redstone **genius**."

Lola blushed. "I don't know about that. There are others who are just as **skilled**." She smiled at me. "I should mention that this is just the beginning. I'm in process of creating a few more items like this to help you out. My way of **thanking you**."

"... For what?"

"Before we left the village, you gave me **a chance**. You believed in me. And now, it's my turn to believe in you."

"..... I..."

I was so **overwhelmed** I couldn't form a proper response.

Trying to find the right words was like trying to plan a redstone build. **Exceedingly difficult**.

I'll just say that the seven of us eventually headed to the enchanting shop, where I was able to enchant my new sword exactly like the first.

A recreation of my initial **experiment**.

Only with far more durability. A bit more than iron, strengthened further with **Unbreaking III**.

And this is only **the start**.

Soon, I'll have this thing enchanted so much, zombies will look at it and flee in **terror**, mistaking it for the sun.

As great as it was, though . . .



My friends had to head back to the Academy. Everyone besides Emerald, I mean. They each had an extra class in the evening.

How long is it going to be before they're out of there? Breeze says she's almost finished with that special **elven training**, but the rest are all still struggling . . .

At least I can end this journal entry on a positive note. Before they took off, I had to answer a question Max and I had been wondering.

**Legends** say a sword enchanted with **Fire Aspect** can be used to cook food. Can the **Flametongue** enchantment do the same?

To find out, we went to a nearby tavern and ordered a single, uncooked steak.

Long story short, attacking a steak with a **Flametongue** imbued sword is a much faster alternative to using a furnace.

The uncooked steak was rather cheap, too! So cheap that I suggested that we order more. We could have an early dinner together.

Emerald wasn't so **excited** about the idea: "Um, I'm not eating anything that sword touches. Who knows how many monsters it's seen?"

Breeze was frowning as well: "Err, the steak looks somewhat frozen now . . ."

Okay, so the **Frostbrand** enchantment had left a few bits of ice. Cry me a water block! Or water spring. Whatever.

"You're supposed to be **adventurers!**" I said. "As adventurers, we can't be picky! We'll have to eat stuff like this from time to time!"

"**He's right,**" Stump said. "When you're out questing, you won't always have access to the best food. Adventurers are even known to drink dungeon water." He grinned. "That being said, I'll take **two.**"

"I'll take one as well," Max said. "After all, this could be seen as an unusual form of magical cooking. Could I even call myself a mage if I didn't at least try a bite?"

Breeze finally gave in. "Well, my **ancestors** did used to eat fried slime. The steaks can't be any worse than that, right?"

"I prefer mine **well done,**" Lola said. "Do you think that might be possible if you were to attack the steak twice? Or three times, maybe?"

"Or maybe that can be done with a **critical hit?**" Stump suggested.

"How does one critically hit a steak?" Ophelia asked with a frown. "Furthermore, how about medium rare? That's what I prefer. Although I'm not sure how that could be accomplished."

"Maybe with a glancing blow," was my suggestion. I rose from the table and once more drew **Nightfoe**. "A light strike at the side of

the steak. Perhaps the effect of the sword's enchantment will be less powerful?"

Max, adjusting his glasses, took out his journal, as well as a quill.

To him, this was a bonafide magical experiment. We were researching the properties and behaviors of weapon enchantments.

Sometimes, it really does feel like I never left my village. Only moments after enchanting a new sword, here we were, already asking the **REAL** questions . . . .

And ordering uncooked steaks.



## JOURNAL ENTRY 4

THE NEXT MORNING,  
AT THE GUILDHALL . . .

(Peaceful music.)

(Distant rooster  
crowing.)



Last night, we had **a real feast**.

A **hearty** and **traditional** Villagetown-style meal.

In addition to steak, we ordered baked potatoes, carrots, cookies.

**All the classics.**

Max even ordered a bowl of beetroot soup. He was never a fan of that before, but he said it reminded him of home.

I wanted to be reminded of home as well, so I suggested a pumpkin pie **eating contest**. A common event back in my village. And I ate so many. I was only half a pie away from matching Stump.

Now, this morning, in my room back at the guild—

“Hurrgrrr . . .”

I was in a state of pie-induced food paralysis. Otherwise known as a **“pie coma.”**

The final, half eaten pie that I was unable to finish last night was now **lying** on the floor. Why did I bring it back to my room?

There was also someone knocking on the door. For me, that’s an almost unusual sound, since few people ever knock back in Villagetown. It’s customary to just barge through doors.

By the time I finally **dragged** myself out of bed, the door flew open.

In rushed a girl with **silver hair** and **shining robes**. **Elodi!**  
Beside her, there was an elderly man in purple. That was **Sage Lukas**,  
one of the seven members of the **Lorica Council**. One of her advisors,  
in other words.



### Elodi . . .

I hadn't **seen her** in days!

What's more, I hadn't thought about her at all. **Is that weird?**

How could I have forgotten about **Elodi Runehammer?!**

She's the **king!** Covering for her father, yes, but she's still the  
**ruler of Ardenvell!**

Only days ago, she invited me to this guild. A **royal invitation**. Yet since that time, I haven't thought about her all that much.

As I said, though, I haven't seen her at all lately. And I've been **WAY** too wrapped up in this new enchanting project. It's not easy coming up with an idea to help save the world!

It's also not easy speaking to her. I still don't know how to properly address royalty.

I thought back to **Urg the Barbarian**. In that series, whenever Urg sees the king, he'll often just say: "**YA0000!!!! KING!!!!**"

But that's in Urg's fairy tale world, the fantasy world of Elunia. In that world, people ride giant blue chipmunks and use pineapples as currency. I was fairly certain that "**Yo, King!**" wouldn't have worked too well here.

As luck would have it, though, I didn't have to say anything.

Before I could, she unleashed a torrent of words that would have put Stump to shame.

"I'm sorry for not being here I know I said I was going to help you get settled in I've just been so **busy** I'm sure you can understand right and anyway how did you do it what's your secret tell me tell me tell me I **really need** to know!"

I had **no idea** what she was talking about.

Unless she was asking how I was able to eat so many pies last night.

But that's a **mystery** even to me. How did I eat so many? Had my food bar increased as of late?

I glanced around **nervously**. Especially at the half-eaten pie left on the stool. In her excitement, she didn't appear to notice it, and I'm thankful for that.

"Really," she said. "How did you do it?!"

"Do what?!"

The man beside her, **Sage Lukas**, spoke up: "Her Majesty is referring to your recent adventure in the **labyrinth**. Word around the guild is that you vanquished a monster known as a **creeper squid**. A fact confirmed this morning by your party member, Emerald."

". . . Oh."

Is that really what they're called? Creeper squids? I forgot to use **Analyze** on it.

Why did they have to remind me of that thing, anyway?! I was trying so hard to **forget!** The way it crawled around on the dungeon floor, with that horrible creeper face just staring at me . . .

"I almost can't believe it," Elodi said. She had visibly calmed down somewhat but still looked rather amazed. "A creeper squid is a **very**

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Why did they have to remind me of that thing, *anyway*?! I was trying so hard to **forget!** The way it crawled around on the dungeon floor, with that horrible creeper face just staring at me . . .

"I almost can't believe it," Elodi said. She had visibly calmed down somewhat but still looked rather amazed. "A creeper squid is a **very**

serious monster! One of the **worst** of the enemy's new creations. Even the more experienced adventurers in this guild, much older than yourself, **have difficulties** with them."

The Sage nodded. "In fact, no one in the guild has managed to defeat one without the heavy use of **magic**. Their physical defenses are among the highest of the creatures on the dungeon's first floor. Yet from what we know, Emerald didn't assist you. She didn't cast a single spell."

The way Elodi looked at me now was so intense, it was like the stare of **ten endermen**. "You had **no idea**, did you? How dangerous they are?"

"Well, no, I . . ."

So **creeper squids** are apparently fearsome, scary monsters. And I **defeated** one.

At this news, part of me wanted to jump around cheering. Another part, however, mostly my stomach, was against the idea of any sudden movement. No, I don't think I'll be able to eat pumpkin anything **ever** again.

The Sage was staring at me. "I must say, something about this is highly **unusual**," he mumbled. "This boy is completely **average** in almost every way. Yet he easily defeated such a powerful foe. **How?**"

"Why do I even need to explain anything?" I asked, looking at Elodi. "I thought you were capable of reading minds?"

"You think I haven't been trying? The only thing I've picked up from you are thoughts about enchantments!"

". . . Here."

It was here that I showed them my latest project. **Nightfoe.**

Every **wild idea** I've ever had in the past . . . The **furnace house.** The **mushroom house.** **Project X.** The **dyed green eggs.** None of that compared to this.

Yet, at first, they looked at the weapon with raised eyebrows.

They couldn't comprehend the **sheer awesomeness** in front of them. In fact, the Sage actually laughed.

And suddenly I felt like I was back in Villagetown again, back at school, when my teacher had **criticized** the mushroom house. It was that all over again.

"This material, **truegold** . . ." Sage Lukas laughed again. "Sure, it might receive enchantments better than any other material, but **Flametongue? Frostbrand? Shock?**" Another laugh. "They're all extremely **poor**, far worse than something like Fire Aspect, as they only provide the **smallest amounts** of magical damage with each strike and—" Then he suddenly froze. "Oh dear. **That's brilliant.** Why didn't we think of that?!"

"**I knew it!**" Elodi said. "I knew it was going to be something like this!" She turned to the Sage. "Now you see why I invited him to

the guild! He might come up with the **weirdest** strategies . . . But they work!”

“I’ll admit, I completely forgot about these minor enchantments,” the Sage mumbled. “Only in this specific situation do they really **have merit.**”

“Thank you,” Elodi said. “**Really.** I mean it. The guild really has been struggling in the dungeon lately, but with strategies like this, we might have **a chance.**”

“What’s so important about that place, anyway?” I asked. “What is **Herobrine** doing there?”

“Well, the dungeon’s lowest floor has **a doorway**, or portal, to his realm. You know, the **ice realm?** That’s where his lair resides. It’s said to be a fortress made entirely of ice blocks.”

I staggered back a bit. “. . . **P-portal?**”

“Uh huh.”

“. . . To Herob-br . . . .”

“Err . . . ?”

“. . . **Gg-g . . . g-g-g . . .**”

Allow me to repeat what I just learned.

A portal leading **directly** to Herobrine’s castle is somewhere beneath the city.

If you really think about it, you might as well say that Herobrine's castle is somewhere **beneath the city!**

This was probably the biggest **discovery** I'd made since leaving my village. As you can imagine, I completely freaked out. Here's the problem with that. Recently, as mentioned in my last journal, I learned a new spell, **Air Dash**. The thing about spells is that you can cast them inadvertently. Especially when you have a Magic skill as low as mine and are stressed out or extremely excited. Of course, Air Dash isn't exactly the kind of spell you want to cast on accident . . .

All I really remember is **flying into the Sage** like a redstone-powered minecart. I really need to **work on my Magic skill**.



## JOURNAL ENTRY 5



"... A portal?" Breeze said, one eyebrow raised.

We met up with in the afternoon and decided to go **fishing**. We mostly just chatted, though. Especially about what happened to me earlier, with Elodi's **surprise visit**.

I nodded. "**A portal**. On the dungeon's lowest floor."

"And it leads to **Icehollow**?" Breeze frowned. "I guess that explains why **the guild** has been so focused on exploring that place. I'll try to do a bit of research."

I was **glad** to hear that.

Maybe she could find something in one of those history books she's always reading?

Of course, I mentioned how I **accidentally** cast Air Dash and flew into the Sage guy. "He **wasn't too happy**. He said my Magic skill is probably lower than his cat's."

Breeze grinned. "Even if your skill with Magic **isn't that great yet**, your ideas . . . **Creativity** can be as strong as any spell. At least, that's what Brio always said." She paused. "What else did Elodi say? Anything?"

"Not really," I said. "Only that she was going to mention my enchantment **strategy** at an upcoming meeting. Then she thanked me again, said I should take the rest of the day off, and left."

"Well, why don't we do that? Let's head into the city. **Take a break.**"

Take a break? I almost laughed.

First of all, I had to **work** on my Magic skill so that I would stop randomly flying into people.

Second, my armor could have used some **repairs**. And furthermore, I still hadn't tried out my new sword yet. Even if

Nightfoe was almost identical to that first sword, I still needed to do a proper **field test**.

And maybe I could find a book of **Fire Aspect** . . .

Yes, Fire Aspect . . . I could really use something like that, because—

“Hey?” Breeze nudged me. “Let me guess. You’re thinking about enchantments right now, aren’t you?”

This time, I actually laughed. You know, the kind of laugh you make when someone suggests something that’s completely absurd? That sound, plus: **“No.”** Then I looked at the sand. Lowered my head.

**“ . . . Yes.”**

Breeze sighed, shaking her head slightly. “That seems to be **all you’ve been thinking about** lately. In fact, Emerald said you haven’t even looked at the guild’s quest board yet. You were so excited upon seeing the one at the Academy, and the Guild’s board is twice as big, the largest in Aetheria.”

. . .

**It’s true.**

The Adventurers Guild does have the largest quest board.

A board of **masterful** craftsmanship and elegantly polished spruce planks, right in the front lobby. You couldn’t miss it.

At any hour, you'll find adventurers standing around it, browsing the **endless** number of quests posted there while grumbling about how strong the monsters have become.

Yet I had completely **ignored** it.

I should have been so excited to see that on my first day.

That should have been the first thing I focused on after becoming an adventurer.

"I've barely thought about questing," I said. "I've been so **focused** on my enchantment schemes, that I just . . . **Forgot.**"

I'd forgotten about everything.

At times, I'd even forgotten about my friends. And how could I forget about someone like Breeze? I really did need a break. I can't be expected to save the world all the time, right? Only Monday through Friday.

"**All right.**" I smiled. "What would you like to do today?"

## JOURNAL ENTRY 6



We went to this **little fair** on the edge of town.

Besides the bustling crowds, the first thing I noticed was the **construction**. Most of the capital's buildings are made of these blocks called "**timberframe blocks**." Timberframe buildings are **quite beautiful**, but unlike anything you'll find back in my village.

However, everything at the **Moonrise Fair** was much simpler, mostly cobblestone and oak planks. This was **intentional**. The fair

was made to resemble a remote village, where things like timberframe blocks are unheard of.

Any door you'd find here was oak and looked just like the doors back home. And the only **chairs** here were stair blocks.

"It looks almost exactly like Villagetown," I said to Breeze, looking around in **awe**.

"Thought you might like this." She **smiled**. "There's even an ice cream stand. And games. Maybe we can win something?"

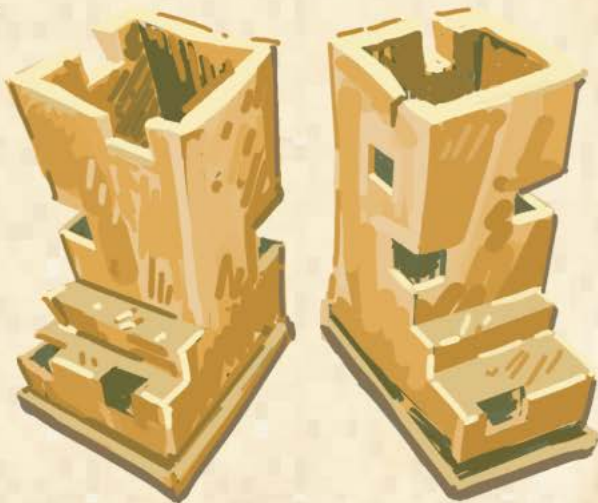
Yeah, the fair had a number of games. Each could be played for the low price of just **five emeralds**.

The first game we tried was called **The Table's Challenge**. It was simple enough. You stand at a crafting table, and you have to craft a pair of leather boots. If you manage to craft a pair without any major defects, you get a prize.

Amazing, right?

I mean, **what could possibly go wrong?**

My pair had **holes** in them.



I tried explaining to the guy running the game that this wasn't a defect at all, but an **intentional** modification. Weight reduction. I mean, with boots like this, you'll be able to run faster, and . . .

**All right**, so I failed.

It was a **ridiculous** game, anyway.

A real game involves a skill like swordsmanship.

As luck would have it, the next game we saw was an **archery** game.

Why did Breeze have to go first? **Why?** She threw five emeralds onto the counter, grabbed a bow . . . And hit three bullseyes, **just like that**.

The guy behind the counter **wasn't too thrilled**. He reluctantly gave her a **Wand of Summon Animal**. That's a low-level summoning spell that can be used to call forth almost any normal animal the size of a pig or smaller. And if you think that sounds **useless**, the wand only had one charge left, meaning it could only be used once.

**Even worse**, Breeze gave this wand to me.

**How embarrassing is that?** I should be winning a prize for her! **Not the other way around!** And it wasn't even a cool prize, like a **stuffed enderdragon!**

I looked at the wand doubtfully. "What am I supposed to do with this?"

"I'm sure you'll figure out a use for it," she said with a shrug. Then she turned to the guy behind the counter. "Care if I **try again?**"

"Um, actually, **no**, I . . . I'm about to close soon!"

"Err, it's barely past noon," Breeze said flatly.

"**Oh, well**, the city has all sorts of new regulations! They don't want us working too hard!"

I'd never seen someone **close up shop** so fast. Well, no, there was one time. Back in Villagetown, that food stall next to the school once had an "all you can eat" deal. They began to regret this shortly after Stump walked up. My best friend had nearly **put them out of business** that day. Or so I heard.

Anyway, the fair was **great**.

We tried **a lot** more games, including one that had a **huge cauldron** filled with water and apples. And you had to grab these apples with your teeth. Of course, I ended up **falling in** . . .

But besides that, it was a **perfect** day.

I hope I'll be able to say the same about tomorrow. Emerald and I will be taking on **our first quest** in the morning.

It's too bad Breeze isn't in the guild yet. She's almost done with her training, though. Actually, she had **a class** tonight, and I ended up

walking her there. I mostly just wanted to snoop around and see this **secretive rogue classroom** for myself. It's in a nondescript building near the Academy's gardens.



However, the classroom was **completely** empty.

Was Breeze the only student in this class? No. In fact, many students were here, but right now, they were all in **stealth**, practically **invisible**. If you look closely, you might be able to spot some of them.

"Good luck tomorrow," Breeze said. "Oh. And one more thing."

"What's that?"

She **vanished** into thin air.

A moment later, in my right ear, little more than a whisper: "**Boo.**"

...

And after today, I guess I have **another goal.**

An **enchanted sword** is nice and all, but I really, really need to learn some abilities like that.

## JOURNAL ENTRY 7

In the world of Aetheria . . .

When the stars were **much brighter** than they are now.

There was a period of time known as the **Wood Age**. It predates even the **Stone Age**. In these earliest days, the **primitive** people of Aetheria didn't even know how to craft stone items. Only things made out of wood.

In fact, in the very beginning of the Wood Age, no one knew how to craft anything at all.

This may come as a **shock**, but what the earliest Aetherians used as weapons were pieces of **sugarcane**.

Of course, there were monsters back then, just like now. Mostly spiders, slimes, and these **big lizard things** which are now extinct. So when cavemen went into a nearby swamp foraging for mushrooms, they had a rather difficult time.

Adding to this, the earliest slimes enjoyed eating mushrooms, too. So back then, slimes and sugarcane wielding Aetherians would often clash.

They would square off at a distance, **glaring** at each other angrily, and making angry sounds, the cavemen brandishing their sticks of sugarcane in a **threatening** way.



However, all of this changed with a caveman named **Ogg**.

Ogg would spend the whole day fighting off **prehistoric** monsters and would often come back to his little cave with only **a single** mushroom to show for it.

Sometimes, he was unable to find any mushrooms at all.

And so one day, as he returned to his cave emptyhanded, he grew **frustrated** and punched a tree.

Then he punched **again**.

He punched and punched until a block of oak was mined.

Ogg's first instinct was to **eat** this block, which he tried, many times. **Without any success.**


It wasn't until a few weeks later that Ogg managed to put this wood block into **his inventory's crafting grid** and somehow managed to make **planks**.

Weeks later, he made the world's **very first** crafting table.

Within minutes, this crafting table had **teeth marks** in it. Ogg tried **eating** this as well. Even so, it was, despite having been chewed on, a **fully functioning** crafting table and the first major discovery in Aetheria.

The details here are unclear, but what's **important** is that within two months, Ogg managed to craft a **wooden axe**. The world's very first actual weapon. With this, he managed to fight off a number of **fearsome** monsters and returned to his little cave with at least twenty mushrooms. Suddenly, venturing into the swamp was **no longer so scary**.

And now, it's the same thing all over again.



*"Only instead of  
a swamp, there's  
a dungeon."*

"And instead of  
a caveman . . ."



... There's me,  
apparently."

Oh, and Emerald. She bought a staff yesterday and had it enchanted with Frostbrand II.



I'm glad she did, because we ended up fighting a lot of things today.

Including a slime—the screaming variety—a creeper chicken, and a giant silverfish.



As well as a  
giant bat.



And a  
sand slime.



I'm sure you're **wondering** about that last one.

It would appear that Herobrine somehow managed to merge a **green slime** with a **block of soul sand**.

The result is a creature that resembles a brownish-green slime. And it can occasionally spray **a cloud of sludge**—a mixture of soul sand and slime.

By the time I removed the last of the creature's health, I was **completely** covered in the stuff.

What can be said about soul sand? It **reduces your movement speed** by 50%, right? Okay, so the sludge had the exact same effect. It also gave off an **incredible stench**, and being part slime, clung to my armor. It just wouldn't come off.

The sludge did, of course, leave a **"debuff"** or negative status effect.

There was a faint green icon in the corner of my vision that indicated this. **"Soul Ooze,"** it was called. And it had a duration of **ONE HOUR . . .**

If there had been a source of water nearby, maybe I could have gone for a quick swim to **wash it off**. This dungeon is said to have many pools, even waterfalls and rivers, but not here. We were still close to the dungeon's entrance.

That meant we were done for the day. I couldn't fight like this. We had to **head back**.

How did Herobrine manage to make such a creature? What kind of **twisted** person combines a slime with a block of soul sand?

Really, **Ogg the caveman** had it so easy compared to me.

At least he only had to fight normal monsters. Not the creations of an evil wizard. I could almost hear him **cackling** right now, from the depths of this place . . .

**That's fine, though.** Emerald and I did make some progress today. We sent five of his creations to the **99th dimension**.

And here's the best part. We grabbed a quest from the guild's quest board this morning. Titled **Monster Removal**, the quest offered **two hundred emeralds** per mob defeated.

To collect that reward, I only had to head out of the dungeon and back to the city, to the guildhall's front desk . . .

Which took a while, given my current state.

The worst part about all of this? I was going to be **late** for lunch!

"Will you **hurry up?!**" Emerald snapped, looking back with a scowl. "Chug a Swiftess potion already!"

I actually tried that. The potion had **no effect**, though. The sludge not only slows you, it blocks **any effects** that increase movement speed.

". . . Maybe you can **push me forward?**" I asked. "Would that help?"

"You really think I'd get close to you right now? You smell worse than one of Breeze's brewing fails."

I remember that day. The day Breeze's potion **blew up**. That had smelled pretty bad, but this . . . This was a bad day to have a nose.

**Squish, squish . . .**

The sound of me trudging forward. Even my boots were ooze-logged.

When we finally reached the city, I felt so relieved. Many in the street weren't too happy to see me, however. A group of little kids took one look at me and screamed.

I was still **covered in so much of that sludge**, I . . . Apparently resembled a monster.

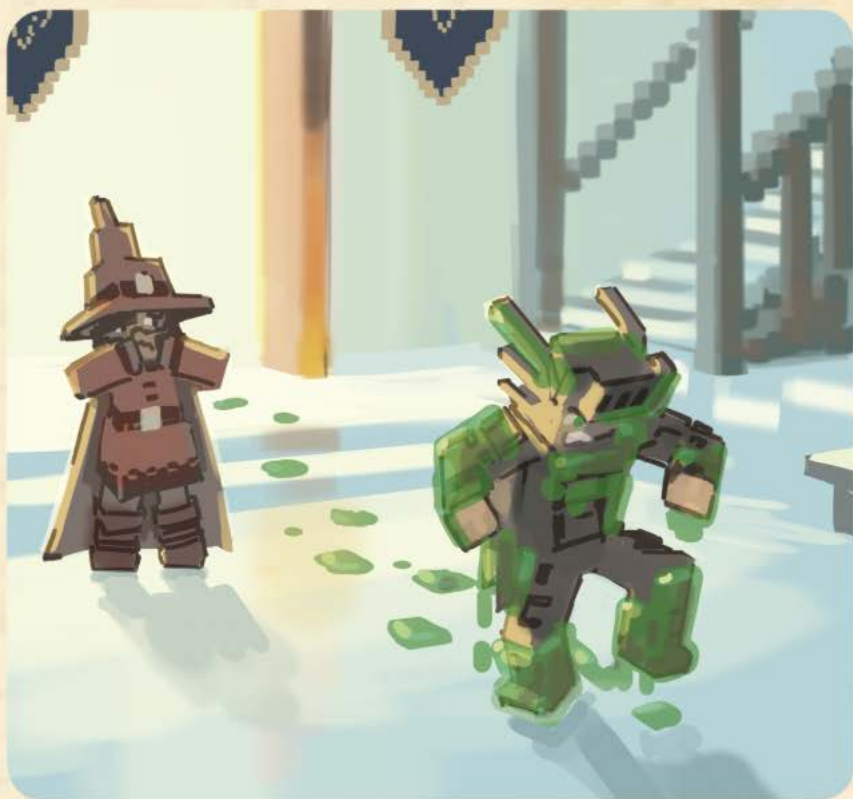


A **typical** day in the life of an adventurer.

I'm just glad it started raining on our way back to the guild. That helped wash off at least some of the slime.

Yeah, the weather is still **pretty bad**. These days, it's been raining so much, the creatures of the End have probably blocked off any portals that lead to this world and put up signs that read: "**Warning. Do not invade. Do not.**"

## JOURNAL ENTRY 8



The Adventurers Guild really is a **wonderful place**.

All the whites and browns with hints of red, green, and gold. Every pixel of **wood polished** to an almost diamond gleam.

You step into the lobby, and the warmth hits you immediately, while a **cheerful melody** drifts from further within—the notes of a

harpsichord—as does the scent of freshly baked bread, enchanted teas and coffees, and distant laughter.

**Beautiful.**

So beautiful that it almost felt wrong to walk around here while still half covered in slime.

**Squish, squish, squash . . . . .**

“You should probably hit the bath house first,” Emerald said, still keeping her distance. “You’re **um**, still kinda leaving a trail.”

Yeah, the guildhall not only has multiple shops, but a **bath house**. The bath entrance is on the side, so adventurers don’t go tracking in mud, cobwebs, dirt, mold and yes, various types of slimes and oozes.

Before I could even take another step, though, I noticed **three adventurers** approaching.

One was a guy in a dark green long coat, with a hood and **mask**. You couldn’t see his face, only his eyes. That was **Alvard**. One of the guild’s more **experienced**. His pendant—**diamond**—indicated his rank.

The dwarf beside him was **Grumf**. He wore a diamond pendant as well.

There was also a girl in rose-colored robes, with black hair that fell over one eye—**Arine**. She was a **Copper** rank, so she must have been somewhat new to the guild. Copper is only one step above Jade, like Emerald and myself.



Alvard and Grumf were **definitely warriors**.

At least, they looked like the type whose **hobbies** included arm wrestling iron golems.

As for Arine, only a **moon priest** wears robes like that. They're spellcasters with unmatched **healing and defensive magic**.

"What does **this kid** keep squinting at us for?" Grumf asked the other two.

To which Arine replied: "He appears to be using the **Analyze ability** to ascertain our names."

The dwarf scowled. "Whatever happened to **proper introductions?!**"

"You must be the ones **Elodi** was talking about," said the one in the longcoat—Alvard. "It appears you're doing **rather well**. First, I heard that you defeated a  **Creeper squid**. And now, by the looks of it, you've defeated a **sand slime**."

"Sand slimes are one of his **unholiest** of creations," Arine said. "Soul sand is a **foul substance** by itself, but to somehow merge that with a monster, through undoubtedly **dark methods** . . . It's an **extreme corruption** of nature."

With a nod, the dwarf stepped forward. "Aye, even we have trouble with such **fiends**. So perhaps I should ask how greenhorns like yourselves managed one?"

I glanced at Emerald. "We, **um** . . . Attacked it?"

"Runt here did **most of the work**," Emerald said. "I did help out, though! By giving it a few good bops with this!"

She **proudly** held up her new staff.

Apparently, she had it **enchanted** yesterday while I was hanging out with Breeze all day.

Emerald really knows how to **brag**, doesn't she? Her new staff **does** look amazing, I'll admit. And hey, I'm not jealous or anything. I mean, okay, sure, I did show them my own weapon. I drew **Nightfoe** from its scabbard in a flashy way. Not because I wanted to show off, however. I figured they should at least see a real weapon, you know, with all the proper enchantments, and—Okay, **fine! Fine!** I wanted to **show off**, too! Is that such a crime?!!

"Yeah, these are some **weird** enchantments," Alvard said. "Elodi did inform us of them yesterday. And at the time, I must admit, it didn't sound like such a great idea . . ."

"Aye, it sounded like a bunch of **trickery** to me," the dwarf said. "Something an elf would come up with! Yet maybe it really does hold promise? Perhaps we could have a test. A **DPS race. You against me.**" He looked at me. "What do you say?"

He explained that there's a **training dummy** in the courtyard behind the guildhall.

It's a golem, like the ones they have at the Academy. Except this one has **buffs**, increasing its armor dramatically. In other words, it's just like one of the dungeon's monsters.

The dwarf's idea was to see who could do better **DPS**, or **damage per second**.

What was I going to say? **No?** According to them, the golem wouldn't even fight back. It could be commanded to just stand there. All I had to do was head out into the back courtyard. So I did.



I'm really **glad** that golem could be commanded to not fight back. It was **huge**.

They wanted me to go first, and here's how that went. I swung NightFoe. **A lot**. Just as the blacksmith, Leaf, once attacked an item chest, over and over. No fancy moves. Just endless strikes.

At last, a minute later— **“3.9 DPS,”** Arine called out.

She seemed to be using **a spell** that was displaying my damage output and DPS. I’m not sure what spell, exactly.

Then it was Grumf’s turn.

Little did I know, this guy was a **blademaster**, which is similar to a samurai.

He charged at the golem with the **loudest** cry, then unleashed an **Overblade**—A sword ability that was so strong, the flames in the nearby lanterns flickered.

The **“battle”** that followed created a cloud of dust, until that was all you could see.

When the dust finally **settled**, the blademaster was standing there with a **cool** pose, wearing a cool gaze, **his sword at his side . . .**

His DPS, according to Arine:

**“6.1!”**

. . . I lost.

I nodded at the dwarf. **“Good game.”** I was so tired from questing earlier that I just wanted to wash up and get some **sleep**.

**“Wish I could learn some abilities like that,”** I said to him.

He made a slight sound.

**“. . .? Are you okay?”**

The dwarf didn't respond. He was staring straight ahead, a pixel of **sweat** on his brow.

"G-g-g . . . g-g . . . g-g-gg-g-**gggg**—" Then he fell to his knees.

". . . **gg-g-g-g**—"

Until falling **face down** in the grass.

"**Wow**. He went **oom**." Arine crouched down beside him. "He really went all out on that one, huh?"

The dwarf had **run out of mana**. He had pushed himself to the **absolute** limit, using a flurry of powerful sword moves, until the **last of his MP** had been consumed.

"Wait a minute," Alvard said. "Runt didn't use **any** abilities at all. He used **zero mana**. He was just auto attacking."

Arine nodded. "If we take that into account, **he wins hands down**."

Alvard was giving me the **strangest** look. "You're a **really weird** kid, you know that? You join the guild, don't talk to anyone, then you come up with **a strategy** like this . . ."

"I'd like to say that's it's been **a huge** team effort!" Emerald said. She threw one arm around my shoulder and flashed **a smile**, as if we were the bestest of best friends. "I've been encouraging him all the way!"

I looked at Alvard. "So do you think this could help out the guild?"

"I can see the **potential**," he said. "It's worth testing out. I'll try to throw **Flametongue** on my sword and see how it goes." His gaze drifted. "You know, a long time ago, there was this big bad . . .

**The Lich King**. He created vast armies of **undead**, and there were adventurers who began to **specialize** in dealing with them. They were like hunters of the unliving. They even formed **a guild**. And they began using a specific enchantment. **Smite**."

"It's considered a **holy** enchantment," Arine said. "Once their weapons were **blessed** in this way, they were able to defeat the **Lich King's armies** in short order, turning countless unliving foes into dust."

"Whoever they were, they were obviously very **smart**," Emerald said. "I mean, they adapted, right?"

Arine nodded. "Perhaps it would be wise if our guild did the same."

"**Ahghrghrggrgggr . . . !!**" The dwarf, Grumpf, sat up and **spat** out pixels of grass. "**Aye**, can't believe I lost to some kid . . . He stood there **auto attacking** and did over half my DPS. Please tell me this is all part of some **really bizarre joke . . .**"

"It's not," Emerald said. "But if you want to hear one, I've got one for you."

The dwarf, still in the grass, raised his eyebrows. "Oh? Let's hear it, then."

The **bard** looked around with an impish grin. Something told me she'd been waiting for this moment for a long time. "All right, so **three creepers** walk into an item shop," she said. "The shopkeeper looks at them, then says to himself, '**Wow!** Looks like my sales are about to **explode!**'"

...

The other three exchanged the **blankest** of expressions.

Emerald's grin turned **sheepish**.

"**Come on!** Was it really that bad? I thought it was a little funny . . ."

Really, Emerald . . . ? That was the **worst joke** of all time! Now that I think about it, I remember her little brother once coming up to me back in Villagetown and saying that . . .

She used one of her little brother's jokes . . .

"I've got **a better one,**" I said. "You walk into an item shop and tell that exact same joke to the shopkeeper. Who promptly tells you to get out of his shop."

Emerald rolled her eyes. "You are such a **creeper squid.**"

"Air miner."

"Lava jockey."

"Water builder."

"Potato brewer."

The dwarf had the most confused look: "I have no idea what I'm listening to right now, but there's one **thing** I'd like to know." And his eyes held a feverish gleam. "Where did you get those enchants?"

## JOURNAL ENTRY 9

Remember the story of **Ogg the caveman**?

There's one part I forgot to **mention**. A few days after Ogg created the world's first **wooden axe**, others saw his huge success. They saw him hauling like fifteen mushrooms back to his cave. An armload. He's dropping a few on the ground but he doesn't even care, he has **SO many**. Of course, his fellow cavemen, upon seeing that, wanted to craft their own wooden axes.

Okay so, **weirdly enough**, this morning, the same thing happened to me.

Some kid **burst** into my room. A Jade-ranked adventurer like myself. Around my age. **A total newbie** in a basic looking chestplate, a sapphire sword at his hip.

His name was **Slade**.

"Hey . . . **Runt**." He bowed. "Sorry to bother you, but I just wanted to say thanks."

"For what?"

"Well, I saw you at the **front desk** yesterday . . ."

Yesterday, after winning that **DPS race**, I went to the front desk for my quest reward. My share was **five hundred emeralds**.

That's a **large** amount for rookies like Emerald and me. We had taken out **five** of Herobrine's minions in a single day. For **newbies** like us, that was almost unheard of.

In short, this kid saw how much we had earned and heard about **my new sword** with its **unusual** enchantments.

Or so he explained just now.

"And thanks to you, **I now have this.**" He drew his blade from its scabbard.

It looked almost like a diamond sword, only deep blue. **Sapphire.** I'm not sure of the **specific** properties of that gemstone, but from what I remember, it's functionally quite similar to diamond.

More importantly, a few **yellow pixels** could be seen rising from the blade. Still in bed, I gave an approving nod. "**Shock, huh?**"

He enthusiastically nodded back. "Yeah! **Shock II.** I had it enchanted yesterday, then I went into the dungeon with a friend, and we defeated our **first** mob! Our first successful quest." He lowered his head. "Before, we weren't able to do anything. Six **failed** quests in a row. Every time, we would get something to half, then **get low ourselves**, and we'd run for the exit in panic . . ." He looked up. "Anyway, **thanks.** If you ever need help with anything, let me know. **Good luck with your quest!**"

After he left, I couldn't stop **smiling**. My latest project was a success.

I did go back to sleep for another hour, because I mean, it was the **MORNING**. Do people actually wake up at this hour?

And I would have slept longer, yet—

“ . . . Greetings.”

Another guild member **barged** into my room.

It was **Grom**. The dwarf I met on my first day. Not to be confused with **Grumf**, who has a similar name.

“So I put **Frostbrand** on my axe yesterday.” He held up his emerald axe. “And I was able to send **three of the Night Lord's minions** to the shadow realm.”

“The Night Lord?”

“Aye. That's what people have been calling him lately. To avoid any **confusion**, the guild decided upon a name that—”

“You're finally **awake!**” A girl in red leather armor almost bowled into the dwarf. “After hearing the news yesterday, I picked up a sword at the **Auction House!**” She showed off an emerald blade. It sparkled with **deep green pixels**. That was from **Windslash**, she explained excitedly, a basic enchantment that deals a small amount of elemental air damage. “Thank you so much for this,

it **really helped out** on my quest! I'd like to ask what other enchants I could—"

"Hi, Runt."

That was **Fimble**.

The gnome who had quit the guild.

He was wearing **an emerald pendant** again, though, so he must have rejoined.

By now, I couldn't help but wonder. How many people were going to bother me? Was my **brilliant** plan starting to backfire?

I mean, sure, I wanted to prove myself to the guild. Come up with a useful **strategy**, help save the world. But this was beginning to affect my sleeping schedule!

I'm just glad the gnome wasn't here to talk about enchants.

"Um, the **guildmaster** is here today," he mumbled. "She'd like to speak with you."

## JOURNAL ENTRY 10



Introducing **the guild's War Room.**

In one corner, a **massive** table with a large map of the kingdom, tiny figurines scattered across.

There's also a **huge** map of the dungeon on one wall. Eight blocks in height and width. I believe that's only a map of the first floor, too. The Maze is **impossibly vast.**

A room that serves as the **center of operations** for the Adventurers Guild.

When I entered, though, there was no one here except for **Elodi** and that advisor of hers, Sage **Lukas**.

**"Hiiiiiiiiiiii!"** She shuffled towards me in her silver slippers. "I um, heard about **the DPS race** yesterday! Can't believe you defeated Grumf!" She laughed, then stabbed the air with an **imaginary** sword. "Wish I could've seen that! I mean, he's not **some noob**, you know! He's a **Diamond**-ranked adventurer."

Sage Lukas nodded his head sagely. "Your victory has motivated other guild members to try out your peculiar strategy. There have been several **positive** reports so far . . ."

With a smile, Elodi held up a copper pendant. "And that's why I'm giving you **a promotion!**"

. . . **What?**"

I blinked, trying to process her words.

"You're now a **Copper rank!**" she said, beaming. "Cool, huh?"

For a moment, I just **stood there**, completely stunned. **Second rank?** It felt like I'd just started.

"Also, Breeze **finished** her training," Elodi said, drawing me out of my thoughts. "She'll be here tomorrow morning."

Yet more news that left me **stunned**.

Breeze would finally be **joining me** . . . ?

Please consult the following illustration to see my reaction level here.



When I'm able to craft something that doesn't have holes in it



When I'm given a promotion in the Adventurers Guild



When I'm told that Breeze will be joining my party

"Oh, and before you leave . . ." Elodi walked over to the table and picked up **three books**. With a small flourish, she placed them in my hands. "I want you to take your idea further. I'm **curious** to see how effective it'll be once you reach your full enchantment build."

"These **are . . . e-e-ench . . .**"

The titles, **gleaming** in the lantern light, left me spellbound.

**FROSTBRAND II.**

**SHOCK III.**

**MOONLIGHT I.**

That last one has a **33%** chance to deal three additional damage of elemental light.

This only affects beings that have a specific **weakness** to light. Nearly everything in the dungeon falls under that category, though. Regardless of their appearance, they're really like **evil spirits**.

How do you think I reacted now?

Okay, you know the **last illustration** I just showed you?

The one with the **shocked** expressions? Check this out!



Seeing my face right then, Elodi laughed understandingly.

"You'll need to add them yourself," she said. "The guild still doesn't have any **real enchantment experts** yet. Hhmmm. Maybe your friend Max can help you? He's studying to become an **Enchanter**, isn't he?"

"Yes, and . . ."

I was almost about to ask:

Do you, by chance, happen to have a book of **Fire Aspect?** Or **Air Aspect?** Or **Earth Aspect.** Or possibly all three.

But I didn't. That would sound **ungrateful.** She had just provided three **different** enchantment books, thousands of emeralds worth, for **free.** I'm always thankful for free cool stuff.

"Your Majesty!!"

Two men in chainmail ran into the room.

I'm not sure who they were, exactly, but they looked like guards.

"We bring **urgent** news," one of them said. "More farms in the north were **attacked** last night. By something **terrible.**"

"We're hearing reports of what can only be described as creepers made of **lava,**" the other guard said. "The Loric Council has sent in reinforcements to deal with this threat. I'm sure they will succeed, yet these attacks are affecting the price of vegetables in the capital! As of this morning, the price of the potato pie has risen to **three** emeralds . . ."

"To raise the price of our potato pies, the capital's most beloved of street foods . . ." The first guard **angrily** shook his fist. "That **evil** wizard will pay for this crime!"

## Creepers made of lava?

How does that work? If they **explode**, they send globs of lava flying everywhere?

Things are getting pretty bad in the north, I guess. Well, to the northeast, past **Ravensong**. They call that area the **Frontier**. It's said that only monsters live there.

Note: Ask Breeze about lava creepers. She might know something.

. . .

I figured now was probably a good time to take off. Elodi really had her hands full. So after thanking her, I left the guildhall to visit Max at the Academy.

I did chug several Swiftness pots on my way there. I was that excited. I mean . . .

**Enchantments! Three of them!** But was Max capable of adding them to my sword?

When I finally barged into his room—which used to be my room, too—Max and Stump were there. I hadn't seen them in **forever**. Well, a few days, but still . . .

The first thing Stump did was hand me half a stack of cookies he'd baked yesterday. **Mana cookies**. They're just like mana biscuits in that they restore **1 MP** when eaten. But they look and taste like any cookie you'd find in Villagetown.

I couldn't have asked for a better gift.

Buying them from the guild's shop would have cost a small fortune.

"I'm sure you need **all the mana you can get**," he said. "So I'll keep making more. Whenever I have free time. It's good practice for my **Cooking** skill, anyway. I'm almost at two hundred!"

Then it was time for the real work to begin.

After I showed them the books, the three of us headed to the Academy's Enchanting Room immediately. And as I looked down at that enchanting table . . .



Well, it made me think about how far I've **progressed** since those early days. Back when I didn't even have a wooden sword.

And now . . .

Stump looked rather **scared**, though. "Don't know about this, guys . . . Nightfoe already has **four enchantments**. Can it really hold a fifth?"

"I'm **afraid** there's no telling how much power this weapon can hold," Max said. "If I were only adding an additional enchantment, I wouldn't be **so worried**, but I'll be upgrading two **existing** ones as well . . ."

"One of which is level three," Stump added. "This doesn't feel right."

Max turned to us. "You two may want to **step back**. We have no way of knowing what might happen here."

I smiled at him. "I believe in you, Max."

"**All right**. Fine. Let's do this." Stump raised a fist. "**For Aetheria!**"

It should be noted that, despite our words of encouragement, we did take several steps back.

Max, after glancing back at us, turned back to the table. His new challenge. Although he had once failed to craft a prismarine staff, he would **not fail** here.

More than anything, I was certain.



I don't know why it took **so long**. Max really struggled.

It was definitely worth it, though. By the end, the weapon had **noticeably** changed.

The blade **shimmered** every so often in pixelated waves of white light. That was from the **Moonlight** enchantment.

Additionally, the frost effect was somewhat more visible, and most of all, small arcs of lightning could occasionally be seen. They ran down the length of the blade, accompanied by the kind of sound you'd expect.

. . .

Bzzzt . . .

BzzzZzz-bzt . . .

. . .

. . .

. . . Bzt.

. . .

That **wasn't normal**, according to Max.

Yet it occurred with less frequency over the next minute or two, until the lightning stopped **completely**, replaced by the occasional spark.

So it wasn't too **alarming**. Just **somewhat alarming**.

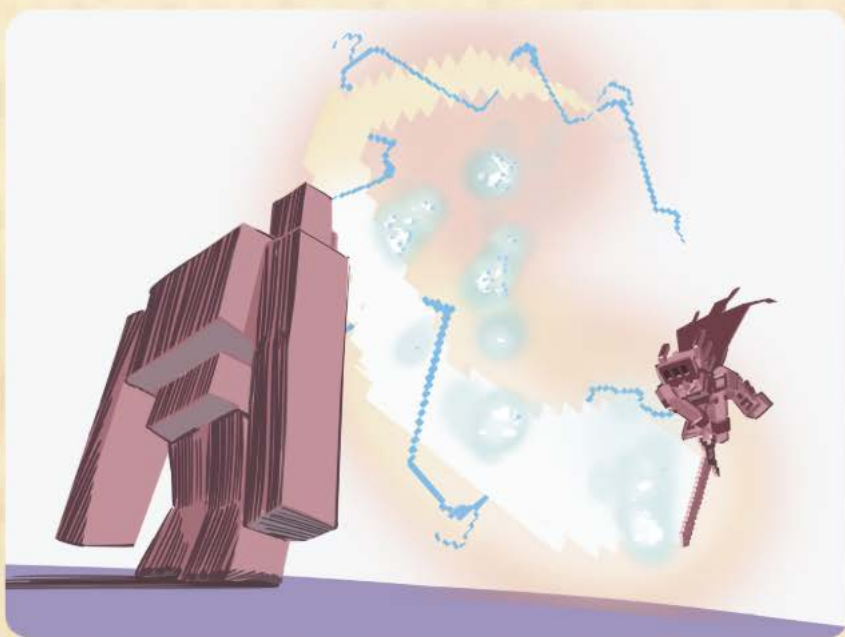
Max, his expression **grim**, mentioned that the weapon might have become momentarily **unstable**.

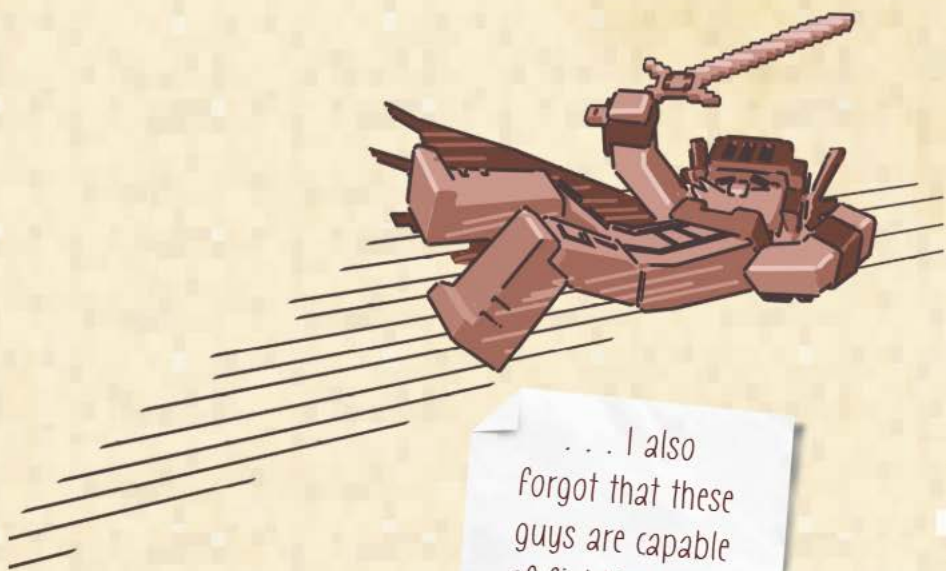
Maybe due to having so many different elemental enchantments at the same time. They could have been **conflicting** in some way.

He said he's going to do some research to see if he needs to redo the enchants. I don't think he needs to, though. For an **initial test**, I went to the Academy's training grounds and battled one of the golems there.

The results were very **successful**.

With that first strike, the blade left a trail of fire, frost, lightning, and elemental light.





... I also  
forgot that these  
guys are capable  
of fighting back.

## JOURNAL ENTRY 11



For me, to wake up **before** sunrise is a heroic achievement.

I somehow managed this morning. Past the window of my room, the sky was still dark and filled with stars.

Then I had this **weird feeling**.

You know when it feels like someone is watching you?

Also, the door was **open**. I vaguely recalled hearing it open in my sleep. How long ago was that?

The doors in this world all make a distinctive sound when you open or close them.

Even though the doors here in the Adventurers Guild are much **fancier** than the ones back in my village, they still make the exact same noise.

That was when I noticed the **faint outline** of a person.

Almost **invisible**. They were under the effects of magical **stealth**.

**Creepy**, right? I immediately grabbed Nightfoe and flew out of bed with a Dash spell.

**"Not bad,"** the figure said. "You've learned a few abilities, then. Although you should have noticed me sooner."

It was a calm voice. Somewhat deep. Very **familiar**. I lowered my sword.

**"Brio."**

"This room is . . . **unacceptable**," he said. "The door needs a



tripwire alarm. At the very least, you could put something in front of it. A block of iron. Or an . . . anvil." The look he gave me was like the stare of the **Ender King** himself. "Has this guild not taught you **anything?**"

"Nothing about . . . tripwires, at least."

"**Rather soft** around here," he muttered. "I will have a word with the guildmaster. An adventurer should be prepared for anything!"

"Y-yes, sir."

I assumed he had no idea who the guildmaster really was.

Did I tell him? That the leader is **Elodi**? Who has never gone on a single quest in her life? Well, he was already fairly **annoyed**. No way was I going to say anything right now.

"It is **a nice headquarters**," he said, glancing out the window. He was no longer frowning. "The way they build things around here . . . I'll admit, I do have a fondness for timberframe blocks. A bit **complicated** to build with, but if you can pull it off . . ."

"Personally, I was thinking about redecorating my room," I said. "Go simple, you know? All clay and oak planks. To remind me of home. I think that might be against guild regulations, though." I **paused**. "How is Villagetown? **My parents?**"

"There's no need to worry. The Knights that Elric left have started

fortifying the wall. And your parents have sent **a letter**. It's with **Kolbert**."

"He's here?" And there was that smirk. I hadn't seen that in a while. Only he could pull off an expression like that. "You didn't think I'd head all this way by myself, did you?"

That was when I heard **a noise**.

A commotion past the window. Distant. Although growing louder.

We went to the window. Like everything here, the windows are fancy, what they call diamond pane, and they can swing open like a door.

**Kolbert** was the first one I noticed.

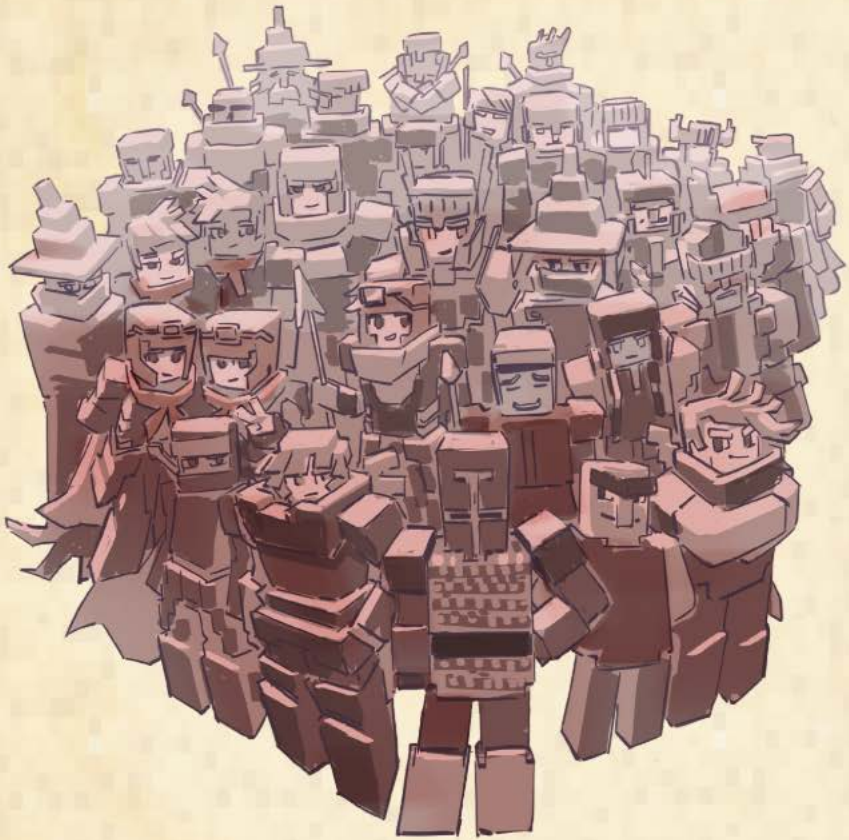
In fact, more than a few members of the **Lost Legion** were there.

S was there as well, and **Pebble**. Perhaps the only Aetherian among them. However, roughly half I didn't recognize.

The summoned heroes had returned . . . ? The guild was doing fine by itself, but now, with reinforcements like this, **our world was saved**.

. . . **Who is that guy?**

At the front was a figure in **obsidian** chain. You couldn't see his face due to the helmet he had on. A type of helm called a "**crusader helm**," also obsidian.



There was something **intimidating** about him. Powerful. It's said that all of them have an **aura** like that. They arrived in this world with magical talent that Aetherians like me could only dream of.

Still, he seemed stronger than all the rest.

There was something familiar about him, too. I knew I had seen this person before.

And when he removed his helmet, I **almost** couldn't believe it. Part of me also felt **guilty**, because I was supposed to be looking for him. I just got so caught up with what's been happening here.

Yeah.

## It was Steve.

I glanced at Brio. "I'm going to . . ."

He nodded. "Of course. I'll see you out there."

As I ran out of my room, I was so **excited**, I accidentally cast a Dash spell and ran into a wall.

By the time I reached the front courtyard, Steve and the rest were still there looking around in awe, as though they had never seen a **guildhall** before.

I must have looked just like that on my first day here.

". . . **Runt?**" Steve took a step in my direction. "What are you doing here?"

"Um." I looked at him. At **Kolbert**. At **Pebble** and **S**. "I think I should be the one asking that."

"We're here to help **save the world**," Kolbert said. "What else?"

"We sort of ran into each other on the way here," S said. "Word's gotten around about what's been happening here."

He held up an official looking **paper**. It was an advertisement for the guild.

According to Kolbert, **advertisements** like this have been arriving in every town in the kingdom lately.

I heard something about that the other day. That the guild had recently raised its **recruitment** efforts. I didn't think too many would actually show up, though.

Was I ever wrong.

Curiously, the ad left out any mention of the **dungeon**, and the **nightmarish creatures** that lurk there. Like slimes made out of soul sand. Oh well. That's a minor detail, right?

# JOURNAL ENTRY 12



NETHERIA



THE ADVENTURERS GUILD—  
SOUTH DINING HALL



THE ADVENTURERS' GUILD





I once mentioned that the Adventurers Guild has **two dining halls**.

The northern hall is beautiful, **elegant**. All timberframe blocks with a lot of windows letting in natural light.

This one, however, almost resembles a **dungeon**. The guild's dwarves and gnomes complained about the other one. They said there wasn't enough stone blocks. So this place was built to accommodate them.

Why am I mentioning this? **Steve** suggested that we catch up over a bite to eat. So I took him here.

I felt this place was the **better** of the two, since the waffles here are **excellent**. They also serve glowberry tea, which is my favorite drink lately. It comes in these giant wooden mugs. They're like **miniature barrels** with handles.



Steve took a few big glugs of his. "Glowberry tea, huh? **That's good stuff.**"

"It doesn't taste like tea at all," Kolbert said. "More like **root beer.**" He could have won a potion **chugging** contest the way he drank his.

". . . So Mike really took off?" Steve asked.

I told him about that earlier, when we first sat down.

"He just boarded a ship and **took off?**"

"He thought you were history," I said. "He seemed so sure about it. What happened?"

"Ah, it was a real **mess**. We wandered too far. Got lost. Started going in circles, I think."

He frowned.

"Then this monster came out of nowhere, screaming crazily. A **zombie**. I couldn't tell what it was at first, though. It was . . . **on fire**. I guess they're called **blaze zombies**."

Emerald and I were warned about those the other day.

**Blaze zombies**, I mean. They can breathe fire, and they're immune to fire. They also have a flame ability that deals fire damage to anyone standing near them.

A cross between a blaze and a zombie.

A zombie's much stronger, **louder**, angrier, burnier cousin.

They're the **toughest** monster on the first floor. To date, no adventurer in the guild, no matter how experienced, has ever managed to defeat one.

The guild has a lot of Adventurer **Commandments**. One of them is, if you ever see a blaze zombie, well, chug a Swiftess potion and run.

Needless to say, Steve **fell in battle** to one of these things.

"But I **respawned**, just like always. This time, I wound up really far away. The middle of **Ravensong**. I wandered around for days. Headed south. Found a chest in the woods with some random items

in it. Including boots, some carrots. Which I survived on. The carrots, I mean. Was down to my last when I ran into this guy.” He slapped **Kolbert** across the back. “Thanks for the armor, by the way.”

“You’re lucky we were carrying a few spare **sets**.” Kolbert said and looked at me. “That armor came from Villagetown. Some new stuff Brio has been working on. **Obsidian**, mostly.”

Steve smiled. “I’m **glad** to hear the village is doing well. You know, I . . . Hey. Do you hear that?”

There was that sound again.

Bzzzt.

Bztbzzt.

. . .

. . .

Bzt.

Kolbert looked around. “What is that?”

Well, I hadn’t planned on showing off **my new sword**, but since he asked . . .

As soon as they noticed the weapon’s many enchantments, five in total, the two of them looked so **confused**. Neither of them had ever heard of anything like it.

"Frostbrand," Steve mumbled. "Shock?"

"Wait, I think I heard someone mention them before," Kolbert said. "What do they do again?"

It didn't take me too long to explain. All I had to say was "elemental magic damage," "not too expensive," and "almost as good as Fire Aspect."

They understood immediately. I'll never forget their expressions.



"Elemental enchantments . . ." Kolbert was so **stunned**. "That's the thing about this world. It's **different** from the Aetheria we knew. Here, everywhere I look, there's new blocks, armor and weapons, materials, spells . . ."

"You know, I once thought of enchanting my sword with Fire Aspect," Steve said, "but failed every attempt. Then I checked a few shops, hoping to find a book for sale, of Fire Aspect. I figured it might be easier to do it that way. And I did find one. It was going for **twelve thousand emeralds**, though. Never thought to check for any cheaper **alternatives**."

"There are a few other enchantments that do something **similar**," Kolbert mentioned. "They reduce the target's armor. Usually by a percentage. This allows more of your weapon's physical damage to go through. But enchantments like that are expensive, just like Fire Aspect. What you've cooked up here is a cost-effective alternative. A **budget** version. We could easily equip a large number of people with weapons like this."

Steve seemed **lost** in thought: "**Runt**. You remember that time you came up to me when I was preparing to leave your village? You didn't want me to go. You said Villagetown needed me. That your kind **isn't that creative**." He smiled. "Well, **you were wrong**, eh? Even I wouldn't have come up with something like this."

"I . . ."

To receive such **praise**, from Steve, the legend himself, well, it's definitely among the top five most **amazing** things that have ever happened to me. I tried to formulate a proper response, yet—

**"Yooooo! Runt!"**

—**S** came walking up to our table.

Couldn't he have just let me have my little moment?!

"This is **some guildhall!**" he said. "So beautiful. **Perfect.** I'm totally registering after breakfast."

**Pebble** appeared next: "**Glad** to see you're doing well, Runt. Heard you've rather been busy around here. We have a lot of catching up to do."

Behind him, there was **Kae** and at least ten other Legionnaires. In addition to over twenty other people I'd never seen before. They weren't part of the Legion.

And I know you must be exhausted reading all of this . . . Because I was exhausted experiencing it. So many **different** people. So many **different** names. There were far more than the ones I just mentioned, too. In fact, over one hundred of them had arrived this morning.

With their return, the guild was about to become **a lot stronger.** And everyone was going to be wielding some really **scary** weapons with all kinds of weird enchantments.

Yeah, **Herobrine doesn't have a chance.**

Really, what is he going to do? He might be **slippery**, but he's not getting out of this one.

Give these guys two weeks, and they're going to steamroll that **little dungeon** of his. I don't care how tough his new minions are.

"So how about some waffles?" I asked, looking around. "In this guild, they say you're not a real adventurer until you've consumed at least **fifteen waffles** in a row."

"They really say that?" Pebble asked.

I nodded. "They have waffle eating contests all the time. I haven't seen one yet, but they happen."

"Why don't we have one right now?"

. . . **It was Breeze.**

I noticed that she was now wearing **a copper pendant**. Exactly like mine. She must have just registered at the front desk. I assume she was able to start off at Copper rank because . . .

Well, it's Breeze we're talking about.

"A **waffle contest**, huh?" Steve, upon looking around at all the rest, offered a shrug. "I think we can do that."

"LET'S  
G00000000000000000000!!!!!"



In some ways, the real  
adventure is how many waffles  
you eat along the way.



Breeze won. Did  
you expect anything  
different?

She is, after all, the girl who  
might as well have five food bars.  
It was wild to see both Kolbert and  
Steve collapse on either side of her,  
face down in their waffle stacks.

"Um, what's  
happening? And  
wow . . . Is  
that Kolbert?"



## JOURNAL ENTRY 13



I made a **guild advertisement** of my own just now. What do you think?

Okay, so Steve's boots are way **too big**. I was rushed, and my quill has been acting up, it has really low **durability**, and I don't have time to go shopping for a new one.

By the way, in this latest journal, you know how I've been **numbering** every entry? Well, that was just an **experiment**, and I kind of like it.

This way, journal entries can **easily** be referenced. I mean, instead of saying "You know that entry where I made Steve's boots way too big?" I can just mention "Journal Entry 13." I wish I'd thought of doing this sooner. Part of me almost wants to go through my past journals and change them.

Actually, I did read through my **old** journals the other day.

My **Writing skill** seems to have improved somewhat since I first started writing back then.

Take a look at that first journal. It has almost no paragraphs. Or **really** short paragraphs. Sometimes a single word per line.

You'll also find multiple **exclamation** points throughout. Emerald says adding **more than two** exclamations at the end of a sentence is "**just noob**, like how her little brother writes."

Yeah, I was **such a noob** before.

Still am. But slightly less so compared to back then.

As for my Drawing skill, I've **raised** that as well. I'm still having trouble drawing larger scenes with lots of people, however. If so many heroes hadn't shown up today, I wouldn't have had to draw so many. It would have made my life so much easier.

And **guess what?**

This morning, shortly after that waffle contest, even more people showed up outside the guild.

They were **townsfolk**, mostly. They had heard the news of the heroes return and wanted to see for themselves. At first, it wasn't so bad. Maybe just fifteen people or so. No problem, I thought. I can draw that. Then twenty more arrived, and I started **grumbling** to myself. Please. No more. Thirty-five townsfolk is definitely pushing my limits. Any more than that, and . . .

That was when at least **fifty** more arrived.

Accompanied by a second, smaller group with every kind of musical instrument imaginable.

. . .

I'm not angry at them.

You can't blame these people for showing up like they did.

Practically everyone the kingdom has been waiting for the heroes to come back. They were all **hoping** for this day.

Still, at the sight of over one hundred townsfolk, I lowered my head. My shoulders sagged. I only had one quill on me, and it had **questionable** durability. I was also running low on almost every color of ink. I had to draw them, though. I couldn't mention such a large crowd without making at least one illustration, **right?**



Please note, most of the townsfolk didn't have **green** or **purple** hair. I'm running low on every other color. So I had to **improvise**.

Anyway, these people, excited at the news, called for a celebration tonight. There's going to be all sorts of games and contests, and the heroes are going to make a speech.

Which means I need to head over to the guild's item shop and buy more art supplies. Since I'm sure you'd rather **not see** any more drawings like those last two.

## JOURNAL ENTRY 14

The Alliance  
Festival





They're calling it the "Alliance Festival".

A party held in the capital's **prestigious** Lantern District, not too far from the castle.

**Elodi** herself made an appearance. As did seemingly half the city's population. To celebrate a new partnership between **our kingdom** and those from **Another World**.

I'm sure this day will be remembered throughout the ages. **The 30th of Diamondstar**. Maybe in the future, it will become a holiday of some kind, where everyone will eat **pizza**. That seems to be a favorite among otherworldly heroes.

Of course, for this event, **Breeze** wanted to dress up.

Don't worry, though. I talked her out of it. After all, she recently acquired some **new gear** during that training of hers.

First, there was the **cloak** she had once mentioned. It was made of **enchanted spidersilk**, a tough material that only the elves know how to craft. She was also provided with a **set of elven chain**. A superior version of ordinary chainmail, dark gray in color. As light as leather yet stronger than iron.

All in all, some rather **expensive stuff**.

So I can't understand. Why would she prefer to wear a **fancy dress** over gear like that?!





Shortly after we arrived, we overheard **something weird**.

Despite how many heroes showed up today, there was not a single member of the **Solemn Blades**.

They're a fairly large group, similar to the **Lost Legion**. Yet not one of them was here at tonight's festival. What's more, no one has seen any of them for weeks.

Over **one hundred heroes** had arrived today. Some had traveled pretty far. As far as southern **Dawnsbloom**, or the very north of the kingdom. Strangely, not one of them could recall seeing a single member of the Blades in the past two or three weeks.

Almost like they just **vanished** into thin air.

Kolbert tried to **reassure** everyone. "They're likely **hiding**," he said. "We did the same thing for a while. The Lost Legion, I mean.

It took us so long to get used to this world. We couldn't even figure out the basics of magic. The status system's different. Everything is **different.**"

"Yes, it's been **tough** for all of us," Steve said. "We will run into the Blades again, though. I'm sure of it. And I'm sure they'll join us, now that the enemy's location has been found."

"What about **the XP problem?**" someone asked.

That's something that still hasn't been solved. All the new minions Herobrine has been sending are really just low-level creatures with powerful buffs. They **don't provide much** in the way of experience points. Which means gaining levels is suddenly a lot more difficult than it was in the past. (We went over this a lot in my last journal.)

". . . Don't even mention that right now," Kolbert said. "The thought of being deprived of our much-needed XP . . . . . No, it's **too cruel** . . ." He angrily shook his fist. "Earning experience points and gaining levels is one of a hero's **basic** rights!!"

That was when Elodi stepped in.

"Err, I've been working on a plan for that." She looked around **nervously**. "So the um . . . **royal treasury** has this stockpile of items. They were left behind ages ago by Aetheria's past adventurers,

I guess? They were left as a safeguard of sorts. You know, in case a new threat appeared in the future. Anyway, I'm wondering if this could help." She held up what looked like a **potion**. "The treasury has tons of them, and . . ."

It really did look like a potion.

A glass bottle filled with a **yellowish-green liquid**.

I'd seen that sort of potion before. In one of the Academy's textbooks. And suddenly I realized it wasn't a potion at all.



What she held was a thing of legend. **A relic of a past age.**

It's said that long ago, the ancients discovered a way to **store** experience points in bottles like this.

No one knows how they managed that. The exact process **was lost**. So nowadays, you'll only find them in places like ancient ruins and shipwrecks. Oh, and back in Villagetown some kid once caught one while fishing. That was the biggest news, I remember. I was only nine when it happened, and I went fishing myself for weeks afterward. Never caught one, though. In short, they're really rare. So it was surprising when Elodi said the castle's main storeroom had **"tons."** Someone asked how many, exactly, and her reply was **"over ten thousand."**

"Not sure how much XP that would be in total," Kolbert said. "That should be enough to help everyone gain at least a few levels, though. How will they be allocated?"

Elodi had that **nervous** look again. "Well, I was thinking the guild could, um, you know, start handing them out as additional **quest rewards**. One hundred XP for every one hundred emeralds earned. **How does that sound?"**

You can imagine our reactions here. **Especially mine.**

Things were finally **looking up**. For the first time, it truly felt like we had hope.

How smart were those **past adventurers**? To leave behind a vast amount of treasure like that, just in case another big bad showed up in the future. An evil wizard insurance place. The **Librams** back in the Academy must have come from the same place. Librams are **invaluable** treasures as well, and the Academy was handing them out like cookies, almost. How much stuff does that storeroom have? And when can I see it?

“. . . Your Majesty.” It was **the elderly Sage Lukas**. “I don’t mean to interrupt, yet there is something I have been meaning to ask the heroes for some time.” He looked at Steve and all the rest. “I don’t mean to **offend** you, although I must say that some of you have the most **curious** names. I understand the world of Earth is very different from ours, but even so . . .”

The Sage gestured to someone in the crowd. A heroic looking young man in silver armor. Exactly like what you’d imagine when you hear the words **“summoned hero.”** In fact, Sage Lukas pointed out that this guy’s class was **“Holy Knight.”** That’s a special class, similar to the **Paladin**. One look at him, and you knew his hobbies included sending evil creatures to the shadow realm.

However, his name was **Angrypotato**.

That was **his actual name**. Not a nickname. I used Analyze on him and that's what appeared in my vision.

Sage Lukas understandably found this very perplexing. However, **Angrypotato** the Holy Knight was far from the only hero present with an odd name. The Sage pointed out another guy, in gray robes, whose name was **Catsocks**. Along with his sister, in brown robes—**Duckboots**.

There was also a guy with a very intimidating appearance. In black robes with a hood and mask, a deadly looking blade on his back, and two daggers on his belt.

His name: **EnderNoob**.

Roughly half of the heroes had names like that.

Imagine what it must have been like for the ones who summoned these people months ago.

A group of high level spellcasters, including the illustrious **Notch** himself, worked together to cast **the most powerful spell known**. A spell they hoped would save the world . . .

Yet what soon arrived in the golden light were people with names like **Duckboots**.



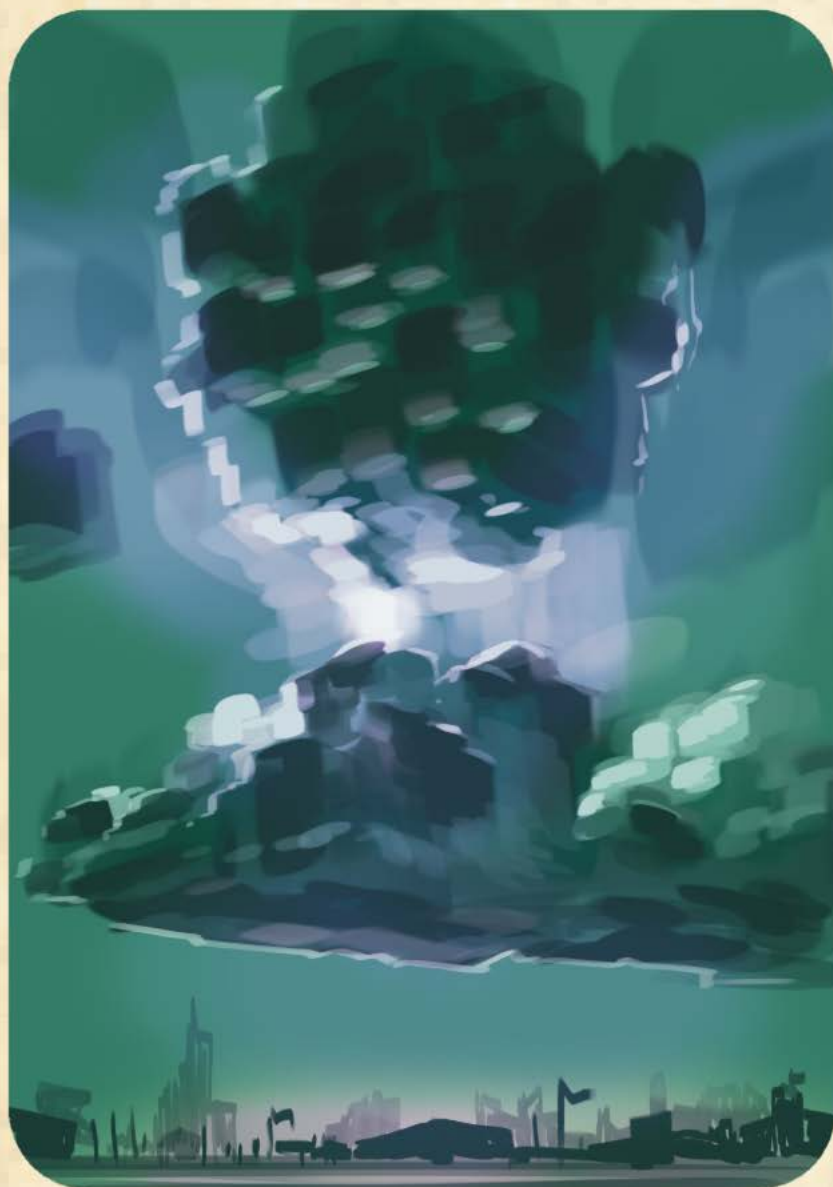
The guy in that last picture is a gnome named **Bo**.

Like many of the otherworlders who showed up today, he headed to the capital after seeing a guild **advertisement** that mentioned today's festival. Ever since he arrived in this world, he's been hiding in southern Dawnsbloom, where it's pretty safe. He still hasn't fought a single monster,

and he only came here because the ad promised free cake and glowberry tea.

Why was he wearing dyed purple leather boots? I don't know. I've met so many random people at this festival today. I don't know what's happening anymore.

## JOURNAL ENTRY 15



I'm **sad** to announce that the festival was cut short.

It started with some **dark clouds** and the occasional pixel of rain. A slight wind followed.

**What timing**, right? I knew our favorite evil wizard was behind this. It had to be him. **He was angry**. I mean, we were finally doing good. A lot of things were going well for us lately. A new guild. New enchantments. New allies. He wanted to **stop** all that, but he couldn't, and he was mad about that, so now he was having a **meltdown** and angrily lashing out.

For a while, there was just light rain, no one was panicking. More than a few suggested calling the festival, though. Around here, a light rain can turn into **ice blocks** at a moment's notice.

Then I heard a few gasps.

Not too far away, there was a **swirling** black mist. And inside was a **vaguely** familiar form.

Next to me, someone was trying to speak:

"A m-m . . . m-m-m . . ."

Until this failed attempt at language became a **scream**.

**A monster**. And like all of them, it was a hideous abomination. A creature that simply shouldn't be. Although it

vaguely resembled a skeleton, it was made of a **gelatinous green substance** instead of bone.

Yeah, so have you ever wondered what might happen if an evil wizard were to combine a skeleton and a slime? Who hasn't, right? That's something that Stump and I used to discuss long ago. Long before we left Villagetown. On warm summer nights, we would sit back against some grass blocks under the clear, star filled sky and have serious discussions about such creatures. What would a **slime skeleton** look like? Could such a thing exist?

And now, the answer was right in front of me.

By the way, if you've ever wondered what an **enderbat** looks like, you're in luck, because several appeared in the distance shortly after the green skeleton. Along with several other creatures.

One after another, monsters appeared in seemingly random locations.

Suddenly, the festival was no longer so happy.

(People  
screaming)



(Someone shouting  
something about  
protecting the cake)

Leave it to **NoEyes** to pull something like this. Right when things were starting to look up.

At this point, I had no idea where Steve was, or Brio, anyone. I **was with Breeze**. We had gone over to the food tables to check out this **giant cake**. The castle's royal bakers brought it. And I had almost grabbed a slice when **the slime skeleton thing** appeared right in front of us.

Hey, at least I wore **my armor** tonight.

Breeze was asking me about that earlier. Why don't you try dressing up at least once, huh?

Maybe because I knew it was only a matter of time before something like this happened! **Sorry**, but after tonight Breeze will never doubt my fashion choices ever again!

As for the skeleton slime, even though he was about **twice our size**, he still had two **really big** problems.

One, I just upgraded **my** new sword.

And problem two? Well, **that one's easy**. I'm sure you can guess.



“RgRgurgGrgGrgg . . . !!”

That’s an actual quote from our opponent as Breeze removed a huge chunk of its health.

She used this **new ability** from her rogue training. **Ambush**. It deals three times normal weapon damage while **ignoring 75% of the target’s armor**, as long as she’s behind the target.

The mana cost on that skill is fairly high, but who cares? The mob dropped in **less than five seconds**.

What happened next was something **terrible** and **strange**. Something a person shouldn’t have to witness even once in their life.

The monster, instead of **vanishing** like they normally do, remained on the ground, shaking weirdly. **Trembling**. Then there was this horrible oozing sound as the creature's body began . . .

Well, it just sort of, um . . .

Okay, so it was a skeleton **made of green slime!** What do you think happened?!

I mean what happens when you reduce a green slime's health to zero? Now imagine a skeleton doing that. Yeah. That's what I saw, and I never want to see something like that ever again.

Let's just say it was a bad day to have eyes.

### A very bad day.



Dear Journal,

Today I got to see a skeleton made of slime split into **two copies of itself**.

Luckily, it didn't take us very long to deal with them. Each copy had **less HP** than the original, and Breeze has **so much** damage now.

Here's where things get **really weird**.

Like before, each copy split into two. A total of **four** skeletons, each smaller than the last. About the size of a person. But this time they just remained on the ground, shaking violently.

One copy wasn't even green, but **red**. It quickly melted into a pile of red slimeballs. The other three **melted** soon afterward.

I think I can explain why this happened. This specific creature, the **slime skeleton**, was still in development, a prototype. He hadn't yet perfected this type of minion.

And that wasn't the only **abnormal** creature out there today.

Not too far away, a group of people I'd never seen before took down a  **Creeper chicken**.

It began hissing as soon as it hit the ground. The way a creeper does just before it explodes. Everyone moved back, of course. And the monster **exploded**, like you'd expect.

What you probably didn't expect: Ten or so eggs flying everywhere.

**Green eggs** with black spots. I've seen eggs like that before. In a book somewhere. Spawn eggs? Or something?

The eggs began hissing too, and everyone nearby ducked for cover. Each explosion had a small radius. Half of a standard creeper blast. Still, there were over ten eggs. The destruction was unreal. One egg even landed on the giant cake. I don't want to talk about that. It's one of the **saddest** things I've ever seen.

One question, though.

Why have I never seen a creeper chicken do this until today?

Did **NoEyes** improve them recently? Did he somehow give them an "explosive egg" ability?

And if so, is that ability called **Eggsplosion**? That would be a really nice name for it. He has my permission to use that.

Also, will he somehow manage to create **ender cave spiders** at some point in the future? If he does, that will probably be the day I **give up** my adventuring career.

Anyway, I didn't have much time to think about this. Around me, it was pure chaos. More creatures were still appearing, everyone was fighting, and above, the dark clouds flashed blood red. I also saw

Kolbert flying through the air in my direction. A completely normal day, really.

“WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA—”

THUD.

He **crashed** into the ground right next to me.

The monsters really were angry today. I don't know what Kolbert was fighting, but he really flew.

After picking himself up, he chugged a **healing potion** then glanced at me and Breeze. “Hey, guys. Could really use your help.” He pointed to my right. It was really bad over there. A lot of people were holding off what looked like a wall of zombies, skeletons. “They’re appearing as fast as we can take them down,” Kolbert said. “We could use **more DPS.**”

“More DPS, huh? Don’t worry. **I’ve got you covered.**” That was **Emerald.**

Yesterday, she mentioned that she was trying to learn a new spell.

A spell that supposedly puts an **enchantment** on a melee weapon. A temporary enchantment with a five-minute duration.

The name of that spell is **Flame Blade**.

The enchantment it bestows is one I've been talking about for days.

## Fire Aspect.

I now had **Fire Aspect!** For a total of five minutes, I got to live the dream . . .

Breeze did, too. Emerald cast the same spell on her, and Kolbert, Brio, Steve. The last two met up with us shortly after my sword began **glowing**.

Fire Aspect doesn't normally provide **any glowing effect**.

But the **temporary** spell version makes your sword glow like powered redstone. Only, um, you know, orange? Okay, maybe it was more like a really bright torch.

Either way, it looked cool enough for Steve to ask:

**"Got one of those spells for me?"**

I don't know how Emerald managed to cast that spell two more times. One for Brio, and one for him.

In the Lorica Academy, students who can cast a spell four times in a row are said to possess **great talent**. As of today,

Emerald can manage **five**. Her magic really is improving at an **alarming rate**.

Breeze also gave everyone a potion from her personal stash.

Ever heard of a **Haste potion**? The effect it provides is similar to a beacon's aura, raising your attack speed.

There's one difference, though.

With a Haste potion, the **attack speed** increase is **100%**.

I really need to stock up on those, because attack speed affects how fast you can use silverware, and I'd be able to eat breakfast in **record time**.

100% attack speed is also the kind of thing you need when facing an unliving horde. **Purple** zombies. **Blue** skeletons. The wall of undead Kolbert was talking about.

I don't know what they were, exactly.

What I can safely tell you is that with our **Fire Aspect** and Haste, things didn't go so well for them.



One after another,  
the undead fell  
like beetroots.



They dropped so fast, I don't even have much to write about.

At one point, Steve went berserk. I'd never seen him fight like that before. I think he was out for revenge.

Just three minutes in,  
there were only a few  
creatures left. And this  
guy. Scary, huh?



## That was the Lich King.

One of Aetheria's former "**Demon Lords**", or **big bad** guys.

There were rumors that NoEyes **revived** him somehow. He was now second in command.

Emerald told me a few things about him once. He used to be the world's **highest level** spellcaster, more powerful than even Notch, and he had **TWO** classes. **Necromancer AND summoner**.

The former is a caster who **specializes** in undead minions.

Well, no, there's a bit more to **necromancers** than that, but that's the short version. They control undead minions.

As for the **summoner** class, they learn spatial magic. Or spells that involve summoning and teleportation. His knowledge in this area is said to have once been the greatest in all of Aetheria.

In case you're wondering, his presence here was **really bad news**.

Of course, as soon as we saw him, he immediately began casting a spell. A **powerful** one, surely.

With a loud cry, Steve charged in, and everyone else followed. Over one hundred otherworlders, thirty adventurers from the guild, ten or so royal guards, two Knights of Aetheria. I'm told that there were several Knights who had taken **Elodi** away from the battle earlier. Oh, I also

saw a shopkeeper. I have no idea why, but he was charging in with us, wielding a sign as a weapon.

What's important is that **a lot** of people charged in.

I remember thinking something wasn't right. Clearly, NoEyes sent this guy here, right? **For what, though?**

What was the point? There were so many heroes at tonight's festival. You couldn't fight all of them. So why would they launch an attack now? What was NoEyes hoping to accomplish? And what spell was the **Lich King** going to cast?



Maybe he was going to bring in some **cactus zombies**? Or maybe some **ender rabbits**? You know, some sort of killer bunnies with oversized teeth that teleport behind you? Hey, I'll take anything

over ender cave spiders. No, please not that, anything **but that!**

Oh, wait. What if he can read my mind? I mean, Elodi said she can read minds. It's an actual spell. What if he really summons a bunch of ender cave spiders?! What if I just **doomed** Aetheria?!

Don't worry, he didn't end up summoning a swarm of teleporting spiders.

In fact, he didn't summon anything. Nor was there a **fiery explosion**. Or streams of lightning. **Nothing like that.** It was the **weirdest** thing, but as we charged in, just one or two seconds from reaching him, the spell he cast **was—**



## Smoke.

In any direction, that was all I could see.

The Lich King had created a **huge cloud** of roiling, billowing **smoke**.

I wasn't affected in any real way. I didn't take a single point of damage, and didn't feel any different.

Breeze, too, appeared unaffected. To the right, Emerald, Pebble, and Brio could barely be seen, but they seemed all right. And over there, the shopkeeper guy—the one wielding the sign—looked completely **unharm**ed.

We couldn't see much, but that was it as far as maladies went.

Why would a guy like the Lich King ever use a spell like that? Why didn't he summon more slime skeletons?

That's all he had to do. Bring in some more slime skeletons. Or skeleton slimes. Whatever they're actually called, they're definitely in my **top five** most annoying monsters of all time. Then add a few more creeper chickens, and some enderbats teleporting around, screeching in your ear, and some soul sand / slime things. That's enough to make anyone **give up**.

Instead, he tries to conceal himself in a cloud of smoke. It didn't even protect him very well. All we had to do was take a few steps forward—using the ability “**Move Legs**”—and there he was.

It happened **SO** fast—

The combined damage from Breeze, Pebble, Brio and myself, and the shopkeeper, who hit with his sign for **three damage**, plus an Air Bolt spell from Emerald.

The skeletal mage dropped in seconds.

**Sudden**, I know. You probably weren't expecting that. You were probably expecting this long, **drawn out** battle.

Hey, I was too. That's how it happened, though. One moment, he was there, looking like a **final boss**. The next, he dropped like a block of sand.

. . . **How was that even possible?**

He should have been protected by a magical shield at the very least.

There are several spells that do this. One of them is a Necromancer only spell called **Bone Shield**. It creates a barrier of bones that look exactly like the bones dropped by skeletons.

From what I understand, though, he used all of his MP to summon so many minions. Then that last spell, that created the smoke, **brought him to zero**.

**Weird**, right?

Why would he use the last of his magic on such a **worthless** spell?

What kind of **noob villain** did NoEyes just send at us? You call that a bad guy?! I've seen dirt blocks last longer! I'm sorry, but if that guy really was second in command, Herobrine really needs to work on his hiring practices.

I noticed a few others running up.

"Runt! You all right? I can't believe it, they . . . He . . ."

It was **Fimble**, the mage from the guild. Behind him was **Slade**, and the dwarf, **Grom**.

Why did they look **so sad**? And what about Steve? Kolbert? Where were they? The smoke was beginning **to clear** somewhat, but I couldn't see them anywhere.

Roughly a minute ago, there were over **a hundred people** around me, and now—

It was **way** too quiet. Past the ones who just showed up, others were approaching. Adventurers from the guild, mostly, along with a royal guard and a young Knight of Aetheria.

However, not a single otherworlder could be seen.

As much as I looked, I could only see bones, slimeballs, bat wings, horns, claws, tentacles, and other monster parts the **Lich King's minions** had dropped, and pieces of cake, frosting and sprinkles . . .

Not a summoned hero in sight.

**Where were they? Where did they go?**

And why did everyone look so glum? Breeze, Emerald. All of them.

I don't know why I didn't realize it sooner. Maybe I was just too focused on the battle. Eventually, I did notice all the armor on the ground.

Especially **the obsidian chainmail.**

. . .  
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**The smoke was coming from the armor.**

**How?** Everyone around me was completely **unharmed**. Not a single point of **damage** between us.

Yet every last hero was gone. Each had been reduced to a pile of items. The one in front of me was Steve. And over there, Kolbert, where Emerald stood silent, looking down.

Soon, as our visibility improved, you could see a countless number of them. Piles of stuff. The worn equipment and inventories of over **one hundred** people.

Seeing that, every emotion (besides happiness) welled up inside of me. Especially **confusion**. Confusion that only grew when Brio turned to me.

"In the **old days**," he said, "the time of the last war, **NoEyes** had many followers. Some were capable of magic, and one spell they used could summon a small, winged creature known as a **vex**."

"I've read about them."

One of our textbooks in the Academy had a section on that monster.

I'm not sure why Brio was giving me a history lesson, though. Why now, of all times? The look I gave him—Enderman level.

He continued: "His followers were known for summoning a lot of different creatures like that. To the point where your ancestors, the highborn, were forced to come up with a solution. And they devised a spell, called **Unsummon**, that was capable of returning a summoned creature back to its **homeworld**. At first, this spell wasn't

so useful. It could only affect a single creature. But soon, they created higher spell ranks. **Unsummon II**, **Unsummon III**, with each rank capable of affecting more targets. A larger area of effect. At last, the spell's tenth and highest rank, **Unsummon X**, could affect an entire army."

## Unsummon.

It was an **interesting** concept.

A spell that could send summoned creatures back.

But why was he talking about this now? He must have been in shock. The poor guy. He couldn't handle what he had seen and was just rambling now.

Wait.

Was he trying to tell me—

"That was the spell he used," Brio said. "Although they're still alive, they're **no longer here.**"

...

So NoEyes figured out a way to deal with them.

Steve really was **unstoppable**. With the ability to respawn, he was truly immortal.

It didn't matter how many minions were thrown at him, Steve would just return, again and again. A handful of heroes were said to

have the same power. The rest still had a strong ability of some kind, even if they hadn't discovered it yet.

For Herobrine, they were a huge problem.

Then he found an answer. He really is as smart as they say.

It's always been like this, though, hasn't it? Even around the time of my first journal, the mobs were already behaving so strangely. Back then, slimes and creepers were already working together, coming up with strategies. Clever ones. It wasn't them doing all the thinking, though. **It was him.**

So what happened today is really just the next logical step. Herobrine's latest **scheme.**

I mean, any villain with half a brain is probably going to sit down at some point and think, "Okay, so the good guys summoned an army of heroes using a powerful spell. What if there's another spell that can undo that? **Hmmmmmmmmmm.**"

Of course he'd think of that.

What else could he do? Send zombies at us all day? Basic ones?

". . . **Runt?** What happened? What is all this?" It was Stump, with Max, Lola, and Ophelia. They had only just arrived. They were studying, and working on their Magic skill, for an upcoming test at the Academy.

As they approached, I had no idea what to say. How could I tell them?

**Unsummoned** . . . I've never heard of that. I've read over fifty volumes of **Urg the Barbarian**. In those books, a lot of weird things happened. But nothing like this.

Creeper chickens I can handle. They're not so bad. Even the new ones with explosive green creeper eggs.

**But this . . .**

You just can't do something like this! It's completely **unfair!** The heroes were going to make this big speech today. About how they had come to terms with existing in this world, how they were going to help save it, and . . .

"Will someone say something?!" I could barely hear Stump's voice, even though he was almost shouting. "**Hey! Runt?! Where are you going?!**"

"Back to the guild," I mumbled. I had started heading in that direction. **Slowly**. Shambling. "Maybe order some tea, and . . ."

I don't know why I was like this. I should have been absolutely **panicking**. My dialogue consisting of **giant** letters that took up half a page. Followed by at least ten exclamation points.

You know—**ME**.

Maybe I was just that **shocked**.

So **stunned** that I could only shuffle away wordlessly.

No endless internal monologue. No entire sentences written in capital letters. Just **silence**.

Or mumbling about tea.

For me, that's  
the highest level of panic,  
the most extreme reaction of all.

## JOURNAL ENTRY 16

The guild considers it a “win”.

An attack in the capital, **thwarted**. A big bad, **defeated**.

They say the outcome could have been **much worse**. A lot of adventurers were present during the attack, and half were armed with **real** enchantments, instead of noob ones like Sharpness. That gave us the edge. The **Lich King** underestimated how much damage we could do.

So my enchantment idea really did help.

Still . . . I’m not calling in a victory. I’ve been in my room all day, in fact. I haven’t even left my bed. What happened to the heroes just isn’t right.

**Steve. Kolbert. S.**

How am I supposed to go on without them? Can I even continue this journal? I mean, in every fairy tale series I’ve ever read, you have some main characters, and they cannot be separated at all, they are always together, no matter what happens, as if bound by a mysterious force. If an evil wizard tried to split them up somehow—with a spell, for example—that

spell would **mysteriously** fail. In **every** book I've ever read, that's how it goes.

So how can I continue? What kind of story is this if it can't even follow this most basic tradition?

Steve should be here, and we should all be **celebrating**, everyone's dancing and jumping around, someone's playing a little flute, or maybe a redstone piano connected to note blocks, or . . .

. . . Why couldn't it **be like that?!**

The door suddenly clicked open. Heavy footsteps. It was **Stump**:  
". . . You're still in bed? **You all right?**"

He was here to cheer me up, of course. Yeah? **Good luck!** Emerald had tried that earlier. **No success.** Before her, Breeze had tried, but not even she could lift my spirits. No, nothing was getting me out of bed today. Even if someone brought a stack of glowberry muffins, I wouldn't move an inch!

"You know, my skills are really **getting up there,**" he said. "They say I'll be ready to join the guild soon. Maybe tomorrow. Or the next."

⋮  
⋮  
⋮

"Well? Aren't you going to say something?"

...

I was **happy** for him, of course. My best friend was going to become an adventurer. They'd start him off at first rank and we would finally be able to quest together.

Even so, "... " was my response.

He sighed. "Also, **Debble** is joining the guild. I saw him earlier. At the front desk. He was registering."

Debble.

I've been meaning to speak with him.

The two of us need to **catch up**. He must be as sad as I am, because **S** was unsummoned, too—His best friend. Thinking about that made me even sadder.

...  
...  
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"**Brio** is joining too, I guess," Stump added. "He's going to be some kind of **instructor**."

...

That was **good news**. It was all good news.

What about Steve and Kolbert, though? Was that **good news**?

Should I be happy right now?

Stump, clearly knowing **what I was thinking about**, stepped closer to my bed. "Hey. They can be **summoned** again. You know that, right?"

". . . Yeah."

Breeze had mentioned that earlier today. Emerald, too.

The heroes could, in theory, be resummoned, with a **ceremony**. They were summoned before. It could happen again. It's something Elodi could arrange.

That could take a while, however.

And who knows if a second summoning would be successful?

"Guess I'm going take off," Stump was saying. "But before I do, hear me out—**Fire Aspect**."

". . . ?"

Now he had **my attention!**

Why did he have to say those two words?!

"If you're going to lounge around in your room all day," he said, "how are you going to **put Fire Aspect** on your new sword? An enchantment like that is **very expensive**. We'll need to start questing."

Hey, I have to admit, that was a good attempt at cheering me up. **Very good**. My best friend can be really crafty like that.

However, I easily countered with: "I already have that enchantment, **in a way**. You heard about that new spell Emerald learned?"

Stump laughed. "Of course. It's Emerald we're talking about. I heard all about it. And it does sound **pretty nice**. A spell that imbues a weapon with a **temporary version** of Fire Aspect I."

"Right, so why spend so much money on the enchantment?" I said. "I can already get **Fire Aspect** through her magic. And it won't cost me an emerald."

"Well, did you know that spell stacks with the normal enchantment?"

"Meaning . . . ?"

"If you have a sword enchanted with **Fire Aspect I**, and then she uses her spell on that same weapon, which also grants **Fire Aspect I**, the spell's enchantment will stack with the standard enchantment, and you'll get—"

"**Fire Aspect II**," I almost shouted.

The flames from a second level Fire Aspect **last longer**, dealing **more damage** over time with each hit, and—

". . . ?!"

I looked down at the floor.

In my **excitement**, I had flown from my bed and was now standing. My best friend just grinned.

"All right, **you win**," I said, grinning back. "Fire Aspect, huh? How'd you know that would work?"

"I didn't. That was all **her idea**."

**Breeze** suddenly appeared right next to him.

So she had been standing here the whole time. **In stealth**.

"Figured it was the only way to get you moving," she offered with a shrug.

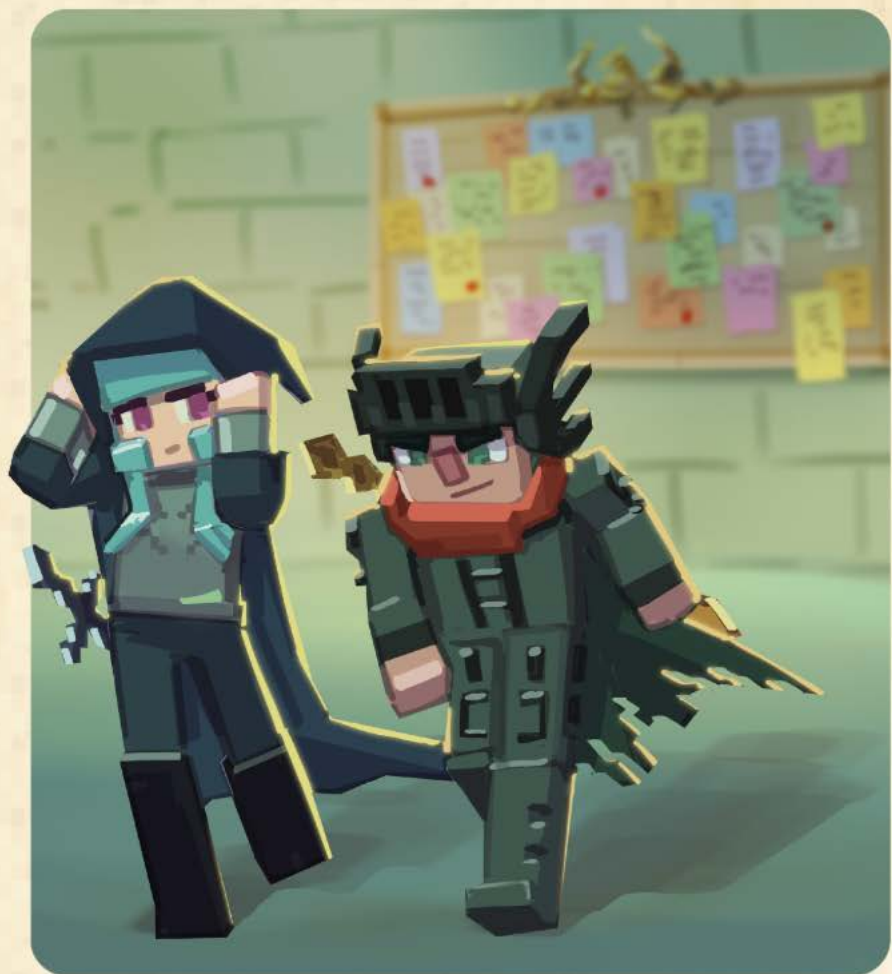
She was right, anyway. No matter how much **I wanted to**, I couldn't stay holed up in my room forever.

The guild is still here, and with each new day, new quests are added to the guild's quest board. So many that they're starting to pile up.

Only half involve **the dungeon** beneath the city. Others seek those who specialize in **curative magic**. A mysterious plague has been spreading among wild animals, said to be unnatural. And lately, the quests pouring in calling for the defense of **northern villages** is almost beyond count.

In short, there's still so much work to do.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Cube Kid** is the pen name of Erik Gunnar Taylor, a 41-year-old writer who lives in Alaska. He's a big fan of video games—especially Minecraft—and he discovered a passion for writing fan fiction early on.

Cube Kid's unofficial Minecraft fan-fiction series, **Diary of a Wimpy Villager**, first came out as e-books in 2015 and was an immediate hit in the Minecraft community.

This series was discovered by 404 Éditions and published in France in 2016 as paperbacks with illustrations by Saboten. The illustrated series has since returned to Cube Kid's native country under the title **Diary of an 8-Bit Warrior**.

When he's not writing, Cube Kid likes to travel, putter with his car, devour fan fiction, and play his favorite video game.

