

Miner's Eternity

Chapter 1: A New World; A New Life

My name is Charle. This is my story, my history. My life.

It all began when I was flying over the Atlantic on a small airplane. Night was falling fast, and I decided to take a route that I had never flown before, over the fabled Bermuda Triangle. Flying towards the southern tip of Florida, I suddenly noticed an object that even today I have trouble describing.

There, outside my plan, was a dark cloud. I do not know what it was or what it did, but suddenly, my cockpit went dark, and all I remember is a cold darkness as it wrapped itself around me.

When I awoke, I found myself on a strange island. The scenery was too temperate for Florida or the Keys, and I knew for a fact no islands where in the ocean in my flight path. I walked around and soon discovered the island teeming with life; chickens, pigs, and cows romped around me, curious. It seems that they had never seen a human before, and were very curious about me.

I soon discovered a large cave deep in the side of a mountain. Working my way deep inside, I found myself face to face with something that chilled me to the bone; a walking skeleton. It stared at me for a moment, then raised a bow towards me. I ran from the cave as an arrow shot out, hitting me in the left shoulder. Pulling out the arrow, I ran back to the beach.

I soon decided that if I was truly stuck here, I would need a home. Because I had seen the skeleton, I knew that something was amiss on this island, and so I needed protection. Walking up to a tree, I tore down some branches for wood and began shaping myself a crude tool best I could, making three tools; a shovel, an axe, and a pick. They were crude and barely more effective than my hands, but they still allowed me to gather materials.

I soon cut down a few trees with my axe and gathered some stone from the outer limits of the

cave, watching carefully to make sure the skeleton did not return to finish the job. Working until midday, I soon managed to fashion stone tools, reminding myself for the cave-folk of the ancient times. Still, they were better than my wooden ones, which I soon discarded.

I managed to build a small stone shack on the beach as the sun started going down over the sea. Walking into my shack, I placed my tools there for safekeeping, taking only the pick and heading to the cave.

When I got there, I started to work, gathering stone to be used to improve my home and make more tools. However, I soon noticed a new form of wildlife, its figure strange and alien to me. It had four legs, but no arms, and was completely green. The creature saw me, and walked over to me, curious about me as the other creatures had been. I stopped my work for a minute, and looked at it, backing away a few steps for safety. The creature noticed me moving back and ran forward, and started hissing. Startled by the sound, I stumbled backwards, and fell. The creature exploded violently, sending a chunk of stone into my face. As I felt death come to me, I could have sworn I heard a voice... "Sorry..."

Chapter 2: Death?

I awoke suddenly, as if I had been sleeping and been woken by a loud noise. I looked around me. All my stuff was lost, but I was standing on the exact same spot I had first stepped when I landed on the island. I could still remember the pain and destruction of the poor creature; I still had no way of knowing what happened, whether it had stepped on some crude landmine or had blown up itself or any other such things. But the odd thing was... *I was alive.*

I could feel, touch, and see. I could not explain it, but ever after being hit by such an explosion, I was alive! I could hardly contain myself. However, my happiness soon went away when I noticed what was going on around me.

The sun was now a thin ribbon over the sea, and I saw what could only be described as the living dead break out of the ground around me, pulling themselves up to the surface. I screamed in sheer terror, and ran towards my shack, which I could see in the distance. Running inside, I piled stone by the entrance and grabbed my shovel that I had placed there before. Here, I cowered in a corner, whimpering like a child. I did not know what this place was, but Skeletons, and Zombies... Such a place can not be on Earth! Where was I? Will I ever get home?

Suddenly, I heard noise outside as the zombies yelled. Thinking it was all over, I covered my

face... then heard a new sound... voices!

Running to the barricade, I peered through one of the holes I had not filled in, and saw four other people out on the beach, attacking the zombies with swords and bows. I could not believe it, Humans! However, as I did not know if they were hostile or not, I waited, and watched them dispose of the zombies. Eventually, when the undead were put back in the ground, they noticed my hut. Walking over to it, they knocked aside the stone, and I hastily brandished my shovel at them. "G-g-get back!" One of the men laughed, and said, "We won't hurt you. We were just on a gathering run. New to this place?"

I let out a sigh of relief and lowered my weapon. After a moment, I answered. "Yes, but where is this place? Zombies and Skeletons are from an old Hollywood movie, not in real life!"

The man laughed again, this time joined by his companions. "Heh. We aren't on Earth anymore, friend. Hell, we do not even know which continent we are on in this world. All we know is that here, Undead exist, as well as Creepers." "Creepers?" "yes. Horrid little things that run up to you, hiss, and blow up. Caused us to respawn many times."

At the word "respawn" My eyes widened. "Wait, respawn as in a game? But... how?" The man shook his head. "I don't know but I don't want to know. Anyways, mind if we set up camp by your base? Seems that you are near the spawn point, it will give us some breathing room. We have been lost for days."

I nodded, and said, "Sure, but I will have a few more questions." The man nodded to his companions, who walked in and started tearing down my walls and making my home bigger. Sitting down on the ground, he said, "My boys will expand this place proper. We have a while till Dawn, so ask away."

Chapter 3: Daybreak and a New Friend

Dawn rose over the mountains, giving the glorious light to me and my friends. As the sun rose, I saw a zombie making his way towards me, and turned to run. My friends had gone exploring more, and promised they would be back by nightfall, so I was alone once again. Suddenly, I heard the zombie cry out, and turned around. I saw it was on fire, and was momentarily brought to pity as the poor thing started to burn in the bright sunlight. It ran towards me for a moment, and then darted into my house, which I had left open. "Wait! What the..." The zombie ran over to a bucket of water that we were using to clean ourselves, and promptly grabbed it and used it to douse the fire.

Then it turned to me. I back up, panicking, and hit a wall. Thinking I was about to respawn once again, I closed my eyes to await the pain... which never came. Instead, I felt a tight squeeze around my chest. Opening my eyes, I saw the the zombie, was in fact... *hugging* me! I was startled; I did not think the undead had feelings other than anger and hunger! The zombie stopped hugging me for a minute, and I notice that, unlike most undead, this zombie seemed less... rotting, I will say. Its skin seemed less than a few days old, and the odd thing was... *It looked like me.*

Looking it in the eye, I noticed something that made me gasp in surprise. *The zombie was me!* There, in its forehead was a large hole, and I could see a stone stuck inside that had caused the hole! I do not know how, but with a few moments of thought, I managed to think up a solution: When we respawn, our bodies are recreated, leaving our corpses behind. Then, whatever magic is in this land takes the corpses and reanimates them! What an interesting discovery!

Well, I decided that my zombie-me deserved a name. Until I could think of something, I would simply name him Zharle, simply my name with a Z instead of a C. Next up, I had to tell my friends this discovery- was it all zombies that where peaceful, or was it simply zombies made from our corpses? I did not know, and I did not especially relish the thought of testing my theory.

After a few more moments of thinking, I suddenly noticed a noise gradually getting louder, a sort of banging. Looking around, I saw that Zharle was digging into the ground, making my home larger! After a few seconds pondering this, I grabbed my pick and shovel, and went down to help him.

We worked for most of the day, turning my shack into a very large underground home with several rooms and even a skylight. Looking at Zharle, I thanked him for his help. He looked at me for a minute, and spoke. "Weeeelcome..." It was hardly more than a groan, but it startled me. Now he zombies could talk! What news I had for my companions!

Finishing up the last bit of the house, Zharle and I started work on a larger basement, and I noticed the sun was starting to set once again. With it, I could also hear the sounds of my companions returning, walking on the sand. After a few moments, they came in, and looked at the house me and Zharle had expanded. They smiled, a smile that dissipated when they saw Zharle.

I started explaining, but the leader of the men punched me, saying, "Why did you lead a zombie in here, fool! You say it is harmless, but I do not believe it!" Taking his sword and before I could do anything, he cut Zharle in half from head to foot. I screamed as Zharle fell to the ground, and disappeared.

Turning to the leader, I tackled him, full of rage. Keeping him down with my knees, I kept punching and punching and punching him in the face. It took all three of his companions to get me off, but I could still see he was grievously injured. "Damn you! He was not harming anyone!" I shouted, being held by two of the others.

Getting up, the leader wiped some blood from his mouth. "You don;t think i know that these... THINGS are intelligent? You do not think I do not know they can understand us? That is what makes them abomination! They can mimic life, and they do not deserve to live!" Turning to his companions and my new enemies, I he glared at me. "Throw him in the mountains we discovered today. Let his "Friends" deal with him for us. And James..." he motioned for one of the men. "Change his spawnpoint. Make sure he never spawns here again."

James nodded, and took out a small device. Tapping on the screen for a minute, I felt something strange, like someone had punched me in the gut. Gasping for breath, I looked at the leader and James. "Heh, Spawnpoint changing is a rather hectic process. it takes a part of your life and places it in a new place. Thanks for building this house, though. It will make an excellent base." With that, he took his sword, and stabbed me in the chest. I felt death pull me once again...

Chapter 4: Ancient Ruins?

I suddenly awoke.

Looking around, I saw I truly was in a different location than the beach. I could see a forest, several mountains, and another cave in the distance, and saw that the sun was just now setting. How long do respawns take? How long was I out? I did not know. Walking over to the entrance of the cave carefully, I looked inside, and gasped.

There in front of me was a massive ruined city. Huge buildings towered above a large cave ceiling, and I could see a large fort in the center of this massive ruin. However, judging by the fact that the buildings where not crumbling or dilapidated, I knew that whatever this place was, it was abandoned a short time ago.

Suddenly, I heard a noise, and whirled around. There, in the cave;s entrance, was a creeper, as the leader had called them. I remember the form; it as the same type of creature that had killed me on my first night here! I stepped backwards, cautious. However, the creeper seemed to be curious about me, and did not move from that spot. Suddenly, I heard a voice. "Huumaaan... Frieeeeend..." I knew that voice anywhere, twirling around, I saw none other than Zharle standing in the darkness! His body seemed alright, but I could see a massive scar down the

middle, where the leader's sword struck him. Running over to Zharle, I embraced him; it seems I was no longer alone in the new spawn-point!

After a few seconds, I turned around, and was started by the creeper. There it was, standing in front of me, staring at me. We locked eyes for a moment, staring at each other. For a second, I was frightened, and thought of running, but calmed myself. Just as I did, I felt a hand grab me and throw me backwards, slamming me against the wall. It hurt, but rubbing my head, I saw that it was Zharle who had thrown me, and was now running towards me as fast as he could. "Why..?" was all I could say as suddenly, the creeper exploded violently.

Turning from the blast, Zharle spoke once again. "Creepeeeerss... Noooo Controool... Tiiicking..." I managed to grasp what he meant. For some reason, Creepers spontaneously explode around humans. Was this a feature shared with all creepers? If so, how could I get around it? It was something I had to think about later.

Me and Zharle left the ruins, and he started to explain what was happening. He soon told me that the ruins I had stumbled on was the remains of a gigantic creeper city, Creepopolis, and he had been spending the last week or so helping with the construction of it. However, the leader and the rest of his cronies had discovered the peaceful city, and tried to take the thing that the creepers held dear, something called a "Spawner" which allowed them to be respawned at the city rather than randomly, as it seems creatures respawn every night at a random location.

Zharle also explained the decision of the leading creepers to move the city, and Zharle had decided to remain here, in the off chance he could find me. I nodded, and thanked my friend. He had given up a new life for me; just on the off chance I would find this place.

We finally stopped as the moon reached it;s highest point. I noticed with some confusion that no creatures were spawning near me at the moment, something I had come to grow accustomed to with nightfall. "Creeeeatresss... go... Creeeptopliss..." Zharle said, noticing my confusion. I realized he was right; any creatures that spawned would no doubt wish to live with the creepers in Creepopolis, and would have gone with them.

I walked over to a tree and started gathering wood, with the help of Zharle, and soon made myself new tools. Working together, we managed to dig deep into the ground, looking for supplies. I knew that we would need to make a new home, as when the creepers of Creepopolis got farther away, more creatures would spawn, and these ones would no doubt consider me a threat and try to make me respawn. Also, I knew that come day, Zharle would need shelter from the harsh rays of the sun, and I vowed, as long as I was around, my friend would not come to harm.

Soon, we managed to make a small home, and digging down, we came upon a new mineral: Iron. I knew that Iron would be useful for making new tools, so I gathered it up with my stone tools and brought it back to my house. Taking some coal Zharle had found while digging, I managed to make a small oven, which I used to melt the iron and turn to steel. Taking my new steel, I made myself new iron tools, and went back to work.

I do not know how long we spent underground, or how much time we spent digging, but I do know that I had used up seven iron pickaxes and three iron shovels before I hit a strange black rock. Looking at the rock, Zharle moaned a single word, "Beeedroooock..." And started digging away from it. Whatever the stone was, even trying to break it damaged my pick, so I started to mine away from it.

Soon, I came upon a beautiful sight: Gold! Its beauty was dazzling, and taking my pick, I dug it up, and gave it to Zharle, telling him to bring it back to the surface. While Zharle did that, I continued on, and soon found a glittering, shining gemstone. Digging it out with my pick, I soon saw its beauty: it was a diamond! Looking around, I saw no less than three diamonds, all of massive size. Taking them back up myself, I showed them to Zharle, who took one of them and examined it. "Diaaaaamond..." He said. "I know. What should we do with it? We cannot trade it with anyone, as I am not going anywhere NEAR those other humans.

Suddenly, I noticed a shadow coming from the door. Too late, I saw the door was open. Running to shut it, I got closer, and closer, but suddenly, I saw a creeper standing in the door. Zharle raced to grab me as I heard the creeper go SSSSSSSSSS, but he was too far... I awaited my end.

Which never came.

Looking at the creeper, which seemed to be confused, I noticed that the diamond in my hand was glowing with a soft light. "So diamonds make sure creepers do not end their ticking, huh?" I said to myself. The creeper looked confused, and then spoke. "My ticking stopped. But I did not reset. Human, how did you do such a thing?"

I showed the creeper the diamond, and he looked at it closely. "Such a thing should be valuable to my kind. Would you care to part with it? I would like to return this to Creepopolis." The word "Creepopolis" made me do a double-take.

"You live there? In Creepopolis?" I asked. The Creeper nodded, and asked again, "Can I please have that diamond?"

"On one condition." I said. The creeper eyed me for a moment, and asked, "And what is that?"

"Take me to Creepropolis."

Chapter 5: Creepropolis

The creeper took me and Zharle to a large island in the sky. It was a beautiful sight, with waterfalls going down the sides and trees sprouting within it. I could also see a small village and stairway that led to the island itself, with many, many creepers climbing up and down it.

I soon noticed a lone creeper, admiring a flower near a small pool of water. He was a bit darker green than the others, and I noticed that the creeper I had met was leading me to him. I also was inwardly startled as I realized that it was the same creeper that I had first met! After a few seconds, the dark-green creeper noticed the two of us, and my creeper friend spoke. "He is the elder. Go to him."

I cautiously walks closer, and soon me and the "Elder" where face to face, looking at each other. After a few minutes, the elder creeper spoke.

"Why have you come to Providence, our sanctuary in the sky?" He said. His voice was deeper, and more mature, than I had ever heard from anyone before. I knew he was a creeper that had seen more than his fair share of life, and gotten stronger because of it.

"I... I have come to ask to live within Providence, and wish to do my best to aid your people, Elder." I said. "And how can you do this? If you remember, I exploded upon my attempt to talk to you before. How are you able to speak with me now?"

"With this." I said, taking the diamond from my belt. He looked at the glowing gemstone for a second, and seemed to be captivated by it's internal lights. "This... this is a true treasure. It will allow you to help us make Providence great." The Elder said, turning away from the light, a bit dazzled. "Come, I shall introduce you to my people." he said, turning towards the stairway. As we walked, the creeper, the Elder, Zharle, and I, I asked the Elder, "What is your name, sir? So I know what to call you in the future?"

"Jonno." Came the reply as we continued on.

As we walked up the stairs, our topic turned to the other humans. "So, do you know the four that attacked our peaceful city? I assume you heard the story already?" Jonno asked.

"Yes, I have." I replied as we reached the top of the stairs. "Our paths where once joined,

but after they showed they could not be trusted, I was banished from among them, and they changed my spawnpoint- you know it as a reset location. They are... very misguided and masochistic people."

Jonno nodded, and soon I saw that we were in front of a large building. I saw that there was nothing but cloth covering the doorway, and stopped. "One moment, Jonno." Taking my crafting bench and some wood I had on me, I started working. Jonno seemed surprised, and watched me closely, and soon I had made two wooden doors, well-made and secure, and placed them in the doorway. "Here, hit them with your foot." I said.

Jonno walked up to it for a minute, and kicked it with one of his legs. It swung open perfectly, coming to rest in an open state. "Impressive." Jonno said, and we continued on.

I soon found myself in a massive courtroom. With the creeper and Zharle next to me, Jonno went up to take his place, a large chair in the center of the table. I also saw that there were others: three creepers, a zombie, and a skeleton all sitting there. Next to me, Zharle spoke. "Zooombie... Ruuuugby... Woorked... buiild... Ceeeeptopolis" He said.

I understood what he said quickly. It seems when he worked on Creepopolis, he worked under the supervision of Rugby, who was now one of the elders of Creepopolis.

After a few seconds, Jonno spoke. "Elders, I have brought this human before us because of a new material he brings before us. Charle, please show it."

I took out the diamond, and held it high for everyone to see. Several of the creepers seemed captivated by it, and others were simply amazed. Taking the chance, I spoke. "This diamond will keep me safe from causing any of you to end your ticking from being close to me. I wish to use this ability to help make Providence a city, one to match Creepopolis, which I know that other humans drove you out of."

There was a lot of murmuring between the elders, when suddenly, the skeleton jumped up in his seat. "I...do not.... trust... He might... want to... harm us..." He said.

This caused an explosion of murmuring in the courtroom. I saw that many other creepers had walked in, and were sitting in chairs made for them. I noticed that many of them were uncomfortable, however, and started thinking.

Taking out my crafting bench again, I took a bit of wool I had saved from a sheep I had caught, and some wood. Putting it together and making holes for their legs, I managed to design a chair for creepers to sit in without pain. Making twenty of them, I quickly walked around the courtroom

and started calmly asking creepers to get up, and giving them the chairs. Many of them were surprised at how the chairs fit them, and several of them, I could see, were very comfortable.

As I did this, the elders stopped and watched. Jonno spoke up. "Even now he is helping us. Farash, do you truly think he means harm?"

Farash, the skeleton, looked at me for a moment. "He... should... be watched..." He said. "But... give... him a... chance..."

Jonno turned to the other elders, and asked, "And what say you, Applecore, Duffman, and Mooman?"

Applecore, a creeper with a bit of red on his head, stood up. "I believe this human could help the city. I agree with Jonno."

Duffman, a creeper with a lighter tint of green, stood next. "I believe he should be allowed in as well."

Finally, Mooman stood. He was a creeper with a bluish tint, making him stand out from the others. "I agree on some grounds with Farash, he should be watched, but we should allow him to come."

Then, Jonno turned to Rugby. "And you, Rugby?" Rugby shrugged, "Leeeet... hiiim... joooin..." he moaned.

With that, Jonno turned to me. "Welcome to Providence. Do NOT betray the trust we have given you." I nodded, and spoke, turning to the crowd of creatures that have now come into the courtroom.

"I know that you all do not trust me, and I know humans have done things to you in the past. But I promise you, I will make this city better, and make it so that you will never have to fear humans again!"

With that, the creatures that were watching cheered.

I felt... happy. For the first time since I had come to this world, I was happy, and felt at home.

Chapter 6: Providence Reborn

The next few days, I worked on making the creature;s homes better, providing tools such as boats and streets, and created chairs, doors, and even glass windows for their homes. I also started work on a large project; massive towers made of iron that glittered in the sun. These would be large communal structures, and would house hundreds, if not thousands of creatures.

Due to the fact most of my work was at night thanks to the zombie construction crew, I worked hard and sometimes worked all day straight with no stopping for rest, making the massive towers in the center of the city. After they where done, on the third day that I had been invited into the city, I stepped back to look at my work.

Fifteen stories each, I had built three towers, all out of Iron. The roofs where made of wood, to keep heat and sunlight out, and there where windows on the thirteenth story and higher, allowing from creepers that wished to see the sun to do so. Several of the elders complimented me on my work, but I sadly noticed many of the normal creepers still did not trust me. I hoped I would one day remedy that.

On the eve of the second day, I started my next project: defenses. I did not know how long Leader and his cronies would take to find us, but I did not think so foolishly that they would leave us alone if they did. Taking some stone and being careful near the edge of the island, I started work on a massive wall; six feet thick and ten feet tall. If they ever did come, we would at least have time until they broke through. The wall, with the help of the zombies, as relatively easy to create, but as with working near cliffs, we nearly had an accident on our hands. a creeper that had been helping us move stone was walking near the edge when he slipped and started to fall. Running over, I leapt off the edge,grabbing his body and throwing him back up on the island itself.

However, my momentum as too fast, and soon saw the ground fly up to meet me. With a sickening SNAP, I felt my ankle break as I landed on it with an odd angle. The pain was great, but I knew I had to much to do, so I fashioned a splint for myself out of wood, and completely encased my leg in it, allowing me to move the borken ankle with little to no pain. With this contraption built, I went back to the island and finished the wall, with new respect from the creepers that had seen what had happened.

With the finale of the wall as the sun started to rise, I told the zombies to head back home while I worked on a gate. I knew that if I made a simple wooden door, it would be easy to break through, so I started looking in my pack for what I had. taking out some iron bars that I still had, I heated them up in the furnace and melted them down, making two iron doors. Then, taking an odd red powder that I had found while looking for diamonds, I sprinkled it on the ground, connecting them to a pressure plate made of stone and a stick that had been dipped in the dust.

The stick, when connected to the dust, started to glow, and I saw, much to my satisfaction that, with the pressure plate in the way, the energy the torch created did not go straight to the double gates. With a quick test, I made sure that when I stood on the button, it opened the gates, and made sure it worked with a fellow creeper as well.

Removing the dust and the working again, I made two pressure plates, on each side of the gates on the wall, that both had to be pressed to open the gate. This way, Providence would be safe from hostiles; and with the aid of some creepers whom I explained the system to, we soon had a regular patrol on the gates.

Sitting back, I saw that many of the creepers were now looking at me with a new gaze, one of respect.

Chapter 7: Life in Providence

The night was cool and calm, and I stood at the top of the walls of Providence, looking out over the world. Sitting by me was Zharle; he could not speak as eloquently as I needed him to at times, but he was a constant companion in this city.

I couldn't help but feel out of place at times, the only human in this city of creatures. Where humans truly as rare as I have seen? Was I the only human, besides Leader and his goons? I shuddered at the thought. However, I was comforted by the fact that it seemed time had stopped for me; my fingernails were not longer, even after weeks, I was not dirty, and my hair was as short as ever. It seems that dying of old age is impossible here, or else at the very least I age much slower.

I traveled around Providence, looking at everything I had done for the small town, but I felt it was not enough. I felt no matter how hard I tried, I would never come close to doing what Jonno had done: he had united the creepers and given them a home, a place to call their own. Beside me, Zharle quietly walked along, contemplating his own thoughts.

As the sun started to rise, I found myself alone as Zharle walked back to our shared home. Walking down the wall, I looked down the cliff and then sat, my feet hanging over the edge and the blastedly annoying wooden splint hitting the wall. After a few minutes of thinking, I heard a voice. "You know, you don't have to be out here alone. You seem to come out here every morning."

Turning around, I saw Edward, the creeper that had brought me to Providence. Since my arrival, he had done his best to make me feel at home, and even introduced me to his Reset-brother,

Paulo, whom he met when he reset for the first time.

"I know, my friend, but I have been thinking about this world. About life and existence itself." I said, placing my head on my good knee.

"Ah, such a thing only causes a mind to go insane. Best not be thinking of such things." Edward said, nudging me. I sighed. "Do I really belong here, if the only thing that keeps me safe in Providence is this amulet?" Taking out the amulet I wore, I showed it to Edward. Instead of piercing the diamond, for which I had no tools and no idea if it would ruin the diamond, I had instead encased it in gold on four sides, then encased that with iron, making a three-layer amulet coin which I wore around my neck, tied by some sturdy string supplied by Farash's spider, Leaper.

"Ah, but it does not matter why you are here and what keeps you here. What matters is what you do while you are here." Edward said. "Now, my friend. What do we plan to do today?"

"I... am not sure." I said, standing up. As the sun continued to rise, I turned to him. "What does this city need? What else do they need me for?"

Edward nudged me again. "Alright then, how about we take a tour of the town? Just me and you? That way, the others will get to know you better as well. Some of them are still a bit nervous."

I nodded. "Sure. Why not?"

So we started walking down the main road, passing by creepers on their way to the walls for guard duty, others heading to the courtroom, and even more just walking around and running errands for their companions.

As we entered the courtroom, I saw it filled with creepers, standing next to a large table, with zombies next to them. As the creepers talked, the zombies carved their words into stone. "Do you not use paper?" I asked, surprised.

"What is 'paper'?" Edward asked. I just stood there for a moment, surprised, then caught myself. "Do you know where I can find reeds? They grow about 9 feet tall, mostly near water."

Edward nodded, and led me to a large house. Inside was a massive farm, with wheat and reeds growing next to irrigated pools. "Amazing." I said. "I had a feeling we would need reeds sometime. So did Jonno; he had us bring them here and farm them. Farash gave us a toolbox to put the extra in, over there." Pointing with his head, Edward pointed out a small chest, which

I went over and opened. Taking around five bundles of reeds, I then carried them back to the courtroom.

Taking out my crafting bench, I mashed the reeds into a paste, then used fire to dry them into sheets of paper. Handing the paper to the zombies, I said, "Use this instead of stone." The zombie needed some tutoring, and I had to show them it did not need to be chiseled, but each of them learned fast. Soon, the zombies were scribing with quills I made from chicken feathers, and writing in small books. "Now the archives will take less space." I said. Edward seemed pleased.

Taking me past the courtroom, I saw a large house that reminded me of pictures I had once seen of Roman architecture.

"What is this house?" I asked. "Oh, that? That is where we get rid of our powder." Edward said. "Powder?" I asked, surprised. "yes, each week it accumulated over our bodies. If we do not scrape it off, it could become hazardous to our health." "Really? Like dirt?" I asked. "Yes and no... we have had some problems with the powder, when exposed to a flame, exploding violently much like when we end our ticking." Edward shook his head. "If only there was a use for it. Care to have a look?"

I shrugged, and said, "Why not?" And Edward led me inside and into a large room. In the center of this room was a large bin full of black dust, and when I reached in and touched it, I knew my hunch was right. "Black powder! This is amazing!" I said, starting both Edward and a few creepers nearby.

"What is it?" Edward asked, surprised. "In my world, we called this Black Powder. it was needed for most explosives, and was highly volatile." I said. "Pack this in a box or a barrel, and we have an explosive. One that can be used WITHOUT any of your brethren having to end their ticking."

"What a surprising idea! We once tried to do something like that, but it ended up causing more harm than good, with three creepers and a zombie having to reset." Edward said, shaking his head. "Well, I know a little bit about explosives. Give me enough of this stuff and time, and I will be able to make it into usable explosives."

Edward nodded, and said, "Alright, I will tell Jonno or any of the Elders when I see them next. Anyways, on with the tour."

The rest of the tour was uneventful, with Edward showing me each of the houses, including their purposes, mostly each of them were residential areas, with several creeper families. Edward explained that "family" was merely a group of creepers that wished to share living space, and as

all creepers were created by "resetting," there was no need to worry about young creepers or any of the like.

As the day started to turn to night, I yawned as the tour started to end. Noticing my exhaustion, Edward walked me to my house. As I stepped inside, I stopped for a second.

Edward was right. It was not the reason I stayed, nor is it the reason why I am here. The true reason I should be thinking of is what will I do while I was here. With this knowledge, I went inside and went to sleep as Zharle left the house to go out as he did every night.

At this point, me and Jonno's paths diverge on our specific "endings."

Chapter 8: Questionable Methods

The next night, I was busy making myself useful around Providence, making small but useful items for the creatures that resided here. My depression was gone, and it made me smile when I saw a creeper jump for joy when I gave it something it liked.

Farash went off at dusk for some reason, not even Jonno knew. I knew that he was probably going for a walk, or something similar.

Suddenly, a creeper shouted from the walls. "Someone's coming! I think it's a human!"

I dropped what I was doing and ran for the walls, joining the creepers there and gazing over the edge.

Looking down towards the ground, I saw Leader, followed by two men I didn't recognize. They were armed in iron armor, and swords were sheathed at their waist. As soon as they saw me, they took out a white flag and waved it, calling out, "Charle! We wish to parlay with you!"

"I am not the leader here." I replied, and turned around. I saw the Elders running towards the wall, and after a few seconds, they arrived, and Jonno was looking over the edge. "What do you want, Leader? Charle has told me much about you... so be brief."

"Just a quick meeting with you, honored creeper." Came Leader's reply. I didn't trust him; I knew something was up. "Jonno, I would be careful." I said. "Very well. I will take precautions." Turning back to Leader, Jonno said, "I will send Applecore, a fellow Elder, down to meet with you. He will be accompanied by two zombies."

Leader shouted a reply a few moments later. "Fair enough."

Applecore walked down the stairs, followed by two zombies. We all watched as Applecore began talking with Leader. After a few moments, I realized something was wrong.

Suddenly, movement caught my eye coming from the hills. Three more humans popped out of the ground from holes they had been hiding in. I watched in horror as the bowmen shot down Applecore and the zombies, and their bodies disappeared.

Then, turning to us, Leader smirked, a smile full of hatred and scorn, one that I could see even in the darkness. "You fools have two days to surrender. If you do not surrender by then, We will attack and enslave your pathetic people. And you, Charle? I have something special in mind for you."

With that, Leader and his men turned, and walked off. I cursed myself for how unprepared I had been for such an event, I should have made armor, or weapons, but I had thought my time in this peaceful village would never end.

Now, we faced a choice. One that would decide our fates; slavery and life, or war and death.

Looking at each of the Elders in turn, I saw each of them had the same glint of determination in their eyes, and knew their answers.

It was war.