AN UNOFFICIAL MINECRAFT CHAPTER BOOK

THE CURSED EMERALD

PART 1

My pickaxe goes CHINK, CHINK, CHINK against the coal. Same old coal. Same old dark cave. Same old Tuesday.

Then something flashes green in the wall, and my pickaxe stops mid-swing.

An emerald. A big, fat, beautiful emerald, glowing like it wants me to find it. My brain says, "Don't touch it." My fingers say, "Too late."

HISSSSSS.

I know that sound. Every miner knows that sound. I spin around and throw up my shield just as the Creeper explodes. BOOM! The blast slams me backwards into the wall so hard my teeth rattle.

When the dust clears, I look over at the emerald. Something inside it is glowing. Not regular emerald green. A deeper, weirder green, flickering like a tiny flame. "That's new," I whisper. And then the whole cave starts to spin.

I blink. I am standing on grass. Under stars. Outside.

One second I was deep underground, and now I'm in the middle of nowhere with the wind on my face and a wooden sign I've never seen before. I check my diamond armour for cracks. No cracks. I check the emerald in my hand. Still glowing. Still weird.

"Okay," I say to nobody. "So it's THAT kind of emerald."

TWANG! An arrow zips past my ear.

A skeleton. Of course it's a skeleton. I catch the next two arrows on my shield, then pull out my netherite sword and charge. One swing. Bones everywhere.

A little green experience orb floats up from the pile, and I breathe it in. "Thanks for that," I tell the bones. The bones do not answer. But somewhere behind me, something else does. A clicking, scratching, many-legged something.

I turn around slowly. A spider creeps out of the shadows, red eyes glowing. Behind it, another skeleton with an arrow already on the string. And behind THAT... a baby zombie. Riding a chicken.

"Oh, come ON," I groan.

I don't wait to count any more. I pick a direction and run. My boots pound the grass, my armour clangs, and somewhere behind me a chicken goes "Bawk bawk bawk" like this is all very exciting.

A river. Perfect. I splash straight in. Zombies can't swim fast, skeletons can't aim at a moving target in water, and baby zombies on chickens... well, I don't actually know what they do in rivers. I don't want to find out.

A zombie stands on the shore, watching me with its dull, hollow eyes. It doesn't follow. I paddle out to the deep part and let the river carry me. Behind me, the monsters shrink to tiny shapes in the dark. "Not today," I whisper.

I swim until the trees on the banks get tall and tangled. Jungle. Vines everywhere. Way too thick to run through at night.

Then I see it. A little wooden cabin, half-hidden in the ferns, its shape reflected in the still water like a painting. A cabin means a door. A door means nothing can get in.

I swim for it so fast I nearly swallow the river.

I slam the door, flop onto the bed, and sleep hits me like a falling anvil. When I wake up, sun is pouring through the window. I eat my last piece of bread and sit there chewing, staring at nothing. Then a green glow catches my eye. The emerald, sitting right there on the bed where it fell out of my pocket.

That strange little flame still dances inside it. Last night it zapped me to the middle of nowhere, threw monsters at me, and nearly got me eaten by a baby zombie on a chicken. I pick it up. I hold it to the light. I smile.

"So," I say. "Where to next?"

All

The Cursed Emerald Part 1

Deep in a Minecraft mine, a miner's ordinary Tuesday changes forever when a glowing emerald winks from the cave wall. One touch - and suddenly they are standing outside under stars with no idea how they got there, monsters closing in, and a baby zombie on a chicken in hot pursuit. What is this cursed emerald, and where on earth will it take them next? A decodable reader at Level 85, practising words like "beautiful," "flickering," "backwards," and "reflected."

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