



**BUILDING FAITH**

**BLOCK**

**-BY-**

**BLOCK**

**MICHAEL ROSS  
CHRISTOPHER ROSS**



**HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS**  
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For Tiffany  
We love you...and have so much fun  
sharing this amazing Minecrafty world with you!



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## STARTING POINT

# Unlock the Fun!



I bolt out of bed and squint in the darkness.

Something woke me up—sort of an eerie moan...or maybe it was a growl. *Zombies! Bet they're outside my front door. Maybe an army of them.*

Suddenly...*HHHHIISSSSS...CLANG!* Something is *inside* my house, and I can detect faint scampering sounds moving up and down my walls.

*Spiders!*

But I can't see a thing. Every torch in my house has gone out—including the ones on my porch. *This is bad!*

"Lenny," I call out to my ocelot-turned-cuddly cat. (The Minecraft tutorial I watched online was right on: Feed a wild ocelot three fish, and it will turn into a cute cat.) "Hey, crazy pet...my favorite four-legged friend who would never in a million, zillion years leave a Minecraft pal in the dark to fend for himself, *where are you?* I'm really scared and—"

I stop midsentence. I hear noises coming from the long corridor that leads to my mine.

I run my hand over the spot where my cat usually sleeps but make contact with nothing but a dead fish! At least my cat has been here. “Lenny,” I yell a little louder. “Lenny, come here!” At this point my orange-and-brown-spotted friend usually greets me with an arched back and a face full of imaginary cat kisses. But this time...silence.

I quietly open a storage chest next to my bed and pull out my trusty bow and arrow. I raise them high in the air, ready to fire, and then take a quick peek out my front window. Nothing but darkness. Not the monster freak show I imagined on my doorstep.

*Yep—I definitely have visitors in my mine. It’s go time!*

As I make my way toward the noises, I can’t help but groan at my surroundings. I crafted this place with a pickaxe and my own two virtual hands, but when night falls and the monsters roam, my house begins to feel more creepy than cool. There are cold gray stones everywhere, and one of the walls is lined with stained glass windows—which, at the moment, look hauntingly eerie with moonlight shining through them.

*What was I thinking? Why did I make this place look like a vampire’s lair?*

It reminds me of scary evenings in the real world. If I watch something spooky on TV before going to bed, I lie awake, shaking under the covers...wondering if that big pile of clothes Mom told me to pick up is going to form arms and legs and eventually attack me.

I take a step but nearly trip. Another one of Lenny’s fish treats just slimed my floor. I squeeze shut my eyes and take a

deep breath. “Lenny,” I whisper to myself, “I need you now!” My heart is playing keyboards with my ribcage.

I take another step...followed by a fourth and a fifth...and I eventually reach the entrance to my mine. Directly in front of me is a long, narrow shaft that drops into the ground. A wooden ladder is the only way down.

“Torches,” I whisper to myself. “They’re still lit.” A warm glow emanates from the opening. I stand perfectly still, just like a ninja. I hug a wall and listen intently. I hear desperate sounds—muffled growling and hissing coming from below.

I roll my head slightly and look into the pit.

“Lenny!” I spot my faithful pet on a ledge just a few feet down, poised for action—his tail all puffed out and his claws ready to strike.

*GROWL...HHHHIISSSSS...WHOOSH!*

I turn away to think about what I just saw: *My cat is attacking something, but what? Zombies aren't scared of cats, and neither are spiders. And the game makers haven't yet introduced monster mice. This means one thing: My faithful buddy is fighting a...*

“Creeper!”

Creepers are the most dangerous monsters in the game. They run toward their victims and explode, destroying just about everything in sight—especially players. But for some unknown reason, they fear cats and ocelots.

I've met plenty of creepers at school. But the kind I'm talking about are disguised as bad attitudes and ugly behaviors: envy, hatred, jealousy, rage, selfishness, fear. They invade the hearts of otherwise good people, wreaking havoc in their lives.

Just as I spin around again to get a handle on the action...*WHOOSH!*

A creeper races up the ladder right at me. I take aim. (Curiously,

in spite of not having any arms, ugly green creepers are good with ladders.)

“That’s it—keep coming,” I shout, taunting him just a little. “A bit closer. Keep coming because you are absolutely, positively gonna be...toast!”

I pull back on my bowstring and let an arrow fly.

POW...a direct hit! I fire again and again...and the creeper freezes in midair. And then, in an instant, it vanishes into oblivion.

I let out my one-millionth sigh of relief. (Hopefully, my last one for the night.)

Another monster down. Another win for the good guys. And I survive to make my Minecrafty world a better place.

As for Lenny...he gets an extra fish treat!



My first few moments in Minecraft began at daybreak.

I was completely alone—single-player, survival mode. But once darkness fell, I quickly discovered a secret: *We are never truly alone.*

Unseen eyes are always watching. Hidden dangers are lurking in the shadows, so we’ve got to stay alert. This tip can keep us alive...in the game and in real life.

I’m Dragee90, and I can’t wait to share more secrets. See the little duck in the image at the start of this chapter? That’s me—my character. A bow-slinging, warrior duck to be exact. He’s fearless in battle, faithful to his friends, and an amazing monster hunter. (He snagged an *achievement*—a high honor—from game makers for taking out that creeper.) My character is

full of surprises too. You can't help but crack up laughing when he springs into action. But watch out—this crazy duck is on a mission!

*Building Faith Block by Block* is all about discovering our very own real-life mission. Just like the game, the real world is filled with bad guys and heroes, struggles and victories. And on any given day, we have *tons* of decisions to make. Without warning, we find ourselves smack in the middle of hair-raising predicaments, like fending off creepers in our brains (bad attitudes and behaviors), escaping the smelly slime of stupid choices, and avoiding the web's darkest places.

In the virtual world of Minecraft, our problems are solved with a simple *TAP, TAP, TAP* on a keyboard. We can switch to creative mode and shut out all the bad stuff. At that point, we're in control as we explore strange lands and create whatever we want...worry-free. The game makers don't force us to choose pre-planned responses or to follow a bunch of rules. Instead, we get to make our own choices and just have fun being ourselves.

Guess what? We can have this kind of freedom in real life too.

No one can totally escape the pressures of everyday living and breathing, but the Creator of all things—the one and only God of the universe, our heavenly Father—loves us more than we can ever imagine. He promises to guide our steps right through the bad stuff. God has amazing dreams for us—an ultimate mission that leads to eternal life with Him. But He'll never, ever force us to follow Him.

It's up to us to make that choice.

In each of these short chapters, I give you a click-by-click report of my Minecrafty adventures, and I'll share some useful tips that can help in the game...and in life.

Let's not waste another second. You already know what

happens when the sun goes down in Minecraft, so let's get moving. I have a lot to show you!



*CLICK...CLICK...CLICK.*

There it is—the first thing I want you to see. That stone fortress perched high atop a ridge is my house. You stumbled around it in the dark with me, but here's how it looks in the daylight. Since my heritage goes back to Sweden, Ireland, and England, I decided to honor my family with a medieval-styled, Irish-Scandinavian chateau. (Even the queen would love it here!) It took hours to craft.

Gray and whitewashed stone, weather-worn wood, turrets with brown-and-red-tiled roofs, narrow windows and doors with arches...pretty cool, huh? The inside is still rustic with just a handful of rooms, a crafting table, a bed, and some chests to hold my stuff. Its coolest feature is the long passageway that leads to my mine. (Remember the stained glass?)

It's my own royal hideaway, what I proudly call Mount Quack. I started it in a hurry, just minutes after I arrived in my Minecraft world. You know the drill: We spawn into the game at daybreak, but we have only ten minutes to find food, gather resources, build shelter, and prepare for nightfall. We absolutely can't be stranded in the dark.

So I strategically placed Mount Quack on the highest point, a steep peak where I feel safe at night. And during the day, I can see practically the whole world.

Speaking of the world, take a look...

*CLICK, CLICK.*

I was lucky enough to be spawned in a dense jungle, technically

called the Jungle M biome. Really, this place is just one huge, mountainous island with trees that reach into the clouds and jagged cliffs that plunge into the ocean. It's a lush green paradise with waterfalls and caves and beaches that remind me of an island in the Bahamas—only better. I think I could live here for real!

Brightly colored flowers and cocoa pods seem to spawn everywhere. And all around us is a tangled ceiling of leaves and vines, so thick you can barely see the sky. If you listen closely, you can almost hear the crazy choruses of chirps and yelps, whistles and whirrs. And don't forget the soothing roar of the ocean. *Ahhh...island life!*

The coolest thing about the Bahamas was getting to swim with a bottlenose dolphin named Shawn. He was huge—nine feet long and weighing 500 pounds! But the cool thing about my virtual island is my creeper-scaring cat named Lenny. I think he eats as much fish as Shawn!

Check out some other great critters...

*CLICK.*

This place is teeming with friendly animals that seem to appear out of nowhere. Ocelots (just like my cat), wolves, pigs, and goofy-looking chickens often scamper into the thick brush. (Yep, crazy chickens inhabit this island!)

My world is resource rich, and if you play this game much, you know how important that is. Everywhere I look, I spot useful items: trees, stone, water, sand, cactus, sugar cane. And mining has really paid off. In addition to good stuff like coal ore and granite, I've dug up emerald and diamond ore. I trade emeralds with villagers on the other side of the island, and I craft armor out of diamonds. I end up with a glistening turquoise outfit that keeps me stylin' in battle!

As for Mount Quack, I have big plans for my place. The exterior is cool, but the interior needs a good HGTV makeover. I envision just the basics. You know, simple touches that make Scandinavian chateaus very...uh...chateau-like: sprawling courtyards with fountains, an indoor pool, a library, an armory. Torches everywhere. Outside, I'm going to build giant walls and lookout towers for protection. Mount Quack will be a safe place, shutting out scary stuff. That is, every bad thing but creepers.

I haven't figured out how to fully escape these guys. They pop up when we least expect them, and they're hard to beat. Thankfully, I have my cat, Lenny, by my side.



So there you have it—my Minecraft world, fresh from my imagination!

Enough with the tour. Let's jump back into gameplay...this time multiplayer, survival mode. Sure, we'll switch back to creative mode from time to time to work on some mind-boggling Minecraft creations. But I really want you to join me in an A-to-Z quest for survival secrets. There's a lot we're going to discover together.

We'll mine some of the best-ever tips on zombie-proofing friendships, outsmarting creepers, protecting our skin, and other clues for faith, life, and fun!

Hey, it's go time!

## 60 A-to-Z Survival Secrets

This book is jam-packed with 60 survival secrets. How you use it is up to you—alone or with friends, as a daily devotional or a reference book. Share these pages with Mom and Dad or a group at church or school. Each entry includes a Minecraft adventure followed by two important sections:

**T** *Gameplay Secrets.* These help you achieve success in the virtual world. Dragee90 emcees the action, defining a Minecraft A-to-Z term and offering secrets for online survival.

**T** *Real-Life Secrets.* Here's where you'll find tips for success in life. Dragee90 relates the topic to the real world and shares a story, a struggle, or a victory from his own life. Each entry ends with a Bible verse, a question to think about and discuss with your friends, a faith-building step you can easily apply, and a place to jot a thought or doodle a Minecrafty masterpiece.

## SECRET 1

# Escaping Aggressive Mobs



**M**y fingers and arms are a blur of activity. I just spawned into a brand-new game, and I don't have a second to spare. I stack block after block, trying to craft my shelter before darkness falls. Finally, the roof is attached.

*Whew—that's a good start.*

I race around my crude shelter, adding torches. Light is a player's best friend. I knock out some holes on each wall and fill them with blocks of glass. Eventually I'll add some cool details, like stained glass, a fancy corridor that will lead to my mine, and several more rooms—sleeping chambers, a crafting room, a big dining hall. But I can't worry about those things just yet. My number one priority is to protect myself from eminent danger.

*Uh-oh, I see movement in the trees. Better hurry.*

I tap into my resources and build some heavy wooden doors

to keep out the mobs. Yikes—I don't have enough weapons and food yet. I have to go back outside, but I'm losing time.

*Here they come.*

Moans, groans, and hissing sounds fill the air as an army of Minecraft monsters invade my world. There are fast-moving skeletons, lumbering zombies, and creepy spiders. They're definitely in attack mode. These aren't passive or neutral mobs. The creatures on my doorstep are aggressive! My best defense is shelter.

But I'm caught outside trying to gather more supplies for the night. I move as quickly as I can through the thick trees. Suddenly...creepers! They are spawning everywhere.

*Quick—run!*

This time my legs become a blur as I rocket home. I scream through the front door just in time and find a corner, where I hunker down for the night. (I haven't yet created a bed.)

*I'm safe inside...for now.*

After what seems like an eternity, nightfall covers my Minecraft world. I peek out a window. *Yep, the freak show is in full swing!*

But something even stranger catches my eye. I can almost see my friends among the monsters outside. I imagine a neighborhood kid named Eddie dragging his feet with the zombies. (He does a pretty good imitation.) Skinny Kyle is blending in with the skeletons. And the more I look, the more I realize that Minecraft mobs are like different groups at school. My best friends are creative and nice and fun to joke around with. Some kids are passive and move right past me as if I didn't exist. There are other kids whom I don't know that well but who are good to be with when the teacher gives us team assignments.

My smile quickly fades as I think about a not-so-fun group: the mean kids.

You know the types—those who love to make fun of people... otherwise known as *bullies*. And to be honest, that's who I'm up against right now.

At school, bullies walk around in groups, acting as if they own the place. And when one turns his attention on me, the rest of them seem to want a piece of the action. They say they are just joking around and I shouldn't get upset, but their hateful words spawn like a creeper mob.

*GROWL...HHHHIISSSS...KABOOM!*

That all-too familiar sound snaps me back to gameplay. I glance out the window again and cringe. The creepers are multiplying—and they're everywhere!

*What else will the darkness bring?*

## GAMEPLAY SECRETS

Mobs (short for “mobiles”) are a fact of life in Minecraft. They include villagers, animals, and monsters. They can turn otherwise peaceful gameplay into turmoil. The aggressive mobs are the worst ones. They attack players on sight, and not just when they're provoked.

But I have a survival tip that can save your life...



### Dragee90's Best Tip

Monsters cannot see through glass or ice blocks. So always build windows on your shelter. This way, you can spy on them without being detected.

## REAL-LIFE SECRETS

### Read It

“There are six or seven kinds of people the LORD doesn’t like: Those who are too proud or tell lies or murder, those who make evil plans or are quick to do wrong, those who tell lies in court or stir up trouble in a family” (Proverbs 6:16-19).



### Think It

When you’re attacked by creeper-controlled “aggressive mobs,” do you stop and think before you speak? Or do you push back with anger, fueling the fire? Do you pray? How would Jesus want you to react?



### Live It

There will always be mean people in the world. And since we can’t always avoid them, it’s a good idea to have a plan for when they attack. The best defense is to know that we are wonderfully and creatively made by God. We have a special set of skills that God wants to use to make the world a better place. Our identity is not decided by a few jerks who are just trying to look cool in front of others. So take a deep breath and resist fighting back in the same hurtful ways. Instead, find shelter. God has our back, and He has given us *real* friends. Step back and look at the troublemakers through the glass window. You’ll quickly see their actions in a new light.

