

**Fresh and Refresh**



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# Fresh and Refresh

*A Story About the  
Greatest Game Ever Made*

Blurt Snodgrass

a [321Lumina.com](https://321Lumina.com) book

*For every player  
just starting the tutorial.*



CHAPTER

# One

## Two Friends Show Up

...

ON A BRIGHT Tuesday morning, two small characters appeared on the map.

One was named Fresh. She had big curious eyes and always asked “why?” about everything.

The other was named Refresh. He had bouncy energy and loved to try things twice — and then a third time just to be sure.

“Where are we?” asked Fresh, looking around at the trees and roads and tall buildings.

“I think,” said Refresh slowly, “we are in a game.”

“A game?” Fresh blinked. “Like on a tablet?”

“Bigger,” said Refresh. “Much, MUCH bigger.”

They were in the game called Universe.

And like all new players, they were starting the tutorial phase — the part the game designers called childhood.

CHAPTER

# Two

## The Tutorial Begins



THE TUTORIAL WAS a busy place. There was a lot to learn!

Fresh and Refresh learned to walk and talk. They learned to eat their vegetables (well, Refresh mostly moved his around the plate). They learned to share, to count, to read, and to tie their shoes — though the shoes took quite a while.

But something bothered Fresh.

“This tutorial doesn’t tell us EVERYTHING,” she said one afternoon.

“What do you mean?” asked Refresh.

“In other games, you get a list of your character’s powers. You know: FAST RUNNER, GOOD SINGER, LOVES MATH. But I don’t have a list. Do you?”

Refresh checked his pockets. No list. He checked behind his ears. No list there either.

“No list,” he confirmed.

“Then how do we find out who we really are?” Fresh wondered.

That was the best question anyone had ever asked in the entire game.

CHAPTER

# Three

## The Too Sleepy Problem

...

AS FRESH AND Refresh grew, they noticed something strange.

Some days their brains felt slow. Fuzzy. Like trying to watch TV, listen to music, and do a puzzle all at the same time.

“I can’t keep my eyes open!” Refresh groaned one day, flopped over his desk. “I’m SO tired! My legs are tired. My arms are tired. Even my hair feels tired.”

“When did you go to sleep last night?” asked Fresh.

Refresh thought very hard. “After the show. And the other show. And the snack. And the other snack.”

Fresh crossed her arms. “That’s why.”

“But I wasn’t even sleepy at bedtime!” said Refresh.

“Your body needs sleep even when your brain thinks it doesn’t,” said Fresh. “Sleep is how you recharge. Like plugging in a toy that ran out of battery.”

Refresh looked at his hands. They did feel a little like an uncharged toy.

That night, Refresh went to bed on time. And the next morning, everything looked brighter. His brain felt fast and clear and ready.

“Whoa,” he whispered. “I can think again.”

Fresh smiled. “Sleeping enough,” she said wisely, “is a very important game skill.”

CHAPTER

# Four

## The Stuck Player

...

ONE SATURDAY, SOMETHING worrying happened to Refresh.

He sat in front of the glowing screen. One video played. Then another. Then another. Then seventeen more.

He didn't pick the videos. The screen just kept going. And Refresh kept watching.

Hours passed.

Fresh came in and found him there, eyes glazed like a donut.

“Refresh?” she said.

“ ... ”

“REFRESH.”

He blinked. “Hm?”

“You’re stuck,” said Fresh seriously. “Like when a video game freezes and the character just stands there not moving. You stopped playing and the screen started playing YOU.”

Refresh looked at the screen. Then at his hands. Then at the window, where the sun was already going down.

“Oh no,” he said quietly.

The best players choose what they do. Stuck players just let things happen to them.

Refresh turned off the screen. He went outside. He kicked a pinecone down the street. He chose to do it. It felt wonderful.

CHAPTER

# Five

## Choosing Their Own Games

...

THE VERY BEST day came when Fresh and Refresh stopped waiting to be told what to do — and just decided for themselves.

The day already had plenty of things in it: go to school, do homework, eat dinner, be nice, go to sleep. Those were fine. But after all that? The rest of the time was THEIRS.

Fresh got a notebook (a special one, with a star on the cover) and wrote at the top:

What makes me curious?

She thought for a long time. She was curious about bugs. About why the sky turned pink at sunset. About how bread got so fluffy. About how books were made.

She picked one: bugs.

She went to the garden and lay flat on her stomach in the grass. She watched an ant carry something three times its size across a leaf. She watched a beetle open its wings like a tiny secret door. She watched a worm wiggle slowly through the dirt like it had absolutely nowhere to be.

She stayed there for a whole hour. It was the best hour of her week.

Meanwhile, Refresh wrote in HIS notebook:

What makes me feel like ME?

He thought about making people laugh. About building things. About really excellent sandwiches.

He picked building.

He dragged every pillow and blanket in the house into the living room and built the most magnificent fort anyone had ever seen. It had three rooms, two tunnels, and a flag made from a spatula and a sock.

Fresh came inside, dirt on her knees, and stopped in the doorway.

“Whoa,” she said.

“Want to come in?” said Refresh from somewhere deep inside the fort. “There’s a room for bug scientists.”

Fresh grinned and crawled inside.

“These are our games,” said Fresh, sitting cross-legged on a pillow. “The things we actually chose.”

“They’re better than the ones someone else picks,” agreed Refresh.

“Much better,” said Fresh.

CHAPTER

# Six

## The Five Things That Matter Most



ONE EVENING, FRESH and Refresh sat on the back steps watching fireflies blink on and off like little living stars.

“I’ve been thinking,” said Fresh, “about what the game is really counting.”

“Like a score?” asked Refresh.

“Sort of. But not the kind you can see. I think the game secretly counts five things.”

She held up one finger: “First — love. Did you choose to be kind, even when it was hard?”

A second finger: “Second — friends. Did you really listen to the people around you?”

A third: “Third — getting back up. Did you try again after you fell down?”

A fourth: “Fourth — learning. Did you keep learning, even when it was tricky?”

And a fifth: “Fifth — helping. Did you leave things a little better than you found them?”

Refresh was quiet for a long moment.

“Those aren’t really game things,” he said softly. “Those are just... good things.”

“Yes,” said Fresh. “I think that’s the whole point.”

CHAPTER

# Seven

## Fresh and Refresh Grow Up

...

YEARS WENT BY the way years do — quickly when you're busy, slowly when you're waiting for something good.

Fresh and Refresh grew taller. They learned new things.

Fresh learned how to study bugs at a university. She had a whole room full of tiny creatures in little glass cases, and she knew the name of every single one.

Refresh learned how to fly an airplane. The first time he landed it perfectly, he let out a whoop so loud the control tower laughed.

Together they learned how to grow a garden. Fresh grew vegetables. Refresh grew the world's largest pumpkin, which he was very proud of.

Fresh wrote a book. It was about bugs, of course. Refresh read every single page, even the scientific parts.

Refresh learned how to teach a robot. The robot was not a very fast learner. Refresh was patient anyway.

They both learned how to play guitar and piano. Fresh was better at piano. Refresh was louder at guitar.

They learned how to swim fast and slow — fast for racing, slow for floating on their backs and watching the clouds go by.

And they both learned how to ride a horse. Fresh's horse was calm and steady. Refresh's horse was fast.

They never did get a printed list of their powers. But by now, they didn't need one. They could feel them in the things they loved to do.

CHAPTER

# Eight

## Still Playing



ONE MORNING, FRESH looked out her window at the big wide world.

Trees. Roads. People walking dogs. A kid on a bicycle. Clouds that looked like sleeping animals. The whole enormous beautiful game of Universe, stretching in every direction.

Refresh knocked on the door. “Ready?” he asked.

“For what?” said Fresh.

He grinned. “Whatever game we choose today.”

And they stepped outside together into the great big game — not because someone told them to, not because a screen was pulling them along, but because they CHOSE it, with curiosity in their hearts and their notebooks in their pockets.

As they walked down the street together, Refresh looked around at the trees and roads and tall buildings — the same ones they had seen on that very first morning, all those years ago.

“Hey Fresh,” he said.

“Yeah?”

“Remember when we first showed up and you asked where we were?”

Fresh smiled. “I remember.”

“Do you know the answer now?”

She thought about the garden. The bugs. The fort. The horse. The piano. The five things on her fingers. All of it.

“Yeah,” she said. “We’re in our game.”

Refresh nodded. And they kept walking.

...

*The End*

*Thank you for playing.*

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