

MONDAY

Oof!

Smash!

COMMANDO ROLL!

Jump! Perfect landing!

**OH NO! TAKING FIRE!
PEW PEW PEW!**

Duck! Take cover! Laser scope.

*Explosions! **BRACE FOR
IMPACT!***

Steady now . . . Check for bad guys . . .

THERE!

*Target acquired, I repeat, target
acquired. Teeth armed and ready.*

'Winston?'

No time for distractions.

*I licked my sharp wolf teeth
and prepared to pounce on my prey.
I stretched my claws in the dirt . . .*

AND LEAPED!



My sharp jaws closed savagely on my target and I shook my head, tearing it into little pieces.

I WON!

'Take that!' I growled.

'Winston Wolf, where are you?'

I looked around and dropped my **prey** when I saw who was coming towards me.

'Right here, High Commander Wolf!'

A tan-coloured wolf approached me and I stood to attention. All GUARDS knew to be respectful of their leaders.

'Great to see you practising your striking skills,' she said, 'but when

we're at home, you can just call me **Mum.**

I relaxed and grinned at her. When you live in a Minecraft wolf pack, it's pretty cool to have a High Commander for a mum. She leads the **HOWL COUNCIL—THE HIGH ORDER OF WOLF LEADERSHIP**—alongside High Commanders Okami and Rolfe. Not only does she run things around here, but she knows nearly **everything** and tells **everyone** what to do.

Sort of like what mums normally do at home, except on a bigger scale.

'You know GUARDS don't really do all that **action hero stuff**, don't you?' she asked. 'Our job is about security and protection. I don't want you to get your hopes up expecting a lot of excitement.' She paused, frowning. 'Winston, are those my towels?'

'What? Oh. Yeah.'

All the towels she had hung on the washing line were now lying on the ground, chewed and ripped to shreds. What can I say? I'm a **canine**, after all. Some things can't be helped.

'I was using them for target practice,' I explained as I helped her clean up. 'GUARD training starts tomorrow and I want my skills to be **sharp**.'

All **GUARDS—GUARDIANS UNITED AGAINST REAL DANGERS**, though regular mobs just call us Minecraft wolves—have to pass a training assessment before they can be sent on official assignments. I was really looking forward to mine—I **wasn't nervous at all! Not one bit.**

Well, maybe *one* bit. But that's it.

'How odd,' Mum said. 'I'm sure Okami said training for new recruits started today.'

'No, Mum,' I laughed. She was so forgetful! 'He said it starts on Monday.'

'**Winston, today is Monday!**

WHAT?!

I dropped the towels, yelled goodbye to my mum—who wasn't so forgetful after all—and **BOLTED** out of our little cave. I couldn't believe I'd forgotten

what day it was! Mum had it on the calendar and everything—she knew it was important to me.

Our cave was part of a huge network of tunnels called **THE DEN**. As I leaped through the tunnels, my **wolf eyes** saw easily in the darkness. I needed to get to the training area in the very centre, deep underground, as fast as my paws could take me.

That's where today's training was. I didn't want to be late—not if I wanted to become a **REAL GUARD WOLF**.

I rounded a corner and the training ground's obstacle course came into view. Some other young wolves about my own age stood waiting with an older black wolf I knew well. I could tell from his expression that he was not happy.

'I'M SORRY!' I shouted, running down the slope towards the obstacle course. I was so close, but then one of my toes caught on a loose rock on the cavern floor. I **flipped** and landed flat on my snout, then skidded the rest of the way down the dirt slope. **Does no-one clean up around here?!**

I stopped right at the polished paws of High Commander Okami. The loose rock rolled to a stop beside me.



'We should probably have less rocks lying around,' I said as I got up. 'It's a trip hazard.'

'It's an underground cave, Winston.' Okami didn't look impressed, but he didn't comment on my dirty face, or the fact that I was late. **OOPS.** He turned to face the whole group. 'Now that we're all here, it's time to begin your training.'

I shook with excitement. I had been looking forward to this moment my whole life—my chance to become a real GUARD, just like my mum! **NOTHING COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG NOW!**