

quintessential learning experiences

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quintessential learning experiences

by [thanotaphobia \(blue000jay\)](#)

Summary

Phil lifts his hand, scratching the back of his neck lightly. Below him, the kid is silent and staring at some point on the table. “No. He doesn’t know Common. So we’ll be homeschooling him for a little while, until he knows enough to get by in school.”

Techno’s seventeen. He finished his last year of public school the summer before.

“I can teach him,” he says, not tearing his eyes off of the small frame sitting at the table, dwarfed by Phil’s size and his wings. He’s pitiful.

(Techno teaches Ranboo words. They're very big. Techno is proud. [based off a twitter post])

Notes

based off of [this](#) tweet and some of the replies!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Phil’s always picked up strays. Technoblade thinks he just likes having a fun and funky habit,

where he can take people home like him like one would take home a box of kittens on the street. Like an eccentric coin collector, or like how some people have scrapbooks full of stamps. Those people collect inanimate objects-- Phil collects children. Techno had been picked up first, of course; Phil had told him the story plenty of times over, a broken kid in the Nether, a player child who had strayed too far from home and been badly, badly hurt. A player child who Phil had adopted into his house and home and given shelter, given food. Wilbur had come next. He'd been a city kid through and through, fingers raw from plucking at his tiny ukulele (it was all he had known how to play back then) and begging for change. Wilbur had come home with Phil when Techno was around ten or so, and after a few month stint of utter animosity between the two they'd become as thick as thieves.

Enter Tommy, when Techno was fourteen and Wilbur was thirteen. Tommy was four years old and loud and cried at anything. Tommy clung to Phil in the first few weeks, not even letting go to go to bed. Techno and Wilbur were slightly annoyed, but both old enough to understand that asking about where Tommy had come from wasn't allowed. They also knew that no kid was truly ever that clingy naturally-- so they allowed Tommy into their home. Over time, their hearts opened as well. A year later, Tubbo, sitting in a box on the side of the road with his eyes red from tears, yet smiling as Tommy held his hand in a crushing tight grip.

And now.

"He's had a rough time," Phil explains, the little Enderman-hybrid sitting in a chair at the dining room table. The kid is scrawny but tall-- Techno would've guessed him to be eight or nine if Phil hadn't told them he was six-ish. "So I need you all to be nice."

"Where'd you find him?" Tommy asks, seven years old and just as loud as they day Techno had met him. Tubbo's still stuck by his side, thumb in his mouth out of habit as he peers around Tommy's shoulder. Wilbur's leaning against the doorway (sixteen means that Wilbur gets to be moody and angsty, but there's a new kid in the house and this means that whatever facade of the day he's got on drops).

"That's not important," Phil says gently, and the kid on the chair is quiet and still. Nothing like Tommy had been, or even Wilbur. All the same, Techno looks at him and knows that they're all more similar than appears. "We're all going to be nice to him. He needs it. Okay?"

"Got it," says Wilbur.

"No promises," Tommy says with his shark-teeth grin. He'd learned that phrase from Wilbur three weeks ago and had taken to parroting it around, not promising anything, even if it didn't matter that it was a promise. Phil just presses a hand to his temple lightly, looking amused. Techno catches his eye and nods. Of course he'll be nice-- for all the orphan jokes he makes, Techno's not serious about them. Well. Most of them.

"School starts tomorrow," Tubbo says after a second, surprising everyone in the room. Tubbo does not often speak up like that. Phil says they should make sure to pay attention when he does. Something about positive reinforcement. "Is he coming with us?"

"Well." Phil lifts his hand, scratching the back of his neck lightly. Below him, the kid is silent and staring at some point on the table. "No. He doesn't know Common. So we'll be homeschooling him for a little while, until he knows enough to get by in school."

Techno's seventeen. He finished his last year of public school the summer before.

"I can teach him," he says, not tearing his eyes off of the small frame sitting at the table, dwarfed

by Phil's size and his wings. He's pitiful. Techno wants to pick him up, wonders how much he weighs. It doesn't look like it would be much. "I'm going to be home anyways."

"Weren't you gonna work for Mr. Sampson in town?" Wilbur asks from the door. "With the armory?"

"He's got plenty of help," Techno shoots back, tearing his eyes away from the kid. "Besides, I wasn't going to get paid. This'll give me more time to practice my swordsmanship so I can head off to Hypixel next spring."

"Are you sure, Tech?" Phil sounds mildly concerned, which is fair. Techno usually would never sign up for something like this-- in fact, this is so out of left field for him Techno's surprised Phil's not coming over to check his temperature and make him sit down. Techno's even surprised with himself, and yet...

Yet, Ranboo glances up for the briefest of moments, eyes catching with Techno's before shuffling down again to stare at the wood of the table. In that silent moment, Techno sees something.

"Yeah, I'm sure," he says. And it's settled.

Teaching a language is hard. It should be even harder because his student is a six(ish) year old hybrid that only speaks Ender.

Fortunately, Ranboo is a good student, and Techno is nothing if not persistent.

He spends multiple nights making flashcards, studying in his old Common textbooks, running over the parts of speech in his head. Ender is fairly similar to Common-- it's called Common for a reason-- but there are some changes that the kid will have to make and probably will struggle to understand. He falls asleep the first night and dreams of prepositional phrases and conjunctions.

The flash cards come out *amazing*, and Phil leaves the first day with a ruffle to Ranboo's head and a hooked pinky-shake to Techno.

Ranboo sits at the dining table, oh-so-small, and Techno begins. He starts simple. The alphabet first, having Ranboo copy it down three times before letting him take a break. Techno's expecting something like how teaching Tommy usually goes: sitting in one spot and fidgeting, until three minutes in and then exploding in a fit of energy. Ranboo isn't like that. He's not like Tubbo either, who can spend hours on a project like Techno can but flits from activity to activity with the smallest of attention spans.

No. Ranboo just sits and does as Techno instructs, correcting his mistakes when told to. Techno feels terrible the first time he points one out, consciously softening his tone when Ranboo flinches. However, the flinches slowly start to disappear. He doesn't speak, except when Techno tells him to, and even then his voice is soft-spoken and quiet. He is the complete opposite to what Techno's expecting, but he picks up the basics of the language quickly which is all Techno is really supposed to be asking for here. It takes a bit of time, but when Techno first pulls a laugh out of him, he swears he's never felt more amazing. (Maybe once. Maybe he'd felt this way the first time he'd made Tommy laugh, or the time Wilbur had crawled into bed with him after a nightmare, or when Tubbo had called him his big brother, or when Phil had ruffled his hair and said he was

proud. Maybe.)

“How was the first day?” Phil asks when he comes home, covered in dirt and muck and sweat and a little bit of blood. Techno doesn’t ask. He knows he’s not supposed to. He glances back to where Ranboo is sitting on their makeshift couch instead, a book written in both Ender and Common in his lap, and nods.

“Pretty good,” he says. “Pretty good.”

Techno is nothing if not persistent, however, and pretty good is acceptable but not perfect.

That night, he sits down to make more flashcards. Ranboo’s a good student. He’s going to shape him into something *amazing* .

Phil has the day off. He’s grateful for it, really, since his job is illegal at best. He can’t even think of a worst, so he simply doesn’t. He just sinks into the fact that he can sleep in-- Wilbur walks Tommy and Tubbo to school, Techno sleeps in and Ranboo does as well. In fact, it’s not until around lunchtime regularly that Phil gets out of bed and drags himself to make a coffee, filling the air with the scent of beans. Ranboo’s the next one out of bed, stumbling into the kitchen and standing there in the doorway like a spectre.

“Hungry?” Phil asks after a second, watching the steam lift out of his mug. In his peripheral, Ranboo nods. “How do we feel about eggs and toast, then?”

“Superb,” says Ranboo groggily, and Phil does a little double-take as his morning brain kicks him into gear. Superb? “I am famished.” Phil does a triple-take, standing there and gripping his drink carefully.

Huh.

“That’s an interesting way to say you do want eggs and toast,” Phil says gently, pulling himself out of his reverie. He laughs to himself as he makes his way to the cupboards to pull out some bread. “Go check the henhouse, please.”

“Okay,” Ranboo says, and then he’s gone out the back door and Phil’s getting a pan and heating it up and pulling the butter out too. Techno must be keeping him busy, he thinks to himself, pushing a pad of butter around in the pan as it heats and watching it slowly melt and cover the bottom in its entirety. Learning to talk again must be difficult. Phil’s not about to poke his nose into whatever delicate system Techno’s got going on with Ranboo. He’s just grateful the two get along as well as they do.

His train of thought ends there as Ranboo comes back in with three eggs, clutching them to his chest carefully. One for each of them, and Phil sends him off to wake Techno next as he cracks them into the pan.

The day passes by normally after that. Ranboo and Techno sit at the dining room table for a good chunk of the afternoon, and Phil busies himself around their small farm. There are a few repairs he’s been meaning to do, so by the time he’s back in the house for the day he’s sweaty and tired and his other three sons are home from school as well.

“How was your day?” Wilbur just gives him a *look* before disappearing, and Phil doesn’t push it. Teenagers. Tommy and Tubbo however, bound up to Phil and start babbling excitedly.

“--saw Jack and he fell off the slide!”

“--ommy told me to eat a bug!! He got in trouble!!”

“Jesus christ, one at a time,” Phil chides gently, kneeling down to get on their level. “Say that again. Tubbo first-- what did you say about a bug?”

“Tommy told me to eat a bug and he’d give me an emerald.” Tubbo’s grinning, missing a front tooth and eyes sparkling. “I didn’t fall for it this time though. I told on him and he got in trouble with Miss Puffy.”

“I didn’t do that!!” Tommy cries, indignant. “I did not! Tubbo’s a liar! He’s a bad, horrible liar!”

“Actually,” Phil says, reaching out to ruffle Tubbo’s hair. “You’re the worst liar in the family, Toms. Don’t tell Tubbo to eat bugs. Don’t tell *anyone* to eat bugs.”

“Ranboo likes them though,” Tommy says, and Phil catches movement in the corner of his eye. Ranboo’s made his way over, creeping closer and closer to the conversation and his two friends/brothers. “I don’t even have to tell him to eat bugs. He just does it.” Ranboo blinks at them, and says nothing. No defense, no confirmation. Just a silent stare.

“Tasty,” Tubbo says sagely, nodding his head up and down. Phil just glances between the three of them, then heaves a sigh.

“Go play,” he says. “Get your energy out. Go. Go!”

And off they go, scrambling for the back door and Tommy shouting something already. Techno’s been watching from the dining room, chin in hand and the faintest of smiles on his lips.

“Did you hear that?” Phil asks once the room is clear of anyone under the age of ten. “Ranboo eats bugs. Willingly.”

“Protein,” Techno says nonchalantly, and Phil can’t help it-- he bursts into laughter.

Tommy slumps down against the tree trunk, hands burning and palms red from the texture against his hands. He likes climbing trees. His hands haven't gotten rough with callouses like Techno's yet, but they're well on their way.

“Didya see anything?” Tubbo’s voice makes its way to his ears, and he turns, wiping his open palms on his shorts as Tubbo drops his hand from his forehead. Ranboo’s behind him, shoulders hunched but a smile on his face as Tommy shakes his head.

“Nothing,” he says, and Tubbo sighs. “I looked! Don’t be all disappointed with me!”

“I’m not disappointed with you,” Tubbo says, “it’s just that I really thought it would work!”

“Then stop sighing!”

“Stop squabbling,” Ranboo says, and Tommy snaps his head to stare at him with a twisted scowl. “We can just try again.”

“Squabbling,” Tommy mocks. “Fuck off.”

“I’m going to recount this to Phil,” Ranboo says, and he’s grinning in the way that means he’s doing it on purpose now. “He won’t be pleased with your indecorous language.”

“Shit.”

“Catastrophic.”

“Bitch!”

“Quintessential.”

“Fuck off!”

“Are you two done?” Tubbo asks, sounding exasperated and halfway down the path. He’s got his hands on his hips when Tommy turns to look at him, shirt buttoned up wrong and the sun glinting off his hair where it shines through the canopy of leaves above them. “We should go find the ball so we can get back before dinner.”

“At least it didn’t fly as far as you had hoped,” Ranboo says, ignoring Tommy’s sigh and shuffling to follow Tubbo. “Then we wouldn’t be returning with a ball at all.”

“Got no fancy words for ball, dickhead?” Tommy taunts, but he follows anyways. Ranboo glances at him from the corner of his eye and Tommy feels *condescended*. He can do big words too. Or maybe Ranboo’s just wearing off on him or casting a spell every time he uses the fancy words he knows. Who knows. Who cares? Surely not Tommy.

“Spheroid,” Ranboo says after a second. “But now I just sound like a prick, I think.”

“You always sound like a prick.”

“Stop baby-raging, Tommy!”

“Fuck you!” Tommy throws his hands in the air as they walk, jogging a couple steps ahead of both Tubbo and Ranboo as they giggle together. After a moment of just their feet crunching through the leaves, Ranboo’s voice creeps into his ears.

“Lexicon,” he says softly, and there’s a thwap from behind as Tubbo smacks him with a hand.

“Why can’t you be normal!” He laments, and Tommy just drags his hand down his face and groans. It’ll be awhile until they can hunt down their toy, and it’ll be spent like this-- fantastic. He is not smiling. He is *not*.

Ranboo is enrolled in school.

Techno’s done what he can-- he’s taught him the alphabet, the structures, the words. Flashcards sit

in a pile in the dining room, find their way into cupboards and couch cushions, float around the house like little particles of dust with definitions scratched on them. They're everywhere, and Techno swells with pride whenever Ranboo picks one up and confidently reads the word on it aloud, then spells it, then recites the definition. He's crafted a perfect specimen in Common-- sort of. Ranboo's good, but the nuances and official grammar stuff that Techno doesn't know is lacking. He's learning quickly, but Phil explains one night to them both that putting Ranboo in the public school would be good for him. Exposure to other kids and professional teachers is the next step.

So Techno sends Ranboo off to school one winter morning, watching out the window as his four brothers (Ranboo bundled up a little extra against the snow) traipse towards town.

The house is very, very empty.

Techno misses teaching him. He misses it terribly. Despite Ranboo being fairly quiet-natured, they were still a good pair. As they'd warmed up to each other-- and Ranboo the language-- banter and silly jokes had come so incredibly easy to the two. And that just makes this departure hurt so much more, settling into the soft center in his core and reminding him that he's alone in the house with no one to talk to.

So Techno pulls out his swords and trains. He recites definitions aloud to himself as he does.

Hours later, Phil isn't home yet, but Wilbur's bundling the three rowdy kids inside and Techno comes over to help tug off jackets and snow boots and mittens, the pile of warm clothing steadily getting higher.

"How was your first day?" He asks Ranboo quietly, helping him tug off one of the big snow boots Phil had made sure to get him. Endermen don't like water or snow-- it applies to this little hybrid as well.

"It was boisterous," Ranboo replies, just as quietly in return. "Tommy made me converse to all his friends."

"With all his friends," Techno corrects, mostly out of habit.

"Stop indoctrinating the kid," Wilbur quips from where he's wrestling an ice chip out of Tubbo's mouth.

"Indoctrinate," Ranboo says, and he's staring intently at his snow pants as he shimmies them down. "I-N-D-O-C-T-R-I-N-A-T-E. To teach a person or group to accept things unconditionally."

"He sounds like he's in a fu- freaking cult," Wilbur says, mouth agape. From his angle, Techno can see the grin on Ranboo's face as he tugs his snow pants the rest of the way off, and he just smiles as well.

"It was an important word," he says casually, and Wilbur groans, throwing the Tubbo-spit-covered piece of ice at him. Techno dodges expertly.

Three weeks later, Ranboo has settled into school, and Techno has readjusted to being at home alone. Then, Wilbur comes home with a flier from the younger kid's teacher. He looks constipated as he hands it over to Phil. Phil, who just looks amused as he gives it to Techno.

A spelling bee. A *spelling bee*.

Oh, they're going to rock shit.

They rock shit.

There's a week until the spelling bee, with it being the following Friday, so Techno takes some time out of the week for him and Ranboo to prepare. They go over the flashcards again, and Techno tapes them up around the house for Ranboo to find. It's a delight hearing him mutter to himself in the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom. Tommy and Tubbo are utterly perplexed every time they find a flash card, but when Phil asks Ranboo about it Techno's relieved to hear he's finding it fun.

The week passes, and then it's Friday.

Techno hasn't been to the school in almost a year at this point-- nine months at least, and it's weird. The feeling of knowing the space and also being foreign is heavy on his shoulders, and he gets some odd looks from old teachers, but that's fine. He was never a loud student, just exemplary in his grades and focused. He came into school to learn and that was it. Wilbur on the other hand, was loud and social and extroverted to a fault. His grades were less than stellar, but he made up in his presence. Often, teachers would be confused when the two came together after a long day; apparently, no one expected them to be brothers. And yet, they were.

Techno climbs the steps and ignores the looks and waves from teachers and focuses on what he's here for.

Ranboo, sitting in the front of the classroom, twiddling his fingers and twisting his hands. It's a nervous habit he's picked up, reminiscent of how Wilbur picks at his cuticles and how Tommy chews his nails. Techno does nothing of the sort (he paces). Ranboo is sitting at one of the desks in the front of the classroom, patiently waiting as people file in and sit in the seats and other children go up to stand by him. He's so much taller than the rest of them, even sitting down-- Techno catches his gaze a moment later, and flashes him a tiny thumbs up.

Ranboo smiles, and Techno has to fight to suppress his own.

Beside him, Phil leans over, bumps their shoulders together. Tommy and Tubbo are sitting on his other side, sharing a chair, and Wilbur's boxing them in all the way over on their other side. "He looks excited," Phil says quietly, waving gently at Ranboo. He waves back a moment later. "Nervous, but excited."

"I mean, look at this room. I'd be terrified too," Techno points out. Phil laughs, nudging him again with an elbow and then jostling slightly as Tommy careens into his side and then leans away again. "He'll do fine, though," Techno says. "I have faith."

"If you say so," Phil says. "All he ever uses is big words. Told me the other day that Tommy had been malevolent."

Techno grins, leaning back in his chair. Yeah, they've got this.

The spelling bee starts, and Ranboo flies through the first category easily. Cat? What is this, kindergarten? Ignoring the fact that it is, Techno's smile only grows larger and larger as the words get longer in length. River. Once. Mammoth. Kids drop like flies on that one. Touch. Lamb. Another kid drops out. Weigh. There are three kids left. Passage. Two left. Compartment.

Ranboo is the only kid left. The teacher smiles, then says-- *one last word! A toughie!* -- clearance. When he recites it without issue, she keeps going. Rhythm. Exterminate. Limousine.

They get to *insouciant* before the teacher, through wondrous eyes, stops and declares Ranboo the winner.

Techno cheers the loudest, ignoring the stares. Ranboo rides on his shoulders all the way home. The certificate of first place sits pinned on the cabinets for ages afterwards, sunlight fading the letters.

End Notes

o/

i hope you enjoyed the fluff! make sure to leave a comment/kudos if you did!!!!

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i also now have a [discord](#) if you're interested!

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