

The Last Ember in the Skyforge

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The Skyforge buzzed with the high-pitched whine of electricity running through ancient conduits. Arlen stood there, staring at everything and looking lost.

Lyssa stomped in behind him, shouting, "Did you touch something?"

Arlen gave her a lopsided shrug. "I might have... interacted... with a gear. A *little* one. Hardly worth mentioning."

In the large chamber something exploded with a disappointingly soft *boom*. Iridescent flecks slowly spun and swirled in the center of the glowing Skyforge, like someone had spilt glitter glue into a whirlpool. Lyssa squinted at it like she was trying to read tiny print. "Oh, great. That's the **Emberember**, I guess. It's doing... something."

The **Emberember** flickered and made a noise like a drawn-out puff of air. Then a voice boomed out of nowhere: "**WHO IS POKING ME NOWWHO IS POKING ME NOW?**"

Arlen winced. "Hey, uh, sorry. We didn't mean to wake you... Or we did...
.? —Actually, I don't know what we meant."

Lyssa slapped his arm. "Stop talking! This is a big magic thing! Or a cosmic... thingy."

The gears overhead began turning; their metal teeth, in need of lubrication, grinding against each other. The **Emberember** ~~glowed brighter~~glowed more brightly. "**YOU TWO ARE REALLY ANNOYINGYOU TWO ARE REALLY ANNOYING.**"

"Yeah," Arlen kicked a loose bolt across the floor, where it clinked sadly. "We get that a lot."

Frustrated, Lyssa threw her hands up. "We're apprentices! We don't know what we're doing! Please don't blow up everything!"

There was a moment ~~wherewhen~~ nothing happened and everything was strangely awkward. Then the **Emberember** said: "**FINE. JUST STOP TOUCHING THINGSFINE. JUST STOP TOUCHING THINGS.**"

The lights dimmed. The buzzing stopped—mostly.

Arlen scratched his head. "Well, that was terrible. Let's go before the universe changes its mind."

Commented [KKPG1]: Style Guide: spaces between periods is ellipses

Commented [KKPG2]: SG: ember is lower case. Each skyforge has an ember; it is not a proper noun.

Commented [KKPG3]: SG: Machines speak in quoted small caps

Together, they stumbled out, arguing about whose fault it was, while the
Emberember made a sound that might have been an ~~eye-roll~~eyeroll.