

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

One Month Solo – The Ferris Seed

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

A cheap SMARTPHONE vibrates on a cluttered nightstand.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: an email notification.

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL AID - ACTION REQUIRED

A hand slaps around for the phone and drags it under the blanket. The email opens. A giant BALANCE DUE sits over a red HOUSING WARNING with a date two weeks out.

JAY (O.S.)

No. No, no, no...

JAY RIDER (20) hoodie and sweats, pillow lines on his face, sits up. He squints at the numbers. He swings his legs off the bed, pulls a beat-up LAPTOP from the floor, and boots it on the cluttered desk.

ON LAPTOP - CAMPUS PORTAL

He clicks through fast. Tuition balance. Housing page. The same warning banner.

BANNER: "PAYMENT REQUIRED TO KEEP HOUSING ASSIGNMENT."

Below that, a small tag: "Independent Youth Housing Grant - exhausted." Jay leans in, jaw tight. A KNOCK at the door.

RA (O.S.)

Floor meeting at nine, Jay. You coming?

Jay keeps his eyes on the screen.

Footsteps move away. Jay stares at the deadline one more beat, then slams the laptop shut.

EXT. CAMPUS WALKWAY - DAY

Cold air, light snow on the grass. Students move between buildings, hoods up, backpacks bouncing. Jay walks alone, earbuds in, hood over a beanie. He scrolls his phone.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

An INSTAGRAM post from "Ferris Student Life." A bright graphic of a Minecraft campus.

TEXT: "BUILD FERRIS. WIN TUITION AND HOUSING. SOLO BUILD CHALLENGE. 30 DAYS. LINK IN BIO."

Comments fly underneath: fire emojis, gamer tags, jokes.

Jay slows down, thumb hovering. He looks up. Ahead, the STUDENT LIFE OFFICE glass wall. The same graphic is taped huge on the inside with a giant QR code. He stops. After a second, he pulls out his earbuds and heads inside.

INT. STUDENT LIFE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Warm, busy space. Flyers everywhere. A big MINECRAFT CHALLENGE flyer with a QR code sits in the middle of the bulletin board.

CLOSE ON FLYER - same key lines as the post. At the bottom:

"Sponsored by Anonymous Donor. Solo entry. All sessions streamed live with VODs saved for audits."

Jay steps up and scans the code. BEEP. A sign-up page loads. At the front desk, TAYLOR (late 20s, Student Life staff) stamps forms.

TAYLOR  
Need help with that?

JAY  
This is real?

TAYLOR  
Yeah. Donor's footing the bill. Month long build on their server. Winner gets next semester's tuition and housing.

JAY  
Just one winner?

Jay turns back to the kiosk.

ON SCREEN - he types his name, email, gamer tag, and checks: "I agree to keep all VODs and follow audit rules." He hits SUBMIT. A small printer spits out a RULES SHEET and a CONFIRMATION SLIP. Jay grabs them.

TAYLOR (O.S.)  
Orientation stream's at seven. Server name and rules are also on there.

Jay scans the top page. One line pops: "ALL BUILD SESSIONS MUST BE LIVE STREAMED." He folds the papers, tucks them in his backpack.

JAY  
If I win, that covers everything?

She nods. That lands. Jay then nods once.

JAY (cont'd)  
Cool. Thanks.

He backs away, already checking his phone for the time.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tiny space. Bed, desk, mini-fridge, one poster held up by peeling tape. Jay drops his backpack on the bed and pulls out the RULES SHEET, taping it next to the whiteboard at eye level.

CLOSE ON RULES: "Solo only." "All sessions live." "Random audits." "Final upload before lockout."

Jay studies it, then uncaps a marker and writes at the top of the board: "ONE MONTH SOLO"

He draws four empty boxes underneath. He drops into the chair and powers on his pc. He props a cheap WEBCAM on the monitor and clamps a MIC stand to the desk. On his LAPTOP, he starts a screen-recording app and mirrors it to the main monitor. He clicks "New Scene" and names it: "DAY 1 - SETUP"

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM / MINECRAFT SERVER - NIGHT

The monitor shows a MINECRAFT SPAWN PLAZA. Four roads stretch away to blank land. In the corner, a scoreboard: "DAYS REMAINING: 30"

Jay's PLAYER joins in, tag floating over his avatar. He walks down the center road and stops at an empty plot marked by fence posts.

Jay drops a SIGN at the edge of the plot then pulls a printed CAMPUS PHOTO from his backpack and props it against the base of the monitor as he takes a breath.

He places the first BLOCK, starting a straight line that matches the photo. We push in on the scoreboard as it quietly ticks: "30" - "29 DAYS, 23 HOURS..."

CUT TO BLACK.

MONTAGE - EARLY BUILD DAYS

A) INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Jay clicks between a CAMPUS PHOTO and his Minecraft window, tracing sidewalks and paths with blocks.

B) INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A PROFESSOR lectures while Jay fights sleep, his pen sliding off the notebook before he jerks awake.

C) INT. STUDENT LIFE OFFICE - DAY

On a lobby TV, a Student Life REEL plays a quick time lapse of Jay's build labeled "Student Creator Spotlight."

D) INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Jay checks his stream dashboard. VIEWERS: 9. CHAT: a few scattered messages of encouragement.

END MONTAGE

INT. CAMPUS TUTORING LAB - DAY

Rows of computers. A few students. Whiteboard full of math problems. Jay sits with a freshman, pointing at a problem on the screen. Across the desk, MILES (20s, friendly) leans forward, eyeing the clock.

MILES

You're not even pretending to study.

JAY

I am. I'm pretending hard.

MILES leans in, spots the campus build in the corner.

MILES

That the game scholarship thing?

JAY

Yeah. Month long build. Ferris map. Winner gets next semester paid.

MILES

So... no pressure.

Jay snorts.

JAY

If I don't get some kind of miracle,  
(MORE)

JAY (cont'd)  
I'm packing all this into a storage unit and hoping the bus station has Wi-Fi.

MILES studies him a second.

MILES  
I thought you had that housing grant?

JAY  
Aged out. They covered what they covered. After this it's... me.

He taps the balance line on his phone with two fingers like it's a bruise.

MILES  
Okay, dark. You need help with this essay or are we just trauma dumping today?

That pulls a small smile out of Jay.

JAY  
Essay first. Then I'll traumatize you.

MILES turns the laptop so the essay is full screen.

MILES  
Cool. Start typing. I'll hop in if you start writing like you're on Discord.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

The room is lit by the monitor glow and a cheap desk lamp.

ON SCREEN - Jay's BUILD looks solid: the Quad, a couple of dorms, paths, trees. He glances at CHAT. (USER:"you seen NOVA\_CAMPUS yet?")

Jay frowns, opens a new tab, and types into a search bar.

NOVA\_CAMPUS's overlay looks professional: animated borders, sponsor logo, chat flying. Their build is huge, almost half the campus already.

NOVA (V.O.)  
...and then I mirrored this side so Accessibility doesn't yell at us, you feel me?

The camera flies smoothly up over a fully lit stadium. CHAT goes nuts with emotes and "W" spam.

Jay stares, jaw tight. He glances back at his own stream window: plain layout, small build, VIEWERS: 7. He exhales, closes the rival tab, and clicks back into his game. He then starts adding detail to his main building, more focused now.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Rain beats against the window. The HEATER rattles. Jay builds in silence, headphones around his neck so he can hear the storm.

ON SCREEN - he's working on the inside of a building, placing stairs and railings.

A LOUD CRACK of thunder. The lights FLICKER. His monitor blinks black for a second, then comes back. The game freezes.

JAY

No, no, no...

The PC emits a BEEP and reboots itself.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

Jay sits back at the desk, half-dressed, hair still damp from a quick shower.

ON SCREEN - the world loads in. Part of the QUAD is just... gone. A whole corner is missing, terrain torn up like a bite out of the map. He groans then opens his VOD list.

ON SCREEN - last night's VOD shows the missing area finished and clean.

He pulls the video up on his phone and props it next to the monitor, scrubbing to the right time. He looks between the phone and the monitor, then starts rebuilding block for block, matching his own recording.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Later in the challenge. More boxes on the whiteboard are filled in with messy notes. On screen, Jay is mid-stream. His BUILD looks fuller. VIEWERS: 18. CHAT trickles in.

MOD\_KEL:"audit check - hands cam + desk please."

JAY  
Uh... okay. Sure.

He clicks and drags his HAND CAM feed bigger, turning it toward his keyboard and mouse. He lifts his hands, wiggling his fingers.

JAY (CONT'D)  
These are my very own hands, hi.

He swings the camera around his beat-up setup: monitor, tower, a labeled SSD, the printed RULES SHEET pinned on the wall. ON SCREEN - MOD\_KEL types: "show file names on that drive pls"

Jay flips to his file browser and opens the SSD. Just backups, class stuff, and old VODs. Nothing that looks like a team folder.

JAY  
It's just me in here, man.

A pause. Then, MOD\_KEL: "cool. We had some anon complaints. You're clear. Keep VODs on."

JAY (cont'd)  
Anonymous haters, love that for me.

CHAT fires laughing emotes and "LMAO." Jay shrinks the hand cam and goes back to building, shoulders a little tighter.

INT. STUDENT LIFE OFFICE - DAY

The lobby TV shows the challenge server in spectator mode. A STUDENT LIFE HOST in a small picture-in-picture talks over it.

HOST (V.O.)  
We're at the halfway point in the build challenge, checking out some of the top entries so far...

The camera flies over NOVA CAMPUS's build: clean lines, bright lights, a big "WELCOME BULLDOGS" arch.

HOST (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Here's NOVA CAMPUS with a really polished rebuild of the main academic quad...

A couple students watching murmur, impressed. The feed cuts to Jay'S SHARD. The build is detailed but not as complete. A caption on the TV reads "JAY\_FERRIS - SOLO ENTRY."

HOST (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And this is JAY\_FERRIS, working solo  
on a very accurate campus layout.  
He's been streaming pretty much every  
night, so check him out.

In the doorway, Jay stands with his backpack, watching from the hall. After a moment, he turns away and heads down the hall.

MONTAGE - FINAL WEEK PUSH

A) INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

The scoreboard reads "7 DAYS REMAINING." Jay color-codes sections of the map on the whiteboard.

B) EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

He power walks between class and work, checking a list on his phone labeled "BUILD / LIFE."

C) INT. DINING HALL - DAY

He wolfs down food alone, NOVA's stream muted on his phone as he studies their details.

D) INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - LATE NIGHT

He adds small signs and ramps, testing doors by walking through them in-game.

E) INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

An alarm blares. He jerks awake at his desk, keyboard imprint on his cheek. The scoreboard now reads "3 DAYS REMAINING," the campus map almost complete.

END MONTAGE

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

The scoreboard on screen reads: "2 DAYS REMAINING." The CAMPUS MAP is almost complete. Jay squints at the screen, then at his WHITEBOARD. Only two empty boxes are left. He writes beside them: "DETAILS" and "UPLOAD"

He underlines "UPLOAD" twice. He opens a cabinet, pulls out a chunky POWER BANK and sets it on the desk. He checks the battery lights. All full.

JAY  
You're the real MVP if power dies  
this time.

He digs in his backpack and pulls out a short EXTENSION CORD, plugging everything into a small surge strip. He glances at the clock. Midnight.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

ON SCREEN - Jay's avatar walks the campus at dusk, checking lights and ramps. He stops at a set of stairs and adds a ramp beside them. In CHAT: (USER9:"this is like Ferris but clean") - (USER10:"you gonna add the icy sidewalk too lol") - (USER11:"what happens if u lose")

Jay reads that last one, pauses.

JAY  
Then I move. Again.

He stops at the STADIUM ENTRANCE, adds a small sign: "WELCOME BULLDOGS" He backs up to look at it, then smiles.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

The scoreboard ticks to "1 DAY REMAINING." Jay ends the stream, leans back, and rubs his eyes. He opens a BACKUP MENU and makes a fresh copy of the world to his labeled SSD.

CLOSE ON SSD LABEL: "FERRIS\_MAP\_A\_FINAL\_TEMP"

He clicks "Safely Remove," unplugs it, and sets it carefully on top of the monitor. He looks at the whiteboard. Only "UPLOAD" is left.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Sunlight tries to creep around the dark curtain. The phone ALARM blares. Jay jolts awake at the desk again, almost falling out of the chair. He silences the alarm, checks the time, then looks at the CHALLENGE TIMER on his monitor: "HOURS REMAINING: 05:32" He exhales, nods.

JAY  
Okay. Last lap.

He clicks "Go Live."

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - DAY - LATER

The stream is running. VIEWERS: 41. Biggest number yet. Jay works through a list on his phone. CHAT is busier now: (USER12:"this is wild for solo") - (USER13:"mods said upload early bc net is trash") - (USER14:"nova's doing a final fly-through rn")

Jay sees that, glances at the timer. "HOURS REMAINING: 02:14."

JAY  
Yeah. We're not waiting for zero.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - LATER

ON SCREEN - the UPLOAD FORM and a single PROGRESS BAR. He picks his FINAL FILE, glances at the name, and clicks "UPLOAD." The bar crawls. Outside, WIND rattles the window. He flips the POWER BANK on just in case. The bar hangs high in the 90s. The CHALLENGE TIMER reads: "HOURS REMAINING: 00:11" Jay leans in, tense.

JAY  
Come on. Come on...

Its lights blink. The bar jumps to 100%. A message pops: "UPLOAD RECEIVED. SHARD LOCKED FOR JUDGING." Jay slumps back with a short, disbelieving laugh.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - EVENING

Jay stands by the window, looking across at the real QUAD outside. Snow dusts the walkways. His laptop dings. NEW EMAIL. He sits down and opens it. A link to a Student Life livestream. Under it: "Finalists will be announced live at 7pm."

Jay glances at the time: 6:52 PM.

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - LATER

The Student Life livestream plays full screen. Jay sits close, headphones on.

ON SCREEN - the HOST from earlier sits in a small studio setup.

HOST  
Alright Bulldogs, it's time. We've narrowed it down to two finalists...

A graphic pops up with two names: "NOVA\_CAMPUS" and "JAY\_FERRIS"

Jay freezes. The HOST continues.

HOST (CONT'D)

We're going to take a quick fly-through of both maps, then announce the winner.

INT. JUDGING SERVER - VIRTUAL - CONTINUOUS

We fly over NOVA\_CAMPUS's build first: clean, bright, a huge banner over the main walkway, a flashy stadium. The panel's VOICES overlap.

PANELIST #1 (V.O.)

Very polished, nice use of lighting and space...

PANELIST #2 (V.O.)

Some bottlenecks on the paths if this were real traffic, but yeah, gorgeous.

Then, the camera eventually moves to Jay'S SHARD. It's less flashy, but everything feels grounded: ramps where stairs would be, labeled buildings, little seating nooks, realistic paths.

The camera drops to STREET LEVEL and walks the avatar through a doorway, up a ramp, into a lobby.

PANELIST #3 (V.O.)

This one feels exactly like the actual campus. Distances, signage, even that weird corner by CAPS...

Quick cuts: the avatar walks the path from dorm to quad, to dining hall, to stadium. Everything flows.

PANELIST #1 (V.O.)

You can tell they thought about how students actually move.

PANELIST #2 (V.O.)

And all the audit VODs checked out. No off-stream building, no extra help.

BACK TO:

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - SAME

Jay watches, barely blinking. He glances once at his PORTAL TAB in the background. The red HOUSING WARNING still sits there. He quickly clicks back to the stream.

INT. JUDGING SERVER - VIRTUAL - CONTINUOUS

The camera floats back above both maps, side by side in split screen.

BACK TO HOST.

HOST (V.O.)

The panel's decision came down to accuracy, access, and how well each build could be used for future student tools like tours.

BACK TO STUDIO.

The HOST faces camera.

HOST (CONT'D)

So... the winner of the first Ferris Campus Build Challenge, and the student receiving next semester's tuition and housing, is-

He pauses a beat.

HOST (CONT'D)

-JAY\_FERRIS!

The chat ERUPTS. "LET'S GOOOO" - "W JAY" - "NOVA GG" - "CRYING FR"

Jay slaps a hand over his mouth, eyes wide.

HOST (V.O.)

Huge shout-out to NOVA\_CAMPUS as well, who will be getting a tech bundle from our donor. Both builds will be kept online for future use.

Nova types in public chat: "gg jay. rematch next year?" Jay responds: "bet."

INT. JAY'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The stream fades to credits. Jay sits for a second, staring at the "Winner" graphic that lingers on screen. Then he swivels to his laptop and opens the CAMPUS PORTAL again.

ON SCREEN - the balance line refreshes.

The big number drops to zero. The red HOUSING WARNING disappears, replaced by: "Housing Assignment: CONFIRMED." Jay leans back, letting his head hit the chair. For the first time, he smiles without forcing it.

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - NIGHT

The real quad. Snow on the edges of the walkways. Light spills from building windows. Jay walks the same path his in-game avatar took: from dorm side, past the seating area, toward the main steps. He stops where his SIGN sits in the game. There's no sign here, just a patch of grass and a trash can. He stands there a moment, hands in his pockets, taking it in. His phone buzzes. He checks it: an email from "Ferris Student Life."

ON SCREEN - subject line: "Phase Two - Let's Talk."

"We'd love to chat about using your build for virtual tours and a campus day stream. Are you available next week?"

Jay looks up at the campus buildings again, then at the message. He taps "Reply."

JAY  
(under his breath)  
Yeah. I'm available.

He slides the phone away and keeps walking through the quad, blending into the flow of students crossing campus.

FADE OUT.