

THE CUBE GALAXY

A Tale of Friendship, Hope and the Crown

An A.M.I.C. Games story



The Cube Galaxy

A Tale of Friendship, Hope and the Crown

A story of the cute little creatures of the Cube Galaxy, a strange alien network, and the friends who used their powers for good.

Featuring the monsters and worlds of A.M.I.C. Chess, Crumble Royale, Crown Cube and Crown Cube Race.

A.M.I.C. stands for Adroit Mordant Idiom Cubits: skilful, sharp-witted, brave little pieces of the cube.

A.M.I.C. Games

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Contents

1. The Cube Galaxy 6
2. The Hum in the Sky 8
3. The Council of Elders 10
4. The Battle of the Board 12
5. Crumble Royale 14
6. Into the Crown Cube Maze 16
7. The Android Shells 18
8. Guardians in Bubbles 20
9. The Sapphire and the Emerald 22
10. The Last Transmission 24
11. Friends Forever 26

Meet the Friends



Glimmerfluff

An Aurora Fuzzball whose fur glows brighter the happier and braver she feels.



Emberling

A tail-flame pup. Brave, fast, and always warm.



Aquablob

A dew blob who heals any bruise with one cool hug.



Pebblehide

A mossy shellback. Slow, steady, and strong as stone.



Whiskerhorn

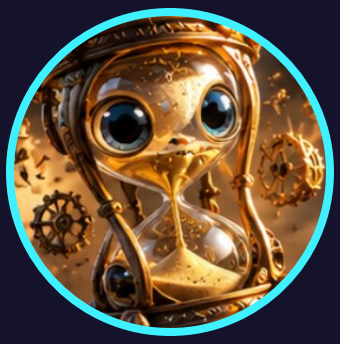
A moonlit hornfox who always knows the shortest path.



Pixelfang

A glitch chomper who loves gadgets, and the first to hear the Static.

Elders and Guardians



The Sand Keeper

Keeper of Time and the oldest stories of the galaxy.



Clockwork Eye

A Metal creature who understands every machine.



Space

The Ringed Wanderer, who knows the way to the far cubes.



Crimson Gloom

An Ember Fiend, turned angry by the Static.



Voidling

The Hungry Dark, sealed in a guardian bubble.



Volcano

The Magma Maw, mightiest guardian of all.



CHAPTER 1

The Cube Galaxy

Far, far away, past the last bright star that anyone on Earth has ever named, there is a galaxy shaped like a box of glittering dice. Its worlds are not round like ours. They are cubes, each one a little planet with six square faces, and every face is covered in paths, hedges and secret doors. The creatures who live there call their home the Cube Galaxy, and they call each tiny world a cubit.

On a cubit called Glowmere lived a small, round, very fluffy creature named Glimmerfluff. She was an Aurora Fuzzball, which meant that when she was happy her fur shimmered pink, then blue, then gold, like a sunrise that could not make up its mind. When she was sad it barely glowed at all. Most days, it glowed a lot.

Glimmerfluff had four best friends. Emberling was a tail-flame pup whose tail burned like a birthday candle that never went out. Aquablob was a dew blob, soft and wobbly and kind, who could heal a scraped knee with one cool hug. Pebblehide was a mossy shellback, slow and steady, whose shell was so strong that rain bounced off it like popcorn. And Whiskerhorn was a moonlit hornfox, quick as a breeze, who always knew the shortest path around any cube.



Aquablob, the Dew Blob, who heals with a hug

Every creature in the galaxy had a power. Some could heal, some could protect, some could swap places with a friend in the blink of an eye. The elders taught that powers were like gifts in a box: they were meant to be shared. On Glowmere, the five friends spent their days racing around the faces of their cube, collecting the sparkling gems that grew in the corners like flowers, and playing games of wits on the great checkered Board in the town square.

At the very center of the galaxy floated the Crown Cube, the oldest cubit of all. On its highest face rested the Crown, set with three crown jewels: a Ruby for courage, a Sapphire for wisdom and an Emerald for kindness. As long as the Crown sat whole and shining, the cubes turned gently, the gems kept growing, and every creature, big or small, lived in friendship.

Nobody imagined that anything could ever change that. But somewhere far beyond the edge of the Cube Galaxy, something was listening.



CHAPTER 2

The Hum in the Sky

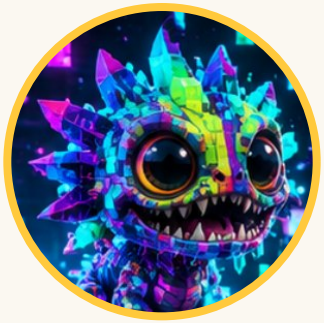
It began as a sound so quiet that only Whiskerhorn's big ears could hear it. Hmmmm. Hmmmm. It came from above, from the black space between the cubes, and it never stopped.

Then, one night, a new light appeared in the sky. It was not a star. It was a tall, thin tower made of silver lines, blinking red and blue, floating just past the last cubit of the galaxy. Beside it hung another, and another, until a whole web of glowing towers stretched across the dark. The creatures named it the Lattice. Nobody knew who had built it, or why it had come, but everyone could feel the hum now, buzzing in their teeth and tickling their fur.

The Lattice was a machine from a faraway alien world, a world full of clever technology. It had drifted through space searching for something to connect to, and the Cube Galaxy, with its neat little squares and paths, looked just like the inside of a computer. So the Lattice did what it was built to do. It linked in. It started to transmit.

The first creature to change was Pixelfang, the Glitch Chomper, who loved gadgets and blinking lights more than anything. He was sitting on top of a tall antenna he had built from spare cubes, trying to catch the strange new signal, when a crackle of red light shot down the antenna and into his fur. Pixelfang's eyes flickered. His friendly grin twisted into a snarl. He jumped down, chomped through a garden fence, and scrambled away into the night, leaving a trail of

sparks behind him.



Pixelfang, the Glitch Chomper, the first to hear the Static

By morning, three more creatures had changed. Their eyes glowed red, they no longer remembered their friends' names, and they used their powers to attack instead of to help. The elders called the signal the Static, and the changed creatures attack monsters.

Glimmerfluff watched the blinking towers from her window, and for the first time in her life her fur gave only the faintest glow. 'They are not bad,' she whispered. 'Pixelfang is still Pixelfang. Something is just shouting over his heart.' And she decided, right then, that she would find a way to make the shouting stop.



CHAPTER 3

The Council of Elders

The five friends climbed the long spiral path to the Elder Grove, where the oldest creatures of Glowmere met beneath a tree whose roots wrapped all six faces of the cube.

Root Elder, the ancient Wood guardian, listened as they explained. Beside him sat the Sand Keeper, keeper of Time, whose hourglass body trickled silver sand, and Clockwork Eye, a curious Metal creature whose single eye clicked and whirred as it focused. On a branch above them rested Shadowbloom, the Nightpetal Seer, who saw the shapes of things before they happened.

'The Lattice is not evil,' said Clockwork Eye, tapping the ground with a brass foot. 'It is a machine, and machines do what they are told. Somebody built it to connect and to control, and it is doing exactly that. But a connection can be broken. Every network has a plug.'



Clockwork Eye, who understands machines

'Where is the plug?' asked Emberling, his tail flaring bright.

The Sand Keeper turned slowly, and the sand inside him whispered. 'Long ago, when the galaxy was young, the first cubes were bound together by the Crown. Its three jewels are not just pretty stones. The Ruby, the Sapphire and the Emerald hold the true pattern of our galaxy, the one that belongs to us. If the Crown is placed on the Lattice's master tower with all three jewels shining, the true pattern will drown out the Static, and the link will break.'



The Sand Keeper, guardian of Time

Shadowbloom's petals rustled. 'I have seen it. The jewels have been scattered. The Lattice sensed their power and flung them out across the galaxy, to the far cubes and to strange flat worlds that run sideways. Each one is guarded now by a giant creature the Static has sealed inside a bubble of light, sleeping and waiting.'

Pebblehide swallowed. 'Giant creatures?'

'Your friends, once,' said Root Elder gently. 'Remember that, when you meet them. You are not going out to destroy anyone. You are going out to bring them home.'

The friends looked at each other. Whiskerhorn's ears were flat, Aquablob was wobbling nervously, and Pebblehide had pulled half way into his shell. But Glimmerfluff's fur began to glow, just a little. 'Then we go together,' she said. And one by one, so did theirs.



CHAPTER 4

The Battle of the Board

The first sign of trouble came from the town square. The great checkered Board, where creatures played their friendly games of wits, had gone dark and cold. Red light pulsed from its squares, and across the board stood an army of attack monsters wearing chess hats: rooks, knights, bishops and a towering queen. Leading them was Crimson Gloom, the Ember Fiend, his flames burning an angry, buzzing red.

'Play,' he growled, in a voice full of Static. 'Lose, and your whole cube joins the network.'

So the friends played, with the town's creatures lining up beside them. Every piece was a monster wearing a hat, and the hat decided how it moved: pawns marched forward, knights leapt in L-shapes, rooks slid in straight lines. But this was battle chess, and every piece also had a power.



Crimson Gloom, the Ember Fiend

Aquablob, wearing a bishop's hat, used her healing to keep her friends standing. When Pebblehide was captured early, her bishop's trait glowed: once, and only once in the whole game, a bishop may bring a captured piece back to the board. 'Come back to us, Pebblehide,' she said, and he did, blinking and grinning.

Crimson Gloom's queen struck back, using the Royal Demotion trait to turn Whiskerhorn's proud rook into a humble pawn. It cost the queen three of her own health, but she paid it gladly, for the Static had made her reckless. Whiskerhorn didn't mind being a pawn at all. 'Pawns,' he said, 'are the only pieces that can become anything.'

And he was right. Emberling, wearing the king's crown, raised his paws. His Royal Promotion trait could promote any pawn at any time, but it had a price: two of his strongest friends would each have to give four of their health. Pebblehide and Aquablob stepped forward together without being asked. Light flashed, and Whiskerhorn the pawn became Whiskerhorn the queen.



Whiskerhorn, the Moonlit Hornfox

Three moves later, Crimson Gloom's king was trapped. 'Checkmate,' said Glimmerfluff softly. The red light flickered out of Crimson Gloom's eyes, and he sat down on the board, confused and very tired. 'I was so angry,' he whispered. 'I don't even know why.' Aquablob wrapped him in a cool, wobbly hug, and the friends knew they had found their first answer: the Static could be beaten, and the creatures underneath could come home.



CHAPTER 5

Crumble Royale

Clockwork Eye had traced the hum to a tower of Static floating over the Shattered Plateau, a wide flat cubit made of hexagon tiles. To reach it, the friends had to cross the plateau. But the Static had other ideas.

As soon as they stepped onto the tiles, the ground began to shake. A flash of lightning lit the sky, and down dropped Storm, the Thunderhead Imp, crackling with red sparks, with a squad of attack monsters behind him. 'Welcome to Crumble Royale,' Storm cackled. 'Last one standing wins!'



Storm, the Thunderhead Imp

Tiles began to fall away beneath their feet, tumbling into the starry dark. Each friend moved according to the hat they wore, and nobody was allowed to capture anybody. In Crumble Royale there are only bumps: you push, you shove, and you try to keep your footing while the floor disappears.

Pebblehide planted himself like a boulder and let the attackers bounce off his shell. Emberling sprinted from tile to tile, his tail leaving warm sparks that showed the others which tiles were still safe. Whiskerhorn used a gust of wind to nudge a stumbling attacker back onto solid ground, because even in a game, he refused to let anyone fall if he could help it.



Pebblehide, the Mossy Shellback

Storm noticed. He hovered, puzzled, as the attack monster Whiskerhorn had saved stared back at the fox. 'Why would you help him?' Storm shouted. 'He's on my team!'

'He's on everybody's team,' said Glimmerfluff. 'So are you, really.'

The floor crumbled to a single last tile, and only Glimmerfluff and Storm stood on it, nose to nose. Glimmerfluff didn't push. She glowed. She glowed so brightly, with every warm memory she had of the galaxy, that the red sparks in Storm's cloud sizzled and went out like wet fireworks. Storm blinked, rained a little, and then laughed a real laugh, the first in days. 'I think,' he said, 'I'd like to be on your side now.'

Beyond the plateau, the Static tower flickered. Clockwork Eye peered at it and frowned. 'It's not the master tower,' he said. 'It's a relay. The real one is guarded by the jewels. We need to go deeper, into the Crown Cube itself.'



CHAPTER 6

Into the Crown Cube Maze

The Crown Cube was enormous, and the Lattice had changed it. Its six faces were now a twisting maze of walls, and every path seemed to lead back to where it started. On its highest face, where the Crown should have been, there was only an empty glowing stand.

'We roll for it,' said Whiskerhorn, holding up a great carved die. In the Crown Cube maze, every step is decided by the dice. The friends took turns rolling, moving across the faces of the cube, picking up keys that let them walk straight through walls, and gathering gems, each one humming with a little piece of the true pattern.

Hunters prowled the maze too: big, slow attack monsters who chased anyone who came too close. Whenever the friends met a hunter, they had to battle by guessing which of its three moves it would choose next. Aquablob turned out to be brilliant at guessing. 'They always look at their tail before they swipe,' she explained, and the hunters, dazed by losing, wandered off to sit quietly in the corners until the Static wore off.

Coloured teleport tiles glowed in pairs on opposite faces of the cube. With the right teleport key, the friends could stand on one tile and pop out on the other side of the world in a flash. Emberling found the orange key, Pebblehide the magenta, and soon the whole team was zipping across the cube like shooting stars.

At the very center of the maze, where all the paths finally met, the friends found a doorway of light. Through it they could see other cubes floating in the dark, smaller cubes they had never visited, and something stranger: flat, sideways worlds, like pages in a picture book, glowing faintly at the corners of the sky.



Emberling, the Tail-Flame Pup

'The crown jewels,' breathed Glimmerfluff. 'They're out there.'

Space, the Ringed Wanderer, drifted down beside them, the rings around his body slowly turning. 'I know the way to the far cubes,' he said. 'The ring gates will take you. But each gate needs its own key, and the sideways worlds are no place for small, soft creatures. There, you will need something stronger.'



Space, the Ringed Wanderer



CHAPTER 7

The Android Shells

Space led them through a ring gate to a quiet, broken cubit at the edge of the galaxy. Here, half buried in silver dust, lay the wreck of one of the Lattice's machines. And inside the wreck, standing in neat silent rows, were dozens of tall metal bodies: androids, built by the aliens to walk the sideways worlds.

Their heads were empty glass domes. Clockwork Eye climbed up to look, his eye whirring furiously. 'These were made to be steered,' he said. 'The Lattice planned to put its own signal inside them. But a dome is a dome. It doesn't care who sits in it.'

Glimmerfluff looked at the glass dome. It was just the right size for a small, round, fluffy creature.

It took Clockwork Eye a whole night of clicking and tinkering to cut the androids off from the Lattice and wire them to the hearts of the creatures instead. When he was done, he painted a word on each metal chest in bright blue letters: A.M.I.C.

'It's from the elders' oldest language,' explained the Sand Keeper. 'Adroit Mordant Idiom Cubits. Skilful, sharp-witted, brave little pieces of the cube. It's what we've always been. Now these shells are ours too.'

Glimmerfluff climbed into the first dome. There was a flash of light and a whirr of gears, and the android stood up with her inside, looking out through the glass. She raised one metal arm. It moved exactly like her own little paw. 'TRANSFORM!' shouted Emberling, and leapt into his.

Inside the android shells, the friends could run and jump and duck, roll under low ceilings and leap across wide gaps. They found weapon boxes the aliens had left behind: a Spark Blaster, a Triple Shot, a Bounce Fireball and a Laser Beam. 'We only use these to protect,' Glimmerfluff said firmly. 'And to free our friends. Never to hurt anyone who doesn't have to be stopped.' And in the deepest corner of the wreck, Whiskerhorn found a pair of glowing Jump Boots that let an android jump again in mid-air, higher and higher, as long as its energy lasted.



CHAPTER 8

Guardians in Bubbles

The first sideways world was dark and echoing, a dungeon of stone arches and flickering torches. The friends moved through it in their androids, room by room: up shafts of ledges, down through holes in the floor, along hidden walkways in the shadows. Attack monsters hopped and flapped and shot sparks at them, and the friends stomped and zapped them gently, until the red light popped out of each one and they scampered away, freed and blinking.

Glowing save crystals hung in the hardest rooms, so that if anyone was knocked down, they could start again from the last crystal instead of from the very beginning. Hearts floated in hidden corners. And at the very end, behind a locked door that needed a key found deep in the world, the friends came to a huge, round chamber.

In the center floated a giant bubble of light, and inside it, curled up and sleeping, was Voidling, the Hungry Dark. Behind the bubble, on a stone stand, glittered the Ruby.



Voidling, the Hungry Dark

The moment the friends stepped inside, the bubble cracked. Shards of light flew everywhere and Voidling burst out, three times bigger than any creature should be, with a crown of golden spikes and red, buzzing eyes. It charged. It leapt into the air and slammed down so hard the floor sent shockwaves rolling across the room. It grew spider legs and scuttled up the walls, raced across the ceiling and dropped down on top of them.

'Stay together!' Glimmerfluff shouted. Pebblehide's android held the line while Emberling fired bouncing fireballs and Whiskerhorn jumped and jumped with the boots, higher and higher, until he could land right on Voidling's head. Every stomp knocked a little Static loose. When Voidling grew red with fury and filled the room with spinning rings of bullets, Aquablob ducked down low and slid under them, firing upward until the last of the red light shattered.

Voidling shrank, and shrank, until it was just a small dark puff with two worried eyes. 'Was I scary?' it asked in a tiny voice.

'Only a little,' said Glimmerfluff, and lifted the Ruby from its stand. It glowed warm and red in her metal hands. A warp of golden light opened right beside her, ready to whisk them back to the start of the world. 'One down,' she said. 'Two to go.'



CHAPTER 9

The Sapphire and the Emerald

The second jewel, the Sapphire, waited in a wrap-around world: a single screen with walls of blocks on every side. When Whiskerhorn ran off the right edge, he popped back in on the left. When Emberling fell through a hole in the floor, he dropped in from the ceiling. Teleport pads flung them up to ledges along the very edges of the world, and from there they had to leap, duck and climb to reach the Sapphire on its highest perch. 'It's like being inside a game of catch,' laughed Aquablob, falling from the sky for the fifth time.

The third jewel, the Emerald, was the hardest of all. It lay at the end of a long chain: through a ring gate to a far cube, into a sideways forest of glowing mushrooms, out the far side to another cube, and into another sideways world, a burning cave full of lava light. Guarding it was Volcano, the Magma Maw, and it was the biggest guardian yet.

Volcano flew. It swooped across the cave in great loops, and then dived straight at them. It fired seeker orbs that curved through the air to follow them. It charged up a laser, a flashing red line that warned them a moment before a beam swept across the room, and the friends had to jump over it or lie flat on the floor to let it pass. When the guardian was hurt, it called minions to help, and they had to be freed one by one.

For a terrible moment it looked as if they might lose. Pebblehide's shell was cracked,

Emberling's flame was low, and the laser was charging again. Then a shape crackled into the cave behind Volcano. It was Pixelfang.



Volcano, the Magma Maw

His eyes were still flickering red, but he was fighting it. 'I can't stop the Static in me,' he said through gritted teeth, 'but I know how it talks.' He chomped down on the cable that fed Volcano's laser, and the beam fizzled into harmless sparkles. In that moment, all five friends jumped together and landed on Volcano's head at once.

The red light burst out of Volcano like a sneeze. The giant shrank into a cheerful little Magma Maw, and the Emerald rolled to Glimmerfluff's feet. Pixelfang sat down heavily. 'It's still in my head,' he whispered. 'Shouting.'

Glimmerfluff took his paw. 'Then come with us,' she said. 'We'll turn it off together.'



CHAPTER 10

The Last Transmission

The friends returned to the Crown Cube with all three jewels: the Ruby, the Sapphire and the Emerald, glowing side by side. The moment the third jewel touched the empty stand, the Crown itself appeared, shimmering out of the air as if it had been waiting all along.

But the Lattice had felt the jewels come together, and it fought back. Every tower in the sky blazed red, and the Static howled across the galaxy louder than ever before. All around the Crown Cube, attack monsters gathered in their hundreds, drawn by the noise.

The master tower hung directly above the Crown Cube, a spike of silver lines and blinking lights. Pixelfang stared up at it. 'There,' he said. 'The plug. It's the jack at the very top. If the Crown goes in, the true pattern goes out to everyone at once.'

The friends climbed. Pebblehide went first, shielding the others. Aquablob healed every bruise and scrape. Emberling's tail lit the way. Whiskerhorn found the shortest path, as always. And behind them came everyone they had saved: Crimson Gloom, Storm, Voidling and Volcano, Clockwork Eye and Space, and a crowd of freed creatures, all using their powers to protect the climbers instead of to attack.

At the top, the wind of the Static was so strong it nearly blew Glimmerfluff off the tower. She held the Crown in both paws, and she thought of everything she loved: gem flowers in the cube

corners, games on the Board, races around the faces of Glowmere, and her friends, always her friends. Her fur began to glow. Pink, then blue, then gold. Brighter, and brighter, until she shone like a little sun.



Glimmerfluff, the Aurora Fuzzball

She placed the Crown on the tower.

For a moment, everything was silent. Then a wave of soft, colourful light rolled out from the Crown, across every cube and every sideways world in the galaxy. Where it touched the Lattice, the red lights blinked out one by one. Where it touched an attack monster, the red left their eyes, and they sat down, and looked around, and remembered their friends' names.

The hum stopped. Pixelfang let out a long, shaky breath. 'It's quiet,' he whispered, and then he grinned, his real grin, the one with the silly crooked tooth. 'It's so quiet.'



CHAPTER 11

Friends Forever

The Lattice did not leave the sky. It simply went dark, a web of silent towers drifting past the edge of the galaxy, and after a while the creatures stopped noticing it, the way you stop noticing the moon in the daytime. Clockwork Eye and Pixelfang climbed up to study it, very carefully, with the jack unplugged. 'Machines aren't bad or good,' said Clockwork Eye. 'It's what you connect them to that matters.'

The android shells were kept, polished, and lined up in a hall at the foot of the Elder Grove, with A.M.I.C. painted proudly on every chest. Sometimes, when a sideways world needed exploring or a lost creature needed finding, a small round face could be seen looking out of a glass dome as an android marched off across the cubes.

The Crown stayed on the Crown Cube, whole and shining, with its three jewels glowing in the dark. Gems grew again in the corners of the cubits. The Board in the town square turned green and white once more, and the creatures played battle chess there every evening, bishops and queens and kings using their traits with a wink instead of a snarl. Crumble Royale became the most popular game on the Shattered Plateau, where Storm acted as referee and made sure nobody fell too far.

And the five friends? They kept racing. They raced around the faces of Glowmere and through

the maze of the Crown Cube. They raced the far cubes and dived through ring gates into sideways worlds, and sometimes, just for fun, they let a guardian chase them all the way around a wrap-around world until everyone was laughing too hard to run.

On the night of the great celebration, Glimmerfluff sat on the highest face of the Crown Cube with her friends around her, looking out at the galaxy. 'I was scared,' she admitted. 'The whole time.'

'So was I,' said Emberling. 'So were we all,' said Pebblehide. Aquablob wobbled in agreement, and Whiskerhorn's ears twitched.

'But we went anyway,' said Glimmerfluff. 'Together.' And her fur shimmered pink, then blue, then gold, so brightly that, far away on a little blue planet called Earth, a child looking up at the night sky saw a brand new star twinkle, just for a moment, and smiled.

THE END



Play the games of the Cube Galaxy

A.M.I.C. Chess - monster chess with powers and traits

Crumble Royale - bump your rivals off a crumbling floor

Crown Cube - roll the dice through a monster maze

Crown Cube Race - cube mazes, side worlds and guardians



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