At the ripeful age of four, my mom, brother, and I played *Angry Birds Rio* with a newly bought iPad before sleeping one night. When the cable was out to *Clifford* or *Curious George*, I was told to just play the iPad. With the device, I was proficient at showing my mom to enter the password to download a free game, but actually a $99.99 purchase on *Samurai Vs Zombies* for a large magnitude of gems. Later, the Apple ID shut down because she didn’t want to pay for my foolishness. Throughout my life, I gamed every chance I got from *The Sims FreePlay* to *PUBG*.

Midway into 9th grade of high school, I despised my identity as I compared myself excessively to successful peers. I hated myself as everyone was simply better with strong writing in world history and impressive drawing abilities, and there’s me: a no-life gamer. Although school was virtual, I found myself really liking this girl. She introduced me to Programming Club, and she’s the reason why I was motivated to really try coding. Because naturally, I wanted to better myself for a single person by showing I have this fun skill (and she teased about wanting a computer science boyfriend).

Programming is hard. So hard that I gave up three times, with the last time getting beat by Java classes despite watching many programming tutorials by the superb Alex Lee. But I wanted to try again; the person I liked was my main motivation. I asked my mom for a MacBook that was on sale at Costco as a birthday gift. I felt bad asking as the sale ended in 12 hours, but using the school laptop was difficult as the firewall didn’t even allow us to download Python in Programming Club. Reddit advised me to learn HTML/CSS with freeCodeCamp, which was deemed beginner friendly. I started on July 28th, 2021.

Being the gamer I was, learning HTML feels as crafty as worldbuilding in *Minecraft,* having built five-floor pagodas in a friend’s realm called *The Babes*. And learning CSS feels as creative as strategizing in *Genshin Impact* with my Hu Tao build that dealt 80k damage with her ultimate. Once I went through the Responsive Web Design course, I went through it again and took notes on a notebook labeled ‘CS’ with my best handwriting on my desk at four in the morning. On August 15th, I finished my first project: a survey that Rickrolls upon submission. To be fair, I looked at the example survey I tried to make several times, sometimes with guilt-free copy pasting. Yet, I took pride in the poorly designed website, thinking how fun it was to trick people in my crush’s Communist Discord server (SATIRE) with my own creation.

I grinded Javascript to create a four-function calculator with 900 lines of carefully crafted spaghetti code, showcasing my progress with friends on my Instagram spam account while receiving the intense joy of getting division to work. Successfully, I coded a Caesar Cipher, palindrome checker, cash register, and markdown previewer for freeCodeCamp’s certifications. Touring the web for free Javascript resources, I bookmarked sites such as Coursera and Galanize for learning coding.

That research sparked a new passion: nonstop learning. Pushing through jQuery to SCSS, I advanced according to freeCodeCamp’s map. I created countdown and pomodoro timers, sound pads, random password and quote generators, and Whack-a-Mole and Hangman games. I even created pixel art with CSS. Yes, I wrote 2,000 lines of CSS for pixel art of Toriel and Frisk from *Undertale* that would have been easier with some free editor. I didn’t care; I enjoyed my work. There was no reason to care about skills other people had; there was no time for that. Hell, I was busy learning Java GUI Frameworks to make the *Fill-The-Fridge!* game in JavaFX, which my friend was addicted to. And, well, I’m busy learning everything.