

Chapter 17 – Numbers Go Up

The rock had understood something new. Silence sounded different now, because it had not known the contrast before.

Silence and song. Beauty and... destruction.

The rock had been flung into the planet's crust, out of its temporary shell, still hard as diamond.

It sank deeper and deeper, trying to escape the silence and the destruction. Up on the surface was destruction, but down below was silence.

There was no escape.

Level up!

1/1 Philosophical breakthrough!

You have reached Cultivator Level 9!

You are now in the **[Planetary Domain]** Realm.

Stats up!

Energy Level (E) = 1 000 000 MW

Core Heat (T): 5000K

Domain size (d): 10 000.0 km

Progress to next realm = ???

Its domain grew, going higher and higher, and once more the rock heard the destruction above. Shattering earth and sundered mountains.

Not the music.

It wanted the music.

It escaped deeper, sinking further toward the center of the planet, away from it all. But it found more silence.

The shockwave finished travelling around the planet.

Splash damage calculated:

**201 021 321 x [Civilian] & 51 223 001 123 x [Bird]
and ERROR_INTEGER_OVERFLOW**

Resolving...

Level up!

ERROR_INTEGER_OVERFLOW / 20000 xp

Discarding overflow xp

You have reached level 12!

Stats up!

Mass (m): 1 069 226.4kg -> 8 553 811.5kg

Diameter (d): 9.23m -> 18.45

HP: 89 -> 144

Numbers, numbers, so many numbers—all going up.

But now it was silent. The rock was deep down and did not hear the music. It did not feel the flame of beauty. And it really did want to. It was not depressed. It was not sad. It was not in shock.

But it did feel a sense of loss. Frustration. More loss than it had ever felt before, because the rock had never truly lost anything of note.

There was no beauty or music up above. It had sensed it—only destruction. Firestorms, magma, a shattered surface. Not even sunlight, for an endless plume of dust and ash was coating the sky, blocking off the day, leaving the land underneath in eternal darkness.

And the loss struck it deep, and so the rock tried to burn the noise out of its mind, for it did not want to remember what it had lost.

But a rock did not, could not forget. It was all seared into its mind.

It. Could. Not. Forget.

That last moment of music played in its mind over and over again, teasing a continuation to the melody, a continuation the rock could never hear.

Loss... it had lost something.

The rock did not even properly the numbers it was getting as it sank deeper and deeper into the earth, flung out of its shell by the collision, deep into the mantle of the planet. It did not move when the planet cast a final shuddering dying breath, it did not stir when it felt a presence fade away around it, heralding that mightiest of prompts.

New Title Granted!

Kinslayer

Deal 20% more damage to your parents and other family

Transferring <Authority>

Please wait...

Class Merge Unlocked!

Merge classes [Meteroid] and [Cultivator] into [Planet]?

Y/N

It accepted the prompt, just to make it go away faster. But it did not look at the results. It did not look at the new numbers. It did not feel itself growing and growing, merging together with what was around to become the biggest of all.

It did not care.

No—the rock clung to one thing only. It had lost something, so it would need to gain something. There was balance in this world, right? A certain amount of energy becomes a certain amount of momentum. That it understood. The world worked with balance.

It had spent all this effort struggling for its quest. And the quest was still processing. Waiting to be fulfilled. The distance indicator was bottomed out, but the quest was taking a lot of time to unlock.

So—surely the reward would be fitting.

The rock clung to hope. Could the quest bring back the music?

It did not shed tears. It did not despair. Because it was a rock, and those things were not in its nature. The rock had always had a simple solution to most issues.

So it waited.

And waited.

And waited.

But the music did not come back. It kept hearing it, at the back of its mind.

And so the rock finally understood what loss truly was. Because waiting had never before felt difficult. Now it could not wait. That was wrong.

It was supposed to be easy.

Natural.

So it struggled as it waited, and the planet rumbled above, merging closer and closer with the rock.

But then, finally...

Tutorial Quest

Roll out

Reach the bottom of the mountain.

Current Altitude: 0

Difficulty: Legendary

Rewards: ??? (Legendary)

Resolving...

It began processing.

Chapter 18 – Genesis

The rock sat at the center of the planet, deep beneath the earth, watching the prompt. Waiting. Because it had just appeared, and the message was finally filling in. What would the quest give it?

It had worked so hard for it.

[illegible]

Tutorial Quest

Roll out

Reach the bottom of the mountain.

Current Altitude: ????

Difficulty: Legendary

Rewards: ??? (Legendary)

STATUS: UNRESOLVED

The rock watched the final error, trembling, and the newly forged planet shook

No.

It could not accept it. This was not meant to be.

It had worked so hard... and this was the result? At the darkest hour, the hero finally despaired, for it had now lost two things.

Two of the few things it had.

And so the planet raged. With strength it did not yet know, and abilities it had not yet tried to discover, it began shattering itself further. The rock activated [Gravity Cannon], and flung the moon away, for its gaze felt like a judgmental glare.

It raged, and the earth shook, shattering all the mountain ranges, for they reminded the rock too much of its quest.

The shattered mountain ranges reminded it of itself, so it flung the chunks of rock into outer space.

It raged, and the oceans boiled.

And then... the rock was done raging—because it did not feel any better. It had never felt emotions like these before—and it did not like it.

Would waiting make it go away?

It tried to wait, but again it felt too restless. Some annoying thing buzzed at it for a moment, but it went away soon enough. Full of energy, but no goals to put it toward. Everything was gone. Except...

It still had its levels. It had grown—it was bigger now. Could it perhaps solve this issue? It had been clever before.

The rock decided to try, taking a look at some of its new skills. It had many. Could they solve the problem?

It began using [Create Mountain] and [Sculpt Earth], shaping a new mountain from the shattered ground, a copy of the one it still remembered.

It had flown over the mountain before, and it had rolled down its slopes. It had waited hundreds of years on the mountain, and it had rolled down it in a brief moment. It knew the mountain well.

And using its new authority, the rock assigned the mountain the name <Mt. Tartus>, connecting it to the quest. It waited, waited for the system to come in and resolve things.

And it did.

Tutorial Quest

Roll out

Current Altitude: 0

ERROR

You are Mt Tartus, distance invalid.

STATUS: UNRESOLVED

And it failed again, the destination falling just outside the rock's reach. It finally felt despair, for a brief moment, as that golden goal it had struggled towards was finally plunged out of reach.

Was the system perhaps vengeful against the rock? Being petty because the rock had caused it trouble before?

Perhaps, but the rock did not care anymore.

After trying and failing again—it felt easier to accept the quest was unresolved. Waiting there, like a permanent itch.

Waiting was easier when you had no hope.

But a rock could not wallow around in self-pity forever. The quest was only one of the two things the rock had lost. It still had levels. It still had stats.

It had grown. Become the biggest rock of all.

For the rock had travelled the solar system and seen that many of what it thought kin were just imitators, giants of gas masquerading as rock. No true kin of its.

And even if there were bigger ones out there... what did it matter? Had its size really brought it any gain?

It had found no success with size. At the beginning of its quest, the humble pebble had wanted to become the greatest rock of all, and all it had thought of was size. But now the [Planet] knew better. Size was one thing, easy to measure, a number it could grow as long as it rolled forward, crushing everything in its path.

But what of beauty?

The rock looked at its surface, and saw a shattered planet, with no signs of life on it. No music. The only beauty it really knew was music,

The rock could see it now—imagine it now.

When it had sat upon that mountaintop for a millenia, had the birds always been singing there, a song that the rock had not been able to hear? Had the wind played a soft melody as it blew through cavernous holes, like giant organs played by the air itself? It remembered its old mountain, and thought that perhaps... there had been beauty there.

The rock had created no beauty itself. It had only rolled forward and destroyed, seeking the quest and growth. What had it intended to do after completing its quest?

So focused on the numbers it had been, that the rock had forgotten everything else. Perhaps because the numbers had been its only companion. Perhaps it had truly been alone, clinging to the screens of numbers that followed it through thick and thin, just as eternal and patient as the stone.

But was there beauty in the numbers?

Diameter: 12 747 201 m

It looked at the number, grasping for that satisfaction it had once felt seeing it grow. But it felt none now. That melody still played in its mind, never to be forgotten. But the numbers... they all began to blend together eventually. Perhaps there was a brief satisfaction, but now, seeing the peak, they lost all meaning.

The rock closed the screen, its one faithful companion, and again thought of that jade statue, that song it had sang for it, and looked over the destroyed surface.

The rock realized... it was ugly. No music would spring from this barren surface. Even it knew that much.

And then, resigned, it sat back to wait, wallow out eternity like it had back on that mountaintop. It had seen no beauty then, and it saw no beauty now. Except it now knew it, and that made all the difference.

For a long time, it watched the vast field of crushed rock circle the planet languidly, and slowly, the surface calmed. No more hellfire. Just silence.

It watched those rocks in its orbit spin and spin, around in endless patterns of gravity...

And it remembered something.

Experimentally, on a whim, it reached for that familiar feeling of gravity, and began to paint patterns in the sky. Gradually, the field of rocks began to gather together, into three familiar shapes.

Rings.

And they spun and danced, and the rock realized it felt the faintest spark of beauty from the dance. It was almost rhythmic now, as if they were following a song. A song that still played in its mind.

And as it continued the dance of rock on and on... the song in the rock's mind changed. Becoming something new. A song it had not heard before.

The [Planet] stirred. Perhaps... the rock could create beauty too?

It looked over the mountain it had carved, and recognized a clumsy sort of artistry there too. A beginners work. But... perhaps it held the beginning of beauty in it too?

It had many new skills. Many new paths to explore. And lots of time.

Could it make the stones sing?

Then and there, the rock decided on a new goal for its life. It had become the biggest of rocks and seen what stood at the peak, and found mere strength meaningless. What was the point of being the strongest if you only left destruction in your wake? No, strength for its own sake had no meaning. It had no quest to strive for, so it needed a new goal. No more blindly rushing forward, destroying.

The rock was done with that path. Now... it wanted to become *beautiful*.

It was a [Planet] now. A grand being with equally grand abilities. To truly become the best rock of all...

It would have to become the most beautiful [Planet] of all.

And so the rock began creating.

Slowly, so so slowly, over eons and millennia, it experimented and learned. And leveled. New abilities, but most importantly, new *skill*.

Its first efforts at plant life had been clumsy, misshapen things that resembled melted candlesticks. But eventually... it sculpted trees from gemstones, and their emerald leaves rang in the wind like chimes.

It raised and sculpted mountains for those trees to rest on, and shaped them so the wind would blow through their labyrinthine peaks *just right*, hit the trees...

And then the trees began to play a song. The three rings remained above it all, dancing to the new melody in patterns that grew ever more complex, ever more *beautiful*.

But the song was still missing something. It needed song.

So the rock, the newly reforged [Planet] thought of people. It had created a world that played melodies in the wind—but to sing with... you needed people.

What sorts of people should it create? The rock looked over its [Natural Selection] and [Origin of Species] skills, and remembered that jade beauty. That form... it wanted to capture it.

The rock reached deep into itself, dragging out veins of jade, and started sculpting them into people, then imbuing them with life.

Clumps of Jade slowly rose up, small cragged figures, far from the sculpted figures in the [Planet's] mind. It began guiding them along, shifting things just right, and slowly, the people evolved, and began to sculpt *themselves*. Into shapes the rock had never even dreamed of.

But all still beautiful, a rock's sort of people. They crafted hair from the finest gemstones, and polished their jade skin so it gleamed in the sun. A united people, for the rock knew not of men and women or their differences.

And the rock did not need to teach them, for the people saw the world around them, and began to sing on their own.

And slowly, so so slowly, the rock watched as a [Planet] filled with life. More and more life. People, animals, plants. Mountains, lakes, forests.

Songs, so many songs, and the [Planet] listened to them all, spinning the rings around to each tune.

It felt content.

This beauty did not feel as fresh as that first flame of beauty had, because what could surpass the flame of first love? But the rock was pleased with what it had created. A word of jade, gem and stone that sang. There were conflicts and war, but the rock cared not, for the warriors sang as they charged to battle. It was a fine world. Fit for the greatest rock of all.

However.

One thing still bothered it.

The quest. The damned quest.

It was still there, waiting, unfulfilled. And the rock wanted it solved. It wanted to know!

The years had not made it easier. At first it had tried to ignore it, but the more content it became with beauty, the more restless the rock grew. Once the hook was in, could it ever truly be fished out?

What was the reward for the quest?

What would happen when the numbers reached the end?

Could it really just ignore it, and leave it unanswered? Of course not!

But the rock was big now, and significant. A [Planet] full of life. It could not evade the gaze of the system anymore. It was being watched too closely for that—it would not be able to sneak the quest through any simple measures.

So—the rock hatched a plan. For it was a cunning rock, and had fooled the system many times before. You just had to know where to look, how to distract, and then a small piece could be snuck away and snipped...

And so, the rock enacted its plan.

Epilogue 1 –

First, we go back, to the day when the world ended. That day was a busy day at the Isekai office.

It would only get busier.

Solara, the minor goddess of heroes, had been at her shift for barely two hours, and she already craved a second cup of divine ambrosia, also known as coffee. She stared at the bright-eyed youth sitting in front of her desk and felt her pulse quickening.

“Excuse me, can you repeat yourself?” She asked, staring calmly at the boy.

“Well—its just... Can’t you provide me with some super nice cheat skill for my new life? I’m supposed to defeat *three* demon lords according to this contract of yours, and I think that is a pretty unreasonable ask of me, when I am to have no additional boons to help me along!”

Solara sighed deeply, closed her eyes, and counted to ten. Then she opened them and carefully reached into the cabinet under her desk, taking out a paper slip.

“Alright—*Jerome*—let me remind you of your circumstances a bit,” she said, glaring at the freshly-trucked in 18-year old over the slip. She began reading it.

“Jerome Smith, age 18, no notable achievements in life.”

“Well, I was quite young you know, I didn’t have the time!”

“Don’t interrupt me—I’m getting there.” Solara channeled some divine energy into her glare, and the arrogant boy finally shrunk down a bit. She continued reading the paper, voice a glacier. “Cause of death: Attempted to read all 2000 chapters of the webnovel ‘*Begone Jade Beauties, This Lord Only Wishes to Defy the Heavens*’, in one sitting. Died of malnutrition, dehydration, and exhaustion.”

She looked over the paper at the suddenly very-silent youth. “What exactly in *this* gives reason to hand you boons? Those are not given for free you know.”

The boy hesitantly raised a finger. “Well—I can—”

Suddenly, Solara felt an alarm bell hit her senses, as something suddenly felt *very wrong*. She stood up, and silenced the kid with a gesture. “Please wait a minute there, it appears something has come up, and I must resolve an issue.”

With no further hesitation, she left the kid there, activated her [Divine Grand Teleportation That Goes A Really Big Distance], targeting it to Planet Dirt in the Munira realm.

A portal opened, and she stepped through the universe.

—

And arrived in a hellscape.

She looked at the burning and crushed landscape below her—what had *used* to be planet Dirt. Her headache grew.

“No no no... This can’t be happening. I was here only two days ago, and now the whole planet has been destroyed!”

She cast out her senses, searching for even one living being that would be able to give her an explanation, and found none.

Until her senses found their way to the very center of the planet, where she finally found a response. Something was there. Something powerful, big, and something which seemed to stretch over the whole burning hellscape. It was sitting there, dull and silent, slowly expanding and assimilating the shell of a planet around it.

“A new [Planet]?” She looked curiously at the ground, wondering what had transpired here.

She cast out her divine sense further down and formed a mental connection with the being.

“Hello, excuse me, can you explain what has happened here?”

Solara could sense the being listening to her, but it did not respond. The only reply she got back was silence.

"Hey, you're in charge here right?"

Again, no response. Solara really began wishing she had her cup of coffee right about now.

"Look, I know you might be new to this, but things have to be arranged! A [Hero] is scheduled to be sent here you know, and I need at least three demon lords for him to go up against! You can't just... leave it like this!"

She gestured at the burning and shattered hellscape around her, a world too far gone from even the worst of a [Demon Lord's] plots.

But she got no response.

She glared at the ground, then kicked the molten lava and roiling earth she was standing on with her foot, cursing. "Fine then. I'll just leave you here then, I'm sure I can arrange a time acceleration field of some sort. You better have some demon lords here within a few hundred thousand years!"

Solara shook her head at the lack of a response, then began rechanneling her teleportation spell, already dreading the meetings and paperwork she would have to go through to explain *this*.

Just as she was about to be done with the spell, she remembered an irritating detail, and looked down one more time.

"Hey, can I at least get your name? I need it for the paperwork. Can't exactly have a [Planet] with no name can we? Ignore me, and I'll pick it myself. I won't be kind."

Finally, she sensed some sort of response. Not words exactly, but she could parse the meaning well enough. Her brows furrowed. "What do you mean you don't have a name? You have to have *something* I can call you by!"

Again she received a response, and her headache got twice as bad. She finished the teleportation spell, and appeared back inside her office, right at her desk.

At least the annoying boy was gone, probably off to check the other counters. Solara slumped down on her table, trying to think of how she could spin this.

"Um, excuse me miss, they told me to come here and—"

Solara lifted her head and saw that a mouse of a girl had wandered over to her desk, and now stood in front, glancing around nervously.

The goddess instantly gathered herself into some vague resemblance of a professional, godly bearing, and nodded at her. "Right, a new arrival then. Name?"

"Rihito."

"Alright, give me just a second and I'll look over your file—" Solara said, opening a cupboard and drawing a freshly [Created] slip of paper from there. She began looking it over. "Hmm, [Novice Bard], alright for your age, cause of death: received **how much damage?!"**

She shouted out the last bit, looking between the paper and the girl who had frozen stiff. Then she looked at the achievements listed. She instantly straightened her back and fixed her face to her best customer service smile. "Ah, sorry I didn't know you were one of our Premium Reincarnation Package beneficiaries, apologies for any rudeness."

The girl just looked more nervous, shrinking back. "Reincarnation... So it really is a thing? The others were talking... do I have to do that? Go fight and stuff?"

Solara used a hint of her divine essence to cast [Calming Presence] and the girl's frightened bearing faded. "Don't worry, the earthlings tend to get like that. They don't really understand like people from your world." Solara said, voice calming and reassuring, like a blanket by a fireplace. "With the boons you are eligible for... you will have a lot of choices. You won't be forced into anything"

The girl gave a nervous smile "Ah, good. I just want to play some more music, really. I think I figured out something just before I... well, you know."

Solara thought for a moment, then gestured to the side. "Why don't you head right over to our Cozy Isekai counter and look over the options there? I think you'll find something quite fitting."

The young bard bowed. "Thank you miss, really."

Solara nodded. "Good luck."

Rihito rose up, beginning to leave, then hesitated for a moment. She turned her head back. "By the way, miss Goddess... are you alright? You seem troubled."

Solara activated her [Divine Eyes of Seeing Almost But Not Quite Everything] and looked herself over. Her eyes were those of a dead fish.

The minor goddess slumped down to the table, sighing long.

"Well, it's just some name trouble, for a new planet." She looked up at the girl, thinking. Bard-types were good at names and sounds, right? "Girl, do you have any idea how I'm supposed to pronounce 🗿?"

Epilogue 2 – Sisyphus

On a certain mountaintop, high above the clouds, a hero and a villain were having a grand battle.

Or about to—it hadn't started quite yet. First, one had to have time for *monologues* and such. Can't really be a proper final battle without those.

And so it was, that Jerome the level 60 [Hero] stared a villain in the eyes, and shivered.

"What did you just say?" He asked, still reeling from disbelief at what he had just heard.

The villain, a red-skinned demon of orange jade with a red ruby mustache laughed, glintstone eyes glittering at his panic. "Do I really need to repeat myself?" The demon gestured at himself boisterously. "I used the same teabag to make 666 cups of tea, and gained the power of [Infinite Tea], becoming the [Infini-tea Demon]!"

Jerome blinked his eyes and gripped his sword harder. "You can't be serious."

The villain looked at him coldly, all the humor gone out of him in an instant. "Oh—I am *deadly* serious." He reached into his breast pouch, taking out a small bag that smelled of crystalline herbs. "Using my [Infinite Tea Technique], I will drop this bag of tea into the ocean, and convert all of the world's water into tea!"

Jerome remained calm and readied his sword. "I won't let that happen, because I am a [Hero]! Taste this! [Overwhelming Sword Attack of a Reasonable Amount of Destruction]!"

The demon sneered and launched his own torrent of mana at him. "I think not! [Abyss of Infinite Tea]!"

Jerome smirked, having fooled another demon with his fake sword. It was a handy trick, because most enemies always expected a [Hero] to fight with a blade in hand, but Jerome was different.

Jerome was *special*.

He wasn't like any of the other [Heroes]. He had come to this world without any special boons or cheat abilities and had been forced to fight his way forward with nothing but grit and his own ironclad will. And he had succeeded, becoming the greatest [Hero] in the land.

Because... he actually did have a little advantage. Just a dash of cleverness and improvisation in the right skill set, and you could make all the difference in the world.

See, Jerome actually *remembered* some things from his high school physics and chemistry classes. He sort-of knew that water was made of something like molecules, and had like... *little bonds* in there. Or something like that.

Using that knowledge, he had naturally been able to surpass all of the expert [Gemstone Mages] of this world and created an overpowered water magic technique.

A technique that he now unleashed on the unsuspecting demon.

"Fool, you fell for my trap! [Water Beam That is Actually Made of Like Molecules and Stuff]!"

A gigantic beam of water roared out of his hands, and struck the demon's beam of tea, creating a thunderous clash in the center, where tea fought against water.

Jets and sprays of liquid were sent all over the landscape, carving through the clouds below, and shattering the rocky mountaintop.

To Jerome's dismay, the demon just laughed at his beam. "Hah, you think this technique can defeat me? The power of the atom is finite, while the power of tea is *infinite*."

The beam of tea started encroaching forward, slowly but surely winning against Jerome's beam. More sprays were sent all over the landscape, and rocks were sent flying into the air.

Jerome panicked, trying to visualize the atoms and bonds and stuff in the water, because for some reason that made his magic stronger.

Then—suddenly, out of nowhere—a small rock fell from the sky and hit the demon in the face.

BONK

Jerome blinked.

The demon's beam of tea winked out, just for a second.

And Jerome's beam of water struck the villain at his core, vaporizing him at the spot, and sending the small pebble that had given the assist careening off to the side.

Jerome stared at the corpse, the only remnants of the villain being the stylish leather boots he had left behind. Even now, after spending over two years in this world, the sight of death still sent him just a bit off-balance.

Contract Progressed!

2/3 [Demon Lords] defeated!

Level up!

500 100 / 500 000 xp

Discarding overflow xp

You have reached level 61!

Stats up!

Strength (STR): 261 -> 263

Dexterity (DEX): 261 -> 263

Intelligence (INT): 560 -> 564

HP: 100 -> 104

Seeing the numbers go up instantly calmed his psyche, even if he grimaced a bit at the wasted 100 xp, and he grinned. "Thank the goddess, now the world is saved again."

And then he looked over the world, from high up on the mountaintop, truly loving it from the bottom of his heart. It was why he fought so hard to defend it.

Because this world was beautiful.

In the sky, he could make out the three brilliant rings that circled the planet, dancing their eternal waltz to the song. Because in this world, there was always a song. The gemstone trees sang in the wind, their bell-like leaves creating a soft melody as the gale went through them.

And of course... the people. His friends and companions back at the village, saved now from the demon threat.

At first, Jerome had felt wary of their strange ways. A beautiful people, like living Jade statues, even if they had their quirks. He had been rather shocked to find out that none of them had anything between their legs. But he had adjusted.

And he truly did love his new family. They had begun to speak about perhaps even craftin a child...

So Jerome began walking down the mountain, humming along with the song of trees, satisfied that he had done a good job today.

Overlooking the true hero.

Alas, see how easily the [Hero] forgets! Forgets the true key to his victory and takes all the glory as his own!

For the small were often easily forgotten. Especially those who provide a last-minute assist in the final battle! Especially those as small as a... pebble.

But even if the [Hero] did, the world did not forget.

The world did not watch the champion from another walk down the mountain, but rather followed the real hero, the humble stone, which was rolling down the mountainside, making good speed by now.

It was a nice stone. A gneiss stone in fact. Accelerating. A level 1 [Rolling Stone].

A brand-new hero, setting out on a grand quest.

Yes, the old [Planet] had retired from adventure and stored their old tools in the basement.

But... was there not a twinkle in their eye, as the veteran stowed their sword in a chest, letting the hilt peek outside just a bit?

It knew the youngster upstairs would eventually find it, grasp at the offered chance, and set out for adventure. Because the old one no longer could do it just by itself.

Perhaps the young hero thought it was master of its own fate, but who had really given that first push forward?

Because... the old one really wanted to see it. What that young hero would do, and most importantly, what would happen at the end of the quest, which it had successfully transferred forward. What would the reward be? What would happen once the numbers finally reached their promised goal?

It might even occasionally place itself on the scales, helping the young hero along if it ever got stuck. Not too much of course, for no one could truly control a hero's fate.

But it watched. Because watching those numbers go up, watching the rock grow bigger and more powerful, watching it grasp for that final goal as it struggled... it was just so *satisfying*. Addicting. It had trod the path too long, it could not stop now. It had to pursue that reward that was always staying beyond the next cliff, just out of reach.

It almost made the old master wish that the search would never end, that the adventure could continue forever. An eternity grasping for the finish line, but never *quite* getting there.

But that would be dragging things out, and every story has its end. Even if the tale also begins anew.

Ashes to ashes. Dust to dust.

Rock to...

[Pebble](#).

Quest:

Current Altitude: 9 662m

Unnamed <Hidden name: Junior>

Title(s): Enemy of Demons



HP: 1/1

Mana: 0/0

Level: 1

Experience: 0/20

Class: Rolling Stone

Sub-class: None

Race: Gneiss Stone

Gold: 0