

Sorrel groaned and splayed out on his bed, handheld gaming console clutched in his right hand. A hostile black and red GAME OVER screen shone from the bright display while the small speakers rang out a depressing death knell. It wasn't the first time that that boss had laid waste to his team and crippled his strategy, and it wasn't likely to be the last. He ran his fingers over the case of the device, and flipped it shut, sentencing it to a silent sleep mode for the trouble it gave him. He sat up, leaving the small orange console on his sheets as his chubby, cream-colored belly bulged over the hem of his underwear. He was home alone, and not inclined to wear much more. Swinging his legs off the edge of the bed, he got up and wandered out of his room to get a snack and plan a new strategy.

His body piloted itself down the hall as he ran through the fight in his head. The Golem wasn't a boss to be trifled with, and even the easy strategies weren't really easy at all. With stellar health and physical defence, it was only really weak to elemental damage. However it could also reflect elemental damage back at the party and wipe them all out. He sighed and pulled open the fridge, letting light and cold air wash over his mostly-bare front.

One hit kill moves were his best bet, but the monstrosity was capable of self-reviving even if killed, meaning he'd have to get lucky enough to pull off more than one one-hit in a single fight. He shook his head and closed the fridge, deciding against something chilled. The bag of corn chips sitting on the counter within arms reach looked much more appetizing, and they were soon accompanying him back to his warm bedroom.

He tugged the chips open and crunched a handful of them into his mouth before dropping the bag on the floor at the foot of his bed. He grabbed his handheld once more and flipped it open, mashing A to skip past the persisting Game Over screen and return to his save outside the boss lair. The sprites of his party looked tiny compared to the veritable background that comprised the Golem's overworld sprite, and the sense of scale was not lost on the otterdog who had lost several times already. A tap of the start button popped up the menu, and he ticked down to adjust his party and equipment once more, fine tuning his plans.

He'd gotten into a habit of playing tough RPG's, and this one was no different. The losses he suffered were more invigorating than discouraging, pushing him to think harder, and plan better for the next encounter. He thrived on the challenge that it provided him. He grit his teeth as he closed the menu screen and charged into battle once more, the screen blurring as the overworld melted into the fight.

His fingers flew over the buttons, each menu selection ringing a high pitched ping from the speakers. With the Golem immune to status effects, he spent the first turn buffing his own team members. His mage raised his glittering staff above his head, his body glowing as his robes billowed in a strong swirl of wind. He slammed the staff into the ground, sending out a shock of light that put a shining barrier of light around himself and his two allies. [Phys.Def+!] With the barrier set, he ordered his other troops on the offensive. Clouds of smoke exploded from a pair of flintlock pistols, the bullets exploding into showers of lightning as they struck their foe. [-508! -497! The smoke clouds have slightly raised evasion!] The Gunner had finished her turn. As the lightning fizzled into static nothingness, a fire roared to life. There was a ringing of metal on metal, and an explosion as a flaming blade met the Golem's body, searing it. His sword master skidded back into place beside his companions. [Critical Hit! -1350!]

His turn all used up, the Golem lumbered to life, it's metallic joints screaming as metal ground against metal. Red eyes glowed with ferocity. [Golem Attacks with Hammer!] One great arm twisted form, reshaping from a titanic hand into a heavy-headed hammer. The air roared as it descended, colliding with the barrier and smashing into it with an explosive sound. The screen shook, the entire party taking the hit. [-80! -136! Miss!] The shield held, absorbing most of the blow. The gunner rushed out from her smoke cloud and dove into a forward roll, the hammer smashing down inches from her soles. She flipped and slid along the ground, taking a faceful of kicked up dirt, but remained uninjured.

Sorrel pumped his fist in celebration, pleased to have actually survived the first turn. His team turned full offence for the second assault. He set up a combo attack of his own design, one that had so far proven quite effective against this boss. Water vapor swirled around his mage and gathered in the units hand as he raised it to the sky. The screen shook once more, and a glacier burst from the ground, smashing into the Golem's underside, staggering the beast. His swordsman rushed in again, blade ablaze, his stroke turning the glacier into a tidal wave that drenched the towering metal monster. Another set of electric round burst forward, dealing considerable bonus damage to the now-wet boss. [-679! -312! -975!]

The Golem roared, an awful, artificial screech that only a creature not of flesh could generate. [Str+!] It stretched both hands forward, fingers all pointed at the tiny humans that faced it. A volley of tank shells blasted from its finger cannons, exploding all around the team. The barrier still took most of the blast, but only most of it. [-200! -181! -196!] Sorrel's jaw relaxed only after seeing he had survived, his teeth sore from grinding them involuntarily the last few attempts. With the Golem dented, he wagered against hope that his luck would hold up. [Mage> Attack> Special> Reap]

His mage raised his staff once more, the weapon morphed into a gigantic reaper scythe. The mage robe darkened and shredded into a grim, black cloak, with the broach holding it together becoming a tiny human skull. The scythe swung, the blade cleaving through the Golem like he was made of butter. The mage's clothes and weapon returned to normal, his magic gauge mostly depleted. Sorrel held his breath and squeezed his handheld, waiting for the display to show the result.

[-9999!]

He barely managed to keep himself from squealing as the attack miraculously landed, reducing the Golem's health to zero. It collapsed into a heap of scrap on the screen, the battle pausing for a turn while Sorrel healed his fighters' health and mana. On cue, the boss reassembled itself, using its one guaranteed revive right up. The hybrid otterdog cracked his knuckles and shook out his joints, ready to go another round. He repeated his strategy once more, making sure to refresh his barrier spell before going on the attack. His opponent put up a good fight, but luck was on his side. A second reaper spell missed, but with a quick potion use, he was ready for a third attempt. His eyes were glued to the screen, his fingers gripped the device tight. He held his breath, almost sweating. Third time was the charm, after all.

The attack hit, and the boss collapsed again into a pile, and after a moment, faded away into nothingness.

[Victory!] The game listed out the spoils of his victory as his team danced around in celebration, Sorrel joining them in doing the same. He hopped out of bed, console in hand, and danced around in a circle, arms waving in the air. He stopped only to bring the screen back into view to save his progress before shutting it again and dropping onto his bed with it. He felt oddly exhausted from the effort of so many tough fights, but it was finally over. That was it, the last, the post-game boss. He looked over at the game, and grinned. He was ready for the next challenge.