

## Chrysalis 1221

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#### Chapter 1221: The Evolving Situation

Time to get back to business. The wave is ongoing, the fortress needs defending and all of a sudden, the Colony is more interconnected than ever before.

The gates are working! I can take a few steps and be in the second stratum! Or the third! I mean, going to the second would be *deeply* unpleasant, but the third might not be so bad. I could say hi to AI, and all the other demons who ended up feeding me energy through the Vestibule.

A number which has been *increasing*, by the way. I'm not at all comfortable with it. Ants, I understand. Humans, those are a bit iffy. Demons? They're *weird*. At the current moment in time, I have implemented a standard policy to avoid inspecting what they're thinking about as much as possible.

Actually, maybe I should avoid the third....

Which is fine! I have plenty to be about right here on the fourth. Need to fight the wave, practise my Skills, mutate and most importantly of all, I need to help guide the evolutions of my dear pets! All three of them are still out there fighting, and although there isn't much experience to be had from the freshly spawned monsters of the wave, if they defeat enough of them, it's going to add up. Hopefully, by the time this current wave comes to an end, they'll have reached the required level and be ready to join me in the seventh tier.

Considering I have three mythic cores ready for them to absorb, courtesy of the Demon God, they should turn out super powerful as well. I can't wait!

Which means it's time to get in touch with my old friend. Fortunately, I can talk to him through the Nave. Actually, on second thought, I might just send a message. Speaking to people through the Nave tends to weird them out.

Since we have the gates, might as well put them to the test. I snag a scout and ask them to get in touch with Granin, see if he can make his presence known down here so I can ask a few questions, then I scuttle off to see how my student is getting on.

I find Solant doing pretty much what I expected, snapping out orders and managing her little battlefield like a conductor leading an orchestra. She's continued to drill her little army and they're getting more and more coordinated, allowing her to sneak in additional complexity. Normally, I find a battlefield between monsters and the Colony to look like organised chaos, the ants forming lines, advancing and retreating. This just looks... organised. No ant moves alone, always together, always as a group. When everyone retreats, they do it in a rippling wave. When everyone advances, they surge two, three, four times, overlapping charges that eat up space and drive back the monsters.

On some level, I can see what she's doing. Rampaging, berserking beasts they may be, but the creatures spawned of the wave still have that spark of animalistic intelligence in them. Solant manipulates them, dangling bait, exposing weaknesses, forming vulnerabilities in the line.

The moment the enemy leaps in, those points of attack fade away, like smoke, as if they were never there. I watch her at work for the rest of her shift, taking it all in. When the little general finally retreats and is replaced at the coal face, I rush up and give her a little nudge with one leg.

“Solant! Looking good out there! The moves, the fancy feet! How’s it all coming along?”

She looks a little confused.

“Fancy feet? We don’t have feet. We have claws.”

“Fancy claws, then.”

“I wouldn’t describe them as fancy, as such....”

“.... Just, take the compliment. I’m impressed with how well you have troops moving.”

“Oh. I didn’t understand what you meant. Yes, it’s coming along.”

She doesn’t seem at all pleased.

“Not satisfied?” I ask.

“Not even close,” she affirms. “There is much work to be done, and many more ideas to test before even this simple tunnel defence can be called a success.”

“From what I understand, it’s going very well. The troops are happy, the generals are happy. What’s wrong with it?”

“It can be *better*,” she says as if it were the most obvious thing in the world. “I’ve been consulting with some core shapers who I think will be able to help out, and the more we drill, the better we get at responding to unexpected situations. There’s still a lot of work to do.”

“Well, good thing the wave won’t be over any time soon. You’ve got twelve hours of solid fighting every day to work on your plans.”

“I intend to make good use of them,” she says, determined.

“Make sure you’re getting your fair share of Biomass and experience as well,” I warn her. “As important as it is for the troops to be getting stronger, the generals need to as well.”

“I will, Eldest. Now if you excuse me, we need to run our drills.”

“Didn’t you just finish fighting?”

“It’s the best time to go over the mistakes that were made.”

So saying, she’s off like a shot, and I notice her little army is already lined up and ready to go, her broodmates in the thick of it. I’ve no doubt that these ants will form the core of her following soon enough. Once they get caught up in the wake of the charismatic champions, it’s very hard for my siblings not to get pulled along after them.

It’s fine. Solant is going to be very important going forward. I can’t wait to see what she does.

Well, might as well head on up and see if there's been a reply from Granin. With my pets so close to evolving, the excitement just won't stop bubbling up!