

Chrysalis 1226

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Chapter 1226: There Is Only War

All right! I'm juiced! I'm jacked! I'm fully powered up and ready to go! New Skills to grind, new fusions to chase down and new mutations to get the hang of. By the time the itching finishes running its course and I can get up onto my legs again, the Gravity Mana Gland is already kicking into gear, filling up its vast new reservoirs. Feels good!

Even more impressive are my dangerous and snappy looking mandibles! They didn't extend as far as I expected, but they certainly are longer, a happy median that I can accept. Aside from the length, they look... well... more savage, I suppose. More choppy and definitely spikier, I should have a much easier time punching through hardened defences with these bad boys.

I'm convinced the power of the mandibles has a direct effect on the strength of my bite Skills as well, so the Void Chomp should be even stronger now, which could be... a bit much. But what I really can't wait to test out is my new injection mutation. I have to do a lot of grinding and practice before I'll be able to use it properly, but I'm pumped up for the challenge!

Looking over my Skills, I've made a lot of progress, but there's just so many levels to get, hundreds and hundreds of them before I can meaningfully rank up my key abilities. I'm starting to understand what Granin meant when he said there were fusions that would take decades. A rank seven fusion would be... quite the project.

For now, I need to get back out to the front and into the fight! I've got new stuff to test and an entire Dungeon full of monsters to test it on! If they insist on running headlong toward the Colony, then the least they can do is take part in a little experimentation!

With a spring in my step, I make my way down through the nest and into the lower levels. Apparently, things have been a fair bit calmer on the surface of the island lately, which is good. The Colony has been able to concentrate their efforts down below, which has, along with the reinforcements pouring through the gate, really helped take the pressure off.

I heard some ants are even getting a day off from the frontlines! Outrageous! At least, they would think so.

My three compatriots are still down here fighting, but I don't want to take their experience away, nor do I want to barge in and interrupt Solant as she's generalling, so I head down another tunnel, my mandibles clacking with anticipation.

When I reach the front, I let the general know I'll be taking over the tunnel for a little while and push my way past the defenders, apologising to the troops as I go.

"Excuse me. Sorry about that. Oi, mind the carapace."

In return, they call out as I pass them by.

"Finally getting back to work, are you?"

"Have you been resting, Eldest?"

“Need some more torpor?”

“That’s enough of that!” I snap my mandibles at them jokingly. “Why don’t you slackers head back down the tunnel and watch while someone does some *real* work!”

When I reach the front of the line, I *dash* forward, blasting back the weird mud creature the ants were busy fighting to give them time to retreat.

The beast looks a bit like a spider, at least in the number of limbs, but the details are difficult to make out given it is covered in a constantly dripping coating of mud. Perhaps it’s even some form of elemental and there’s nothing inside there? Or is it just producing a new layer of the coating all the time? Ah well, no need to stress about it.

I raise up my business district and fire a blast of my new acid.

POW! POW! POW!

Holy smokes! That stings!

I know I used the idea of launching bricks as a metaphor for the new acid, but I didn’t expect it to be quite so accurate! Launching the hyper-concentrated acid from the launch-zone is... uncomfortable, but impactful! The creature recoils as the weighty blobs of near-solid acid slam into it with tremendous force, penetrating the outer layer of mud and sizzling away. Not bad. A few more where that came from!

POW! POW! POW!

Oof. Yeah, I might need to mutate my Nozzle to better handle ammunition of this calibre.

Despite the mud coating, the monster is clearly suffering as the acid continues to burn, and indeed, produces more of itself, so it isn’t going away any time soon. In retaliation, the mysterious beast charges forward, its many legs flailing before the mud peels back to reveal a ring-shaped maw filled with rotating, diamond tipped fangs. That is terrifying! And shiny!

Only I am allowed to be that shiny!

My mandibles peel back, lock into place, then slam forward with unbelievable strength. The Savage mutations show their power as they slice straight through the coating and the spikes dig deep into the flesh beneath.

Now, witness the power of my venom! Or... mana. Whatever.

The new mutation works seamlessly as gravity mana flows up from the gland, through the mandibles and directly into the monster before me. The longer I hold on, the more I can force into the beast, but I let go before too long, since holding the bite prevents me from using my mandibles to defend myself from the flailing limbs.

Reaching out with my senses, I can detect the mana I left behind, coiling inside the beast, ready for me to use, but when I try to shift it, it’s like painting a picture while holding the brush with my aura. There’s nothing to grab hold of!

Well, almost. I *can* get the mana to move, but it takes a *hell* of a lot of effort. Forming it into a spell or gravity bomb is just wishful thinking at this stage, but it's something for me to work towards! It's great to have goals!

The monster and I stalk around each other as I dedicate considerable willpower towards manipulating the mana inside it. Sadly, the fight ends before I can get the hang of it, my mandibles proving to be enough to finish off the monster. Ah well, plenty more where that came from!

My mind constructs churn as I work to grind all of my new abilities, and my external mana manipulation most of all. Before too long, another beast, maddened and roaring in anger, charges up the tunnel. This time it's a triceratops-looking thing, except it has lightning crackling all over its horns and its feet are on fire.

Holy moly. The monsters down here are something else.