

Chrysalis 381

[Chrysalis](#)

Chapter 381: Croc Around the Bloc

"Hold the line!" sprayed Grant to the ants around her, "don't let these motherless scum over the wall!"

She faked left before biting down hard with her mandibles on a clawed hand that threatened her. The dirt wall defences of the ants had held firm so far, only by voluntary retreat had they been taken by the enemy. As each consecutive wall had been surrendered, the ants' defences had become concentrated and more sophisticated.

Now on the sixth wall, the greater preparations were bearing fruit. The moat was deep here, and filled with Biomass. Sharpened stakes dotted the face of the wall and many monsters had lost their lives pushing forward into them.

Spears of water erupted out of the moat and dozens of monsters fell back, pierced through their sides. Not far from where Grant fought on the wall, the water mage slumped to the ground, exhausted.

"Get back to the nest," Grant ordered, her pheromones cutting through the myriad scents of the battle.

"I've got one more in me" the mage forced out.

"Denied, get back in the nest and recharge. One spell here isn't worth delaying your return to the field later," Grant ordered even as she fended off another attacker on the wall.

The mage ant pushed her feet back under her and with the assistance of a nearby healer, crawled away from the fighting and towards the nest.

The general assigned to this section of wall shook her head. The colony was pushing itself hard and the will to sacrifice themselves had risen within each ant as long as the battle had gone on. When push came to shove, each individual would rather die than allow another to die in their place. It had become harder and harder to get soldiers to take breaks, to make healers recharge their mana glands and even the generals had become obstinate, some had even pushed forward into the fight themselves!

The generals were no larger than a juvenile soldier. All the evolutionary energy in their second evolution went into raising their Cunning and the Combat Aura gland. When it came to applying damage with their mandibles, even scouts were much superior, forget about the soldiers themselves!

"Get back!" Grant yelled.

The ants around her scuttled back from the wall just as a giant rotting toad monster opened its distended and grotesque mouth and unleashed a gout of putrid liquid that washed over the surface of the wall.

"Dirt! Go! Go!" the general ordered even as she ran forward with her mandibles filled with soft earth.

The green liquid bubbled and steamed on the ground as the ants scrambled to cover it with dirt. After a few seconds the horrific mess was nowhere in sight and they leapt back to the edge of the wall to battle against the monsters who threatened to spill over the edge.

Grant cursed inside. Those stupid toads had become a problem ever since they'd first appeared at the fifth wall. If they weren't spotted in the heaving mass of monsters at the wall before they spewed out their poisonous, acidic soup a great deal of damage could be done to the ants in a short period of time. The wounds caused were excruciating and required a massive amount of mana to heal. Almost every healer on the wall had been sent back to rest at one point, drained of their mana after treating the burns.

"Hold the line!" Grant shouted once again and her fellow soldiers, which their larger bodies and powerful mandibles stepped once more.

GROOOOOWL!

Grant felt the ground beneath her feet vibrate as a low growl from hundreds of throats shook the air. She stared out over the thronging horde, much smaller now than it had been at the start, and she saw them.

They pushed their way through the horde in packs of three or four. Standing upright they towered over many of the monsters around them. Light glinted off their dark scales and razor claws. Some of them opened their massive jaws wide and flashed their teeth as their growls continued to rumble deep in their chests.

"THEY'RE COMING!" she roared. "THE CROCS ARE COMING!"

All along the wall the ants rippled with energy as the word raced down the line and back up to the nest. Excitement pounded in Grant's thorax. Finally the filthy crocs were prepared to show their faces. At last the battle would move to its destined conclusion!

Since the smaller crocs had moved forward, the big one couldn't be too far behind!

Sure enough, it didn't take long for the order to come back from the main nest.

"We're abandoning the wall! Prepare to push on the count of ten!"

"Get ready!"

"Still work to do here! Don't slack!"

"Don't slack, yourself!"

"Five!"

Grant braced herself and she felt the soldiers on either side do the same.

"Mages start to channel! Stay clean on the lines!" The generals hollered.

The smaller ant mages came forward until they were right behind their soldier siblings and began to channel the mana within them.

They crafted it into the mind bending shapes and constructs that would bring death to their enemies and a reprieve to the colony, if only for a few seconds.

"PUSH!"

"RAH!"

As one, the soldiers shoved forward and ripped into the monsters in front of them. They teamed up to throw monsters down from the wall and shove them back, clearing space to allow them to disengage. The soldiers backed up and turned around before they rushed away from the wall, leaving the smaller mages as the front line.

Up and down the wall a hundred ant mages completed their spells, stepped forward and unleashed them on the horde at the foot of the walls. Gouts of flame and spears of water poured down from the top of the wall. The shrieks and roars of injured, infuriated monsters filled the air as the ants silently completed their deadly task.

With their limited cores and mana glands, they weren't able to maintain the magical onslaught for long, only a few seconds, but it was enough. As the monsters of the horde descended on their wounded members to feast on their Biomass the ants turned and fled back to the seventh and penultimate wall.

"Looks like the number crunching by the bigger brained castes was pretty much dead on," Grant observed to the nearby general as they retreated together.

The two ants carefully followed the prepared scent trails as they narrowly dodged the traps and tunnels that dotted the open ground between the walls.

"We might even have one wall to spare," the general chuckled.

Grant shook her antennae.

"We'll need more than one to hold off Garrlosh's children. They're bigger and stronger than most of the trash we've been dealing with so far."

The ants crawled up the face of their seventh defensive layer and took position at the top. They would have a few precious seconds of rest before they were tested again. Rested troops greeted them as they crested the wall. Scouts, soldiers, healers and generals, already in place and ready to battle the enemy.

The ant hill rose high behind them, much closer now than when the battle started. The colony was prepared to make their final stand now. Once this position was overrun, only one wall would stand stood between the nest itself and the horde.

"How many casualties so far?" Grant asked one of the healers.

"Below three hundred so far," the worker replied.

A remarkable number. A miracle almost. They'd defeated thousands of mindless enemies for the cost of only several hundred colony members. It would get harder now though.

At that moment, Grant noticed a disturbance at the peak of the nest. A flood of worker and artisan caste ants poured out of the opening at the peak, followed by a familiar, massive frame.

Grant felt conflicted, but she had to admit, it was a good time for the Queen to reappear.

[Chrysalis](#)

Chapter 382: The Leeroy Initiative

"Haul your abdomen, Sloan!" Victor yelled at her slower contemporary.

"I'm coming!" Sloan grumbled back.

The two generals were exhausted. They hadn't fought on the front line during the course of the battle but they'd been debating, planning and coordinating the efforts of the colony without pause for over a day without rest.

"Finally getting to the good part and you want to miss out?" Victor joked.

"I'll push you into the mouth of a Garralosh spawn," Sloan promised, "watch yourself up there."

"I'm not worried, Leeroy will probably already be in there and can push me out."

At the mention of the more... enthusiastic of their soldier siblings, an irritated twitch flicked through Sloan's antennae. Now that they'd come to this point, nothing could be held back any longer. Which meant that Leeroy, and the soldiers who'd kept her pinned down in the nest, had been sent back to the wall.

The two generals rushed out of the dark nest and into the bright light of the surface. Victor shielded her eyes with her antennae as best she could as she stared at the carnage taking place beyond the walls. From this high up, she could see the children of Garralosh approach, flames trickling out from between their teeth.

"About time you slackers made it up here," Burke observed from nearby.

"We haven't been slacking!" Sloan ground out.

"I know that, obviously." Burke turned to Victor. "Why is she so tense?"

"Not much torpor."

"Ah."

The three of them continued to observe the battle. Things were heating up now, and not just because of the flame spewing crocodile monsters. The Queen had re-joined the front line and the ants there had quickly reached a boiling peak of rage and fury.

"We need to get down there," Sloan gasped urgently.

"I know," Victor replied, intent.

"Do you really think you can stop her?" Burke asked the two generals.

"Not a chance," Victor replied.

"We managed to convince her to return once. Why not once more?" Sloan protested, desperation crept into her scent.

Victor flicked her antennae toward the battle that raged at the seventh wall.

"The Queen is committed. I don't think she expects to survive this battle. The only reason she retreated last time was because she would have caused more deaths than she saved. There is nowhere else to retreat to now, if the colony puts itself between her and danger again, she'll just push us to one side."

"We have to help her!" Sloan pleaded.

"Of course we will. Coming Burke?"

"Let's go!"

The three members of the twenty rushed forward to join in the battle. There was nothing left to do now but fight. The closer they came the more their senses were overwhelmed by the din of battle. The roar of the monsters, the clash of claws, mandibles and carapace, the stink of Biomass mixed with a thousand messages pouring out of the ants every second.

More than that, the three felt the boiling rage and feverish heat that built within the closer they came to the Queen. Before they could reach the edge of the wall, the Queen and the ferocious worker and artisan caste ants that had followed her crashed against the enemy like a tidal wave.

Acid flew into the air, so thick it fell like rain over the enemy and the Garralosh spawn roared with pain and anger. The ants cared not and made no sound as they doubled their ferocity. For every monster that made it to the top of the wall, four or five ants were there to meet it. The soldiers on the front line were the first to move, they seized the victim in their mandibles and pulled, trying to haul them over the wall.

Then the smaller ants got hold of them and the unfortunate creature was buried under a swarm of bodies.

Then the children of Garralosh reached the wall. Flames roared into the sky and hundreds of ants fell back from the edge, lest the inferno claim them. The wash of heat was felt dozens of metres away as the air crackled against Burke's antennae.

The only ant not to take a backward step was the Queen.

The flames licked against her carapace but she didn't appear to care, her attention was seized by the face of her enemy, after all this time, at last they would feel her wrath!

The moment the hideous creatures came within her range, the Queen reared back and raised her head before she lunged forward and unleashed a torrent of acid from her mouth! Garralosh spawn in front of her were bathed in acid in an instant, their scales sizzled and melted as they stumbled forward through the downpour.

It didn't take long for some of the monsters to retaliate, raising their multi mouthed heads to belch powerful flames to counteract the acid. The Queen did not relent and continued to pour out her acid, the powerful stream rained down on monsters up to thirty metres away. When acid and flame met, the stream exploded into boiling hot clouds of acidic steam that wafted over the battlefield, scalding all who touched them. Sadly the colony had no wind mages to direct the horrific steam and some small amount drifted towards the walls.

Unwilling to drain all her acid away, the Queen relented in her opening salvo and clacked her mandibles eagerly. She hungered for vengeance!

"Queen! Please be careful!" Sloan sputtered, exhausted from the run.

"I'll not go back. Not this time. I'm needed here," the Queen spoke sharply, unwilling to waste time arguing.

"I know that! Just ... try not to die!" the general begged.

Before the Queen could respond, another scent intruded on their conversation.

"Your time's up, Sloan! Let's do this!" Leeroy shouted as she barrelled forward, excitement and rage evident in every inch of her frame.

Victor groaned as she watched her sibling rush forward. The enthusiastic approach she didn't mind, it was the complete lack of a sign that Leeroy intended to stop that concerned her.

"Leeroy -!" She tried to call, but to no avail.

The soldier anticipated her siblings would attempt to cut her off and moved to render their efforts useless.

"Not this time, Sloan! I will fight, MY WAY!"

With a daring leap, she launched onto the abdomen of the Queen and rushed up her back, rising above the tumult of battle. Even the Queen was taken by surprise by this manoeuvre and didn't move as the much smaller scrambled up her back.

"Leeroy! Don't be stupid!"

"I AM AWAITED!!! OUR CARAPACE WILL GLEAM FOREVER, SHINY AND RED!!! LEEROOYYYYYYY!!!"

So shouting, the soldier ant heroically leapt from her bewildered mother's head and soared high into the air. So powerful was her jump, she appeared to float in defiance of gravity as she soared above the heads of the monsters below.

"By my two antennae, why is she screaming her own name!?" Sloan despaired.

The two generals could only watch as their over enthusiastic sibling sailed into the open air above the wall, above the horde of gnashing monsters and hulking crocodiles, before she began to fall.

Stillness had fallen across the colony, as all the ants watched this majestic leap to glory. Their poor ant hearts, already filled to bursting with the urge to fight, boiled over in that moment and they threw away all restraint. The Queen was with them, how could they fail?!

Ant after ant began to throw themselves off the wall and into the fray, casting aside the high ground and the benefit of their defences to better take hold of the enemy.

"Do you think that Leeroy remembered that this was part of the plan? Victor asked Sloan.

"I really don't think so."

The sibling in question fell down into the horde and vanished into the swirl of bodies.

"Time to go?"

"Let's do this."

The two ants tapped antennae in the classic 'ant high five', before they took a running start and leapt off the wall. The two generals had worked hard on this aspect of the plan. It was time to launch 'the Leeroy initiative!'

The Queen could only watch in shock as more and more of her children literally threw themselves into the jaws of the enemy below before she too hurled herself over the wall, healing mana charging within her antennae.

Please be in time!

[Chrysalis](#)

Chapter 383: Shadow Offensive

"At last our time has come!" Bella exulted.

"Our moment to shine!" Agreed Ellie.

"I'll be glad to get out this damp hole finally," Bella huffed.

The two core shapers glanced around at their cramped compatriots and their loyal shadow beasts, crammed into this small underground chamber.

"We can go, time to move out!" A scout near the entrance confirmed.

"Here we go!" Ellie cheered as the ants and their pets began to charge towards the entrance to the surface tunnel.

It's taken a long time for the Carvers to complete this chamber, time in which the Core Shapers had further refined their tactics and tried to squeeze the last few mutations out of their charges before the battle.

They were as ready now as they could possibly be, given the circumstances.

"Do you really think that we should be heading up there?" Elligant worried.

"I mean, I know we agreed not to. But I don't believe that every member of the council has managed to restrain themselves. Do you? Remember the name of this strategy?"

"You make a good point."

"So let's go!"

From just behind her, two massive shadow beasts raised their heads and began to move forward in support of their master. The two of them weren't technically supposed to have crafted their own pets, but they figured there was no better way to conduct their research than this, surely!?

Not to mention, how were they supposed to properly train their skills and test the limits of their caste without their own pets? With such reasoning they had convinced themselves to not only create their own pets, but invest in them to an absurd degree, even giving up their own food to ensure the maximum amount of Biomass was received by their creations.

Find authorized novels in Webnovel, faster updates, better experience, Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

"How far beneath the ground are we?" Ellie asked the scout who lead their procession into the narrow, upward sloping tunnel.

"The chamber we just left is thirty metres down. The final staging chamber above us is ten metres below."

"I'm surprised they were able to build so many tunnels without the ground collapsing on our heads," Bella commented.

"The Carvers are beginning to unlock some truly impressive skills," the scout replied.

The Carvers were proving their worth to the colony and every member of every caste approved of their work. Who could disapprove of such skilful digging?

Through the soil there came a dull thudding sound as creatures above brawled back and forth. From the ceiling, dirt broke away and trickled down over the ants and shadow beasts that marched through the narrow tunnel.

Up and up they went, following the winding path, like a spiral staircase through the cold, damp soil. The ants moved in complete silence, even more so than usual. The Shapers didn't have much time to talk to each other and were engaged in mental communication with their pets, preparing them for what was to come.

Soon they came to the staging chamber. Multiple tunnels, even narrower than that which they had come through, lined the walls.

"Remember your number and head to the designated tunnel entrance. Pets first, shapers behind," hissed the guide.

The ants began to move with greater urgency as the rumbling clatter from overhead grew ever louder. Dirt fell regularly now, trickling over carapaces and irritating the ants by getting caught in the sensitive hairs on their antennae.

It was made worse by the fact the ants were unable to stop and clean them in such narrow tunnels! It'd delay the ants behind them!

Bella ground her mandibles and resisted the powerful urge to clean herself.

[Move up,] she told her two pets.

[Hrmm,] they both grunted in reply.

It was a shame that they'd reduced their intelligence to this extent, she reflected, it would be nice if they could hold a decent conversation. But, their battle prowess was what actually mattered and they'd done all they could to punch that up a level.

Noise and heat grew as they drew closer to the surface. After a few short minutes the tunnel came to an end. Each of these short tunnels opened into a pitfall that was possibly already full of Biomass, they needed to collapse the entrance with care.

Bella instructed her two pets in the lead to scrape away at the softened dirt wall with their claws until it crumbled away to reveal a grisly sight. The pitfall did indeed do its job and the bottoms of it was filled with Biomass. She bit back her hunger though, there was work to do. Since the opening of their tunnel was two metres above the bottom of the pitfall, her two pets were able to push their way out into the open, standing on the broken bodies of the monsters in the bottom of the pit.

Light, heat and sound buffeted against Bella as she crawled out into the open. Above her head the battle raged, monsters of the horde and even Garralosh spawn stood above, shoving and pushing each other as they attempted not to fall.

Once she cleared the tunnel entrance, more Shapers and their pets followed until the bottom of the pitfall became dangerously overcrowded.

"It's time to go!" shouted Bella, "let's show them what the shapers can do!"

"Charge!"

Despite their surging spirits, the Shapers themselves did not charge. As members of the artisan caste, they were amongst the smallest of all the members of the colony and not well suited to direct combat.

But they enthusiastically cheered their pets on!

Chaos already reigned on the battlefield. The ants had begun to pour down from the wall and take the fight to their hated foes, the Queen herself had leapt down and begun to charge her antennae with healing magic.

At that exact moment, hundreds of raging shadow beasts erupted from within the pitfall traps and began to tear into every enemy they could reach with wild ferocity.

[Chrysalis](#)

Chapter 384: Mosh Pi

The Queen landed with a calamitous thud, several unfortunate monsters were crushed beneath her bulk or stabbed through by her legs as she fell. Her legs strained to the breaking point, but she absorbed the shock and ran forward, bulldozing her way toward the place her wayward child fell.

She reached deep into her healing mana gland and dragged the dense fog of energy out and into her antennae where it was amplified. More and more of her children were pouring off the wall and down into the crowded space. The melee was quickly becoming out of control.

Conflicting emotions battled in the Queen's thorax. She feared for her family, she was terrified that they would suffer due to her actions. At the same time, she exulted. This was what she had been born to do, and her instincts were afire with joy. She turned her body and scythed through a raging bear with a single chomp of her razor sharp mandibles.

System notifications rang within her mind but she paid them no attention. Her focus was on the healing energy building to a peak in her antennae. When she could contain it no more, the energy exploded outwards in a rolling nova of light that washed over the battlefield in an expanding ring.

Only the ants were affected by this mana, and then felt its invigorating properties wash away their fatigue and ease their pain in an instant. Already filled with the burning rage and desperate anxiety that seeing their mother fighting on the frontlines caused, colony members of all castes were driven to a frenzy and threw themselves upon the enemy in groups, tearing their foes apart with their vicious jaws.

After stomping her way another ten metres forward, the Queen stood over the healing body of the soldier who had leapt so energetically from her head. The ant in question was quite wounded, even in the short time she'd been submerged in the churning soup of monsters.

"Did... Did I win the battle?" she croaked.

The Queen stood over the smaller ant and defended her space with savage chomps of her mandibles.

"No child," the Queen responded, puzzled, "you must get up and fight"

".... Fine."

At that time, hundreds of dark shadow monsters erupted from out of the pitfalls. In a nightmarish scene, the creatures reached out of the holes in the ground with their dark, shadowy arms and dragged struggling monsters down into the pit with them. It didn't take long for the creatures to push their way out of the pits and begin to engage the monsters all around them.

Then the Garralosh spawn arrived.

Flames belching from their open mouths, the giant crocodile monsters bounded forward to tear into the shadow pits and smaller battles broke out everywhere.

"My Queen! Be careful!" Sloan had arrived next to her mother and couldn't resist trying to caution her.

"Don't be ridiculous, Sloan!" Victor scoffed, "it's a battle! Start worrying about yourself!"

The Queen quite agreed with Victor at this point and turned her attention to the approaching crocodiles. These were the monsters who were responsible for bringing this battle to her family and she would delight in returning the pain to them.

CLACK!

The Queen snapped her mandibles shut with tremendous force. The sound cut through the noise of the battle with ease, a whip crack that punctured through the din. In front of her a wall of Crocodile flesh rose up and she began to step toward them. As she did, her carapace began to glow bright with energy that unfolded and encompassed her entire body.

As she gathered speed, the light built in intensity, the pure blue light of mana built to a brightness than almost pained the eye of the monsters forced to gaze upon her. She had no eyes for any of the smaller creatures that she crushed beneath her feet, she hungered to unleash her strength on those that had caused the conflict that had harmed so many of her children.

Maybe if she were to destroy enough Garralosh spawn, then their mother would feel the pain.

The crocodiles reared up before her and unleashed their flaming breath. The energy that had accrued in her carapace flared brighter, warding off the damage and the Queen continued her assault.

CHOMP!

The moment the first was in range she lunged forward with her mandibles and crunched down on them. Her savage, barbed jaws crushed the creature and without pause the Queen swung her body to fling the Biomass away and free herself for another bite.

[You have slain level 8 Garralosh Bellator.]

[You have gained experience.]

The system notifications rang in her mind but the Queen paid no attention. At last she had the chance to seek retribution and she would seize it!

"The Queen has gone in deep!" Sloan worried to Victor, her scent barely able to cut through the chaos of the battlefield.

The Queen was barely visible to them now. She'd pushed forward beyond what any of the ants who were in position to support her could reach, beyond even the positions of the core shapers and their pets! If it weren't for her glowing carapace that seemed to ward off damage somehow, they might not have been able to see her at all.

"We have a task force for this," Victor reminded her sibling, frustrated. Did she really have to put up with Sloan's anxiety here and now?! They were in a battlefield for the Eldest's sake!

Victor ducked back from a claw that swiped in her direction and retaliated with a careful bite, aimed low to hamstring her hound-like opponent. Her jaws found purchase and she twisted her body to allow the mandibles to inflict maximum damage before she released her grip and leapt back, creating space for other ants to make use of the opening.

"I don't see them though?!" Sloan whined.

"You want to go looking for Vibrant? Go then. The rest of us will just stay here and... you know... fight this battle."

Not for the first time Victor was grateful that she didn't need to use her mouth to talk like humans did. Ridiculous notion.

"Hi-Hi! Did someone call me!?"

The scent arrived at just the same time as Vibrant did. A large bulky soldier who could move with incredible speed, the two generals hadn't seen her coming in the slightest until she was on top of them.

"At last! You need to go protect the Queen!" Sloan shouted.

Vibrant lifted her herself up to take a look.

"Get 'em!" She hollered and they crashed into the ugly Croca-Beasts with a vengeance.

"Aha!" She cheered as her first visceral chomp crashed down on one of the monsters her Senior hated so much. She wasn't sure why the Senior hated them so much, but they sure did! Vibrant was only too happy to along with it.

Acid flew over their heads and rained down on the crocs in front of them. The massive beasts retaliated with tremendous gouts of flame that roared into the sky whilst others simply ignored it, they allowed the acid to fall upon their scales and continued to push forward to swipe and bite at any ant foolish enough to draw close.

The battle was a cacophony of sensation to Vibrant and her mind swam with it. The smells, sights and sounds battered into her brain until she was giddy.

Her followers, fifty of them now, dashed forward to support their leader as she leapt into battle recklessly. Claws raked along her side, great lines were gouged into her carapace and one of her antennae was near bitten off in just moments but Vibrant continued to laugh and push forward.

Forward! Forward! Forward!

Vibrant didn't know any other way!

She grew tired of being stuck in one place in an instant. She didn't want to stand here and go back and forth with these stupid Crocs! She wanted to run! Unable to contain herself any longer, Vibrant dug her claws into the soft ground and punched her legs down. She accelerated in an instant, her six legs moved in a blinding rhythm that couldn't be seen as she shifted her large frame and blew past the crocodile before her.

"Slow-Slow!" She teased as raced away.

As her Senior had done in battle, she raced from fight to fight and aided her colony brethren in their struggles. The fight had been joined in earnest now and ants fought in large groups against the monsters that pressed towards their home. The Garralosh spawn had reached the frontlines and the risk towards the ants had become magnified by a hundred times. Stronger and less stupid than the mindless, starved zombie monsters of the horde, the Croca-Beasts were cunning and brutal in their tactics.

For the next five minutes, Vibrant was everywhere. She moved so quickly not even her own squad could keep up with her as she raced through the battle unimpeded. Her wounds piled up but she hardly noticed. This was exciting! So many powerful opponents in one place made her heart pound deep inside her thorax as their auras washed over the field.

She chomped a leg here, knocked a croc off balance there, she danced through the chaos whilst refusing to stay in one place and engage any one foe for too long. Large and highly evolved Crocs challenged her but she simply laughed in their faces and ran to another conflict.

Further back, Grant kept her eyes on the sky.

"I don't see any storm clouds brewing," she noted.

Mendant clacked irritably.

"Stay still while I'm healing you. If you're going to get yourself near cut in half then the least you could do is not move when I'm putting you back together!"

"Sorry, sister," Grant apologised.

She thought her sibling was being a touch overdramatic, she wasn't cut in half or anything like it! Whilst the healer continued to draw precious healing mana, augmented through her antennae and into Grant's body, the soldier once more contemplated the sky.

When and where was the Kaarmodo going to strike? The Queen had quickly felt the wrath of the powerful mage when she had first appeared but she'd been on the field for nearly ten minutes and not a single spell had been sent her way There had to be a reason. Had something changed?

"Do you have much mana sense?" Grant asked Mendant.

"Would you shut up and stay still if I answer this question?" The healer replied.

"Maybe," Grant hedged.

Mendant scoffed a little before she replied.

"Yes I do. The ambient mana is being sucked beyond the wall. We think that Garralosh is getting a top off before she comes out."

"What?!"

Find authorized novels in Webnovel, faster updates, better experience, Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

THWACK!

"Stay STILL, you idiot!" Mendant flared.

Grant slumped to the ground in agony. The healer hadn't targeted her head with that strike but the wound instead.

"I thought you were supposed to heal injuries," the soldier grumbled.

"You running off and getting yourself killed doesn't help the colony. The Generals have been told. The second she shows up, the retreat to the final wall will occur. Until then we fight it out here."

"But what about the Queen?!"

"She isn't likely to listen to you, is she? The Eldest is going to be the only one who could get her to back off and hopefully they wake up soon."

GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR.

So deep it almost couldn't be described as a sound the growl rumbled through the air and through the ground. Grant felt her carapace vibrate with the force of it.

"Real soon."

sustaining damage. Soldiers, scouts and more had begun to fall in increasing numbers but no backwards steps would be taken.

The Queen fought at the front throughout it all, tireless and without peer on the field, she threw herself into the more powerful Garralosh Spawn over and over again. Supported by her children she was able to lay many of them low, but they were many and she was but one. Even she began to flag as her wounds began to mount.

"The Queen's started to struggle up there!" Advant shouted, "we need to get healers up there immediately!"

"What healers?!" Grant called back, exhausted, "almost all of them are recharging their glands and cores. We just have to get up there somehow!"

As the Queen battled and struggled, the ant's ferocity rose to a fever pitch. Every time she was injured, it was as if the entire colony flinched before they hit back twice as hard. The core shapers themselves dared to rise out of the pitfalls and fight alongside their pets, mages poured out their mana, holding nothing in reserve. The fight became increasingly bloody on both sides.

"She's coming!" the pheromone message smashed into Grant like a truck.

"What?!" she called back.

A scout raced up and down the line of battle as she repeated the same message again.

"She's coming!"

Grant froze for a moment. Her heart seemed to slow in her chest. The time had come. The white hot frenzy of the ants cooled as the message sank into their antennae and reality asserted itself.

"RETREAT! Back to the final wall if you want to live!"

Would the colony survive? Or would they perish here and now?

"Someone has to go tell the Queen...." she muttered.

But would the Queen retreat? Should she? If the Queen couldn't fight off the beast, then none of them could.

This torpor felt different somehow. I wasn't sure exactly what it was. I tried to put my feelers on it but thinking is difficult, elusive. My awareness is washing to and fro, separate pieces that come together only to float apart once more. It's hard to think.

Am I awake? Or is this a lucid dream?

Something is different.

Faint whispers tickle in the back of my mind. They creep up to my ears. Or antennae? I don't know. Perhaps they speak straight into my thoughts? I don't know. Strange whispers they are, indistinct and blurred, I can't understand them fully. In some ways they are more like impulses or desires, but I feel

that they are not my own. As time passes they become louder and there are more of them. They drag and pull at my skin. Or carapace? No. Deeper than that. A thousand tiny hooks that tug at my very soul.

I feel helpless to answer them. I'm adrift in a dark river, distant from my own body and unable to react. I'm changing. I can feel it. Even as the whispers grew louder and my body shifted at the edge of my awareness, something more fundamental was changing. This was evolution.

What did it mean to evolve? To change oneself in a physical sense? I had thought that was the case. Even as I float, half asleep, I can still tell that this is different. This is deeper. The longer it goes on, the more my mind wants to sink, to fall into the centre and stay there. Why move? When I move, things are destroyed. Better to be still and quiet.

Stop whispering to me. Stop pulling at me. I want to sleep.

But I can't. The hooks are insistent. Each moment that passes they drag me a little further out of the river and closer to shore. A thousand hooks and a thousand voices, each with their own particular tug and tone. Over time my mind and my body come back together, to meet once more in the middle. The light came back to my eyes, so slowly.

I'm so hungry, yet, and it's the strangest thing, on the inside, I feel so full. The whispers are louder now. Insistent and desperate. They need me, very much. They need me, and so I will go. The call alone is enough for me.

With great care, I lift a leg, then another, then another, until all six were positioned around me. Then I pushed, and the blood began to flow through my body once more. Mana sputtered to life inside my core and began to trickle out through my veins and then further, to seep into every fibre of me.

But still the whispers, still the hooks with their endless pull. It isn't pain I feel, when they drag at my heart, but something far worse. I need to go to them.

I'm coming. I'm awake.

[Chrysalis](#)

Chapter 387: Stand Against

"Vibrant! We need to get to the Queen!" Grant punched out her pheromone message with all of her strength.

"Wha? To Mother? Why?" The fast moving ant slowed down for just a moment to respond.

"Garralosh is coming to the wall! We need to bring her back a bit closer to the nest. Heal her if we can!"

"Okay! :D" Vibrant replied.

Grant was frustrated by her sibling's seemingly flippant attitude but bit back her anger and tried to focus. For the colony to have the highest chance of success, the plan needed to be followed. Draw the Queen back to the eighth wall and she can fight against Garralosh there.

If they did that, then maybe they would buy enough time for the Eldest to awaken and then perhaps they might just survive.

"How fast are you?!" Vibrant asked.

"Fast enough," Grant grit her mandibles and replied.

"Then let's go! Follow me!" Vibrant chirped before she turned around and ran toward a member of her squad.

"Give us a boost!" She called and the soldier in question ducked her head to allow Vibrant to race up onto her back.

Bewildered, Grant had only a moment to think before she threw herself forward and she too leapt from the poor soldier's back.

"Gogogogogo!" Vibrant cackled as her legs flashed at impossible speed and she took off across the backs of ants and monsters alike, racing toward the place the Queen was fighting.

This is insane! Grant could only sharpen her mind and race forward, trying to maintain her balance as she dodged snapping jaws, belched flames and raking claws as she scrambled to keep up.

"Hahahahaha!" Vibrant laughed with delight and began to fire acid into the crowd of monsters beneath her as she ran.

Grant cursed. Since she was behind the other ant, this only made keeping up all the harder!

Nonetheless, they made it. Vibrant flung herself from a monster and onto the still glowing carapace of the Queen, followed a few moments later by Grant.

"Mother!" Grant pushed out, exhausted. "Garralosh herself is coming! The colony is going to pull back to the eighth wall. You need to come with us!"

"I can see the creature already, child." The Queen sounded exhausted, but calm.

What?

Grant scabbled a little higher up her mother's back and looked out over the roiling mass of monsters. The entire battlefield was a mess. Biomass, broken walls spread before her like a carpet. The ground was pockmarked with holes, traps and to her right she could see the human wall beset by Garralosh spawn. The fighting was fierce, but it didn't hold Grant's eye for long. The slow approach of the titanic crocodile did that.

Unhurried, her mouth gaped open to reveal her enormous teeth in a cruel grin, Garralosh stomped her way forward. Every time one of her feet came down the ground groaned beneath her weight. Any Biomass she stepped on was crushed to paste. The giant crocodile looked inevitable, like a mountain of scales and teeth. Her claws gleamed, each looked hard as diamond and as thick as Grant's own head.

How were they supposed to kill that?!

"That's a big Croca! Like, the biggest! Look at those teeth! They'd chop me in half with one bite, no doubt! I wonder how she tastes?" Vibrant continued to talk in a constant stream.

"Pull back to the wall, Mother! The colony will be able to support you from there, and you can get healing!" Grant pleaded.

The Queen's antennae drooped.

"Very well, child."

Having made up her mind, the Queen didn't hesitate and turned. Under the influence of Vibrant's speed aura, she made excellent time as she stomped her way through the field, stabbing down with her legs to spear monsters on the way. The closer she came to the wall, the more ants swarmed around her. They feasted on any enemy that was foolish enough to come too close and when the Queen reached the base of the final wall, she allowed herself a moment to rest.

The pressure from the horde and the Garralosh spawn had begun to slack as their mother approached. The largest Crocs were the first to pull back, followed by their younger siblings and then the horde monsters. The prepared barrage of the artillery spells and interference tactics of the shadow beasts were almost unnecessary as the colony enacted its final retreat.

Healers, fresh from the nest, rushed forward to tend to her wounds and try to restore her energy. A dozen of the small ants climbed over her, their antennae glowing bright with energy as they touched the healing mana to her carapace.

The Queen checked on her core and sighed. She had begun to run low on mana. Her infused carapace put a great deal of strain on her core and it wouldn't be long until she leached out enough energy to cause pain. Hopefully her fight with Garralosh would be swift.

The ants once more employed their acid barrage from the top of their final wall. The encroaching Garralosh spawn suffered from the rain of acid, the numerous traps and the sneak attacks from Shadow Beast pets launched from hidden tunnels in the soil.

CRUNCH.

Like a nightmare made into flesh, a giant, clawed hand reached over the wall. Claws dug into the packed dirt and muscles bunched as the mother of crocodiles pulled her massive frame over the seventh wall. She slowly swung her head to regard the final layer of defence, as well as the towering nest behind it, before she pulled the rest of her body up onto the wall.

The Garralosh spawn shrank back in the presence of their parent. Whether through fear, respect, or if they were cowed by the crushing aura that she emitted. The ants grew still as their nemesis drew closer. After a week of frenzied battle and preparation, she was finally here, before them.

Even from a distance of one hundred metres, it was clear to see that Garralosh towered over the Queen. Even without standing up, the Croc was far more massive than the largest ant in the colony. It was clear the enormous beast felt no threat from the colony in front of her. She opened her mouth and huffed, an action which caused dark red flames to flicker in the depths of her gullet.

As stillness overcame the battlefield, Garralosh stepped forward at a slow pace. The ants on the wall held firm. The crushing aura and presence of the most powerful monster they'd ever seen weighed down on them, tried to press them into the dirt, but they would not succumb. The colony stood tall, as one, and faced down the demon who had decided that they should die.

Up on the wall, Sloan was calm.

"Let's get into the bunkers then. It won't be long until we get to see the mother Croc's fire."

"Good idea," Victor agreed.

Scout ants began to run up and down the line as they passed along the message. Ants scurried to protect themselves. They threw themselves into prepared bunkers or behind walls in anticipation of Garralosh unleashing her flames.

The Queen was too large for such measures. She readied herself for the onslaught, unaware of the dozen water mages on the wall behind her, ready to lend what aid they could.

Garralosh seemed to watch the flurry of activity with amusement. As if playing with her food, the massive beast continued to take slow measured steps toward the Queen. Flames licked against her teeth with every step but the anticipated roar of flame never came. Instead, the looming pressure grew each moment as the nightmare beast approached.

The Queen had had enough.

CLACK!

With a fierce snap of her mandibles she charged as the light in her carapace flared to its brightest point.

HUFF, HUFF, HUFF.

Air whooshed from the titanic lungs of the Croc, creating a breeze strong enough for the ants to feel fifty metres away. Garralosh was laughing.

[Chrysalis](#)

Chapter 388: Shaping Up

The Queen of the colony charged toward her much larger foe, her momentum built with each step. To the ants on the wall, she looked majestic, a shining beacon of strength that attacked with grace and courage.

But the closer she drew to Garralosh, the more hopeless it looked. Garralosh was a mountain of a monster, easily twice the Queen's length and perhaps as much as ten times the mass. What could she hope to do?

Unable to contain herself, Grant scrambled to keep up with her mother's courageous charge. What she could do to assist in this battle, she didn't know, but fear had taken a grip on her heart. She could not sit back and watch her mother die.

The ants on the wall poked their noses out from behind their earthworks and scrambled to assist their parent in the battle. Scouts and mages launched a ferocious barrage of magic and acid that soared through the air to rain down on the beast. The colony unleashed its firepower on the massive monster and Garralosh ignored it all. Her sunken red eyes were locked on the Queen as she approached and even though her scales steamed from acid burn she did not react.

When the Queen drew within twenty metres she stopped on the spot and unleashed her acid spray for the second time. A deluge of acid in a concentrated jet erupted from her mouth and she blasted the

hated monster before her in the face. The barrage continued for a full minute, the massive figure of Garralosh almost completely obscured beneath the flames and steam.

The temperature began to rise. The bubbling acid hissed and steam belched into the sky faster and faster as time wore on. The Queen could feel the heat as it buffeted her carapace and dried her eyes. Something was wrong. She backed up a few steps as her acid spray ran dry. She remained watchful, on edge as the massive form of Garralosh remained hidden behind the mist.

Thud. Thud.

Like a mountain that had begun to walk, the beast stepped forward, no sign of haste evident in her movements. The Queen was wary. She doubted something as old and successful as Garralosh could possibly be this slow. She kept her legs tensed as she watched her enemy approach.

Garralosh' scales burned a deep orange. Her enormous snout came into view first. The scales atop her jaw were no longer the deep green that they had been before. Instead, they have turned orange, streaked with violent shades of red that pulsed underneath. The air rippled as it heated and the shape of the giant monster became further distorted in the haze.

The temperature was intense. The Queen backed away as Garralosh approached. The heat was so thick she could feel it even through her mana infused carapace. Were she to charge forward, she may take damage just from the air itself.

But, ultimately, she had no choice. If she were not to commit to the battle, there were no others in the colony who could. Thankfully her children were not incapable. The fire mages ceased their activities as they could see it had little effect. Instead, the water mages stepped up and began to collaborate in small teams. In moments, spires of twisting water rose into the sky and speared down toward the hulking beast.

When the water slammed home, an explosion of steam followed, and the Queen sensed her time had come. She assumed the beast would be blinded, and she dashed to one side, her mandibles opened wide as she closed on what she felt would be where Garralosh's flank would be.

CHOMP!

The Queen regretted, not for the first time, that she hadn't taken more time to raise her skills. Her experience came mostly in the form of almost dead monsters her children brought to her. Most of the time she hadn't even bothered to use a skill when she'd finished them. A waste.

Her mandibles glowed bright with the power of her stamina and lunged forward.

CLANK!

Only to bounce off, as if she had bitten something harder than mana infused stone. The Queen rattled her body to shake off the stunned, sore feeling that blossomed in the muscles of her face and lunged forward again.

CHOMP!

Find authorized novels in Webnovel, faster updates, better experience, Please click www.webnovel.com for visiting.

CLANK!

The scales were just too hard! She couldn't get through!

TSSSSSS.

The Queen noticed the tips of her mandibles had begun to steam and pain radiated from them as they burned. The Queen was undeterred. Pain wouldn't not be enough to stop her, only death would suffice for that. Garralosh turned lazily, under no threat from the assault of this small ant.

The Queen was unwilling to allow the giant beast to turn and face her directly, so again she dashed, further this time. If the flank was too thick, perhaps there would be a weakness further back, at the tail. The Queen bit down with all her strength on the tail, almost as thick as her own body. Again, the scales proved too durable. Frustrated, the Queen bit down again, but Garralosh moved.

The tail, which had drifted lazily in the air only a moment before, snapped out like lightning. The Queen didn't have time to react before it crashed into her infused carapace. One moment she had lunged forward, the next she spun through the air and landed heavily over ten metres away with a boom. Dirt flew into the air where the Queen landed and the ants on the wall nearly lost their minds.

To see the Queen under assault in this way was unbearable. Their minds boiled with rage and their hearts demanded vengeance, their instincts made war on their intellect. They knew that there was nothing they could do to harm the mother crocodile in direct combat. The Soldiers could attack her with all their might and Garralosh could sleep through it, her scales were impervious to their bites. She could ignore the fire magic, dissolve the water magic, even the shadow beast pets had no hope of causing an injury.

All they could do was get in their mother's way and cause her pain as Garralosh destroyed them with ease. They might have gone anyway, charged forward into suicidal danger, they'd done it before after all. But somehow they felt that their hopes were being listened to, that someone would come for them. So they stayed back.

Even the monsters of the horde, and the Garralosh spawn, pulled back to allow their mother her fun. The horde was but a tattered remnant of its former self and even the numbers of the Croca beasts had been thinned, brought low by the fury of the colony.

The Queen pushed herself up once again and drew on the strength of her evolution. She couldn't afford to hesitate anymore. From deep within the nest, where the Brood Tenders cared for the brood, to the thousands who lined the walls of the colony and huddled in bunkers, the Queen pulled on the strength of her children, and began to grow.

[Chrysalis](#)

Chapter 389: Stay Away

The Queen felt herself grow larger as she borrowed the strength of her children. The ants could feel themselves be diminished, but they allowed it willingly. They would sacrifice far more for their Queen, this was nothing to them.

Garralosh watched from the place she had struck the Queen, that powerful tail once more swung lazily through the air as she watched her prey with cruel eyes. She moved slowly, unhurried. Every movement

of the giant monster gave the impression of power and confidence. Even as the weakling before her grew larger, she felt no threat.

The Mother of the colony was concerned. Her core had begun to run low. The Queen had poured out all of her mana to empower her carapace and now she had spent much of what remained to activate this feature of her War Queen evolution. She had gained two main things when she evolved. First, the aura to empower and drive her children in battle, and second, the ability to gain strength from those she had birthed herself.

She grew until she was half again as large as she had been. She took a moment to steady herself and then charged.

CRASH!

She slammed into the side of the giant croc and felt the creature shift, ever so slightly. The Queen was encouraged and once more opened her jaws wide.

CHOMP!

CRUNCH!

Her mandibles closed with shattering force and the sound of something cracking rose in the air. The Queen pulled back to take in the damage of her assault. Before her eyes, a single, glowing scale now sported a crack, several inches deep.

She sensed danger and leapt, pushed down with all six legs. Garralosh, irritated by the damage caused to one of her scales, finally moved. Her head snapped around with blinding speed and her colossal jaws snapped shut where the Queen had been just moments before.

The Queen settled herself before a blinding pain rocked her head. Her antenna! Between the teeth of Garralosh dangled a singular antennae, so small and tiny in those jaws. The Croc snapped her jaws again and the organ was gone. Biomass for the great beast.

HUFF, HUFF!

Garralosh chuffed her laughter once more. Air swirled around her as she did so, as if a titan had gripped a bellows.

The pain could be ignored. The threat to her family could not. The Queen pushed her suffering to one side and once more stalked on her six legs around Garralosh. Grant despaired. The Queen had grown to be the second largest monster she had ever seen. A titanic ant who wouldn't be able to fit within the nest, even after they'd modified it for her evolution! Even with her strength increased to such a degree, she still couldn't penetrate the defences of that monster!

Even if the Eldest were to awaken, what could they do?! A lower tier than the Queen, with none of her physical strength, would they be able to cause a wound to this creature? Would the colony really die this day?

Perhaps they should have run. They should have hidden themselves away. Would Garralosh really have pursued them? Perhaps, if the colony had given up the humans, then Garralosh would have left them alone? Would that have been acceptable?

For the first time, she felt doubt. She herself had run forward to assist the Queen, but now that she was here, what could she do? She could only watch, and try not to get in the way, as the Queen battled on behalf of her family.

The Queen herself had not given up. Whatever damage she was able to do would aid her most troublesome child when they came out to fight. Every second she fought drained not only her own core, but that of the beast as well. Each moment she endured was a small victory. She would fight for as long as she could, until death claimed her. She could only believe that the troublesome one would be able to finish the work that she could not.

That child... Full of strange ideas and dispensing such careless wonders. With such a leader, the Queen felt certain the colony would survive without her.

And so she would hold nothing back!

With a silent cry, the Queen dashed forward once more! She pulled greater strength from her children, which caused her core to begin to sputter and blink as the final wisps of mana were drained from it.

Still larger she grew, and as she drew near, Garralosh opened her great mouth wide in delight. Would this prey give a proper struggle? It had been so long...

A low growl rumbled in the back of the monster's throat and shook the air once more, but the Queen paid no heed. She would strike a blow here for her children, nothing could shake her indomitable will. Again, Garralosh, who had returned to moving in her lazy, unfocused way, accelerated with shocking speed for a monster of her size, snapped forward, her jagged teeth flashing in the sun.

The Queen had anticipated it, and once again leapt, her momentum carried her forward and over the body of the beast, away from that deadly maw. She landed heavily on the other side of her foe and immediately flattened herself against the ground as that massive tail swiped through the air above her. Dirt blasted into the air from the wind of the strike, dirtying the antennae of the ants on the wall.

But the mother of the colony had no time to clean her remaining antenna, before Garralosh could reposition her tail, the Queen had already struck.

CHOMP!

With the strength of her whole body behind the strike, the Queen chomped down on her hated enemy.

CRUNCH!

And this time, she broke through. Hot blood sizzled as it flew into the air and the Queen felt a surge of wild joy as she felt the scales crumple beneath her mandibles and the soft flesh underneath.

GRRRR!

Garralosh rumbled a growl, not in pain but anger! How long since she'd suffered a wound? Prey should know its place! The great monster struck out with her second arm closest to the Queen and knocked the puny insect backward a few metres. The Queen scrambled to regain her footing, there would surely be a follow up coming.

Quick as a snake, Garralosh whipped her head around, her throat contorted as if it had become engorged from within.

"Mother! Time to move!" Vibrant said.

The smaller ant had zipped into the battle without the Queen having noticed her move. She was grateful that her daughter had made a move however, as a moment later she dashed to one side just that tiny bit faster due to Vibrant's aura.

Just in time. Garralosh's grossly bulged throat gave way to her open maw and from between her jaws spewed a blast of boiling magma. The air itself hissed and steamed as the temperature soared. Garralosh shifted her head and lunged forward again as she unleashed another blast of liquid rock. The Queen shifted her position desperately but even with Vibrant assisting she wasn't able to avoid the splashes completely.

The magma sizzled into her infused carapace which caused the Queen to clack her mandibles in pain. Hot! She backtracked quickly to put some distance between herself and the beast. When she tried to steady her footing, she slumped to the ground.

Shocked, the Queen checked her condition and with dismay realised that her core was empty! Crippling pain exploded through her body and she writhed in place on the ground. The ants on the wall froze in horror as their mother appeared unable to move.

The Garralosh spawn who watched from a distance grinned malicious grins as drool dripped from their elongated teeth. Play time may be over at last, time for the feast to begin.

Garralosh herself leered hungrily at her fallen opponent. She swallowed the magma that had accrued in her gullet and began to stomp toward the Queen, her mouth open in a horrific crocodilic grin. Now she would feast, then she would burn the nest to slag, send her children in to purge it of the meddlesome insects and then she would crush the humans beneath her feet. Then her revenge would be complete. With each step she loomed closer to the ant Queen until she was nearly on top of her, a delicious morsel.

In that moment, when delightful images of her victory rolled through the mind of the great Croc, she failed to sense the dense magic that came her way. A roiling sphere of immense power that slammed into her side and expanded into a vortex of death that attempted to crush her body to pieces.

HORRRRRRRRRR!!!

Garralosh roared in pain and tried to fling herself to one side. To her shock, she found even her own boundless strength wasn't enough to escape the pull of this vile magic! She dug her claws into the soft earth and scrambled to avoid the damage that rent her side.

For the ants on the wall, that spell was a welcome sight, and so were the pheromones they heard coming from behind them.

"Get away from her you BITCH!"

[Chrysalis](#)

Chapter 390: The Paragon's fight

How long have I been asleep?! Just what on earth went on around here?! From the mound of the nest the surrounding area is a complete disaster zone! The rings of walls the colony had worked so hard to build are in ruins, smashed apart and, in places, the dirt walls had collapsed to create wide ramparts that had become covered in fallen monsters.

In fact, just about everything I could see was covered in Biomass. Holy moly! Just how many enemies had they managed to kill whilst I was sleeping? Judging by the thick carpet of remains that I see spread before me over the ground, just about all of them! This much Biomass will feed the colony for ages! We could triple our numbers if we manage to shovel all of this into the Queen.

Actually, speaking of the Queen....

Gotta get down there!

Garralosh is scrabbling in the dirt as she tries to escape the howling vortex that is my Gravity Bomb. Good luck with that you mega lizard. If I'd had enough time I'd have condensed it and maybe you'd be dead already. My three sub minds begin to weave together another one as I concentrate on my rush to the front line. I need to get down there before my spell is finished.

"Eldest, you're awake!" Sloan appears at my side to say.

"Obviously! What the hell is going on? What happened to the Queen?"

"She's been fighting Garralosh for a few minutes. The creature is too powerful for us, we could only try and support her from a distance. I think her core has run out of mana!"

I cursed.

"I'll get down there and distract the fat Croc. When you get a chance, get down there and get Mother out. You understand me?"

"Of course, Eldest! Good luck!"

I'm gonna need it...

As they saw me, the rest of the colony had to chip in their ten cents.

"Finally awake, Eldest?"

"The slacker has arrived! We've been doing all the work!"

"Shove some Biomass in it you lot," I grumbled, "I'm here now, aren't I?"

"Barely in time! Work hard, Eldest!"

"Show them what the colony is made of, Eldest!"

As I speed past the ants who huddle at the wall, I can feel them tug at me through my new gland. It's a bit... disconcerting. I don't really understand what it means and, to be honest, I'm still struggling to adapt to my new body! My status has undergone a massive change, I'm more than twice my previous size for starts! In fact, I'd say I'm even a bit bigger than the Queen was before she evolved, but still smaller than afterwards. Which means I'm running around larger than a mini bus. I'd estimate my size at

over two metres tall and six metres long. That change is.... Abrupt! I'm not used to this size! I'm freakin' huge now! The other ants look tiny as I skitter over their heads.

The moment I woke up and got moving I took a peek at my status and the change is stunning.

Name: Anthony

Level: 1 (Special core) (V)

Might: 91

Toughness: 79

Cunning: 64

Will: 45

HP: 159/159

MP: 250/250

Skills:

General:

Expert Excavation (III) Level 5; Advanced Grip (II) Level 6; Advanced Stealth (II) Level 9; Tunnel Map (II) Level 6; Expert Cerebral Endurance (III) Level 19; Expert Stamina (III) Level 5; Profound Meditation (III) Level 10; Flicker Dash (III) Level 2;

Mana:

Mana Transformation (III) Level 13; Condensed Mana (III) Level 7; Finer External Mana Manipulation (III) Level 8; Mana Coveter (III) Level 1; Expert Water Magic Affinity (III) Level 3; Enhanced Mind Magic Affinity (II) level 7; Empowered Mana Sensing (II) Level 9;

Pet:

Distant Pet Communication (II) Level 5; Core Surgery (III) Level 6; Pet Growth Speed (I) Level 1;

Defensive:

Expert Exo-Skeleton Defence (III) level 14;

Offensive:

Deadly Acid Shot (III) Level 7; Advanced Precise Shooting (II) Level 8; Omen Bite (IV);

Mutations:

Senses:

Perimeter Eyes +15, Future Sight Infrared Antennae +15;

Defence:

True Diamond Carapace +15, Supportive Inner Carapace Plating +15;

Physical:

Rapid Absorption Legs +15, Empowered Mandibles +15, Regrowth Regeneration Gland +15, Loquacious Pheromone Gland +15, Stomach, Musculature, Sub-Neural Network;

Acid:

Mana Binding Acid +15, Acid Nozzle, Acid Concentration Gland, Acid Stimulation Gland;

Mental:

Adaptable Coordination Cortex +15;

Mana:

Bottomless Gravity Magic Gland +15, Collective Will Vestibule +3;

Species: Juvenile Colony Paragon (Formica Sapiens)

Skill points: 9

Biomass: 0

I put all of the Biomass I had available and took my Vestibule to +3. If anything is going to help me out in this fight, it's going to be that. Then I bought my fusion bite skill for nine(!!) skill points. I'm banking a lot on that skill, I'm not confident I can break through that damn Crocs scales without a truly epic skill!

When I reach the wall and fling myself off it, to my shock I find that my three sub brains have already completed a Gravity Bomb. Far from a maximum power one, but I'll take it! The first spell has begun to flicker and die so the timing is perfect!

Fire!

HOOOOWLLLL!

Another spinning, dark purple sphere of death erupted from my mouth and sped straight toward Garralosh's monstrous bulk. She seems distracted, since she fails to dodge and the spell strikes home again! Gweheheheheh! Take that you stupid lizard! Feel the superiority of ant-kind with your own body!

Man, my brains have really taken a step forward! With each of them gaining more 'grunt' in the form of buffed stats, and the addition of the third, more powerful sub-brain, coupled with the multiplicative effect of the coordination cortex allowing them to achieve more together than they could apart, they are really proving some serious worth!

Now that I'm this close to Garralosh I'll need to be careful with Gravity Bombs for a time. I switch the pilot sub brain into forming a Mind Magic Array and put the other two to the task of forming gravity bolts. If Garralosh wants to be the heaviest monster around, I can make that wish come true...

"Hi-Hi, Senior!"

"Vibrant? Why are you down here?"

"Helping, of course! Did you have a good sleep?"

"I think I slept a little too well..."

"It's been booooring without you here. Are you gonna fight?"

"Well.... Yeah? Think you can stick around? I could use your speed."

"Everyone needs more speed!" she giggled and dashed behind me.

"First thing's first, we need to cover for the Queen until the others can get her out."

I dash forward to reach the Queen's side. On the sidelines the Croca-Beasts stand in a wide semi-circle around their mother. They appear angry, hungry but somehow, in the eyes of the more evolved ones, I can see their unshakable confidence. They've never seen their mother lose and they don't think they're about to see it happen now. I suspect that unless Garralosh asks them to intervene in her fight, then they won't.

I can use that.

"Troublesome child."

The warm scent of the Queen wash over my antennae as she greets me.

"Hi there, Mother, how's the battle going?" I try to be flippant but I can't help but show my relief that she is still alright.

"Better, now that you are here. I ... can no longer fight."

"You did your bit, now it's my turn. The others are going to get you out of here, any second now."

Even when I look back at the wall, I can't see any activity there. Where is the rescue party?! They must be up to something, no chance they'd leave mother down here to die.

"Time to get to work then!" I said.

I left my mother and ran to engage the humongous Croc from another angle. Her scales are glowing orange?! Is that normal? Damn, it's hot! This is going to limit my acid options...

No matter! I can make it work!

With my mind magic array ready to go I fire off my prepared Gravity bolts, focusing both spells on one of Garralosh's feet and begin to weave a mind bridge towards her.

Let's see what goes on in the mind of a former human who turned into a giant lizard!