

CHRYSALIS

Chapter 9 To live is to learn



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Hi Anthony, are you a massive idiot?

Why yes, yes Anthony, I am a massive idiot. In fact, I'm the kind of idiot who dances up to a human guard station to say hello when I am, in fact, a horrible monstrous ant over a meter long.

Wow Anthony! You really are a king amongst all of the idiots aren't you? If all of the idiots in the world were to hear of your incredible achievements in the field of stupidity they may just organise a religion around you, worshipping you as their stupid god of all things stupid.

I agree.

...

Holy moly, I am lucky to survive that nightmare! Chased by those two soldiers, dodging crossbow shots and magic fire, I was able to find a tunnel that bore the distinct odour of those damned centipedes. Thankfully they were at home and when I blasted acid into their tunnel they came boiling out, mad as hell.

With over ten of the horrible things bursting into the cavern I was almost killed by the stupid centipedes before a few of them got hit by the fireballs and they turned and attacked the guards, giving me a chance to flee further into the tunnel.

At this point three more guards turned up and they obliterated the centipedes the gross insect threshing machines and continued to chase me.

I lured three packs of centipedes out, three! Before they managed to occupy those soldiers long enough for me to slip into the shadows and hide.

I'll see those terrifying attack skills in my nightmares surely, flashing blades of light travelling from swords to chop monsters five metres away, blazing flames like a flamethrower shooting out of a soldiers hand to roast the centipedes.

So scary!

What can I do? Bite?! No flashing mandibles fly out of my face to bite enemies five metres away. What the hell Gandalf?!

Well, experience is the greatest teacher, so they say. I've confirmed many things thanks to this misadventure, the existence of magic, the existence of human society and exactly how weak I am compared to those professional soldiers.

I've also confirmed how I take damage. After being blasted by stone shards and being scorched by the fireballs my HP was reduced to 15, half! Thankfully my legs are still fully functional but I can feel cracks in my carapace where the stone shards penetrated into my armour.

I'll have to see how I can regenerate my HP. Perhaps it will have to recover over time or will I have to heal my wounds manually somehow? This is a serious problem at this point.

At least now I have a chance to secure additional benefits from this disaster.

So many centipedes have been killed and their bodies were left out in open, totally ignored by the guards as they retreated. This is a golden opportunity that cannot wait! Those filthy corpses represent nothing less than a golden treasure, a heaped mountain of wealth! Biomass! I have to secure that biomass!

I have to move fast too, since every creature in this place will be crawling over those corpses soon.

Sure enough I can already see some creatures making their way towards the piles of bodies. In order to minimise the chances of having to fight I rush immediately to the bodies closest to the dungeon entrance. I'm on high alert in case those soldiers are coming back but thankfully they aren't.

Time to hustle!

I snatch up a large chunk of centipede (ugh) and dash towards a nearby crevice in the wall. I drop my food and immediately begin to excavate a small hole in the wall, stuffing my food into it and then rushing back to grab more.

After three trips I can see that more and more creatures have emerged to fight for the resources and bloody combat has been engaged. Even centipedes have emerged from some side tunnels to try and eat the bodies of their fallen brethren. Yuck!

It won't be long until the chaos makes its way up to where I am so I quickly make another two trips before I remove the largest chunk and then bury the rest of the haul in the wall, hopefully hidden from sight.

Then I stealthily return to my nest with my prize.

I'm not sure where all these monsters are coming from but they seem to be endless. More and more piled into the cavern attracted by the noise and smell. Hopefully the racket dies down soon so I can go and retrieve the rest of my booty.

For now though I shall eat! All that running around has completely drained me and hopefully I can restore my energy and health with a meal.

Chomp!

...

Erk....

Horrible.

[You have consumed a new source of biomass: Unguibus Scolopendra, you are awarded one Biomass].

[Basic profile of the Unguibus Scolopendra unlocked]

Ah yes, Gandalf with the hunting diversity bonus. As I continue eating I open the basic profile and take a look.

[Unguibus Scolopendra: Claw Centipede, has strong claws and a venomous spike in its tail].

Yep, the basic profile continues to show its uselessness. Claw Centipede eh? Makes sense really. They are centipedes with claws after all.

Come to think of it, doesn't that really lack imagination?

Silent eh, Gandalf? Not that I can blame you really, names are hard.

[You have gained one Biomass].

Phew.

I've finally finished my meal.

I quickly open my status and take a look.

Name: Anthony

Level: 2

Might: 15

Toughness: 12

Cunning: 25

Will: 18

HP: 17

MP: 0

Skills: Digging level 3; Acid Shot Level 2; Grip Level 3; Bite Level 3; Stealth Level 3; Tunnel Sense level 1;

Mutations: Eyes +2

Species: Hatchling Ant Worker

Skill points: 0

Biomass: 2

My health has started to recover! Two whole points! This is fantastic news. As I continue to eat my wounds will surely close over, returning me to the perfect picture of ant health.

I'll have to spend my Biomass as well. More mutations await!

...

That really sounds weird you know, as a human, should I welcome mutating this much?

I think I know what I want to improve though.

Mutate Acid +1 and Antennae +1!

[Do you wish to improve Acid and Antennae? This will cost two Biomass]

Yes I do! But please no itching!

...

HURK

Gah!

Damni -

Fzazzithrap!

Stupid Itch!

Using my forelegs, I continuously scrape my antennae clean but it doesn't help at all. This is an action I've noticed myself doing more and more lately. I know that ants try hard to keep their antennae scrupulously clean and even have special hairs in the elbow joint of their forelegs to help remove dust and particles from their antennae, keeping them in tip top shape.

The cleaning does nothing to help protect from the maddening sensation that erupts every time I mutate however. I also can't do anything about the searing itch in what I can only imagine is my acid gland, deep inside my body.

I hate thiiiiis.

Ah, finally!

Phew. Now I have continued on my path of enhancing my senses by improving my antennae, which will increase my sense of smell and capacity to detect air vibrations. I have also taken my first step to increasing my combat ability by increasing the potency of my acid, which is my only reliable attack right now.

Now I have to emerge, pass through the chaos and return with the rest of my treasure.

As I pass through the cavern, attached to the ceiling, I can see that the action is beginning to calm down and monsters are establishing territory and starting to eat.

This makes life easier to me. I make four more trips and manage to bring all of my stash back to my nest. I consider this an amazing success. Considering all

the Biomass that was available I didn't get much, but I was able to secure this much with almost no risk, so I'm very satisfied.

Time to eat!

After I finish eating I have gained another two Biomass and five HP but I choose to save these two points in the hopes I can gain one more and improve my vision once again. Maybe with the action dying down outside they were will some crumbs left for a humble ant such as myself to collect?

I'll have to wait.