

Tyrant 7

Chapter 7: A Day to Breathe

The cold water ran through his fingers as Trafalgar splashed his face once more, trying to erase the lingering nausea.

He stared at the mirror. His reflection still looked pale, the shadows under his eyes heavier than usual. But the trembling had stopped.

He dried his face with a towel and took a slow, steadying breath.

'That's enough,' he told himself. 'I'm not the old Trafalgar anymore.'

The events of the morning still clung to him, but he wouldn't let them dictate the rest of his day. He stepped out of the bathroom and returned to his room. The door shut behind him with a soft click, and for the first time in hours, there was silence.

'Tomorrow Lysandra and Valtair return... So today's my last chance to have some peace.'

He looked around his room. Despite everything, there was one thing he could control now—his growth.

'I guess I should start training my mana. Even if I've got a system, it doesn't seem to level up like a video game. All I've got is this "Core" thing that says Origin. Probably the lowest tier. Gotta work my way up.'

He walked over to the shelf, eyeing the stack of books his predecessor had collected in desperation. After a few moments of skimming through dull spines, one title caught his attention.

"Mana Cores: Basics."

'Perfect.'

Trafalgar sat cross-legged in the middle of the room, book in hand.

Trafalgar flipped through the worn pages of the book, skimming until he reached a familiar concept.

"To ascend, a Core must first be filled. The ambient mana you absorb must not simply pass through you—it must be guided, anchored, retained. Only when your vessel overflows can it break through its shell."

He sighed.

"So it's the same as when I first formed it... but now, I need to actually fill the damn thing."

He already understood how to draw mana from the environment. That had been instinctive, almost natural, when he first awakened the Core. But this time was different.

This time, he had to hold on to it. Feed it. Grow it.

Trafalgar sat cross-legged on the floor of his room, spine straight, eyes closed. The Core was there, like a soft pressure in the center of his chest—faint, but steady. A white orb, imagined but real in feeling.

He inhaled through his nose, slow and deep. Mana trickled in, clinging to the breath like dust riding wind.

He focused on keeping it. Guiding it into the Core without letting it scatter.

Minutes passed. Then hours.

The mana was thin in his room—not an ideal place to train—but even here, the flow was steady enough. It was like trying to fill a lake with a dripping faucet. Pointless at first glance, but not impossible.

With time and effort, the droplets added up.

Trafalgar didn't break his focus. His legs went numb. His shoulders trembled. Sweat formed on his brow.

And yet... he felt it.

A subtle warmth. A heaviness within the Core, like the slow rising of water in a sealed jar.

"So this is what growth feels like in this world."

He smirked slightly.

"Yeah... It'll take time. But I can work with this."

He opened his eyes slowly. The light in the room had shifted. The afternoon sun was dipping toward evening.

He took a deep breath, flexed his stiff fingers, and leaned back against the wall.

"Step by step."

Evening had settled in by the time Trafalgar stood up, joints stiff from hours of meditation. Mayla had left his dinner—still warm—on the table while he was focused. He ate in silence, his thoughts still fixed on the flow of mana and how slow the process really was.

Later, he made his way back to the training room from the previous day. The halls of the estate were quiet, wrapped in a stillness that made his footsteps sound louder than usual.

Once inside the training room, he walked toward the rack of weapons and picked up the same plain sword from before. As expected, a soft system chime rang in his mind:

[Item Acquired] – Sword (Common Rank)

Trafalgar nodded.

"So it's consistent. Everything physical seems to register as an item, at least the things that look like weapons."

He turned the blade in his hand thoughtfully, then frowned.

"But... how do I carry stuff? I don't have a bag or anything on me."

On impulse, he focused on the sword, picturing it disappearing—maybe even being absorbed by the system somehow. Just an experiment.

To his shock, the blade dissolved into faint light and vanished from his hand.

[Item Stored] – Sword

His eyes widened in disbelief.

"Wait, what?"

He stared at his now empty hand, then quickly focused on bringing it back. The mental image formed clearly in his mind: the same sword, reappearing.

And just like that, it materialized mid-air, shimmering into solidity before dropping softly into his grip.

"No way... It has an inventory system? Well shit, I'm dumb? I saw the option before."

Excitement surged in his chest. He repeated the process a few more times—store, summon, store again. It worked each time.

"This is... actually insane. It's not just a UI. It really is a full system."

He tried it with a couple of other weapons—an axe, a short spear. The results were the same. But eventually, he returned everything except the basic sword to its place.

"I'll start with this one. No point rushing into the good stuff."

With a quiet grin, Trafalgar turned and left the training hall.

The corridor was dim, lit only by the faint glow of the mana lamps spaced evenly along the walls. Trafalgar walked back toward his room with steady steps, the sword now safely stored in his invisible inventory. He couldn't stop replaying the moment it had vanished and reappeared—proof that the system wasn't just cosmetic, but functional in a way that mimicked real games.

"So if I can store weapons... what else can I store?"

"Potions? Books? Maybe even armor?"

His mind raced with possibilities, and for the first time in days, he felt something resembling genuine excitement.

Back in his room, he sat on the edge of his bed and looked around. The faint remnants of mana he had gathered earlier still lingered in the air, giving the space a subtle shimmer. He glanced at the book on mana theory again but decided to leave it for tomorrow.

"Lysandra and the old man return in the morning..."

"This is probably the last calm day I'll get."

He lay back on the bed and stared at the ceiling, feeling the weight of his body for the first time all day. Training his Core, testing the system—it had drained him more than he expected.

But somewhere above, hidden behind the shadows of the ceiling beams in the hallway he had just passed, the same observer watched.

A thin figure cloaked in dark gray, blending almost perfectly with the architecture, pulled back from the ledge as Trafalgar closed the door to his room.

"He's gone to the training room two days in a row now... spending hours inside."

"Whatever he's doing, he's serious about it. He wasn't like this before."

The observer moved silently, footsteps light against the stone floor.

"I'll have to inform the Patriarch when he returns tomorrow. The boy is changing."

And just like that, the figure vanished into the darkness.