Reincarnated as a Castle - (LitRPG, Kingdom Building, Progression)

Chapter 7: Castle Core

I can accept randomized stats, but putting fucking [Lumberjack] on a hammer?!
How the hell is someone supposed to chop wood with a hammer? This makes no sense!
Now, imagine rolling for a god-tier SSS Divine Sword with god-tier primary stats and insane base damage... only to get stuck with a completely useless skill like [Cooking] or [Fishing]!
"Aaaaa... what an ass system!"

But... that wasn't the end.

This System was about to get even worse.

Because as I scrolled a little farther down the panel, there it was...

Two more predatory features!

[Item Reroll – Stats]
[Spend Points to reroll the stats of an item and receive another randomized set. The item's Rarity will be maintained, but all stats will be randomized unless locked by spending additional Points.]

[Item Reroll – Item]
[Spend Points to reroll the item itself and receive another item of similar rarity with randomized stats.]

...

...

Oh yeah... it’s hopeless.
And let me guess, I’ll also need to spend Points if I want to lock an item in the shop, too?
I already knew the answer deep down, but I checked anyway.

And as I searched through the panel, boom! Just as predicted!

[Item Lock]
[If you don’t have enough Points to purchase an item immediately, don’t worry! You can spend Points to lock it instead. The item will not refresh during the next shop rotation!]

[Lock 1 Item: 10 Points]

[Lock 2 Items: 100 Points]

[Lock 3 Items: 1,000 Points]

[...]

Haha, what a greedy system!
Perhaps whoever designed this System is some kind of RNG gacha god or something?
Putting that silly thought aside, I moved on to see what I would unlock by upgrading the shop.

[Upgrade Item Shop to Level 2]
[Requirement: System Shop Level 2, Castle Core Level 1]

[Upgrade Cost: 100 Points]

[Unlocks: Item Combining, More Shop Options, Higher Item Tiers]

In the end, with no one living inside me yet, the Furniture Shop, Food Shop, and even the Item Shop were all pretty much useless for now.

But that would all change dramatically the moment I got even a single person living inside me.

Not that I had any idea when — or how — that would actually happen...

I just hoped it wouldn’t take something ridiculous like a hundred years.

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Now, only one shop remained.

The Castle Core Shop.
The name alone gave me almost nothing to work with, so naturally, my curiosity was burning.

Earlier, however, I had noticed that both the Construction Shop and Item Shop required a "Level 1 Castle Core" before they could be upgraded to Level 2.

Whatever this Castle Core was, it had to be incredibly important.

"Alright, open the Castle Core Shop!"

The System responded immediately.

As I looked inside, I unexpectedly found a genuine clue about what I truly was in this new world.

[Castle Core – Current Level: 0]
[Description: The Castle Core is the heart of your very being, where your soul resides. It is buried deep beneath the foundation of your castle for protection. The higher its level and the stronger your core becomes, the stronger you will become.]

[Currently, due to your low level, your castle skills and abilities are very limited. Try to level up as soon as possible!]

[Warning: If the Castle Core is destroyed, you will die!]

Wow! So I'm really a magical castle that can grow and evolve!
And not only that.

Now that I knew the core existed, I tried to focus my mind and reach inward.

For the first time, I could actually feel it clearly.

My core...

It was literally a small, dense sphere of swirling energy buried deep beneath the earth, directly underneath my foundations. Its diameter was tiny, perhaps roughly the size of a tennis ball.

Yet despite its small size, it pulsed steadily, pumping some kind of mysterious, warm energy into every wall, every brick, and even the old iron torch sconces.

It powered my entire structure.

It really was like a beating heart, keeping me alive.

"Now then, how do I upgrade this core?"

The System immediately displayed another panel.

[Upgrade Castle Core to Level 1]
[Unlocks:]

[Skill: Generator – Generates 1 Point per day.]

Hell yeah! So I really do have a reliable way to generate Points now!
One Point a day is, honestly, a tiny amount. But as a castle, I have all the time in the world! I can wait!
And now, what about the cost?

I eagerly looked at the next line.

[Upgrade Cost: 10 Points]
"Oooooh! It’s perfect!"

I had exactly 10 Points left in my balance. I could afford it down to the very last Point!

Never had I felt better about myself. The System had already tried to rob me of my precious Points several times with its scam offers, but too bad! I had held firm!

And just like that, with nothing else particularly important left to check, I was certain this was the most important upgrade available to me right now.

So, I spent all of my remaining Points on upgrading my Castle Core.

[Ding!]

[Purchasing Castle Core Upgrade... Success!]

[Initiating Castle Core Upgrade Process...]

As the upgrade began, my mind suddenly grew hazy.

Oh shit... I’m feeling strangely sleepy...
At the same time, I could sense something significant happening deep within my core.

It was growing hotter.

Its pulses became faster and stronger. Vibrations hummed through my stone foundations, shaking loose dust from the ceiling beams and sending faint tremors through my empty halls.

But that was all I could feel...

Before everything faded away, and I lost consciousness.