

Grand Ancestral Bloodlines #Chapter 21: Inner Devil (2)

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Hearing these words, even Priest Saint Ventus was caught completely off-guard. It was true that Elena's first partner was slated to be Gale, but the last time they raised an uproar about this, Ryu had shamed them to no end. Although today was the first time Gale had met Ryu, his anger toward him had been brewing from long before.

This so-called choosing of the first partner was a tradition of the Holy Wing Clan. Back in Old Mistress Holy Wing's day, her elders had chosen Priest Saint Kunan as her first partner. However, he chose Vorena, causing her to have to take matters into her own hands.

Weren't you just a measly man? Why do you care how many women you bed? Why are you suddenly being such a prude? Could it be that you're actually a woman?

These were just some of the distorted and depraved thoughts Old Mistress Holy Wing had had back then. She felt enraged and embarrassed that a man had actually turned her down. After learning from her birth about just how horrible and vile men were, how could she not feel embarrassed? One of those lowly creatures actually believed himself to be her better!

As for the end of that story, everyone already knows it. This was the reality of this tradition.

Since every Holy Wing Clan woman before her had had her first partner chosen, Elena was obviously no different. This first partner was incredibly important because the first daughter had a special status and as such had to come from good pedigree. So, the talented Gale was chosen for Elena.

Of course, even as a cripple, Ryu's pedigree was far better than Gale's. It didn't matter that he couldn't cultivate, he still had four Ancestral Grade bloodlines within him. In fact, it was this argument that Ryu used when this was last brought up. It was irrefutable.

Back then, Old Mistress Holy Wing had countered with the fact that this was no longer a matter of pedigree. After all, the agreement had been decided upon. You couldn't just switch out when you found a better candidate, wouldn't that stain the reputation of their Holy Wing Clan?

However, this matter was irrelevant now. All that was important was the fact that Old Mistress Holy Wing suddenly used a different approach entirely, one that played on the sympathies of everyone. Wasn't Gale the truly pitiful one here?

It had to be said that not every member of the Holy Wing Clan had multiple partners like Old Mistress Holy Wing. Many only have a single partner for life, it was just that Old Mistress Holy Wing went out of her way to anger Priest Saint Kunan. This was all to say that Gale technically had the right to see Elena as his woman in name, although it wasn't exactly like that.

In fact, many men here had been chosen as the first partner of a young mistress of the Holy Wing Clan. They understood the ins and outs well.

Gale's face turned several shades of red, white and black. Would someone as arrogant as him agree to be portrayed as a pitiful lovesick puppy? Of course not! Yet that was what was happening.

Even his grandfather had grown angry. 'What is this whore doing!? Involving my grandson is such nonsense?! I'll have her head on a platter!'

However, neither he nor Gale had anywhere to vent their anger. If Gale or his grandfather called out Old Mistress Holy Wing for her antics, it would come off as trying to hide behind their anger. Even if her words were untrue, many would start believing them simply because of their reaction. They had been caught between a rock and a hard place and it was all this wench's fault. She wanted to save her own face so badly that she decided to throw them into the fire with her?!

With nowhere to aim his anger, Gale stood, an eerie calm having taken over his features.

"Old Mistress Holy Wing is correct, this matter has been weighing on my heart. Although I have no romantic feelings or tender love for Elena, it's difficult for a man to forget a woman that should have been his first.

"I agree that the Clans that back me aren't as powerful as Young Master Ryu's. My father is an average talent and my mother is practically a mortal as well, so how could I look down on his plight? My only backer is my grandfather, a man who's given me all the love he has. It was because of this love that he did his best to find me a worthy first woman, and even though Elena chose another man, it is an objective fact that she is more than worthy."

Gale's words were eloquent and heart felt. He seamlessly played on the hearts of those listening, evoking his seemingly normal pedigree and inciting his grandfather's love. It made him come off as sincere, people could see portions of themselves within him.

Plus, which man here didn't understand his words? Sometimes men even became territorial over women in brothels, disallowing their favorites from playing with others. They'd probably go on a murderous rampage if they ever found their favorite prostitutes in bed with another man.

Compared to this, a young man's first woman was on an even higher pedestal.

"However, even with all of these pent-up feelings, I didn't dare to bring them up and only remained quiet. I hadn't expected that Old Mistress Holy Wing would come for such a reason. However, she and my grandfather have been close for a long time, they could be considered childhood friends. So, in a lot of ways, she treats me as her grand nephew." Gale bowed gracefully before the Tatsuya family, having reached a single step ahead of Old Mistress Holy Wing, facing Ryu. "I hope that the Tatsuya family will be magnanimous in forgiving my grand aunt for fighting for her grand nephew."

Gale rose with a slight, amiable smile. His features were warm as his light green hair and eyes twinkled.

Ryu watched their theatrics emotionlessly, allowing Gale to finish his speech to completion.

"So, what are your plans here?" Ryu finally asked, his voice calm, but filled with a biting chill.

"I'd like to find out once and for all who among the two of us is better." Gale said straightforwardly. "Obviously, I don't mean in combat. Whether I win or lose, Elena will remain your fiancée. After all, she's made her choice. However, I would like to wager something so in the case that I do win, I could receive something back as a token of my victory. In this way, my inner devil will finally disappear."

Chapter 22: Inner Devil (3)

Although those around him showed astonished expressions, Ryu didn't have much of a reaction himself. He may have evaluated Gale as too arrogant, but how did others see Ryu? His arrogance pervaded the lands, infused the heavens and shook the earth. This was Ryu! A man who, even as a cripple, wouldn't bat a single eyelash when challenged by an immortal. This was his pride.

Titus felt his chest thump when he looked at this son of his. 'How great would my son be if the heavens hadn't cursed him? Wouldn't he force the Shrine Plane to play on the palm of his hands?'

However, to Ryu, he wouldn't describe himself as arrogant. Wouldn't such a title imply that he was overconfident? This evaluation was wrong. Ryu knew the extent of his abilities. His disposition was nothing short of warranted and earned!

To the side, Old Mistress Holy Wing almost couldn't refrain from giggling in madness. She had come up with this plan on a whim but hadn't expected Gale to adapt and react so perfectly. But then again, if he wasn't an outstanding youth, he would have never been chosen for Elena.

"And what did you have in mind?" Ryu replied.

Gale's face twitched slightly in response to Ryu's calm response. 'Does this cripple really think that it only makes sense for me to challenge him? Does he believe that he's worthy of such a thing?! FUCK! If it wasn't for this old hag, do you think that I would be in this predicament?!'

"Nothing complicated. It'll be a simple test of disposition. As much as I'd love to settle this with the ancient rules of the martial world, your body is too frail. I had also thought of challenging you in your domain, but I have no experience in secondary professions. Instead, I'll choose something completely neutral and benign."

Gale's poisonous words were clear to everyone, but they still remained sympathetic to him. Which of them wouldn't feel insulted if a mere mortal showed no reaction to their challenge? This was a sort of slap in the face too. Gale had clearly managed to grasp the crowd's momentum. The Faith of this room was now biased toward him.

"Is that so?" Ryu nodding faintly.

"Of course." Gale nodded. "There's still the wager portion. I would like you to wager this Origin Flame Embryo!"

The room fell into such a devastating silence that even a pin dropping wouldn't dare to make a sound. This wager... It was too venomous! Did Gale believe an Origin Flame was a normal treasure?! How could such a thing be used in a wager?

"Alright."

However, Ryu's answer was swift and decisive. He didn't even ask what Gale would bring to the table. In fact, he didn't care. The idea of losing never crossed his mind, even for a single moment.

"It's difficult to put a price on Young Master Gale, and it's even more difficult to place a value upon your heartfelt emotions. In comparison to the Origin Flame, I fear that your plight heavily outshines it. As such, I have no qualms placing this small flame forward. In fact, I would feel ill-at-ease if you also wagered something. I would feel much better if you didn't."

Ryu's words caused his family's lips to quiver. It was a serious matter, but Ryu's words were too funny.

Gale had gone through all that trouble to make sure others knew that he didn't care for Elena. He was only doing this for what she represented, not her herself. Yet, Ryu's words had shattered that fabricated reality.

By implying that Gale's emotional trauma over Elena was even more valuable than an Origin Flame, he was portraying Gale as some frail, porcelain doll that needed to be coddled and protected, even to the point of gaining his rival's sympathy! If Gale's words were poisonous, Ryu's were deadly!

"There's no need, this young master wouldn't be so shameless." Gale spoke through his clenched jaw.

"Oh? So you have something of comparable value to an Origin Flame? I wonder what hidden vault treasure of the Ventus Clan this is?"

Ryu's words tore another hole in Gale's gut. While Ryu's own efforts brought his clan this Origin Flame, wouldn't Gale only be able to bring out a treasure his Ventus Clan had gotten for him?

With just a few words, Ryu was sneering toward Gale despite his face remaining cold and neutral. 'You dare challenge me to a wager to decide which of us is better? Isn't it already clear which of us deserves that title? You can't even bring out something you've taken with your own two hands!'

Gale's chest heaved as he felt many looks of pity fall upon him. He had tried to start a war of words with the Tatsuya Clan's Young Master, yet it had ended with him getting beaten down time and time again. Wasn't this too pitiful?

Soon, Gale forced himself to regain his calm once more. He had lost count of the number of times he had to do this in just the last few minutes. This Ryu's words were too sharp...

"I'm sure that Young Master Ryu won't be disappointed. While the Origin Flames are the last sparks from the beginning of all things, there are other vicissitudes of that age still remaining." A crafty glint lit his eye as his back straightened, a look of pride in his eyes.

"As you all know, the Wind Sky God mandates that her successor inhale the winds located at the ends of existence, the Heavenly North, South, East and West Winds. What this young master has here is an Embryonic North Heavenly Wind!"

The guests began to clamor, unable to hold down their excitement. They had come here in low spirits, feeling it beneath them to attend the birthday party of a toddler. But, to think that they'd see so many great things! This was unprecedented!

An Origin Flame and a Heavenly Wind?! These two treasures were indeed comparable. Although the Origin Flame was actually a few tiers higher, when all four Heavenly Winds were combined, they wouldn't lose out in any way!

This was truly a worthy wager!

Chapter 23: Inner Devil (4)

Not only did Ryu understand the significance of a Heavenly Wind, he likely knew more about them than almost anyone else. This was because the name of Elena's Holy Wing Clan wasn't for show. They were descendants of a heavenly bird race and as such, were well known for their speed. Through his research, Ryu was able to find a lesser wind for Elena to incorporate into her Spiritual Foundation, causing an explosive increase in her Sky Dominion.

Each Heavenly Wind had an earth-shattering ability the likes of which were rarely seen. Many of these so-called 'lesser winds' attempted to replicate these abilities in part, but couldn't do so perfectly. Still, these lesser winds were highly sought after. Since this was the case, one didn't need to explain just how much value a true Heavenly Wind had.

The East Heavenly Wind was known as the Wind of Sharpness. It was among the most dangerous of the four falling short to only the West Heavenly Wind. One wielding this Heavenly Wind would gain a sharp and defined aura, not to mention a special Dominion the likes of which those who devoted their lives to an edged weapon would kill over.

The West Heavenly Wind was the most violent, earning the Wind of Tribulation namesake. This was the most dangerous wind and it was the combination of this wind and the East that made the Wind Sky God's trial almost impossible to complete. One wielding this Heavenly Wind would gain control over the weather, able to call down destruction with a single roar. The Dominion gained from this Wind would explosively increase one's hand to hand combat and was the treasure of tyrannical war lords.

The South Heavenly Wind was known as the Breath of Life. This Wind was the most docile of the four and gifted its wielder near endless stamina. The Dominion gained by this Wind would be one of healing. Legends say that a master of this Wind could fight for an entire epoch without a moment of rest.

As for the Wind Gale brought forward, it wasn't to be underestimated at all. The North Heavenly Wind was known as the Wind of Natural Order. One had to know that the term 'Natural Order' was never to be taken lightly. Its definition encompassed the quintessence of heavenly laws!

Those who wielded the North Heavenly Wind would become akin to wind itself! Simply put, their swiftness would be unmatched, their flexibility would be uncanny, and their stealth would be impossible to see through! The Dominion of this Heavenly Wind allows its wielder almost unmatched movement. This was the North Heavenly Wind.

Gale sneered at Ryu's lackluster reaction. He had adapted to his opponent's apathetic appearance and was no longer bothered by it. Instead, he began to sharpen his mind. His Ventus Clan couldn't afford to lose this Wind!

Considering his grandfather hadn't sent him messages scolding him, it was clear that he found this to be a worth while risk as well. Why? Because Gale was also a wielder of one of the ten heavenly pupils! One didn't need to follow the Fire Natural Order to make use of an Origin Flame. Gaining this would greatly benefit his cultivation.

"The contest I have devised is simple. We are both wielders of one of the top ten heavenly pupils, as such, Objects of Origin have a certain fondness toward us. We'll both release our wager items, you your flames, and me my wind. The first to gain acknowledgement of one or both heavenly treasures is the winner!"

The mouths of those listening nearly dropped. Only a single word rung in their minds: Shameless!

Who didn't know that one's heavenly pupils evolved with cultivation? Although Gale's were only ranked seventh, while Ryu's were ranked first, the disparity in cultivation more than made up for this! It was no wonder this young master was so confident!

At this point, Ryu had his first change in expression. His brows wrinkled into a frown, his handsome features slightly contorting.

When Gale saw this, his sneer deepened. "It can't be that the Tatsuya Clan Young Master is scared, is it? With the difference between me and you, isn't this the most fair competition possible?"

Many felt like Gale's words made sense. There were only so many forms of competition a mortal and immortal could undergo. It was impossible for it to be perfectly fair. Since Ryu accepted so easily, shouldn't he have to pay the price for his arrogance?

However, Ryu didn't mind Gale's words, instead he looked toward Elena apologetically.

"I'm sorry."

Many thought he was conceding when he said these words and couldn't help but sigh. As for Old Mistress Holy Wing and Gale, they almost couldn't refrain from laughing uproariously. In fact, Valeska's faint giggle still filled the ceremonial hall. That is... It filled the hall until Ryu's next words resounded.

"I'll try to find a way method to extract it from myself later. After all, it's much more useful to you."

Elena smiled sweetly when she heard these words, her heart warming. However, for others, they nearly fell off their seats, suddenly understanding what Ryu was trying to say.

Ryu never had a doubt that he would win. In fact, he had wanted to win the Heavenly Wind so that he could gift it to Elena. However, with the rules as is, it would mean that

he and not Elena would become the Master of the Wind. This was something that was almost impossible to undo once the deed was complete. The easiest way was to simply kill the host, but obviously, Ryu couldn't do that to himself.

"Let's begin!" Gale roared, failing to control his anger once more. Wasn't speaking to this man far too infuriating?! How could there be such a man in existence?!

With one movement, Gale and Ryu shifted simultaneously. Ryu pressed a hidden mechanism on the large black box, unleashing the Origin Flame Embryo in the world. Gale wasn't far behind, his eye dimming slightly as a whirlpool appeared before them, releasing the Heavenly Wind.

The display was absolutely beautiful. The Heavenly Wind released a fragrance that sent those present to another world... It was as though they had entered a land of fairies, fluttering with a golden and unblemished beauty.

The Origin Flame fell behind in no way. It flickered in reds and pinks, before shifting to blues and violets, before touching upon golds and silvers. Its mere presence forced many into an involuntary state of enlightenment... Just looking at it made one feel as though they were riding atop a soft cloud.

Chapter 24: Inner Devil (5)

The two heavenly treasures floated into the air, exuding auras of absolute dominance. Lower caliber treasures would attempt to run at this moment, but these Origin Grade treasures felt that it was far beneath them to do such a thing. They could sit completely still and still have the arrogance to say that no one could catch them. This was the pride of a heavenly treasure!

As for the fact the Ventus and Tatsuya Clans had technically done exactly that, this was ignored by them. To such sentient treasures, they didn't consider being 'claimed' by a Clan to be akin to being truly captured. To them, the only way to lay claim to them was to become their master!

The Heavenly Wind sparkled with an arrogant gold, fluttering in the air aimlessly. Not to be outdone, the Origin Flame bared its prowess. Its flame wasn't hot, but it bathed the ceremonial hall in a rainbow of bright colors.

Gale's expression became serious. His feet left the ground, allowing him to meditate in the air. Soon, his body seemed to disappear despite the fact one's eyes could clearly see him in the same position.

"To enter a meditative state so quickly. Truly a heavenly genius." Someone of the crowd murmured. "The Ventus Clan must have done its absolute best to nurture this young man."

Similar evaluations spread out amongst the guest. There was no doubt that they were well warranted. However, it could only be expected for someone with cultivation as deep as Gale's to enter this first stage of meditation so easily.

Gale silently adjusted his mental state. He felt absolutely no pressure in this competition. He already knew exactly how difficult it was to gain the acknowledgement of these heavenly treasures because he had yet to gain the acknowledgement of the North Heavenly Wind!

Why was it that Gale had this treasure with him yet had not used it? Obviously, this ordeal caught him off guard so he hadn't been saving it for this occasion.

The truth was that Gale had been accumulating momentum to gain the Heavenly Wind Embryo's acknowledgement for several months now. Everyday, he would constantly nurture it with his own qi, this was exactly why it was stored in his eyes' inner world. Of course, this was yet another shameless ploy. After all, Gale had specified that they could gain the acknowledgement of one or both!

Those who hadn't become enamoured by the presence of the heavenly treasures immediately realized that something was fishy the moment Gale evoked his inner world. This realization caused the anger of the Ryu's family to boil once more, but there was nothing they could do. No matter how shameless Gale wanted to be, it was Ryu who had already accepted the conditions. If he had had a problem with it, he should have said so before.

Gale's eyes finally snapped open, flooding the room with an enigmatic presence only those with Heavenly Pupils could match.

His eyes flashed with aggression, sparking with a fierce green light that seemed to carry the depths of the universe itself. One couldn't help but become hypnotized by his gaze... This was truly the seventh ranked Heavenly Pupils, The Eyes of Truth!

There was not a single pair within the Heavenly Pupils ranking that could be looked down upon. In fact, The Eyes of Truth could be said to be the most feared without exaggeration!

The reality was that these pair of eyes were only arbitrarily ranked so low because their combat abilities were marginally lower than the six that outranked it. However, its abilities were wholly devastating.

Some of the most devastating techniques of the martial world were those of the mind. These so-called Mental Realm Masters were so taboo that Clans banded together to eradicate them from existence entirely. In fact, to many, Mental Realm techniques were more atrocious than even Fiend Path ones.

It may sound silly to compare sacrificing virgins for the sake of cultivation to mental tricks, but imagine this for a moment. What if a virgin was completely aware that the man they were with only wanted to use them as tools before discarding them, yet did so happily anyway, thinking that it was their own will?

This was the devastation a master of the Mental Realm could inflict upon a person. One wasn't even safe within one's own mind!

Today, the so-called Mental Realm that Old Mistress Holy Wing referred to simply involved a calm mental state, it was about tempering one's will from within instead of projecting it outward.

All of this said, there was one staple of the Mental Realm Master that survived to this day, and that staple referred to the Eyes of Truth!

With his eyes, the range of abilities Gale had was frightening. For one, his Mental Realm was perpetually far above what his cultivation dictated, allowing him more Spiritual Qi. This permitted him to meditate, maintain focus, and contemplate for values of time far exceeding those of his cultivation level. However, this wasn't the end of it.

Gale's eyes had the ability to influence the Mental Realm of others, even peering into them. Not only did this allow him to tell falsehoods from truth, he could employ suggestive abilities on the psyche of others. Of course, he wouldn't dare to do the latter now due to taboos, but who's to say that he's never done so before in secret?

If Gale was given a set of Mental Realm Techniques, his abilities would soar far beyond imagining. In fact, it's because these techniques were all destroyed that the ranking of his pupils fell from the fourth rank to the seventh. However... Legend has it that each set of Heavenly Pupils comes with a hidden legacy. Once Gale's cultivation reached a high enough level, wouldn't he gain exactly what he was missing now?...

Still, there were two restrictions on Gale's abilities that made Ryu not fear him in the least. The first was that those with cultivation far above his rendered his eyes completely useless. And the second was that the Eyes of Truth couldn't exert their dominance over pupils ranked above it! While the fourth, fifth and sixth ranked eyes were exceptions to this due to the fall of the Eyes of Truth from fourth to seventh, the top three Heavenly Pupils were completely unaffected!

Unfortunately, this truth did nothing to stop the fact that the Heavenly Wind had stopped moving entirely... And it definitely did nothing to stop the fact that this very same Heavenly Wind then began to fly toward Gale at blinding speeds...

Chapter 25: Inner Devil (6)

The Heavenly Wind reacted like a lost child who had just found its parent. How lucky was it? Not only did it find a wielder of the Heavenly Pupils, this person actually had such a high wind affinity!

While many Clans of the Shrine Plane were descendants of Ancient Beasts, there were other races that had their lineages survive until now. The Ventus Clan, for example, were descendants of Spirits. These were a legendary species that descended from humans to gain high affinity with the Natural Order.

Spirits were born with special Spiritual Foundations that allowed them to accelerate along certain Natural Order Paths far easier and further than those of other species. While Ancient Beast descendants were blessed with strong bodies and special innate abilities, the descendants of Spirits had comprehension that made even the Heavens themselves jealous!

The Ventus Clan were descendants of Wind Spirits. Knowing this, how could the Heavenly Wind not be excited? Gale was simply the perfect host! It also helped that it felt an innate familiarity with this potential Master, as though it had known him all its life. Of course, this was due to Gale's nurturing.

Seeing the North Heavenly Wind's near ecstatic reaction, many felt that this competition was all but over. It had only been thirty or so minutes since it began, yet, Ryu's fate was sealed.

What none of them realized was that there was a fog over their perspective of events. It was as though they only had eyes for Gale, as though he didn't have any opponent to speak of. But, was this correct? Why was it that they had been continuously commenting on Gale but hadn't spoken a single word about Ryu?

Even Ryu's family didn't notice that their nervous expressions had been trained on Gale this entire time. Although their thoughts were filled with hopes that he would somehow fail, it was still a fact that all of their beings were focused on Gale.

Whether it was realizing which Heavenly Pupils Gale wielded, or commenting on his meditative state, or realizing he had nurtured the Heavenly Wind for this very moment, everyone was entirely focused on Gale. The name Ryu hadn't crossed their mind a single time from the very beginning!

It was in that moment, just as the Heavenly Wind was about to reach Gale, a sigh rang out from a completely unknown source.

The sigh was filled with a sense of loneliness and sorrow, as though it was a peak that stood atop the world without rival, without foe and without friend. It held the vicissitudes of life and death, carried an arrogance of such unmatched proportion that those who

heard it felt inferior. Whether it was the youngest genius here or the oldest monster, each felt their souls shake.

Thousands of pairs of eyes uncontrollably shifted to a single young man. His features were so unbearably handsome that they should never have appeared on a mortal. His demeanor was so ethereal, so otherworldly that he almost seemed to not be standing there at all. He was above it, above this petty competition, above the remarks and speculations of those watching, above even these Origin Grade Heavenly Treasures themselves.

To him, these things were meaningless. So what if his life was short? If he had been given the same length of time as all of you, it would be too unfair. So what if he had no cultivation to speak of? If he had the power to flip the tides of the oceans and force the stars to set at his whim, what piece of this world would be left? So what if his opponent was an immortal? If he faced someone of his own stature, would there even be a point to all of this?

This arrogance... The kind that stood above even the Shrine Plane itself, the kind that could look down from the highest peak in existence apathetically, the kind that could take the number one beauty of the younger generation for himself without batting an eye.

Wasn't this the true Ryu? His own death didn't faze him. Was he sad that he wouldn't be able to continue and live a full life alongside his family? Yes. But it wasn't for himself, it was for them. Wasn't this yet another kind of arrogance? The kind that didn't even skip over your closest loved ones? The kind that was so suffocating and perpetual that it seeped into his very being?

You dare to look down on me as Origin Grade Treasures? Well... The reality of the matter is that I look down on you. Did I bat an eyelash when Gale raised his wager item? Was I shocked when I learned of the location of an Embryonic Origin Flame?

The Heavenly Flame stopped abruptly even as the Origin Flame twitched.

"Come." Ryu's voice was just as calm as it always was. However, it wasn't until he spoke that those around him finally understood why they had only had eyes for Gale.

Why was it that even Ryu's family had seemingly forgotten about him? Why was it that Gale seemed to have become the center of attention despite the fact Ryu's earlier anger made even those of the oldest generation raise an eyebrow?

"Breath of Earth..." Silence pervaded the ceremonial hall as the Origin Grade treasures disappeared into Ryu's body.

States of meditation had nine distinctive levels. These levels also came to be known as states of enlightenment. The higher the level, the deeper one's selfless state, and thus

the stronger the enlightenment. The issue was that such levels were often only crossed due to fortuitous events. Only the greatest geniuses like Gale could directly evoke these levels at a whim.

The issue was that Gale took tens of thousands of years of strict training to be able to evoke the first level at will – the so-called 'Meditation State'. However, not only was Ryu a mere fraction of his age, he had the ability to evoke the second stage, Breath of Earth!

How could a mortal accomplish such a feat? It was impossible! No, it had to be something more than impossible!

Ryu fell into a dormant state, he could feel the treasures melding themselves to his soul. His body suddenly felt light, almost impossibly so. In the next moment, his eyes blazed to life. He could feel the Origin Flame coursing through the veins of his pupils, dilating them before resting comfortably.

"You..." Gale looked on in shock, even to the point where he fell out of the air, almost crashing to the ground. At that moment, all he saw was red. The combination of embarrassment and rage was too much to handle. "I'LL KILL YOU!"