

Grand Ancestral Bloodlines

Chapter 36: Kings' Garden

One might wonder why a King with so much power in his hands would ever care to listen to this opinion of those who amounted to simple mere mortals. However, it was important to understand just how critical the role of an Imperial Censor was. In fact, they're purposely chosen to be mortal so that they can maintain proper perspective.

When a country or Kingdom is formed, the most powerful strength its leaders can wield is nationalism. This fervent and almost basal instinct of a person born in a certain place to be biased toward their home. It is because of this nationalism and loyalty that governments can maintain themselves over generations, while it's often due to a lack of it that they fall prematurely.

No matter how much individual strength King Tor wields, there would come a day where he would have no choice but to hand his life's work to the next generation. When this occurs, he needs to ensure that the people still believe in the royal family and are willing to pledge their loyalty for another ruler's span. After this, it then becomes the next ruler's duty to maintain this tradition.

The date of this event was closer than one might think. Although King Tor's current lifespan was more than two hundred years, this didn't mean that he would rule for one hundred fifty more. According to the rules and regulations of their Plane, experts of a certain cultivation must recede from the so-called 'Secular World'. Given King Tor's talent, it wouldn't be much more than fifteen to twenty more years before he would be forced by these ancient traditions to abdicate.

Knowing this, King Tor couldn't in good conscience leave his Kingdom in turmoil. Even if he slowed his cultivation purposely to match the upper limit of this time – something that was morally grey according to the rules they followed – his eldest son wouldn't even be twenty-five years old. This simply wasn't enough time to resolve this conflict!

This wasn't the worst of matter either. Up until now, only abstract matters such as nationalism and loyalty were touched upon. However, there was a very real and tangible measure of this in the martial world: Fate!

This was the greatest task of the Imperial Censors, to ensure that Tor Kingdom's Faith was always maintained at the highest possible levels. Without the protection of such Faith, a Kingdom could face many potential issues. These matters could include crop failures, the spread of disease, lower fertility rates... The list was simply too long and catastrophic to comb through.

King Tor squeezed his forehead between his fingers, his jaw clenching. Flashes of pain, remorse and hesitation crossed his deep brown eyes. This was his son. No matter how many wives or concubines he had, he had never elevated one above the other.

How could he not know the kind of dirty schemes and backstabbing occurred in the Imperial Harem? He had tried his best to put an end to it all, but the Pillar Clans of his Tor Kingdom were simply too conniving. While he wanted to destroy them all from the root, such a thing would cripple his Kingdom as well.

Now, he was thrust into a situation where he was wrong no matter what he did. How could he ever look his son of his in the eye again?

"This matter concludes today." King Tor finally spoke, not looking up. "No one will lay a hand on the Fourth Prince."

The eyes of the Ministers and Censors widened. "Your Majesty!"

"SILENCE!" King Tor's roar shattered the floor beneath his feet, causing the mortals in front of him to bleed from their ears, unable to withstand his might.

"Seven years from now..." King Tor continued solemnly, "It will be revealed to the public that the Fourth Prince's Meridian Awakening Ceremony has failed. He will live a simple life without cultivation. When the Coronation Games begin, he will not have the power or backing to succeed... His life or death will be up to his own luck.

"Should he survive, he will be allowed to live out the rest of his life in quiet. If I hear of him suffering even a single grievance, I will eradicate you and your families!" King Tor's growl shook the scholarly Ministers from head to toe. How could they withstand such killing intent? "Should he die..."

King Tor didn't finish his words. He turned his back to the Ministers, disappearing from the Imperial Court it was seemed like just a single step.

**

The back of Tor Palace was a wonderland of sorts. It didn't have any heavenly treasures or overwhelming qi density, but it did have a calm ambience that helped one to clear their minds. This place was the only area of the Palace the King could come to be alone as everyone else was barred from entry.

That said, these truths were just by the standard of the Shrine Plane. To the Higher Mortal Plane, this small garden was akin to heaven on earth.

King Tor entered the Garden of Kings to stand beside a small stream of Elevated Water. This treasure wasn't too astounding, but it was definitely far better than a normal stream. It was charmed to have the capability of absorbing qi from the air before

releasing it slowly over time in the form of a comforting fragrance. The result of this was increased qi density and purity in a given area.

The King mindlessly stared at this stream, following its meandering and benign path of meaninglessness. It simply continued to do its job. Absorbing qi. Storing qi. Releasing qi. Absorbing qi. Storing qi. Releasing qi...

In a lot of ways, it was a reflection of the pointless lives they led. Why did he become King? To protect the Kingdom. Why does he protect the Kingdom? To secure his family's future. Why does he want to secure his family's future? For the sake of the Kingdom. So why did he sacrifice his son today? For the sake of the Kingdom. But wasn't the sake of the Kingdom supposed to protect his family?

Shaking his head, King Tor walked to the end of the Garden to an unassuming fountain. He gripped the edge of its grey stone with a sturdy hand. The small prick of something sharp cut his hand, but in the next moment, the grey fountain began to turn, revealing a dark staircase below.

It wouldn't be long before King Tor realized that what he thought was saving his Kingdom had guaranteed its destruction. In the future, when he remembered that he made this decision because his son was born with a head of pure white hair and silver-blue eyes, it was likely that he wouldn't want to live anymore.

Chapter 37: First Prince

Three years later, Tor Palace had long since forgotten the oddity surrounding the Fourth Prince's birth. In fact, today was a true day of celebration. The First Prince's Meridian Awakening Ceremony was to take place!

At this moment, a small boy not even a meter tall sat on a short stool, his little slender legs swinging back and forth. Behind him, Imperial Doula Miriam sat. Her actions were odd – she seemed to be applying some sort of dark pigment to the small boy's long white hair. Considering the toddler didn't say much to these events, it was clear that he was used to it by now.

Still, the oddities persisted. The little boy's eyes were closed. Even after several moments, they remained as such. One would have thought that he was taking a nap, but would someone who was asleep swing their legs in the way he was?

"Little Ryu, you must be more careful." Imperial Doula Miriam chided. "After your elder brother awakens his meridians, at least until your own ceremony, you must try not to antagonize him, okay?"

"If he's smart, he'll stay very far from me no matter what his cultivation is." The cold reply of the small boy was nothing like what one would expect from a toddler. Somehow, he had already gained the demeanor of an absolute expert, the kind that one

would make certain to exterminate from the root after even the slightest offense for fear of one's own death.

Imperial Doula Miriam sighed. "Just ignore his words. He's young and rash, there's no need for you to create a life-long enmity between siblings over frivolous nothings. It's best to forgive and forget, to be magnanimous for the sake of your own health."

One would never expect an adult to speak to a child in such a way. Imperial Doula Miriam described First Prince Amory as the seven-year-old child that he was, but pretended as though Ryu wasn't the three year old toddler before her. She had begun subconsciously treating this boy as an equal for a very long time now.

"Aunty Miriam, you're very na?ve." The small Ryu suddenly said. "Do you believe that first brother's animosity toward me is organic? Did I offend him in any way? Is he even old or mature enough to understand that he will have to compete with us three younger brothers for the throne?"

"This first brother of mine has an aptitude that I understand well. He may very well be better than the average child, but his world view is limited and shallow. The things he understands aren't by virtue of himself, nor are his thoughts his own. If all of these things are true, then who do you think is responsible for molding him?"

Imperial Doula Miriam shivered, but didn't dare to reply. It was one thing for a Prince to say such stinging words about another Prince's upbringing, but for her to comment could result in execution. This was especially the case considering the person Ryu was alluding to was none other than the Queen of their Kingdom, Olivia Tor.

Still, the scope of understanding this mere three-year-old boy had was astonishing. To understand the politics of the Kingdom so clearly already, it was shocking to her even now. However, Ryu was right. No matter how Ryu reacted, Amory and his third brother would never reciprocate in good faith. Their minds had already been corrupted by their mother. Maybe only second brother deserved Ryu's hope for now, but who knows what would happen in the future?

Of course, there was always a chance that his first and third brothers would break from the control of their mother in the future. However, that wouldn't happen until they both matured and learned to distinguish right from wrong themselves. For now... It was impossible.

With a deep sigh, Imperial Doula Miriam stood to wash her hands in a bucket nearby.

"Alright, let's go take you to your mother."

**

"Be sure to stay quiet for mommy, okay?" The beautiful First Concubine Leilani smoothed her dress and hair, making final adjustments before taking Ryu's small hands in hers. "Also remember that you must stay respectful in front of your father. The future of the Agnes Clan rests on your shoulders, so you must find favor with him, okay?"

Little Ryu didn't reply, simply following after his mother as they walked into a large ceremonial hall outlined with beautiful glass artwork. Of course, he could see none of this due to the fact his eyes were closed.

Although his vision was covered by darkness, he could feel the gazes that turned toward him and his mother. He remained unaffected, but many thought that this was due to his blindness. They probably believed he couldn't sense their emotions or understand their animosity simply because he was young and supposedly disabled. However, it would be more accurate to say that Little Ryu was the sharpest person here.

"First Concubine greets Queen Tor." Leilani said with a light smile. "I'd like to be one of the first to congratulate you and Little Amory. He has a very bright future ahead of him."

Queen Tor greeted Leilani. "Thank you for your kind words. I wouldn't like to get too far ahead of myself. There's a saying that expecting too much can end in devastation. Even if my Little Amory fails, I hope that he can lead a calm and quiet life."

"Big Sister Olivia's words are truly grand. I hope to one day cultivate my own Mental Realm to be as broad minded as your own."

The light conversation between Queen and Concubine was the center of attention for most. There didn't seem to be any out of bounds occurrences, but it felt uncomfortable to watch from the sidelines. Maybe it was because the entire time, two young boys stood to Queen Tor's back – one seven years old, the other four years old – making faces of disdain and disgust toward the blind Ryu.

Seeing the innocent boy with only a light smile on his face, completely oblivious to the torment of his elder brothers made those of the royal court uncomfortable. The young boy's plight was quite pitiable. Still, that didn't stop others from believing that this was how things should be. In fact, many believed that Ryu should be appreciative for even being alive while others still believed he should still be killed...

"Introducing His Majesty, King Tor!" A herald's voice shattered the building tension.

Chapter 38: Royal Father

Everyone present stood respectfully, including the formerly quiet Second Concubine Catalina and Ryu's second brother, Second Prince Jedrek.

King Tor didn't seem to have aged even a single day. Still, his youthful exuberance didn't stifle his commanding and oppressive aura.

His sons looked up to him in awe. In their eyes, he was the greatest man in existence. They didn't need to fake it, nor were these the teachings of their mothers, it was just how they felt. Being the son of the King was something they were proud of and their expressions reflected this. This said, Ryu showed no particular reaction.

The King continued to walk along the path laid for him, receiving the bows of everyone. With each step, another column of individuals would lower their heads. The coordinated dance of decorum had a slight, unblemished beauty to it that was hard to describe. Whatever flaws he might have, it was clear that Shuren Tor was born to be a ruler.

Soon, he had made his way to the head of the Imperial Court, receiving the slight bows of his Queen and two Concubines, along with his sons. It was at this moment that King Tor turned a sharp gaze toward his fourth son.

Leilani tried to subtly nudge her son. She knew that if it was only under her insistence that he showed due deference, it would leave a poor impression. She couldn't help but silently scold her son in her mind, even if this was his first public event, and he was only three years old, he had been schooled in matters of decorum since birth.

Unfortunately, Olivia and her sons wouldn't be themselves if they were to miss such an opportunity.

Amory scuttled over like a proud little soldier, his royal blue robes making him look quite dashing despite his young age. Much like his father, he had a strong head of brown hair and eyes, not to mention flawless bronzed skin. It was clear that he was well taken care of.

He leaned over and whispered into his fourth brother's ear. "Fourth brother, father is before you now."

In all fairness, his words really were soft. However, in a quiet hall specifically designed to project the voices of those who spoke at its head, such precautions were inconsequential. To Ryu, it was obvious that Amory hadn't planned this. The simple optics of him whispering to Ryu was enough to convey the necessary message. But, that didn't stop sycophant fools from relishing in the 'intelligence' of the First Prince as well as his 'kindness'.

"Oh." Ryu responded with an embarrassed smile. "Hello father."

Ryu's response caused black lines to form on his mother's delicate forehead even as some Ministers nearly fell from their seats. Did this young man forget everything he was taught? What had he been doing for the last three years?

First, he hadn't bowed. Then he called King Tor father instead of royal father. And, even after his mistake was pointed out, he still didn't bow.

It was one thing for First Prince Amory to call him father in what should have been a whisper, such a mistake could be forgiven. But to speak aloud in such a way was yet another breach of decorum.

King Tor didn't react much to Ryu's words, or rather, he didn't get the chance to because First Concubine Leilani had no choice but to take matters into her own hands. The miseducation of a Prince was never the fault of a father, but rather was always on the mother's shoulders. After all, a King had too many other matters to attend to. At the very least, she had to make it clear that Ryu's actions were innocent mistakes and not the occurrences of her teachings.

"Little Ryu, whenever you see your royal father in such a setting. You must bow, okay? It's okay to treat him as a normal father in private settings, but in public, he is a King."

Ryu tilted his head to side, displaying his confusion. "But... I can't see, mother."

The seemingly innocent words of the Prince caused those who sat on the fence about such matters of the royal family to feel dull aches in their hearts. However, those who were already against his existence to begin with sneered in their hearts. How stupid did this child have to be to take such words literally? Even if he was only three years old, it wasn't too much to expect a higher level of education in subtlety.

First Concubine Leilani did her best to remain calm and continued explaining with a smile. "This mother of yours only meant those words figuratively. Simply put, in the presence of your royal father, showing proper respect is important."

Ryu's small head nodded. "Ah, sorry royal father, but I can't bow to you out of respect."

Leilani had almost released a breath of relief, but the end she choked on that very breath, unable to believe what she was hearing.

The First Prince and his full-blooded younger brother, Cayden, almost couldn't hold back their laughter. Queen Tor remained completely silent, pulling her boys back from making fools of themselves all while Second Concubine Catalina had no particular reaction to the situation aside from a raised eyebrow. Her son, however, seemed to be trying to take a nap on his feet, using his mother's hand for support.

"Little Ryu..." First Concubine Leilani tried to teach her son once more, but this time, she was the one who was interrupted.

"And why is that?" Surprisingly, it was actually the King who spoke. His voice was filled with majesty and the smallest hint of curiosity. He really did want to know what this son of his would say.

"It's simple, really." Ryu explained unperturbed by his father's presence. "I'm blind. If I bowed, I have no way of knowing if I've done so in the proper direction. I could follow your voice, but if I miss by even a hair, and grace a Prince's bow to the wrong person, wouldn't that be more catastrophic than not bowing at all? Isn't my not bowing the highest form of respect I could give you, royal father?"

A pin drop of silence filled the hall, stunned expressions coloring the faces of those present. This was the first public ceremony the Fourth Prince had attended. It could be said that Imperial Doula Miriam and his mother were the only ones who interacted with him with any relative consistency. No one understood just what kind of Prince he was.

They had thought he was a fool... But did he just play them all? Was a three-year-old making his dissatisfaction with the Kingdom known in its Imperial Court of all places?

Chapter 39: Good

Pa!

The crisp sound of a slap not only made Ryu's ears ring, but also caused his face to sting with a deep and reverberating pain. Maybe it was due to the fact his eyes were closed, but he felt every moment. The whooshing of the air, the vacuum that formed in his ear, even the shock of what happened were each multiplied many times over. He felt stuck in the moment, replaying the sensations in his mind again and again.

Amory's meridian awakening ceremony had long since come to an end. In fact, the awkwardness of its start was washed over by the outstanding news related to his meridian, skeletal, bloodline and spiritual foundation grades. However, it was clear that First Concubine Leilani hadn't forgotten what happened. It had festered in her to the point where she hit her son for the first time in her life.

"Do you not understand the gravity of what you've done today?!" Leilani's shrill voice filled the mother and son's private courtyard. "Do you believe that you were very clever?! Did you think that even if you meant your words with the utmost sincerity that it would matter?!"

Ryu didn't respond. His face didn't show the change in expression or borderline crying contortion a three-year-old should have probably displayed. His eyes remained closed, his hands didn't even clench into fists, and aside from the gradual reddening of his left cheek, his features practically remained at their baseline.

Even at three years old, Ryu had an arrogance that no one could shake. Today, he could have bowed, but he did no such thing. Since he was capable of beating up his elder brothers, something he had done on several occasions already, how could he not be capable of aiming a bow properly? He didn't do it because he didn't want to.

According to their martial world's tradition, there was no shame in bowing to one's parents. In fact, it was dutiful and filial of a child to do so. The problem was that Ryu never saw King Tor as a father. He saw him as a weak and spineless man who didn't deserve his respect. His brothers saw the King as the perfect and best man in the world, but to Ryu, if this was what the pinnacle of manhood was, the human race would have been extinct long ago.

"Do you not understand that this isn't just about you?" Leilani trembled at her son's lack of a reaction. She had half a mind to raise her hand and slap him again, maybe this time the message would ring true to his mind. However, something told her that even if she skinned Ryu alive, it would make no difference to his demeanor whatsoever.

**

The years passed slowly. On the fourth year since Ryu's birth, his second brother's meridian awakening ceremony took place. On the fifth, it was his third brother's turn. And finally, the seventh year came around, leaving just three days until Ryu's own.

In these times, the Kingdom was truly blessed. It seemed like all of the King's heirs were heavenly talents the likes of which their Plane rarely saw. However, there was an undercurrent of competition that shook Tor Kingdom. It could be said that this generation of Tor heirs had no choice to be great. If they had been any less talented, the threat of the Six Pillar Clans would have been too great to bear.

Young geniuses sprang up not only in the royal family, but also Tor Capital City's upper echelon. Not only were the Prince's heavenly talents, but so were the young masters of those six Clans.

Still, the Third Prince shockingly stood above them all, including his eldest full-blooded brother. He was actually born with an Earth Skeletal Grade! The moment this news became public knowledge, the various elders of the Heavenly Body Sect practically tore each other apart in competition to be his master.

According to tradition, there were only two ways to enter the four sects of their Plane. The first was to reach a certain cultivation threshold. No matter which sect was in question, this threshold was the Spiritual Severing Realm. One wouldn't be considered a true cultivator until this realm was reached. It was also those of this threshold that were no longer allowed to interfere in the matters of the 'Secular World'.

The second method was actually far more difficult. This second path required one to be born as a heavenly and undeniable talent. Being of the Earth Grade in one of the so-called Foundations of Cultivation was the minimum requirement!

In truth, King Tor was also born with an Earth Skeletal Grade. In his youth, he had been taken away. But, after all of his brothers crossed the age of eighteen, he came back to participate in the Coronation Games. After this, he was crowned as King and had ruled

ever since. This said, once he stepped into the Spiritual Severing Realm, he too would have to return to the sect after abdicating.

For the Tor Clan to have birthed not just one Earth Grade genius, but three for consecutive generations of them caused an uproar the other sects could no longer ignore. If it had just been the now abdicated Amell Tor, it was fine. Their sects also had one such talent each. But now adding Shuren Tor and his son, Third Prince Cayden Tor... It was too much!

On top of all of this, recent rumors had it that Amell Tor had just stepped into the Half-Step Divine Vessel Realm. Even the sects of the Immortal Planes had started to show interest in recruiting him. Now, the Tor Clan had only become far more untouchable...

It was in the midst of this shockingly good news that Ryu's own meridian awakening ceremony approached. Using the former King Amell Tor's cultivation increase as a pretext, Shuren Tor took his four sons with him on a trip, waving Leilani off and claiming that he could handle his own son's awakening ceremony. After all, even the poorest of family's could arrange such a ceremony for their children. Although it often failed due to their poor talents, that didn't mean that such unlucky Clans didn't still treat their newborn children as potential lottery tickets to a grander life.

Ryu didn't speak for the entirety of this trip. Even when he entered the Heavenly Body Sect and met this shadow-like grandfather for the second time, he didn't show much of a special reaction.

When the day of his ceremony finally arrived, Ryu stood before his brothers, father and grandfather, a cold expression on his small, immature face. While his brothers, especially his first and third, stood nervous, each entirely certain that this fourth brother of theirs was the most talented of them all, Ryu somehow knew exactly what would happen.

When his father pretended to pull a long face as the ceremony fizzled out, he didn't so much as tremble.

"To not even allow me a path to live?... What a good father you are." Those were the only words Ryu spoke during the entire trip, and it earned him the second slap of his life.

Chapter 40: Elder Sisters

Like this, another four years came and went in the blink of an eye. The three eldest Princes of the Tor Royal Family began to grow into their own, claiming milestones the likes of which few had ever seen.

The First Prince, although a far inferior martial talent in comparison to his full-blood younger brother, became a scholar of worthy note. At just fifteen years old, he

graduated from the Four Kingdoms' Institute with top honors and had already begun to take on large responsibilities in the Tor Royal Court. Many claimed that even if he didn't gain great combat prowess, his charisma and steadily growing faction would be enough to make a mark during the Coronation Games.

Still, this was just a matter of perspective. Even though the First Prince was inferior to his third brother, in comparison to the other young talents, even among all four Kingdoms, he wouldn't fall out of the top twenty.

The Second Prince was far more lowkey than his elder brother. He seemed to have an inherent laziness to him that drove his mother, Second Concubine Catalina, crazy. That said, his love of money shone through with a fierceness. He seemed to believe that only when one was rich would they be able to recline as they pleased. Who cared about power? Power led to responsibility which only led to more work. This philosophy ironically resulted in him working himself to the bone, but now he had the financial matters of Tor Kingdom in his grasp. In fact, there were rumors that he had already infiltrated the economies of Opes, Lantes and Viri Kingdom as well.

Then there was the Third Prince. Truth be told, of the three, the general population knew the least about him. This could only be expected considering sects were barred from taking part in worldly affairs for the most part. However, there were still some cases where the curiosity of the public could be satisfied.

Just three years ago, a beast hoard ravaged the outer fringes of Tor Kingdom. It became clear very soon that the secular army didn't have a chance against them. As such, the Heavenly Body Sect had no choice but to dispatch a group of disciples in order to fulfill their responsibilities.

After years of being hidden from the world, Third Prince Cayden finally reappeared. He swept through the battlefield valiantly, bearing the crest of Inner Disciple with pride. At just ten years old, the Third Prince had not only already become an eighth stage Awakening realm expert, but he was actually capable of fighting second order beasts already!

One had to understand that beasts were more powerful than humans. A first order beast was too much for a normal Awakening realm expert to handle, while the second order was far out of reach. Yet, the Third Prince shattered this notion completely!

If this was all there was, it would be shocking enough, yet the Third Prince made a second appearance just one year ago during the Sect Gathering Tournament. At just twelve years old, he placed top twenty against competitors double and sometimes triple his age!

A twelve-year-old Pulse Opening realm expert had actually been birthed to the Tor Royal Clan!

As for the Fourth Prince, he had faded into the background. It was to the point where no one wasted their sneers or holier-than-thou words on him. He was simply a forgotten entity, one that maybe only a few individuals remembered the existence of.

At this moment, this forgotten Prince sat clad in black robes, his face expressionless and his eyes closed.

There was an atmosphere of calm relaxation around him. A small girl who was at most five years old splashed her feet near a stream while a breath-taking woman who seemed like an older version of her danced freely as her cascading dark hair flowed in the wind.

"Fourth Brother, tell me, is your big sister beautiful?" Second Princess Isla spun in a mesmerizing yellow dress. Despite her childish demeanor, she was already a woman who had a child half as old as Ryu. That said, one would never assume so by her high-pitched whining.

"Second sister, how could I possibly answer that question?" Ryu's lips slanted into a bitter smile.

"Your second sister believes you have the best eyes on this entire Plane, is that not enough?" Isla took a seat beside her little brother, ruffling his black-dyed hair. "Look at you, you're so handsome. Don't you want big sister to find you a little wife?"

In the corner of the courtyard, kneading away as god knows what, was Imperial Doula Miriam. She smiled at the Second Princess' adorable nature. It was rare that the two Princesses came down from the Heavenly Body Sect, but when they did, the aging Doula felt gratified. Among those of Tor Palace, they were the only ones who actually acknowledged Little Ryu's existence.

One might wonder which of the two requirements the Princesses of the Tor Kingdom met to be allowed to enter the sect. Well, the truth was neither. Instead, they actually both married experts of the Sect, thus fulfilling the requirements for an unspoken third rule for allowed entry. Their husbands were quite powerful also, having both become Outer Elders of the Sect at relatively young ages.

Ryu smiled lightly. "And which little girl would you sentence to become a widow?"

The Second Princess pouted, knocking Ryu on the head. "Don't say such depressing things. Does this big sister of yours look like the type to allow you to die? Now be serious.

"The little girl of second brother's Garis Clan is quite cute. She's only a year older than you and this big sister's intuition tells her that she's taken a liking to you. There's also the Kunal Clan's young miss. She's already five years older than you, but that's okay.

When you two get older and she gets droopy, big sister gives you permission to take a young and ripe concubine."

Ryu didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Were these really the kind of words a mother should say when her five-year-old daughter was just a few meters away? The value system of this Kingdom really was too backwards.

Before Ryu could answer, the gate of his courtyard banged open, revealing the disheveled appearance of a beauty that lost out to the Second Princess in no way. In her arms, a small boy clung to her neck, clearly perturbed by his mother's erratic behavior.

"First Sister?" Ryu and Isla spoke simultaneously.

First Princess Dahlia did her best to catch her breath, taking in a deep gulp of air before speaking. "The Natural Order Sect has been destroyed!"