

Grand Ancestral Bloodlines #Chapter 41: Natural Order

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Chapter 41: Natural Order

Ryu's forehead wrinkled as he allowed his First Sister's words to sink in. But, even after a few moments, even the premise was difficult to accept.

In the martial world, there were six Planes – three mortal and three immortal. The Plane the Tor Kingdom resided on might be mortal, but it was the highest of the three Mortal Planes. This meant that among mortal cultivators, the experts of the Natural Order Sect were the very best. Simply put, no one on this Plane had the power to destroy them, especially not so quickly that information of an attack wouldn't be disseminated before information of its destruction was.

This meant one thing and one thing only: Whoever destroyed this sect did it so swiftly that not even a call for help could be levied.

The Second Princess showed a rare serious expression while Imperial Doula Miriam's frail, old hands trembled. Ryu's little niece didn't seem to understand the gravity of the information, so she only continued to play. But, it was clear that her demeanor didn't speak for everyone.

The First Princess released her son, allowing the two little cousins to play with one another as a tight frown took over her beautiful features.

"Who could have done this?" Isla finally asked.

How could Dahlia have an answer? The only reason she knew this information was because their husbands had sent a messenger beast. In the letter, they all but commanded their two wives to not travel back to the Sect at this time in case whoever was responsible was still at large. The truth was that if the Natural Order Sect couldn't survive, Tor Kingdom had no chance. But, it was at least safer than being alone on the road.

"It was likely an Immortal Plane expert."

The casual, nonchalant voice shattered the tense atmosphere. After he finished speaking, Ryu had already gone back to meditating as though his words needed no more explanation.

Suddenly, a twist at his ear snapped him out of focus. "Don't leave your big sisters hanging. Do you want me to teach you a lesson, little brat?"

"Ah, ah, okay." Ryu rubbed his ear, full of grievances. One of his sisters was a toddler in a woman's body while the other was still a school bully. When would they ever grow up?

"There's not much explanation needed. The Mortal Plane doesn't have experts capable of taking out a Sect. Even if the three remaining Sects joined forces against one, although the one would surely be defeated, it wouldn't end so quickly that news of an attack wouldn't reach us."

"What about a beast hoard?" The Second Princess asked.

Ryu shook his head again. "That's even more unlikely. Even the so-called "King" beasts of this Plane are only of the Fourth or Fifth Order at most while not even a Sixth Order beast could fulfill the task so cleanly and quietly."

"How can you be so sure?" First Princess Dahlia couldn't help but asking. Although she loved this little brother of hers, he was a blind cripple who hadn't cultivated a day in his life. To top it off, the strength of individual sects was a closely guarded secret – no one but they knew their limits.

"Their secrets aren't so hard to see through." Ryu calmly explained. "The three sects, or now, I guess, two, were both wary of your Heavenly Body Sect because our Tor Clan birthed three Earth Skeletal Grade experts. This is public knowledge. Everyone knows it."

"Father is turning sixty-three soon yet hasn't been taken away by the sect, which means he hasn't entered the Spiritual Severing Realm. This is also public knowledge. Everyone knows it."

"Judging by that, we can say that Earth Grade talents are rare. We can also judge their cultivation speed by using third brother, father, and grandfather as measures. If we factor in their lifespans, a good estimate isn't impossible. Even if I overestimate, I'd still be correct."

The two Princesses and Imperial Doula Miriam sighed. Why was it impossible for them to have one conversation with this little boy without being awed? Was he really trying to convince them that such closely guarded secrets were easily revealed simply by using public knowledge everyone should be aware of? Wouldn't those old ancestors of the sect commit suicide if they understood this?

"Doesn't this mean that we're all doomed?" The Second Princess said worriedly. "If this matter was caused by the Immortal Plane, what chance do the rest of us have?"

Ryu remained silent for a moment. The truth was that the Immortal Plane would never get involved in conflicts of the Mortal Plane as long as a certain balance was maintained. In fact, the current system of the Mortal Plane was put in place by Immortal Sects and Clans in order to facilitate a greater flow of talents to their pool of experts.

Many epochs ago, the Mortal Planes were awashed with war and blood. In the beginning, the Immortal Plane ignored these matters as it had nothing to do with them, but soon even the Immortal Plane became embroiled in their own struggles. As a result, various Immortal Clans and Sects began to seek out talent from lower Planes. However, with them all dying so frequently, it was impossible to do so with any sort of efficiency.

It was in response to this need that the Immortal Planes set out to reform the Mortal Plane. In the end, the Four Kingdom and Four Sect system was put in place. Each Kingdom would be backed by a single Sect, thus separating the matters of cultivators and mortals. Kingdoms would funnel resources to the Sects by various means while the Sects would provide a baseline of protection.

This system set a delicate balance, allowing Sects and Kingdoms to compete within their own lanes, but also controlling the level of bloodshed to acceptable levels. So, it was obvious why while his elder sisters worried over the potential attacks of this mysterious Sect destroyer, Ryu was more worried about the impact the unbalancing of this system would cause. With its backer gone, what would happen to the Opes Kingdom? How would the other Kingdoms react? Would the now ancient laws still be followed?

Eventually, Ryu shook his head, suddenly laughing.

"Why are you laughing?" The First Princess frowned, pulling on her little brother's already reddened ears.

Ryu coughed lightly, pulling himself away. "I just had a funny thought. Wouldn't it be amusing if the only reason the Natural Order Sect was destroyed was because their name was too arrogant?"

Chapter 42: Unknown Consultant

When the Kingdom learned of the reason surrounding the destruction of the Natural Order Sect, the three women who had been with Ryu when he said those ill-fated words nearly died of shock. To think that even the words Little Ryu said in jest could still be so bone chillingly insightful.

According to spies hidden with the Opes Kingdom, the wreckage of the Sect only included the destruction of their Sect's entrance stone. It had stood for thousands of years, yet now it was nothing more than ash.

Although normal humans couldn't cross the barrier to the Sect, reports stated that the inner structures were completely untouched. However, dead bodies of experts filled the paved roads with blood and a terrible stench.

Still, the ones who took this news the worst were the Noble Clans of Opes Kingdom and the Opes Royal Clan themselves. To have lost their backer in such a way and for such

a frivolous reason... How heart wrenching was that? The worst part was that until their current King crossed into the Spiritual Severing Realm, access to the Sect and the treasures they left behind were completely barred to them. As a result of this, several greedy eyes trained toward the East, each with various thoughts of their own.

However, there were too many barriers to satisfying this greed. For one, only those of the Opes Clan and the descendants of the Natural Order Sect knew how to breach the barrier to the Sect. Secondly, even if they were able to pry such information out of King Opes, it would require war with the Opes Kingdom. Thirdly, if one assumed that this war ended swiftly and didn't raise the ire of the Immortal Plane experts who built their system of balance, how would the treasures of the Natural Order Sect be split?

For now, peace was kept. The fear of breaking ancient rules set by the Immortal Plane Clans and Sects weighed heavily on their minds, wiping out whatever greed they might have had. That said... Who knew how long such peace would last? Even in the face of danger, humans always found a way to justify their actions for the sake of wealth.

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"Grandpa!" Two adorable five-year-old children sprinted into the arms of King Tor, the little boy monopolizing his right arm while the little girl took over his left. A rare smile graced the King's face, the likes of which hadn't been seen in public for decades.

Behind the two children, Princess Isla and Dahlia walked into the King's Study, neither of them surprised by this side of their father. Whenever it came to matters not pertaining to succession or the betterment of the Kingdom, he left such Kingly matters behind. Since their children would never be in line for the throne, King Tor had no reservations toward them.

"Okay, okay, you two little mushrooms. Go off to the garden and play, grandpa has something to speak with your mothers about."

The two toddlers ran out without a worry in the world. Soon, with how powerful their fathers were, they'd be given their own awakening ceremonies and soar into the skies. The best resources of the Mortal Plane would be funneled into them and they'd soon become pillars of the Sect themselves. Even with how tumultuous the times had suddenly become, it was doubtful that they'd ever be affected. They deserved to be the envy of many.

"How are Adorjan and Cato?" The King asked absentmindedly, taking a seat.

"Our husbands are doing well, father." First Princess Dahlia responded, a light smile on her face.

At first, her and her younger sister hadn't been too excited to be married off into the Sect, but their husbands were good men who treated them well. Just like there were

Clans to manage in Tor Kingdom, the Heavenly Body Sect also had various Clans that had grown over the years. The ancestors of such Clans had once come from nothing, but due to their cultivation talent, were accepted into the fold by the upper echelons of the Sect. Over time, they gave birth to their own factions that had grown to this point today.

Back then, two Princesses had no choice but to marry into these factions in order to consolidate the Tor Clan's power in the Sect. Of course, this was well before Third Prince Cayden's birth. If Cayden had been born earlier, their sacrifice wouldn't have been needed at all simply by virtue of his talent. With three Earth Grade experts, the Tor Clan would be unshakeable. That said, although this matter was slightly unfortunate, it couldn't be said that the two Princesses were unhappy.

"That's good. Has the Sect done anything special in response to the Natural Order Sect's destruction?"

"If you want to ask us how Little Ryu thinks you should respond, then just be straight forward." Second Princess Isla responded. Her voice didn't have any odd fluctuations to it. In fact, it sounded just as light and playful as it usually did. But the weight of her words was fairly clear.

King Tor shrugged. "If he can predict the reason for its destruction without ever taking a step outside, then his insight really is frightening."

"That's why us monitoring him is useless. If we waste even a single word trying to lead the conversation, he will realize it. The Agnes Clan has already forever earned his bad side, even his foolish mother is no exception. I don't know how you could expect us to help you." The First Princess interjected.

"That's where you're wrong." King Tor shook his head. "No matter how intelligence the Fourth Prince is, he is still only a child. Every child is the most susceptible to manipulation at this age and not a single one is indifferent to living a life without warmth. His IQ is irrelevant to the matter at hand."

"You haven't interacted with him much. Speaking with that child is like walking into a lion's den." Dahlia's eyes flashed with a complicated light. Why were they tasked with treating their little brother like an enemy?

For years now, these two Princesses would visit their fourth brother only to bring news of their interactions to their father. Who knew how many Kingdom matters Ryu had unknowingly consulted on? While others assigned the rise of Tor Kingdom to his three elder brothers, these three here knew exactly who should be thanked... A boy who hadn't experienced a sliver of true familial love in his pitiful life.

"My asks of you two are simple. It's okay if he believes that I sabotaged his meridian awakening ceremony, but it isn't okay that he confirms it or finds proof. You must also

ensure that the Agnes Clan cannot make a secret attempt of their own to redo the ceremony. The best-case scenario is that he trusts you two enough to ask for help. In that case, you know what you must do..." King Tor said softly.

After a moment of complicated silence, the two sisters nodded. For the good of the Kingdom, they had already sacrificed themselves. They didn't find it odd for it to be their younger brother's turn.

Chapter 43: Yaana

As his two elder sisters were meeting with his father, Second Concubine Leilani had travelled with her son to the Agnes Clan. Unfortunately, this change in title was not a mistake.

Within a Kingdom's Imperial Harem, there was a hierarchy. However, this hierarchy wasn't decided by the order in which women married into the harem. Instead, they were decided by the importance of the woman to the royal clan.

In her youth, Leilani had competed with Olivia for the title of Queen. Unfortunately, she lost despite being the King's favorite due to the fact Olivia was simply more suited to be Queen. Still, after entering the Imperial Harem, she had immediately been given the First Concubine rank in acknowledgement of the King's affections. Alas, these matters were destined for change.

After Ryu's meridian awakening ceremony failed, he immediately became the least suitable heir to the throne. Although Leilani still kept this rank for a time afterward, Ryu's lack of care for the matters of the Kingdom caused the Ministers to once more pressure their King into lowering Leilani's rank.

The Imperial Censors stood at the forefront of this change, imploring King Tor to maintain proper traditions. The ranks of the Imperial Harem were highly important and couldn't be ignored. The royal marital household was to be held in the highest regard to the public, what would happen if the people began to ignore these hierarchal standings as well? Plus, the Second Prince was so outstanding. How would he feel if, despite his splendor, his mother continued to be ranked so low? Would he not grow a dislike of the Kingdom and its ways? If this happened, wouldn't there be inner turmoil within the royal clan?

Under this pressure, King Tor relented once more, officially demoting Leilani to the Second Concubine title. As of now, the only concubine who ranked below her was Third Concubine Selene, a reclusive woman who happened to be the mother of their Kingdom's two Princesses. Due to a disease she contracted giving birth to Isla, she rarely appeared in public.

It didn't need to be said how much rage this induced within the Agnes Clan. As a Pillar Family ranked only below Queen Tor's Cedar Clan, having their young miss be a First

Concubine, even of the Royal Clan, was insulting enough. But, to now have her be demoted to the second rank? It caused an uproar within their upper echelons.

Patriarch Agnes, an older man who happened to be Ryu's maternal grandfather, stormed into the Imperial Court to raise havoc. However, even after drowning the King and his Ministers in a torrent of spittle and curses, nothing changed.

This sort of failure led to the Agnes Clan turning their pitchforks toward the mother-son duo. If Leilani had been more scheming and clever, she would have earned the title of Queen and wouldn't have to deal with this ranking nonsense no matter how useless her son was. In that case, the face of the Agnes Clan would be saved, and they wouldn't have turned into the laughingstock of the six Pillar Clans.

Then there was Ryu. If he hadn't been born a cripple or had at the very least been capable of awakening his meridians, this too would have never happened. What a useless pairing of mother and son they were, bringing not an ounce of good to the Clan.

If it wasn't for the fact they would incur even more sneers of disdain for it, they would have long since disowned the both of them.

Still Ryu and his mother were offspring of the Agnes Clan, and as such, had no choice but to return every year for their gathering. Currently, Ryu sat at the edge of a vast outer expanse, crossing his legs atop a grey stone in silent meditation.

In the distance, many branch and main bloodline members of the Agnes Clan younger generation horsed around. Some spoke amongst each other, some started friendly sparring sessions, while others introduced some of their close friends or love interests to one another.

The Clan gathering was held for reasons similar to why Imperial Censors existed. It was meant to instill a connection to the family and remind everyone, even branch members, that loyalty to the Clan was of the utmost importance. It was for this reason that this gathering was mandated.

"Ryu? Is that you?" Suddenly, a sweet voice interrupted Ryu's calm state of mind. It wasn't that the voice stirred emotions within him, but rather he hadn't expected to hear this voice here. This was because it was the voice of the Garis Clan young miss and cousin to his second brother Jedrek. It was odd to meet someone of another Pillar Clan at an event like this one. Plus, her question itself was weird.

"Yaana? I didn't expect to hear your voice here." Ryu said with a light smile.

Yaana blushed slightly at Ryu's words, feeling a light fluttering in her heart. She was only twelve years old this year, so she still had a lot of room to grow, but she had taken a liking to Ryu many years ago. It was at this moment that she felt gratified that Ryu was blind so he couldn't see her in such an embarrassing state.

"You remembered the sound of my voice? Yaana is very happy." She said, her words almost dripping with honey. They hadn't seen or spoken to each other in more than a year now, so she had been prepared for the worst. But, hearing that Ryu not only remembered the sound of her voice but also her name made her happy beyond compare.

Ryu almost chuckled. It seemed his second sister's intuition when it came to the hearts of young girls was fairly spot on. He didn't know what he had done to gain this little girl's affections, but he seemed to have cast a shadow over her heart.

Those around could almost see Yaana's young maiden heart fluttering before them. Her fairy-like appearance had been the object of their hopes and dreams for several years already, but it seemed she had already found someone she liked. Clearly, they hadn't bothered to ask Ryu's opinion on the matter. None of them thought he was worthy of her to begin with, how could they fathom a reality where he would reject her?

Still, technically speaking, since Patriarch Agnes only had one daughter and no other children, even if Ryu lost the Coronation Games, he could still become Clan Patriarch if he renounced all rights to the throne. So, among their generation, he was still the highest ranked no matter how much the upper echelon hated him. Simply put, if he wasn't worthy of her, then neither were they.

"The Clan Patriarch summons Young Master Ryu to his study." Before Ryu could properly respond to Yaana, a servant came to deliver a message.

Chapter 44: Old General

Yaana felt saddened as she watched Ryu slowly follow the servant away, but there was nothing she could do about the matter. She was far too young to understand what love was, but she knew enough to know that she enjoyed being around Ryu. Was that not enough for now?

As for Ryu, he had no such things on his mind. He was too mature to fall for someone like Yaana. At the same time, he felt that her endeavours would only lead to her own heartbreak – something he cared little for.

Of the young mistresses of this generation, Yaana and the Kunal family miss Ryu's second sister mentioned were number one and two. Simply put, they were almost guaranteed to marry into the royal clan as tools for their families. This was almost written in stone considering the Garis and Kunal families' fairly low ranked among the six Clans.

While this sounded like good news for Yaana, it wasn't. The top young maidens of a generation almost always married the King. Whether they became Queen or Concubine was the only matter up for questioning. This was exactly what happened with Ryu's

mother and Olivia of the Cedar Clan. And, obviously, as things stood now, Ryu would never become King.

Truth be told, even if Ryu had the power to fight for Kingship, he had no interest in the title, nor did he have interest in collecting beauties. He didn't fully understand why, but every fairy-like lady he interacted with, no matter how beautiful or elegant, seemed plain and uninteresting. None of them were capable of moving his heart. It probably also didn't help that he never actually laid eyes on them, he only listened to others describe how beautiful they were... He found the whole affair meaningless and uninteresting.

Ryu silently followed servant who continuously looked back with an expression of curiosity. The servant boy couldn't help but wonder how it was that Ryu followed him so easily. He suddenly thought of fantastical stories he read about heavenly cultivators capable of 'seeing' an ant crawling along the grass from hundreds of yards away, but he immediately shook his head. Didn't their young master fail to awaken his meridians? How could he be such an expert?

Soon, the two of them had made their way to the Agnes Clan's Main House, a towering structure with ancient aesthetics and a tall set of wide stairs to its front door. It just so happened that as they were making their way in, an escort of five was making their way out.

"Ah, Patriarch Garis." The servant boy bowed hurriedly.

A bold elder gentleman walked ahead, sweeping a cold glance over the servant boy and Ryu who followed behind him. Despite being his grandfather's age, Patriarch Garis only had a few streaks of grey in his reddish-brown beard. Plus, his valiant appearance was only helped by the fact he stood well over six feet tall.

The servant boy looked toward Ryu nervously. He had purposely said this Patriarch's name aloud to help out Ryu so he could only panic when he saw that Ryu didn't react appropriately.

Ryu smiled lightly. "Patriarch Garis, I hope you've enjoyed your stay at our Agnes Clan. Forgive this blind young master for being unable to see you out."

The brows of the four guards who followed the patriarch frowned. They were all middle-aged men of decent cultivation, so they knew ways of the world well. Although this young man's disposition was clearly quite good, he didn't have the power to backup his arrogance. In the case that this was true, the best course of action was to lower one's head. The fact that this young master of the Agnes Clan refused to do so would only ensure his demise. It was the epitome of stupidity.

Patriarch Garis snorted in disdain. "My granddaughter won't be marrying a cripple like you no matter how many airs you put on. Do tell your useless grandfather that."

With a wave of his robes, Patriarch Garis turned to leave. As the retired General that he was, it wasn't much of a surprise that his personality was so abrasive.

"Oh, is that so? Do tell her that I wish her the best then." Ryu said without care. Where did these people get off? Did everyone assume that Yaana falling for him was his own blessing? Did they really never consider the idea of him not wanting her love to begin with?

"What did you just say?" The former General's temper flared. It was one thing for his granddaughter to reject Ryu, but the words this young man just said made it sound as though it was the opposite. Had his ears heard incorrectly?!

Ryu didn't seem to be listening. Instead, he had patted the servant boy's shoulder. "Do remember, brother Parios. Within the Agnes Clan, even pigs and chickens must have their own pride. If I find that you've bowed to another person not of the Agnes Clan, I'll be forced to punish you."

A cold sweat dripped down Parios' forehead and back. On one hand, his heart warmed that their Clan's young master remembered his name and even called him brother. But, on the other, he couldn't help but steal glances toward the five valiant men who had stopped in their tracks at Ryu's words.

He started praying to the gods above. 'Please save me, oh Sky Gods. I've lived a good life. Other than one or two trips to the local brothels, I swear I've committed no other wrongs. I don't deserve to die so young.'

However, Ryu didn't sense his plight. In fact, he had already continued up the stairs, passing by the General as though there wasn't a murderous rage locked onto his body. Before any could even realize what had happened, he had already made it to the top of the stairs without incident and was headed toward the doors.

Before he entered, he paused once more. "I have to say, Commander General Garis, I'm quite disappointed. The fact you allowed me to reach the top of these stairs could only mean that you've dulled in your old age."

Ryu's words were like a resounding slap to the face of the five-man escort team. Weren't they just thinking about how misplaced Ryu's arrogance was? Weren't they just thinking about how he didn't have the power to back it? Yet, he was blatantly disrespectful to their Clan Patriarch and they hadn't dared to retaliate. Wasn't this the clearest form of contradiction?

Parios scurried up the stairs, almost falling to all fours multiple times before he finally dived through the large double doors to duck behind his knees and hands as though an explosion was coming. By the time he came to, not only had Ryu disappeared, but the Garis Clan escort had left in defeat.

Chapter 45: Disown

The enraged roar of Patriarch Agnes shook the Clan's Main House. His cultivation couldn't compare to the King, but he was still a Qi Refinement realm expert. When he was angry, the trees swayed and ground shook. This was the way of the world.

In the corner of his study, Second Concubine Leilani stood with her head lowered, unable to face her father's scrutinizing look. After holding in his anger until he was sure the Garis Clan bastards were gone, Old Man Agnes couldn't control it any longer.

"What did I do to deserve this?! A useless daughter! A useless grandson! My entire main bloodline is filled with useless fools! Do I really have to hand the Clan to my younger brothers?!"

By now, Leilani's good looks had begun to slowly fade. She was still an outstanding beauty due to her cultivation, but the war age waged was one it always took victory in. Coupling this with the stress she faced due to her own son's inability to help the Clan and the process only sped up. She was already forty years old with nothing to show for it.

All her life, she had done nothing but lose. She was raised to become Queen but had failed. She was then tasked with at least birthing the King's first son, but she had failed once more. Then, her own son was finally born and she thought it was finally her time to shine. Ryu was not only handsome, but a child with rare intelligence. But, that had ended in failure once more. She couldn't help but feel that the entirety of her life was meaningless.

Just now, her father had tried a last-ditch attempt to revitalize Ryu's potential usefulness to the Clan. At the very least, if he could leverage the Yaana girl's apparent affection for his useless grandson, the Agnes Clan would gain the backing of a third of the Kingdom's military. This would solidify their rank for at least one more generation where hopefully a worthy successor would be born. However, it was clear how that attempt ended.

Patriarch Garis had all but laughed in his face. The Garis Clan was eyeing the Queen position for themselves, how could they allow themselves to become tool of the Agnes Clan? Why? Just so that they could remain ranked last while the Agnes Clan remained the second ranked Clan? What an absolute joke.

The Garis Clan men often devoted their lives to the military. It was for this reason that they were ranked so low to begin with. But, after a series of events the Imperial Censors had banned from being disseminated, the upper echelon of the Garis Clan realized that the power they held was meaningless. If they wanted to avoid ever being disrespected again, they needed more power!

Still, even if Patriarch Agnes understood the reason behind the rejection of the marriage proposal, how could he accept the reality of his Clan's decline so easily? The Clan Patriarch was thoroughly enraged.

"What are you worth if not the hole between your legs?!" He turned his ire toward his daughter, swinging his palm toward Leilani with barely a regard for her life.

A resounding slap sent the Second Concubine crashing into a bookcase that leaned against the wall. Books flew into the air, flying upward only to land of Leilani's frail body as she slumped to the floor.

Ryu's mother's face slightly deformed, her delicate cheeks swelling so quickly that her left eyes sealed shut at a pace that was visible to the naked eye.

It was at this moment that Ryu entered the study...

Although his eyes were blind, he didn't need them to know what had happened. He had heard everything from the yelling to the loud slap. Still, he didn't show much of a reaction.

"You summoned me?" Ryu's cool voice directed a question toward his grandfather.

Patriarch Agnes' brow twitched. He had half a mind to slap this grandson of his as well, but when he thought about what he had planned, he hesitated. He would need that handsome face to succeed.

"You have one more opportunity to be useful to me." Patriarch Agnes responded coldly. "For the next three days, the Garis Clan will be here. Although they can reject my offer of marriage, they cannot toss away all decorum. They must allow us to play host. During this time, the Garis Clan young miss will likely cling to you as she always does, you must –"

"No." Ryu didn't allow his grandfather to finish. In fact, his face as twisted into a look of sheer and unbridled disdain.

"What did you say?!" The chest of the old man rose and fell at astonishing rates. His skin reddened and one could almost see billowing smoke coming from his now crimson ears.

"I have no intention of making use of a little girl's affection to corner her future. In addition, Yaana may be immature, but she isn't stupid. She understands the value her body holds which means the only way to succeed would be if I raped her. You really have the face to stand before your grandson and ask him to commit a crime to force the hand of the Garis Clan?"

The fact that this was even an idea his grandfather was comfortable enough to say aloud filled Ryu with a deep disgust. If he was willing to say such things now, what other horrible things had he done in his life that Ryu had no idea about? What land of white bones was the Agnes Clan's number two ranking built upon?

These thoughts caused a searing pain time to climb up from his stomach with such ferocity that Ryu almost vomited from where he stood.

Without another word to his grandfather who was currently pointing at him in mute anger, Ryu attempted to go and help his mother to her feet. But, who would have known that he would be greeted with a piercing wind headed directly to his gut.

Before the blind Ryu could react, the small foot of a woman cracked three of his ribs, sending him flying to the opposite wall... The small foot of his own mother.

"You useless, unfilial child! Do as your grandfather says!" A shrill cry filled with desperation, rage, embarrassment, but most shocking of all, resolution, filled Ryu's ears.

He coughed weakly, blood falling from his lips as he struggled to stand. In the end, a self-deprecating laughter left his lips.

"I hope after I leave today..." Ryu spoke softly, "That the Agnes Clan disowns me completely. I never want anything to do with you all again..." With nothing but a lonely back, Ryu walked out of the room.