

# Grand Ancestral Bloodlines

## *Chapter 6: Forgotten*

Mistress Kunan's eyes widened as she gazed at her grandson. She knew Ryu's personality well. He was cold, calculating, and treated his words like gold. In truth, she was worried that if she wasn't his grandmother, he might not speak to her at all. The fact that this very same Ryu was saying these words meant that if he wasn't 100% confident, he was at least 99% so.

"A Dormant Shrine?" Mistress Kunan probed.

Such Shrines were coveted by Clans of all kinds. With the system of things having been set for so long, Dormant Shrines were among the only resources capable of shifting such a stable situation.

Shrines themselves not only provided Clans with protection, they also dictated the Faith tied to a lineage. Said Faith is responsible for the prosperity of Clan, its potential for growth, but most importantly, its longevity.

The Faith of the Tatsuya and Kunan Clans were unrivaled. With such a level of protection, they had an unshakeable foundation.

Of course, one might then wonder just why such blessed Clans birthed a cripple like Ryu, but this was an inappropriate way to view things.

For one, the prosperity Ryu brought his maternal and paternal Clans couldn't be underestimated. Due to his aid, his Father, Titus Tatsuya, had already become the number one expert of the Shrine Plane with his mother acting as a close number two.

Secondly, if one analyzed Ryu's body, you'd be shamed if you dared to say he wasn't a blessed young man.

Not only was Ryu born with a perfect balance of four Ancestral Grade bloodlines, he awakened the number one ranked Heavenly Pupils. And, although his meridian awakening ceremony failed, he was also born with Ancestral Grade meridians.

How could a young man born with so much talent be classified as anything other than blessed?

"Mm." Ryu retracted the excited glint in his eye, his expression darkening slightly. "Our next movements have to be extremely calculated."

"Do you sense something?"

Ryu looked off into the distance, gently holding his grandmother's arm. "We have the most accumulated Faith in the martial world, yet it seems that other Clans are surging while ours have stalled. Something is amiss."

"Have you..." Mistress Kunan hesitated.

She knew quite well what abilities of her grandson's eyes. Often times, Elders of their Kunan and Tatsuya Clans would attempt to exploit Ryu's abilities, but his grandparents and parents never had. They understood quite well how much Ryu hated reading Fate, so they never forced him to do such things. However, judging by the way he was speaking...

"After what father did yesterday, I've felt uneasy." Ryu replied seriously. "If it's for the sake of my family, any discomfort is irrelevant."

Mistress Kunan's eyes glistened with unshed tears as she tightened her grip on her grandson's arm.

'Am I really cursed to live longer than my grandson?' Her heart ached uncontrollably.

"If your father hadn't done what he did, I would have never allowed him to marry your mother. I want my grandson by my side for as long as possible."

Ryu sighed. "The heavens are in turmoil. So much so that even my eyes can't make sense of anything. There's a possibility that this is because I have no real practice reading the stars. But, my instincts tell me that it wouldn't matter."

Mistress Kunan shook her head. "Reading the stars has never been entirely reliable..." After a pause, Mistress Kunan continued, "What have you understood about this ruin?"

"Not much..." Ryu lowered his voice. "I've cross-referenced a few ancient texts and am fairly confident about its general location and its importance. That's all."

"A few?"

Seeing his grandmother looked at him skeptically, Ryu rubbed his nose. He had been working on this for hundreds of years, how could it qualify as "a few". Just by virtue of the fact no one else knew about this ruin, one could understand the difficulty of finding this information.

Mistress Kunan smiled knowingly. "You've grown old now and think you can lie to your grandmother?"

With a cough, Ryu changed the subject. "The location is very sensitive... It's not located in this layer, it's—"

Suddenly, Mistress Kunan's head snapped toward a particular direction. "How dare you?!"

An oppressive aura erupted from Mistress Kunan's frail looking body. In that moment, she had regained her majesty as Priest Saintess of the Life and Ice Shrines.

Ryu's eyes narrowed. The reason he spoke so freely about such a sensitive topic out in the open like this was because no one dared to eavesdrop. Even if someone had the courage to do something so stupid, was his grandmother some frail woman? She was a Priest Saintess!

A shadow stumbled from the void coughing up blood and revealing a red robed elder.

Mistress Kunan was livid. Someone actually dared to impugn upon her prestige in such a fashion? And worst yet, it was a mere Shrine Elder?!

She already so rarely got to spend time with her grandson. How could she take this lying down?!

"Your courage has grown Sixth Fire Shrine Elder Ciaran!"

Elder Ciaran smiled wryly. "Ah, it's Priest Saintess Kunan. My apologies, I was simply in a rush and happened to encroach upon your Void Domain. The mistake is entirely my fault."

The sheer lack of sincerity in his voice caused Ryu's grandmother's rage to shake the very foundation of the Palace. "It seems that the last time I killed someone was over a billion years ago. Maybe some fools have forgotten my name!"

#### *Chapter 7: Supreme Priest Adofo*

An illusory hand of shimmering blue appeared in the skies. Although it had the delicate and slender features of a woman, it blossomed with an unbridled and domineering power. No matter how beautiful it looked, one couldn't help but shiver at its sight.

Elder Ciaran panicked, his casual demeanor shattering in the face of absolute strength.

He was a complete fool. He actually dared to anger Mistress Kunan when she was in a terrible mood. She had just been feeling helpless about her lack of ability to help her grandson and now someone provoked her? This was no less than poking at a sleeping bear.

"Ah, Priest Saintess. Please give me some face and stay your hand."

Ryu inwardly sneered when he heard this newcomer's words.

Wearing the same red robes as Elder Ciaran, aside from the gold etchings, a seemingly young man appeared within the Palace Hallway.

Although he seemed young, this was only because of the depth of his cultivation. In reality, he was several million years Elder Ciaran's elder. This man was none other than one of the Grand Elders of Fire Shrine, Third Grand Elder Eloysius.

'As expected, this really does have something to do with father's actions. But, to think Third Grand Elder would be so bold.' Ryu's expression never changed, glancing from Sixth Elder's shivering body to Eloysius.

Any normal mortal wouldn't be able to meet the eyes of an immortal. In fact, mortals of the lower realm shivered in the face of even those Ryu saw as mediocre cultivators. However, Ryu showed no such reaction in the face of these immortals. His pride was staunch even in the face of his quaking inner organs.

Seeing that Mistress Kunan's technique hadn't paused, Third Grand Elder continued elegantly.

"Although your son-in-law is the Priest Saint of Fire Shrine, it wouldn't bode well for his mother-in-law to kill one of our elders, right?" A small smile played his handsome lips. "After all, Priest Saint Titus' rule is... Well, it's best we don't speak of this with those not of this Shrine. It would be inappropriate."

Mistress Kunan didn't have the normal reaction a person would have to such provocation. Instead, she turned to her grandson.

"What's the worst I can do without causing trouble?"

Ryu's eyes flashed. "Cripple Sixth Elder. Slap Third Grand Elder and sever his left arm."

"Okay!" Without hesitating, Mistress Kunan did exactly that.

Third Grand Elder's eyes widened. What kind of situation was this?

His calm expression crumbled into darkness. He had miscalculated.

During Ryu's life, who had dared to provoke him? The answer was obvious: No one. His mother was the heiress to three potential Shrines while his father was the Priest Saint of the Fire Shrine. This didn't even need to mention his grandparents. Who would dare touch him?

This caused a misconception that began the moment Ryu went into seclusion at seven years old. Many believed that he was weak willed and sheltered. They had no clue about his decisiveness, nor his ruthlessness. Today, they would learn.

The illusory light blue palm fell from the skies.

"No! No please! I was wrong!" Sixth Elder screamed almost incoherently. He couldn't believe what was happening. His only job was to probe Ryu. Maybe if they could make the son give up what his father had given him, then the father would say no more. Yet this resulted in him being crippled?!

Mistress Kunan couldn't seem to hear a thing. In one swift motion, the massive hand slammed into Sixth Elder's body, burying him into the ground.

Just how sturdy was the Fire Shrine Palace? It was made of some of the greatest and strongest materials known to the martial world. Yet, it blasted apart like wet cardboard in the face of Mistress Kunan's strength.

Sixth Elder convulsed on the ground, unable to stop the cold energy from seeping into his body, freezing his meridians and shattering them one by one.

His Spiritual Foundation shook in indignation, unwilling to leave the world so soon. But, with its tether to the Living Plane severed, it faded into non-existence.

Third Grand Elder eyes contracted. The Faith a Priest Saintess of two Shrines could maneuver was too fierce. Even if he was in his home territory, it wasn't enough to fend off Mistress Kunan!

"Entering the private property of the Tatsuya Clan without permission. Showing disdain for the heir of the Tatsuya Clan. Insulting the ruling Priest Saint. Eavesdropping on Council Grade information." Ryu's voice was akin to the surface of an undisturbed lake. But, beneath its surface, it was clear... So devoid of life that one could see clear through to the bottom yet remain unable to fathom its depth. This was Ryu!

Third Grand Elder shivered when he heard Council Grade information. The Council referred to the highest order experts of any given shrine. The lowest acceptable rank for a member of The Council was Priest! A Grand Elder was still two ranks from such prestige!

"Lies!" Third Grand Elder lost control of his emotions, uttering something he never should have.

"You can cripple him now too, grandmother." Ryu said casually as though he was speaking about the weather.

Mistress Kunan smiled lightly, raising her fallen palm and slamming it into the aggrieved First Grand Elder. In the next instant, one Elder lay unconscious on the ground while the other became stuck in the wall. It was a truly pitiful sight.

"His father will be quite unhappy." Mistress Kunan spoke gleefully.

"Supreme Priest Adofo should have taught his son better, then."

*Chapter 8: Old Monster Couples*

As the evening set upon the Shrine Plane, the Central Pavilion of Fire Shrine was bustling with countless guests. Not only had the various Clans of the Fire Shrine coalesced, masters of the Wind, Earth, Water and Wood Shrines had also made appearances along with many others.

Aside from the bosses of Shrines, Guild leaders and Sect Patriarchs also attended. Alchemy Gods not seen for millions of years resurfaced, Formation Masters of ancient times left their dens, and even cultivation experts, after being in seclusion for countless years, had come to remind the world of their existence.

Many of these individuals hadn't even seen or heard of this "Ryu" before. After all, this was Ryu's thousandth birthday, a time that was a mere blink of an eye for these old men and women. Still, they came. The call of the Tatsuya Clan wasn't something that they could ignore.

At the head of the pavilion, a domineering roar of a laughter shook the foundation below their feet. Yet, the party continued as though the guests had heard nothing. They were too used to powerful experts like this involuntarily influencing their surroundings.

"My grandson did that? Truly me boy!" An older man who looked to be in his 50s roared with laughter. His head of hair was a fierce blue, shimmering with a lightning so powerful that it sometimes appeared white due to the blinding light. This man was none other than Priest Saint Kunan, Ryu's maternal grandfather. "Decisive and ruthless, just like his grandfather!"

An older woman of about the same age sighed. Her hair flickered with the embers of an undying fire, making her already red hair even more valiant and awe inspiring.

Despite her appearance, this older woman's demeanor was calm and serious, similar, yet, at the same time so very different from Mistress Kunan's calm and lovable demeanor. This woman was decidedly colder. However, there was clear love in her eye when she spoke of Ryu. She was none other than Ryu's paternal grandmother and current Priest Saintess of the Reincarnation Shrine, Old Mistress Tatsuya.

"This Third Grand Elder doesn't have a small background." Old Mistress Tatsuya spoke, trying to pour cold water over Kunan's party.

"You come from a mighty Phoenix Clan, yet you're worried about some inferior fire bird clan?"

A severe pinch contorted Priest Saint Kunan's facial expression. He wanted to rage, but the moment he noticed that it was his wife's hand to his side, he ducked down like an

obedient child. Ever since that incident with Elena's grandmother, he had been practically begging for forgiveness for the last few billion years. Even after all this time, he didn't dare to go against his wife.

Mistress Kunan sent a look of disdain toward her husband, causing the quiet-until-now Old Man Tatsuya to chuckle lightly, but he too received a glare from his wife that forced him quiet once more.

"The Scarlet Clan isn't a normal inferior fire bird clan. Many ancient texts place them above the Phoenix among the Fire Bird species."

Old Man Kunan wasn't convinced although he remained quiet. The Scarlet Clan were the descendant of the Scarlet Sparrow. It wasn't that they were weak, he knew well that they were very strong. It was just that a Phoenix's wings could cover hundreds of miles at maturity while a Scarlet Sparrow would never be more than two palm lengths. It was difficult for someone with his personality to take such a creature seriously.

During ancient times, the Scarlet Clan once controlled the Blood Shrine. At that point, everyone had no choice but to take them seriously, despite their size. However, they hadn't birthed a descendant capable of taking the role of Priest Saint or Saintess for many generations, forcing their Legacy Shrine into being a Dormant Shrine.

They were quite amazing creatures. While Ice Phoenixes wielded Life and Fire Phoenixes wielded Reincarnation, Scarlet Sparrows were masters of Vitality. Their flames had the ability to bestow and take away bloodlines. They were no less important to the structure of the martial world in comparison to Phoenixes.

Now, however, the Scarlet Family was a subordinate clan of the Fire Shrine due to the fact their only remaining ancestral ability were their scolding hot flames.

"Look at you." Mistress Kunan frowned, reprimanding her husband. "Didn't your Kunan Clan lose the Tribulation Shrine? Just like the Scarlet Clan, you haven't birthed any descendants who can take it over. Why do you look down on the Scarlet Clan for a plight you yourself have?"

"But—"

"No buts." Mistress Kunan continued. "I know you want to say that Little Himari can gain the Tribulation Shrine's acknowledgement, but how is our little girl going to preside over four Shrines? Aren't you a little too useless?"

Old Mistress Tatsuya glared at her own husband as well. "What are you snickering for? I'm still not satisfied with the fact you handed your duties to Little Titus so soon. You're his father, you should have borne the burden for longer no matter how talented he is. But, all you Dragons are so lazy!

"You wanted to do what he did for Little Ryu, but you didn't want to bear the headache, so you passed of your duties on him. What kind of father are you?!"

In the distance, Mistress Tatsuya and her husband Priest Saint Tatsuya coughed awkwardly as they watched their parents bicker, not daring to get in the middle of it.

Even for experts of their caliber, billions of years of marriage wore on them. It would be impossible to find any couple that had been together for so long that weren't like this.

"You won't ever treat me like this, will you?" Titus looked toward his beautiful wife, but only received a mysterious smile. Still, it made his heart flutter.

"Will everything be okay?" Himari suddenly asked, changing the subject.

Titus snorted. "Since I've decided to give my son the Origin Flame, even the Sky Gods themselves can't stop me!"

### *Chapter 9: Loss*

"Introducing the heir to the Tatsuya Clan and his fiancée, Saintess Elena!" A loyal servant of the Tatsuya Clan happily introduced Ryu and Elena. In that moment, thousands of gazes had fallen upon the heavenly couple.

Although Ryu preferred black robes, today, he wore traditional Tatsuya warrior garments. His robes were split into three layers, starting with an underlayer of golden cloth, partially covered with pristine white fabrics, before finishing with a fierce embroidered red. The design was simple yet exuded an air of majesty only a young man with the world in his hands could replicate.

To his side, Elena's beauty was beyond words. Her diamond pink eyes sparkled with happiness, reflecting everything good about the world. Her hair shimmered like crystals, sometimes appearing as a soothing lavender, and at other times like a gentle pink, yet it flowed like calm stream.

She was dressed in traditional Kori Clan robes, representing the Clan of Ryu's maternal grandmother. The elegant gown shimmered with light blues and pristine whites, exuding a graceful and comforting air.

Ryu walked forward holding Elena's arm, his white hair falling with a beautiful sheen and reaching to the middle of his back without a speck of dust. His silver eyes were steady with a cold indifference as though he was completely unaffected by the numerous sensory sweeps that touched his mind.

Still, he felt every single one. It was akin to an uncomfortable bombardment hands, each vying for space to greet Ryu. However, to those whose senses touched him, they



felt his lack of a reaction was due to the fact he didn't realize what was happening at all. If Ryu had the cultivation of his father, would they dare to be so rude?

It was clear that they all wanted to confirm whether or not the son of the mighty Titus Tatsuya and elegant Himari Tatsuya really was a cripple. And it was just as clear that his reaction, or lack thereof, confirmed the rumors.

Elena's brows twitched in anger. To her, an insult on her future husband was an insult to her. However, if she stepped forward to protect Ryu, wouldn't that just give these bastards capital to talk ill of him more? Giving her fiancé the title of a man who hid behind a woman would only harm him.

'These fools have no idea how much he's done for you all...' Elena thought with disdain.

One would think that the birth of a child as a result of a union between the Tatsuya and Kunan Clans would cause an uproar, but this was the case only for those of the younger generations. Those of the older generation didn't care for such matters.

Well, this wasn't entirely accurate. This union affected them too, but their uproar had already occurred when Titus and Himari announced their engagement. After this matter was closed, wasn't it a foregone conclusion that they would eventually be with child? Such a child wouldn't be worth the older generation giving a second glance to until he grew through several millennia.

It wasn't too much of an exaggeration to say that of the older generation, only Ryu's grandparents had been aware of his birth.

As a result of this, many of these old fogies weren't aware of Ryu's deeds. To them, the thousand years since his birth was nothing more than a nap to them. How much could someone accomplish in that time? This was how they thought.

Since they often spent millions of years stuck at a cultivation realm, this was how they began to view time. If they couldn't accomplish much of anything in a thousand years, how would a youngster, wet behind the ears, do so? If it wasn't for the Tatsuya Clan's call, they wouldn't have even come here.

A small smile played Ryu's lips. But, those who knew him knew that this wasn't his true smile. In fact, just looking at it made their backs stiffen with a frosty cold.

"I must say," The crowd quieted down for Ryu to speak a few words to begin the festivities, "With so many seniors here, I, Ryu Tatsuya, can smile sincerely. The face you've given me today is one I can wear proudly for the rest of my life. Thank you."

Hearing Ryu's amiable and humble introduction, some felt bad about their actions, even blushing in shame. However, others sneered inwardly. This was the martial world, the weak would always be taken advantage of, what did they have to feel bad about? Even

if Titus' father was the number one expert of the Shrine Plane, he wouldn't wantonly offend so many of them for something so petty.

In the distance, Ryu's parents and grandparents, the six who knew him best, also inwardly sneered. However, their reasons were far different. In Ryu's thousand years of life, when had he ever taken a loss?!

"Please feel free to enjoy yourselves." With that, Ryu took a step forward before pausing. "Oh! I almost forgot."

Just these words were enough for Ryu's family members to start uncontrollably chuckling. Elena, who was trying her best to keep it together, couldn't control the quivering of her upper lip. Even Nuri smiled sweetly from within the void, following behind Ryu and Elena in silence.

"There'll be a gift ranking competition later tonight. My father plans on opening the festivities by gifting me the Origin Flame, I hope that you all can continue to enlighten this junior about the older generation's prestige!"

Hearing this, the eyes of those old fogies widened before raspy coughing and paled faces filled the room.

A gift ranking competition with such an opening? He wanted to wring them dry!

#### *Chapter 10: Folk Lore (1)*

Ryu pretended as though his words had no deep hidden meaning, disappearing into the crowd of guests with Elena by his side.

With the appearance of so many of the older generation, there were of course many who brought their disciples with them. In addition, there were many heirs to numerous Clans and Shrines present as well. It was these individuals that he and Elena began to mingle with, ingratiating themselves well as a young host and hostess.

Although this action seemed simple on the surface, it was yet another message to those who had been arrogant enough to so brazenly investigate the secrets of the Tatsuya Clan Heir. 'We are but youths, no? So wouldn't it be beneath your lofty statuses to take out your anger on us?'

Just like this, those old fogies hadn't even begun their counterattack before they suddenly ran into soft clouds. Their rage could only hang in the air with nowhere to be vented.

That said, there were some of this very same generation who found great pleasure in the proceedings.

"That little rascal is too vicious." Despite her words, Merula Tatsuya, Ryu's paternal grandmother, couldn't hide the smile hidden deep within her eyes.

Priest Saint Kunan was clutching his stomach at this point, trying his best not to let his laugh be heard. If those old bastards heard him now, they really might throw a fit.

Ryu's words might have seemed simple, but they weren't at all. There was nothing that old fogies cared about more than their faces. Public perception was everything. They had little else to hang their prestige upon.

A gift ranking competition was usually used in such ceremonies so that a ruler could distinguish their retainers from the rest of their kingdom. In these cases, the supposed "rank" of the gift would be decided in advance. One of low status wouldn't be allowed to bring a gift that was too valuable, while those of high status wouldn't be able to bring a gift that was too mundane.

The mere fact that such a practice existed in the martial world showed just how important these symbolic and abstract showings meant to the upper echelon of society. Often times, the best Emperors and Kings were capable of manipulating these seemingly meaningless occurrences to perfection.

However, Ryu broke all of the unspoken rules of the gift ranking competition. Those who had been invited didn't know whether they could be considering as retainers of the Tatsuya family or not, so how could they know just how valuable their gift should be? They had no guidelines to follow.

So, imagine for a moment if one purposely gave a mundane gift. Wouldn't you thus be saying that you had no interest in being close friends with the Tatsuya Clan? Wouldn't you essentially be spitting in the face of the number one clan of the Shrine Plane? Who could bear such a burden?

The worst part about it all was the fact that Ryu had already named the so-called 'headlining gift', a gift by which all standards were set. Whether a gift was valuable or mundane was decided by this headliner. Yet, this headliner was among the most valuable treasures in all of existence!

If they purposely gave a poor gift, they'd be slapping the face of the Tatsuya Clan. If they gave an appropriate gift, they'd be giving up their most treasured possessions. Ryu had driven them into a corner with just a few sentences!

Mistress Kunan couldn't help but smile either. On this rare instance, she didn't reprimand her husband. When it came to things involving her precious grandson, she was much more relaxed. However, the matters they had spoken of earlier today weighed on her heavily, still.

"There may be large, sweeping changes soon." She said with a sigh.

"You spoke of what led to that Third Grand Elder child's crippling, but you didn't go into details. Just what is worthy of a Council Grade evaluation from Little Ryu?" Merula questioned.

"If Little Ryu is correct, I believe it's time for your Fire Phoenix Clan and my Ice Phoenix Clan to come together once more."

"It's this serious, Vorena?"

"Mm." Mistress Kunan nodded in affirmation. "These ruins house not only the secret to rekindling our flames, but also an opportunity to grasp a third flame and a Dormant Shrine. The movement of Faith has been too odd in recent times. We've been far too unlucky in comparison to our standing, while others have been the exact opposite in comparison to theirs. I think it's for the best if we accomplish this task for the sake of the future generation."

The two clan mistresses spoke seriously while their husbands stood on the sidelines. Although they were married, when it came to matters of the Phoenix Clans, they were obviously handled by their two Clan Matriarchs.

One had to know that it wasn't only the Ice Flame that was weakening, the Rebirth Flame was also weakening. In fact, before Old Man Tatsuya's Clan took control of the Fire Shrine, it was his wife's Clan that had it. Although they were Fire Dragons, their strength lied in their battle prowess and strong bodies, not the potency of their flames. It wasn't until the Fire Phoenix Clan's flame weakened that the Fire Dragons grasped the Shrine.

Simply put, Merula was just as interested in these ruins as her sworn sister Vorena. If something wasn't done, it could be that soon the Reincarnation Shrine wouldn't be theirs to control anymore.

yet another Shrine."