

Life at the Top Chapter 516

Jasper looked at Ian coldly. The man was growing more arrogant by the second. “You really do think that you can devour all my assets, don’t you?”

Ian snorted and returned to his chair. Picking up his wine glass, he laughed loudly. “You’re telling me you have another trick up your sleeve? Look around you, Jasper. This isn’t Swallow Capital, nor is it the Southeast Province. I’ll show you just how powerful the Hull family is!

“You drove my son mad! I’m going to make you kneel before him and prostrate in apology! I’m going to destroy you!”

Ian glared at Jasper through the transparent wine glass and scoffed. The latter was expressionless. “And this is only the first wave of my plan! I’m only going to continue attacking you from here on!

“So are you here to show off or are you here to mock me?” Jasper looked at Ian calmly as if whatever the man said was not enough to faze him.

“Or perhaps, you’re here to compromise?”

Ian’s expression froze.

His eyes drilled into Jasper, and at that moment, Ian wanted nothing more than to take a look at Jasper’s brain to see what was going on inside.

Jasper had got it right. Ian did not come over to boast or mock Jasper at all.

Such things were normal for youths like Ben, but for Ian who had seen his fair share of business struggles, he knew that he had to be careful until the last moment before victory was confirmed.

The only reason he would compromise was due to the importance of the two ships that were detained in Harbor City!

Ian scoffed and replied meaningfully, "It's always better to resolve conflicts than add to them. You've seen what I'm capable of, and to speak the truth, maybe I do need to put in a little more effort to completely crush you. But there's no way you'll ever be able to crush me.

"This is the difference between the both of us. We've got completely different foundations.

"You're just representing yourself, and Dawson Schuler too, at most.

"But I have the businesspeople of Haddock on my side. You screw with me, you screw with the entire Haddock Chamber of Commerce. Forget you, not even the Law family is powerful enough to counter them!"

Ian took a deep breath and stared at Jasper icily. Slowly, he began, "Leave my two ships in Harbor City alone and I'll consider not killing you."

"Why? You're scared?"

Jasper's three words had caused a drastic change in Ian's expression.

Glaring frostily at Jasper, Ian snorted. "Scared? Did you forget who's territory you're standing on right now?"

"Of course, I know that this is the Hull family's territory, but so what? I'm here anyway, aren't I?"

Jasper shifted to a more comfortable posture and looked at Ian before continuing plainly.

“Let’s be honest. These tricks you’re playing, they’re nothing grand at all but that’s because this is the best you can think of within such a short period of time, correct?”

“I can tell that you’re panicking, or you wouldn’t have come to me so hastily and tell me so much right after pulling out those small tricks of yours.”

Jasper then slightly leaned forward and chuckled, looking at Ian. “Just what are you so panicked about? Let me take a guess, shall I?”

“Could it be the two detained ships of yours in Harbor City? And the charge for smuggling goods?”

Jasper’s every word cut into Ian’s heart like daggers.

Ian felt his heart clench painfully.

Jasper’s words were the truth.

Ian was well aware that he had smuggled goods.

In those two cargo ships were a total of 100 million Somer Dollars worth of smuggled goods.

Considering the huge value, Ian was utterly screwed if it came to light.

Despite the flurry of emotions within, Ian’s expression remained indifferent.

Staring nonchalantly at Jasper, Ian scoffed. “What a vast imagination you have there. Do you think I’d be sitting here unharmed if I really smuggled goods?”

“You’re too naive, Jasper. The world is more complicated than you think. Everything you see is just the image others want you to see.”

Jasper nodded in agreement. "You're right, the world really is complicated. Or at least, your acting skills have opened a new world to me. I would've gone and turned myself in or fled long ago if I were you."

Narrowing his eyes at Jasper, Ian replied calmly, "So you're really going to fight until one of us gets completely crushed, then?!"

"I've already told you this back in the Southeast Province." Jasper's expression was still devoid of emotions.

"Then just wait and see! Even if I lose everything in the process, I'm still going to drag you under me when I fall!" Ian shot up and growled wretchedly.

"I'll increase my attacks on both yours and Dawson's businesses right away. How long do you think you'll last, hmm? One week? Two weeks?"

Jasper remained unaffected and carefree in the face of Ian's aggressive words.

Just then, Ian's phone rang.

Ian rejected it irritably but the other party only called again.

Frustrated, Ian picked up the call and growled. "I'm busy now!"

"Mr. Hull, I'm the person in charge of loan transactions in ICBS' Waterhoof City branch. I've called to tell you that our bank has found out about your company facing a severe financial and legal crisis.

"To ensure the security of our branch's loan, we'd like to officially inform you that our branch's contract with your company is to be fully terminated. You are to repay the two billion Somer Dollar loan within three business days!"

A strained voice echoed impolitely from the other end of the line.

Ian was rooted blankly in place before he suddenly roared angrily. “There’s a one-year loan repayment period stipulated in the contract! There are still a few months before the deadline! You have no right to terminate the contract now!”

“Please read through the contract carefully when you have time, Mr. Hull. The bank has the right to request repayment in advance if your company has participated in any illegal activity that could cause a problem with the bank’s loan!

“In addition to this phone call, an official letter will also be faxed to your company. We request that you treat the situation cautiously.”

Then, the person hung up on Ian.

Infuriated, Ian glared at Jasper with utmost ire. “You’re behind this too?!”

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Jasper merely chuckled when confronted with Ian’s anger. “I’m sorry, I don’t think I understand what you mean.”

Ian slammed his palm on the table with a loud bang, causing the snacks and wine on the table to splash and scatter all over the floor.

“Stop pretending to look innocent, Jasper. You were the one who leaked the news to the ICBS, right?! How else would they know about what’s happening in Harbor City if you didn’t tell them?!”

“Now they’re asking me to repay the loan immediately too! Why else would they react so quickly if you hadn’t done anything?!”

Ian glared at Jasper ruthlessly. Fury burned bright red in his chest, and he wanted to throw Jasper into the Harpoon River to feed the fishes.

Jasper shrugged and replied coolly, "I have nothing to do with the bank and your loan.

"The bank recognizes that you broke the law and they want you to repay the loan in advance. That's a matter between you and the bank. What does it have to do with me?"

Ian glared at Jasper coldly. If a look could kill, Jasper would have died thousands of times in Ian's hands by now.

"Don't be so proud, Jasper. It's just a two billion Somer Dollar loan!

"I'm Ian Hull, there's no way I'd be stopped by a mere two billion loan. If you think you can win me like this, then you can f*cking dream on!"

Jasper finally made a move in the face of Ian's words.

Ian watched Jasper arrogantly, waiting for a reaction.

He saw Jasper slowly pull out a document and place it on the table.

'Land Ownership Transfer Agreement.'

Ian's pupils contracted.

"I just bought a plot of land a few hours ago. Coincidentally, the commercial building for G.S. Trading Export Limited Company happens to sit on that plot of land."

Jasper smiled at Ian as the other's expression pulled tautly and became horrifyingly dark. "I think I just became your landlord."

At that moment, Ian's heart constricted.

The last thing he expected was for Jasper to find a way to completely uproot him.

This plot of land belonged to the ICBS, which was intending to sell it.

Ian was well aware of the fact.

A few months ago, Ian even contacted the ICBS to purchase this plot of land as he believed that this plot of land would only appreciate.

Even if it did not appreciate, it was still the plot of land his office building sat on and he would not make a loss.

However, the ICBS had yet to make a decision back then, nor had they agreed on a price yet, so the matter was left alone.

Ian had planned to talk to them about it again, but he did not expect Jasper to be a step ahead of him.

“The land is mine now, and in extension, so are all the commercial buildings atop it. There are still a few months before the lease you signed comes to an end, right, Mr. Hull? That’s okay, I’ll pay compensation according to the lease contract.”

Jasper smiled and tapped on the contract lightly. “It’s just a few hundred thousand dollars. I can easily pay you that amount.”

Ian flushed abnormally red, and his breathing turned heavy as he stared at Jasper. Clenching his jaw, he spat out the words from between his teeth.

“You’re going too far, Jasper!”

Jasper waved his hand dismissively. “Now this, I don’t understand. You’re the one who did all the horrible things. All I’m doing now is retaliate, so why are you accusing me of going too far?”

“Or are you saying it’s my fault for being bullied around by you, and I should just die because you want me to?”

Jasper flipped his palms upward. “What kind of logic is that?”

Ian glared at Jasper, the fury in his eyes bubbling over. “You’re not good enough to offend the entire Haddock Chamber of Commerce!

“This is my last warning. If you continue to act so ignorantly, you’ll be the one dying in a f*cking ditch in the end!”

“Have you gone mad or did I hear you wrong, Ian?”

Jasper looked up at Ian indifferently with a deep gaze.

“You’re the one standing on the edge of the cliff now, not me.

“I’d start thinking about how I’m supposed to defend myself if I were you, not sit here daydreaming.

“The moment your smuggling case is proven at Harbor City, your future will be set in place and there’ll be nowhere for you to run. What makes you think you’re the one winning here?”

Ian chortled and replied, “That’s why I said you’re too naive, Jasper. So what if they find out? You think that means I’ll have to pay the price?

“It’s just 600 million, I can afford to lose it! I still have the Haddock Chamber of Commerce. I’m still a member, and I can still start all over again!”

“And as for the smuggling you’re accusing me of, I don’t know what you’re talking about. I hand every business transaction in my company to my confidant. Of course, he’ll have to go to jail for breaking the law. But what does that have to do with me?”

Ian stared at Jasper and tried to find even a shred of disappointment or frustration on his expression. However, he gave up in the end, for there was no shift in Jasper's expression after Ian's words.

"You're too naive, Jasper. What makes you think I'd do those things myself? I had already found myself a scapegoat in the very beginning. So what if they find out? It won't affect me anyway.

"Your plans... are futile!

"I am Ian Hull. I've been in the business world for decades. What makes you think a 20-year-old brat like you can compete with me, huh?"

Ian suppressed the anger within him and sneered coldly.

Jasper merely smiled and took the contract on the table before stating calmly, "Please do start thinking about moving, Mr. Hull."

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Ian's pupils contracted. He was about to say something when Jasper spoke again.

"Maybe you don't have to go through all that trouble. After all, even if you find a new place, who knows if you'll get to stay there, right?"

Ian felt a wave of unease rush over him at Jasper's subtle smile.

He could not help but feel like there was something he had forgotten, a weakness that Jasper had already gotten hold of.

Yet no matter how he thought about it, Ian still thought that everything was in his grasp.

“All you have is the ICBS’ loan, the two ships in Harbor City, and this plot of land. That’s just three axes and you think you can win me? You wish.”

Ian sneered when he was done, but his phone suddenly began to ring again.

Ian had heard no good news every time his phone rang today, and now that his phone began to ring incessantly once more, Ian did not want to pick it up at all.

However, the display on the phone stated that it was from the hospital.

Ian had no choice but to pick it up.

“Mr. Hull, I’m calling to tell you that Ben has run out of the hospital!”

A nurse’s agitated voice echoed through the speakers.

Ian was stunned for a moment before he exploded. “What do you mean he ran out?! He’s a patient, how could you let him run out? Are you stupid?”

The nurse replied indignantly, “We’re a hospital, not a detention center, Mr. Hull. The patient is in control of his own legs. Not to mention that Ben is mentally unstable and there’s no way we can watch over him every single second.

“All the more reason to watch over him if his condition is unstable! Do you think you can take the responsibility if anything happens after he has run out?!”

Ian roared.

The nurse on the other end did not dare to make a sound.

Taking heavy breaths, Ian knew that this was not the time to throw a tantrum. He clenched his jaw and ordered, "I'll be there right away. Go look at the cameras and find out where he ran off to!"

Ian then hung up the phone. Glaring sinisterly at Jasper one last time, he turned and left, leaving Jasper to simmer in his thoughts as he watched Ian leave hastily.

Although he did not hear what the hospital told Ian, Jasper could more or less guess what had happened from Ian's two replies.

'Ben ran out?'

'Where would a mentally unstable madman run to?'

Jasper did not dwell on the problem and instead called Henry.

"How's it going for you?"

In a high-end residential complex in Waterhoof City, Henry was sitting with his legs crossed. He was grinning as he looked at the man kneeling in front of him. The man was having his face beaten up by two burly men. "Don't worry about me, I've got this."

Jasper smiled. "Have him turn himself over after you're done. Make him say what he has to."

Hanging up the phone, Henry snapped his fingers at Derick who was kneeling before him. "Hey, have you given it enough thought yet?"

Blood was dripping from the corner of Derick's lips, and the man looked conflicted. He did not dare to speak.

Henry pursed his lips. “Are you actually stupid or are you just pretending to be a f*cking idiot? Do you actually think that *sshole, Ian, is a good person or something?”

“I can promise you that he has already decided to use you as a scapegoat.

“I’ve already asked around in Harbor City. There’s no escaping the charge for smuggling. It’ll only be a matter of time before they issue a joint investigation with the Mainland, and by then, you can forget about walking free from this.

“They’ve also informed me that all the evidence they found points to you being the culprit behind everything. This means Ian has completely removed himself from the narrative while you’re still here putting your life on the line for him. Are you an idiot?”

Derick’s pupils contracted slightly at the words.

He did not know who this young man who suddenly came crashing at his door was, but from everything that had conspired since then, Derick knew that this was an arrogant young man who did things without caring about the consequences.

Most importantly, this young man also seemed to be very aware of what was happening in Harbor City as if he was the true mastermind behind it all.

Henry squatted in front of Derick and spoke, “I don’t like wasting my time, and my patience has always been horrible. Your wife and child are in Harbor City, right?”

“Do you think they’ll have a nice life if you went to jail for smuggling?”

Smiling, Henry patted Derick’s swollen face. “Think again. Work with me, and I’ll have Ian put behind bars. You’re just an accomplice. By turning yourself in and cooperating with the investigation, you’ll have a few years cut from your sentence.”

Henry then pulled out a check from his breast pocket and waved it in front of Derick.

“This check will be enough for your wife and kid to wait comfortably until your release.

Derick stared at the check, already enticed.

He knew that the things he did with Ian were illegal. It would be fine if they did not get caught, but a lot of trouble would come if they did get caught.

According to his understanding of Ian, it was very likely the man would make him take all the blame...

“I mean, you don’t have to agree. You could go ahead and get executed for Ian. I’ll try to send your wife and kid down to meet you as soon as possible.”

Henry’s last sentence finally made Derick speak.

“No! Don’t!

“I promise, as long as you do as you say, I’ll promise you everything!

“I’ll go turn myself in. I’ll tell them everything I know!

“Just please, don’t hurt my family. Keep them safe!”

Henry let out a sigh of relief when he watched Derick’s last defenses break down and begin to sob.

Honestly speaking, he was a trust fund baby, a son from a rich family.

His favorite pastime was to bully and oppress other trust fund babies of his same status, not ‘normal people’ like Derick as it made him seem classless.

Not to mention that he would never hurt Derick's family. Young Master Law was not a suicidal gangster. He was not that horrible.

Henry would be at a loss if Derick had still refused to speak.

Henry smiled, feeling pleased. He spoke, "Good. Don't worry. I promised you, didn't I? That's a basic ethic for high-class trust fund babies."

Henry then got up and gave the two subordinates a look. "Let's go, Mr. Mallin. We'll send you over to turn yourself in."

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It was already getting late when Ian finally found where Ben had run off to.

G.S. Trading Export Limited Company's rooftop was the last place anyone would have expected a mentally unstable Ben to appear at!

No one knew how Ben managed to walk tens of kilometers barefoot and alone to the office's rooftop.

When Ian rushed up to the rooftop, he was met with Ben sitting on the railing, dangling his feet in the air. The ground was tens of meters under his feet.

The sight had Ian's heart lurching to his throat.

"Benny! Come down from there!"

Ian yelled.

Ben turned around to see Ian and smiled dumbly. "Hey. Come and play with me, come and play."

Ian's heart hurt as he looked at Ben who was now dirty and unkempt everywhere since he had walked his way here. Ian's hatred for Jasper reached the extreme.

"Come down first, Benny. Let's go home, hmm?"

"Don't worry, Jasper, our enemy, won't get to be arrogant for much longer. He'll kneel before you and beg for forgiveness very soon!"

Ian spoke as he carefully approached Ben.

Initially somewhat calm, Ben's expression immediately turned wretched at the sound of Jasper's name. Crazy resentment and hatred flared in his eyes.

"Jasper! Jasper's the devil! I want to kill Jasper! I want him dead!"

While Ben was agitated, Ian quickly dashed forward and grabbed his son's waist tightly. He dragged him to safety.

Extremely triggered, Ben could not recognize anyone and began to scratch and claw all over Ian.

In a few minutes, after someone had finally come to pull Ben off him, Ian already had open wounds all over himself.

Ian panted and raised his hand to wipe the burning wounds on his face. He watched with anger and infuriation as a few people held Ben down as the man continued to struggle and shout.

"It's all Jasper's fault! Our family would never have to suffer like this if it weren't for him!"

The hatred Ian harbored for Jasper was indescribable.

Just then, someone came over and whispered, "Let's go downstairs first, Mr. Hull. We should send Young Master Hull to the hospital immediately considering his mental state."

Ian clenched his jaw and got up to speak. However, he frowned as if he had thought of something and asked, "Where's Derick? Why haven't I seen him at all today?"

The person shook his head. "I don't know. We haven't seen Mr. Mallin since yesterday."

Ian felt his heart thrum as an inexplicable feeling of unease appeared. He had someone call an ambulance while he dialed Derick's number.

"Sorry, the number you have dialed is unavailable right now."

The female automated intercept message fueled Ian's unease.

"What the hell are you doing, Derick?!"

Forcefully suppressing the unease in his chest, Ian was about to exit the rooftop when he saw two employees run up to him frantically.

"Mr. Hull, someone called Jasper and a person from the ICBS branch came over to ask us to repay the loan and hand over our office building!"

Ian's expression changed as he barked out with his jaw set, "So they're really working together! Where are they?!"

The rooftop doors opened just as Ian asked, with Jasper, Vita, and a few others entering together.

Ian scoffed. He was about to speak when he saw a large group of uniformed men appearing behind Jasper.

The sight of these people froze the expression on Ian's face.

One of the uniformed men walked over and asked Ian indifferently, "Are you Ian Hull, the legal personality and president of G.S. Import And Export Trading Company?"

Ian took a deep breath and forced the unease in his chest away to reply bravely, "I am."

The person waved his hand, and two of his subordinates immediately rushed over. They took one side of Ian's shoulders each and handcuffed his wrists.

Shocked, Ian struggled. "What are you doing? Who are you to arrest me?!"

The officer pulled out an arrest warrant sternly and explained, "This is your arrest warrant. We have enough reason to believe that you're involved in smuggling goods. Please cooperate with our investigation and follow us to the station."

Ian roared. "No way! Derick was the one who did everything! It has nothing to do with me! I'm a victim here!"

The officer replied coldly, "Derick Mallin is currently under investigation at the station. He has already testified against all your crimes. I suggest you stop making unnecessary struggles."

Ian was stricken, and his expression paled. He turned to glare at Jasper and roared, "This is all your fault, Jasper! Since when did you conspire with Derick, huh?!"

Jasper tucked his arms behind him and replied plainly, "This is where you're wrong. I didn't conspire with anyone at all. Derick Mallin was just enlightened and

refused to be your puppet anymore. He chose to tell the truth. That has nothing to do with me.”

Ian clenched his jaw and glared hard at Jasper, shouting, “Go to hell, Jasper!”

At that moment, Ben also saw Jasper from the side. With a sudden roar, he pounced at Jasper.

Jasper arched an eyebrow slightly but did not make any other move before Julian suddenly appeared from behind him. With the flick of a hand, Julian had Ben pinned on the floor.

Then, two other police officers ran over and cuffed Ben as well.

“Let him go, he’s not mentally stable!” Ian shouted.

“We’ll decide whether he’s mentally stable or not. But with the evidence we have on hand now, your son Ben is also involved in the smuggling of goods and must be brought away as well,” the officer stated emotionlessly.

Ian felt his world go dark and crash all around him.

He stared at Jasper and laughed pitifully. “You’d go so far to destroy everything I have, but what do you think you’ll get out of this, Jasper?”

Jasper looked at Vita calmly and asked, “Mr. Layne, I’d like to know what your bank thinks of my previous suggestion?”

Vita chuckled and replied, “Sigh. Our bank loaned Ian two billion Somer Dollars, and now we can only apply to seize all his company and assets. You’re a generous man, Mr. Laine. Since you’re willing to repay this loan for Ian, then it’s only right that all his assets go to you.”

Ian was about to explode with infuriation at that.

“You’re all bloodsuckers! My company and assets have a value of at least 3.5 billion Somer Dollars! What makes you think you can steal them with just two billion, huh?! In your dreams!”

“I disagree!”

Vita stated coldly, “I’m afraid it’s not up to you anymore, Mr. Hull.”

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“There’s hard evidence of you being involved in smuggling goods! All your accounts are now frozen, so how are you going to repay our bank’s loan?”

Vita stared intently at Ian, and his tone was extremely frigid.

“Two billion Somer Dollars is a huge sum of funds to a bank, and according to the contract we signed, the bank has the right to request to seize your company and all the assets under your name if we find ourselves in such a circumstance.

“Of course, since the sum in your personal account has been seized, we have no other option but to auction all your assets to prevent a loss on our side.

“Mr. Laine took pity on you and is willing to repay your loan, so it’s only right that we transfer your assets to Mr. Laine.

“If you’re unwilling, you’re very welcome to bring this to court with Mr. Laine when you’re released.”

Vita then smiled and continued, “That is, of course, if you get released at all.”

Ian ground his molars together and glared at Vita, roaring at the man. “You were nothing more than a dog wagging its tail when you f*cking begged me to take a loan! You’d even lick my shoes if I asked but now this is how you’re talking to me?!”

Vita’s expression darkened, and his voice turned icy. “I was just doing business. You didn’t have to listen to me if you didn’t want to, Mr. Hull. What you think doesn’t really matter anymore anyway.”

“Hahaha!”

Ian looked up at the sky and scoffed self-deprecatingly. He then turned to glare at Jasper. “What a well-thought-out plan you have there, so great that you’ve managed to destroy me and the entire Hull family while swallowing all of my assets too. So this was your plan?!”

“What grandeur, Jasper Laine!”

Jasper replied plainly, “Frankly speaking, I’m not actually attacking you. I don’t even want that bit of money the Hull family owns. If I didn’t have the habit of seeking profit returns with everything I do, I wouldn’t have even wasted my time on something as worthless as you.

“Plus, I’m saving you here. You would be facing more than just your assets getting auctioned off if I don’t repay this loan for you. The bank would sue you for loan fraud, now worsened considering the immense value of two billion. Coupled with you smuggling goods, you’ll be charged for both crimes and that’ll definitely guarantee you a life sentence in prison.

“You should be thanking me here.”

Ian’s expression twisted into a crazed one at Jasper’s words, and he began to struggle maddeningly as he roared at Jasper. “Just wait, Jasper! Do you think that you’ll be safe now that you’ve gotten rid of me?”

“Let me tell you, I have the entire Haddock Chamber of Commerce supporting me here!

“And my money, that’s Gale Hurlbutt’s money! Do you dare take his money too? He’ll f*cking kill you!”

Jasper huffed a laugh. “You’re talking about that three billion Somer Dollars, right? I’m sorry, but I don’t think you understand what’s going on here. I’m not the one seizing your bank account. Regardless of who gave you that three billion, the court will still take it as money you earned from smuggling goods.

“Considering how prestigious Old Master Hurlbutt is, I’m sure he won’t be calculative with a little brat like me.

“Most importantly, so what if he decides to be calculative?

“Do you think he’d want to clash with the Law family for a doomed pawn?”

Jasper’s words froze Ian’s crazed expression.

“The Law family. I knew it was the Law family! I knew it, that’s why they attacked my ships so quickly! You conspired with them long ago. You had already decided that you’ll split my assets!”

Jasper gave a small smile and ignored Ian.

Ian had lost to him ever since the beginning, and he was never worth any of Jasper’s concern.

Instead, Jasper walked over to Ben.

Ben’s condition was still unstable. He continued to struggle wretchedly, out of control. He was barking like a mad dog.

Seeing Jasper approach him, Ben's struggles doubled.

If Ian's struggle was because he had been blinded by anger and lost all rationale, then Ben's could only be described as the suicidal struggles of a madman.

The two burly men beside him seemed to have difficulty holding him down.

Julian walked over as well and stood next to Jasper, ready to protect the latter while whispering, "Be careful, Jasper."