

Life at the Top Chapter 681

Everyone had thought the bid would either end in Jasper clenching his teeth and calling out for a higher bid while Marcus watched calmly as Jasper lost a large amount of money.

Or perhaps it would end with Jasper being understanding and giving up the land to Marcus at a low price only to buy it over at a high price.

Still, the current situation was something no one had expected.

Everyone understood now as they watched Jasper show his hand.

It had been a set-up ever since the beginning, a trap where he would lure Marcus in only to end Marcus with one strike.

The owners of the two real estate companies shared a look.

They looked at each other in confusion.

The same thought appeared in their heads, 'Are all outsiders so fierce nowadays?'

Then, they looked at Marcus. Having lost the game and his dignity, Marcus resembled an aggravated lion as he suddenly shot to his feet and slammed his palm on the table before him. The impact came with a loud bang.

Following that was a roar even louder than the slam.

"How dare you trick me, Jasper?"

Jasper sat in his chair, unfazed by Marcus' roar. He spoke calmly, "What do you mean? You were the one who jumped out and challenged me for this plot of land. The bid was hosted by the city government too, so how could you accuse me of tricking you?"

Jaw clenched tight, Marcus' eyes were bloodshot. He was so infuriated he might explode.

'This is 950 million Somer Dollars!

'Almost f*cking one billion!

'This one billion hard-earned money of mine is now gone! In its place is a 1,500-acre plot of industrial land!'

The land was useless in Marcus' hands, for he had no idea nor understanding of operating a factory.

What enraged him more was how he had stepped right into Jasper's trap.

This had made Marcus extremely uncomfortable, as business for him had always been smooth-sailing.

In comparison to Marcus, Ned was more enraged.

Ned and the rest were such a tight-knit group of friends because they had a common interest.

While Marcus was the main shareholder of Fortune Co., Ltd, Ned had his fair share of shares as well. This 950 million loss meant that Ned would lose a few hundred million as well.

If Marcus was already so infuriated, one could only imagine how much angrier Ned felt.

His pawnshop business did not make great profits. After all, the current social and economic development had yet to arrive at the heights in Jasper's past life. There were only so many things civilians could pawn off right now. Most people were either someone's employees or ran their own businesses. It was rare for people to suddenly need a large sum of funds.

As such, a few tens of thousands a year was the maximum Ned could earn from his pawnshop.

There was no way Ned was willing to pay so much money in one go today.

Roaring, Ned arrived before Jasper and spoke wretchedly, "Stop pretending to be innocent, Laine. Everyone with eyes can tell that you set a trap for us with this bid!

"You're going to pay this 950 million whether you want to or not! Or I'll kill you right now!"

Blinded by benefits, Ned no longer cared about the fact that they were in public as he threatened Jasper on the spot.

Threats were not enough to alleviate his anger, so Ned reached out to grab Jasper's lapels.

Behind Jasper, Julian had already stood up the moment Ned rushed over. Julian refused to see Jasper get hurt, so he stepped forward in front of Jasper and reached out to grab Ned's wrist.

Then, everyone present proceeded to watch Julian flip Ned, a broad and sturdy man of 190cm in height, off the floor and bodyslam him onto the ground.

With a loud thud, Ned's 100kg body hit the floor. Following this was a terrified and painful shout from the man.

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Julian placed a foot over Ned's chest and spoke coldly, "This is a warning. If you try anything dangerous again, I'll break more than just your arm."

'He broke his arm?!'

Stunned and dazed, everyone snapped back to reality and turned to look at Ned's arm. They found that his right wrist was bent at a strange angle. It was a shuddering sight.

"Chupse..."

Everyone present sucked in a cold breath.

They did not expect Jasper's bodyguard to be so strong, especially considering that Ned had fought his way up in Reed City.

Yet when faced with Jasper's bodyguard, he did not even last a single second.

At that moment, everyone realized that Jasper was someone truly formidable.

As expected, Marcus roared.

"How dare you hurt him, Jasper?!"

Jasper replied calmly, "Everyone in the room saw very clearly that Ned attacked me first. My bodyguard merely countered his attack."

Marcus had a wretched expression on his face. "You've broken Ned's hand. This isn't over Jasper!"

“I’d think about how I’m supposed to pay that 950 million first if I were you,” Jasper spoke calmly.

The words cut deep into Marcus’ heart.

“Jasper! F*cking... Fine!” Marcus clenched his jaw, utterly infuriated.

“You’re just making me suffer because you can’t afford that plot of land, hmm?”

Jasper shrugged. “You’ve misunderstood. I saw how much you wanted that plot of land, Mr. Coine, so I had no other choice but to give it to you. After all, I’m just an outsider and I’d never dare to fight a man as powerful as you, Mr. Coine.

“So I’ve decided that I’ll just choose another plot of land to build my factory. Reed City is huge, there’s bound to be somewhere suitable for me.”

Marcus widened his eyes and pointed at Jasper with a trembling finger. He angrily barked out in laughter. “Good! Very good!

“Very f*cking good!

“Just wait, Jasper!”

Marcus then helped Ned up, the latter still whimpering in pain. He glared at Jasper coldly before they left embarrassingly.

With Marcus’s exit, the performance had come to a momentary end as well.

The owners of the two real estate companies shared a look and ran over. They handed Jasper their name cards courteously and told Jasper to look for them if he needed a construction company for his factory, promising great results for a cheap price.

Jasper did not treat the two real estate company owners coldly despite the immense change in their attitudes.

Humans tended to act according to the situation, so how could he expect otherwise from men who had been doing business for decades?

Any less shameless and they would not even have the rights to join Marcus and Jasper in this bid.

After taking the name cards and conversing with the two of them, Jasper watched the two owners leave.

The two owners walked toward the door with excitement and unease. They were just about to leave when they heard Jasper's voice from behind.

"A 950 million revenue, Mr. Powers. Is it to the city government's satisfaction?"

At that, the two owners felt their legs give out and almost knelt on the ground.

'So Jasper has already gotten the city government's support without anyone realizing?!'

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Mr. Powers did not know what the two fleeing real estate owners were thinking.

All he knew was that his mind was currently blown.

Mr. Powers had not expected Marcus to actually act so well according to Jasper's plan.

The plot of land had a starting bid of 100 to 200 million and Mr. Powers believed that it would only come to a maximum of 300 to 400 million.

Mr. Powers had no qualms with that, for it aligned with the city government's desire to oppress Marcus.

Yet... Jasper had just taken 950 million from Marcus in one go!

"We're very well aware of Fortune Co., Ltd's financial situation, Mr. Laine. The entire company is worth around one billion only, and with how much he has to pay this time... I'm afraid it would only cause you trouble."

Mr. Powers' words were extremely subtle.

Jasper smiled and replied calmly, "There's no way I can invest in anything with Marcus still in the picture. Plus, the city government wants to get rid of Marcus too, correct? I believe the city government's and my interests align on this topic. I'm sure that you wouldn't want someone to slander the reputation of Reed City either, right?"

With that, Jasper then clapped Mr. Powers on the shoulder. "I understand that there are many things the city government is not in the position to do, so I'll do them for you instead. All I hope is that the city government is able to provide me support during necessary times."

Mr. Powers replied sternly, "I'll make sure to relay your message word for word, Mr. Laine."

Jasper politely bade Mr. Powers farewell and called out to Julian before he exited the meeting room while stretching.

Mr. Powers had a grim expression on his face as he watched Jasper vanish at the exit.

Just then, Chad walked over and whispered to Mr. Powers, “What should we do about this, Mr. Powers?”

“What else can we do? The only option is to report this to the higher-ups and let them decide what to do next. The situation has gone beyond what we can control.” Mr. Powers sighed.

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“He dealt with the most complicated problem with the simplest method. What an interesting young man.”

A middle-aged man sat in the spacious and solemn office. There were two flags on this office table, ones that ordinary office desks were not allowed to have.

Mr. Powers stood respectfully before the table as he reported the details of the bid this morning.

He also relayed Jasper’s message without missing a detail to that middle-aged man.

After a moment of thought, the middle-aged man waved his hand. “I still have a meeting later. You’ll be in charge of overlooking the development of this situation. Essentially, you are to make our stance on the matter clear.

“Do not say what you do not have to and remain impartial. But you must do your part well.”

With that, Mr. Powers bade farewell and left the room while deep in thought.

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In Reed City’s best people’s hospital, the Special Care Unit.

Ned lay on the hospital bed, his face sickly pale. He had just got out of surgery and was enduring the pain now that the anesthesia had worn off.

“The patient’s arm has suffered a comminuted fracture. We’ve already done our best to repair it, but there will be lifelong complications with his right hand. He’ll be able to use it as normal, but it will no longer be able to exert extreme force or participate in strenuous activity.”

The doctor looked at the group of people who had sinister and bloodthirsty expressions on their faces. He was too nervous to take a bigger breath.

“You piece of trash! Your entire family is made out of f*cking trash!” roared a man who looked a lot like Ned.

“Enough. They’ve already told us this, so we’ll get the same answer no matter where we go. At least his right hand isn’t completely crippled. That’s good enough, isn’t it?”

Len spoke expressionlessly.

“Thank you, doctor. Could you please leave us alone?”

Len’s peaceful attitude had the doctor let out a sigh of relief and he quickly excused himself.

After the doctor left, Len then grimly turned to look at Marcus who had been silent the entire time. “Talk, Marcus. Tell me what happened.”

Marcus then proceeded to relay the incident, albeit not without exaggeration on some parts.

In the hospital room, both Marcus’s and Ned’s fathers, Len and Fletcher, darkened their expressions.

“That’s essentially what happened, Dad, Uncle Adkins.”

“That Jasper Laine! He has no respect for Ned and me just because he’s rich. We didn’t even say anything and he immediately started yelling about a fight!

“This bid was supposed to be a fair competition, but who’d have thought that the b*stard had bribed Chad? Even Mr. Powers favored him too. Ned and I got roped into a trap he had set up and we ended up losing 950 million. There’s no way we’ll accept this outcome!”

After Marcus’ explanation, the situation now turned into a case of Jasper oppressing them and disrespecting the local families. Jasper had apparently also set up a malicious trap and caused Marcus to lose 950 million.

After Marcus was done, the hospital room fell silent.

After a long while, Len then glared at Marcus. “Do you think that just because we’re old we don’t know how you youngsters normally act? We only choose to let you act as you wish outside, but that doesn’t mean we’re blind to the kind of people you are.

“The part of it being a trap is true. But from what I can see, you provoked him first, didn’t you?”

Len’s words had Marcus flushing in embarrassment. He spoke up indignantly, “But it’s true that he broke Ned’s hand! He also bribed Chad to make me lose 950 million.”

“Hmph!” Len harrumphed coldly and spoke, “I told you guys not to provoke others as you wished, didn’t I? What about now, then? Do you finally understand how strong outsiders can be?”

“What do you want to do about this, Fletcher?” Len looked at the other man who was furious.

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Fletcher replied grimly, "No matter what the actual situation was, he did break Ned's arm. The Adkins family can forget about working in Reed City if I'm not even going to get justice for my son."

Nodding, Len replied, "Alright, it seems like we're on the same page, then. The Coine and the Adkins families have been close since our father's generation. There's no way I'd stand still and watch as someone bullies Ned."

"Dad, Uncle Adkins, I don't plan on giving the city government that 950 million," Marcus spoke darkly.

"They're obviously targeting us. The past few years of work would've been for nothing if I just gave them that money."

Len was about to speak when Marcus' phone rang.

"It's Mr. Powers from the city government." Marcus' expression changed as he accepted the call.

After a moment, Marcus hung up the call angrily and spoke, "Dad, Uncle Adkins, Mr. Powers wants me to pay the 950 million bidding price within three business days as per the regulations. What the f*ck is that supposed to mean?"

"Don't spout nonsense!"

Len glared at Marcus who did not seem to know how to choose his words properly and growled. "There are some things that you can just keep to yourself, okay? You don't have to exclaim every single thought that comes to your mind!"

How old are you, huh? Can you still not tell the difference between what you can and cannot say?"

Marcus replied angrily, "Mr. Powers sounded really stern on the phone. He said that if I don't pay up, the city government will then sue us and we'll be brought to court. By then, they'll even investigate and charge me for defrauding state-owned property! It's not even that big of a deal and they're blowing this out of proportion!"

At that, Len's expression changed as well.

He looked at Fletcher and spoke grimly, "It's that person who newly took office in the city government, isn't it?"

Fletcher sneered, "It has to be. He's the only one who doesn't like us. They've made quite a few moves against us recently so there's no way they'd let go of this opportunity."

"Hmph, the Coine family isn't their punching bag." Len scoffed and turned to Marcus, saying, "You have three more days, right? So before those days are up, I'd like you to get something done."

"What is it?" Marcus asked.

"You said Jasper bribed this man called Chad? Then go and think of a plan to get him fired."

...

The Coine and Adkins families were terrifyingly powerful in Reed City. The following night, Jasper received a phone call from Chad.

Walking out from the hotel, Jasper and Julian arrived at a skewers stall and saw Chad smoking by the road despondently.

“You’re here, Mr. Laine.” Chad quickly snuffed out the bud of his cigarette when he saw Jasper walk over.

While just as polite as before, Chad was also speaking to Jasper with a shred of respect and caution now.

Jasper pretended not to realize this slight yet important change and glanced at the small pool of cigarette buds on the floor beside Chad with a smile. “Is something bothering you, Mr. Wright?”

Chad smiled bitterly. “You don’t have to address me so politely anymore.”

“Come sit, I’ll tell you as we eat.”

Under Chad’s lead, Jasper and Julian sat at the table. Chad smiled at Jasper and spoke, “I love skewers, Mr. Laine, so much that I’d eat it every few days. So forgive me for not inviting you out to a high-class restaurant.”

“My parents were farmers. I don’t care much about how cheap the food is, especially when it comes to supper. Nothing’s better than lamb skewers.” Jasper chuckled.

“Nice!” Chad’s eyes brightened and he turned to shout at the owner, “I’ll have ten more lamb skewers, please!”

Chad cracked open two bottles of cold beer. He also handed Julian a few bottles of non-alcoholic drinks since he knew that Julian was Jasper’s bodyguard and did not drink.

“So tell me, Mr. Wright. What happened?” Jasper asked.

“My boss talked to me when I clocked out today. He said that he’s going to transfer me to a small village south of Reed City,” Chad explained with a deep sigh.

“From working in a city to being demoted straight to a small village? Not even to a town first? That’s unusual,” Jasper commented meaningfully.

“Haha. It’s the Coine family’s work.” Chad scoffed and downed a large gulp of beer roughly.

“So I banged my hand on the table and gave up. I exploded and vented all the unjust I’ve been keeping bottled up inside of me. If the Coine family wants to oppress and dominate, then I’d rather not work there anymore!

“I’ve been thinking about working with you, Mr. Laine. So I was wondering if I still had a chance?” Chad glanced at Jasper with a look of extreme anticipation.

If Chad was ever reluctant to leave his job because he had grown attached to this job he had done for more than half his life, he was not anymore now that he had seen through the truth behind the working system. He was ready to give it his all.

“I would want nothing more.” Jasper grabbed his bottle of beer and clinked it with Chad’s.

Chad grinned and spoke, “Alright then. I’m going to start working for you now, Mr. Laine. I’ll be your loyal subordinate!”

“You’ll realize how smart this decision is very soon.”

Jasper was truly grateful to Marcus for this incident alone.

After all, it was not easy to get such a talent in the management field like Chad on his side, and Marcus had easily done it for him.

Despite having the advantage of being reincarnated with memories of the future, Jasper knew that not every skilled person in the management industry was suited to work in a company like JW Capital.

Chad, though, was different. While Chad was not a famous man in Jasper's past life, this short period of time was enough for Jasper to recognize this man's potential.

The two were in a great mood now that their frustrations were resolved. Time began to tick by as they two drank and talked.

Just as they started the third round of drinking, two vans suddenly halted by the road and more than ten men dressed in black jumped out with machetes. All of them rushed toward Jasper's table.

The sudden development caught everyone off guard.

It resembled a scene from a movie, and the other customers who were eating around them all screamed while running away.

Julian reacted extremely quickly.

"Jasper, watch out!"

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By the time he finished speaking, Julian had already dashed over to stand in front of Jasper. He held a beer bottle in his hand and with a backhand smash against the table, the thick beer bottle shattered.

Julian's gaze was frosty as he pointed the sharp end of the bottle at attackers who were rushing toward them.

He did not rush up to them, for his most important mission was to protect Jasper.

After all, they were faced with around a dozen men now and it would end horribly if he rushed forward only to leave an opening for someone to attack Jasper.

Despite having lived more than half his life, Chad had never seen such a scene before and he grew pale from utter fear.

“Don’t worry,” Jasper’s gentle voice sounded...

“Jul’s here, we’ll be fine.”

Chad turned to look at Jasper only to see him calm as usual. There was no sign of panic on the man’s expression at all.

Perhaps it was Jasper’s influence, but Chad found himself calming down as well.

In a short while, the men with machetes rushed over.

It was evident that these people had been through professional training. They were on a completely different level from ordinary gangsters and were extremely professional machete wielders.

Their target was clear—Jasper.

The first three rushed over, and Julian was extremely focused as he raised his hand to whack the beer bottle on one of the trio’s heads. The opponent staggered with a pitiful whimper and fell. At the same time, Julian grabbed another’s throat before tossing him against the third person harshly.

Julian was extremely strong, especially when his strength exploded. Jasper had seen how the man burst a sandbag with one punch in practice.

The hit crashed into the three men like a train and they were sent flying with pitiful screams. They ended up toppling the adjacent table upon impact before they ended up passing out embarrassingly.

Julian had acquired a machete by now and with a weapon in hand, Julian resembled a God of War. No one could get three meters near him.

Had it not been to protect Jasper, Julian would have rushed toward the men and sliced his way through all of them.

Seeing how more than half of their men had been defeated, the remaining five to six shared a look. Jaws set, they changed their tactics.

They had three of them surround Julian while another three rushed to attack Jasper.

Julian roared angrily once he realized it and grabbed a table beside him with one hand. Then, he threw the table at them as if it were a weapon.

Two were immediately knocked down.

At the same time, two machete-wielding men had arrived on both sides of Jasper.

Despite not knowing how to fight, Jasper was not an idiot who would just stand there and let them do as they wished. His opponents had weapons and were professionally trained, so fighting back was not an option. Jasper immediately took two steps back and waited for Julian to come and help.

However, Chad was petrified and remained rooted in place.

The two men watched as Jasper retreated. Julian was angrily rushing over as well, and they did not have time to run after Jasper now. Grinding their molars, they swung their machetes at Chad instead.

At that moment, Jasper's heart raced.

He would not be able to find a manager who met his and JW Capital's standards if Chad died here.

Without further thought, Jasper walked forward and reached out to pull Chad away.

This move had the fatal slice merely nicking Chad's arm instead, while Jasper ended up taking a hit on his shoulder as well. Blood immediately streamed from the wound.

Julian's eyes grew red from fury at the sight.

His strength exploded within him and he arrived before the two men in the blink of an eye. Raising his hand, he smacked the two attackers just like how one patted a watermelon. The two men's chests folded inward upon impact. Countless ribs must have fractured and they immediately fainted.

The remaining two men saw the scene and turned to flee. Whatever bravery they had left had already vanished into thin air.

Not that Julian allowed them to escape as he was still enraged. He caught up to them in a couple of steps and grabbed the two by the shoulders as easily as grabbing small chicks. He then pressed them onto the floor.

With two loud thuds, the tiles on the floor shattered and the two attackers were on the ground before they could even shout. They lay there without moving.

"Mr. Laine!" Chad finally reacted to what was happening. Ignoring the wound on his arm, he rushed over to hold Jasper. Color immediately drained from his face as he took a look at the horrifyingly blood-soaked wound.

He knew that Jasper was hurt from protecting him.

"Get lost!"

Julian shouted angrily with red eyes. He wanted nothing more than to beat Chad up, considering Jasper had only gotten hurt from saving Chad who was too stunned to react.

Chad shivered in fear and quickly spoke, "I... I'll call for help right away!"

"Jasper." Julian rushed over to Jasper, his eyes filled with franticness and regret.

"F*cking hell, I'm still alive." Jasper could not help but curse at the pain. His shoulder burned where the wound was and hot blood continued to flow between his fingers as he pressed down on the wound. He assumed that the cut must have hit his artery.

It would be a lie if he said he was not panicking, for he would be dead if it was a major artery.

He had spent his previous life suffering as an ordinary and bitter man. Now that he had gotten the chance to start over and rewrite his past, it would be a tremendous shame if he died before he could fully enjoy his life.

Sucking a breath through his teeth, Jasper spoke, "Help me stop the bleeding first."

Julian quickly ripped Jasper's shirt by the shoulder. The wound cut deep to the bone and fresh blood streamed freely. It was a terrifying sight!

"They nicked a blood vessel. We have to get you to the hospital now." Julian panicked.

While the wound was on the shoulder and nonfatal, it was rather deep. Not even a large cow could survive continuous blood loss at such a rate, let alone a human being.

With that, Julian carried Jasper onto his back and got up to run toward the street.

A cab happened to pass by just then and Julian handed Jasper to Chad without a thought before walking up to hail the cab.

The driver was startled by the sight of Julian who was drenched in blood. Not daring to stop the car, he swerved left and right to make his way around Julian but the man jumped onto the hood instead. With a punch, Julian broke the windshield and almost gave the driver a heart attack.

“Send us to the hospital. I’ll kill you if you waste our time!” Julian’s eyes were frosty, and his ruthless tone made the driver’s legs go numb.

Jasper had no idea how he ended up in the cab, and all he could hear was Chad and Julian talking. He also heard the roaring of the engine, and his heavy eyelids took in no more than the shadows of the street lamps that flew past.

Sound and scenery slowly faded away as Jasper’s consciousness slipped.