

Life at the Top Chapter 706

Click, click.

Camera lights flashed endlessly in the conference hall, and all the video cameras were aimed right at the stage. No one wanted to miss any details.

If the fight between them was considered normal competition between two companies, then Valentine's words had instantly escalated the situation where it now involved the breaking of the law.

The man had used expletives.

The reporters present all flushed in excitement. The trip over suddenly felt really worth it.

There were too few instances of such situations in the country.

Therefore, the moment such instances occurred, they attracted everyone's attention.

Conrad was very pleased as well. Valentine was becoming more useful to him with every moment. Valentine knew that there were things Conrad was in no position to say, so he jumped out and conveyed the message Conrad wanted to say but could not.

"You're the one speaking nonsense!"

A loud shout came from beside Jasper, causing everyone present to look over in shock.

Especially Valentine. The man's expression darkened after being accused and he turned to look at Chad.

"Who says the only way to manufacture goods is with patent rights?"

Chad scoffed and pulled out a piece of document from his briefcase that he brought with him. He opened it before everyone and spoke, "Not only has JW Electronics bought 50% ownership of the MP3 player patent rights from Sentel Corporation, but we've also signed an improvement patent agreement!

"So as long as we've succeeded in improving the MP3 player, we're automatically granted the user rights to the patent."

Chad looked at the silenced group of reporters proudly as he continued, "In addition, JW Electronics will hold complete ownership over our improved patent rights. That means that our Mellow has fully independent intellectual property rights!

"Unlike some companies who seem to be very proud of the fact that they have a license. So what if they do? They're still working for the foreigners, aren't they? A portion of the profit made from very first-generation Melody has to be distributed to Mr. Damond Golding. Can you still call that a domestically manufactured product?"

Chad's words stunned the entire venue.

The reporters began to whisper among themselves. There were quite a few reporters who did not understand much about patents, licenses, and their pertaining laws, but they all came to an understanding after asking people who worked in those industries—Chad was speaking the truth!

No one had expected JW Electronics to have managed to sign an improvement patent agreement when they could not get a license. Not to mention that they had succeeded too!

This was what a domestic brand truly entailed.

The reporters looked at Jasper excitedly, and they all wanted to know how Jasper had done it.

The man remained calm.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Jasper took the microphone and spoke softly, “I merely wish to show you with my actions that our Somerland is capable of manufacturing exceptional goods.”

Clap, clap, clap!

No one knew where it started, but all the reporters were fervently clapping at Jasper’s statement. The entire conference hall was instantly drowned out by the sound of applause.

At the same time, both Conrad and Valentine had a very sour look on their faces.

Especially Conrad, who had never expected such a move from Jasper.

“That stupid improvement patent agreement, does it actually exist?” Conrad suppressed his anger and asked Valentine.

Valentine’s face paled as he nodded with difficulty. “It does. There is such regulation under international patent law. As long as the owner of the patent agrees, it’s very much possible. But the issue is that he’d need all of the people with ownership to agree before it’s granted. Damond Golding only has 50%, so how did he get the remaining 50% from Sentel?”

Conrad was slightly shaking after receiving such a shock. He turned to glare fiercely and coldly at Jasper, grinding his teeth together.

“You already knew this was going to happen, Jasper, so that’s why you had everything prepared, right? You were just waiting for me to play my role. How dare you make me into a fool?”

Furious, Conrad asked directly.

“Mr. Monty, how could you accuse me of making you into a fool when you were the one who asked for all of this?” Jasper replied calmly.

“But I must really thank you for giving Mellow such a great opportunity for advertisement, Mr. Monty. It looks like I’ll get to cut down on quite a bit of advertising expenses.”

Conrad was about to combust from infuriation.

He had used up a lot of favors using the Monty family’s name for this launch event just to get dozens of media representatives over, including those two large stations from Swallow Capital. Now, he had given the advantage to Jasper on a silver platter.

The worst part of this all was that his first-generation Melody had its reputation crushed before it could be released.

Conrad felt his limbs grow cold and there was a stuffy gust of air that suffocated his chest. He could not swallow it nor push it out. It felt terrible.

Jasper smiled slightly at Conrad’s reaction.

‘That’s all it took to beat you?’

‘But I’ve only just started.’

He stood up again.

The reporters had learned from experience that if Jasper stood up to speak, it was going to be another large announcement. Everyone looked at Jasper eagerly and waited for another bomb to drop.

Indeed, Jasper did not waste time as he took the microphone and announced, "There's something I'd like to announce as well during this important event.

"Mellow will be sold at 1,699 Somer Dollars starting tomorrow and all consumers are welcome to buy them from any Schuler Supermarket within the country.

"Moreover, every consumer can download official tracks for free from us.

"For that purpose, we've already signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Terizone Inc, Easy Media, and Advent Entertainment Group.

"Easy Media and Advent Entertainment Group are currently the biggest media companies in the Mainland and Harbor City respectively. At least 60% of the famous artists we know now are signed under them.

"We'll provide the biggest official music library within the country, so as long as you buy Mellow, you will be allowed to download the songs for free.

"In addition, JW Electronics will work together with Easy Media and Advent Entertainment Group to attack all sources of pirated music within the country. Our related departments are already in contact and we've received immense support.

"That is all JW Electronics has to say for this launch event, thank you."

Jasper then placed the microphone down once he had finished talking. Leaving coolly, he left Chad to deal with the extremely excited reporters.

Just as Jasper left, Conrad quickly followed after.

His complexion was pale from anger, and his expression was wretched like he wanted to tear Jasper into pieces with his teeth.

“You stand right there, Jasper!”

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“Forget the fact that you’re dominating everything, Jasper, but you’re not even going to give others a chance to make money? Aren’t you afraid that your ruthlessness will come and bite you back in the *ss?”

Conrad’s gaze darkened as he roared. He felt the urge to punch Jasper in the face.

Jasper looked at him confusedly and asked, “What do you mean? You’re making this into more of an issue than it is, Mr. Monty. I don’t think I follow.”

“Stop f*cking pretending to be clueless!” Conrad roared.

“We’re all intelligent people here, what’s the point of this clueless act of yours?”

“What’s the meaning behind the official music library, huh? Tell me what MP3 player doesn’t need to download music! You’re just trying to make the entire market yours with that official music library and wanting to attack pirated sites, aren’t you?!”

Conrad was infuriated when he thought about how the mountain of goods in his warehouse was done for and could not be sold. It was a loss not even the Monty family could endure.

Coupled with the aluminum mine incident, Jasper had struck the Monty family hard twice.

'The Monty family is rich, but it can't take such a series of attacks.'

At that train of thought, Conrad felt like his heart had been pierced through with needles.

"Weren't you the one who kept saying I have to do things legally, Mr. Monty? Supporting the official version and ownership, correct? Or perhaps you don't agree with me attacking pirated music?" Jasper asked with a smile.

Conrad took a deep breath and spoke sinisterly, "You'll anger a lot of people like this, Jasper."

"That's alright. After all, the official music library is free to everyone who buys Mellow. As for imported MP3 players, sure, as long as the consumers pay. After all, I need to pay my employees in the entertainment companies salaries, and who wouldn't take money served on a silver platter?" Jasper spoke calmly.

Conrad scoffed and replied, "Fine. So this is what you have in mind then, making money? You're a cruel man. Fine, I admit my loss. How do you want me to pay you?"

"You've misunderstood, Mr. Monty." Jasper shook his head. "I meant those with imported foreign MP3 players are allowed to pay for access to my music library. But as for competitors within the country, I'm sorry, we're ultimately still rivals. There's no way I'd let my competitor steal my market quota, right?"

Conrad was stunned for a moment when he heard Jasper. The next second, he felt blood rush to his head.

"So you're just killing me off, then?!" Conrad spoke coldly.

“The market is a battlefield, Mr. Monty. I’m sure you wouldn’t have let me live either if our roles were reversed,” Jasper spoke calmly.

Conrad chortled. “Good job, Jasper! What a scheme you’ve plotted here!”

“But I heard that you spent tens of millions on your manufacturing lines, Mr. Monty? In addition to the storage warehouses, oh, and that license, you must’ve spent a lot, haven’t you?” Jasper asked.

“What are you trying to say? The Monty family doesn’t need you to pay for such a small loss.” Conrad spat out coldly as he suppressed the flames of fury within him.

“I was just thinking that if you don’t want them anymore, Mr. Monty, I wouldn’t mind acquiring all your factories and equipment. It just depends on whether you’re willing to part with them or not, Mr. Monty,” Jasper suggested.

Conrad widened his eyes. He could not believe such a shameless man existed in this world!

“You just screwed over my investment of almost one billion Somer Dollars and now you want my factory and manufacturing lines as well? How greedy can you be, Jasper?”

“It’s precisely because I’ve caused such a grave loss to you, Mr. Monty, that I was thinking of a way to make up for it. There’s nothing wrong if you don’t want to accept my kind proposal, Mr. Monty,” Jasper stated.

“Don’t worry. I’d rather lose out on all that money than ever benefit you!” Conrad sneered.

Jasper shrugged and spoke regretfully, “That’s a shame, then. Well, if that’s the case, please excuse me.”

Jasper turned and was about to leave when he heard Conrad speak behind him.

“Wait.”

Jasper turned and looked at Conrad.

Taking a deep breath, Conrad tried to speak in the calmest tone possible, “I can give you my factory and my equipment for free.”

Jasper looked at Conrad but did not speak. He knew that Conrad was not done speaking.

As expected, Conrad paused for a moment before speaking again, “But I want shares to JW Electronics.”

Jasper chuckled. “Sure.”

Conrad looked up and stared at Jasper, asking in disbelief, “Really?”

“Really, but on one condition. I want shares to Monty Group!”

Monty Group was the Monty family’s core business. All of the Monty family’s properties were controlled by Monty Group. It was a parent company, just like Jasper’s JW Capital.

Conrad flew into a rage when he heard Jasper’s condition. “No way, in your dreams! You could sell the entirety of JW Capital and you still wouldn’t be qualified to touch a cent of the Monty Group’s shares.”

“Exactly, that’s what I wanted to say as well.” Jasper had never intended to be a shareholder of Monty Group. It was just as impossible as him allowing Conrad to be a shareholder of JW Capital.

Conrad glared at Jasper and ground his molars. “You’ll get karma for being so merciless, Jasper!”

“If there’s nothing else, Mr. Monty, I’ll get going now.” Jasper shook his head. He was no longer interested in arguing with Conrad anymore.

Conrad glared at Jasper’s retreating figure and fell silent for a long while.

He clenched his jaw as a gust of humiliation and hatred surged in his chest. He did not understand why he could not win Jasper no matter what he did. Not even when he struck first.

Just then, Valentine rushed over to him. Seeing that Conrad was alone, he walked over carefully and spoke, “Mr. Monty, where’s Jasper? What should we do now?”

“News has already gotten out and the merchants already know what’s going on. The merchants have come to find us at the company and they’re requesting a refund. What do we do?”

“What should we do, what do we do... All everyone knows is to ask me what to do next. How the f*ck am I supposed to know?” Furious, Conrad suddenly pushed Valentine and the other felt his back knock against the wall.

“I got you people to work for me, not to ask me what to do!”

Seeing how Conrad seemed to have lost all rationale, Valentine sighed. He knew that he no longer had a place beside Conrad.

Someone had to take responsibility for the failure of Melody’s products. There was no way Conrad would take the responsibility, so it had to be him.

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“I’ll hand in my resignation to you tomorrow, Mr. Monty.”

Valentine sighed and spoke softly.

Conrad looked at Valentine sinisterly and spoke coldly, "What, you're just going to wash your hands off this incident just like that?"

Valentine shook his head disappointingly and spoke, "That's not what I meant, Mr. Monty. You know that someone has to take responsibility for all of this. It's only right that I take the blame."

Conrad halted and spoke solemnly, "Go back and calm down. I'm busy, we'll talk about everything else next time."

Conrad then left without turning back.

Exiting the hotel, Conrad drove straight to the quiet villa.

In the backyard was a middle-aged man in traditional clothing fishing by the lake. The sun was bright and the weather was good, but Conrad's mood was despondent like an impending storm.

"Welcome home, Young Master," a servant greeted.

Conrad waved him off and spoke indifferently, "You're all excused. I want to talk to my dad alone."

The servants left and Conrad sat beside Steven. His tone was full of despair when he spoke, "I lost again, Dad."

Steven was focused on the particles floating on the surface of the lake. He did not seem to be too agitated about Conrad's loss.

"I expected it."

Conrad frowned slightly at Steven's words. "Isn't it a bit too late to say that, Dad?"

Steven smiled and replied meaningfully, “Do you know what the biggest difference between you and Jasper is?”

Conrad replied coldly, “The brat is too good at scheming and very good at waiting.

“Every time! It’s like this every time! He always waits until the last minute to show his hand!”

Steven shook his head. “That’s just the surface of it.”

“Let me ask you. Have you dug up information on him and found out about how Jasper got to where he is today?” Steven asked again.

Conrad was stunned for a moment and replied with a sneer, “He earned himself millions from the futures market a year ago and then kept making more money based on pure luck. Then the international crude oil incident gave him a ton of wealth. But so what? With such opportunities, even idiots could grow rich.”

“What about you, then? Why didn’t you take those chances?” Steven asked.

Conrad was about to protest but he realized he had nothing to say when he opened his mouth.

Indeed, all of those incidents were hugely profitable opportunities, but they were all in the past now. There were not many people who could tell that there would be profitable opportunities before they happened.

People who could accurately make these judgments were rare, and they had all become rich thanks to that.

Sighing, Steven retracted his fishing line. The bait was gone, but he had no idea when the fish took it.

Steven replaced the bait as he spoke, “This is the biggest difference between you two. The fact that he’s willing to wait is only the surface of things. He’s detail-oriented and a very skilled man with an exceptionally sharp eye for things. There aren’t many people comparable to him in terms of that within the country, let alone you.

“But that’s not the point now. So what if you find a so-called chance to profit? How many people would truly dare to take the risk? He made his first trade with a mortgage from his only house here in the province.

“Lose, and you live on the streets. Win, and you’ll be bathed in riches. Would you have dared to take the bet if you had been in his shoes?”

Conrad fell deep in thought at Steven’s question.

“No, you wouldn’t have.”

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Without waiting for Conrad’s reply, Steven gave his opinion.

“Because you’re a Monty. You started on a finish line that most people could never reach even if they worked hard from the moment they were born till the end of their lives. You’re used to living a pampered and protected life. You were set for a comfortable life even without fighting for it.”

Steven tossed the fishing line out and spoke calmly, “That’s also the difference between a king who fought for his throne and one who inherited it.”

Conrad clenched his jaw. “I lost almost a billion dollars again this time. It’s not fair!”

“What’s a bit of loss? The Monty family can take much more than that. Jasper is the best target practice I can give you. This isn’t an easy target and you might get hurt if you’re not careful. You’ve lost twice against him, each loss worse than the last.

“Meanwhile, Jasper is growing stronger every day. He gains profits every time you lose and if this keeps going, the distance between the two of you will only reduce until you two end up as equals.”

Conrad was not pleased with Steven’s words. “Who does he think he is? As if he’s worthy of being my equal!”

“In reality, I’d say he’s somewhere above you in my eyes,” Steven spoke solemnly.

Conrad clenched his jaw. “I won’t let him get away with this!”

“Calm down and clear your mind. Then decide what you want to do next.” Steven passed Conrad the fishing rod.

“Come fish at the pond when you’re free. Take a breather and focus, it helps with pondering many important things. The more important a decision, the more calm and open an environment you need to be in to think.

“Don’t think about going in until you’ve caught at least three fishes.”

Steven then got up to leave.

“Oh, one more thing.”

Steven suddenly turned to Conrad while he was walking and asked, “You have a Valentine Estrada by your side, right?”

Conrad nodded. “I do, but he’s decided to resign.”

“He’s promising, keep him by your side,” Steven spoke.

Conrad frowned slightly and replied, “He’s skilled, but this incident...”

“Con, as superiors, we must learn to accept others’ flaws. More importantly, you have to know how to get your men to be utterly loyal to you. How will he see you if instead of pushing all the blame to him, you keep him by your side?” Steven prompted calmly.

Conrad thought about it before nodding slightly. “I understand.”

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While Conrad and Steven conversed in the villa, Jasper had returned to the investment company as well.

Chad, who had been receiving phone calls the entire way over, was flushed with excitement.

“Its popularity is exploding, Mr. Laine! Mellow’s popularity is exploding! Countless merchants are begging us for products! They’re all willing to pay in advance as long as it means they’ll get the product!”

In the office, Jasper smiled as he sat down. “I expected no less. But I need you to make sure that we will only manufacture according to what we’ve predicted—not one device more.”

Chad was confused. “But why, Mr. Laine? Mellow is in very high demand right now. We should take this chance to manufacture in large quantities. Why do you want to keep it at 30% of our manufacturing capacity?”

Jasper chuckled. “The scarcer something is, the more precious it becomes. The best way to get someone to remember our product in the shortest time possible is by making it something everyone wants to buy but may not be able to even if they’re willing to pay. This is the brand effect.”

It made sense that Chad did not understand. For this was the hunger marketing strategy that a mobile phone company would be using in the future.

Jasper, though, could not be more familiar with the strategy.

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Jasper's words were thought-provoking.

After all, as a man who had spent more than half his life working with state-owned enterprises, Chad was not a man to be underestimated. After a moment of thought, he mostly understood what Jasper meant.

"You really are a natural-born businessman, Mr. Laine," Chad exclaimed with admiration.

Jasper smiled and passed Chad a cup of coffee. "Perhaps start nurturing a few well-trusted confidants for the electronics company, especially at the factory. That's going to be the company's important source of income in the future.

"But my plans for you lie in the position of director of the Human Resource Department in my investment company. You can't stay in JW Electronics forever to cultivate a team of managers. You should get this done as fast as possible."

Chad nodded in understanding. "Alright, I'll train a few leaders."

"I'll hold an overall assembly with all companies under JW Capital by the time you assume your position. One, so that everyone can get to know you and thus make future work easier; two, to deal with some of the company's internal issues."

Jasper rubbed his temples and spoke in a slightly tired manner.

There was quite a big problem with the investing company and due to various reasons, Jasper had yet the chance to deal with them.

The investment company's managerial team, for example. Excluding Chad, Jasper had no idea how the others' standards were.

The most important thing now was that Jasper needed someone who could take on the role of a commander when Jasper himself was too busy to deal with the company.

This was a very important position and one with very high authority. As such, Jasper could not trust hunting companies to help him look for such professional managers to fit the role.

There was a long road ahead of him and there was much work he had to do.

Thinking back to those reincarnation novels that he had read before, Jasper realized how unrealistic they were. All the main character had to do was appear with his dignified aura and all sorts of lackeys would bow to him, pledging loyalty.

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The next day, following the report of the launch event in newspapers and television stations, Mellow had officially begun to trend.

Merchants had their own methods of gaining intel so they had gotten news of it earlier. Ordinary consumers, however, could only learn of such things through the media.

Not to mention that the internet had yet to be as advanced as the future, where news all over the world could spread like wildfire in just a few hours.

By the second day when the news of the launch event had simmered a little, all the consumers had gone mad.

Countless youths broke their piggy banks or begged their parents to go to the nearest Schuler Supermarket for a Mellow.

There were even cases of people lining up at some supermarkets in large cities like Cavern City, Swallow Capital, and Waterhoof City just so they could get their hands on a Mellow.

Authorized sellers had gone mad as well in face of such enthusiasm.

While JW Electronics had explicitly stated that most of their products would be sold by Schuler Supermarkets, other authorized sellers were still distributed 25% of the goods.

Therefore, consumers all ran to buy the device from other merchants when they were sold out at Schuler Supermarkets.

They would buy the device even if the price cost a few hundred more.

In addition, Terizone's music downloading site seemed to show a trend of being overwhelmed soon.

"We've already added three emergency servers, Mr. Laine, and we've talked to the operator to increase our bandwidth temporarily. But the load at the website has already severely exceeded its designed index. It might crash soon."