

Life at The Top – Chapter 1166

Half an hour later, after a simple breakfast Jasper had Julian drive him to ICBS' Waterhoof City branch's conference room.

Vita met Jasper outside the conference room.

“How is it? Did I miss anything?” Jasper asked.

Vita quickly replied, “You're just in time. The conference starts in five minutes.”

“The higher-ups sent a survey team to attend this conference. The main objective of today is to confirm the access policy. I've already sorted your ideas and handed them over, so they might ask you a few more questions about it.”

Jasper nodded. He was about to push open the door and enter when Vita lowered his voice and said, “Prince is inside too.”

Jasper arched his brow slightly. “He doesn't have an online payment company not any relevant experience. What's he doing inside?”

Vita smiled wryly and replied, “We can’t decline him because of his status. Soha’s vice president’s also inside with him.”

Jasper nodded. He pushed open the conference room door and walked in.

There were not too many people in the conference room, just five to six, but everyone looked stern.

Jasper immediately attracted everyone’s gaze once he entered the room.

Sitting on the left of the conference table was Prince. The man tinkered with the earring on his earlobe and

looked at Jasper neither dark nor brightly. Then, he sneered.

The middle-aged man sitting at the head of the table was very polite as he took the initiative to walk up and shake Jasper’s hand.

“Hello, Mr. Laine. I’m the leader of the survey team, Barnaby Wilcher. You can call me Mr. Wilcher.”

Jasper smiled and shook Mr. Wilcher's hand. "Mr. Wilcher, please survey to your heart's content."

Barnaby laughed out loud and replied, "It's our job. Well then, let's begin the conference."

Under Barnaby's lead, Jasper sat on his right, coincidentally right opposite Prince.

The conference was about to begin when Prince suddenly said casually, "Wait. Before the conference starts, I have something to say."

"Since there's no set policy for online payment yet, I think all running businesses should temporarily be put on hold. Only after the policy's issued should the company be re-reviewed, after which qualifications and licenses can be distributed."

Everyone looked at Jasper after hearing this.

Even an idiot could tell that Prince was targeting Jasper alone with his words.

This was because Jasper was the only person in the country officially operating an online payment system. Jasper would be forced to suffer a huge loss by putting his

online payment system on hold until the policy was enforced, his company's qualifications were re-reviewed, and a license was distributed to him.

Jasper was expressionless when he replied calmly, "Well then, Mr. Chavez, I wonder if you eat by injecting food into your stomach and waiting for it to digest before you take it out to chew?"

Muffled snorts were heard from the other attendees. They could not help but laugh at the response.

Even Mr. Wilcher, who was hosting the meeting, showed a tint of mirth on the corner of his lips.

Prince was the only one with a pitch-black expression. He stared at Jasper and asked, "What did you say, Jasper?"

"Don't you know understand what I said?" Jasper asked back.

This conference had been a fight between him and Prince to begin with, and Jasper would not lose.

Admitting defeat meant that there would be a slight change to the policy in the future. One that might result in a huge attack against his properties.

Because of this, Jasper was fully prepared to face off against Prince, both from a logical and emotional perspective.

“Online payment is a concept I first proposed, and with the central bank and the government’s support, it’s proven to be a viable option to adopt. I have no qualms about sharing the fruit of my hard work with you since I had never decided to act illegally and monopolize the country’s market.”

“But this is still a survey conference, after all, one that will decide the policy framework of the online payment industry in the future. So what are you trying to do by requesting that I close my operating platform right off the bat?”

“My partnership is recognized by ICBS, the central bank, and the government. I will change according to the official policy when it’s issued in the future, but I will not put a halt to my business until then.”

Jasper’s words were well-founded and reasonable.

Even Mr. Wilcher nodded slightly in approval.

However, there was no way Prince would give up so easily when he had the intention to cause trouble for Jasper.

“You make it sound so nice, but I heard rumors long ago that your online payment has a turnover of tens of millions everyday. Who knows if you’ve done anything illegal? Would you dare to pull out all your data for us to audit?”

The atmosphere in the conference room changed at that.

Prince did not stop there.

“Do you know how much wealth is involved in a turnover of tens of millions? Do you know how much dirty money you can earn with even a slightly underhanded trick?”

“You think that just because you claim that there’s nothing’s wrong that there won’t be a problem at all?”

“You want to prove your innocence? Sure. The best way to do so would be to share your data with the public and let us investigate it thoroughly.”

Jasper glanced at Prince’s prideful expression and replied calmly, “So you want to investigate me. What happens if there’s nothing wrong, then?”

Prince snorted. “Shouldn’t that be the given? You’d be in grave trouble if there was something wrong. What do you mean, ‘what then’?”

“So you mean I have to immediately reveal all my data to the public and let you flip through all my important trade secrets as you wish. However, if there’s no problem, you’ll just up and leave matter-of-factly, correct?”

Prince grinned. “Exactly. That’s correct. Why, do you not dare to do so?”

“It’s not that I don’t dare.”

Jasper shook his head.

“I’m just really curious how you can be so arrogant.”

“Following your logic, it means that I can enter your house and start digging around. If I find nothing I want, then I’ll just walk out self-righteously. If I find something, then I’ll confiscate it and your entire house. What difference is that from a common bandit?”

“Not to mention that neither of us have any say in whether there’s anything wrong with it or not. All my companies have performed their tax duties and cooperated with tax

auditing businesses. There's never been any problem when it comes to us and paying taxes."

"But according to what you said, are you telling me that your authority is above the tax department? Or perhaps you think that everyone in the tax department is useless and are not as skilled as you."

"You want to investigate? Sure. I can open all my data to the public. But what about Clear Seas Industrial's data? Can I investigate that as well?"

Prince's expression darkened with every word. Once he heard the last part about investigating Clear Seas' data, Prince exploded in fury like a cat whose tail had been stepped on.

"Who the f*ck do you think you are? How dare you propose investigating Clear Seas Industrial's accounts? Who gave you the right to say something so treacherous?!"

In comparison to Prince's fury, Jasper looked much more laid-back. He nodded calmly and said, "Exactly. You just voiced out exactly what I wanted to say."

Prince narrowed his eyes and glared at Jasper. The conflict between the two seemed even more incendiary than ever before.

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Prince suddenly smiled and slowly sat back down. He raised his hand to play with his earring and said, “Wow. You’re not a weak opponent at all, Mr. Laine. Very well, then. Let’s start the conference.”

Everyone felt uneasy at the drastic difference in Prince’s attitudes. It was as if he had turned into a completely different person.

Jasper was the only one who frowned slightly as he internally raised Prince’s level of danger toward him.

The impression Prince gave Jasper right now was of an arrogant and insolent man. However, beneath all these emotions hid an even stronger capability to control them.

People like him were very difficult to deal with.

Mr. Wilcher finally found the opportunity to speak. He cleared his throat and said, “Let’s move on from the previous topic. There are two agendas for this conference today.”

“Firstly, about the access review policy plan Mr. Prince Chavez proposed for the online payment industry. It’s a great plan, and after further research, we’ve found that we can use this suggestion as a sort of the blueprint while designing the future policy.”

Prince finally smiled after he heard Mr. Wilcher's words.

The entire proposal was designed with a professional AI policy research team under Mr. Wilcher.

The proposal ensured that the government's goals were met while his own interests were kept. As far as Prince was concerned, there was no reason for this proposal to be rejected.

Prince chuckled and said, "I just want to standardize the industry even more. Otherwise, other people might start thinking that just because they came first, that the entire industry now belongs to him. They should at least take a look at themselves first. Wouldn't you say so, Mr. Laine?"

Prince's attention was fixed on Jasper the entire time, so he did not realize the awkward smile on Mr. Wilcher's face.

"Uh, I'm not done yet," Mr. Wilcher interrupted.

Prince leaned back against the chair and said casually, "It's alright. There's no need to praise, to thank, or to give me recognition. I'm just doing my part. Only by brainstorming and working together can we make the best out of the industry."

Mr. Wilcher's expression turned even more awkward.

"After a research meeting and taking all aspects into consideration, we've decided to use Mr. Jasper Laine's proposal as the final executed standard that will decide the future direction of the industry's policies."

With Mr. Wilcher's words, the conference room fell pin-drop silent.

Prince's smile froze on his face and his expression became as dark as a moonless night.

Mr. Wilcher had been speaking about how Prince's proposal could be used as a blueprint mere moments ago, only to state that they would use Jasper's suggestion as the final executed standard in the next. The stark contrast in both sentences had the other employees in the room feeling agitated, let alone Prince himself.

Prince's explosive temper could not be contained anymore, and he turned to glare at Mr. Wilcher. "What did you say?!"

Mr. Wilcher felt awkward, but his identity and status were still somewhat powerful. Hence, he felt displeased when he heard Prince's interrogative tone.

“Mr. Chavez, I understand where you’re coming from but please correct your attitude. All decisions were made during the research meeting and was not decided by any one person.”

Prince felt like he had been made fun of as he suppressed his fury that was moments away from exploding again. He answered, “Didn’t you say that my proposal would be taken as a blueprint? What the f*ck is Jasper’s proposal?”

Mr. Wilcher sighed and said, “The overall decision of the higher-ups is to carry out the license issuance system. The government will do a comprehensive qualification review before a company can apply, and they will only be issued a license should they pass it. Your idea of a 1 billion Somer Dollar security deposit has also been retained.”

“Mr. Chavez, the biggest difference between Mr. Laine’s and your suggestion is that he proposed that the bank can partner with multiple companies possessing an online payment license, meaning that the industry is open to the public. Mr. Chavez, the scope of your proposal was too narrow.”

“Online payment is new, but it will become a huge industry. No one is allowed to monopolize it.”

Prince’s expression darkened with every word.

When Mr. Wilcher told him unkindly that his scope was too narrow, Prince slammed the table and pointed at Jasper's nose while scolding, "How dare you f*cking steal my profits, Laine?!"

Jasper looked up and glanced at Prince before he replied calmly, "Didn't you say it yourself? I'm just doing my part. Only by brainstorming and working together can we make the best out of the industry, no?"

The last thing Prince expected was for Jasper to revoke the most important part of his proposal.

"Are you f*cking crazy?! What good does opening this industry to the public do for you? You're willing to screw everyone over just to stop me from profiting, huh?"

Prince was infuriated.

"The license qualification review and the 1 billion security deposit means nothing. But you allowing the bank to partner with multiple companies means that you're completely opening the industry to the public! How f*cking cruel of you, Jasper!"

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Prince's anger was only natural.

The man was in a rush to prove himself to his family. He was optimistic about the online payment industry, and he had invested a lot of time and effort to make it come true.

To Prince, this incident was like a trial for him. If he passed, then he would be given more say in the family enterprise. If he failed, then he was to do his part and be an obedient son of his wealthy family.

Prince was indignant.

After paying the price in an immeasurable amount of effort, Prince's most basic goal was to monopolize and enforce a blockade on the market so that only he alone was allowed to operate it.

The situation had been going great until Jasper suddenly appeared. After Jasper figuratively flipped the dinner table so that no one could eat anything, Prince now hated the man to his very core.

However, it had never occurred to him that Jasper had already stepped foot in this industry before he could. If he wanted to control the entire market, he had to throw Jasper out.

Jasper ignored all of Prince's scolding and complaints. After all, he had more important things to do than deal with Prince's disgruntlement.

"Mr. Wilcher. I also brought something this time."

Jasper then pulled out a stack of papers. Mr. Wilcher looked at it then waved his hand, and someone immediately distributed the papers to everyone.

Prince received a copy as well.

"I'd like to see what tricks he has up his sleeve!"

Prince scoffed and flipped open the document.

He had only taken one look when his pupils constricted.

As the sound of flipping pages sounded filled the conference room, Jasper began to elaborate on his plan.

“I’ll announce the establishment of a whole new company very soon that will continue development of the online payment platform initially run by Terizone Inc. The company will also arrive at an in-depth strategic cooperation agreement with the three companies Terizone, Sena, and Abbylon.”

“This new company will only be in charge of one business, online payment.”

“For this, in addition to the 1 billion Somer Dollar security deposit with the central bank, I will also put in an extra 1 billion specifically for compensation purposes. This way, anyone who uses my online payment business will not have to worry, as any loss of funds will be compensated for in full without failure.”

Prince’s hand shook when he took in the contents of the document.

He knew that this would be the nail in the coffin.

Should Jasper begin to execute this, no one in the country’s online payment industry would be able to defeat Jasper.

Prince passed the document to his team of research consultants that had followed him here, then turned to glare at Jasper with extreme hatred and iciness.

He realized that he had to do everything possible to stop Jasper.

Otherwise, it would be over to him.

In stark contrast to Prince, Mr. Wilcher and the rest became more terrified and satisfied as they read on.

“Mr. Laine, if you don’t mind me asking, is this entire operating concept and framework, as well as what you said just now, true?” Mr. Wilcher asked.

Jasper chuckled. The contents of the document were something he had come up with Hudson and Wayne overnight.

The concept was something he had introduced from the future, it was something that was proven to be feasible as history had proven. Hence, Jasper had no fear that it would fail.

“I wouldn’t make a joke in such a situation. I’ll make my words come true.”

Mr. Wilcher shouted after hearing Jasper's reply, "Good!"

"We were still worried before about this completely new industry. The government might have come up with a policy and standard, but we've never encountered something like this before. There is no relative experience for this overseas either, so we were worried that a problem would arise somewhere along the process."

"But with you leading the way, Mr. Laine, I'm confident that there won't be any problem at all."

"Wait!"

Prince's voice interrupted Mr. Wilcher's joyful conversation with Jasper.

Mr. Wilcher frowned irritably as he looked at Prince. He said patiently, "Is there anything you'd like to add, Mr. Chavez?"

Prince sneered and stared at Jasper before saying, "You're about to establish a new subsidiary, right, Jasper? Great Then I'll use this setting and opportunity to announce something as well."

"Soha's about to launch its own online payment platform too, very soon!"

Prince then stared daggers at Jasper and spat icily, “Since we’ve come to an agreement on the policy, Jasper, let’s decide the true victor on the market. Whoever dies will be forced to pull out from the market. Do you dare to accept my challenge?”

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Before Jasper could react to Prince’s words, the vice president of Soha sitting beside the latter paled in shock.

‘Since when was Soha about to launch an online payment platform?’

‘As vice president, how do I not know about this?’

‘We have nothing. What are we launching?’

‘We have no product to sell, so there’s no reason for any customer to use a barebones online payment platform! What are we launching it for, then?’

Sitting on his chair, the vice president felt sweat bead and trickle down his forehead. He was frantic.

Yet, Prince showed no signs of interest in this as he glared at Jasper.

“So? Do you dare to take up my challenge or not?”

Jasper merely chuckled in the face of Prince’s aggressive and forceful shouting. The former replied, “I don’t care what you or Soha are going to do. If you think you have the capability then fight for what you want. What’s the point of blowing this into something bigger than it actually is?”

“Good!”

Prince smiled wretchedly and stood up to point at Jasper. He continued, “I’ll commend you for your bravery. But as someone who’s never experienced it for themselves, you’ll never know how terrifying it is to offend me.”

“I don’t need too much effort to get rid of you considering how small your capital is in comparison to mine. If you have a death wish, then I won’t be blamed for being cruel either.”

Mr. Wilcher shook his head at both Prince’s aggression and Jasper’s indifference.

If possible, he truly hoped that these two companies could collaborate and work together to develop this newly emerged industry.

However, from the way things looked now, it seemed like this was a pipe dream.

Not to mention that his identity at this conference was a sensitive one. He represented the government, so no matter how distasteful he found Prince's arrogance, or how much he appreciated Jasper, he had to remain impartial.

"Alright. Now, let's move on to the next item on the agenda. Before I do that, let me remind everyone once more that the point of this research conference is to plan for the online payment industry's future. Please refrain from bringing up topics unrelated to this matter."

"I would like everyone to try and refrain from adding your own emotions into this conference too, as it will only waste everyone's time."

The following discussion was spent with Mr. Wilcher's research team asking Jasper about how online payments operated, what problems he's faced or would face in the future, and how to resolve these problems. Overall, this could be considered a scenario where the government was asking for all of Jasper's opinions in one go.

After all, Jasper was the only person in the entire country and world that was officially running an online payment system. There were similar businesses abroad, but those

were of a completely different kind, and there was no way they could invite someone foreign over to conduct an interview.

It was evident that the government had decided to build this online payment industry well. Thus, they decided to resolve all potential problems that could possibly arise.

Naturally, Jasper was glad to help.

Be it within or outside the country, all companies required their respective government's support if they wanted to grow.

The government planned for the benefit of its people while enterprises only had to worry about profiting, paying taxes, and internal personnel.

The government and enterprises were not enemies. In fact, they were co-dependent and could develop a mutually beneficial relationship.

However, while Jasper and Mr. Wilcher began to benefit from each other, Prince no longer had anything to do with the conference.

Prince might have wanted to enter the industry, but he had no experience in the online payment industry at all before this.

Soha's vice president was useless in the scenario too, since Soha did not understand the industry either.

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All they could do was watch as Jasper and Mr. Wilcher grew even closer.

Many people believed that with Prince's temper, there was no way he would accept being discarded like this.

Surprisingly, Prince did not cause trouble throughout the rest of the conference. It was almost as if he had accepted the role as a bystander.

It was only his sinister gaze sweeping over Jasper from time to time that gave him away. After all, nobody would believe that this quiet man sitting at the conference desk could look as arrogant as he did at the beginning of the conference.

An hour later, the meeting ended.

Outside the conference room, Mr. Wilcher shook Jasper's hand and said, "Thank you for so many of your suggestions, Mr. Laine. I'll compile and hand this up as soon as possible. I'm sure that the official document will be issued in no time."

Jasper smiled and replied, "I'm just doing my part."

After their chat, Prince also walked out of the conference hall bossily.

He made a beeline for Jasper and snickered.

"I really want to rip your face off so I can send it to you and let you admire it, Jasper. Because it won't be long before you'll never get to smile again!"

Prince's eyes shone with a venomous glint.

"I used to think that you were a prideful ant, but I realized that I was wrong. Rather than prideful, you're just a scheming ant who has a bit of luck."

"Not that it matters, since you're just an ant at the end of the day. It'd take no effort for me to crush you."

Prince sneered and lowered his voice to continue, "You've never faced Clear Seas Industrial, so you'll never know how powerful I am. I am the crown prince of Clear Seas Industrial! Just you wait, Jasper. I'll make sure to kill you!"

Staring at Prince, who was mere inches away from him, Jasper replied calmly, “Let the results do the talking. What use is being ruthless with your words? Do you see me getting affected by them?”

Prince glared at Jasper and replied icily, “You sure have a way with words!”

“But I do hope that you can still joyfully rebut others in the future. Not that you’ll have the chance, though.”

Prince gave Jasper one last sinister look after he finished speaking, as if trying to memorize Jasper’s current expression before he turned his head and left.

Jasper watched Prince’s figure leave calmly.

However, no one seemed to realize that most of Jasper’s attention was not on Prince. Instead, it was focused on Soha’s vice president who stood beside Prince and whom had held an insignificant presence throughout the conference.

Jasper could clearly remember that when Prince first said that Soha was about to launch an online payment platform in the conference room, the vice president looked shocked and helpless. It was almost as if he had been told that aliens had invaded earth.

So why did he look overjoyed and confident now?

Excluding the few minutes Jasper and Mr. Wilcher had spent conversing outside after the conference was over, Jasper and Prince had been in the same venue the entire time.

'Prince and that vice president were alone in the conference room only for those few minutes.

'What did they talk about?

'What was it that turned the vice president from a desperate mess mere moments ago, to an extremely confident man in the next?'

Jasper refused to believe that Prince had simply given the vice president an empty promise to console him.

The man had managed to become Soha's vice president. Without seeing some tangible benefits, there was no way he would buy into a rich kid's baseless plan.