

Life at the Top Chapter 176

Zachary was in a meeting with senior executives of the group when he received Henry's call.

He raised a hand to halt the man speaking and picked up the phone.

"It's starting, Dad! Jasper's plan is starting! Our stock traders need to get in position now!" Henry spoke agitatedly.

Zachary, a man who rarely lost his composure, felt his emotions go haywire at his son's words.

"I've already contacted the professional team. Bring Jasper back immediately. There's no safer or more quiet place in Harbor City than our home. The people and equipment will be waiting for him there."

With that, Zachary ended the meeting and rushed off, leaving behind the senior executives in the room to scratch their heads and share looks of confusion.

On the way back, Zachary lined the people up while he texted Michael the details.

Since they had already decided to involve Michael in this, there was no way they would neglect him when things were happening.

Zachary was efficient. Everyone he had prepared was mostly in place by the time Jasper, Henry, and Anna had returned to Law Manor.

The manager leading the team was Zack, someone Jasper had met once before.

“Hello, Mr. Laine. I’ll be the manager leading this team of stock traders. We’ll do our best to follow your instructions.”

Zack immediately walked over to speak when he saw Jasper.

This manager who had a quick mind, worked cleanly, and acted instead of speaking had left a good impression on Jasper.

“We’ve already worked together before, so it’s just the same thing as then. Execute my instructions as fast and as efficiently as possible. Leave everything else to me,” Jasper stated as he shook Zack’s hand.

Zack replied solemnly, “Don’t worry, Mr. Laine. These 15 stock traders here are an old team of mine. Their skills are guaranteed, and we’ve already signed an NDA of the highest order.”

Jasper nodded. He was not surprised for this was what he and Zachary had already discussed.

As the stock traders would be following Jasper’s orders directly, it could be said that they were Jasper’s left and right-hand men in this business war. What was most important was not high efficiency but rather, absolute trust.

Before these traders entered the room, the Law family’s bodyguards had taken all their phones and checked them for any form of communication devices.

Moreover, they were not allowed to take a step out of Law Manor before their mission was complete. The Law family would be in charge of everything they did, be it an intake or the letting out of food. Bodyguards were tasked to follow them even when they took bathroom breaks.

Naturally, their pay would also be a generous one.

They earned, in one day, what ordinary people could only earn in three months.

Zachary had especially cleared a large living room for this battle. When Jasper and Zack walked over, there were already 15 stock traders sitting in front of newly installed equipment, ready to begin.

Glancing at the large LED display on the wall, Jasper gave his first order for the war.

“Open up Harbor City stock market. I want the internet sector strictly monitored from now on and any change of stock prices exceeding 3% reported.

“Open a short position at the bottom. Zack, equally split and transfer the prepared 15 billion worth of funds to each of the traders’ accounts, then let me authorize it after you’re done.”

Zachary and Michael’s promised funds had already arrived earlier today and the funds that Jasper transferred from his account in Mainland had also smoothly arrived with John’s help.

At that moment, Jasper currently had a whopping 40 billion in his hands.

30 billion was from the Law family while he and Michael both contributed five billion.

This 40 billion would prove to be Jasper’s weapon to move all of Harbor City’s finances at his will.

Zack’s team was very efficient, and it was less than a minute after Jasper’s order that Zack reported the completion of tasks.

After entering the password authorization to the master computer with the highest authority, 15 billion funds were then split up and entered into each of the 15 traders’ accounts.

Zack’s heart raced as he saw the large balance before him.

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Up until that moment, Zack had no idea what the Law family and Jasper wanted him and his team to do. However, the shocking sight of 40 billion in cash signified that a storm had begun to brew over Harbor Stocks.

He did not dare ask nor think into it, throwing away all thoughts that he should not have. He waited in focus for Jasper's next order.

Just then, the doors opened to reveal Zachary and Michael walking in with solemn expressions on their faces.

"How's it going, Jasper?" Zachary asked.

Jasper relayed the information he had gotten from Jack.

"Weresoft... is splitting up?" Zachary asked in disbelief.

Michael was more sensitive, for he had switched to working in the finance industry, after all. "It's going to affect a lot of people."

Jasper nodded. "From my understanding of Weresoft, there's no way they'll be so willing to split just because they're forced to. However, once the news gets out, then it will come with drastic effects."

"Will this be what induces the popping of the bubble?" Michael asked.

Jasper shook his head. "It's one of them, but unless I have it wrong, another reason will appear very soon. I don't know what it'll be, but it'll definitely appear today. By then, the future will be set."

The fuse leading to the first world war was the Sarajevo assassination incident. There were too many contradictions, and conflicting forces were still keeping up the delicate balance. Yet one falling leaf was all it would take for this balance to topple and crash.

Weresoft losing their lawsuit was the first leaf, and the balance had already been toppled. It was still a slow process, but the next leaf would undoubtedly trigger the figurative avalanche.

“Mr. Laine, there’s a shift in Ardent Tech’s stock prices! It just dropped by 4%!”

Zack’s voice suddenly cut through Jasper and the other two’s conversation.

The three turned to look at the screen, and before their eyes were Ardent Tech’s stock prices on the large LED display, dropping a heavy 4% as if being axed.

At that moment, Harbor City’s investors had yet to realize the impending storm. Many merely assumed that it was a conspiracy within the stocks.

However, people with sharper senses began to realize that something was different this time.

“Keep watching and monitoring,” Jasper ordered without turning back.

The first change brought the second and the third changes.

“Sunny Internet’s stock prices dropped by 3.5%!”

“Carefree Net’s stock prices dropped by 3.6%!”

“The entire internet sector had an overall drop of 3%!”

“Its Hansel Index keeps dropping! It’s currently at 17,970 points!”

Updates after updates were reported.

The atmosphere within the large living room slowly turned nervous and heavy.

Michael and Zachary looked at Jasper, waiting for him to react.

Jasper did not say anything.

A quick moment later, Michael asked, "The stock prices are already dropping, Mr. Laine. Won't we start investing?"

"Not yet."

Jasper shook his head and replied, "It's not the time to start investing yet. There's no way the idle funds and organizations dealing these internet stocks will go down without a fight."

Michael frowned. "But Mr. Laine, if the future is already set, it'll be too late when we do start investing."

"You're welcome to take your funds out if you don't trust my judgment, Mr. Lane," Jasper replied calmly.

Michael frowned and spoke distastefully, "So you're going to be so stubborn?"

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Michael was enraged when Jasper talked back at him.

After all, Michael was still his elder, especially in terms of working in the business world. His Gladness International was a large corporation.

Everyone respected him, in front and behind his back.

Yet Jasper's words had cornered him and made it difficult for him to accept.

"We've already agreed, Mr. Lane. I need to have absolute authority," Jasper stated.

Michael replied roughly, "All I did was make a suggestion. You're the one who's acting like a tyrant who won't listen to others' opinions."

"I didn't say that I won't, but I'm trying to think and make a decision here. Your self-righteous suggestion will only divert my attention." Jasper's expression hardened at Michael's accusation.

"We're a team now. If we win, we split the winnings, and if we lose, we all shoulder the blame. If you've already decided to give me the full authority, then I'll greatly appreciate it if you remain a silent bystander most of the time, Mr. Lane."

Michael pointed at the market and laughed. "The market is dropping right now. If you're not going to start investing, then what if we miss the opportunity?"

"Let's all take a minute."

Zachary spoke in understanding and turned to Jasper with a light-hearted expression. "Mr. Lane might be a little confused here, Jasper. How about you explain it to him?"

"The dealer!"

Jasper pointed at the market and raised his voice. "There's no way internet companies will just stand there and watch as their own stock prices begin to drop. Not when a dealer is controlling the stocks in every company. No way."

"So you're telling me that no one has seen the horrible drop in the entire sector?" Michael scoffed.

"Of course, they have," Jasper replied without hesitation, "But most of their funds are in the stock market. If they want to pull out, they need to raise the prices first."

"Not to mention that the status of senior executives and bosses depends on the price of their stocks. They will definitely make a move."

Just as Jasper finished speaking, Zack's voice suddenly rang out.

"The overall price of the entire internet sector has just jumped back up!"

"All stock prices that dropped just now are rising at different rates again!"

"The market is picking up again. Businesses have begun to oscillate and recover!"

Michael's head snapped up as he stared at the electronic screen. Each green line that showed a decrease had turned red and started to rise.

"I..." Michael felt like there was a hand suffocating him and he could not speak.

The turn of events had given him a whiplash.

“Haha. Nothing to say this time, huh, Mike?” Zachary chuckled.

With Zachary smoothing over the situation, Michael then apologized to Jasper. He had an embarrassed expression on his face, but he was a man who knew when to leave things and move on. “My apologies, Mr. Laine, I’ve spoken out of turn. I did give you the authority when it comes to the stock market, so I shouldn’t have suspected your decision.”

Jasper’s expression warmed as he replied gently, “Like I said, Mr. Lane. We’re a team.

“You know too that we already have 40 billion funds at hand, but we’re in for a financial war involving hundreds of billions in the future. So I have to ensure my authority to command.

“My apologies if I offended you just now, Mr. Lane.”

Jasper had already spoken so understandingly and humbly that Michael was at a loss for words.

“Alright. I promise to watch my words,” Michael replied in admiration.

Jasper smiled and saw Zachary, who stood behind Michael, giving him a big thumbs up. Jasper turned to instruct Zack’s team, “Prepare to open a position!”

The clickity-clack of fingers on keyboards brought the living room into a frenzy, and the 15 professional stock traders immediately opened a position.

All it would take was an order from Jasper to buy any stocks, and they would immediately enter Harbor Stocks with a large number of funds.

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At that moment, fierce competition began among the people who were watching the rise and fall of the internet sector in Harbor Stocks. A large number of funds were entering the market every second.

Bearish people wanted to knock down the stock prices, bringing down with them all of Harbor Stocks and its Hansel Index. Meanwhile, bullish people continued to defend their territory and refused to let the prices drop so easily.

A war without the use of gunpowder continued to spread.

At that moment, in a quiet villa within Harbor City, the clicking of keyboards continued to sound out.

Kennedy stared at the display screen solemnly and kept firing orders.

A short distance away, Rogers sat idly as he sipped red wine.

“We’ve accumulated enough bargaining chips, Mr. Rogers,” Kennedy turned to tell Rogers.

Rogers put the glass of red wine down and looked at the screen, a playful smile tugging at the corners of his lips as he spoke, “News of Weresoft in the United States should’ve arrived at Harbor City by now, yes?”

Kennedy replied, “People more well-informed should already know by now. Quite the amount of funds have begun to enter the market.”

“Good!”

Rogers rolled his shoulders and walked over to the door. "I'll tell the people at Wall Street to start moving. There'll be an exciting battle there in no time, and I'm sure Harbor Stocks will immediately make their move as well."

"Solo, that old man, didn't manage to defeat Harbor City's economy three years ago, but this time, I'm going to make sure Harbor City's economy loses the past five years of their development!"

Bob spat at him sullenly as he watched Rogers leave to contact his Quantum Fund Group. "These white people from the United States are just coming here to dig up the graves of Harbor City's ancestors. And here we are, handing them the shovels."

Kennedy glanced at Bob plainly and spoke, "Ancestors don't exist in the capital market, but if you mind, you're free to leave."

Bob smiled embarrassedly. "I don't care if they live or die. The more they lose, the happier I become. After all, that's how we profit."

Five minutes later, Barron's, the dominating financial magazine, had published an emergency report in the United States.

Its contents were no different from Jasper's memory of his past life.

They had investigated more than 200 internet companies and realized that the senior executives there had all begun to cash out. The companies' performances began to fall, and a lot of them on the market were facing dilemmas of bankruptcy and restructuring.

With that report published, the public opinion around Wall Street that had been shrouded in the gloomy clouds of Weresoft losing the antitrust lawsuit immediately exploded.

The capital's senses were the most sensitive, and they had immediately affected the stock market.

All three of the United States' indexes, The Dow Jones, the S&P 500, and the Nasdaq Composite, plummeted drastically.

Without warning, the dot-com bubble crashed worldwide.

In a flash, trillions of funds turned into maddening strangles in the United States stock market, and enormous amounts of funds disappeared into thin air in mere seconds. Countless people were immediately faced with bankruptcy.

The tragedy hit like a tsunami, and it swallowed the entire world whole.

Harbor Stocks' Hansel Index was immediately affected, and countless investors immediately tried to retreat. Every investor began to sell their stocks at maddening speed in fear of being affected.

However... they were too late.

"Quick, what's the trading volume of the internet sector?"

"It's three times larger than it was three minutes ago! It's continuing to grow!"

"The Hansel Index just dropped by 200 points!"

"The stock market crashed!"

Zack's frantic and exceptionally excited voice was quickly followed by Jasper's new instructions.

"Open a position! Open a position! The Hansel Index, it's dropping! Open a position now!"

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In the futures market, one could decide whether they wanted to buy or to sell. In other words, to take a bullish or a bearish stand.

It was a simple idea. Taking the bullish stand meant that you believed the stock index would increase, so when it did, you earned profits.

Taking the bearish stand meant that you believed the index would drop, so when it did, you earned profits.

All in all, it was a gamble of whether the stock indexes would drop or rise.

Jasper believed that the Hansel Index would drop, so he chose to take a bearish stand.

When in truth, the falling of the Hansel Index was a trend that not even God could change.

The figurative tsunami had appeared at sea level, and the only thing anyone could do now was run as high up as possible, since stopping the tsunami was impossible.

With both Weresoftware losing the antitrust lawsuit and Barron's article, sorrow filled Harbor City's stock market.

The entire market was starting to crash, and retail investors were trying to escape. Everyone was selling their own stocks, but where would they find an investor who would take over the market at such a time?

For stocks to be sold out, it first required someone to buy them or the transaction could not be completed. Without anyone purchasing, the falling of prices was the only outcome!

Harbor Stocks right now and stock markets all over the world were facing the same situation.

Countless shares were dropping drastically and therefore lowered the overall stock indexes.

Almost every stock price was dropping!

Countless people were hugging their heads in disbelief at the current situation of Harbor Stocks' trading market. Wails, sobs, screams, and shouts filled the city.

The scene was one of absolute chaos.

At the same time, media companies were trying to report the latest news of the stock market as quickly as they could.

Now the entire world knew that the dot-com bubble had popped.

Such a situation only promoted more fear.

Harbor City's government quickly set up an emergency press conference stating that they would do everything in their ability to guarantee the safety of investor's funds while providing a series of favorable measures for internet companies.

Harbor City's government was trying to use politics to reignite the stock market to ensure that the city's economy could continue to develop.

Yet with the major trend of panic spreading through the entire market, the government of Harbor City's press conference produced no effects.

Stock prices continued to drop.

The drop in the stock index was beyond what anyone had ever seen.

Like a nightmare, it reminded Harbor City's investors of the horrific memories from the financial tsunami three years ago.

Every single citizen had to pay for the economic fallout of one single district.

The most straightforward and simple result was that the market price of companies would drop too low, thus leading to their cash flow breaking up and lastly the company closing down. The first thing that happened was the axing of employees.

Having lost their jobs, employees no longer had any economic income and their entire family's financial stability would be put at risk.

Too many people would lose their jobs, and the worst, as well as the most direct result, would be social chaos.

Similar tragic consequences had happened overseas before.

Citizens were terrified.

In less than half a trading day, the Hansel Index had continued to drop. By the time the market closed for the day, the Hansel Index had dropped to 14,979 points!

At that moment, everyone knew Harbor Stocks was screwed.

Those who took the bullish stand had lost everything in this war, down to their defenses. All they could do was watch as those who took the bearish stand celebrated joyfully.

They were tasting the fruits of their victory.

In Law Manor, Jasper let out a long exhale the moment the stock market closed.

“Report,” Jasper ordered.

Zack was flushed with excitement. He had never felt so ecstatic in the more than ten years since he started working in this industry.