

# Life at the Top Chapter 346

Lights shone brightly in the conference hall, and there was a podium at the very front. Around the room were buffet-style tables for refreshments and there were waiters all around the hall for guests to request help from.

“Quite the number of people are in attendance for the conference this time. Even the owners and senior executives of private state-owned and joined venture chainstores like Kaymaroon, Carrefour, Somer Resources, TR-Mart, and Somer United Stores will be here today.”

Dawson turned to tell Jasper before they walked through the door.

“Is something big about to happen to the industry? Why else would there be such a grand conference?”

Jasper knew that for at least 15 years until online shopping completely monopolized people’s expenses, the supermarket industry had always been thriving.

Moreover, its unique business model guaranteed a large amount of cash flow to the supermarket industry. Supermarkets were the only business that had creditors but not debtors.

It was a promising industry.

However, Jasper did not want to dabble in this industry for now as every industry had its own specialized techniques and Jasper did not do things unless he was absolutely certain of its results.

All he felt now was pure curiosity.

Dawson smiled. "I heard that they're deciding to develop a standard within the industry for everyone to abide by."

While Jasper did not work in the supermarket Industry, he had dabbled in similar industries and immediately understood what this so-called standard referred to.

It was essentially a binding curse bigwigs wanted to give their industries so that they could benefit by gathering as many resources for themselves.

"They wish," Jasper replied faintly, not rooting for it.

Developing standards within an industry was something that required the discussion of the entire country. Competitors should not be allowed to play judge at all.

Dawson smiled noncommittally. "My thoughts exactly."

As they spoke, the two entered the conference hall.

Dawson's arrival had brought over a small wave of guests.

"You're finally here, Dawson. I heard that you've been doing great with your real estate business lately. I almost thought that you wouldn't come since the supermarket industry is on a way smaller scale," a middle-aged man who approached them laughed while speaking.

Dawson smiled and walked over. He reached out to shake the person's hand. "I started off with the supermarket industry, so how could I let go of it just like that? There's no way I'd miss this conference."

"Here, let me introduce you. This is Jasper, my daughter Wendy's boyfriend.

"This is Mr. Chris Quarles! He's one of the big shots in our industry, Jasper. You might want to acquaint yourself."

Under Chris' curious gaze, Jasper reached out humbly and greeted, "Hello, Mr. Quarles."

Chris reached out to shake Jasper's hand. "Not bad. You have promising talent, young man."

Jasper was a generation below his and still young, so Chris did not focus too much time on him. The fact that Chris greeted him politely already spoke volumes.

He turned to crack a joke with Dawson. "Your angelic daughter already has her marriage partner decided, Dawson? My son's still in high school, though. I'd ask you to reconsider him if he wasn't so young."

Dawson replied calmly, "I'll let the young ones decide this for themselves. Plus, Jasper fits right into my requirements."

Seeing how Dawson favored Jasper, Chris glanced at the latter again but changed the subject.

His smile fell as he leaned toward Dawson worriedly. "I got wind of what's happening, Dawson. It's not in our favor at all."

Chris had just finished speaking when a burst of powerful laughter boomed from behind.

"If it isn't Dawson from Schuler Group! I heard you almost got scammed by a few hundred million? I told you, didn't I? We've got to know how much we're worth and don't dabble in things we don't understand. Look at you, why won't you listen? What's with all this real estate business? No one's going to pity you when you make a loss, you know."

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By the time such targeting words were said, the person saying them had arrived in front of Dawson as well.

Dressed in a black suit from a sophisticated brand, his hair was slicked back without one strand amiss. One glance was all it took to tell that he was a very successful middle-aged man.

He had very prominent features, the most impressionable ones being the sharp and defined brows which added a tint of fierceness and frost.

Jasper did not need Dawson to introduce him.

This was Sebastian Walker, the owner of Kaymaroon.

Both TR-Mart and Somer Resources, renowned supermarkets in the future, had yet to make a big name for themselves in the year 2000. The largest supermarket during this time was Kaymaroon.

At the topic of Kaymaroon, Sebastian was indeed an able man.

Born a nobody, Sebastian single-handedly turned Kaymaroon into the country's biggest supermarket chain in the year 2000 from a mere city workshop.

Moreover, the popular commercial complex concept after 2010 was also first introduced into the country by Sebastian from abroad.

However, Sebastian's conceitedness had made him neglect the fact that the country and its citizens' spending was far inferior to what the situation overseas was. Thus, his advanced concept had only fallen short in the end.

The price he paid was Kaymaroon being the first supermarket defeated by online shopping.

According to history, Sebastian was currently at the pinnacle of his career, so it made sense that he was very proud of himself.

Against Sebastian's harsh words, Dawson showed no sign of a reaction.

"You seem to be very interested in my development, Chairman Walker."

Sebastian laughed aloud and replied, "Of course, you're my old rival. How can I not worry about whether a loser like you is enjoying the last years of his life?"

Dawson's eyes slightly narrowed as he replied calmly, "Thank you for your concern, but you should take care of yourself."

Sebastian's forced smile fell and he suddenly turned to Jasper. Realizing that there was nothing special about Jasper, Sebastian smirked mockingly. "What's this? Did Chairman Schuler bring someone new over as well?"

"Don't you know to greet people when you see them?"

Jasper looked straight at Sebastian. Evidently aware of the fight between the two men, Jasper merely replied, "My apologies, but I don't know you."

Sebastian burst into laughter. "I'm the host of this conference. What are you doing here if you don't recognize me, then?"

"Sebastian! Jasper is someone I brought over. If this is what you believe, then there's no need for us to be here at your conference!"

Dawson suddenly spoke and moved as if pulling Jasper out the door.

Chris, who had been chuckling bitterly by the side, suddenly persuaded by saying, “Dawson, hey, come on. Let’s not be so rash, okay? We’re here to attend a conference, it’s a good thing. Relax, okay, let’s calm down.”

Pulling Dawson to sit as he spoke, Chris then turned to say to Sebastian darkly. “How about you greet the other guests, Mr. Walker? We’ll talk later?”

Sebastian scoffed. “What big shot are you pretending to be in front of me when you’re just a loser who has been hiding for the past ten years?”

“How do you even have the shame to bring someone new here? Do you not have any dignity? Ever thought about how his impression of you will shatter when you make a fool of yourself in public again?”

Sebastian then turned to leave.

Dawson’s expression was blank, but his eyes were icy.

Chris smiled bitterly and comforted him. “You know that Walker is just arrogant by nature, Dawson. Just ignore him.

“A lot of people are for this industry standard and those of us against it make up the minority. There’s no way we can stop him if you leave.”

Jasper suddenly spoke, “We can stay to have a look.”

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Dawson slowly nodded his head after hearing Jasper putting it that way. He let out a sigh and said with a bitter smile, “Actually, ten years ago, I got into a fight with Sebastian Walker. It’s just that I ended up losing that fight.”

Chris Quarles backed him up by adding, “It wasn’t actually a loss. In that fight, you actually showed your imposing momentum.”

As he was saying, Chris spun around and said to Jasper, “Ten years ago, no one ruled over the supermarket industry in the southeast province yet. The Schuler family’s supermarket and Sebastian’s Kaymaroon, which were the only two supermarket companies that entered the southeast province at the same time, competed with each other for the top spot.

“Both of them wanted to take over this huge market and keep it to themselves. Hence, the two companies could not stop a fight from breaking out between them.

“The competition had been a cruel one. When it was very aggressive, both parties were basically losing in order to take control over the market. Your father-in-law was very kind and was a steady man in battle. He was very tolerant of the suppliers, and that’s why many people supported him.

“But Sebastian was different. He was more domineering. Basically, he’s the kind of person that says he’s the only one who can rule the world. Therefore, not many people supported him.

“When your father-in-law was about to emerge victorious, a big boss from Swallow Capital suddenly took out a huge sum of funds to support Kaymaroon. With this, your father-in-law could no longer win against them and lost that battle.

“It was very unfortunate for your father-in-law. Ever since that time, he had never shown up in the market within the province. If not, no one could say for sure who will be the head of the current supermarket business within the country.”

Dawson said with a smile, “Those are the old stories. Why bother mentioning them?”

Jasper spun around and asked Dawson, “Is it because Sebastian threatened you?”

Dawson sighed and said, "You can't say that he threatened me. I'll just put it this way. It was an agreement in a bet. Whoever lost the bet will not be allowed to expand their market."

"But such an agreement doesn't take effect under the name of law, right?" said Jasper, frowning.

Dawson said with a smile, "Of course not. But I'm a man of pride. Besides, I'm sick of it as well. Keeping the market going on within the province is more than enough to keep the Schuler family alive, and I also get to spend more time to keep Wendy company too."

Jasper nodded and said with his gaze looking dark, "I'll avenge you!"

Before Dawson even spoke a word, Chris laughed. "Young man, do you know what kind of person Sebastian is? Do you know about the huge support he has? Ten years ago, your father-in-law was already no match for him. Things are still the same now. Your father-in-law couldn't handle him back then, what more you?"

"It's a good thing to be ambitious, but young man, you should be more down-to-earth and hardworking."

Jasper could make out that Chris and Dawson had a very good relationship. Chris said those comments with kind intentions, but it was not pleasant hearing them.

Jasper was beyond the state where someone could persuade him with just words. At that moment, he merely let out a smile to show his gratitude to Mr. Quarles.

Chris had been doing business his entire life, and it was impossible for him not to realize that Jasper did not heed his words at all. He shook his head, feeling that the youngsters nowadays were way too arrogant. However, he did not want to waste a single breath talking about it.

After all, Jasper could be Dawson's son-in-law in the future. He had nothing to do with them anyway. He would not stop Jasper if he wanted to boast or get himself humiliated before Sebastian.

While they were talking earlier, the forum had officially begun.

Sebastian, as the leader and also the organizer, would naturally be the first to give his speech. The entire forum was centered around him.

After spewing a whole load of rubbish for nearly half an hour, Sebastian cleared his throat and said, "I believe everyone has already gone through the contents of the standard for the nation's supermarket industry that I gave out earlier.

"I dare say this standard will definitely be great news that will benefit the industry!

"In the standard, I've set up a department with a committee to manage our supermarket industry. I vote myself for the position of chairperson of the committee.

"Now, let us start voting. This standard is suggested by me, Sebastian Walker, and naturally, I should be the chairperson. Everyone, please vote for me, thank you!"

As soon as Sebastian was done with his speech, a huge group of people whom he had bribed earlier immediately voiced out their support.

The situation looked good for him.

Chris and his gang who did not support him all sat on their seats with awful looks on their faces. However, no one dared to take the lead.

Just when Sebastian felt that everything was settled, a clear voice was heard ringing across the entire scene.

“I object to it!”

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”Object?”

Once the voice of objection was heard, it immediately attracted everyone’s attention. Everyone was aware that Sebastian’s status in this industry was very high.

Only a handful of people dared to go against him when he spoke.

Including Sebastian, nobody expected someone to be so daring at that moment to jump out and object.

‘Isn’t this just like wanting to slap Sebastian on the face in public?’

Exasperated, Sebastian looked over only to find out the one who stood up to talk was the young man beside Dawson.

Suddenly, Sebastian’s expression became dark.

The scene at that moment was very quiet. Everyone was sneaking a peek at Jasper, including Sebastian who was wearing a very awful expression.

Most of the people were looking forward to seeing how things would turn out.

Amidst the crowd, Chris came to Dawson and said into his ear with shock on his face, “Is this brat out of his mind? Why don’t you stop him?”

Dawson smiled calmly, and said, “Why should I stop him?”

It was as if it was the first time Chris was getting to know Dawson. “Judging from Sebastian’s temper, do you think he’ll let Jasper off the hook? Isn’t he your daughter’s boyfriend? Are you just going to watch him dig his own grave?”

‘Even the Turner family was forced to step down by Jasper, what more Sebastian who’s alone?’

Dawson was feeling thrilled, but his face did not show signs of it.

At that moment, Sebastian spoke.

“Dawson is the one who brought you here, right? You’re just a brat who hasn’t even gone through puberty. Your seniors don’t dare say a word, yet you think you have the right to talk?”

His comment immediately exposed Jasper’s identity. Everyone was surprised, and following then, everyone’s gazes on Dawson became ambiguous.

The conflict between Dawson and Sebastian was not a secret in the industry. Those who were in the industry for some time would know about it. More so, those who could come to participate in this conference were all big bosses in the supermarket industry.

“I’m representing Schuler Group, so why is it that I don’t have the right to talk? Since it’s a conference for the industry, then as one of the companies in the industry, it’s only natural that Schuler Group has the qualification to express their ideas.”

Jasper raised his head and looked straight at Sebastian who was on the podium and said with an appropriate attitude.

“Could it be that Chairman Walker is so domineering that you won’t even allow anyone to talk? Since that’s the case, if you really succeed in being this so-called chairperson, aren’t you going to be a tyrant in the future?”

The words Jasper said had bruised his ego. Sebastian's expression changed drastically.

Initially, those who were against him were already not few, but at this moment, Jasper was still fanning the flames.

Subconsciously, he glanced over at the scene. Indeed, most of the people had a hesitant expression plastered on their faces.

Sebastian took in a deep breath and said through gritted teeth, "Don't go talking nonsense. Of course, I'll allow others to talk. Besides, I'll be glad to accept good ideas. As long as it's a good opinion, I'll accept it."

"Then please accept my opinion. I object to this industry's standard because I think it's not going to benefit the development of the supermarket industry. Besides, this is just a trick for you to monopolize this industry."

Jasper's voice could even make the ground tremble.

However, no one expected anything good out of him.

They all just thought of Jasper as a silly brat who did not think things through before making a move.

Chris also shook his head while smiling in mockery.

"This silly brat. Is he saying that we, who have lived almost half of our lifetimes, are not able to see through the scheme as thoroughly as a young lad like him?" Chris tilted his body and said to the chairman of another supermarket company beside him.

"Youngsters are that easily triggered. He's too impulsive." That person shook his head and agreed to Chris' words.

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"Sigh, soon, he's going to pay the price for his arrogance and foolishness. Sebastian will definitely not let him off the hook," said Chris calmly.

"Utter rubbish!" Sebastian slammed on the table hard. He stood up like a furious male lion.

Sebastian roared as he pointed at Jasper, "Who do you think you are? Back when I was running my business, you were still in diapers. Since when is it your turn to be pointing fingers at me and criticizing me?"

At that moment, Dawson stood up as well and said coldly, "Sebastian, please mind your words. I'm still standing here well and alive. I'll not tolerate you bullying the younger ones."

Sebastian laughed out loud and said, "Oh my, after blasting the young one, now it's the elder's turn to show up? Dawson, do you really think you're some big shot? Even with that little capability you got there you weren't my opponent ten years back. Just how courageous are you now to go against me?"

"Believe it or not, tomorrow, I'll just enter the market in your province and drag the entire Schuler Group down. How difficult do you think it will be for me to do so, huh?"

Dawson's icy cold gaze fell on Sebastian as he said, "Feel free to test it out. If I even frown, I'll not call myself a Schuler!"

Sebastian sneered. He got down from the podium and walked his way to Dawson. He said coldly, "Hey Schuler, I guess you really haven't learned your

lesson. It looks like the lesson I taught you ten years ago wasn't terrible enough for you, right?"

As Sebastian was saying, he chuckled before continuing, "Do you know why your wife suddenly died of a heart attack ten years ago?"

His comment made Dawson's eyes burst with light as he kept staring at Sebastian. Judging from his body that was trembling slightly, Dawson's emotions were very much agitated at this moment. It was just that he was refraining himself.

Jasper, who was listening beside him, became serious as well.

All this while, he knew that Wendy was raised by a single parent. Regardless of it being his past life when they both had never communicated with each other or in this current life where they were both together, he had never heard Wendy mention a word about her mother.

Dawson had never mentioned his wife as well.

All he knew was that Wendy's mother had passed away a long time ago.

Jasper did not ask as well. After all, it was a very depressing incident for the father and daughter.

However, looking at the current situation, it seemed that the death of Wendy's mother that year was rather suspicious.

After letting out a burst of mystifying laughter, Sebastian said proudly and arrogantly in the ears of Dawson and Jasper with a voice that only the three of them could hear.

"Didn't you find it weird? All the while, your wife only had a mild cardiovascular malformation. Living up to 60 or 70 years old shouldn't be a problem, but then her illness deteriorated and ultimately, she passed away.

“That’s because I summoned a few men. Initially, I thought of just scaring her, but who knew she f\*cking had a heart attack as well. Once she heard the fake news that I told her about you meeting with an accident during a job outstation, coupled with the fact that she was being kidnapped, she really got terrified and died on the spot!

“If it wasn’t for that, I think it wouldn’t have been so easy for me to win against you. However, even the gods were standing on my side, hahahaha!”

Sebastian’s words and laughter were like a spell, unlocking the puzzle Dawson had been struggling himself with for the past ten years. At the same time, it lit up the flames of rage within him as well.

“Sebastian!”

Dawson, who was so mad that he had lost all rationality, roared. He extended his hands vigorously and grabbed Sebastian’s collar. Raising his fist, he was about to swing his punch.

However, given that Sebastian was so daring to blurt out such a comment meant that he had come well prepared. The security guards beside him immediately rushed over and halted Dawson with all their force.

Dawson kept struggling. Due to the rage and agitation, his complexion was unusually red. Both his eyes were engorged with vessels. He opened them wide while staring at Sebastian as if he was about to engulf him.

Even though he was mentally well prepared, Sebastian was still shocked to see Dawson’s current look.

Subconsciously, he took a step back and ordered a few security guards to restrain Dawson. A few people then surrounded both Dawson and Jasper.

After adjusting his collar, Sebastian looked at Dawson and said with an arrogant smile, “Do you know why I’m only willing to disclose it to you now?”

“Because I want you to know that ten years ago, you couldn’t win against me, and right now, you’re still a piece of trash in my eyes!”

Sebastian raised his hand and pointed at Jasper as he was saying. He then added with a cold smile, “Young man, do you see that? This is what you call tactics. You’re just a brainless kid who stepped out without knowing anything. Don’t you know that you’re being used by your father-in-law?”

Jasper gave off a scary gaze. He glanced at Sebastian and tried his best to talk in a calm tone, “To be honest, you’re the first person to make me this mad. I’ll surely serve you well.

“I’ll make you wish you were never born!”