

# Life at the Top Chapter 456

Dawson nodded in satisfaction when he saw how confident Jasper was.

“If you’re in the business world, you’ll meet all sorts of people, including royalty and smugglers. Competition among your peers is inevitable.

“It might be healthy competition among businesses, or it might be malicious competition with intent to suppress. There’s no way you’ll be the only person in an industry. Competition exists as long as you have peers.

“Competition itself is not scary, but you should always ensure you never underestimate your enemy and confuse yourself. No matter who the competition is, you must make sure you have a thorough understanding of them before fighting against them. Your mindset is the most important thing here.”

Dawson gave his diligent advice and said kindly, “If you’re going to take matters into your own hands, I can help by contributing ideas, but most of it will be up to you to handle.”

Jasper understood that Dawson was giving him a chance to gain more experience in fighting business battles, which was why he did not modestly decline. He smiled and said, “Alright, you should take this time to rest up. I’ll come to you if I face any further problems.”

Dawson smiled and said, “You’ve already proved your ability and vision in making money. You’re much more powerful than anyone I’ve ever met, but you still need a little practice in business battles. I’ll help keep an eye on things while I still can. You don’t need to worry.”

Dawson’s phone rang while he was still talking.

It was a phone call from the executives at JW Real Estate.

A moment later, Dawson hung up the phone. He had a grim expression on his face.

“The people from Waterhoof City are quite aggressive.”

Wendy hurriedly asked, “What’s wrong? What did they say?”

Dawson said, “The person in charge from Nauritus City’s government just called. Something about how the company that wants to develop the south bank intends to have contact with me because they plan to build a bridge across Southface River that will connect the south and north banks.”

“Build a bridge? Isn’t that what the city government is supposed to do? Since when were companies in charge of that? Our main goal as a real estate company is to earn money, and a bridge would cost a billion dollars at least. Why should we fund this?” Wendy asked indignantly.

Dawson smiled as he said, “Nauritius City’s government thinks it’ll definitely be a good thing if the south bank is developed as well. Not only will it build a better image for themselves, but they’ll also be able to boost the economy on the north bank, which is relatively backward as of this moment. There’s no reason why they wouldn’t want us to collaborate.

“This bridge is probably one of the things the real estate agents at Waterhoof City used to tempt the city hall.”

Jasper laughed lightly as he said, “How calculating of them. They’ll be the only ones gaining benefits from this bridge, but they want us to fund a portion of it as well. In the end, we’ll have paid for nothing while they get all the credit. Do they think everyone else is a fool?”

Dawson nodded. He was deeply impressed.

He said in a low voice, “But either way, developing the north bank is a project that neither Nauritius City’s government nor the Southeast Province City’s government can reject as it will boost their economy. We’ve already gotten the shorter end of the stick.”

“It doesn’t matter. They can approach us all they like. When will that happen?” Jasper asked.

If Ian and Norman were going to drive up to his door, there was no reason for Jasper to cower behind the door.

Thus, Jasper had never considered rejecting the approach.

“This afternoon at the conference room of Nauritius City’s government,” Dawson answered.

Jasper thought for a brief moment before he raised his head and said, “I’m fine with the time, but I get to decide where we meet.”

Dawson raised an eyebrow slightly.

Jasper continued saying, “We’ll set the location at the development site at the south bank of the Southface River. If we’re going to discuss the development of the south and north banks, we should do it where it’s happening. What can we discuss in an office?”

Dawson smiled and said, “Alright, that’s a good idea. That’s settled then!”

“I’ll have someone return the call immediately and inform Nauritius City’s government of our decision. Let’s eat now.”

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Dawson was a well-known figure in Southeast Province, a territory that covered Nauritius City. When the call was made, the city hall only hesitated for a brief second before agreeing.

Jasper spent some time with Wendy before getting into the car and driving toward the development site.

Wendy did not follow along. Dawson had assigned the vice-president from the real estate company who was in charge of the Southface River project to go along with Jasper. The main reason was that an executive familiar with how the project was progressing needed to be there if any operational issues came up.

“Pleased to meet you, Mr. Laine.” The vice president was named Sean Tucker. He was an executive who Dawson had paid a hefty sum to hire from a state-owned real estate company.

Jasper smiled as he shook his hand and said, “Nice to meet you, Vice President Tucker. I’ll need to trouble you in answering any questions there might be regarding the business today. I’m not too familiar with that aspect.”

Jasper rarely made an appearance at JW Real Estate, but Sean knew the existence of this most powerful boss.

Dawson was only the CEO of the real estate company on paper. In actuality, the shares were all under Jasper’s JW Investment Company and Wendy’s name. Thus, Jasper was his actual boss in practice.

As such, Sean put on a respectful attitude as he hurriedly said, “That’s my duty. I’ll do my best.”

Dawson’s chauffeur was in charge of driving them. Usually, Jasper would have Julian act as both his bodyguard and chauffeur whenever he went out. However, Jasper had allowed Julian to take care of his sister during this time.

A bone marrow match had been found for Julian's sister, and she would be having her operation in two days. Jasper had not only paid for everything, but he also used Dawson's connections to form a team of the best specialists in the country to conduct the operation.

Jasper had also given Julian an additional sum of money to use to take care of his sister, Cathy.

Jasper was never stingy when it came to his subordinate's welfare.

An employee would only be steadfastly loyal to their employer if the employer helped solve their worries. Jasper, who had been an employee for the entirety of his past life, understood that thoroughly.

The Southface River south bank project was the largest investment Southeast Province had made since its establishment. The developmental funds required for the entire project were estimated to be around 15 to 20 billion dollars. Jasper had already invested eight billion dollars into the project. He had not included the Law family's investment of four billion dollars in that.

Even though they had not arrived yet, Jasper could see the development site in full swing as he listened to Sean's report in the car. The site was spread across 900,000 square feet across the entire south bank.

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"The whole south bank of Southface River will undergo development. The site is about 900,000 square feet. After meeting with the planning department, our current plan is to build an integrated city center right in the center.

“That includes a Central Business District, a CBD. The CBD will include two 20-floor commercial buildings and one 40-floor office building. These three buildings will serve as the core of the district. The remaining buildings will surround it.

“In terms of lifestyle, we plan to build four neighborhoods. One high-end neighborhood, two on the poorer end of the spectrum, and one for those in the middle. There will also be two large shopping malls, two kindergartens, and one elementary, junior, and high school each.

“Other supporting facilities such as hospitals, municipal offices, and bus lines have all been allocated into the budget.”

Sean could not help but become excited as he reported to Jasper. He said, “Mr. Laine, to be honest with you, I used to work at a state-owned real estate agency where I thought I had a lot of experience.

“However, our understanding of real estate used to be nothing more than the construction of a few neighborhoods or business buildings. At the very most, we would be contracted for multiple-use buildings.

“I only realized how much one can do as a real estate agent when I saw JW Real Estate’s proposal for the Southface River project. We’re constructing a miniature city!

“The person who came up with this concept must be a genius! He’s the epitome of what it means to be in real estate. All the other real estate agencies in the country seem like small fries and not worth even a glance to me now!”

Jasper chuckled when he heard that. Naturally, he was the one who had come up with the project concept.

Literally every city in every country in the world would look like that in the future. There would not be any surprise anymore. However, when such a concept was

introduced in a world 20 years before that time, Jasper would be the pioneer in the real estate industry. It was only natural that Sean was shocked.

Jasper smiled as he said, "There are still many talented individuals in this country. I merely drew on some experience I gained overseas and combined it with what the locals want to come up with this design.

"However, I'm still an amateur. This design was redone several times when it was delivered to the design institute before it got approved. You professionals will definitely have better ideas than mine once you gain some experience."

Sean was stunned. "Mr. Laine, you designed this?!"

"Yes." Jasper nodded as he acknowledged it.

Sean was convinced now as he said, "I finally know what it means when they say there's always someone better than you. My old friends in the industry have been asking me who came up with the design for Southface River for the longest time. It turns out it was you, Mr. Laine.

"Mr. Laine, JW Real Estate will become famous for sure once this project is completed. The entire country will learn about us!"

As they spoke, the car pulled to a stop at the development site.

Sean had already gotten in contact with the person in charge at the site.

When the car pulled to a stop, a line of engineers and their supervisors were at the car door, fighting for the chance to open the door for Jasper.

"Greetings, Mr. Laine."

"Welcome to the site, Mr. Laine."

“Please come on in, Mr. Laine.”

As they all spoke to him with respect, Jasper waved his hands and said, “I just dropped by to take a look. Are the people from Nauritius City’s government here yet?”

“They’ve arrived and are having a tour of the place now,” a supervisor said.

“Bring me over,” Jasper said calmly.

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Ian was standing with his back to the Southface River. Inwardly, he was deeply shaken as he gazed at the huge site which stretched beyond where the eye could see.

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He was not the only one. Norman, who was with him, also had a tense expression on his face.

The person standing beside them was the person in charge from Nauritius City’s government, and he sounded somewhat delighted and proud as he introduced the two to the site.

“Excluding Swallow Capital, Waterhoof City, and Cavern City, the Southface River project is the most advanced and modern city construction project in the country.

“Furthermore, it’s also currently the most important project in the province. Once this project is completed, it’ll help enhance the province in terms of the level of influence and competitiveness!

“It’s currently about 40% completed, and we estimate it’ll be fully completed by the first half of the next year!”

Norman felt annoyed as he listened to him talk.

He and Ian had not made the trip from Waterhoof City to listen to people praise Jasper’s ability!

“I would never have believed a 20-year-old boy was in charge of such a massive project if I hadn’t witnessed it with my own two eyes.”

Norman spoke in a heavy tone.

“I always thought Dawson was in charge of this. Who would have imagined that Dawson is just a supervisor while the actual mastermind is Jasper! Seems like we’ve grossly misunderstood the dynamics between Jasper and Dawson.”

Ian spoke after a long pause, “Impressive.

“If Jasper goes on like this for another ten years, I’m guessing that not even we will have the guts to challenge him anymore.”

Norman huffed as he said, “I admit that he has potential, but he’s still not that powerful compared to us now. Most importantly, look at how old he is. What tricks could he have witnessed in his lifetime? We’ll have him running circles around us if we just put a little more thought into things!”

Ian smiled. He had the same thoughts as Norman before he arrived at the site.

However, for some inexplicable reason, he had a bad feeling now as he stood with his back to the Southface River. He looked at the construction site, which was slowly revealing its majestic aura like a giant beast.

The south bank was a pearl of great price. However, was it a wise choice to develop the north bank just to get back at Jasper?

Ian's emotions were turbulent. He felt as if he had boarded a train that had left the station and it was too late for him to get down.

Just then, the person in charge said, "Here come the people from JW Real Estate!"

Ian and Norman glanced over. They saw a crowd of people walking toward them, and among them was a young man they would recognize even if he had been burnt to crisps. He was surrounded by the rest of the people, just like how stars surrounded the moon.

Jasper strode toward them. His posture and movement conveyed his confidence.

Ian suppressed his emotions. There was no point in shying away now. The only thing he could do was fight to the death!

When Ian and Norman glanced at Jasper, he also noticed them.

Their gazes met mid-air. Electrical sparks seemed to crackle and flare in the silence.

When Jasper and his companions got nearer to them, they heard Jasper chuckling as he said, "Mr. Hull! Mr. Gardner! Why didn't you let me know in advance that you would be making the trip here from Waterhoof City? If word got out, people would accuse me of being disrespectful and mistreating my seniors who've come as guests."

Jasper's opening statement was nothing but respectful, and he had a friendly posture as he spoke.

However, Ian and Norman were experienced. They could sense the hidden sarcasm behind Jasper's speech.

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"This is an unfortunate misunderstanding. I initially thought Southface River was worth developing and had the south bank as my first choice. Unfortunately, luck wasn't on our side, and the developmental rights for the south bank have already been claimed. Thus, we can only go for the second best choice now and develop the north bank.

"I never thought that you would be in charge of developing the south bank, Jasper."

Ian had a slight smile on his face as he replied.

Jasper chuckled. "I think it's quite a good thing. I was just thinking about how unbalanced it would be if the north bank were to be a desolate area while the south bank became a modern city after the project is finished. It's a good thing now that your company has come forth and expressed interest in developing the north bank."

"It's good if you think about things that way. However, please don't think we're targeting anyone by coming here. We don't mean it that way," Ian said as he smiled.

Jasper laughed. "Of course not."

As the two chatted and laughed, everyone else spectating could sense the hidden edge in the peaceful, jovial atmosphere.

Including Sean, everyone from JW Real Estate had a hostile look in their eyes as they looked at Ian and Norman.

It was obvious they were here to take their business away from them and launch a fight against them. How could they have come with good intentions?

The atmosphere started turning weird too.

Just then, the person in charge from Nauritius City's government smiled and said, "Mr. Laine, you're one of the up and coming young entrepreneurs in the province. Now that Mr. Hull and Mr. Gardner have set their hopes on the future of the north bank, it would do both parties good to cooperate."

Jasper glanced at the person in charge and smiled slightly as he said, "We're all just going about our own business. Of course, I would never say no to anything that would help boost the province's economy."

The person in charge's face lit up when he heard that and said, "Mr. Hull and Mr. Gardner came up with a proposal some time ago. They plan to connect the north and south banks of the Southface River. A bridge will have to be built across the river to make that happen. What are your thoughts on that, Mr. Laine?"

Jasper said appreciatively, "That's a good idea! Once the bridge is built and open for access, the north and south banks of the Southface River will be connected. That will greatly boost the economy of the north bank. Of course, I approve of it."

Everyone's expression changed the minute he said that.

Everyone with a clear eye could tell that Ian and Norman had suggested building a bridge so they would also receive a share in the profits earned from the development of the south bank of Southface River.

The north bank was desolate because of the Southface River. It restricted the development of the few districts there.

Even an idiot could tell that the south bank would become the new province capital once the project on the south bank was completed. It would outshine all the other areas in the province.

Thus, if the bridge was constructed, all the north bank needed to do then was sit back and look pretty to receive a share of the profits.

It did not make sense for Ian and Norman to walk away with such benefits after Jasper had invested so much money into the project.

Thus, even those from city hall were ready to watch Jasper strongly oppose and even get into a fight with Ian and Norman over the proposal.

However, Jasper surprised everyone by immediately agreeing to the idea.

“Mr. Laine, is that what you really think?” the person in charge asked.

Jasper smiled and said, “I’m from Southeast Province, and I feel responsible for the development of the province. Why would I reject a plan to further develop the province? Of course, I’m being sincere about this.”

The person in charge sighed. “Alright, alright. The heroes are becoming younger and younger. No one can match the amount of generosity you have, Mr. Laine.”

Jasper chuckled as he glanced at Ian and Norman before saying, “However, I have two tiny requests and suggestions.”

Ian and Norman, who had not spoken a word since, glanced at each other. Their hearts skipped a beat.

They knew Jasper was no idiot and there was no way he had not realized why they proposed building the bridge.

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Jasper's straightforward attitude was causing them to feel uneasy.

However, now that Jasper had mentioned his two requests, it meant he was about to retaliate.

Ian and Norman made sure they were on high alert. They were interested in what Jasper would do.

"Please go on, Mr. Laine," the person in charge from Nauritius City's government waved a hand as he spoke jovially.

'Persuading Jasper' had been one of the items included in the task list their superior gave them. That was no easy feat.

It would be alright if the person was an average businessman as these people never dared go against the city hall. However, Jasper Laine was no ordinary businessman. Even though he was the person in charge from Nauritius City's government, he did not have the guts to act cocky to Jasper either.

However, he had not needed to say anything before Jasper indicated his interest and cooperation. How could he not feel happy? Jasper seemed like the most handsome man in the world to him right now.

"It's simple. Building a bridge is a good thing, and although I intend to support it, I currently have a project that requires several million dollars of payments every single day. Thus, I won't be able to support the project financially. That's my first request."

Jasper had a bashful smile on his face. He looked like a young apprentice who was bashfully telling his master that he was still inexperienced and needed much more practice.

“The second one is a suggestion. My suggestion is that this bridge extends to where the Southface River meets the sea. Not only will we be able to connect the north and south banks, but we’ll also be able to reach several islands.

“You should give it your all if you’re trying to do good. The people on the islands rely on ferries to travel, and they have no roads that lead to the outside world. How are we going to boost the economy that way? You’ll benefit more people if you extend the bridge to reach the estuary.”

Norman nearly started cursing when he heard what Jasper said.

That little b\*stard Jasper Laine, he was throwing them under the bus!

Norman struggled to stop himself from punching Jasper as he watched the latter smile and talk.

The main reason for constructing the bridge was to milk the popularity that the south bank would accumulate. This way, they could attract some people over to the north bank, which was a desolate, backward place.

However, it would cost a lot to build a bridge. Ian and Norman had only mentioned paying for the construction of the bridge themselves to get into the city hall’s good books.

The problem was they could not bring themselves to fork out a fund of several billion dollars from their pockets.

Thus, they had found a loophole. They would get Jasper to fund the project as well.

Norman had been so pleased with himself after coming up with that plan.

If Jasper rejected his proposal, he would be placed in a bad light with the city hall as he would seem stingy.

It would be the best if he agreed to it, like someone who drank poison to quench their thirst. It would equate to him helping develop the north bank as well.

It was a plan designed to put Jasper in a sticky situation.

Norman never imagined that Jasper would be able to resolve the situation so easily.

Not only did he refuse to fund the project, but he even proposed they extend the length of the bridge to the estuary 40 miles away? Would that not mean he and Ian would be the butt of everyone's jokes if they failed to construct the bridge?

Would that not mean he and Ian would become the two idiots from Waterhoof City who came all the way to give the citizens of Southeast Province free benefits?

The expressions on Ian and Norman's faces turned even uglier as Jasper finished speaking.

The person in charge from city hall also fell silent as he glanced repeatedly at the two men. He seemed to be waiting for their response.

No matter what, it was undeniable that by pulling the carpet from under their feet, Jasper had caused Ian and Norman intense pain.