

Life at the Top Chapter 526

After a short moment of thought, Jasper decided that he would not start a rift with Gale, whose stand was still uncertain. He would be slightly kind to the old man unless absolutely necessary.

“Old Master Hurlbutt, I’d like to ask for some time to think about this,” Jasper requested.

Gale gave a smile and replied, “Of course. I must ask that you do not take too long to think, but I shall await your reply.”

“Three days, then,” Jasper promised, “I’ll give you a clear response in three days.”

Gale nodded as if he was certain that Jasper would agree.

Now that they had finished negotiating, Jasper stood up. “I’ve bothered you for too long, Old Master Hurlbutt. I shall take my leave now.”

Gale reached out gently to gesture Jasper to stop and handed the ‘History of the North and South’ to him. “I am gifting this book to you.

“Do take a read should you find yourself some free time. The history of the north and south was an important time for our country. It would do you good to understand more.”

Jasper took over the priceless and long out of print ‘History of the North and South’ and replied, “Thank you for your gift, Old Master Hurlbutt. I’ll make sure to treasure it.”

Gale smiled and waved him off. "You are free to leave then. I will not hold you here anymore."

Jasper bade Gale farewell and turned to leave.

Gale was calm as he watched Jasper's figure vanish into the corridor. One could not tell if he was angry or happy.

Suddenly, an old servant appeared by his side.

"Master, many of your students are greatly displeased with his cruel methods this time. Yet instead of teaching him a lesson, you gave him the branch's vice president's seat. I fear that many of them will be in an uproar," the old servant replied softly.

Gale replied slowly, "The ones complaining the most are the ones who saw an easy gain and decided to support Ian, only to lose the most. Correct?"

The old servant smiled. "Businessmen. They're known to seek quick benefits."

"There is nothing wrong with businessmen seeking quick benefits, but one must be aware of who their opponent is as well. If you have not the slightest understanding of risks, then there is no one to blame but yourself."

Gale replied calmly, "Ignore those who groan and howl in complaint. I am too old to listen to their cries anymore."

The old servant nodded and asked curiously, "What do you have in mind, Master? According to our information, Jasper is not a saint."

Gale smiled. "It is precisely because he is not a saint. How will an innocent lamb find their footing in Waterhoof City? I need an ambitious and ruthless predator for the job."

“Something tells me that this young man will surprise us all.”

The old servant fell deep in thought for a moment before he asked quietly, “What about the chamber’s opinions?”

“Press them down,” Gale replied, “I still have use for this young man. Without my permission, no one is allowed to act rashly.”

Gale sighed. “The chamber would not be so lacking in elites now if they were more hardworking. And an old man like me would not have to worry so much.

“If they are unwilling to fight for themselves, then they should just be content with what they have instead of pining for a spot they are incapable of filling. The vice president of the Waterhoof City branch is indeed a great position, but if the one sitting there is lacking, then they would only be signing a death wish for themselves. Ian’s situation is testament to that.”

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Once he returned from Suesville, Jasper immediately called Old Master Law and told him of the entire conversation he had with Gale.

“I think Gale wants to make me into his weapon, Old Master Law,” Jasper stated as he sat in the car, rubbing his temples.

Old Master Law’s bright laughter echoed through the speakers. “Don’t think too much about it. There’s a duality to everything. While it does seem like he intends to use you, this may also be an opportunity for you.”

Jasper frowned slightly. “What do you mean, Old Master Law?”

Old Master Law chuckled but did not explain further. Instead, he spoke deeply, "People as old as us don't make decisions with our own gains in mind anymore. We make decisions for the people after us.

"I, for example, make decisions with the Law family in mind. Gale doesn't have any family left, he's all alone. So the most important thing to him now is who to pass the Haddock Chamber of Commerce to.

"That's why he's doing everything he can to pave the rest of the way for the chamber. He might be using you in the process, but he could also use anyone else as well. His main goal is to lead the chamber to develop in the direction he wishes. He couldn't care less who sits atop it.

"The businesspeople from Haddock are a business organization. If the Hull family and Gale can use them as they wish, then why can't you?"

Jasper did not reply as he fell deep into thought.

Old Master Law knew that Jasper needed some time to digest and think it through, so he spoke gently, "Whether you think of this as a big deal or not is up to you. It depends on how you want to see it.

"Take your time to think clearly about it and plan well. Go for it if you think it's worth it, and reject him if you think it isn't.

"Instead of him using you, think of this as a transaction. As to how much you can gain from this, well, that will be up to you."

Old Master Law then hung up the phone.

Jasper calmly watched the highway flit by through the window.

The memory of his past life had given Jasper a huge advantage, and he was well aware that the current success he had was because he had been reincarnated.

No one was more certain of the future than he was.

However, his memory did not make him omnipotent. The Haddock Chamber of Commerce, for example. There was nothing of it in his memory.

All he knew was that there was a chamber of commerce in both his past and current lives.

There were similar chambers but were from different places and with different names.

It was up to him to dig up more intel on his own.

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Returning from Suesville, Jasper arrived at Waterhoof City.

Both Dawson and Wendy had arrived as well.

They had not come for any special reason, but rather because Jasper had bought that plot of land. If he planned to develop it, it would surely be done by JW Real Estate. As such, Jasper decided to ask Dawson and Wendy for their opinions.

As the trio walked toward his plot of land by Harpoon River, Jasper asked, "Uncle Schuler, has the situation with the supermarkets calmed down yet?"

Dawson smiled. "It was never anything big to begin with. Those people can't do much damage. There's a small loss, but it's not a big deal."

Jasper nodded. "In comparison to the supermarkets, their attacks exposed quite a few problems with my investment company. I've got to put some effort there after this and reform it."

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“It’s expected that all sorts of problems will arise during a company’s inception. It’s a good thing that they’ve been exposed so soon. It’d be even more difficult to correct mistakes once they’ve become bad habits within the company and grow to a certain scale,” Dawson replied solemnly.

Jasper nodded in agreement. “That’s the idea... We’re almost there.”

The plot of land Jasper bought was within a few hundred-meter radii of Pearl Tower. It was two streets away from the Harpoon River and could be considered a golden territory.

When the trio arrived, what was once G.S. Limited Company’s commercial office now had its entrance closed and sealed.

The once busy office now fell into deep silence.

“I plan to get rid of everything on the land next year and build a skyscraper in its place!”

Jasper spoke in high spirits as the exterior of the Waterhoof City Financial Tower from his previous life appeared in his mind.

“The skyscraper will be Waterhoof City’s newest landmark, and it’ll stand right next to the Pearl Tower.

“If the Southface River project is said to make a name for JW Real Estate within the country, then this building will make JW Real Estate into one of the best modern and high-end real estate companies in the country that integrates property management.”

“It’s going to cost a lot, isn’t it?” Wendy was in charge of finances, so it was only normal she was sensitive to matters relating to money.

The great Miss Schuler had already been unhappy when she found out that Jasper spent a whopping 300 million just to buy a plot of land that could either appreciate or amortize.

She began to worry about the cost again when she heard Jasper’s expensive idea.

“The project hasn’t been planned or budgeted yet, but I’d say total investment would amount to at least six billion,” Jasper stated.

The Waterhoof City Financial Tower had cost 8.7 billion for its entire construction in his past life.

If Jasper was going to construct it, he would only construct one that was even better.

“I don’t mind spending money, since there are a lot of things that money can’t buy. The country’s real estate market will fully start in a few years and not even the rich would be able to buy such a high-rise building in Waterhoof City by then.”

Despite being prepared for an astronomical amount, both Dawson and his daughter were shocked when they heard such a monumental amount coming from Jasper.

“Six billion.” Dawson seemed to have envisioned a thundering skyscraper sitting on the plain plot of land before him. He asked, “Do you have that much money?”

“It won’t be wise for you to pour in all your liquid funds just to build a high-rise,” Dawson persuaded.

“The Southface River project covers a much larger ground and it only costs around two billion. It’s a large risk to invest triple of the Southface River project just for a building.”

Jasper smiled. “I get what you mean, that’s why I plan to start this project next year. I’m not planning to invest everything in one go either. It’ll be much easier on my shoulders if I split the investments in installments, and the time in between will be enough for me to earn what I invested back.”

Jasper’s eyes shone confidently.

An earth-shattering terrorist attack was due next year.

This was an attack on the United States, the strongest country in the world. It would lead to war in the Middle East.

Jasper did not concern himself with the terrorist attack or war overseas, but behind the incident came the skyrocketing prices of gold and international oil. Therefore, there were plenty of benefits to be reaped.

Jasper was now in need of money to develop this plot of land in Waterhoof City, so there was no way he would throw away the chance to earn big bucks.

Seeing how confident Jasper was, Dawson did not comment any further and merely smiled. “Alright then. Leave a few levels for Schuler Group when you’re done building this skyscraper, would you? Schuler Group’s headquarters won’t move, but it’d be nice to have such an office as well.”

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There was still a year until the development of the land in Waterhoof City.

As such, Jasper and the other two did not dwell in Waterhoof City for too long.

Vita would follow up with the Hull family's assets, so Jasper just needed to wait for the money to roll in.

As a result, the three of them returned to the Southeast Province after lunch.

While there was no longer any crisis with the supermarkets, Dawson still needed to be there to deal with the many issues that arose because of it. As such, he directly returned to the provincial capital.

Meanwhile, Jasper had been summoned back to Tefa City by his mom Sally.

Back in the villa in Tefa City, Jasper found both his mom Sally and his dad Charlie waiting for him in the living room.

"Did something happen? You sounded rushed on the phone," Jasper asked.

Sally turned to look at Charlie only to see her husband staring at her. Sally then spoke in displeasure, "You were the one who wanted to do this. But instead of calling your son and telling him yourself, you make me the one to do it."

Jasper sat on the sofa and took a few large gulps of water before he smiled. "Just tell me what's going on, Mom, Dad. Why are you hesitating in front of me?"

Sally then replied, "It's nothing, really. Do you remember that uncle of yours? Your cousin Darrel's dad."

Jasper gave it some thought. He did not have that many relatives, and there did seem to be such a person.

Be it his past or present life, there had not been many changes in his relatives.

Needless to say, he had lived horribly in his past life. Ignoring how people looked down on him, he was certainly prime material for people to talk and laugh about after meals.

Everyone essentially just lived their plain, boring lives without any large ups or downs.

“I do, why?” Jasper asked.

Sally explained, “Your uncle and cousin are coming over this afternoon. They said there’s something they want to talk about. But something tells me they’re here for you, so I called to see if you were free to take a trip down.”

Jasper frowned.

No one cared when you were broke, but everyone seemed to suddenly be friends when you were rich.

He was the epitome of a good-for-nothing in his past life, and there was no way any of his relatives would entertain him.

Yet now that he had brought his parents over to the villa, all his relatives seemed to have gotten wind of such news.

Jasper had long prepared himself to deal with relatives who would come and fawn over him now that he was rich.

Still, despite being prepared, Jasper could not help but feel uncomfortable by the idea of it. "I'm here already anyway, so we might as well just invite them over for dinner. We'll see how it goes from there."

"But I want to make it clear that regardless of whether I'm rich or not, or however successful my business is, them being my relatives has nothing to do with it."

"If they're really in trouble and they're here to borrow money, I don't have problems helping out. But if they're here to leech off me because I'm rich now, then I'm sorry, but no."

Charlie frowned and finally spoke after having stayed silent this entire time, "I wouldn't agree either if that was the case. But they're relatives, and since they've already come all the way here, it's only polite to invite them over."

Sally commented distastefully, "Look at you two, father and son. They haven't even said anything yet and you two are already defensive. What kind of relatives are you?"

"You two need to have a better attitude when they get here. Or do you want everyone to talk behind our backs saying that we're looking down on poorer relatives now that we're making money?"

Sally spoke as she got up to make the call.

The other family must have arrived at Tefa City in advance, for it only took them half an hour before they arrived at the villa.

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It was a family of three that arrived, including Darrel who Jasper had a slight memory of.

The moment they arrived, Sally immediately went over to greet them.

It was evident that the three of them felt nervous and cautious when they stood in the magnificent villa, for they did not even dare to speak too loudly.

The three of them would glance at Jasper from time to time, wanting to say something only to swallow their words back down.

“Sigh. I heard that Jasper has become an outstanding man and is earning so much money he’s making our ancestors proud, but this is way greater than what we expected. This villa couldn’t have been cheap, right?”

Darrel’s mom, Aunt Honey, spoke enviously.

Sally sat by the side, her expression filled with pride. Jasper being praised made her happier than when people praised her.

“Sigh, Jasper must’ve suffered quite a bit to earn the money he’s got today.”

“What’s the point with having too much money anyway? How can you even spend it all when you’ve made such a fortune?”

Sitting beside Jasper, Darrel carefully pulled out a box of cigarettes from his pants pocket. It was an unopened box of premium grade CW hard cigarettes.

It was evident that they had gone out of their way to buy it.

“A cigarette, Jasper,” Darrel courteously passed the cigarette to Jasper and spoke embarrassedly.

While Jasper did smoke, he did not do it daily. Seeing how polite and careful Darrel was being, Jasper took the cigarette and smiled. “What do you do now, Darrel?”

Darrel quickly replied, “I did two years of temporary work with the county government after I graduated college, but I resigned in the second half of the year.”

Jasper nodded. He was about to speak when Honey interrupted him, “Darrel just doesn’t know how to take it easy, Jasper. He has his mind set on doing business.

“He said he has his eyes on a shop in the county a while ago and now he wants to open a hotpot restaurant. Not everyone can open a hotpot restaurant, okay? But he’s just too stubborn to listen, and he even resigned without telling any of us. Now he’s saying he wants to open a hotpot restaurant or he won’t do anything else.’

Darrel looked determined. “You guys just don’t understand. I don’t just want to open any sort of hotpot restaurant, this is a special kind.”

Jasper was intrigued and asked, “Oh? What kind of hotpot restaurant do you have in mind?”

Darrel’s eyes shone at Jasper’s question. He pulled out a deck of pictures he had prepared from his pocket. Handing them to Jasper, he spoke, “This is what I saw in the large cities when I was in college. Look at them, they’re very different, aren’t they?”

Jasper took a look at the pictures and immediately had an idea.

While the hotpot restaurants in the pictures were not as systematic or standardized as they were in his past life, its trend toward becoming the country's number one hotpot brand was already visible.

This was Hello Hotpot.

It was a brand that truly introduced the F&B industry to the concept of service first.

"You want to open this hotpot restaurant? If I'm not wrong, I don't think they accept franchising," Jasper asked intriguingly.

Ignoring everything else, the fact that Darrel was interested in Hello Hotpot right now had proven his eye for business.

Darrel was shocked. "You know about them too? They opened four outlets in Elden City. Have you been there?"

"Not myself, but I heard about it from a friend."

Jasper gave a smile.

"Tell me how you plan on opening this. Will you completely copy their scale?"