

# Life at the Top Chapter 696

After Dawson left, Jasper turned to hug Wendy. Smiling, he spoke, "Thank you."

"For what?" Wendy tilted her head and blinked confusedly.

"Thank you for caring about me," Jasper spoke as if he could not be any clearer.

"Who else is going to care about you if not me? Just promise you'll be more careful next time. Those people are willing to do just anything for their own interests," Wendy reminded.

Jasper nodded. "You're right. What happened this time was a lesson to myself as well.

"They say good men know better than to stand where danger strikes. And while I wouldn't call myself a good man, I'm terrified of dying. Reed City is a small place, but I suppose the fact that it's small means that there's more negligence with the law there. They've had a very smooth sailing history of doing business, so I got careless."

Wendy spoke gently, "There are no predicting accidents. I don't ask for much, I don't even need all these riches. All I want is for you and Dad to be alive and well. That's enough for me."

"We've already come so far, and on our journey here, we've met great allies like the Law family as well as rivals of different calibers like the Monty and the Coine families.

"We will always have more enemies than friends. After all, the growth of a new family means the redistribution of interests and benefits. We're threatening too many people's livelihoods.

“The moment we lose everything, I’m afraid the people who’d come at us first will undoubtedly be these enemies of ours. So for your sake and for my own, I cannot stop here.”

Wendy leaned her head against Jasper’s chest after he finished speaking and replied, “I just want you to be safe.”

In no time, dinner was ready.

At the dining table, Jasper and Dawson chatted casually and the topic quickly returned to the Southface River Project.

“Construction of the whole Southface River will be done in another two months or so. JW Real Estates will become a name that’ll spread across the land.” Despite his age, Dawson could not help but feel excited at the idea.

Dawson and Jasper, being the people involved, were the only ones aware of how much effort they had invested into this project.

Jasper had analyzed the country’s development plan for the next 20 years and poured the information he knew into the Southface River Project. The goal of it was to loudly broadcast JW Real Estates’ name to the entire country.

He would also use this opportunity to build the foundation for the country’s first private real estate company.

“Making a name for JW Real Estates is much more important than profits. We never planned on earning much with the Southface River Project. It’d be great if we can even earn our money’s worth back. The benefits of this project lie in the fact that it’s long-term and sustainable.

“That’s why I plan to keep all shops, office buildings, and most living districts under JW Real Estates as they are. They’ll be on a rent-only basis.”

Hearing Jasper, Dawson nodded. “I agree.”

Wendy blinked. “Are you that confident? What if the project ends up making a loss...”

Suddenly realizing that she might have jinxed it, Wendy stopped talking apologetically.

Jasper smiled. “I am confident. As far as I’m concerned, the Southface River Project will become the benchmark project for all future city developments in the country. Its influence will be immense, and the fact that no one believes it now is precisely what puts us at an advantage.

“Oh, Uncle Schuler, how did it go with the expert from the Southeast Province Research Institute of Sciences I asked you to help contact?” Jasper asked.

Dawson smiled. “The head of the Research Institute of Sciences and I are friends. But you know how it is with experts, they don’t normally respect businessmen like us. They’re hard to talk to sometimes, but I got you a chance to meet him. Just bring the materials over tomorrow.

“Just to remind you, these people don’t care about money. Technology matters more to them than their own lives, so how you talk to them really matters.”

## Life at the Top Chapter 697

The following day, Jasper sat in his Bentley that he had greatly missed and arrived at the provincial Research Institute of Sciences.

While Southeast Province had contributed a lot to scientific research, the small run-down building before him revealed a very real issue.

The country was in dire need of economic development, so most of the money would go into construction or investment. Thus, it resulted in a grave decrease in investments in scientific research.

After instructing Julian to wait for him in the car, Jasper entered the run-down building that seemed to have three or four decades' worth of history.

Following the address Dawson had given him, Jasper arrived outside an office and knocked on the door.

"Come in." A man's raspy voice sounded from inside the office.

Jasper walked in and saw a man in his 50s wearing a white lab coat. He was tinkering with a chip behind his office desk.

What was supposed to be a clean lab coat was now dirty, and the man's hair that looked like a bird's nest greatly aged his appearance.

The man paid Jasper no attention once he entered. Instead, Jasper found him murmuring something as if he was trying to solve a hard problem—all while fiddling with the chip in his hand.

Jasper did not rush him, opting to wait patiently by the side.

Jasper took in the decor of the office. It was simple and very messy. Equipment could be found all over the place and most of them were rather old. It was evident that they had not been keeping up with the times.

The most eye-catching part of the room were the certificates and awards that covered the better half of the wall. Those were all testaments to the owner of this office's success and glory.

After ten full minutes, the man looked up and saw Jasper. Only then did he put the chip down, speaking slightly apologetically, "Sorry, I can't really stop when I'm researching. I totally forgot about you."

Jasper smiled. "Don't worry about it. You must be Professor Elbert McGee, I assume?"

Elbert replied, "I am. You must be the businessman the head introduced, Ja... Jas..."

"Jasper," he introduced himself after seeing how Elbert had forgotten.

Elbert knocked his forehead with his palm and replied, "Ah, yes. Jasper."

"How can I help you?" Elbert asked straightforwardly.

Jasper took a seat and spoke, "I've come to invite you to be my company's chief technical expert, Professor McGee."

Without thinking, Elbert shook his head. "No way. I just want to do my research in peace. I don't want anything to do with businessmen like you."

As far as Elbert was concerned, businessmen and people like him were completely different. Businessmen were willing to do anything for the sake of profits. His research that he had spent time and effort on would only become money-making tools once it fell in the hands of a businessman.

"I understand your concerns, Professor McGee, but hasn't it crossed your mind that no matter how capable a researcher you are, what new technology can you come up with in such a working environment?"

Jasper did not seem to be affected by Elbert's attitude, and he debated back in the calmest tone with a truth that Elbert could not refute.

As expected, Elbert opened his mouth a few times only to close it back again.

He had applied for five million in research funds for several projects, and the amount was already the lowest possible amount needed after going through

multiple budget cuts. Still, a year after making the application, all he had now was two million.

It was not that someone was trying to cut costs with his projects, for the institution itself had limited research funds. There was too much demand than there was supply. After splitting the funds among everyone, he only had less than half of what he needed. There was nothing anyone could do about that.

“I can provide you with sufficient research funds and the respect you’re worth. Plus, please take a look at this, Professor McGee.” Jasper then reached out for the patented MP3 player technology he brought with him and handed it to Elbert.

Elbert glanced at Jasper doubtfully but took the piece of research. Upon opening it, Elbert found himself deeply entranced by the treasure in his hands. The papers were filled with technical data and sketches that Jasper did not understand.

Seeing how Elbert’s eyes shone as though he was a parched man finding water, Jasper smiled softly. He knew that he had succeeded this time.

...

While Jasper was negotiating with Elbert in the Research Institute of Sciences, in a villa on the other end of Nauritus City.

“So you’re telling me that the sample will be out in less than a week?” Conrad asked, looking at the sharp and confident in front of him.

Valentine Estrada smiled softly. “Don’t worry, Mr. Monty. I wouldn’t say such a thing to you unless I was absolutely certain.”

Conrad nodded extremely contentedly. “Well done. I spent a lot of money hiring you from overseas, and it seems I’ve made the right step.

“There’s one more thing you need to pay attention to.”

Conrad passed Valentine a document and spoke, "JW Electronics are manufacturing MP3 players as well, but they do not have the license to do so."

Valentine was stunned. The country lacked awareness when it came to patents and copyrights, so it was very common to see pirated products. In all honesty, normal people did not actually care about such a thing. However, the fact that Conrad, the only person in the country with the license to manufacture the MP3 player, was raising the issue meant that there was more to this than Valentine thought.

"Do you wish for us to pick on them, Mr. Monty?" Valentine asked.

Conrad smiled faintly. "Pirating without patent rights is a very severe problem overseas, right, Valentine?"

Valentine nodded seriously. "It is. The moment such an incident is found overseas, it does not matter how many funds were involved, the company would surely be sued to the point of bankruptcy while the person in charge of the company would also have to face civil responsibilities. That's why almost no one dares to do such a thing overseas.'

"Our country has a Patent Copyright Protection Act as well." Conrad thumbed his fingers on the desk. "Do you understand what I'm trying to say?"

Valentine's eyes shone as he replied, "I understand. I'll gather as much evidence as I can once I return and sue this JW Electronics. As long as you give me enough support, I can very well beat them in a court case."

"Don't worry. You'll get as much support as you need." Conrad waved him off. "Go wild!"

# Life at the Top Chapter 698

On Jasper's end, he had brought out enough bargaining chips to pique Elbert's interest and surprise him immensely.

"Mr. Laine, this is the most advanced MP3 player design document in the world. Where did you get it?"

Elbert asked Jasper excitedly in the Southeast Province Research Institute of Sciences.

Jasper smiled. "Obviously through legal means. I bought it from the original creator, Damond Golding. Does the technology look difficult?"

Elbert smiled confidently. "I know about Damond. He's a very talented technician, but I'm not horrible either. With this document, I can most certainly copy the MP3 player."

"No. A simple copy isn't enough." Jasper shook his head.

"Why would I ask you for help if all I wanted was a complete copy with no technical expertise, Professor McGee? I'd be able to do that with a few research students with Masters in scientific research. What I want is an improved and upgraded version."

Elbert furrowed his brows deeply at Jasper's words and replied curtly, "You don't know anything about technology, Mr. Laine. A mature piece of patented technology is like a system of interlocking gears. Any slight change somewhere would result in a huge difference."



With that, Elbert then pointed at the stack of technological papers. “I can tell you that if I make the slightest change to any single thing here, the entire technology will end up failing. This isn’t as simple as you think.”

“What if I just want to add a screen?” Jasper asked.

Elbert was stunned for a moment, and his brows furrowed as he fell deep in thought.

“It shouldn’t be that difficult if I’m just adding things instead of changing anything. I’ll just have to leave a spot on the circuit board to attach the screen and rewrite the code.”

At that, Jasper smiled. “Would you be interested, Professor McGee?”

Elbert hesitated.

“I promise that as long as you agree to be JW Electronics’ chief technological officer, a status on par with the CFO, you’ll be paid two million a year with at least a 10% increase each following year. You’ll also enjoy the company’s dividends.”

Elbert looked conflicted.

“I also promise you complete authority to appoint and dismiss other technicians. You are free to lead your professional team to research all related areas and you’ll receive at least 50 million research funds from the company every year. Of course, any patent rights of your research will belong to the company, but you and your team will have a right to 10% of the patent, Professor McGee.”

Elbert shot to his feet and asked excitedly, “Really?”

Elbert seemed to care much more about research funds than his salary.

Jasper smiled bitterly.

However, it was employees like Elbert whom Jasper did not need to worry about.

“I’ve promised you, haven’t I? A businessman values his word.” Jasper smiled. “However, if you’d like more assurance, Professor, we could sign an employment contract right now.”

Elbert seemed embarrassed when he spoke again, “That’s not what I meant. I’m technically still working in the research institute, so I have to resign from the institute first before I can sign the contract with you... It’s just that I have two friends and six students with me. I was wondering if I could bring them as well?”

“Don’t worry, those two friends are both experts in electronics and integrated circuits respectively. We don’t care too much about our salaries, but research funds...”

Jasper interrupted Elbert and spoke, “Professor McGee, as I said, you have complete authority over the appointment and dismissal of your team of technicians. There’s no need for you to bring it up with me.”

## Life at the Top Chapter 699

Elbert spoke elatedly, “That’s wonderful. I’ll contact my friends right away and report to you in the shortest time possible.”

Jasper smiled and got up. “Very well, then. I shall await your and your team’s arrival.”

“I have a small request.” Elbert pointed at the document and asked, “Could you leave the documents with me? I still want to do some research and there are a few points worth borrowing from.”

Jasper replied, "Of course. Although, we're a little short on time so I'd prefer if you made improving the MP3 player your current priority, Professor. There'll be a lot of time in the future for you to slowly research what you wish."

"Of course!" Elbert laughed aloud as he was in a great mood. He could tell that Jasper was very different from other businessmen; he was not money-hungry like the others.

After agreeing with Elbert, Jasper got up and left. There was still a lot he had to do so he could not stay in Elbert's office any longer.

The following few days were spent communicating with Chad, who was in Reed City, about the construction progress and the equipment installation in the factory over there.

With money and the support of Reed City's government, the factory was being constructed at a terrifying speed.

In less than a week, the first batch of three 25,000 square feet factories were constructed and furnished.

To speed up the process, Jasper and Chad had decided to first complete construction of the first batch of factories, consisting of three factory buildings, and leave the other factories as well as the production district to be constructed while work began.

The day the three factories were completed, equipment installation and commissioning began as well.

"Mr. Laine, the 200 workers we've recruited have already completed their technical training under the skilled workers and managers we spend a lot of money to hire from other electronics factories."

Jasper nodded in satisfaction when he heard Chad's report through the video call.

“Good job. That’s already considerably fast. I’ve already contacted Elbert and his team has already completed the key research for the upgraded design of the patented MP3 player technology. The result should be ready in two days so I’d like you to try to produce a sample first.”

Chad hummed in acknowledgment and then suddenly spoke, “Mr. Laine, I heard that a domestically manufactured MP3 player is about to appear on the market? They’re already advertising it?”

Jasper nodded. “Indeed. They’re also a business based here in Southeast Province. It’s likely that they’ve successfully created a sample, so they’ve begun advertising through all large television stations as well as newspapers. The public should be made aware very soon.”

“Doesn’t that mean we’ve lost the element of surprise, Mr. Laine?” Chad asked despondently.

“It’s alright. We’ve got a unique advantage when it comes to advertising. So long as our product is on the market, no one will be able to compete against us in terms of advertisements. The only thing we need is enough goods and an upgrade in the product’s technology when our MP3 player becomes publicly available.”

Chad nodded seriously at Jasper’s words.

“Alright then, Mr. Laine. I’ll get back to work first. I promise to get a sample out as fast as we can the moment your technology over there is complete.”

Jasper let out a light exhale after he ended the video call with Chad

On his table was an issue of today’s Southeast Province Morning Post with the MP3 player advertisement printed on the most prominent spot.

Just then, Jasper’s phone rang.

Connecting the call, Jasper heard a familiar voice drift through.

“I was both relieved and disappointed to find out you lived, Jasper.”

## Life at the Top Chapter 700

“You must’ve been very busy lately, Mr. Monty. And yet you’ve taken the time to find out how I’ve been as of late. I’m flattered, truly.”

Leaning against the sofa, Jasper replied. He knew that the call was from Conrad right when the man spoke.

Conrad chuckled on the other end of the line. “Looks like you’ve been attentive to my situation as well, then?”

“Not too different, are we? Though in comparison to the people you sent to follow me, I’d say my attention is hardly worth mentioning.”

Conrad harrumphed at Jasper’s words and spoke, “I heard that you took a trip to Coreana to buy the patent for MP3 players?”

“Didn’t you buy the patent before I could, Mr. Monty? Why would you ask if you already knew?” Jasper spoke calmly with no hint of displeasure in his tone.

Conrad chuckled. “Since you already know that I’m the one with the patented technology, then why would you still dare to manufacture MP3 players in your factory in Reed City? You’re a brave man.”

Jasper replied calmly, “You’ve misunderstood, Mr. Monty. What my factory in Reed City manufactures are merely small trinkets that you would never be interested in, Mr. Monty.

“Why, Mr. Monty? Are you worried about something?” Jasper asked intently.

Conrad’s expression darkened as he replied calmly, “Let’s not beat around the bush, Jasper. We have history between us, and this is far from the end of it. You wanted the patent rights to the MP3 player, so I decided to fight you for it and be one step ahead of you.

“Initially, I had just planned to pose an inconvenience to you. But I’ve realized that the MP3 player could be a very promising product in the country’s market. I’ve got to thank you for your guidance, or I’d never have found such a suitable way to make profits in such a short time.

“I’m the only one allowed to manufacture the MP3 player in the country now, so I suggest you be a little smarter and not think of little tricks. Or I’ll make you pay until you go bankrupt!”

Conrad chuckled before continuing, “You must be so angry, so pissed, so reluctant to give up, hmm? Because even though you found out about it first, I still stole it from you. One step is all it takes. You’ll never catch up to me now. I have the higher ground now, so how are you going to beat me this time?”

Jasper replied calmly, “I don’t really mind putting the entire JW Electronics at risk, Mr. Monty. If I do end up losing all of that, I’ll just treat it as having not earned anything from the aluminum company incident before. Now that I think about it, you were indirectly the one who gave me that money, weren’t you, Mr. Monty?”

“You!”

Fury burst from within Conrad. He had only ever lost once in his life yet this one loss had become a nightmare he could never escape from.

Jasper’s name had become Conrad’s trigger. Conrad only had to think of that man and he would completely lose all his composure.

“Haha!”

Conrad forcibly pushed the anger aside and spoke coldly, "We've got a long road ahead of us. So what if you win once? The one with the last word is the true winner, Jasper. You've already lost once, what makes you think you can win this time?"

"Just you wait. You won't be able to do anything but watch as I slowly take up all domestic MP3 player market shares. The money should've been yours, but you'll have no way of getting it. All you can do is watch and drool. Of course, perhaps I'll give you a chance or two to earn money if I'm in a good mood.

"But as to whether that's good or bad money, that's not for you to decide! I'll decide and you'll take what I give you!"

With that, Conrad hung up the phone.

Despite knowing that he had the upper hand, Conrad could not seem to lift his mood.

He threw the phone aggressively and took the new MP3 player sample from his table. Looking at the silver coating, Conrad asked grimly, "Can this thing be mass-produced yet?"

Valentine replied confidently, "All manufacturing lines have already been installed. It can be mass-produced any time."

"Good!" Conrad's mood lightened a little.

"Then begin production. Contact the sales department as well. We can sign contracts with business clients who've been requesting it but remember to raise the bar. We're the country's first domestic brand for MP3 players. It's not something any Tom, Dick, or Harry can sell on our behalf."

Valentine nodded after Conrad finished speaking. "One more question, Mr. Monty. What should we name this MP3 player of ours? And how should we price it?"

“Its name...”

Conrad fell silent for a bit and replied, “Let’s call it Melody. As for its price, it’s selling for 2,000 bucks overseas so there’s no reason for us to sell it at a cheap price. Let’s do 1,800 bucks per MP3 player.”

Conrad then scoffed and fiddled with the sample. “It costs us no more than 500 to 600 bucks to produce, yet we’re selling it easily at 1,800. What a profit.”

“How’s it going with the rights protection materials I had you prepare?”

Valentine smiled and replied, “Don’t worry, Mr. Monty. I’ve already prepared most of it. All we need to do now is for JW Electronics to start manufacturing. We can sue them the moment that happens and we can also request for all the company’s factories to be seized.”

“Good!” Conrad was excited, and his eyes shone with excitement. “I’ve been waiting for this day for too long. Don’t you dare disappoint me, Jasper. Produce your MP3 players as fast as you can.”

“I have a question, Mr. Monty.”

“About that Jasper, the owner of JW Electronics... If he knows that you have the patent rights, why did he still build a factory to manufacture it? Or perhaps he isn’t really planning on manufacturing MP3 players? In that case, won’t all our hard work be for naught?”

Conrad was in a great mood, so he explained patiently, “You don’t know Jasper. We’ve fought before and I can tell you that he’s a very calm man. It’s almost as if he doesn’t really care about anything.

“But it’s people like him who are truly arrogant. He thinks that he’s the strongest of us all. The reason why he doesn’t get calculative with anyone is that he doesn’t even think they’re worth his time.”



Conrad then pointed at his nose and continued, “Even I’m among the group of people he looks down on. So this factory of his is definitely manufacturing MP3 players. There’s no way it can be anything else. Perhaps he thinks he has another trick up his sleeve to counter me.”

At that, Conrad locked his fingers together and put them behind his head before leaning comfortably against the big office chair. Squinting, he looked at the ceiling and spoke calmly, “So this time, I’m going to crush him under my foot without giving him the chance to ever turn the tables!”