

Life at The Top – Chapter 1171

Jasper's worries were not unwarranted.

The day after the conference, before Jasper could officially announce the establishment of his new company, Soha made their move.

Soha made an official announcement to establish Soha Payments, which had arrived at a strategic cooperation agreement with the three gaming companies Netsy, Ideal World, and Senator.

At the same time, the three gaming companies also released public statements.

They announced that the online games under their respective companies would integrate an online payment system, and all players would be able to utilize the bank system and buy points cards online.

As far as the outside world was concerned, these three gaming companies appeared as though they had taken note of how Sena managed to earn huge profits through selling points cards online for United Legends and decided to replicate their success and enter the market as well.

On the other hand, an extremely small group of people could see the true danger lying underneath this sliver of information.

This was a two-pronged attack across two industries.

The first attack was Soha Payment's open challenge toward Jasper's existing payment platform. The second was that this represented a revolt from other online gaming companies in the country against Sena after United Legends had blown up.

Due to the butterfly effect, Senator had actually gotten the agency rights for another exciting online game that had been developed in Coreana.

Miracles.

This was another online game that had once blown up within the country. This was an online game Coreana had developed to counter United Legends once they saw its hype.

In the present timeline, due to United Legends' popularity being moved forward, Miracles also fell under the public spotlight earlier. The game was also greatly sought out by a large group of players.

Miracles was not the only game that had appeared earlier.

So did Ideal World Co., Ltd's representative game, Ideal World.

Even West Fantasyland had hit the markets earlier, a long-standing online game also known as a miracle on par with World of Warcraft.

Jasper's appearance resulted in many future well-known and outstanding online games appearing sooner than they had in his original life. However, these premature games were no match for United Legends, the best online game in the country which was currently at its peak.

"Mr. Laine, even though United Legends' current player base and revenue are decreasing, we still control at least 60% of the country's online market share."

Jack, who was fully presiding over Sena's business, reported to Jasper through a video call.

Jasper nodded. He was unsurprised by the data.

One of the reasons behind United Legends' eventual weakening in his past life was Senator's heartless cash-grab tactics. This resulted in explosive growth on their side.

A simple monster and player fighting game had been forcefully turned into a game of token exchange. This money-minded operation had also sped up the game's demise.

However, Senator did not have much of a choice at the time. They were facing the issue of overly high protection costs, as there had been a leak in server source codes overseas, which spread to private domestic servers.

At the same time, other online games also began to arise. Coupled with the fact that United Legends had reached the end of its version's lifespan, Senator had no other option but to quickly wring United Legends dry of every dollar it was worth.

Jasper had taken precautions against this and bought ownership over United Legends. All follow-up development and agency rights were decided by Sena themselves in order to make sure the possibility of a leaked source code would not occur.

"We have to speed up the content creation of the version. Among Miracles, Ideal World, and West Fantasyland, the last one will be our biggest competition.

"But that is still a 2D turn-based game and it's unimportant to our target audience. You still have to watch out for the other two games, especially Miracles."

"And I heard that cheat codes have appeared as well?"

Cheat codes were essentially coding software that skilled programmers wrote to hack into the players' accounts. When it came to online games, the most important things to look out for after private servers were cheat codes.

When it came to danger levels, cheat codes were even more dangerous than private servers.

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After all, not everyone was brave enough to risk being sued by the gaming company and potentially face life imprisonment just to steal a source code.

However, anyone who was even slightly familiar with technology could code.

Jack looked embarrassed when he heard Jasper's question and replied, "We've already gathered the relevant reports and handed it over to the technical department for urgent repairs.

"Being constantly on guard is a waste of resources and has no guarantee. Just contact the legal department and suspend all accounts that used the cheat code once they've been detected. We'll sue everyone that wrote the code. Do I need to explain something so simple to you?" Jasper asked distastefully.

Jack smiled wryly and replied, “Mr. Laine, I don’t know if you know this, but it costs almost nothing to write a cheat code. However, it costs a lot for us to protect our rights.”

“We can only use technical methods to suspend accounts that are using cheat codes, but we have no right to trace the physical addresses of the players who used the codes. We’ll have to contact the police for this and have them investigate the matter. You know how difficult this is, Mr. Laine.”

“I am confident that I can do this.”

Another voice suddenly rang out on Jack’s side of the video call.

The camera turned and Jasper saw a familiar person appear on the screen.

Dane Warren.

Sena’s previous chairman and its true founder.

After completely losing against Jasper in a fight for shareholder rights, Dane opted to stay in Sena’s internal ranks when the former gave him the choice to.

It was an act that required a lot of courage, but Dane continued bravely despite the weird looks the other employees gave him.

Jasper initially worried if the man had ulterior motives, He even asked Jack to keep a close eye on him.

Yet, the truth remained that Dane truly wished to make Sena into something great. Even if this Sena was not the same one he had founded.

Dane had worked diligently all this while and he did not contact any of his previous confidants. He carried out his own role clearly and well.

Dane must have possessed his own strengths and capabilities to create Sena by himself and turn it into the best web portal in the country.

He might not have been an outstanding chairman, but he was an exceptional senior executive.

Dane looked nervous in the video call as he looked at Jasper intently. There was an almost pleading look in his gaze.

“Uh...”

Jasper did not know how he should refer to Dane.

It had been a long time since he paid Dane any attention. After all, the difference in status between the two was just too large.

“I’m currently the manager in charge of maintaining the web portal’s forum,” Dane said calmly with a wry smile.

“Mr. Warren,” Jasper nodded. Pondering for a bit, he asked, “This is a difficult and ungratifying job, something that you could put tons of hard work and effort into only to come up empty-handed. Are you sure you’re willing to do it?”

Dane replied sternly, “I am. Please give me a chance, Mr. Laine.”

After a moment’s silence, Jasper answered, “You still have a small portion of the initial shares when it was previously diluted. I can give special approval for you to cash all of it out at Sena’s current market rate.”

Jasper’s words implied that Dane could become a multimillionaire at any given moment.

Dane replied calmly, “Money isn’t the most important thing to me anymore.”

Jasper nodded and said, “Alright. Then I’ll pass this responsibility over to you. I view all capable people the same. so as long as you do well, I won’t be stingy with your dividends and bonuses.”

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Ex-enemies could one day become intimate partners. Dane’s wish was for Sena to grow strong, and so was Jasper’s.

People who had the same goal could fully move on from the past with a smile on their face.

Only children talked about who was good or bad. Adults focused on gains and losses.

This gain or loss could be about their interests or their dream.

Dane felt his chest lighten when he heard Jasper’s reply. Frankly speaking, it took a lot of courage for him to volunteer for this, and he felt immense pressure to say what he did today.

Dane had stayed even after he lost his identity as the company’s founder and chairman, and ended up as a maintenance manager for a small forum. He had no reason not to fight one last battle for himself.

Even so, he could bet that Jasper was not a narrow-minded person.

Thankfully for him, he had made the correct bet.

This incident would spell a huge change in Dane's career and life, but it was just a small act of leniency on Jasper's side.

After deciding this, Jasper immediately moved on.

“Jack, have everyone in the company be taught on the importance of anti-cheating. Give Mr. Warren the appropriate resources as well...”

“I understand, Mr. Laine.”

“Alright. Now moving on...”

The entire video conference lasted almost two hours. Jasper had to be more cautious with this.

The current situation was clear. Prince had used the power of Clear Seas' capital and managed to bring Netsy, Perfect World, and Senator together. This was all for the purpose of obtaining United Legends' market share in the country. However, Prince's primary goal was still the online payment industry.

United Legends might be able to hold its ground now, but these three gaming companies were not easy to deal with either. Jasper was not arrogant enough to believe that the world lacked talents that could defeat him.

Not to mention that history told a clear truth. After United Legends met its end in his past life, these three games then started to grow, eventually absorbing a large number of United Legends' previous players.

This time, with Prince supporting them, the three companies that had been oppressed by Sena thus far were instantly rejuvenated. It would not be wise for Jasper to look down on their combined strength.

Looking down on one's enemies was the first step to self-destruction. This was a rule Jasper had always been very well aware of.

After ending the call with Sena, Jasper went to look for Wayne, who was still in Waterhoof City.

Payments for gaming points cards were only a small portion of the online payment feature. It was something Jasper used to accumulate experience whilst simultaneously testing out the technology behind it.

With the advantage of memories of his pre-reincarnation life, he knew that online shopping was the immense energy that would truly open up this space.

Online shopping itself was a hundred-million Somer Dollar market. It was a huge industry that would put Abbylon and Wayne onto the pedestal.

However, Wayne was currently in a meeting with the eighteen founders far in Harvey City. After Jasper instructed them to launch their shopping platform online as soon as possible, Wayne became busier than anyone else.

Hudson, strangely, had returned first.

There were not many follow-up procedures he had to handle. Terizone Inc had thousands of employees, but it was currently going through the golden age of company development. Thus, as a leader, Hudson could not be absent for too long during this period.

“Alright, then. Come over after you’re done with your meeting. I just got off communications with Sena, and there are a few details I need to confirm with you.”

Jasper was about to get up after he hung up the call with Wayne when someone knocked on his hotel room door.

Gerry had come to look for Jasper.

“Take a seat.”

Jasper was unfazed by Gerry’s cautiousness.

Since the beginning, Jasper had planned to use Gerry to monitor the Gardner family and cause them trouble.

However, after the unexpected negotiations with the little prince, the Gardner father-daughter duo ended up leaving the country. It was likely that they would not return after leaving this time, so Jasper moved on from the issue as well.

Hence, Jasper did not really care about Gerry’s relationship with other people, including Prince.

It was only natural that people went to places where they would benefit most. Not to mention that Jasper had never seen Gerry as one of his own, so there was never any resentment over a possible betrayal.

Instead of feeling happy, Jasper's attitude and kindness terrified Gerry further.

As far as the man was concerned, Jasper's kindness could be a prelude to his downfall.

At that thought, Gerry truly believed that he had made the correct decision to seek Jasper out before the man personally started hunting him. His life would truly be over when Jasper started his attack.

"Mr. Laine, I actually came here today bearing news," Gerry did not dare to withhold information. Hence, he immediately stated his intentions upon sitting down.

"Oh?" Jasper looked at Gerry with a crescent-eyed smile, waiting for the other to continue.

Jasper's reaction further solidified Gerry's belief. 'Indeed, Mr. Laine is going to end me!'

Jasper had the same crescent-eyed smile when he faced Norman and Dudley before the branch dissolved.

Then... Norman was completely defeated while Dudley ended up fleeing. Gerry heard that Seatresures Group had also taken a huge blow and it take at least four to five years for it to recover.

Gerry thought back to himself and his small business. Forget Dudley, even Norman used to be one of his pillar's of support before Jasper appeared. Thus, there was no way Gerry could remain unaffected when he saw Jasper's smile.

"Basically, Mr. Laine, when I had dinner with the crown no, with Prince, it was through the connections of a friend. I had no idea that you had conflicts with him, Mr. Laine, otherwise I'd never..."

"It's alright. That's a small issue. Did you come to tell in e this, Mr. Heron?" Jasper interrupted him, not in the mood to listen to Gerry's apology.

Gerry smiled awkwardly and replied, "Sorry, that was too much nonsense. Basically, I've been in contact with Prince twice, and he seems to want me to use my contacts in Waterhoof City to help him do something.

"He gave me a few missions, one of which was to spread rumors on the market about how unsafe your payment platform was, Mr. Laine."

"And there's also something especially important. Prince seems to have dirt on Vita Layne, the ICBS' Waterhoof City branch's vice president!"

Jasper remained calm and unfazed when he heard the first piece of information.

There was nothing new about spreading rumors since it was just a dirty trick that held no value in official settings.

The rumors could be extremely exaggerated and widespread, but as long as there was nothing wrong with the payment platform itself, then there would be no cause for alarm.

However, Jasper immediately frowned when he heard the second bit of news.

'This won't be easy to deal with!'

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Dirt on Vita!

Were Jasper and Vita close?

Not really.

Jasper had only met Vita through John.

At the beginning, Jasper had only wished to acquaint himself with one of ICBS' Waterhoof City branch's internal personnel. This would help him with his purchase of the plot of land for the World Financial Center.

What happened after proved that Vita was a good and capable man.

Because of this, Jasper decided to help the man move up the ranks of the system.

The higher Vita's ranks, the more power he held, and the more conveniences Jasper enjoyed.

Of course, he would not exploit Vita's position to do something illegal. Jasper had no need to pursue such a thing, nor did Vita have the courage for it.

Their partnerships henceforth had been joyful all this while.

Take the online payment incident, for example. Vita played a crucial role in its development as the man had used his contacts to aid Jasper.

After partnering for a long time, Jasper had begun to consider Vita his friend.

Only when their relationship was mutually beneficial and their interests intact could their friendship last.

Most importantly, once the online payment policy was issued and carried out, Jasper's partnership with the bank would only grow more intimate. Vita played an important role in this future.

Now that John had changed jobs to work for the Agricultural Bank, Vita was the only person within ICBS who could deliver crucial information to Jasper.

Be it out of logic or personal relationship, Vita had to be protected.

"What dirt?" Jasper asked solemnly.

Gerry smiled wryly and replied, "This I have no idea of. I only found out about this from eavesdropping on Prince's call with someone else."

"If I have to guess, Prince's people should have contacted Vita about this already. But I don't know what the two talked about specifically."

Jasper frowned sternly.

Jasper would be affected negatively if something happened to Vita right as the online payment industry was about to open to the public.

Prince seemed to have realized this too, which was why he did not attack Jasper directly. Instead, he chose to attack someone as vital as Vita. Absolutely ruthless.

If Vita was removed from the equation, then all Prince had to do was use Clear Seas' contacts and strength to block Jasper from forming a partnership with the ICBS.

Everything Jasper had planned for the online payment industry would be over then.

Jasper immediately thought of this severe repercussion and said sternly, "This is a very important piece of information to me."

Gerry let out a long sigh and quickly replied in a pleased tone, "I'm glad that it helped you, Mr. Laine. I'm glad."

Jasper looked at Gerry intently and asked, "To tell me something so important... Aren't you afraid that Prince will cause you trouble?"

Gerry chuckled wryly and replied, "To be honest, Mr. Laine, I've thought about this deeply before."

“Prince is powerful, but his power isn’t based in Waterhoof City. It’d take him quite a bit of effort if he wanted to get rid of me. In comparison to him, it’s more important that I don’t offend you, Mr. Laine.”

Jasper asked with a crescent-eyed smile, “My power isn’t based in Waterhoof City either, though. My properties are gathered in the Southeast Province.”

Gerry laughed dryly. “After being shown the Gardner family’s tragic end, I would never dare to offend you, Mr. Laine.”

Jasper suddenly understood. Gerry was not terrified of Jasper, he was terrified of the little prince.

The man also seemed to have misunderstood his relationship with the little prince.

However, Jasper was happy to let this misunderstanding continue. After all, Gerry’s information this time turned out to be priceless.

“Alright. Don’t worry, since you gave me such an important piece of information, then there’s no reason for me to cause you any trouble. I’ll keep the secret for you.”

“I also remembered that the Gardner family had a restaurant on Southwest Veil Road. The seafood restaurant you invested in closed down, right? I can give this one to you if you’re interested.”

All of Norman’s property had been auctioned to other people. However, considering who Jasper was, it was not difficult to get what he wanted. After all, everybody made seemingly profitable decisions.

Jasper was uninterested in Norman’s company, but he did use certain methods to procure a few properties, restaurants, and hotels that would appreciate in value in the future.

The aforementioned restaurant was one of them.

Gerry’s eyes lit up when he heard Jasper. Southwest Veil Road was an important piece of Waterloo City’s future development, and even an idiot knew that the land there would appreciate. Not to mention that the restaurant had good business too. It would be a huge source of profit if he got ahold of it.

Seeing this only furthered Gerry’s belief that he had made the right decision in coming here. He quickly smiled and replied, “That would be nice, very nice. Thank you, Mr. Laine.”

Jasper patted Gerry’s shoulder as he replied with a crescent-eyed smile, “I’m always generous when it comes to my friends.”

Gerry got up and said, "Since you're busy, Mr. Laine, then I will get going so as to not disturb you. There's no need to send me off."

Jasper walked Gerry to the door and said, "Then about Prince..."

Gerry was an experienced man in the industry, and he immediately understood what Jasper was implying. Before Jasper could finish speaking, he patted his chest and said, "Don't worry, Mr. Laine. I'll make sure to tell you right away if I obtain more news."

Gerry had originally come to notify Jasper for the sake of repenting. He did not expect Jasper to give him such a huge reward.

Not even Norman or Prince rewarded him so well before, so Gerry would naturally swear his loyalty to Jasper.

Jasper nodded with a crescent-eyed smile and watched Gerry leave.

He knew that while individuals like Gerry were fickle people driven solely by benefits and interest, they were also much more reliable than a majority of ingenuine people who made empty promises.

They were cowards who were easily motivated by benefits. This made them much more useful.

People like them could be immensely useful once you instilled fear or rewarded them.

After Gerry left, Jasper returned to the study in the hotel room. He paced deep in thought for a long while before he picked up his phone to call Vita.

“This is a sudden call, Mr. Laine. Is there anything I can do for you?”

Vita’s tone on the phone was casual and relaxed.

Jasper smiled and replied, “I was thinking of treating you to dinner tonight. Are you free?”

Vita hesitated and said, “It might have another meeting tonight.”

“Is it important?” Jasper asked.

Vita clenched his jaw slightly and replied, “Perhaps I could treat you tomorrow instead?”

“Don’t worry about it,” Jasper beamed and replied understandingly, “Tomorrow’s fine too.”

“Alright then.”

After a few seconds of silence, Jasper ended the call.

His smile instantly disappeared and his expression turned calm.

Jasper had obtained an important piece of information from the call.

‘Something is indeed wrong with Vita!’

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Business-wise, Jasper was currently Waterhoof City branch’s top-notch VIP. JW Real Estates’ Waterhoof City branch’s account alone brought them a cash flow of billions a month due to the World Financial Center’s construction funds.

As the vice president, Vita had to win over this important client.

Personally speaking, Jasper and Vita had known each other for almost a year and their friendship had always been great. The fact that Vita could be promoted from a small asset management office manager to the most authoritative vice president in a year was also thanks to Jasper's support.

There was no way Vita could reject Jasper's invitation for a meal.

That was how their relationship always worked. Despite this, today, Vita's hesitation and struggle had Jasper's heart sinking slightly.

He was unsure if Vita had betrayed him yet or not. This was something he had to verify himself.

With that thought, Jasper called Julian over.

They arrived at a normal apartment building in Waterhoof City's Golden Garden, Open Seas Road, Peace District. As a middle-income area that could be seen from any vantage point in Waterhoof City, it was not an extravagant place. This fit Vita's current salary as vice president of an ICBS branch.

The house door opened with a creak as a rather attractive middle-aged woman opened the door. She looked at Jasper who held a gift in his hands confusedly.

“You’re... Jasper... Jasper Laine?”

Daphne was Vita’s wife and she had met Jasper during a gathering with John. Thus, she could recognize this dignified guest her husband spoke of.

Jasper smiled and said, “I was in the area so I thought I’d come and visit, Mrs. Layne. I’m not disturbing you, am I?”

“No, no, not at all. Please come in.” Daphne may have been confused but she did not dare to make Jasper wait.

She had heard from her husband how Jasper was more than an extremely wealthy man. He was also someone important who helped her husband get promoted, so she did not dare to inconvenience him..

Jasper looked at the ordinary decorations in Vita’s house after walking in and said with a smile. “I don’t remember there being so many rewards on the wall the last time I was here. Did Valerie get first place again?”

The last time they met was during a family gathering. Jasper brought Wendy with him, and John and Vita each brought their own families.

The gathering was held in Vita's house.

That was when Jasper met Daphne and Vita's daughter, Valerie. She was a smart girl.

Daphne beamed at Jasper's words and replied, "Yeah. Valerie doesn't disappoint. But she's playing at her friend's house tonight so she's not home. Vita should be off work soon, I'll call him and tell him to come home quickly."

"No need, Mrs. Layne. He should be on the way home already so it wouldn't be wise to urge him while he's driving. He'll be back soon anyway, I'll just wait for him here," Jasper said with a crescent-eyed smile.

Daphne felt that something was off with his behavior, but she did not go against Jasper's wishes. Instead, she quickly poured Jasper a cup of tea and sat by his side carefully, chatting with him.

She kept trying to probe Jasper about why he had come to visit so suddenly. She wondered about why he was here, especially while her husband was not home. However, considering who Jasper was, the man kept the conversation about domestic trivia. His mouth was tightly shut when it came to the specifics of his visit.

...

As of this moment, Vita was not in a meeting nor was he on the way home.

He had actually arrived home long ago and his car was parked in the underground car park. The man smoked furiously in his car.

Beside the car were more than ten discarded cigarette butts. The already horribly ventilated basement was now filled with a mist of smoke, yet Vita and his deeply knit brows seemed unaware of it all.

Just then, a car drove into the car park and stooped beside Vita's.

An average-looking man stepped out of the car and walked behind Vita's car over to the passenger side. Opening the car door, he then got in.

"Heh. Even though you're a vice president of the ICBS, you're quite down to earth to live in such an old district while driving such a cheap car," The man said as he pulled down the visor and played with it casually.

Vita tossed away the cigarette that almost burned to its butt and asked grimly, "What do you people want?"

The man smiled and replied, "Simple. Just push for the termination on your branch's partnership with Jasper."

"Impossible!"

Vita's first reaction was to reject the man.

Disregarding the fact that Jasper was a huge client of his, the man's help before this was enough to deter Vita from doing such a thing.

"Impossible? Nothing's impossible in the world. Just like how a dignified vice president of a bank branch like you, a person of the upper class with quite a bit of power at hand and a beautiful family, can also have another child outside."

"I suppose others wouldn't believe me either if I told them about this. But it's the truth, isn't it?"

Vita's expression paled at the man's casual voice. He replied painfully, "It was a careless mistake I made back then."

"Careless?" The man scoffed, "I don't think you were careless when you had fun lying on top of that female student's stomach, though."

“Mr. Layne, as vice president of your branch, I’m sure you’re very aware that this is an issue of conduct. If no one pays attention to it, then no one cares. But if someone refuses to let it go, then this beautiful family of yours and your position as vice president will come to a premature end.”

“What would your superiors think of you? What about your colleagues? Your wife, your kids? What would they think?”

“Would you still be the greatly envied vice president by then?”

The man’s words were like a curse as they drilled into Vita’s brain. He replied painfully, “Could you change your request? Anything else is fine. But I, Vita Layne, refuse to be a treacherous b*stard!”

The man scoffed and replied, “You’ll never know how powerful my boss is. A small vice president of a bank branch like you doesn’t even have the right to talk to my boss.”

“You think he can’t do other things himself? We just need a bit of effort from your side on this.”

“You don’t even need to suggest a termination. Other people in the branch will. All you need to do is shut your mouth and make the correct choice during the final vote.”

“Oh, right. And we’ll also need all the details of Jasper’s online payment businesses. Their online payment business is conducted with your branch, so it shouldn’t be difficult for a vice president like you to get your hands on it, right?”

Vita’s head shot up as he stared at the man. “Online payment? You’re Prince Chavez’s men!”

Vita was slapped across the face.

“Who are you to call out the crown prince’s name? Do it again and I’ll cut your tongue off!”