

Life at The Top – Chapter 1176

This slap was both without warning and extremely forceful.

Vita had spent his life climbing up the social ladder and he had never experienced such humiliation.

Caught off guard, this slap almost had him dazed.

Vita glared at the man with extreme levels of anger. Ignoring the burning pain on his cheek, the anger was more driven by the unjust and indignance he felt.

“What are you looking at me like that for? Be grateful that you’re still useful, otherwise beating you to death would be too light a punishment!”

The man looked at Vita and scoffed, “You think you’re some powerful person just because you’re some bullsh*t vice president of a bank? People like you aren’t even qualified to hold the crown prince’s shoes!”

“Think carefully and don’t be stupid. Make the correct decision, or even death might end up being a luxury for you.”

“The crown prince doesn’t have much patience. He’s already being exceptionally lenient with you. You better give us a reply tomorrow. Don’t forget.”

The man then patted Vita’s reddened cheek and laughed arrogantly before he opened the car door and left.

Vita clenched his jaw as he stared at the extremely insolent man’s back. The man got out of his car bossily and left in the car he first arrived in. From start to finish, all of Vita’s anger and indignance could only be vented through his balled fists.

He punched the steering wheel and roared. Both his hands grabbed his hair and he moaned painfully with his head kept down.

“It’s all destined to happen...”

More than ten minutes later, Vita left the car park like a zombie and returned home upstairs.

Upon opening his house doors, he heard the sound of happy chatter and looked up in confusion. He quickly saw Jasper sitting on his sofa and looking at himself with a small smile.

Vita was stunned and was rooted in place the moment he saw Jasper.

The last thing he expected was for Jasper to appear at his house.

“Jasper had just arrived too, Vita. He’s been waiting for you to come home here, Why’d you come back so late?”

Vita’s wife Daphne approached to greet him and squatted down to put slippers in front of Vita for him to change into. Then, she took his briefcase with practiced ease whilst simultaneously explaining.

Vita looked at Jasper and was rendered speechless. “Why, am I not welcome, Mr. Layne?”

Jasper asked with a crescent-eyed smile.

Daphne also realized her husband’s abnormal behavior today and glared at him, facing away from Jasper. She lowered her voice and said, “He’s greeting you. Why’re you acting like you’re dumb?”

Vita suddenly snapped back to reality.

“Oh, you’re here, Jasper. Why didn’t you tell me you were coming in advance?” Vita smiled forcibly.

“You said you had a meeting today and I just happened to be in the area. So I thought I’d come by and visit,” Jasper replied with a grin.

Jasper looked at the clock on the wall as he spoke and continued meaningfully, “Doesn’t seem like a long meeting at all.”

Vita felt extremely embarrassed.

The meeting was just an excuse, but he did not expect Jasper to wait for him at home.

His lie exposed, Vita did not know what to say.

Daphne must have realized the unusual atmosphere between the other two and said, “You two sit here first. There aren’t many groceries at home, so I’ll go buy something from downstairs. Do stay for dinner, Mr. Laine. I’ll go make the preparations now.”

Jasper did not reject her and smiled. “Thank you for the trouble, Mrs. Layne.”

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“Hey, there’s no need to be so polite. You two talk first, I’ll go buy groceries downstairs.”

Daphne said while nudging an abnormal Vita. Then, she took her wallet and keys and went downstairs.

After Daphne left, Jasper’s smile vanished as he looked at Vita calmly.

Vita was not an idiot. With the situation progressing to this point, he knew that he could not hide it from Jasper anymore.

Sighing deeply, Vita turned to the other man. “Will you come to the study?”

Jasper got up and followed Vita there.

After closing the door, Vita patted his pockets for a smoke, only to pull out an empty box of cigarettes. Jasper then pulled out a pack of his own and tossed it to Vita.

Vita smiled wryly when he looked at the exquisitely packed 1916. “What a nice brand of cigarettes.”

Jasper sat on the chair and said calmly, “Look, Vita. I came here today to do one thing only, to hear the truth from you. If you’re facing difficulties or you need help, then tell me. We’ll deal with it and come up with a solution together.”

“But, if you say there’s nothing wrong at all, then I’ll get up and leave.”

“I see you as a friend but if it’s not mutual, then I’ll take it as me being over passionate. I don’t have many friends but you are one of them. Still, the basis of friendship comes down to being genuine and sincere. There’s no reason for me to continue to act dumb when you’re evidently setting me up, correct?”

Vita smiled wryly when Jasper showed his hand. The former replied, “I already made my decision when I saw you sitting in my home.”

“Whether you choose to believe me or not, I’ll come clean, Jasper. I’ll tell you everything as it is since I’m older than you and I see you as my friend too. I’ve never done anything that could cause you harm.”

Jasper narrowed his eyes slightly and looked at Vita. He realized that the other’s cheek was slightly bruised and Jasper replied calmly, “Go ahead then. Tell me everything you want to say.”

Vita clenched his jaw and spoke slowly, as if letting go of all his inhibitions, “Three years ago, I found out that my girlfriend from university died of cancer.”

“I also found out that she had a child, and that it was mine!”

“But I’d already gotten into a shotgun marriage with my wife by then. She’s never told me about this before, and she’s been taking care of the child until she died.

“After her passing, her brother and his wife took custody of the child.”

“I felt like I owe it to her, but I can’t lose my own family in the process.”

“So all I could do was help the kid out financially. I helped her brother’s family set up an account in Waterhoof City and I got them a home to live in. I’ve also been visiting the child over the past three years...”

Jasper nodded after hearing the story and said, “That’s a very dramatic plot.”

Vita smiled wryly. “You don’t believe me?”

“I do.”

Jasper replied without hesitation.

“Considering your character, I believe that you would do such a thing.”

Vita did not care whether Jasper was mocking him or if he meant it in another way. He simply sighed deeply and continued, “I thought that I’d be able to keep doing this peacefully...”

“But someone suddenly found me two days ago and wanted to report me for extramarital affairs. You know how sensitive the nature of my position is, I don’t want to lose my business and my family.”

“It’s Prince, isn’t it?” Jasper said calmly.

Vita nodded and replied, “One of his men came to look for me downstairs. They ordered me to help them terminate the branch’s partnership with you, and give them all of your online payments’ important information and account data.”

Jasper narrowed his eyes as they filled with a certain fire.

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The truth began to surface as Vita recounted the details of the incident.

The truth would always come out in the end.

Vita thought that he had been stealthy enough, yet Prince's ministrations had easily detected his little secret. It was like a fly over white snow.

Jasper was relieved to hear Vita's words.

He was grateful for Gerry's information before this. Even now Jasper could not be completely certain that Vita would never betray him. This was not a risk Jasper could afford to take.

He could not risk the entire future of online payment and even the whole business of Abbylon's online shopping platform on Vita's conscience.

Even if Vita showed no signs of betraying him up until now.

“I don’t have any other choice, Jasper. I never expected Prince to find out and hold this over my head.”

Vita said, pulling at his hair painfully.

“I’ve never planned to do anything against you or your interests!”

“I already rejected his men when they told me what they wanted me to do just now. But they want me to give a final reply tomorrow.”

“I don’t know what to do. I’m well aware that once I listen to them, I’ll become their puppet completely and they’ll never let me go!”

Jasper got up and patted Vita’s shoulder. “It’s actually not as severe as you think.”

Vita looked up at Jasper with a sliver of hope and asked, “You’re willing to help me?”

“Helping you is helping myself too,” Jasper replied.

After some thought, Jasper said, “Can you still contact your ex-girlfriend’s brother’s family?”

Vita nodded. “I can!”

Vita then pulled out his phone without further prompting and asked, “Should I contact them now?”

However, Jasper put his hand over Vita’s and replied, “Not yet. You can’t take the initiative to contact them. Give me their address and contact details.”

Vita had no other plan in mind, meaning Jasper was his only source of hope. Thus, he immediately gave the younger man the contact details.

After jotting down the number and address, Jasper then asked Julian to come up.

Jasper handed the woman’s contact details and address he had written down to Julian and said sternly, “Bring them to a hotel tonight and check them into a room. Make sure that they are safe for the next two days.”

Julian nodded and replied, “If they’re still at the address after this period, then I’ll bring them back safely.”

Jasper smiled. "I've never doubted your capabilities. But things won't be so easy this time."

"Prince's men will definitely have a close eye on them. So, in addition to bringing the people over, Jul, you'll need to find two similarly aged people to impersonate them and have them act as though they've never left home."

Julian frowned slightly. "It won't be easy looking for doubles."

"It is."

Jasper chuckled and handed Julian Gerry's number. "Tell him what kind of people you need."

Julian understood.

It would be extremely easy for a local power like Gerry to find two qualified actors.

"The only problem is if Prince's men are living with them. Things will be difficult if that's the case," Jasper said.

Vita quickly replied, “They’re not. I went over this afternoon and Prince’s men were only watching them from downstairs in the district. They made sure that I didn’t bring anyone away.”

“That makes things easier then.”

Julian immediately spoke up, “I have a way of bringing the impersonators up whilst simultaneously bringing the targets down.”

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“Alright then. Go quickly, this is very important,” Jasper told him sternly.

Julian nodded and left immediately.

After Julian left, Vita then looked at Jasper hopefully and said, “So the issue is resolved, then?”

“It won’t be that simple,” Jasper shook his head.

“Your franticness blinds you. Prince definitely has direct evidence of you and that child’s contact, meaning he has information that proves that the two of you are related.”

“All I can do now is guarantee her brother’s family and the child’s safety. You’re still at risk.”

Vita suddenly understood what was going on. “Then what should I do?”

Jasper paced in the study for a moment before he replied, “There’s only one way to handle this situation now, and that’s to drag it on.”

“Prince’s final target is me, after all, not you. So just agree to everything he asks.”

Vita was stunned by Jasper’s words and asked, “But what about you?”

“All I said was agree to his requests. The point of all of this is to buy time, I never said anything about carrying out what he asked.”

“He wants to bring up the termination of my partnership with the branch, but you need time to talk to people and convince them, right?”

“If you’re going to follow his requests and give him my account data, that’s also going to take time, no?”

“If we have time, then I’ll be able to create a new copy of data for you to hand over to him. The moment he brings up termination of my contract with the bank is when I will truly face off against him.”

“By then, all that will matter is who wins between him and me. What happens to you won’t matter anymore.”

“If I win, then all is well. If he wins, then we’re both in trouble.”

Vita nodded bitterly when he heard Jasper and replied, “Indeed.”

Jasper sighed again and patted Vita’s shoulder before saying, “Don’t blame yourself too much, Vita. Many things are beyond our control.”

“It’s my fault... I planted the seed for today’s trouble. I had this coming,” Vita said with a sorry smile.

“Think about your wife. Even if I win against Prince this round, you’re still going to have to resolve the issue with that child. Are you planning to hide it from your family for the rest of your life? Is it fair to them?”

Vita looked down silently upon hearing Jasper’s words. At that moment, the house door opened from outside and Daphne returned from doing the groceries.

“There weren’t many groceries left at the market, so I got a few dishes to cook some food. I had the restaurant prepare a few dishes too which they’ll deliver in no time. Do you two want to come out and eat something first?”

Daphne’s voice drifted over from outside.

Jasper glanced at Vita and said, “Mrs. Layne is a great wife. Don’t hurt her.”

Jasper then responded to Daphne, who was outside the study, and opened the doors to leave.

Vita let out a deep sigh.

He was still frantic and at loss, but his chest felt significantly lighter now that he had told Jasper everything.

“Thank you, Jasper.”

At the dinner table, Vita raised a glass of white wine as he thanked Jasper, then he tilted his head back and downed the glass.

“Hey, why are you drinking it like that?”

Daphne quickly shouted, not knowing what had happened.

Jasper smiled. “Let him drink, Mrs. Layne. He and I are happy tonight.”

Jasper also grabbed his wine glass and toasted Vita, “Cheers. We’ll drink until we drop.”

“Yes! Drink until we drop!”

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It was already midnight when he left Vita’s home. Jasper did not ask Julian to fetch him, opting to hail a taxi back instead.

He knew that no matter how heartless and crazy Prince was, he knew better than to pay gangsters to cause bodily harm.

This was an unspoken rule in formal business fights.

People could fight for their own interests and benefits. However, everyone was also part of the upper-class society. It would be against this unspoken rule to physically harm someone under the table.

Jasper had people supporting him too, so Prince had to first think of the Law family's stance on the matter before he could do anything. Not to mention that even without the Law family, Jasper was no longer the nobody he used to be.

Many people depended on him to make a living, and his properties were responsible for a lot of economic development. Besides this, a majority of his subsidiaries were also leading enterprises in their respective industries.

If anything happened to Jasper, many companies and industries would erupt into chaos.

These factors ensured Jasper's personal safety and made sure nothing would happen to him under normal circumstances.

Jasper smiled once he returned to the hotel, as he saw Julian waiting for him at the door.

There was no way this man would relax unless he saw Jasper return safely in one piece.

Julian smiled as well when he saw Jasper.

“Did you fetch them back too?” Jasper asked.

Julian nodded and replied, “Everything went well. They’re currently staying in a room next to mine. Nothing will happen to them.”

“Good. ”

Jasper nodded. “This façade won’t last for long and Prince isn’t an idiot that would easily fall for this lie. But we won’t have to keep lying to him either. The results of our little ploy will be out in another two days, and the victor will be determined by then.”

The following day, the release of a few announcements silently triggered many hidden movements.

Abbylon Inc's new c2c shopping platform, Treasurehunter, was officially launched.

There was nothing new about this piece of news though, as huge Internet companies in the country like Sena and Terizone had already advertised this a few days ago.

It was worth noting that with Jasper's all-around support, Treasurehunter had attracted much attention right after it launched.

This completely new method of purchasing and selling of goods had attracted the attention of many people.

Coupled with the support of Terizone and Sena, the platform's business volume skyrocketed moments after its announcement

This completely new shopping method made it extremely convenient for both buyers and sellers. The trading volume had exceeded 100 thousand Somer Dollars on the day of its launch.

In comparison to the future trading volume that would amount to hundreds of billions, this 100 thousand was very insignificant. Still, it was a perfect first step.

Meanwhile, another announcement was made by JW Capital about the establishment of a new subsidiary.

JW Payment Co., Ltd.

This company only had one business, and that was the JW Online Payment System.

As things stood, JW Payment's platform only supported payment of bank cards from ICBS. The platform was launched at the same time as Treasurehunter, and it supported all payment businesses within the three companies Treasurehunter, Sena, and Terizone.

These three companies also simultaneously announced that JW Payment would be the only online payment channel they officially recognized.

Ordinary citizens would focus more on Treasurehunter, while people within the industry knew that JW Platform was Jasper's true primary attack.

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