

Life at the Top Chapter 951

“Half a month ago, didn’t you obtain a manufacturing order for three 5,000-tonne cargo ships through your connections in Harbor City? This was originally a good thing. The entire shipyard has been working together to complete this order.

“However, a few days ago, the buyer suddenly came to the shipyard for an inspection. He found out that we were using a batch of imported steel plates of subpar quality. He was furious about it and he proceeded to sign a new contract with another shipyard.

“I received news that the other shipyard had secretly contacted the buyer a long time ago. They offered him a price that was nearly 20% lower than ours.

“Therefore, this deal was determined to be done for. The old mister and madam have been so troubled over this lately that they can’t focus on anything else.”

After listening to what Lucas said, Jasper frowned. “I obtained this order through a special connection of mine. However, one always has to consider their own interests in business,” he said in a heavy tone.

“I know about these three ships. The value of each ship is around seven million dollars. It makes up a total of 21 million dollars, which isn’t a small number. The buyer will definitely be careful about it.

“Why are we using a batch of imported steel plates of subpar quality?”

“That’s the odd thing,” Lucas replied immediately.

“Mr. Laine, you’ve told us time and time again that we must only use genuine materials. The old mister and madam have never violated this rule. We would never dare order a batch of defective steel plates.

“I checked this batch of steel plates. There’s no inventory record and no purchasing record. It was as if the steel plates had suddenly appeared out of thin air.

“Someone must have been in the factory the night before without anyone knowing. The next day, the buyer came in for a surprise inspection as soon as the factory opened.

“Of course, we could not come up with any excuses when the buyer saw the batch of defective steel plates in the factory. The buyer was reluctant to listen to our explanation as well. He left after throwing a tantrum.”

Jasper’s expression darkened as he gently rapped his knuckles against the table.

“That means that the order was already leaked when the shipyard just received it. When the buyer was here for an inspection, a batch of defective steel plates from an unknown source suddenly appeared in the factory and the buyer just so happened to see it.

“Therefore, you didn’t have the chance to clarify things as the buyer left in a fit of rage. Not long after, another shipyard offered the buyer a lower price for the same order and snatched this deal from us?

“That’s what happened. The entire incident is suspicious. After thinking about it for a while, I thought that I should report it to you,” Lucas said with a firm voice.

“You made the right decision. Someone is plotting against our shipyard.”

Jasper sneered and said, “This is a big buyer. His orders exceed two billion dollars in value annually. Most importantly, we could quickly expand the shipyard’s market in Harbor City and Auma City through this. That’s why I put in a lot of effort and asked someone for a favor to get my hands on this order.

“It seems like someone is after our accomplishments.

“A single order is nothing much, but I won’t allow others to fool and belittle my parents’ shipyard like that. Furthermore, this is such an important buyer.

“I’ll make a trip to Brac County tomorrow. Let’s talk then.”

“Alright, Mr. Laine,” Lucas said excitedly as he breathed out a sigh of relief.

After putting down the phone, Jasper raised his head and caught sight of Wendy who had walked into his study.

“Has Tiffany gone to bed?” Jasper asked.

“She’s resting,” Wendy said. She sat down in front of his study table and supported her chin with a hand.

“Do you want to tell me anything?” Jasper asked with a chuckle.

Wendy was slightly hesitant, but she still voiced her opinion, “I don’t think it’s suitable for Tiffany to be working outside due to her personality. She has too little experience,” she said.

“What are your plans?” Jasper asked with interest.

“I think that we should let her stay at home as our nanny. How’s that?” Wendy suggested.

Jasper was slightly stunned. He smiled bitterly and said, “That doesn’t sound appropriate. She’s still so young. She just came of age this year.”

“Just let her help us out at home. Let’s pay her a salary every month. We can reduce her burden by doing so.

“I pity her way too much. Furthermore, her innocence and kindness give me a good feeling about her. If I didn’t know her, I wouldn’t bother to do anything.

However, since I know about what she's going through, I want to help her if I have the ability to do so."

"You can decide for yourself. I'll support you," Jasper said gently.

"Alright," Wendy said as she smiled radiantly.

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Wendy and Tiffany got along with each other exceptionally well. Jasper was extremely relieved to see this.

He wanted to make up for the regrets from his past life. Anyways, since fate had arranged for Jasper and Tiffany to meet again, he could not bear to watch Tiffany continue to live as miserably as she did in her past life.

Jasper was not one who did many good deeds, but he did not mind putting in some effort to provide a pitiful girl like Tiffany with a better future.

The next day, Jasper woke up early as he had to head over to Brac County. As soon as he stepped out of his room, he noticed that the door of the room at the end of the corridor was open. Tiffany, who had finished washing up, walked out of the room with her luggage.

Jasper was stunned. "Where are you going with all your luggage?" he asked.

Tiffany seemed to be shocked by Jasper's sudden appearance. After a momentary daze, she said in a soft voice, "I'm going to work."

"Didn't Wendy tell you that you don't need to work anymore?" Jasper asked.

"Huh?!"

Tiffany was evidently shocked by the news. The next moment, tears began to well up in her widened eyes and a look of distress flashed across her face.

"Did I really get fired?"

Jasper was amused when he heard the teary tone of her voice. “What are you thinking? We just don’t think that you should be working as a waitress in the hotpot restaurant because you’re way too soft-hearted. Also, you have too little experience, and you’re so pretty,” he said.

“Even if you were appointed as the assistant manager, what do you know about the responsibilities of an assistant manager? An assistant manager’s main responsibility consists of assisting the manager to manage the other waiters and staff of the hotpot restaurant.”

“This is a managerial position. Do you think that you’ll be able to do well?”

Tiffany shook her head as a sense of inferiority overcame her upon registering Jasper’s words. “No, I don’t know how to do any of that,” she said.

“Exactly. Therefore, we intend to let you help us out at home. You can start from being a nanny. You will have a salary of 5,000 dollars per month.

“Your main responsibilities include cleaning, tidying up the house, and tending to the plants in the garden.

“We actually have special maids to tend to these chores, but you can learn from them. If you find it hard to learn from them, you can cook for us. The cook who used to be in charge of cooking for us has resigned to take care of her grandson at home.

“You should know how to cook, right?”

Actually, Jasper could pay for all of Tiffany’s living costs, but it would be inappropriate for him to do so. After all, she was a young and pretty lady. It would be odd for him to take care of her at home.

Besides, he was taking Tiffany’s self-esteem into consideration as well.

He knew that Tiffany was actually extremely determined and sensitive despite her weak appearance. She would reject the charity of others as she hoped that she could change her life through her own efforts.

“I know how to cook!” Tiffany nodded in enthusiasm.

She had raised her brother since young, so there was no way she did not know how to cook. Her cooking skills were pretty good too.

Tiffany’s eyes shone once she heard that she would be getting a salary of 5,000 dollars per month.

“Alright, Wendy will explain everything to you after she wakes up. Don’t worry about anything and just stay here. It’s an easy and carefree job. You can just tell us if you need anything. If you have nothing to do, you can just stay at home or go out for a walk.

“I have work to do, so I need to leave now.”

Jasper said before walking downstairs.

“Brother... Brother Laine.”

Tiffany’s conflicted voice rang out from the stairwell. Jasper stopped walking and turned around to look at her.

Tiffany’s small face was flushed bright red, and she fidgeted awkwardly. It seemed like she wanted to tell him something but was embarrassed to say it aloud.

Jasper did not urge her to say anything. He simply smiled as he looked at her.

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“There’s something else... Brother Laine, could you lend me 1,000 dollars?”

Tiffany sounded like she was about to cry. “I know that it’s wrong for me to do this, but my brother’s school fees have been in arrears for almost a week now. I...I don’t want the others to look down on him in school,” she said.

Jasper sighed lightly as he looked at Tiffany’s conflicted expression.

1,000 dollars was nothing to him.

The profits that he had earned effortlessly from the companies under his name exceeded this amount by a lot. However, this sum of money was enough to cause Tiffany to feel conflicted and awkward.

He took out 2,000 dollars in cash from his wallet and stuffed it into Tiffany’s hands. He then spoke to Tiffany who was desperately searching for the right words to say to him in a kind tone.

“Here’s 2,000 dollars. 1,000 dollars is for your brother’s school fees, and the remaining 1,000 dollars is for your brother’s living expenses. You need to take care of the remaining expenses on your own. However, this money is part of your salary. I’m just giving it to you in advance. When you get your salary, it’ll be deducted from the total.”

Tiffany nodded nervously as a bright expression flashed across her face.

Jasper’s words made her feel extremely at ease. She felt like the 2,000 dollars he had given her was her salary and not a form of charity.

“Thank you, Brother Laine! I will work hard!” Tiffany exclaimed in a determined tone.

Jasper chuckled and waved at her. He then turned around and headed downstairs.

Julian had driven over to the villa after receiving Jasper’s call and was waiting for him outside in his Bentley.

“Let’s head over to Brac County. I think we’ll be staying there for about two days.”

Jasper said as he got into the car and accepted the breakfast sandwich handed over to him by Julian.

The Bentley zoomed along the road, catching the attention of passersby on the street. It then entered the highway and dashed toward Brac County.

They arrived at Brac County in the afternoon, and Jasper headed over to the shipyard straight away.

Charlie and Sally were shocked to see Jasper.

“Why are you here, Jasp?” Sally asked while she turned her head to look behind his back. The expression on her face dimmed when she did not see the person she wanted to see. “Where’s Wendy?” she asked.

“She’s busy in the office. I came here alone this time. If you want to see her, call her and ask her to visit when she’s free,” Jasper said in amusement.

“That’s such a hassle,” Sally said as she shook her head.

“Dad, Mom, has anything special happened at the shipyard lately?” Jasper asked.

Charlie frowned, obviously not in a good mood. "You haven't eaten, right? Come on, let's eat at the canteen. We'll talk while we eat," he said.

"Alright," Jasper said. He did not want to expose them either. He followed both of them out of the office as they walked toward the shipyard.

The shipyard, which had still been deserted not too long ago, was now bursting with liveliness after a period of operation. The sound of machines whirring added to the bustling atmosphere.

The workers gradually gathered at the canteen when it was time for lunch.

It was evident that Charlie and Sally had a good reputation in the shipyard. Ordinary workers and managers of every position would take the initiative to greet them when they passed by. It seemed like they really liked these two bosses. They did not look like they were faking it.

However, not many people knew who Jasper was.

Charlie and Sally greeted workers throughout their journey to the canteen. They did not receive any special treatment either. They queued up after grabbing a tray each and joked with some of the workers every now and then.

Jasper followed his parents. He took a tray and stood behind them. The factory's canteen, which had dozens of workers, took its food seriously. More than 20 dishes had been prepared, and the portion of meat and vegetables was extremely reasonable. His parents had obviously put in a lot of effort and consideration on this aspect.

After taking their food, the three of them sat down at an empty table. Charlie started talking, "Not too long ago, the order you obtained for us got snatched away by someone else!"

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Everything that Charlie told him was roughly the same as what Jasper already knew.

However, he discovered something new from his father's account of the incident.

There were surveillance cameras in the factory. Although there were not many cameras, they covered most of the important areas.

However, none of the cameras had captured the scene of the batch of defective steel plates being moved into the factory.

"I've checked before. There are at least three surveillance cameras along the way to the factory. There's one at the main entrance, another one at the entrance of the production area, and one at the entrance of the warehouse. These are all important pathways, but none of these cameras managed to catch anything on footage.

"Therefore, there can only be two explanations for this. It was either a supernatural event where everything was the work of a ghost or the perpetrator is someone familiar with the environment of the factory and acted as a snitch."

Lucas brought two executives over in a hurry when Charlie mentioned this.

"Mr. Laine, you didn't notify us when you arrived. We should have come outside to greet you," Lucas told Jasper.

Jasper waved his hand while he continued to eat. "You don't have to be so courteous around me. I don't like such behavior. Have you guys eaten? Let's eat together if you haven't," he said.

Lucas flashed a meaningful gaze at one of the executives. The executive rushed off to take food for them at once.

Not long after, the three of them sat down. The small table was occupied by six people. The atmosphere was rather lively as everyone huddled together.

“My father told me about the surveillance cameras. Do all of you know about it?” Jasper asked.

Lucas nodded and said, “Yes, Chairman Laine was the one who proposed this idea to us. After investigating and drawing comparisons between the footage, we didn’t find anything suspicious.”

“If it wasn’t a supernatural event, I’m sure that there’s a snitch among us,” Jasper said in a steady tone.

“I’ve never believed in ghosts. Our investigation will begin with the internal staff of the factory.”

Jasper glanced at Lucas as he spoke, “You’re more familiar with the workers here. List down some suspects and carry out the investigation slowly. As long as that person has done it, some evidence will be left behind.

“Look into the people who were in the factory and those who weren’t there on the night of the incident. Anyone could be the culprit. Don’t spare anyone.”

“However, remember that you shouldn’t cause panic. The factory has already lost a huge order, so everyone is feeling uneasy. Therefore, you need to carry out the investigation without anyone knowing.”

Lucas nodded sternly after listening to what he said. “Alright, I understand, Mr. Laine,” he said.

Jasper looked at Charlie and chuckled. "Relax, Dad. This isn't a big issue. Everything will be in the clear soon. It'll be alright as long as we avoid similar incidents from happening in the future," he said.

"Why are these people so mean? Don't they feel guilty for using such shady methods to plot against us?" Charlie questioned in distaste.

"Guilt is nothing compared to the benefits that come with riches. Plenty of people have thrown their conscience away a long time ago," Jasper said.

"Mr. Laine, Chairman Laine and Madam Laine have been monitoring the production line for days on end lately just because of that order. They've put in a lot of effort. We're all angry now that something like this has happened. We must find the true culprit!" Lucas exclaimed right then.

"Dad, Mom, although your work at the shipyard is important, your health should be your main priority. Don't wear yourselves out over a small issue like this. That would be real trouble," Jasper said in a concerned tone.

Sally laughed and said, "Your father and I have been spending time in a fulfilling manner lately. Now that we have something to do, we feel much more energized than before. We don't find it hard to fall asleep at night anymore. It's a good thing that we're busy now. Don't worry."

Jasper smiled as he nodded.

Although Jasper continued chatting about some casual topics with them, he still felt extremely uneasy.

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Jasper did not really care about the shipyard. It was not worth it to allocate so much of his efforts into this business.

He only came over personally to handle this issue because he did not want it to affect his parents' emotions.

However, from the way his parents were behaving right now, it seemed he had to resolve this problem as best as he could. Otherwise, they would be sick with worry.

After lunch, Charlie and Sally headed back to rest. Meanwhile, Jasper and Lucas discussed the investigation procedures to be carried out in order to find out who the snitch was.

Once that was done, Lucas left to continue with his work whereas Jasper and Julian left the shipyard together.

"They plotted against us when we least expected it. We don't even know what exactly happened. It won't be easy to find out the truth in just a few days."

Jasper massaged his temples in the car. He had a headache.

"You can slowly investigate if you don't manage to find out anything within a few days, Jasper. There's no need to pressure yourself," Julian said while he drove the car.

Jasper sighed and said, "I don't have that much time here."

While he spoke to Julian, Jasper noticed a figure outside the window of the car that moved swiftly along the road. "Julian, stop the car!" he shouted at once.

The Bentley came to an emergency stop by the side of the road.

A short distance away from the car, a huge scene was taking place at the entrance of a high-end residential area.

A man who was pushing a baby stroller and carrying a lot of vegetables with an apron wrapped around his waist was being slapped by an extravagantly-dressed woman in public.

“Greg Costa, what did I tell you yesterday night? I want to drink sweetened milk, but you bought me pure milk. Did you do it on purpose so I won’t feel like drinking anything?! Did you?!”

The woman scolded Greg in a shrill voice as she slapped him.

Greg raised his arm to block the woman’s hand. However, he did not dare to retort against her. He simply explained to her in a stiff voice.

“I was too tired last night. Our child hasn’t been feeling well these few days. He wakes up a few times every night. I haven’t been sleeping well for almost an entire week. You’ve misunderstood me. Don’t hit me anymore. There are many people watching...”

“There are so many people watching?!” the woman yelled in a shrill voice. She sneered and said, “Good, then. I want everyone to see how useless you are. You’re just a piece of garbage who relies on women for money. I’m paying for your living expenses and you’re living in my house. Can’t I hit you a few times, huh?”

Greg seemed to be used to the mocking and derisive gazes being directed at him. “I’ll buy some sweetened milk for you right now,” he said with a dark expression on his face.

“You don’t need to go anywhere now!” the woman yelled, raising her hand and slapping him across the face once again. “I’m going out now, and you’re telling

me that you're going to buy it now? Are you causing trouble on purpose?" she questioned.

"Why are you standing there in a daze? Go home and do the chores at once. Remember that you need to hand wash my clothes. If I find out that you ruined any of my clothes, I'll beat you to death! You're just garbage who lives off his woman's money! Scram!"

After the pretty woman finished yelling at him, she walked toward a red sports car.

Meanwhile, Greg, whose face was streaked with marks from being slapped repeatedly, sighed heavily. He coaxed the baby in the stroller who was crying as he had been frightened by all the commotion. Greg then made his way back into the residential area silently.

"Greg!"

Right then, a man's voice rang out from behind him. His voice was tinged with disbelief.

Greg was stunned the moment he heard his voice. He turned around in shock to look at Jasper who was standing a short distance away from him. He shouted out loud, "Jasp?!"