

Life at the Top Chapter 561

He believed that he would definitely make a fortune one day. He had been so full of himself that he only felt disdain when he heard that Jasper had made it big.

From his perspective, success as described by a bunch of poor rural relatives could not be anything special.

However, he was overcome with overwhelming jealousy after seeing the luxurious villa and the row of BMWs parked in front of it. It was luxury beyond his wildest dreams.

“Can’t he share some of his money with us since he’s that rich? We’re his relatives! All he does is flaunt his wealth! How can someone like that succeed in life? Even if he’s rich, it’s just temporary. He’ll lose big in the future!” Terence Laine murmured through gritted teeth.

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When Jasper arrived at Shangri-La Hotel, his relatives had already been there for more than 20 minutes.

Everyone sat in their respective seats while they engaged in noisy chatter.

Each and every one of them were trying their best to maintain their composure in front of each other. They tried their best not to turn their heads to look around, making it seem as if they often attended such high-end occasions.

However, the truth was that none of them had ever had a meal in a five-star hotel.

They did not even know how to use a napkin properly. Some of them stuffed it into their collars or put it under their dinner plates, whereas others used it as a towel to wipe their hands before balling it up and throwing it aside.

The three tables in the room had already been served with cold dish platters and drinks. The children stared at the exquisite dishes eagerly. However, the adults slapped their hands away when they reached out to grab the food.

Although the adults also yearned to try these exquisite cold dishes that they had never even seen before, nobody dared to touch their utensils before Jasper's arrival.

Even as a mere junior, he had the ability to make all the elders in his family wait for him before they started eating. This was the charm that money brought.

Jasper walked in through the entrance. Noticing the situation in the room, he laughed out loud. "Excuse me for being late, everyone. Why haven't you guys started eating?" He asked.

Jasper's uncle stood up and greeted him with a smile on his face. "We have just arrived as well. You're here, Jasp. Come here, sit down at once," he said.

Jasper looked at the main table. The seat to the left of Carson Laine, his father, was empty. The seat obviously belonged to him.

Jasper chuckled and said, "I'm a junior, so I should sit by the side. If I sit somewhere as prestigious as the main table, I might get criticized."

His relatives burst out into laughter as well. Terence Laine, who was seated at the end of the third table, fixed a jealous gaze upon Jasper. He sneered at him repetitively in his heart.

"Alright, everyone is waiting for you. Hurry up, all the seats are the same," Carson Laine ushered Jasper over to his side and forced him to sit down beside him.

After instructing the waiters to begin serving the dishes, Jasper chatted briefly with the elders seated at his table. He then stood up and raised his glass. "Everyone, today marks the end of the year for us. Let's leave the past behind and welcome new beginnings," he announced cheerily in front of his relatives.

"My alcohol tolerance is quite average, so I won't make an individual toast to each and every one of you. Therefore, I'll make a toast to all of you right now. Here's to new beginnings and peace in the new year."

Everyone showed a good response to Jasper's words. They stood up, and those who could drink alcohol drank from their glasses whereas those who could not drink sipped at their beverages instead. Nevertheless, everyone present emptied the content of their glasses.

Jasper put down his empty glass and was just about to return to his seat when Terence stood up at the end of the third table. He brought a large box over and told Jasper, "This is the wild ginseng that you requested from our family, Jasper Laine. I brought it for you today."

The tone of Terence's voice was stiff and rigid. He spoke to Jasper without an ounce of courtesy. It was as if Jasper had forced his family to hand over the wild ginseng.

Seated at the same table as Jasper, Jasper's uncle's expression changed immediately. He was about to reprimand Terence when Terence let out a cold sneer and began speaking.

"Now that you're wealthy, we don't even dare to say a single word when you take things from poor relatives like us. However, you already have so much money. Why don't you lend me some money? Five figures ought to do it. We are all relatives. You wouldn't have any objections, right?"

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After Terence finished speaking, the atmosphere in the room changed drastically.

Everyone's attention peaked as they stared at Jasper with widened eyes, waiting for his response.

Jasper responded with a smile. Instead of accepting the box, he looked at Terence and said, "I've spent most of my time out of town after graduating. I haven't come back in a long time. May I know who you are?"

Terence scoffed. "You're a prominent figure and a big boss now. Of course, you wouldn't pay attention to poor relatives like us. It's completely normal for you to forget," he said.

"I'm Terence Laine. I can be considered your cousin since Darrel Laine is my brother."

Jasper nodded in realization. "I remember that he has a younger brother. He called me not too long ago to tell me that he was rushing back by train. He said that he'd arrive a little later," he said.

Terence sulked and said, "Everyone knows that my brother will be running a large business very soon. He has attained an agreement with bosses from other localities and he'll be opening dozens of hotpot restaurants in the province next year. Of course, you'd care more about him.

"After all, you'll pale in comparison to him after his hotpot restaurant chain begins operating."

Terence's contemptuous words piqued Jasper's interest.

It seemed like Terence Laine still had no idea that he had provided his brother with the funds to start up his hotpot restaurant chain.

“Never mind, it’d be meaningless to talk about such things. In any case, keep this in mind. Don’t think that you can look down on your poor relatives just because you have some money. You’re so wealthy, but when have you ever provided us with any benefits?”

“I’m in a tight spot right now. Can you bear to lend me a few ten thousand dollars? Don’t worry about it, after my brother opens his hotpot restaurant chain, he’ll become a big boss too. He wouldn’t trouble you by refusing to pay back a measly sum of money like that,” Terence said haughtily.

“Terence Laine!”

Jasper’s uncle roared out in anger. There was an awkward and shameful expression on his face. “What nonsense are you going on about, you b*stard!? Apologize to your cousin at once!” He reprimanded Terence.

His uncle then turned around to face Jasper. He let out a dry laugh. “Jasp, I’ve spoilt him ever since he was young. Please don’t stoop down to his level. I’ll teach him a lesson after this,” he told Jasper.

Jasper waved his hand and looked at Terence with a cheerful grin. “How much money would you like?” he asked.

Terence rolled his eyes. Despite the anger blazing in his father’s gaze, Terence replied stubbornly, “At least 50000 dollars!”

Jasper nodded and grabbed a checkbook from his coat. He proceeded to fill in a check worth 50000 dollars. “Take this check. You can withdraw 50000 dollars from any bank at any time,” he told Terence.

“I’m not lending you this money, so you don’t have to return it to me. I’m buying this wild ginseng from you with this sum of money. That way, you wouldn’t be feel like I took advantage of you. How’s that?” He asked.

Terence sneered and said, “It’s no wonder that you’re so good at making money. You have such immaculate planning. However, don’t even think of using your devious schemes on your relatives. This wild ginseng is over 200 years old—it’s a real treasure. I’ve enquired about it outside, and I heard that it’s so rare that it can’t even be bought with money. If you want to buy it, you’ll need to pay me at least 100000 dollars.”

Jasper filled in another 50000 dollar check without saying a word. He handed both the checks to Terence and told him, “Here’s 100000 dollars you asked for.”

Terence noticed that Jasper was being extremely at ease right now. He did not even think twice before giving him 100000 dollars.

100000 dollars was a monumental sum of money for every average family out there.

At that moment, Terence grew disgruntled after realizing how rich Jasper was. Greed instantly clouded his thoughts as he raised his head indignantly and said, “That’s not enough! Give me 200000 dollars at least!”

Jasper chuckled lightly and put aside both the checks. “First, you wanted 50000 dollars, then you wanted 100000 dollars. I’ve given you everything that you asked for. However, you’re now demanding for me to give you 200000 dollars. Do you take me for a fool who doesn’t understand numbers? Since you’re not selling the goods, so be it. Take it back,” he said in an even tone.

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Terence's expression changed. Just as he was about to say something, his father slapped him hard right across the face.

A loud smack resounded throughout the room.

Terence was beyond stunned by the clear, loud smack. The twenty or so relatives in the room had looks of utter shock on their faces as well.

Disciplining one's child was a shameful act, and it was supposed to be done in the privacy of one's home. Furthermore, Terence Laine was already in his twenties. He was not at the age where he should be hit by his parents.

However, not only did his father hit him, but he had also done so in front of so many relatives. He did not show Terence even an ounce of respect. This showed just how fired up he was.

His father lunged over and grabbed the box from Terence. He was so infuriated that his voice was trembling. "What a rebellious son you are. I've raised you for nothing!" He shouted out.

He then turned around and handed the box over to Jasper. "Jasp, Terence is only acting like that because I haven't raised him well. Please don't hold a grudge against him. How could we sell this to you? How could we ask you for money in return for this gift?" He said apologetically.

Jasper did not want the ginseng at all. However, from his uncle's desperate gaze, he knew that this incident would not pass easily if he did not accept it. Therefore, he placed the box to the side. At the same time, he took out the two checks as well.

“Uncle, I intended to purchase this from you since the very start. Wild ginseng that is more than 200 years of age is indeed precious. Keep this 100000 dollars.”

Just as his uncle was about to say something, Jasper chuckled out loud. “Uncle, if you don’t accept this money, I won’t take this wild ginseng from you. Although we’re relatives, a sale is still a sale. It’s easy to get 100000 dollars, but getting 200-year-old wild ginseng is something that comes down to pure luck. I’m the one that has scored a bargain.”

Nobody could point out any flaws in Jasper’s reasonable argument.

Everyone agreed with Jasper inwardly. Although Jasper was wealthy, he did not look down on his relatives. His behaviors and actions were also extremely mature and well thought out. Thus, it was easy to get along with him.

The only person who thought otherwise was Terence Laine.

Terence clutched at his face. It stung to the touch. Although his face hurt from the slap, he was angrier due to the overwhelming shame that he had experienced.

“Father! He’s just using his money to placate us. Why should we fawn over him like this? Besides, he’s your junior. He has to address you as his uncle! Don’t bow down so pathetically in front of him. I wonder who’ll be bowing to whom after my brother returns and starts operating his business?!”

Terence yelled out while he glared at Jasper angrily.

After listening to what he said, Terence’s father was so enraged that he almost passed out.

“You b*stard, you’re really aa b*stard!” His father yelled at him while smacking his own leg. “Don’t you know that your cousin is the one funding your brother’s business?” He roared.

“You’re completely incapable. All you do is look down on others. You think others are looking down on you if they treat you with even the slightest disrespect. Why don’t you take a look at yourself instead? Do you have anything that’s worthy of other people’s admiration?”

“Jasp has already helped out our family a lot. Look at the things that you’ve done and said. Is this something that a decent human being would do? Why do I even have a son like you?”

Terence was stupefied after registering what his father had just said.

He only heard one thing clearly.

The greatest source of his pride, the business that his brother was about to start, was funded by Jasper Laine?

After experiencing the overwhelming shock and daze, not only did Terence not repent for his actions, but jealousy and rage instantly swelled up in his heart.

“In that case, Jasper Laine should have given me the money! I’m cut out to run a business! I can earn a fortune as well. Why did you offer it to my brother instead of me? Give me 200000 dollars, Jasper Laine. If you give me 200000 dollars, I’ll do better than anyone else!”

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Jasper stared at Terence in shock.

To be honest, he did not achieve much in his past life. He did not meet up much with his relatives either and had never interacted much with Darrel and Terence Laine. Therefore, he had no idea what their personalities were like.

In his current life, Jasper would like to think that he had met quite a number of people; He had also dealt with all sorts of people.

However, he had never expected Terence Laine to go beyond his expectations of what it meant to be shameless.

The last time that Jasper had felt this way was when he was dealing with Penelope Hunt and her family.

Even when compared to them, Terence Laine was still the gold-standard.

“Why should I give you my money if I’m wealthy? Furthermore, it’s 200000 dollars that you’re asking for. Don’t you know that the average salary for a job out there is only a few hundred dollars? It’s considered a huge benefit if you have a salary of a thousand dollars,” Jasper told him.

Terence sneered coldly and waved his hand. “Stop spewing such nonsense. Aren’t you filthy rich? We’re all relatives. Shouldn’t you help us out if you’re rich? Do you want to see us suffer due to poverty? You’ve helped my brother as well. In that case, it isn’t too much to ask you to give me 200000 dollars, right?” He questioned.

“I funded your brother simply because I thought that his business would be profitable. Besides, I did not lend your brother the money. It was an investment. In other words, I’d invest this sum of money all the same even if he was a mere stranger instead of Darrel Laine,” Jasper said calmly.

“I’m doing this because it’s business, not because he’s my relative.

“I can support you if you have the capabilities, business idea, and are willing to put in the effort. However, look at you. You’re incapable and you don’t have any plans. You’re only asking me for money. Do you think that my wallet is an ATM? Do you think that you can take my money whenever you want?”

“Everyone here is our relative. They all know my family’s situation. We were the poorest among everyone in the past. All of you were more well off in comparison to my family.

“Why didn’t you help out my family back then, Terence Laine?”

Jasper’s words rendered Terence speechless. There was no way for him to argue against that.

Jasper turned away from Terence, whose expression was tainted with anger. He looked around the room and gazed at each of his relatives’ faces intently. He then continued speaking in a loud, clear voice.

“Half of the people here are my elders, whereas one-third of them are around the same age as I am. The remaining third of them are my nephews and nieces. We all share the same origin. We’re all from the same family.

“I’m embarrassed to say that I’ve managed to achieve some recognition and success for our family. However, I’ll say a few words without shame today.

“Be it relatives or friends, my words to you are the same. I’ll offer my support to anyone with the capabilities, ideas, and is willing to put in great amounts of effort. However, anyone who thinks that I’m an easy target or believes that I’m obligated to give out money to everyone now that I’m wealthy should just save their efforts.

“That’s all I want to say. Don’t mind me. You guys can start eating and drinking. Anyways, I’ll take care of everything here. If the hospitality is inadequate, it’ll be my fault. You guys can scold me all you want. However, if you’re deliberately here to cause trouble, I won’t welcome or serve you.”

Back at the main table, Sally Lard tapped Charlie Laine. “Won’t it reflect badly on Jasp if he says something like this?” She asked him worriedly.

Charlie had an even and controlled expression on his face. "It won't reflect badly on him. He's simply stating facts. I don't think that Jasp said anything wrong. He has my support," he said.

After that, Charlie fixed a gratified gaze upon Jasper. "I'm old now. Our son has really grown up," he remarked.

The other relatives looked at each other in silence.

Jasper's uncle glared at Terence and growled impatiently, "Why are you still standing there? Scram!"

Terence's face flushed red in anger as he cast a vicious glare at Jasper. He then turned around and walked away.

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Of course, Terence did not have the audacity to stay there and eat with them. He left the room with a slam of the door.

Terence's father took in a deep breath and waved his hand. "Don't bother him. There's no need to pay him any mind. This kid is beyond salvation," he said.

Honey Sarratt dabbed at her tears in a corner of the room. She was terribly upset.

Charlie Laine and Sally Lard comforted Jasper's uncle and aunt respectively. Meanwhile, Jasper got up and went around the room to make toasts with everyone. Nobody seemed to pay any heed to Terence Laine, who had left in a storm of fury.

Although Terence Laine had caused an unpleasant dispute during the Christmas dinner, nobody showed any signs of unhappiness on their faces. Everyone quickly pushed the incident to the back of their minds.

Soon, the atmosphere at the tables became lively once again.

Although not everyone was happy throughout the course of the dinner, at least it ended on a good note.

After everyone finished their meals, Jasper arranged for them to stay in the Shangri-La Hotel. He booked a room for each family where they could stay up to three days and two nights. The decision to stay there was completely up to them.

In the afternoon, Darrel Laine, who had traveled back from another town in a rush, looked for Jasper hurriedly. He had obviously heard of Terence's incident from the day before.

"I'm so sorry, cousin. Sigh, I never expected that my brother would do something that immature!"

Darrel was evidently much more mature than Terence. He apologized to Jasper with a guilty expression on his face.

Jasper was sipping on a cup of hot tea to cure his hangover. He had drunk a little too much the previous night. He laughed upon hearing what Darrel said. "It's alright, I just assumed that I was fooling around with a child. You don't have to mention it... Anyway, how did the discussion go?" He asked.

A look of excitement appeared on Darrel's face. "Everything's almost done. The boss of Hello Hotpot said that he'll come over to visit you personally after Christmas. Regarding the ownership, he'd like to have 30% of the total shares. You will get 60% of it, and I'll have 10%. Is that alright with you?" He proposed.

Jasper laughed. "That's perfectly fine. I'll be getting the sum of money that is to be invested into your business within the next two days," he said.

Jasper then paused momentarily. He felt like thanking Samuel Ray for his extensive wealth.

“In that case, I’ll meet him next year. We will formally sign a three-party contract when the boss of Hello Hotpot comes over. After that, you can set up the company framework. I’ll make sure to credit the funds into the company account in due time.”

Darrel nodded gratefully. He then took out two familiar checks from his coat and handed them to Jasper courteously.

“What are you doing?”

Jasper asked. He laughed in amusement after taking a glance at the two checks that he had filled up himself.

“Don’t disregard me anymore, Cousin. We can’t accept this money from you no matter what. Please take it back!” Darrel said. He was adamant.

“You’re already our family’s saving grace. It would be inhumane if I accepted this money from you. Furthermore, my parents share the same sentiment.”

Jasper chuckled. He did not reject his request, but he did not accept the checks either. “After you set up the company, you’ll need to use a lot of money. You can treat this money as an additional line of sponsorship from me,” he said.

Darrel was stunned after registering what he had said. He wanted to say something else, but he immediately swallowed all his words after noticing the calm gaze that Jasper had directed at him. Thus, he nodded heavily and stopped being persistent.

At the same time, Terence Laine, who had left the restaurant in a fit of rage the night before, had gone to Nauritus City on his own. He had not contacted anyone after leaving that night.

He was there to meet someone. That person was a huge source of support that he had just come to know recently. Now, he planned to take revenge for the humiliation that Jasper had put him through.