

# 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!"

## Life at the Top Chapter 702

"A set-up." Jasper shrugged and passed the invitation to Chad.

Chad took a look and reacted completely differently from Jasper by immediately frowning at its content.

"Melody Electronics wants to invite us for a joint product launch? And they even invited a few television and newspaper representatives?"

At that, Chad instantly reacted. "This is the MP3 player manufacturer that's been advertising their products all this while?"

"Exactly. And they have a domestic license to manufacture the MP3 player," Jasper spoke calmly.

Chad frowned and spoke, "So they're just intending to make a fool out of us in front of the media, then."

"That's why I called it a set-up. I'm afraid this isn't as simple as making a fool of us. They're going to use the power of the press to completely kill our product the moment it launches."

Jasper had a calm expression on his face. He could already imagine how excited and proud Conrad must have looked when he made this decision.

Even though Conrad's move was rather surprising and sudden, Jasper was not angry at him at all.

After all, they were rivals, and there was no law claiming that only Jasper could plot against Conrad and not the other way around.

The two of them were merely trying to spot weak points while they attacked and countered each other, in hopes to get rid of the other once and for all.

About the incident in Coreana regarding the patent, Jasper had found a way to counter Conrad. However, it was not a lie that Conrad's move had almost destroyed Jasper's chances of making profits through the MP3 player.

Conrad was still the one attacking now, and Jasper had to react.

This time, Jasper decided that he would counterattack.

"Perhaps we shouldn't attend, Mr. Laine," Chad suggested with furrowed brows.

Jasper smiled. "Don't worry, I have a plan. Come with me when I attend. The roles in this set-up haven't been decided yet."

Seeing how Jasper had already made up his mind, Chad nodded and decided to go along with it.

With Chad's agreement, Jasper immediately made two calls.

Chad's eyes shone brighter as Jasper made the few calls.

The first call was to Hudson Moore.

The second and third calls were to Ryder from Harbor City's Advent Entertainment and Ted from Swallow Capital's Easy Media.

He had done two things with those calls.

The first thing was to have the two companies under Advent Entertainment grant JW Electronics the right to use their artists' songs.

The second was to have the two media companies sign a strategic cooperation agreement with Terizone. Terizone would then create a downloading site for MP3 players, where available songs would include artists from both media companies, as quickly as possible. Those artists happen to make up about 70% of the famous singers in Harbor City and the Mainland.

"You want to play with copyright and patent rights, Conrad? Fine, then we'll block your content. So what if you have an MP3 player? You won't be able to download any music and even if you are, it'd be the pirated version while our MP3 players will provide tracks from the source. I'd like to see how you're going to win this."

Jasper smiled at Chad who was excited and impatient.

## Life at the Top Chapter 703

Three days later, a piece of news had spread among the tech enthusiasts in the country.

Domestically manufactured MP3 players were available to the public now!

People did not have to save money to get the goods imported, nor did they need to bring cassette tapes around anymore.

Through all sorts of tactics, dozens of media representatives participated in Melody's new product launch event and countless people had their eyes on it.

The greatly anticipated event was held in the conference hall of Nauritus City's Sheraton Hotel.

Thanks to Conrad, not only did media companies of all sizes from Southeast Province send their representatives, but there were also representatives from six television stations from other provinces and two large official news stations from Swallow Capital.

The conference hall was packed with cameras and microphones everywhere. Reporters began to greet each other and exchange contacts before the event began.

It was a lively scene.

Backstage, Jasper saw Conrad standing with a smile not too far away when he arrived. From the way Conrad stood, it almost seemed as if he had been waiting for Jasper.

"I see that you've been well, Mr. Laine," Conrad greeted calmly.

"And you're as graceful as ever, Mr. Monty," Jasper greeted back.

Seeing that Jasper had only brought Julian and another middle-aged man he did not recognize, Conrad smiled. "You don't seem to care too much about this launch event, Mr. Laine.

"It can't possibly be because of my glory, can it?"

Jasper replied calmly, "It's just a launch event, what matters most is the product, no? There's no point in bringing a large group of people with me. I'm not here for a fight."



Although he was smiling, Conrad's gaze darkened slowly. He leaned toward Jasper and spoke, "I like that. Our products will speak for us, won't they? Though I do wonder if I could take a look at the product you've brought over today, Mr. Laine?"

"I'm not the only one anticipating it, of course. I'm sure the reporters are, too... Since a pirated version will be launched with the official one. Who knows, maybe the product you invested in to manufacture will become a widely-bashed product after today?"

Conrad's smile widened presumptuously. "After all, I'm the one with the patent rights."

"Are you so confident that you'll beat me today, Mr. Monty?" Jasper asked.

Conrad laughed aloud. "Jasper, oh, Jasper. Do you know what your biggest weakness is? You're too confident in yourself. Too much self-confidence will be the cause of your downfall. You think that everything is within your control, but there'll always be the unexpected.

"Like the patent rights and this launch event, for example. You know that the patent rights are with me, yet you're unwilling to give up on the MP3 player. What makes you think that I'd let you off? You're too naive if you think you've got a trick to turn this all around."

Conrad scoffed and spoke plainly, "This launch event will mark the beginning of your downfall. It'll be the MP3 player this time, then I'll move on to target all other companies under JW Capital. Just wait. Perhaps I'll even spare you some change the day I make you lose everything. Perhaps I'll spare you enough that you can continue living, albeit pitifully.

"With me in Southeast Province, there will be no room for you!"

With an arrogant smile, Conrad turned and left with light steps.

“What an arrogant man, Mr. Laine,” Chad spoke rigidly to Jasper, his expression dark.

Jasper replied unaffectedly, “It’s only normal for a man to go crazy before his death. His time is coming soon.”

Chad’s expression brightened greatly when he was reminded of the leverage Jasper had. He said, “Now I’m really anticipating the launch event. I’d like to see the change in his expression when he finds out. I wonder if he can still be so arrogant then.”

...

At two in the afternoon, with the reporters waiting patiently, the launch event started on time.

On the stage were two separated groups of people. On one side were the main characters of the event, Conrad and Melody Electronics’ person in charge.

While on the other side stood Jasper and Chad from JW Electronics.

A majority of the reporters looked at Jasper and Chad with curiosity. They did not understand why this insignificant JW Electronics would be here at Melody Electronics’ launch event.

Tapping on the microphone, Conrad spoke to the audience, “Dear friends from the press, I ask that you remain silent for a little longer as Melody Electronics’ new product launch will officially begin.”

Conrad then glanced at Valentine beside him.

After receiving a cue from Conrad, Valentine smiled and stood up with an MP3 player the size of his palm.

“Friends from the press, you should already have received the relevant materials about my company. Now, allow me to show you the first-ever MP3 player to be domestically manufactured that my company has researched and developed!

“I’m sure all of you know that the MP3 player is currently trending in the States and in European countries. Its compact design allows it to be conveniently carried with you, and it’s a music product that allows you to easily download and store songs. This product will surely bring a new era to the country’s electronics market. Our first-generation Melody MP3 player has...”

The introduction lasted for more than ten minutes, during which Valentine elaborated on a grand concept and managed to describe the first-generation Melody as the hope of domestically manufactured goods—a work of art that had surpassed countless foreign goods of the same type.

For a launch event of this scale, it was expected that Conrad had his own men among the reporters.

When it was time for the reporters to ask questions, it was their time to shine.

“Mr. Estrada, your introduction has piqued our interest in the first-generation Melody. But I’d like to ask, at what price will it be sold?”

Valentine replied with a smile, “Since this is a domestic brand, it’s only natural that we keep the price acceptable to its target consumers. We’ve decided to sell each product at 1,800 Somer Dollars.”

The reporters all gasped in shock at the number.

In comparison to the imported goods that would cost at least 2,000 Somer Dollars, the first-generation Melody from a domestic brand was indeed a little more budget-friendly.

“One more question. How many Melodies is Melody Electronics preparing to manufacture?” another reporter asked.

Valentine smiled proudly. “Melody Electronics is fully prepared with four manufacturing lines that work 24 hours a day. There are currently six million first-generation Melody products in the warehouse and we will be manufacturing at least 500,000 per day in the future!

“Our company has invested a large amount to reach that goal. We’re not worried about having invested too much, for we are confident that our product will stun the country’s MP3 player market!”

After the topic began to trend online, Conrad took over the microphone and suddenly spoke with a smile, “We have another piece of news to share, ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Laine from JW Electronics has a new product to launch as well. Would you like to show us your product, Mr. Laine?”

## Life at the Top Chapter 704

Conrad’s words successfully diverted everyone’s attention to Jasper.

Turning his head secretly to glance at Jasper, Conrad felt his emotions thrum calmly within him.

He had waited too long for this day.

He would crush Jasper today and turn the man into the laughing stock of Southeast Province... No, the entire country.

Jasper, who had not said a word since the launch event started, smiled and took the microphone in front of him as the reporters looked over. He spoke, “I did come today to announce the launch of a new product as well. Coincidentally, it’s also an MP3 player like Mr. Monty’s first-generation Melody.

“Of course, my product is rather different from other MP3 players. In fact, I’m more willing to call it an upgraded version, the MP4.

“Unlike the first-generation Melody, my MP4 goes by the name Mellow, derived from the word mellifluous. From the definition alone, I can describe it as a revolutionary product that has completely surpassed all existing MP3 players.

“If one claims that Mr. Monty’s first-generation Melody to be an outstanding product among all other MP3 players, then my Mellow will lead and guide the path to the future of music playing devices.

“JW Electronics does not aim to copy what is already trending overseas. Instead, we aim to make a statement, that those abroad will be the ones to copy the products that we people of Somer descent create.”

Jasper’s words stunned all the reporters present, and everyone was inexplicably filled with anticipation.

2001 had only just started and people were beginning to fawn and worship foreign products. A majority believed that foreign goods were better than domestic ones, that the term ‘domestically manufactured’ somehow made it seem the goods were lacking in quality.

However, as fellow people of Somer descent, they wanted their country to grow stronger. They also wished for their domestically manufactured goods to be copied by foreigners and not the other way around.

Especially when Conrad’s first-generation Melody was introduced first. The introduction mainly compared the product to its foreign counterpart and how similarly they had managed to replicate it.

‘But Jasper?’

‘Jasper has introduced an evolutionary product, one that would have foreigners replicating them instead.

'The winner is evident!'

Conrad's faze instantly grew frosty as he looked at Jasper silently.

"There seems to be a change in the situation, Mr. Monty," Valentine leaned over to whisper, realizing the unusualness of the situation.

"Don't worry, we have the patent rights, remember? He can bluff as much as he wants but there's no escaping the patent rights. That alone is enough for me to screw him over!" Conrad spoke in a dark tone.

Just then, the reporters below were impatient and could not wait to ask, "Mr. Laine, have you officially manufactured this Mellow device you speak of?"

Jasper smiled. "Of course, or I'd just be bluffing, wouldn't I? Let me pass the microphone to the first factory director of JW Electronics Equipment Manufacturing Plant. He'll tell you more about the current manufacturing situation for Mellow."

Jasper then gestured to Chad.

Chad got up excitedly with an MP3 player the size of half his palm in his hand. The most eye-catching part of it was its compact size and a screen that took up more than half the space.

"Dear friends from the press, this is Mellow, JW Electronics' latest product. It's more than just an ordinary MP3 player. It's been upgraded to an MP4!"

The reporters grew more excited as Chad continued to introduce Mellow.

According to Chad's description, there was indeed no similar foreign product out there. It was evident that Mellow was much more outstanding compared to other music-playing devices on the market.

Conrad and Valentine turned grim.

## Life at the Top Chapter 705

Conrad glanced at Valentine. The latter nodded and gestured to the few reporters they had bribed in advance.

One of them stood up and asked Jasper, “Mr. Laine, since your company has such an outstanding product, I’d like to ask if you have the related patent rights?”

The question stunned all the reporters.

He was right. No matter how outstanding Mellow was or how it called itself an MP4, there was no changing the fact that it was derived from the MP3 player. That meant there was no escaping the issue of patent rights.

Everyone fell silent and they turned to Jasper, waiting for his reply.

However, the one who spoke was the same reporter who asked the question. They were evidently proud of the effect their question had brought about and asked another question, “Mr. Estrada from Melody Electronics has already explained just now that they’ve received patent rights from Mr. Damond Golding in Coreana. Melody Electronics is the only company within the country with exclusive rights to manufacture the MP3 player. So, Mr. Laine, could you tell us how Mellow decides to tackle this problem?”

Everyone was watching both Jasper and Chad. Their every word and expression would surely be released in the newspapers and reported by news stations tomorrow. As such, they had to be extremely careful of what they said.

Just then, Jasper stood up.

“Indeed, JW Electronics does not have the domestic license to manufacture the MP3 player.”

That statement caused an uproar.

The reporters were rendered speechless.

While piracy was rampant in the country, it was something that no one dared to state blatantly. After all, that would only make a fool of them.

“If you admit that you don’t have the license, Mr. Laine, then why would your JW Electronics continue to manufacture pirated products without patent rights? Do you perhaps believe that you’re untouchable to the country’s law?” Conrad spoke indifferently.

“Or do you perhaps think that Melody Electronics would not dare to sue you?”

Conrad’s two sentences were incendiary.

The atmosphere in the room turned tense.

Yet the reporters only got more excited.

The launch event was supposed to be a normal press conference, and they had not expected the two companies to start a fight out of the blue.

This was earth-shattering news.

This was an incident that would easily increase their ratings and sell out their newspapers.

Each reporter had a foolish smile on their face as they imagined receiving an award from their editor-in-chief.



At the same time, everyone's eyes were on the stage. They were not going to miss out on any single detail.

"JW Electronics is a law-abiding company, there's no way we would do anything illegal," Jasper replied.

"Bullsh\*t!" Valentine stepped over and pointed at Jasper, accusing him, "This stupid Mellow of yours was derived from the MP3 player patent and you've admitted that you don't have a license! How is that not illegal?"

Valentine then looked around and stated loudly, "Dear friends of the press, Melody Electronics has spent a large amount of money to buy exclusive licensing from Mr. Damond Golding in Coreana. Our company will not stand by and watch as someone infringes on our interest!

"Especially not nobodies who only play dirty tricks. We'll bring them to the court of law, so could our dear friends from the media please take clear pictures of this ingenuine man? He has blatantly broken the law by openly pirating!"