

## **PAW 1081**

Chapter 1081: Mayor Jiang's dead husband's photograph

The sun is bright, and the weather is good.

Dong Xuebing felt the blue sky was the only thing nice in Zhen Shui County. The sky here is much bluer compared to Beijing and Fen Zhou City. He can see the tall mountains and clouds far away. The lovely scenery and fresh air made him feel better as he walked to work.

Dong Xuebing was still far from his workplace, and his phone rang.

Ring... ring... ring.... The number is from the County Mayor's Office. He had saved the numbers of leaders and departments on his phone.

Dong Xuebing answered. "Hello, I am Dong Xuebing."

A young woman said. "Hello, Mayor Dong. I am Mayor Jiang's communication officer, Li Xiaona. Mayor Jiang wants to meet you when you arrive at work."

Dong Xuebing replied. "Yes. I am on my way."

"Ok. I will hang up then."

"Ok. Thank you, Secretary Li, for informing me."

"Don't mention it."

About 15 minutes later.

Dong Xuebing arrived at his workplace on time. He checked the time and went straight to Jiang Fangfang's office.

County Mayor's office.

Dong Xuebing knocked and entered. The layout of Jiang Fangfang's office was different. He had been here before, but he did not stop at the secretary's office outside. Jiang Fangfang's office is at the back of her secretary's office. Anyone who wants to enter her office can walk past her secretary. Jiang Fangfang had brought him directly to her office, and he did not meet Li Xiaona that day. However, Li Xiaona was at her table, packing her stuff. She is in her twenties and has average looks.

"Mayor Dong." Li Xiaona greeted.

Dong Xuebing smiled. "Nice to meet you, Secretary Na. Is Mayor Jiang free now?"

"Please wait while I check with Mayor Jiang." Li Xiaona knocked on the door and entered. She closed the door behind her.

Dong Xuebing knew someone should be inside, or she would not close the door after she entered.

About ten seconds later.

Li Xiaona came out and said. "Mayor Dong. Mayor Jiang asked you to go in."

A man came out of the office with Li Xiaona. Dong Xuebing had met him at his welcome lunch on his first day. He is Zhen Shui County's Political and Legal Committee Secretary and Public Security Bureau Chief, Chu Peng. He is Jiang Fangfang's only supporter in the County Party Committee.

Dong Xuebing smiled. "Chief Chu."

Chu Peng seemed to be in a bad mood, but he forced a smile. "Mayor Dong."

Dong Xuebing said. "Mayor Jiang wants to meet me. I will go in first."

Chu Peng nodded. "Let's have a chat when you are free. I got to go too."

Inside the office.

Dong Xuebing knocked and entered. He closed the door behind him.

"Seat." Jiang Fangfang looked at Dong Xuebing and kept the document she was holding in the drawer.

"Are you looking for me?" Dong Xuebing looked at Jiang Fangfang and remembered she had washed his socks and underwear last night. He took a deep breath to calm himself and sat opposite her.

Jiang Fangfang behaved as if nothing had happened. "I called you here to inform you the city had approved your nomination into the Party Committee. You are a Zhen Wei County Party Committee member. The City's Organization Department will be meeting you later. The Party Committee is the top decision maker of the county, and I hope you will do your best for our County's development."

The Party Committee's appointment is confirmed.

Dong Xuebing was overjoyed. He immediately thanked Jiang Fangfang and the organization.

Jiang Fangfang replied. "One more thing. Secretary Meng is back. You had not met him since you were appointed. You should report to him."

Dong Xuebing paused for a second and nodded. "Yes. I will go after this."

Jiang Fangfang nodded. "Alright, that's all."

Dong Xuebing left Jiang Fangfang's office.

After Dong Xuebing left, Jiang Fangfang called her secretary in. "Xiao Li, come in for a while."

Li Xiaona quickly enters the office. "Mayor."

Jiang Fangfang said. "You don't need to ask for permission the next time Mayor Dong comes and looks for me. Just let him in."

Li Xiaona was surprised. "What if you are busy or have visitors?"

Jiang Fangfang repeated. "You don't need to ask me when he is here."

Li Xiaona nodded. "Yes. I know."

Li Xiaona was confused after she returned to her seat. Dong Xuebing can enter Mayor Jiang's office without any prior permission?! It's OK if it is Chu Peng, as he is Mayor Jiang's trusted aide. What if Mayor Jiang is busy? It is her duty to inform or ask her before letting any visitors enter her office.

Why is she giving Mayor Dong this authority? Is it because of Mayor Dong's background? It cannot be.... Everyone knows Dong Xuebing is here to gain experience and has a strong background. This is Zhen Shui County. Everyone's background is useless, and Mayor Jiang should not be concerned about it. Li Xiaona had worked for Mayor Jiang as her secretary for many years. She had never seen her treating anyone like this. Why is she treating Mayor Dong differently?

Suddenly, Li Xiaona thought of a possibility. She remembered Dong Xuebing's face and got scared. She quickly switched on her PC and looked for Mayor Jiang's dead husband's photographs.

This was when he was thirty....

Twenty-eight....

Li Xiaona found Mayor Jiang's husband's photograph when he was twenty-two and was shocked.

Resemblance....

Dong Xuebing bore a resemblance to Mayor Jiang's husband when the latter was in his early twenties!

Li Xiaona slapped her forehead. She should have thought of it. It's been a while since Mayor Jiang's husband passed away, and she had forgotten about him.

Li Xiaona knew Mayor Jiang had lent her car to Mayor Dong, and this instruction.... No wonder Mayor Jiang treats Mayor Dong differently.

Mayor Dong looks like Mayor Jiang's dead husband.

Or... could it be Mayor Jiang likes this type of man?

Regardless of the reason, Li Xiaona had to keep this to herself. She cannot let anyone know about this.

Chapter 1082: Xiao Dong's first County Party Committee Meeting

Knock, knock.... Dong Xuebing knocked, and a middle-aged man said, "Come in" from the office. He opened the door and closed it behind him.

"Good morning, Secretary Meng."

"Oh, you are?"

"I am Dong Xuebing. I am here to report."

"Ah, you are Mayor Dong. Sit."

Dong Xuebing did not sit with half his butt touching the chair. He sat properly as Secretary Meng, whose rank was not too far apart. Of course, he did not lean on the backrest, as he must show his respect. He took a good look at Secretary Meng. The latter is a middle-aged man with a mustache who looks ordinary. He should be in his fifties, and he has the aura of a leader.

"How is it?" Meng Rui looked at Dong Xuebing. "Have you gotten used to Zhen Shui County?"

Dong Xuebing smiled. "Yes. The environment and people here are nice."

They exchanged pleasantries and did not talk about anything important.

They chatted for a while, and Meng Rui said. "We have a Party Committee Meeting to discuss our County's finances later. Prepare yourself for the meeting."

"Alright."

"I will see you later."

"Ok. I am going back now."

Dong Xuebing thought Meng Rui would try to recruit him and had prepared his answer. He still does not want to join any sides, but Meng Rui did not bring it up. Dong Xuebing could only think of a few possibilities. First, Meng Rui thought nothing of him, and it didn't matter if he joined. Second, Meng Rui is confident he will join his side. After all, Mayor Jiang's influence in the County was no match for him. Third, Meng Rui is in a bad mood or has not managed to borrow money from the Provincial Government. He has no mood to recruit Dong Xuebing. These reasons are all possible, especially the second reason.

Along the corridor.

Dong Xuebing thought for a while and returned to the Mayor's Office. As the County Government's No. 2 and is in charge of the Finance department, he should meet Mayor Jiang before the Party Committee Meeting start. He was assigned to oversee this department yesterday and had not yet checked the County's financial status.

Mayor Office.

Dong Xuebing knocked on the door.

"Please come in." Li Xiaona said.

Dong Xuebing entered and asked. "Is Mayor Jiang in?"

"Mayor Dong." Li Xiaona immediately stood up. "Mayor Jiang is not in her office but will be back soon. You can...." She wanted to ask him to wait outside but remembered Mayor Jiang's instructions earlier. "You can wait in her office."

Dong Xuebing replied. "I will wait here."

"It's fine. You can wait inside." Li Xiaona said.

"Alright." Dong Xuebing turned and entered Mayor Jiang's office.

Li Xiaona looked at Dong Xuebing's back with complicated feelings.

Inside the office.

Dong Xuebing noticed Li Xiaona looking at him weirdly and frowned. Why did Secretary Li treat him differently from earlier?

What is going on?"

Mayor Jiang is also treating me differently. Why is everyone so weird?

Dong Xuebing touched his face and thought to himself. Since when did I become so charming?

One minute....

Two minutes....

Mayor Jiang is not back yet.

It was a last-minute Party Committee meeting, and Mayor Jiang should be busy now.

Dong Xuebing sat in the office and looked around curiously. Suddenly, he noticed a photo frame on the desk, facing Mayor Jiang at an angle. From his position, he could see part of a man's face, which looked familiar. This photo was not on her desk earlier when he visited. Who is this man?

Dong Xuebing got curious and knew this man should be Jiang Fangfang's dead husband. He wants to see how her husband looks, but the office door is open. Mayor Jiang is not around, and he will not close the door. He looked out of the office and could not see Li Xiaona.

No one will know if he looked at the photo.

Dong Xuebing knew this was wrong, but he was too curious. He wants to know what her dead husband looks like.

Dong Xuebing got up and walked over. He took a glance at the photo.

The glass on the photo frame was covered with fingerprints. Jiang Fangfang must have touched the photo countless times. It was a photograph of a couple. The girl is Jiang Fangfang, in her early twenties. She looked fresh from school and did not look as pretty now. The background is a school building, and Dong Xuebing looks at that man. He was stunned. Why is his photo here?

Damn!

What is going on?

Dong Xuebing looked at the photo carefully again, and the man in the photo was not him. He had never met Jiang Fangfang before coming to Zhen Shui County and had never taken pictures with her. The man's nose and some details differ from his, but his eyes and mouth are almost identical. Overall, this man looks 70 to 80% like him.

This man is Mayor Jiang's husband?!

How come he resembles me so much?!

Dong Xuebing immediately understood many things. Why did Mayor Jiang lend him his car instead of others... why did she cook dinner for him and wash his clothes.... He looks like her dead husband, and she treats him as his replacement.

Dong Xuebing immediately got all the answers.

Suddenly, there were sounds outside. Jiang Fangfang seems to be back.

"Mayor." Li Xiaona said. "Mayor Dong is here. He is waiting in your office."

"Ok. I know." Jiang Fangfang walked slowly into the office and closed the door behind her.

Dong Xuebing had returned to his seat when he heard Jiang Fangfang returning, and he stood up to greet her. "Mayor Jiang."

“Are you looking for me?” Jiang Fangfang asked as she walked to her seat.

Dong Xuebing said. “It is regarding our County’s finances.”

Jiang Fangfang stood before her desk and saw the photo frame. She reached out and pushed it facing down. “What is it?” She pulled out a drawer and kept the photo frame.

Dong Xuebing pretended he did not notice it.

A few minutes later.

Dong Xuebing left the office. He was still thinking about that photograph on his way back. He could not describe his feelings or know how to handle them. He found out why Jiang Fangfang treated him so well but still could not understand her. Sigh.... He still needs time to understand her better.

10 am.

The Party Committee meeting is about to start.

This was Dong Xuebing’s first Party Committee meeting. He had not attended such meetings before. He must be prepared.

Small meeting room.

The Party Committee members start to enter the meeting room.

Party Secretary: Meng Rui

Mayor: Jiang Fangfang

Deputy Secretary: Zhang Wanshui

Organization Department Minister: Liao Haiwei

Discipline Inspection Secretary: Pu An

Political and Legal Secretary: Chu Peng

Publicity Department Chief: Cheng Fuguang

United Front Work Department Minister: Jian Xiangrong

Party Committee Office Director: Jiang Hai

Deputy Mayor: Ci Boyang

Of course, Executive Deputy Mayor Dong Xuebing.

Dong Xuebing should be positioned after Chu Peng based on the powers and authorities. Every County is different, and his position should be in the middle. However, he is now in the County and one of the last few committee members.

Dong Xuebing found his seat and drank his tea from his thermos flask.

Some leaders started chatting with Dong Xuebing.

“Mayor Dong...”

“Haha.... Old Jian still has not met Mayor Dong. He is our Province's youngest Deputy Mayor leader.”

“I had not visited the County Party Committee building these days. Nice to meet you, Mayor Dong. I am Jian Xiangrong. I am in charge of the United Front Work Department.”

Dong Xuebing returned their greetings and remembered their names. Yao Cui had told him about the County’s political situation and the relationships between the leaders.

Chapter 1083: County’s Financial status

After all the members got into their seats, Party Secretary Meng Rui and Mayor Jiang arrived. Secretary Meng looked terrible, and he was speaking to Mayor Jiang. She looked emotionless. Dong Xuebing looked at them and felt Jiang Fangfang seemed better at concealing her emotions. Although Secretary Meng has the final say in Zhen Shui County, he could not hide his emotions well.

“Have you given out the documents?” Meng Rui looked at a youth.

The youth, Zhang Feng, replied. “Yes.”

Meng Rui nodded. “Let’s start the meeting.”

Zhang Feng is Secretary Meng’s secretary. He is around twenty-six or seven and is in charge of taking meeting minutes.

The two top leaders got into their seats, and the meeting started.

Dong Xuebing looked at Jiang Fangfang secretly.

Mayor Jiang drank her tea and looked in front.

Secretary Meng should introduce Dong Xuebing as this was his first time attending the meeting. But everyone could tell Secretary Meng was in a bad mood.

Secretary Meng looked at a man in his thirties. “Chief Yan, update us on our current financial status.”

Yan Yizhi.

County Financial Department Chief.

Yan Yizhi is close with Secretary Meng’s faction and is considered one of them.

Dong Xuebing looked at Yan Yizhi and remembered what Yao Cui had told him.

Yan Yizhi attended this meeting but had no power to make any decisions. He replied. “Our funds are running low. The higher had issued some funds to use, and we had used them to repay our debts and make up last year’s deficits. Our account has less than 2 million RMB now.” 2 million RMB must seem like a lot, but it’s nothing to a county. “If we cannot get fresh funding, we might not have enough to pay our staff this month.”

The leaders started to discuss softly among themselves.

Secretary Meng did not say anything. He lit a cigarette and looked at the rest.

Deputy Secretary Zhang Wanshui said. “We cannot pay the staff’s wages?! Do we have other solutions?”

Yan Yizhi replied helplessly. “We tried going to the City Government, but their situation is no better. They don’t have extra funds to support our County. My men visited the City three times, and I went there once. We could not get the funds from them.” The Finance Department Chief is a good position many people would fight for. However, Zhen Shui County is poor, and the Finance Department lacks money. The Chief got to beg for funding from the City Government.

Deputy Mayor Ci Boyang frowned. “The City has always given us funds. Why are they not giving this year?”

Yan Yizhi explained. “The City suffered heavy losses earlier this year because of the snowstorm.”

Everyone was feeling terrible except for Jiang Fangfang.

No one said a word.

One second....

Two seconds....

Three seconds....

Meng Rui snubbed his cigarette and said. “I want to inform everyone another thing. I went to the Provincial Government to seek financial assistance and returned this morning. You might not know about the result. The Provincial Government will not be giving us additional funding this year.”

“Ah?!”

“How can this be?!”

“What.... This....”

Secretary Meng’s words caused everyone to panic.

Their county relied on Government funding every year, and they sometimes needed to borrow money. The Provincial government is not giving them money, and they are in trouble.

No money....

The county cannot do anything now.

United Front Work Department Minister Jian asked. “Secretary Meng, can the Province....”

Meng Rui knocked on the table. “Don’t think of asking the Provincial Government for help. The snowstorm had a great impact on the Province too. Their fund is used in the disaster zones. I called for the meeting to discuss how our county can get money to make up for the shortfalls. If we cannot think of a solution, we cannot last until the end of the month. This cannot happen.”

If the county has no money to run, the higher-ups might blame it on the County leaders.

Meng Rui looked at Dong Xuebing. “Mayor Dong, you are in charge of the Finance Department. What do you suggest?”

Dong Xuebing thought for a while and said. "I can set an example and help speak to our people to take their salaries a few months later. Other than those in financial difficulties, the rest should be fine." He does not mind his salary as his asset is more than 100 million.

Meng Rui nodded. "We will not pay their salaries in time this month. We must let our staff know and get them to understand our situation."

Everyone nodded.

Jiang Fangfang interrupted. "This is only a temporary solution."

Meng Rui nodded. "We got to solve this problem at the root."

Deputy Mayor Ci Boyang said. "Can we organize an Investment fair to get outside funding? We can.... I forgot Mayor Dong is in charge of the Investment Promotion Agency now."

Meng Rui said. "Anyone can make suggestions. This is the worse year for our County, but let's put aside the Investment fair for now. We need funds to organize this fair and are unsure about the results. We held it once, and the funds we received were less than our cost. The investments will also not come in so fast. Does anyone has any other suggestion?"

No one said a word.

It's not easy to solve financial issues.

Secretary Meng waited for a while and looked at Jiang Hai.

Jiang Hai said. "I remember the higher-ups had given our Education Department some funds. Our education department still has money, and we can use it first. We can put back the money when our county has funds."

Jian Xiangrong frowned. "But that fund is for education, and it's not much too."

Jiang Hai continued. "We have no choice now."

Meng Rui sighed. "If we don't have any better ideas, this is our only solution. We will use the education fund to repay the deficits and think of a solution later."

These two men seemed to be putting on an act.

Dong Xuebing could tell Secretary Meng and Jiang Hai had discussed this before the meeting. Secretary Meng did not want to be responsible for touching a specialized fund and got Jiang Hai to suggest it during the meeting.

Everyone kept quiet. After all, Secretary Meng held the most power in the county.

However, Jiang Fangfang put down her cup and said. "I disagree."

Meng Rui looked at Jiang Fangfang. "Then what do you suggest?"

Jiang Fangfang replied calmly. "We cannot touch that education fund. It is used for our county's students and education. Even if the government agencies cannot pay the staff for the next six months, we must protect the children's interest."

Deputy Secretary Zhang Wanshui said. "Mayor Jiang, we got no choice. If we have money, who wants to touch that fund?"

Publicity Department Minister Cheng Fuguang added. “That’s right. This is for the bigger picture.”

Jiang Fangfang replied slowly. “I disagree.”

Dong Xuebing also felt they should not be using that fund. This fund is for the children, and using it for other purposes is against his principles. However, almost everyone at the meeting agrees with Secretary Meng, and he can do nothing.

Meng Rui looked at Jiang Fangfang. “Mayor Fang, how are we going to fill the deficit?”

Jiang Fangfang glanced at Meng Rui. “I think we should ask for funding from the central government. If we can get 10 million from them, it will solve our problems temporarily.”

“10 million?” Meng Rui laughed.

Meng Rui’s people shook their heads. “This is impossible.”

Meng Rui continued. “Mayor Jiang, you are too naïve. The Central Government gave us lots of support. Why would they give us 10 million RMB now?”

Chapter 1084 – I support Mayor Jiang’s suggestion

Jiang Fangfang started a war with Meng’s faction.

Meng Rui’s men were frowning and looking angry, while Mayor Jiang remained emotionless.

One side is angry, and the other side is calm.

It felt like punching a bag of wool.

The Party Committee members had worked together for years and knew Mayor Jiang well. She did not show any reactions whenever they had differences during the meeting. She will insist on her ways regardless of what others say, and nothing will change her mind.

Dong Xuebing was amused and could not tell what Mayor Jiang was thinking. This was the first time he had encountered such an interesting meeting.

“Secretary Meng is right. We must think of the bigger picture.”

“Mayor Jiang, the City, and Provincial Governments could not issue funds to us. It’s impossible to get it from the Central Government.”

“That’s right. You will be wasting your time and transportation costs. This will be a waste of money.”

Asking the Central Government for assistance differs from asking the Province or the City Government. Zhen Shui County falls under the City jurisdiction, and there’s nothing wrong with asking them for funds. It’s OK to ask the Provincial Government if it was Secretary Meng or Mayor Jiang. However, the Central Government is different. The Finance Ministry leaders might not want to meet a County Leader. Their staff will block anyone trying to meet the leaders, and they might not even get to enter the lobby.

Jiang Fangfang was adamant regardless of what others said. “I will not agree to let anyone use the education fund.”

Secretary Meng got frustrated. “Let’s vote.”

Everyone felt Mayor Jiang was asking for trouble. The committee would vote whenever the top two leaders had different opinions, and she would embarrass herself. After all, almost everyone at the meeting is Secretary Meng's man.

Everyone knew the result of the vote, as this was not the first time it had happened.

Dong Xuebing looked at them and considered his vote carefully. Although he agreed with Jiang Fangfang and felt they should not touch the fund reserved for children's education, he could not vote for her. She would get one vote from Chu Peng and herself at most. He would be seen as trying to stand on her side if he voted for her suggestion. Yao Cui was right. He should join Secretary Meng's side or stay neutral. Voting for Jiang Fangfang is asking for trouble.

Secretary Meng and Mayor Jiang did not matter as they would vote for their suggestions.

Deputy Secretary Zhang Wanshui started first. "I agree with Secretary Meng's suggestion."

Secretary Meng has two votes.

County Party Committee Office Department Chief Jiang Hai said. "I support Secretary Meng's suggestion."

Secretary Meng has three votes.

Publicity Department Minister, Cheng Fuguang, said. "I support Secretary Meng."

Secretary Meng has four votes.

Organization Department Minister Liao Haiwei added. "Let's use the education fund to tide us over first."

Secretary Meng has five votes.

Deputy Mayor Ci Biyong said. "I agree with Secretary Meng's suggestion."

Secretary Meng has six votes.

Six votes are the majority for the eleven Committee Members, and there's no point in asking the rest.

However, all the members must express their views during a vote.

United Front Work Department Minister, Jiang Xiangrong, said. "I give up."

Commission for Discipline Inspection Secretary Pu An said. "I will not express my views too."

No one was surprised when both men gave up. They were not on any side and were neutral for the past two years.

Only the Political and Legal Secretary, Public Secretary Bureau Chief, Chu Peng, and Dong Xuebing had not cast their votes.

Dong Xuebing was prepared to give up. He does not want to get involved in the political rivalry.

The result was finalized, and everyone looked at Chu Peng, waiting for him to support Mayor Jiang.

To everyone's surprise, Chu Peng said. "I give up."

Jiang Fangfang looked at Chu Peng.

Chu Peng lowered his head and did not say anything.

Everyone, except for Secretary Meng, was surprised. Secretary Meng seemed to know this would happen and did not appear surprised.

Why?

Why did Chief Chu switch factions suddenly?

Although Chu Peng did not vote for Secretary Meng, it was a signal. Did he fall out with Mayor Jiang, or did Secretary Meng successfully pull him over to his side? Chu Peng had supported Mayor Jiang at every Committee Meeting, and something must have happened.

This action shocked everyone.

The former Executive Deputy Mayor retires, and Chu Peng has become a “neutral” party. This means Mayor Jiang has no supporters now.

Mayor Jiang is alone now....

Secretary Meng has six votes.

Three votes were void.

Mayor Jiang has one vote.

This was too pathetic.

Mayor Jiang will have no say in future Party Committee meetings after losing the former Executive Deputy Mayor and Public Security Bureau Chief’s support. She will be suppressed by Secretary Meng and have no opportunity to fight back.

Everyone knew Jiang Fangfang’s time was up.

Dong Xuebing got mad when he saw this. He does not know why he is mad. Maybe it was because Mayor Jiang was pretty and washed his underwear yesterday. He just felt uncomfortable and angry.

F\*\*k!

What the f\*\*k are these old men doing?!

What’s wrong with Mayor Jiang’s suggestion? The fund is issued by the Education Ministry for children’s education and should not be used for other purposes. You all had ganged up on her, and Chu Peng stopped supporting her.

Jiang Fangfang sat there calmly and did not show any emotions.

F\*\*k you all!

Dong Xuebing announced loudly. “I support Mayor Jiang’s suggestion!”

Chapter 1085: Are you from an actor from crosstalk?!

“I support Mayor Jiang’s suggestion!”

Dong Xuebing said loudly, and all the committee members were shocked. They did not expect him to say this.

Jiang Fangfang looked at Dong Xuebing slowly.

Meng Rui glanced at Dong Xuebing angrily.

Zhang Wanshui and Cheng Fuguang frowned.

Ci Boyang and Jiang Hai's expressions changed.

Dong Xuebing's appointment will not affect the political situation in Zhen Shui County, as Secretary Meng has the final say. That's why he does not need to vote to support Mayor Jiang. Nothing will change regardless of which side he stood, and no one cares. If Dong Xuebing joined the Meng faction, he would have a smoother career and could go further. This is important for him. If he joins Mayor Jiang, he will be suppressed by Secretary Meng and face obstruction at work. Even an idiot will know which side to choose. More than half of the Party Committee are Secretary Meng's supporters, and Jiang Fangfang has no supporters. She is alone. Everyone thought Dong Xuebing would remain neutral or join Secretary Meng's side.

This is the political situation in Zhen Shui County.

Anyone who wants to move up must monitor the situation and not make life difficult for himself.

That's why everyone thought they heard things when Dong Xuebing announced he supported Jiang Fangfang's suggestion. Anyone with some political wisdom would not say this.

Dong Xuebing is seeking his death.

Why is he so stupid?

Dong Xuebing has given everyone a good impression since he comes to Zhen Shui County. No one expected him to make this decision. But none of them knew the 'good' impression was fake. He has political wisdom, but he is too emotional. He does not care about the consequences when he gets mad.

Maintain a neutral position?

After Political and Legal Secretary Chu Peng switched sides, Dong Xuebing gave up on staying neutral.

Dong Xuebing noticed Chu Peng was angry when he left Mayor Jiang's office earlier. He did not know the reason and was not interested to know. He only knows Jiang Fangfang's life will be difficult if Chu Peng becomes neutral or switches to Secretary Meng's side. It would affect her position if the City Government knew she was powerless at the Committee meetings. They would question her ability and might demote her. Chu Peng's action might cause her career, making Dong Xuebing mad. He does not want to see Jiang Fangfang be transferred away or see a group of men suppressing her.

No one wants to support her?!

Fine! I will support her!

Dong Xuebing is simple, and he does things according to his feelings. He also agrees with Jiang Fangfang's suggestion.

One second....

Two seconds....

Everyone looked at Dong Xuebing in disbelief.

Dong Xuebing did not regret it and continued. "Mayor Jiang is right. We must not touch the education fund."

No one would care if it was someone else. After all, the votes were cast, and Secretary Meng had the majority. However, Dong Xuebing was the one casting a vote and was in charge of the Finance Department. Suppose Jiang Fangfang and Dong Xuebing, the County Government's no. 1 and 2, have the same views. In that case, Secretary Meng must reconsider this decision.

Publicity Department Minister Cheng Fuguang frowned. "Mayor Dong, how will you solve our County's finance issue?"

Dong Xuebing replied. "I don't care how we are going to settle it. We must not touch the Education fund."

Cheng Fuguang got mad. "It's easy for you to say that. How is the County Government going to operate without funds? Have you thought about it?"

Dong Xuebing replied. "Minister Cheng, you are a Publicity Department leader and don't need to bear any responsibility for this decision. But I am in charge of the Finance Department. I got to bear this responsibility if the higher question it."

Cheng Fuguang could not retort. "You...."

Deputy Secretary Zhang Wanshui added. "We are not talking about taking responsibility now."

"But I think this is the issue of bearing responsibility now." Dong Xuebing looked at him. "You all can use the education fund if you want, but it should not go through the Finance Department account. I will not sign it."

Jiang Fangfang nodded and looked at Dong Xuebing.

Organization Department Minister Liao Haiwei said. "You must think of the bigger picture, Mayor Dong."

Dong Xuebing looked at him. "Since Minister Liao wants to think of the bigger picture, the education fund can go through your Organization Department account. I will have no objections."

Liao Haiwei got mad too. "How can we go through the Organization Department account?"

Dong Xuebing laughed. "Oh, you disagree too."

Party Committee Office Department Chief, Jiang Hai, looked at Dong Xuebing coldly. "Secretary Meng has said this is a temporary measure."

Dong Xuebing replied. "I know this is temporary, but we must have principles. How can we touch the fund meant for children's education? Even if we can repay the fund in the future, we must not start it. My views on this are in line with Mayor Jiang."

Deputy Mayor Ci Boyang said. "Mayor Dong, the Education Department will not use all the funds now, and we can wait a while. We should use it to settle our problems first."

"Wait?" Dong Xuebing looked at him and said. "Anything can wait, but we cannot wait when it comes to the people. How can let children's education wait? I am sure all of you know about our County's situation. The kids cannot afford books, and some

schools don't have tables. They don't even have money to hire teachers. How are we going to face the children if we use this fund? How are we going to answer the people? Every dollar we spend might be a child's textbook. The money we spend might be a table for a child. Can you all spend your money at ease? I can't. I would rather not get paid for a year and beg the City Finance Department daily for money than to use a single cent meant for the children."

This statement raised the situation to another level.

No one dares to say a word.

United Front Work Department Minister Jian Xiangrong looked at Dong Xuebing and was amused. This new Executive Deputy Mayor is persuasive, and six Party Committee members could not retort him.

Dong Xuebing was fighting against Meng Rui's faction alone.

Everyone was shocked. Voting for Mayor Jiang might not mean Dong Xuebing had chosen to join her faction, but his words now showed his position.

Dong Xuebing had joined Jiang Fangfang's side.

He had joined her side without reservations.

Mayor Dong is prepared to be Mayor Jiang's vanguard. Even the former Executive Deputy Mayor and Chu Peng showed their support by casting votes and had not led the way like Dong Xuebing. This was because they did not want to offend Secretary Meng and his men too much.

What is this guy thinking?

This guy is not playing by the rules.

Meng Rui got frustrated and looked at Dong Xuebing. "You still have not told us how you will solve our financial issue. We all know what you are talking about, but how will this solve it?"

Dong Xuebing replied fearlessly. "I agree with Mayor Jiang's suggestion to go to the Central Government."

Many of the committee members shook their heads. It's easy to say this, but everyone knows it's impossible to succeed.

Meng Rui scoffed. "No one will want to touch the education fund if the Central Government can help us. Fine. Mayor Dong, I am giving you one week. I hope you will not disappoint everyone." He was throwing this problem back at Dong Xuebing.

Asking for money from the Central Government?

Why would they give you money?

Dong Xuebing replied without thinking. "Sure! I will go there personally."

Meng Rui nodded. "I hope you can bring back good news in a week. Let's dismiss."

Everyone looked at Dong Xuebing and left. He had picked a side, and Secretary Meng's men gave him cold shoulders.

The Party Committee Meeting ended.

News of Dong Xuebing going against the Party Committee members and joining Jiang Fangfang's faction spread. The first reaction in everyone's mind was, "Did Mayor Dong go mad?"

The details of the meeting spread among the government.

Political and Legal Secretary had switched sides....

Mayor Dong is going to the Central Government to ask for funding assistance....

Dong Xuebing argued against all the Committee Members....

Everyone broke into a cold sweat, especially when they heard Dong Xuebing arguing with the Committee Members.

More than half of the Party Committee members could not win you in an argument. Are you an actor from crosstalk?

Chapter 1086: Going to the Central Government to ask for money

Dong Xuebing returned to his office at 11 am and received a call from Jiang Fangfang asking him to go to her office.

Upstairs.

Knock... knock....

Mayor Jiang's secretary, Li Xiaona, opened the door and invited Dong Xuebing in politely. "You are here, Mayor Dong. Mayor Jiang is waiting for you inside. Please come in."

"Yes. Thank you." Dong Xuebing replied.

Li Xiaona replied. "Don't mention it. I will prepare tea for you."

Dong Xuebing quickly says. "It's fine. I am not thirsty."

Li Xiaona's attitude towards Dong Xuebing had changed. She heard what happened during the Committee meeting and was furious at Chu Peng for switching sides last minute. Dong Xuebing's support also touched her for Mayor Jiang during the meeting. Also, Dong Xuebing's gift of the gab impressed her. He will make up for Mayor Jiang's flaws for her quiet nature.

Inside the office.

Jiang Fangfang was reading a document at her desk.

"Are you looking for me, Mayor Jiang?" Dong Xuebing walked over.

"Have a seat." Jiang Fangfang put aside the document and looked at Dong Xuebing. "I could not tell you are good with words."

Dong Xuebing smiled. "No.... I was stating facts."

Dong Xuebing was modest and never felt he would lose to anyone in an argument.

Jiang Fangfang paused for a second and said. "I had suggested getting the Central Government's assistance. Sorry for dragging you down."

Dong Xuebing replied quickly. "Don't say that. It's fine. I also felt we should not touch the education fund."

Jiang Fangfang nodded. "I had thought about it. I should go to the Central Government instead."

Dong Xuebing was surprised. "What about your work here if you go?"

Jiang Fangfang replied. "Solving the County's financial issue is our top priority."

Dong Xuebing waved his hand. "No... no.... you cannot leave now. I should go."

Jiang Fangfang looked at Dong Xuebing. "You might not know this. Asking for money from the Central Government differs from going to the Provincial Government. How confident are you?"

Dong Xuebing was touched. He knew Jiang Fangfang wanted to go because she was concerned about him. She does not want him to be embarrassed for failing to get the funding. It would excuse Secretary Meng and his men to suppress him. This is critical for a newly appointed leader. However, Dong Xuebing was confident he would get the fund. He smiled and said. "Don't worry. I will try my best and bring back the fund from the Central Government." He paused for a second and said. "I will not return if I cannot get the money."

Jiang Fangfang replied. "I did not hear your last sentence."

Dong Xuebing asked. "How much does our county need?"

Jiang Fangfang replied without thinking. "We need around 10 million RMB this year. Of course, the Central Government will not give us so much."

Dong Xuebing replied. "Huh? I will try my best."

Ten million RMB is not a small amount.

"What else do you need? You can bring someone along if you want."

"Ok. I will think about it and let you know. I should be leaving tomorrow."

Dong Xuebing only has one week, and he got to hurry. He also did not expect to return to Beijing a few days after arriving here.

Dong Xuebing walked back towards his office after leaving.

Many people gave Dong Xuebing weird looks along the corridor.

Everyone had heard of what happened during the meeting, and no one felt he could get money from the Central Government. They also felt he had picked the wrong side.

Executive Deputy County Mayor office.

Dong Xuebing made a call. "Hello, Xiao Yao?"

Yao Cui replied. "Yes, it's me, Mayor Dong."

"Come to my office." Dong Xuebing hung up and thought about what had happened today.

Someone knocked on the door a while later.

Dong Xuebing said. "Come in."

Yao Cui entered the office and closed the door behind her. "Are you looking for me?"

Dong Xuebing smiled. "There's no one around. You don't need to be so polite. I want you to help me source for someone smart in the Office or Finance Department. I am going to the Central Government and have not decided who to bring. Of course, I might be going with the Finance Department Chief. Recommend some people to me as I don't know anyone here."

Yao Cui recommended some staff to Dong Xuebing and told him about their backgrounds briefly.

Dong Xuebing nodded as he listened.

Yao Cui drank from a teacup on the desk after she finished and said unhappily. "Xuebing, I wanted to say this since I entered the office."

Dong Xuebing laughed. "What is it?"

Yao Cui smacked her lips. "Why did you decide to join Mayor Jiang's side? Didn't I tell you about our County's situation? How are you going to do any work in the future?"

Dong Xuebing smiled. "Anything else?"

"Yes. I still have a lot to say." Yao Cui continued. "You are too emotional, Xuebing. I know I should not say this as your secretary. But I must say it as your friend."

A few minutes passed.

Yao Cui finished what she had to say.

Dong Xuebing laughed. "Haha.... Can you listen to me now? What you said is correct, but we must not follow the wind as public servants. I know Secretary Meng is powerful, but his political views are not in line with mine. Mayor Jiang's political views are similar to mine, and I feel more at ease joining her side. I want to do things for people, and I don't want to go against my heart to make my life easier. Isn't this enough?"

Yao Cui kept quiet. "Xuebing...."

"Huh? What is it?" Dong Xuebing looked at Yao Cui.

Yao Cui sighed. "I finally understand why you can become an Executive Deputy Mayor at your age. You have changed a lot since last time."

Chapter 1087: Returning to Beijing

Dong Xuebing did not bring any luggage. He only brought his work bag to work. He will be flying back to Beijing later today.

County Party Committee Building.

"Mayor Dong."

"Good morning, Mayor Dong."

A few staff greeted Dong Xuebing.

Dong Xuebing returned their greetings and continued to the County Government Building.

Today was different from yesterday. Fewer staff greeted Dong Xuebing, and the ones who greeted him had done it for the sake of doing it. The staff members and leaders from the County Party Committee were not as friendly as yesterday. Dong Xuebing could feel it, and this was because of his actions at the Committee meeting yesterday. He did not care, and he was prepared after he decided to support Jiang Fangfang yesterday.

Inside the office.

Yao Cui was preparing tea in a thermos flask.

Dong Xuebing said. "Cui Er, you don't need to brew tea. I will be flying off later in the morning." He looked at the time. "I am leaving in two hours. I must go to a nearby city to catch a flight or be late."

Yao Cui ignored him and stood there without saying a word.

Dong Xuebing asked. "What's wrong?"

Yao Cui grumbled. "Who asked you not to bring me along."

Dong Xuebing explained. "I want to bring you along, but you got work to do here."

Yao Cui retorted. "I am your secretary. What work do I have after you leave?"

Dong Xuebing replied. "The departments I oversee will look for you when I am not around. You can also contact me anything when something happens here. Who is going to coordinate the work here if we are not around? Didn't you say asking for money from the Central Government is tough?"

Yao Cui sighed. "I want to follow because I know it will be tough. You had helped me a lot, and I had not done anything to repay you. I felt bad."

"It's alright."

"You will be bringing two people with you on this trip. Is it fine?"

"It does not matter."

"Alright. I will stay and coordinate with you."

"Yes. You can decide on all the minor issues. Just say it's my order."

"Haha.... You are giving me lots of power."

"No. Secretary has this power."

"Alright. I will decide for you on minor issues and consult you if anything major happens."

"Ok. Haha.... I will bring some local delicacies from Beijing. I think it's been a while since you ate Beijing roast duck."

"Sure. I am looking forward to it."

Dong Xuebing packed his bag and left his office.

Outside.

An old Geely was parked outside, and everyone was waiting for Dong Xuebing.

The County Government driver will send Dong Xuebing to the airport, and a middle-aged woman will sit in the front passenger seat. Dong Xuebing had met her yesterday. She is Chen Xiaomei, and she has a relative working in Beijing Finance Department. That's why Dong Xuebing brought her along. Her relative is only a staff member in the Finance Department, but it will be helpful to Dong Xuebing. The Finance Department Chief, Yan Yizhi, sat in the rear passenger seat. They are going to the Central Government to seek funding, and he must be around.

Everyone got out of the car when Dong Xuebing appeared.

"Mayor Dong."

"Mayor Dong."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "Let's go."

"Ok." Yan Yizhi opened the door for Dong Xuebing, but he did it unwillingly. Dong Xuebing knows he is on Secretary Meng's side and controls the County's finances. He would consult Secretary Meng if anyone, including Jiang Fangfang, needed money from the finance department.

Dong Xuebing looked at him and entered the car.

Yan Yizhi sat beside Dong Xuebing.

Chen Xiaomei did not say anything. She is Yan Yizhi's trusted aide and is also on Secretary Meng's side. They didn't dare to show a bad attitude towards Dong Xuebing, but they were not happy to go with him. Everything had changed.

The car moved off.

Ten minutes....

Thirty minutes....

One hour....

No one said a word in the car, and they arrived at the airport.

No big cities were near Zhen Shui County, and the airport was tiny.

Dong Xuebing got out of the car and turned. "Thank you, Old Li."

Driver Old Li quickly replies. "Don't mention it. I am going back now."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "Drive safely."

Old Li quickly thanked Dong Xuebing and left after they entered the airport. He was polite to Dong Xuebing because the latter was still a leader regardless of which side he was on. Moreover, Dong Xuebing treated everyone with respect. Not every leader will wish their drivers to drive safely after they get out of the car.

Dong Xuebing will treat everyone with respect as long as they respect him.

Yan Yizhi looked at Dong Xuebing. He saw Dong Xuebing arguing with six Party Committee members yesterday and thought he was arrogant. He did not expect Dong Xuebing to speak to a driver politely. He was different from yesterday.

Chapter 1088: Dong Xuebing's influence

The flight was bumpy.

Dong Xuebing was not used to flying on a small plane. He was used to first-class or business-class cabins. Although Zhen Shui County is far from Beijing, they can reach it in a few hours by plane. He knew he got to get used to it, as the County was paying for their flight tickets. The planes here do not have first-class cabins either, and he got to adapt.

One hour....

Three hours....

The plane touched down in Beijing.

Dong Xuebing, Yan Yizhi, and Chen Xiaomei entered the airport lobby.

Dong Xuebing left for the toilet when they were at the airport.

Dong Xuebing called Xie Huilan. "Hello, Huilan. It's me."

"I know it's you. Don't tell me you have gotten into trouble again. Hahaha...." Xie Huilan laughed.

Dong Xuebing was speechless. "What are you talking about? I am in Beijing now for work. I had touched down and might be staying here for a few days. Are you free to visit me?"

Xie Huilan laughed. "Why can't you come and visit me?"

"I have no time. I also don't have a car, and I had brought some people with me."

"So, you are asking a pregnant woman to travel so far to visit you?!"

"Anyway, I am in Beijing. You can come if you miss me. Don't come if you don't miss me."

"Huh? You are getting mad at me?! You had just left last week."

Dong Xuebing was speechless and remembered he had left Beijing not long ago. "Fine. Don't come and visit me. How are you?"

"Good. I went for a body checkup recently, and everything is good."

"Great. How is mum?"

"Mum is staying with me, taking care of me and my meals. It is making me feel bad. Oh, can you tell her not to worry about me? I am fine alone. Don't let her tire herself out."

"You are pregnant. Haha.... You are our family's treasure now."

“Shut up. I can take care of myself. Remember to speak to Mum. Alright. I got to attend a meeting. Bye.”

“Ok. Go and do your work.”

“Come back when you are free.”

“I might not have the time to do that. Let’s talk about it another time.”

Dong Xuebing walked out of the toilet after hanging up and brought Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei out of the airport.

They waited for a taxi at the taxi stand.

They got into a taxi a while later.

Dong Xuebing looked at them and asked. “It’s almost dinner time. What do you all want to eat?”

Yan Yizhi replied. “It’s fine. I will listen to you.”

Chen Xiaomei did not dare to have any requests. “I am fine with anything.”

Dong Xuebing replied. “Let’s have dinner first before we look for a hotel. I think the Finance Department staff had gone home. We will go there tomorrow.”

“Let’s eat something simple.”

Although both of them did not say anything, they looked listless.

Dong Xuebing knew both of them were unwilling to come.

The leaders had ordered Chen Xiaomei to visit Beijing several times because of her relative working in the Finance Department. Her relative and she were frustrated because her relative is a staff member. She could not make any decisions, and Chen Xiaomei had to ask her for favors every time. She knew they would not get any money from the Central Government this time, and they would be wasting their time. Because of the County’s financial situation, they would stay in the worst hotel and eat at the worst restaurant.

Dong Xuebing shook his head and said to the driver. “Please send us to Wang Fu Restaurant.”

The driver replied. “Sure!”

Chen Xiaomei was shocked. “Wang Fu Restaurant?!”

Yan Yizhi was also surprised. “Mayor Dong.... We.... We are on a budget, and it is difficult to reimburse anything above 500 RMB.”

Dong Xuebing smiled. “It’s fine. I will treat you all.”

Yan Yizhi quickly replied. “How can we let you treat us to dinner?”

Dong Xuebing replied. “I must be a good host when we are in Beijing.”

Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei’s salaries were very low compared to Beijing civil servants. The County rarely pay them on time, and they are not well off. They could not even afford some better restaurants, let alone Wang Fu Restaurant. The cost of living in Beijing is much higher than in Zhen Shui County, and they were shocked with they heard they would be having dinner at Wang Fu

Restaurant. A dinner at Wang Fu Restaurant is nothing to Dong Xuebing, and he can afford to dine there every day.

Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei do not know about Dong Xuebing's assets.

Wang Fu Jing.

Wang Fu Restaurant.

Chen Xiaomei said. "Mayor Dong.... Let's forget it."

Yan Yizhi does not want Dong Xuebing to spend lavishly. "That restaurant over that is not bad."

"Alright. Let's go. I said I will be treating you all to dinner." Dong Xuebing said and entered the restaurant.

Inside the restaurant.

Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei looked around the restaurant curiously.

Dong Xuebing got a private room and took the menu from the waitress. He ordered a few dishes. He had not eaten anything good in Zhen Shui County besides the meal Mayor Jiang prepared. He wanted to eat something good.

The menu was passed to Yan Yizhi.

Yan Yizhi looked at the menu and was speechless by the prices. The cheapest dish is equivalent to a feast at another restaurant, and one of the dishes Dong Xuebing ordered costs 9,999 RMB. It was several times his monthly salary, and he did not dare to order any more food. "Mayor Dong.... I think it's enough."

Dong Xuebing replied. "The portion here is small and not enough for us. Just order a few more dishes."

"It's fine." Yan Yizhi said.

Dong Xuebing turned to Chen Xiaomei. "Chief Chen, order something."

Yan Yizhi passed the menu to Chen Xiaomei. "Chief Chen."

Chen Xiaomei's face changed when she saw the menu. She flipped the pages and dared not order anything. But she saw Dong Xuebing looking at her and ordering a cheaper dish. "Err.... I will order a Sautéed Sweet Corn with Pine Nuts."

Dong Xuebing asked. "What else?"

Chen Xiaomei quickly replied. "That's all. This is enough."

Dong Xuebing turned to the waitress. "Alright. Let's have these first. We will order if it is not enough."

The food was served quickly, and they started eating. Dong Xuebing had not eaten anything so delicious for over a week.

Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei ate cautiously at first, and they slowly opened up after seeing Dong Xuebing eating heartily.

“Oh, let’s have some drinks.” Dong Xuebing said.

Yan Yizhi replied. “I will listen to you.”

“Alright.” Dong Xuebing called the waitress and ordered a bottle of Maotai.

After dinner.

Dong Xuebing did not bring so much cash and followed the waitress out to pay.

Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei knew this meal cost tens of thousands of RMB, and they worried that Dong Xuebing could not afford it.

Outside of the private room.

Dong Xuebing asked the waitress. “Don’t you all have POS machines for credit card payments? Why do I need to pay at the counter?”

Before the waitress could answer, a middle-aged man walked over with a smile. Dong Xuebing had not met him before.

“Mr. Dong.” That man shook Dong Xuebing’s hand. “I am Wang Fu Restaurant’s, Assistant Manager. Our manager is not in Beijing, but he heard your wife is pregnant. He asked me to congratulate you, and this meal is on him. He had settled the bill.”

Dong Xuebing smiled. “How do you know it’s me?”

That man replied. “Our floor manager recognized you when you entered.”

Dong Xuebing recalled. He did meet someone familiar when he entered the restaurant. He had visited Wang Fu restaurant several times and was not surprised the staff recognized him.

Dong Xuebing thanked the assistant manager. “Thank you for the meal. Let your General Manager know that Huilan and I will treat him to dinner again.”

That middle-aged man replied. “Sure. I will let him know.”

Dong Xuebing added. “I will pay for our rooms. Give us three rooms. Hmm.... I will book it for five days and let you know if we need to extend our stay.”

“Sure. Give us a few minutes. I will arrange it now.”

“Ok. Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it.”

Chapter 1089: Second Day’s Itinerary

Beijing, Wang Fu Restaurant.

Dong Xuebing returned to the private room and brought Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei into the elevator without saying anything.

Yan Yizhi asked curiously. “Mayor Dong, we are....”

Dong Xuebing replied. “The guesthouse in Beijing is too far. We will stay here.”

Yan Yizhi was shocked. “This place is too expensive. I think we should....”

Dong Xuebing replied nonchalantly. "It's fine. I booked the rooms for five days and had paid."

Chen Xiaomei said. "Mayor Dong, we... we should not let you pay."

"It's fine. I paid for the rooms. Let's go." Dong Xuebing did not book the rooms as they were Secretary Meng's faction. He does not need to treat them so well. However, he was tired from the flight and did not want to stay in a cheap hotel or the arranged guesthouse. Anyway, the rooms cost nothing to him.

Upstairs.

Along the corridor.

The elevator reached their floors, and they stepped out.

A front desk supervisor and two staff were waiting for them. They smiled at Dong Xuebing. "You must be Mr. Dong. We have prepared the rooms for you. This way, please."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "Thank you."

"Don't mention it." The supervisor walked in front.

Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei had never stayed in Wang Fu Restaurant and thought all guests would receive the same service. No wonder this is a five stars restaurant and hotel, which is so expensive.

They reached their room.

The supervisor pointed to the rooms beside her. "It's these three rooms, Mr. Dong."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "Alright. Thank you. Sorry to trouble you."

The supervisor quickly reply. "It's my job. Have a good rest. We are going back to work. Please call the front desk if you need anything. My surname is Li, and I am the lobby supervisor. Let the front desk know if you need me. I will be here within five minutes."

Dong Xuebing thanked her again. "Thank you."

The supervisor left with her staff.

Chen Xiaomei said. "The service here is excellent."

Yan Yizhi replied. "This is a five-star hotel. Of course, the service is good."

Dong Xuebing did not say anything. He knows the service was good because he is the Xie Family's son-in-law.

"Let's go." Dong Xuebing replied. "We will have a short meeting in my room first."

Inside the elevator.

A staff asked curiously. "Who are those people, Sister Li?"

The supervisor frowned. "Stop asking."

The staff scratched his head and did not continue.

They were curious. They had hosted government leaders before but had never seen their General Manager and Assistant Manager receiving them personally. These people were only staying in standard rooms. Only leaders from the Central Government received such treatment in the past.

That Mr. Dong looks like he is in his mid-twenties and does not look like a leader of the Central Government.

The supervisor said softly. "Be alert, especially towards that, Mr. Dong. Give them whatever they want, and don't worry about the bills. Don't ever ask them for money and put everything on the tab. He is someone we cannot offend. Even our Managers got to be cautious around him. Do you think he is a nobody?"

"I remember."

"Yes, Sister Li."

"Ok. Don't ask anything in the future. I am saying these for your good. You might offend others unknowingly."

"We understand."

Inside the hotel room.

Wang Fu's standard room is bigger than other hotels' rooms. This was Dong Xuebing's first time staying there, and he looked around curiously.

"Sit." Dong Xuebing said.

There was a sofa in the room, and Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei sat there.

Dong Xuebing sat on a chair and said. "We will be going to the Finance Department to ask for funding tomorrow. How did our County do this in the past?"

Yan Yizhi looked at Chen Xiaomei and said. "We would first look for Chief Chen's relative and ask him to bring us into the Finance Department. After that, we would look for the leader. However, we seldom meet the leader and can only fix an appointment to meet him. We might have to wait for a few days before we get to meet him. We might not even get to see him if we are unlucky. After all, we are not going through the proper procedures to request funding, and it's up to the leader's mood."

Dong Xuebing asked. "How many times have we come to ask for assistance?"

Yan Yizhi replied. "We came almost every year. I had come in the previous two years, but..." He paused for a second. "We did meet the leader but had never succeeded in getting money. They do not care about us, and we can do nothing about it."

Dong Xuebing frowned. "We did not even get a cent from them?"

Yan Yizhi nodded. "Yes."

"This is tough." Dong Xuebing thought for a while and said. "We will try your usual methods tomorrow."

Yan Yizhi turned to Chen Xiaomei.

Dong Xuebing said. "We got to trouble you, Chief Chen."

Chen Xiaomei replied. "It's fine. I... I will contact my cousin later. I told him before we came and he would work tomorrow. It should not be a problem."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "Alright. It's settled. Just try your best. We will think of something else if it doesn't work out. Have a good rest, and we will go to the Finance Department tomorrow morning. Let's meet at the lobby tomorrow at nine."

Yan Yizhi stood up. "Ok. We will go back to our rooms now."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "Rest early today."

Chen Xiaomei said. "Thank you for the meal, Mayor Dong."

Dong Xuebing smiled and waved his hand. "Don't mention it. Call me if you need anything. Do you all have my number?"

"Yes."

"Good. Good night."

"Good night to you."

They left.

Chapter 1090: Finding someone

Dong Xuebing looked at the moon from Wang Fu's standard room and smiled. He lit a cigarette and smoked by the window. He felt relaxed in the city he grew up.

Dong Xuebing finished a cigarette and closed the windows. He lay on the bed and called Xie Huilan's younger cousin, Xie Jing.

Ring... ring... ring....

"Hello, Xiao Jing." Dong Xuebing said.

Xie Jing replied. "Bro-in-law.... Haha.... What do you need from me?"

Dong Xuebing smiled. "Nothing. How are you and your boyfriend? Have you met him recently?"

Xie Jing cleared her throat. "I met him once. Sun Kai is doing well at the school you recommended and was promoted to team leader. He asked me to thank you."

"It's nothing. I did not do much either."

"Sun Kai would be jobless if it wasn't for you."

"No.... Xiao Sun is capable and honest. He will find a way out without me."

"Which organization in Beijing will dare to hire him after what my parents say?"

"Are your parents still angry?"

"Yes, and I think...."

"Huh?"

Xie Jing paused for a few seconds and said. "They seemed to know you had arranged a job for Sun Kai at Lu An City. Sorry, Brother Dong. I dragged you into this."

Dong Xuebing smiled. "They will know eventually. My mother is in Lu An City, and Sun Kai was transferred there. Everyone will know I am behind it. It's fine." He did not think much about it as he was prepared. He knew he could not hide it and should not interfere with Xie Jing's family affairs. However, he could not reject her pleas after she cried.

"Oh, where are your parents?" Dong Xuebing asked.

Xie Jing replied. "My Mum is watching the news, and my dad is outstation."

Dong Xuebing asked. "He is outstation? When will he be back?"

Xie Jing said. "I am not sure. I think he will be back the day after tomorrow. Are you looking for my Dad?"

"Ah, nothing. I am just asking." Dong Xuebing replied. "It's fine. Rest early and take care of yourself."

Xie Guoliang is outstation and will be back the day after tomorrow.

Dong Xuebing hung up the call without asking Xie Jing too much. He also did not tell her he was in Beijing and would go to the Finance Department to ask for money. Her father, Xie Guoliang, is the First Deputy Minister of the Finance Ministry, and Dong Xuebing should look for him. But he is not around and feels awkward calling him because of Xie Jing's boyfriend incident. He still does not know if Xie Jing's parents are angry with him. Sigh....

What should I do tomorrow?

Let's try using the usual method first.

Dong Xuebing must not fail this mission. After getting appointed, this is his first task, and he must prove himself.

10 million RMB....

I must get it at all costs.

Next door.

Yan Yizhi and Chen Xiaomei entered a room and sat on the sofa.

Compared to Dong Xuebing's positivity, they seemed to be down.

Chen Xiaomei asked. "Chief Yan, will we support Mayor Dong in getting the fund?"

Yan Yizhi glanced at her and said. "What are you saying? What do you mean by going to support him?"

Chen Xiaomei asked cautiously. "I am afraid Secretary Meng might get mad with us. Mayor Dong had argued with him and offended other Committee members. I think Secretary Meng does not want Mayor Dong to succeed. Should we...." They had worked together for many years and did not hide anything from each other. They were both on Secretary Meng's side and could discuss openly. Chen Xiaomei could not tell what the higher-ups were thinking and wondered if they should create some problems for Dong Xuebing. If Dong Xuebing could not get the fund, Secretary Meng could

continue suppressing Mayor Jiang and her people. She felt this was what Secretary Meng wanted. However, she was unsure if she guessed his intentions correctly and came to discuss them with Yan Yizhi.

Yan Yizhi waved his hand. "We should do what we are supposed to do."

Chen Xiaomei nodded and waited for him to continue.

Yan Yizhi continued. "But we have many National-level impoverished counties in our country. The Central Government will not give out funds whenever they ask for assistance. Did you forget what happened when we came to the Central Government in the past few years? They ignored us completely, and Secretary Meng only gave Mayor Dong one week. Even Mayor Jiang might not get a single cent in a month."

Chen Xiaomei nodded. "That's right."

Yan Yizhi continued. "We are here as a formality and do whatever Mayor Dong asked us to do. It has nothing to do with us if we can get the fund. After all, it was Mayor Jiang and Mayor Dong who suggested this. They will be the ones getting embarrassed."

Chen Xiaomei kept quiet for a few seconds and said. "I understand."

However, Yan Yizhi wished they could get the fund. He is the Finance Department Chief, and his authority will increase if his department has funds. He does not want to be bugged by other departments for funds or go to the City and Provincial Governments to beg for money. He knows it is almost impossible for the Central Government to issue funds to them after the Provincial Government rejected Secretary Meng. He sighed. Working in Zhen Shui County was tough, and he had had enough of it. He would ask for a transfer to another place if he had connections. Even a Finance Department Deputy Chief in another County or District holds more power than Zhen Shui County Finance Department Chief.

Ring... ring... ring....

Chen Xiaomei looked at her phone. "It's my cousin." She answered. "Hello?"

A middle-aged man said. "Xiao Mei, have you all arrived in Beijing?"

Chen Xiaomei replied. "Yes. We arrived a few hours ago."

"Are you all coming to ask for funds again?" Chen Xiaomei's cousin grumbled. "I told you many times it will not work even if you come every month. The higher-ups will not issue funds, and the Finance Ministry leaders cannot help you. It might be possible if one of the Finance Ministry's Deputy Ministers agrees. But I had worked here for so many years and had only met them a few times."

Chen Xiaomei said. "I understand. Sorry to trouble you, Brother. But the County Party Secretary ordered us to come, and we had no choice."

"Just don't harbor any hopes."

"I know. We will not put you in a difficult position."

"Good that you all are prepared. When are you all coming?"

“We should be going tomorrow morning.”

“Ok. Call me when you all are at the entrance. I will bring you all in. But I cannot promise that the leaders will meet you all. I am only a Deputy Chief here and don't know if the leaders want to help. After all, I was promoted to Deputy Section Chief not long ago.”

Chen Xiaomei was surprised. “You are a Deputy Section Chief now?!”

“Yes. A Deputy Chief retired recently, and I took over his position. Sigh.... It is nothing to be proud of, and you had become a Deputy Section Chief earlier than me.”

Chen Xiaomei replied. “It's different. You are a Deputy Chief of a department in the Central Government, and I am Deputy Chief in an impoverished grassroots county.”

“Alright, stop flattering me. Haha.... Come early tomorrow, and I will try to arrange a meeting with the leaders.”

“Sure. Thank you.”

“Ok. I still got something on. Bye.”

Chen Xiaomei used to be close with her cousin, but she had to trouble him every year when they came to the Finance Ministry. Her cousin was frustrated, but he still tried to help because of their relationship. Otherwise, they might not even get to enter the compound. All cars and people got to register before entering.

Chen Xiaomei looked at Yan Yizhi after hanging up. “Chief Yan.”

Yan Yizhi had overheard Chen Xiaomei's conversation with her cousin. “Your cousin is a Deputy Chief now, and we might succeed this time. Hmm.... Let me think.”

Chen Xiaomei asked. “Should I ask my cousin to help or....”

Yan Yizhi clenched his teeth and said. “I think we should trouble him and ask him to help us arrange the meeting with the leaders. It would be great if we could get the funds. Mayor Dong and Secretary Meng's rivalry has nothing to do with us. I only know our Finance Department needs money.”

Chen Xiaomei nodded.