

PAW 1571

Chapter 1571: Secretary's Husband's Charm

Morning.

Clear and refreshing.

City Committee Office Building.

Dong Xuebing was escorted into the lobby by a group of people, and he also held himself a bit more upright, appearing somewhat reserved. Not that he looked down on anyone, but his wife was a local leader, the Secretary of the City Committee. As her husband, Dong Xuebing naturally needed to uphold her dignity and face. Acting the same as before wouldn't be appropriate, so he needed to carry himself differently. Dong Xuebing had been in the system for three years now and had learned a lot, becoming accustomed to these fluctuations in identity.

Inside the building.

A female staff member also heard the Secretary's words outside and was extremely surprised. Seeing Dong Xuebing enter the lobby, she hurriedly greeted him.

"Mr. Dong."

"Yes."

"Please follow me. I'll show you the way."

"Heh heh, alright, thank you."

"Not at all, please this way."

The female staff member quickly took two steps to press the elevator button, then politely turned to Dong Xuebing, her face smiling gently.

There were also a few other staff members nearby who heard the conversation outside. But by the time they came to their senses, someone had already gone to receive him. They hesitated momentarily, feeling a bit regretful that they missed an opportunity, and glanced somewhat enviously at the female staff member who escorted Dong Xuebing. After all, this was the husband of the Secretary of the City Committee, almost no different from the Secretary herself. If they could leave an impression on him and casually inform the Secretary later, perhaps a promotion would come their way. So, who wouldn't want to interact more with leaders and their family members?

Ding.

The elevator arrived.

The female staff member hurriedly let Dong Xuebing go in first. As they entered, she pressed the button for the top floor.

The door closed.

The female staff member felt a bit nervous and hesitated for a moment, but she mustered up the courage to speak: "Mr. Dong, provincial leaders will be inspecting today and arriving soon. Secretary Xie's office may be empty. Do you need anything or your usual tea? I can prepare it for you."

Dong Xuebing smiled, "Thank you, but don't bother."

The female staff member wanted to say something, but didn't know what to say, her face turning slightly red.

Dong Xuebing found her amusing and asked, "I just arrived yesterday by plane. The environment here seems nice. Your work here must be quite comfortable with mountains and water, right?"

The female staff member immediately smiled, "Yes, the air here is good, suitable for living." After a pause, she asked, "Are you staying here permanently this time?"

Dong Xuebing replied, "Not permanently. I have a study exchange opportunity in another place in a few days. I'll be going with Hui Lan. We'll be back after that."

After exchanging a few casual words, the elevator arrived.

With a ding, the door opened, and the two of them walked out.

"That's Secretary Xie's office over there," the female staff member said politely. "Shall I pour you a cup of tea?"

Dong Xuebing glanced around the corridor. It was quiet and empty. He nodded, "Sure, thanks."

There was a door with a sign indicating the Secretary's office. After Dong Xuebing pushed it open, he sat on the sofa for guests in his wife's office. The room was spacious, with good lighting, exuding a pleasant atmosphere. The female staff member followed in, bustling about to prepare tea, and even found some fruits and melon seeds from somewhere. A few minutes later, Dong Xuebing asked the female staff member to leave, and he sat there sipping his tea.

But before his seat even warmed up...

Knock, knock, a gentle knocking sounded.

"Please come in."

"Mr. Dong, hello."

"Who are you?"

"I'm Wang Liang from the City Committee Office. Just call me Xiao Wang." He was a man in his thirties, holding a fruit plate that looked very beautiful. The watermelon slices were cut artistically, similar to those fruit plates in kt. He placed the fruit plate on the coffee table before Dong Xuebing and said, "Please help yourself. The provincial leaders will arrive soon, and Secretary Xie may not return shortly. Let me know if you need anything, and I'll be at your service."

Dong Xuebing smiled, "Thank you."

"You're too polite, it's my duty."

Seeing that Dong Xuebing didn't say anything further, Wang Liang took the initiative to leave, gently closing the door behind him.

Just as he left, someone else arrived.

Hearing the knock on the door, Dong Xuebing put down the toothpick he had just used to eat the watermelon, chewed and swallowed it, then looked up and said, "Please come in."

Outside was a middle-aged woman who was not yet forty. She was quite attractive, with the typical delicate and gentle appearance of someone from the South.

The beautiful woman blinked skeptically after entering, "Excuse me, is Secretary Xie here?"

Dong Xuebing gestured downstairs, "She's in the courtyard, I suppose."

"You must be Secretary Xie's husband." The beautiful woman quickly smiled, "Hello, I'm Gao Jie from the Propaganda Department, mainly responsible for the television station."

Dong Xuebing smiled, "Hello, Sister Gao."

"I can't afford to be called Sister." Gao Jie said quickly, "Just call me Old Gao."

Dong Xuebing said, "If you need to see Hui Lan about something, you might have to wait a bit. I don't think she'll have time right now with the leaders coming to inspect."

"I need to consult Secretary Xie about something." After thinking momentarily, Gao Jie looked at the chair opposite the sofa, "Can I wait here for a while?"

"Of course."

"Thank you."

"This isn't even my office, heh, no need to thank me."

Gao Jie sat opposite Dong Xuebing. She was probably a cadre herself and wasn't reserved. "Mr. Dong, can I have a cup of tea?"

"Please." Dong Xuebing made a gesture of invitation.

Gao Jie poured him a cup first, then poured herself one.

Dong Xuebing understood the situation. Since she knew his surname was Dong, she probably heard Hui Lan's words just now and knew that Hui Lan was directing tasks in the courtyard, waiting to receive the provincial leaders. However, Gao Jie still came knocking, obviously not to see Hui Lan but to see him, Dong Xuebing.

"You just arrived here, right? Are you getting used to it? The air here is humid, which might not suit people from the north." Gao Jie took the initiative to start a conversation, chatting with Dong Xuebing.

Idle chatter is still chatter.

Having a beautiful woman to chat with was also enjoyable.

Dong Xuebing chatted with her intermittently, occasionally laughing.

Dong Xuebing knew the intentions of these people very well. They weren't here for him but for Hui Lan, the Secretary of the City Committee. They wanted to establish contact with Hui Lan through him, hence the polite treatment. Dong Xuebing couldn't help but smile wryly. With his wife's rise to power, he was treated as a hotcake. In the past, no one paid him this much attention. During his previous appointments, people either feared him or kept their distance when they saw him from afar. It was pretty amusing to think about.

Chapter 1572: Inspection is here

In the blink of an eye, it was already past ten o'clock. His wife still hadn't returned inside the secretary's office, so Dong Xuebing continued chatting with Sister Gao from the Propaganda Department while enjoying tea and fruit.

"You're from Beijing, right?" Sister Gao smiled.

"Yeah, you can tell?" Dong Xuebing nodded.

"I can tell. Your accent is heavier than Secretary Xie's. Um, forgive me for being forward, where in Beijing are you from?" Sister Gao asked more questions as they became more familiar with each other, or perhaps because Dong Xuebing seemed approachable. It wasn't just her; many people were curious about the husband of the City Committee Secretary.

Dong Xuebing smiled, "I'm from Beijing too, and I'm also a civil servant."

Sister Gao glanced at him and said, "You seem like a leader."

Dong Xuebing waved his hand, "I'm no match for my wife, and you're the first to say that to me. Heh, I'm not a leader."

"Not a leader? Is your rank not high?" Sister Gao blinked but said nothing further.

Dong Xuebing indeed held a nominal position without any leadership responsibilities. Those who knew him understood that he didn't have the demeanor of a leader. Even if he occasionally showed some leadership posture, it was probably him putting on a show for the sake of his identity. For example, because of his status, he had to maintain a certain level of authority to save face for his wife. Dong Xuebing wasn't one to swell with pride. Even if he became arrogant after a promotion, he would quickly rein himself in. This was his attitude towards life. He would live and act the same way, whether poor or rich, with a high or low rank. He believed it had nothing to do with rank but everything to do with mindset.

Having money meant dining at Western restaurants every day. Having a high rank meant carrying oneself with authority every day. Who dictated that? Dong Xuebing didn't care about these rules. People who came from humble backgrounds and made it big in the capital often had a natural sense of arrogance, which was why people from Beijing tended to be boastful and arrogant. They said what they wanted, did what they pleased, and didn't care about others' opinions.

Dong Xuebing was one of these people. At certain times, he didn't care much about the opinions of irrelevant people. He lived life on his terms.

As the teapot was nearly empty, a few more minutes passed. Dong Xuebing looked at the clock and couldn't help but stand up with his teacup. Walking to the window and glancing downstairs, he could see the courtyard where some staff had already raised banners to welcome the provincial leaders. More than twenty people, men and women, were waiting there. Xie Huilan and several city leaders were facing forward near the entrance. It seemed that the leaders hadn't arrived yet, and they had been waiting for nearly an hour. Seeing this, Dong Xuebing couldn't help but furrow his brows. He felt sorry for Xie Huilan's health. She had just given birth not long ago, and even though Dong Xuebing hadn't been too demanding yesterday evening, he was afraid of pushing her too hard. Now, Xie Huilan had been standing outside for most of the morning, and with the sun getting stronger, Dong Xuebing couldn't help but worry about her.

"They still haven't arrived." Dong Xuebing's expression was grim.

Sister Gao was surprised, "The leaders should have arrived by now."

Dong Xuebing turned back, "What time did they say?"

Sister Gao said, "The Propaganda Department received the news around nine o'clock. It shouldn't be more than ten or twenty minutes even if they were late. Oh, it's already past ten."

"They were notified in advance."

"Yeah, we were notified yesterday. The provincial office also called this morning. The call was made to the City office, so there shouldn't be any mistake," Sister Gao said as she joined Dong Xuebing in looking out the window. Indeed, the provincial leaders had not arrived yet. The reporters and cameramen from their TV station were also waiting on the sidelines. After a pause, Sister Gao continued, "Maybe the provincial leaders went somewhere else on their way here. Perhaps they're conducting a surprise inspection. But if they knew they wouldn't be here by nine, someone should have called to inform us. We can't just let Secretary Xie and the city leaders wait like this."

This situation was difficult to handle. There was no way around it. After all, they were dealing with provincial leaders. Being late was always a leader's prerogative even if they were informed of a nine o'clock arrival time. If the leaders suddenly decided not to come, the subordinates could do nothing. Moreover, they couldn't inquire about the delay. Calling to ask about the situation would mean rushing the provincial leaders. However, if the local leaders left with their team first and the provincial leaders arrived right after, it would make the local officials seem disrespectful. In any case, there was no right way to handle it. The only option was to wait until the leaders arrived or they received a notification. This was what Xie Huilan and the other city leaders were currently doing.

Deputy Governor Jia

Won't arrange our flights...

Now they're leaving Xie Huilan and the others hanging here.

Dong Xuebing was getting angry. He remembered what Xie Huilan had said in the morning, "Today's inspection must have some substance to it." His heart sank slightly.

This is disrespectful to my wife.

Intentionally undermining Xie Huilan's authority.

Damn it, who do you think you are?

Dong Xuebing knew things weren't as simple as they seemed. He didn't have the political wisdom to understand or speculate about these layers of struggles and considerations. He didn't even bother to try. From Dong Xuebing's perspective, it was as simple as this: "Oh, so you, Deputy Governor Jia, favor someone else for the position of City committee secretary. Therefore, you've targeted my wife, making things difficult for her everywhere. Do you think you can hinder us at every turn? Well, I won't give you a friendly face either. Who cares about your intentions, strategies, or goals? It's all bullshit. It's not complicated at all. If you don't treat my wife with respect, don't expect me to treat you with respect. Do you want to mess with us? Let's see who's afraid of whom."

Five minutes passed.

Ten minutes passed.

Evidently, the cadres and civil servants in the courtyard were getting impatient. Some of the older ones were sweating profusely, panting heavily. However, none of them returned to their offices. After all, a provincial leader was coming, and the heads of the relevant departments responsible for the inspection had to be present. Even if they were exhausted and couldn't stand any longer, they all had to endure and wait.

Xie Huilan stood there, too.

Next to her was someone who seemed to be the mayor of Xiaoxing City. He appeared to be balding from his back, and the shirt on his back was damp.

Many of the prominent leaders of the city were present.

The amount of work in a city on any given day was terrifying. The documents received by just one city leader here would probably be in the dozens. They needed to read, sign, and discuss them. With over an hour of delay, a considerable backlog of work had already accumulated. Several city leaders and department heads were on the phone, unable to work directly and having to handle urgent matters through calls.

Finally, after everyone had waited a full hour and a half, someone outside loudly said a few words, and then four or five Audi cars slowly drove in. They had been told it would be an hour and a half, but in reality, they had waited for almost two hours because the provincial office had notified them a little after nine, and everyone had come out a bit earlier, not wanting to be late.

People from Xiaoxing City immediately went to greet them.

Some people had been standing too long and limping as they walked.

As the cars stopped, officials and staff from the provincial office got out.

The last person to emerge was a very fat middle-aged man. He had a large belly and was about five feet three inches tall. His hair was almost completely gone.

"Deputy Governor Jia."

"Deputy Governor Jia, Director Zhou."

"Welcome the provincial leaders to inspect the work in Xiaoxing City."

Banners were also unfurled as Xie Huilan led her team to welcome them.

The affectionate and plump middle-aged man seemed to be Deputy Governor Jia, not a member of the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee, just a lower-ranking Deputy governor, but his actual power was not insignificant.

Upstairs, Dong Xuebing couldn't hear the conversation downstairs clearly, so he opened the window wider.

Sister Gao also understood the situation. She had already had a substantial conversation with the secretary's husband today and felt she should leave a good impression on him. So, seeing Dong Xuebing staring intently downstairs, Sister Gao said goodbye and left, closing the door behind her.

In the courtyard, everyone from the provincial office had come out.

Quite a few people had arrived, scattered in groups of ten or so. There were secretaries and staff members, but not many provincial officials, just enough to count on one hand.

It was eleven o'clock.

It's almost time for lunch.

However, Deputy Governor Jia and the other provincial officials showed no signs of embarrassment. They didn't even have the decency to acknowledge that the comrades from Xiaoxing City had been waiting for two hours. After getting out of the car, they perfunctorily shook hands with Xie Huilan and some local leaders, not even mentioning why they were late. It was as if it was only natural or perhaps deliberately making them wait. They seemed pretty self-righteous.

After a brief exchange of pleasantries, Deputy Governor Jia entered the building without speaking to Xie Huilan and the others. Instead, he looked at someone beside him. "Let's take a look over here first," he said.

Director Zhou nodded. "Alright."

They walked inside, followed by the group of people behind them.

Combined, there were over fifty people, creating quite a commotion.

After that, Deputy Governor Jia mostly interacted with Director Zhou and a few other officials who had come with him, completely ignoring the comrades from Xiaoxing City.

Xie Huilan maintained a faint smile, her expression unchanged.

The mayor did the same. Wherever Deputy Governor Jia and his group went, he and Xie Huilan followed.

Some other leaders from Xiaoxing City were starting to feel uneasy, exchanging glances and whispering to each other. They knew Deputy Governor Jia probably had some grievances against Xiaoxing City, or he wouldn't have this attitude. Sigh, they were probably going to get scolded during this inspection. Everyone was mentally prepared for it.

Chapter 1573: Are you done talking?

Before noon.

City Committee Building.

Provincial inspection teams and city escort teams walked through the courtyard, stopping and chatting intermittently. Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou occasionally exchanged a few words. Then, the provincial staff behind them recorded the inspection content without any pleasantries, just a matter-of-fact demeanor.

After a while, a gust of wind blew.

As the wind blew, a ball of paper and a mineral water bottle rolled over from afar, landing near the provincial comrades.

Sister Gao, who had just left the secretary's office, happened to see this as she walked out of the office building. Originally intending to check on the situation with the journalists and camerapersons, she hurriedly bent down to pick up the paper and bottle, then quickly walked to a trash can in the courtyard to dispose of them before heading towards the TV station comrades.

But the inspection team from the province looked displeased.

Deputy Governor Jia frowned, clearly unhappy.

Director Zhou turned to Xie Huilan, "What does your sanitation work mean? Littering paper and bottles everywhere? This is the compound of the City party committee. How can other places be any better if it's like this here? How do you expect to work like this, especially after we gave you advance notice of the inspection?"

Xie Huilan remained expressionless. "Our work was not up to standard."

The mayor immediately said, "We'll have someone reinspect all the hygiene blind spots."

Deputy Governor Jia furrowed his brows. "What were you doing earlier? Your work attitude is a big problem."

"We didn't inspect carefully enough," Xie Huilan said calmly. "The leadership's criticism is justified, and we will pay more attention in the future."

Deputy Governor Jia pointed in the direction of the cafeteria. "And the cafeteria, I don't even need to go in. You can see for yourselves. The grease on the glass is so thick, and there seems to be a crack. Although this inspection wasn't about sanitation, if we hadn't notified you, you would have been so lax about it. I see this is not just a problem with your sanitation work but also an issue with your work attitude."

The staff behind immediately recorded the leader's instructions.

With just this trivial matter, Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou lectured Xie Huilan for ten minutes, and the mayor and other city leaders were also criticized. They all wore stern expressions, and the people from Xiaoxing City could only listen, not daring to speak up, feeling bitter in their hearts. Some didn't even know what had gotten into Deputy Governor Jia today to make him so displeased with them. Others had a more precise idea, probably because of the City party secretary position. Deputy Governor Jia might have some grievances against Secretary Xie, and although this criticism didn't carry much weight, it was mainly directed at Secretary Xie. Otherwise, why would they criticize her for so long?

Xie Huilan listened quietly without expressing any opinions.

Deputy Governor Jia and the others seized upon this issue, escalating the matter.

Upstairs.

Dong Xuebing had been watching; seeing this, he couldn't suppress his anger any longer. "Damn it, you're not done yet?"

No approval for the plane tickets...

two hours late...

And now criticizing my wife.

Dong Xuebing's temper was something. He exploded with rage and immediately opened the door to the secretary's office, striding downstairs.

Many people in the office building saw Secretary Xie being criticized, but they could only watch from the windows.

At this moment, many people saw Dong Xuebing walk out with a dark expression, and they were all stunned.

"Mr. Dong."

"Um, Mr. Dong."

Dong Xuebing ignored their greetings.

Seeing his demeanor, everyone was puzzled about what Xie Huilan's husband was up to. They all looked over; some even leaned against the windows to watch.

In the courtyard.

Dong Xuebing came out.

Sister Gao saw him and was also stunned.

Over there, Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou were still criticizing Xiaoxing City's people over the sanitation issue. It seemed like they were picking a fight with them. Deputy Governor Jia said that this inspection didn't include sanitation issues. Now, he was latching onto this, which might seem trivial to others, but to Dong Xuebing, it was obvious that the provincial people were deliberately looking for trouble.

"What should be done about this problem?" Deputy Governor Jia asked forcefully, looking at Xie Huilan.

Xie Huilan said, "We will immediately rectify the sanitation issues in the City party committee compound."

Deputy Governor Jia seemed very dissatisfied with her response. "So you'll only rectify what you find in the City party committee compound, right? So, as I said, there's a serious problem with your work attitude. One step forward, one step back. What kind of work is this?"

Xie Huilan replied, "Then we will launch a city-wide sanitation rectification."

Deputy Governor Jia wasn't pleased with this either. "Why does it sound like I'm forcing you to rectify it?"

Rectifying the City party committee compound wasn't acceptable.

Rectifying the city's sanitation work wasn't acceptable either.

Whatever Xiaoxing City or Xie Huilan proposed, Deputy Governor Jia and the provincial inspection team felt it was wrong, no matter what.

The mayor of Xiaoxing City was getting a bit tired of it.

Other city leaders and staff had varying expressions.

But Xie Huilan kept her trademark expression, calm and unruffled, not showing any anger, as if whatever the other party said didn't bother her.

"Secretary Xie, I think your city..." Deputy Governor Jia pointed at Xie Huilan, intending to say something, but someone interrupted him.

Amidst the stunned gazes of everyone, Dong Xuebing walked up and stood in front of his wife, then looked at Deputy Governor Jia, Director Zhou, and the others and said astonishingly, "Are you done?"

Deputy Governor Jia was taken aback.

Director Zhou was also furious. "What are you doing?"

A provincial cadre behind them shouted, "Who are you? Deputy Governor Jia was speaking, not you!"

Dong Xuebing interrupted them again, looking at Deputy Governor Jia. "I asked you, are you done?"

Deputy Governor Jia had no idea who this person was and why he suddenly appeared to ask if they were finished.

Director Zhou looked at Dong Xuebing and said, "You're quite aggressive. What do you do?"

The people from the province all thought he was a staff member from Xiaoxing City, so they didn't expect him to dare to speak to Deputy Governor Jia like this.

Challenging superiors like this was quite rare.

But Dong Xuebing's tone was even more confrontational. He scanned the faces of the provincial people one by one and said, "It doesn't matter what I do. If you haven't finished speaking, then continue. I'm waiting for you. And if you're done speaking, I'll say a few words. Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou can take a break. You've been talking for so long, don't let your teeth get sunburn from all the talking."

Chapter 1574: Dong Xuebing stepped up

City Party Committee building.

In the courtyard.

There were two groups of people: one from the city and one from the province.

Dong Xuebing stood in front of his wife, watching the provincial visitors. As soon as he appeared, he stunned everyone. His demeanor always amazed people wherever he went, leaving everyone speechless. For example, he openly questioned the province's inspection team, asking if they had finished speaking yet. He even used phrases like "don't expose your teeth to the sun" to mock Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou, among others. His words were indeed a bit too impudent.

"Don't run your mouth."

"Do you know who you're talking to?"

"Who do you think you are to speak here?"

"Secretary Xie, Mayor Xia, is this how things are done in your Xiaxing City?"

Director Zhou and several other officials were furious. Some scolded Dong Xuebing, while others reprimanded Secretary Xie, Mayor Xia, and the city officials. They had visited many places for inspections, but they had never seen a city like Xiaxing City, which dared to confront the inspection team from the province openly. Although Director Zhou and Secretary Xie, along with Mayor Xia,

were of the same rank, and even the other comrades who came this time were not higher than Secretary Xie, they represented the provincial level, the superiors. They had no relation to the administrative level of the city officials. Moreover, the team was led by Deputy Governor Jia, a provincial leader. Criticizing them was within their rights, and they had to listen to us. How dare they talk back and even use language with insulting undertones? What did they mean by that?

The provincial officials were outraged.

The city officials, however, dared not say a word. Everyone looked at each other, and finally, all eyes fell on Secretary Xie and Dong Xuebing. Only the officials from government agencies and the clerks upstairs in the office building dared to whisper quietly.

"What's going on?"

"Isn't that the secretary's husband?"

"Oh my, how did he get involved?"

"This is chaos."

"Criticizing provincial leaders? This is outrageous."

The city officials also felt a bit incredulous.

Gao Jie from the Propaganda Department and the official from the City Committee who had just brought fruit to Dong Xuebing's office were also shocked, looking at Dong Xuebing as if they were about to faint.

Perhaps someone spoke too loudly, and it happened to be heard by several provincial officials.

"Husband?"

"He's Secretary Xie's family member."

"What nonsense is this? Isn't it just making trouble?"

This spread, and Director Zhou and the provincial officials also learned about it.

Oh, so it turns out that after causing such a stir, you're not even a city official. You're just the secretary's family member. This made them even more annoyed. How dare you not take the leaders seriously? You're just a family member. You shouldn't even be in the city committee courtyard during working hours. This is a workplace, a place for government work. Hey, not only are you not self-aware, but you also stand up to us. You're here wasting our time just because we criticized your wife a bit.

What kind of official is this?

It's a mess.

After learning that the other party was just a family member, Director Zhou couldn't be bothered to talk to Dong Xuebing anymore. He didn't even look at him again, and instead, he said to Secretary Xie, "Secretary Xie, deal with your family matters yourself." Then he hugged his shoulders and looked at her, passing the responsibility to Secretary Xie, hoping she would handle the situation herself.

The officials from Xiaxing City also understood the situation very well. It was true that Dong Xuebing had made a misstep. It was understandable that his wife had been criticized, and everyone could empathize with his emotions. They had already found it difficult to watch. The provincial officials who came to inspect this time were indeed overly critical. However, even if they couldn't bear to watch, they still had to endure it. After all, the wife was a leader. And being the husband of a city committee secretary did, to some extent, equate him with the city committee secretary. Husband and wife are one body and cannot be treated as ordinary family members or familiar people. However, this understanding was meant to be kept private. It was an unwritten rule that couldn't be openly acknowledged. Family members were still family members and should not interfere here, especially when facing a Deputy governor who was higher in rank than the city committee secretary. It simply didn't make sense.

With Dong Xuebing stepping forward, things became more complicated.

The officials from Xiaxing City knew that Secretary Xie might have to sacrifice her principles for the greater good. After all, what her husband said was not appropriate or timely. Secretary Xie would certainly bear the responsibility for this. At a time when Xiaxing City was already under criticism, this only made matters worse.

Everyone's mood was not very good.

Mayor Xia looked at Dong Xuebing and also thought he was too impulsive. This would only further harm his wife and the city of Xiaxing. However, Mayor Xia's mood didn't change much. Perhaps he knew that Deputy Governor Jia and the others were targeting Secretary Xie, not himself. Or maybe he thought this incident might benefit Secretary Xie, who had just taken office and hadn't yet firmly established her authority. For Mayor Xia, this might not be a bad thing.

Director Zhou stared at her and asked, "How will you handle this?"

Deputy Governor Jia didn't say anything but was also looking at Secretary Xie.

It seemed that all the officials from the province were waiting for Secretary Xie to explain.

But she surprised everyone when everyone thought they had guessed the outcome and how Secretary Xie would handle it.

Secretary Xie shrugged and said, "I'm sorry, but I can't handle it either."

"What?" The provincial officials were all astonished.

Director Zhou was furious. "He's your husband. What do you mean?"

Secretary Xie replied calmly, "Yes, he's my husband, but I can't deal with him."

Whether it was the officials in the office building or the courtyard of Xiaxing City, everyone took a sharp breath after hearing Secretary Xie's words.

Even Mayor Xia was stunned for the first time.

Everyone thought Secretary Xie would sacrifice her principles. Even if she didn't punish her husband, she would at least apologize on his behalf. Who would have thought Secretary Xie not only didn't do that but also boldly claimed she couldn't handle her husband? Wasn't this overly protective? Was she going to confront Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou? At least she could have been more tactful in her response. Why did she directly say she couldn't handle it?

A provincial official behind shouted, "What a Xiaping City!"

Secretary Xie remained calm. "I said I can't handle his affairs."

Director Zhou pointed at Secretary Xie, unable to speak. He hadn't expected her to be so firm. It was one thing for her husband to confront provincial leaders, as he might be just an ordinary citizen who didn't know any better. But what about her? As a city committee secretary, didn't she understand the consequences of her words?

The scene fell silent.

The situation was developing in a direction that nobody had anticipated. This was a rare occurrence, leaving everyone unsure of how to proceed.

One second, two seconds, three seconds... "Have you all finished?" Dong Xuebing, who had been silent all along, finally spoke, looking at the provincial officials. "Then allow me to say a few words."

"Husband sings, wife follows; wife sings, husband follows.

The couple's actions managed to stun the crowd.

They seized a slight advantage in momentum, leaving many speechless.

However, what shocked everyone even more was what followed. Dong Xuebing in defense of his wife, dared to criticize others in front of so many people. It's his wife, after all; usually, he would only grumble about her a bit, never daring to criticize her. How dare you criticize my wife in front of so many people!

Fine.

You like to criticize others.

Then I'll criticize you, too.

Dong Xuebing, with his unchanging style of work, immediately retorted to the officials from the province. "What an impressive inspection team! Take a good look at yourselves, making everyone see your might. How mighty you are!"

Seeing the officials from the province turn pale with anger, some with faces blackened and ready to reprimand, Dong Xuebing didn't give them a chance to speak. He continued, irritated, "If you want to show off, return to your own homes and intimidate your children and daughters-in-law. Why are you showing off here and embarrassing us? What's the point of this inspection? Is it to help improve the work in the counties and cities below? But what have you done for our city? I haven't seen any intention to improve our city's work from your empty inspection. From start to finish, it's all about showing off and nitpicking."

"You."

"What are you saying?"

The officials from the province were furious.

The directors and others also pointed at him with black faces.

Dong Xuebing pointed to his watch and said coldly, "Take a look at the time. It's almost noon. You notified the local government to come at around nine o'clock. But what time did you arrive? You made the comrades in Xiaxing City wait in the courtyard under the sun for nearly two hours. Everyone knows how much work there is in a city. A single phone call and everyone has to wait here. You didn't even call to say you'd be late, and when you arrived, there was no reason given for being late. It's as if the comrades in Xiaxing City should accept it. What kind of logic is this? Are you not embarrassed? Can provincial leaders delay local work? Can inspection teams from the province be late without reason? Who decided this? I don't think you're here to help and supervise local work but to cause trouble for the local government. I want to ask you if the province intends to send you for inspection. It's not to help the locality but to prevent any work from being done in the city, making us wait on you like servants. Take a good look at yourselves. I'm embarrassed for you. I don't even know what the purpose of this inspection is. Go back and read through some documents; if you can't understand them, find me. Look at all of you, coming here and showing off your might. This inspection, in my opinion, is utterly meaningless. You should go back and not delay the work of the comrades in the locality."

Chapter 1575: I am also here for an inspection

In the courtyard.

The crowd grew larger and larger.

Dong Xuebing launched into a harsh rebuke against the provincial officials.

Many people were dumbfounded, swallowing hard as they listened. When Dong Xuebing first stepped forward, the people of Xiaxing City felt his appearance was too sudden, the timing and circumstances were wrong, and his tone was inappropriate. They thought he would calm down afterward, at least leaving himself a way out and also giving his wife, the secretary of the city committee, a way out. Otherwise, if he clashed with provincial leaders, how could he continue to work in the future? But to everyone's surprise, Dong Xuebing lacked this self-awareness and intensified his approach. After sarcastically criticizing provincial leaders and cadres earlier, he now directly criticized the comrades from the provincial inspection team.

"Stop showing off."

"Go home early."

"I'm embarrassed for you."

Each sentence made everyone's heart pound. Many people glanced at each other, unsure what to say, intimidated by Dong Xuebing's momentum. Even if he ranked low among deputy provincial leaders, he was still a deputy provincial leader. He was part of the inspection team sent by the province. How dare a family member of a local city committee secretary criticize them like this? Xiaxing City was sweating profusely.

Gao Jie and several cadres also felt a sense of darkness in their eyes.

The most significant change in expression was from Mayor Xia. Initially, he remained relatively calm, watching Secretary Xie and her husband confront the provincial authorities and observe the situation. But after Dong Xuebing's words were fired like bullets, Mayor Xia became less composed, gradually showing a look of astonishment. Secretary Xie had only been in office for a

few days, and her files had just been filed with the province. No one knew what her husband did. But seeing Dong Xuebing's audacity, everyone had one thought: this family member is too fierce.

Is this still a family member?

The family member of the city committee secretary?

How come you're even more impressive than the city committee secretary?

Someone observed Secretary Xie's reaction and found it speechless. Secretary Xie still had the same calm expression. She even chatted with Mayor Xia with her arms crossed, though no one knew what they were talking about. But from the look of it, it wasn't about the situation at the scene. Secretary Xie seemed to give the impression that this matter had nothing to do with her at all. Her husband criticized the provincial leaders to their faces, but she seemed not to have heard anything.

It's a mess.

This situation really can't be resolved.

The people of Xiaxing City started to worry, feeling very nervous.

In stark contrast were the inspection personnel from the province. Each one was furious. After inspecting for so many days, they had never experienced such treatment before. Watching the family members of the city committee secretary criticize even Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou. Everyone felt their anger building up.

Some people started to fight back.

"Who do you think you are?"

"It's not your turn to speak here."

"Do we need you to teach us how to conduct inspections?"

Their tongues were no match for Dong Xuebing's, and Dong Xuebing didn't spare them either. He continued, "Your way of working is problematic, and it seems like I need to teach you a lesson. What was the focus of this inspection? Was it about hygiene work? It was just a bottle. The comrades from Xiaxing City waited here for two hours. Don't you need water? Is dropping a bottle such a big deal? Why make it a big deal and nitpick about it? This is not about you being responsible for your work; it's intentionally causing trouble. Why didn't you explain or apologize for your lateness? The provincial leaders are no different. Nobody is without fault, yet you act like you have the privilege to be righteous. If you think you have that privilege, fine, pretend I didn't say any of this."

Their tongues were no match for Dong Xuebing's, and Dong Xuebing didn't spare them either. He continued, "Your way of working is problematic, and it seems like I need to teach you a lesson. What was the focus of this inspection? Was it about hygiene work? It was just a bottle. The comrades from Xiaxing City waited here for two hours. Don't you need water? Is dropping a bottle such a big deal? Why make it a big deal and nitpick about it? This is not about you being responsible for your work; it's intentionally causing trouble. Why didn't you explain or apologize for your lateness? The provincial leaders are no different. Nobody is without fault, yet you act like you have the privilege to be righteous. If you think you have that privilege, fine, pretend I didn't say any of this." Follow newest stories at [novel.bi/n\(.com](http://novel.bi/n(.com)

Dong Xuebing's attitude left the people of Xiaxing City conflicted. They were afraid the provincial leaders would take their anger out on them, fearing various consequences. But Dong Xuebing's words were satisfying, relieving those whom Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou had just scolded.

"That's well said. Isn't that the truth? In the end, it's because the people from the province are too nitpicky; they don't like Xiaxing City. You can see it from the incident of being two hours late. They don't care about us, delaying so much of our work. After arriving, they didn't even offer a word about traffic or an explanation. Instead, they focused on trivial matters unrelated to the inspection, causing trouble. It's unbearable to watch."

Dong Xuebing echoed the sentiments of many.

But no one dared to show agreement on their faces.

Xie Huilan continued her conversation with Mayor Xia, possibly discussing the afternoon's work.

The atmosphere on the scene became increasingly awkward and tense, the air so thick it was hard to breathe. Many knew that Secretary Xie and her husband might be in trouble. In their view, he might be correct, but no matter if you're right or not, the big fist counts. The level of the provincial inspection team is there for all to see. Even if you're right, it isn't significant. One level higher in the hierarchy can crush you. How could you dare to compete with superiors?

What about Secretary Xie? Why isn't she saying anything? If she could apologize on behalf of her husband, it would show an attitude. Isn't she too calm? She's even discussing work now. Can't she see how tense the situation is? Can't she see how angry the comrades from the province are?

Director Zhou glanced at Dong Xuebing. "That's enough," he said.

Dong Xuebing nodded. "I'm done for now."

The scene gradually calmed down. People upstairs and in the courtyard looked at them, knowing that the provincial leaders were about to make a statement. Even Xie Huilan and Mayor Xia stopped their conversation and looked over. Everyone understood that the provincial leaders were about to get angry and wouldn't let them off the hook. So, they all sweated for Secretary Xie and her husband, wanting to see how the province would handle it. After all, openly confronting provincial leaders was no small matter; at the very least, it obstructed official business, and this matter couldn't be resolved peacefully.

Deputy Governor Jia's eyes were cold.

Director Zhou felt that the Deputy Governor didn't need to lower himself to argue with Dong Xuebing, so he stepped forward, looking at Dong Xuebing. "Let me tell you how we conduct inspections and the direction of inspections; you don't need to meddle. You mind your own business."

Before he could finish, Dong Xuebing interrupted.

Dong Xuebing smiled. "You're here to inspect, and so am I."

Chapter 1576: Identifying himself

What?

Are you inspecting too?

What are you inspecting?

After hearing Dong Xuebing's words, the comrades in Xiaxing City were sweating even more.

"Um"

"Mr. Dong."

"You, please, say a few less words."

Several cadres from Xiaxing City around him hurriedly advised him in a low voice.

But Dong Xuebing didn't have this self-awareness, and he was very confident.

The people from the provincial government also couldn't help but laugh or sigh. They secretly thought that this person was too ignorant. What kind of status do you have? At most, you're just a family member of a cadre. Even if you put it nicely, you're just considered a family member of a mid-to-high-level cadre. What kind of position is this? What kind of official position is this? You're here to inspect? What are you inspecting? Even if you're a family member, your wife, Secretary Xie, wouldn't dare to say "inspect" in front of provincial cadres. Now, everyone didn't know how to evaluate Dong Xuebing. He dares to say anything. Before speaking, could you please use your brain? They thought in their hearts that Secretary Xie, being such a beautiful mid-to-high-level leader, would marry such a clueless husband.

Mayor Xia whispered, "Secretary."

Xie Huilan's mouth curled up slightly, "It's okay."

Mayor Xia couldn't help but feel helpless. If this wasn't considered a problem, then what is? He didn't understand why Xie Huilan had such a reaction. According to common sense, anyone who could sit in her position at such a young age was supposed to be very shrewd. Not to mention, she was a woman. If she didn't have much more ability and competence than others, she wouldn't have been arranged to be the secretary of the City Party Committee. However, in the days since Xie Huilan took office, it was proved that this woman had a strong wrist and rich political experience. However, the more this happened, the more Mayor Xia became puzzled. Could you at least stop your husband? Why didn't you say a word? Aren't you giving the provincial leaders an excuse to hold against you? Aren't you causing trouble for yourself? What exactly do you mean?

Many City leaders in Xiaxing City stared wide-eyed and sweating, feeling like a disaster was imminent. Secretary Xie's husband was too daring to speak. Sister Gao, who was far away, slapped her forehead. The female clerk who had just taken Dong Xuebing upstairs in the elevator also looked shocked. There were many other officials with similar expressions, all looking down from upstairs. Almost everyone was looking at Dong Xuebing in the center with an incredulous look.

Dong Xuebing became the focus of the whole scene.

He was such a person. Although he was not outstanding in appearance, he was not the kind of person who would be lost in the crowd. On the contrary, wherever he went, he would shine brightly. No matter what he said or did, Dong Xuebing could always hold everyone's attention. Those who knew him thought he was too good at stirring up trouble. However, Dong Xuebing attributed this to his charm.

Deputy Governor Jia stared at Dong Xuebing's eyes.

Dong Xuebing also stared at them without blinking.

Seeing Dong Xuebing repeatedly provoking the provincial authorities, Director Zhou's anger surged even more. "Comrade Xie Huilan," he no longer called her Secretary Xie; his tone was very harsh. Director Zhou and many officials in the province were getting angry. Very angry.

Xie Huilan nodded, "I'm listening."

Director Zhou said to her, "Your family member is disturbing our work and inspection. I'll ask again how you plan to handle this matter."

Xie Huilan shrugged, "I've said it before, I can't handle it."

Asked three times, Xie Huilan answered three times, all with the same answer.

Mayor Xia pondered carefully and listened to some hints in Secretary Xie's words. She didn't say she wouldn't handle it or take care of it; she said she couldn't handle it. Mayor Xia also wondered for a moment why she said she couldn't handle it.

But Director Zhou didn't catch on. He smelled like the Secretary of the Xiaxing City Committee had decided to shield and tolerate her husband. Director Zhou was furious. "The province instructed this inspection. Your husband's behavior has seriously affected our work, and you've heard the open accusations and the words with hints of insult. Don't you have anything to say about this?"

Xie Huilan shook her head slightly. "Not at the moment."

The Comrades from the local city are challenging the province. The Province leaders have never encountered such a thing.

Director Zhou, furious to the extreme, laughed in anger. Pointing at Xie Huilan, he said, "Alright."

Dong Xuebing was right next to his wife, and as soon as he saw it, he slapped away Director Zhou's hand, and his face turned cold. "What were you saying just now? I scolded you all, Director Zhou? I'm apprehensive about you. How did I not know that I was cursing? Did I use any swear words in all the words I just said? How did you hear that and then accuse me? I saw each provincial leader showing contempt and insults towards local cadres. For example, what you just did with your finger, leading by example, how can provincial cadres disrespect local cadres like that? Pardon my ignorance, but this is the first time I've heard of such a rule. I now have reason to believe that your attitude towards this inspection is problematic."

Director Zhou didn't bother to argue with him and said to Xie Huilan, "Alright, so this is the way you work in Xiaxing City, even the province is not in your eyes anymore."

Giving you face...

Still daring to nag at my wife...

Dong Xuebing looked at him. "If you have something to say, say it to me."

Director Zhou said coldly, "You have no right to speak here."

"I'm sorry." Dong Xuebing stared back at him. "I do."

A cadre from the provincial inspection team shouted, "As a family member, what qualifications do you have to speak here? Ignoring you isn't enough, is it?"

Another person said, "Deputy Governor Jia, Director Zhou, let the comrades from the Discipline Inspection Commission handle this." After speaking, he looked at a young man in his thirties beside him.

Others also glanced at him.

Many departments participated in this inspection, naturally including personnel from the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission.

When the young man heard this, he looked coldly at Dong Xuebing and Xie Huilan and said to the provincial leaders, "I have recorded it and will report it to the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission immediately."

The provincial Discipline Inspection Commission.

The people from Xiaxing City changed their colors when they heard this. They didn't expect the other party to directly involve the Discipline Inspection Commission in handling it. But thinking about it, it wasn't surprising. It would be strange if this matter didn't escalate to the Discipline Inspection Commission. After all, Secretary Xie had been overly protective. Not only did she not apologize for her husband, but she also kept condoning him, not even saying a word to stop him, allowing her husband to obstruct official business and even scolding provincial cadres. This situation was a bit bad. Even if the province warned Secretary Xie within the party or suspended her duties, it wouldn't be too much. Your husband may not be from Xiaxing City, but he is still your family member. If you ignore it, you have a joint responsibility that must be addressed.

Many people in Xiaxing City were worried and looked at the Secretary of the City Party Committee. Mayor Xia and several City leaders also glanced at Xie Huilan, wanting to see what she would say. At this time, if she remained silent, it would be difficult for everyone. But what made everyone speechless was that Secretary Xie was standing there with a calm face, not saying anything, as if nothing was related to her, extremely calm.

Everyone couldn't understand how Secretary Xie could be so politically immature.

"It's about to be reported to the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission, and you're still so calm. What are you planning to do?"

The young man from the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission was also getting angry. "Deputy Governor Jia, the problem this time is indeed quite serious. I'll report it to the Discipline Inspection Commission. As for the specific handling..."

But Dong Xuebing interrupted him at this moment. "How are you going to report it?"

The young man looked at him. "Secretary Xie Huilan of Xiaxing City condones her family member's obstruction of the provincial comrades' inspection and ignores the problem."

Dong Xuebing interjected, "I advise you not to report it. There's no need. I don't think I obstructed your inspection and work."

"You've been babbling for nearly twenty minutes, monopolizing the conversation and scolding the provincial leaders. Do you call that not obstructing official business? You've been causing trouble all this time, and you're still being stubborn. You won't shed a tear until you see the coffin, will you?"

The young man from the Discipline Inspection Commission said coldly, "You don't need to explain to me. Prepare to be contacted by the comrades from the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission."

Dong Xuebing smiled. "If you don't come to me, I'll come to you. I just said it's quite a coincidence that you're here for an inspection, and so am I."

Still, talking like that?

What on earth are you inspecting as a family member?

Director Zhou and several provincial cadres were about to shout at him. Their last bit of patience had been worn thin by Dong Xuebing.

But the next moment, Dong Xuebing reached into his pocket. Just as Director Zhou was about to reprimand him, Dong Xuebing pulled out a black work permit, held one side with his hand, and flicked it slightly, opening it up in front of everyone. "Dong Xuebing, the Eighth Supervisory Office of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection inspector, is here to investigate some recent situations and issues in Jiangnan Province as commissioned by the higher-ups."

What?

Central Commission for Discipline Inspection?

The Eighth Office of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission, managing the Jiangnan Province?

And still an inspector?

Everyone present from the province was dumbfounded.

People from Xiaxing City seemed to have a cold breeze blowing into their lungs.

Whether they were watching the commotion upstairs or in the courtyard downstairs, everyone was stunned.

Director Zhou almost spat out blood, and the young man from the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission broke out in a cold sweat, his hands trembling.

Damn it.

You really came to inspect.

When the people from the province saw this, many of them were on the verge of cursing. You're a supervisor from the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. Why didn't you say so earlier? Only now did everyone understand why Secretary Xie Huilan of Xiaxing City remained indifferent from start to finish and why she said she couldn't handle her husband's affairs.

Indeed, she couldn't handle it.

How could a City party secretary handle a mid-level cadre from the Central Discipline Inspection Commission, which oversees their province? Instead, it seemed her husband could handle them.

Chapter 1577: Everyone is speechless

The atmosphere suddenly became tense in the City Party Committee compound. The scene fell silent for a moment.

As everyone looked at Dong Xuebing's credentials displayed there, they knew it definitely couldn't be fake, and no one dared to fake such a thing. Even if there were audacious individuals who dared to flaunt fake credentials like these, they certainly wouldn't be family members of a City party committee secretary. So, there was no need to confirm the stamps or other details on the credentials. Everyone understood clearly that this was real. Standing before them was an inspector at the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, a position of Division Chief level. This sudden revelation caught many people off guard.

Division Chief level?

Even in the Eighth Supervisory Office, that's a leadership position.

Many people's initial reaction was self-recrimination for judging based on appearances. Who could have thought this unremarkable, youthful man would hold such a high-ranking position in the discipline inspection system? It took a moment for the people from Xiaxing City to catch up with the reality. Although Secretary Xie Huan had just been transferred here, everyone should have realized that she, as a Bureau Director level party secretary, with her remarkable appearance and slender figure, wouldn't marry an ordinary person. Birds of a feather flock together, and with such disparity in status, it would have been difficult for them to become a couple.

They had been blind.

No wonder Secretary Xie remained silent all along.

No wonder her husband dared to speak out, criticizing provincial leaders and comrades from the inspection team.

Although everyone had initially thought Dong Xuebing was audacious and ignorant of the situation, they felt relieved now that they knew his identity and his workplace. After all, the Eighth Supervisory Office of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection was in charge of their Jiangnan Province, with the authority to supervise, inspect, and discipline. Even if Dong Xuebing criticized them, or if he were to speak to any provincial-level officials individually, those officials at the departmental level would have to sit quietly and listen. As for provincial-level leaders, if Dong Xuebing obtained approval and proper documentation from higher authorities, he would be entitled to question or even summon them. The extent of his power was beyond the imagination of local cadres.

Mayor Xia glanced deeply at Secretary Xie.

Other city leaders exchanged surprised looks, each with their thoughts.

Dong Xuebing paused, then looked at the young man from the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission. "You can report to the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission now. Anyway, I plan to visit them in the next few days."

The young man turned pale. His face flushed red. "No, no, I..." Where would he dare to report now? That would be tantamount to seeking his death. Even if he did report, there would be no grounds for it. It was usual for the supervisory department to provide guidance and criticism on their work. Even if Dong Xuebing's remarks were excessive, reporting it to the provincial Discipline Inspection Commission would serve no purpose. The provincial Discipline Inspection Commission would likely reject the complaint without hesitation. He had only heard of cases where the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection investigated provincial discipline inspection

commissions; he had never heard of a provincial discipline inspection commission investigating the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. The young man regretted his earlier words and his attitude toward Dong Xuebing. He wanted to say, "When the Dragon King's temple is flooded, even the family members won't recognize each other," but he didn't have the nerve. The provincial leaders had yet to express their stance.

Dong Xuebing turned to Director Zhou. "Director Zhou, do I have the right to speak now?"

Director Zhou wished he could curse Dong Xuebing's ancestors, but he must acknowledge it. He said, "I didn't know you were a comrade from the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. I thought you were a family member of a cadre, so..."

Deputy Governor Jia had been silent for a long time. He remained silent now, too. He just glanced at Dong Xuebing. There was hardly any change in his expression, making it difficult to tell whether he had known beforehand that Secretary Xie Huan had a husband working at the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection or if Deputy Governor Jia had mastered the art of cultivating inner calmness.

The people from the province were all speechless.

Upstairs, some low-ranking staff from Xiaping City felt secretly pleased when they saw the province's representatives being put in their place and remaining silent. They had borne a grudge after being criticized by the provincial officials.

Unexpectedly, Dong Xuebing wasn't about to let them off the hook. He continued, "Now that I have the right to speak let me say a few more words. This time, I didn't come to inspect but to understand the situation. However, what I see now is quite unsatisfactory. It's understandable for the province to conduct inspections, but what is the purpose? I think you should clarify that all the starting points should be to supervise and improve the work of the local government, for development, for the people, and not to disrupt or hinder the work of the local government. Have you perhaps misplaced your priorities? You were two hours late and spent half an hour discussing matters unrelated to the inspection content. In my opinion, your approach is not responsible for the work but disrespectful and irresponsible to the local work."

No one interrupted Dong Xuebing this time as he spoke.

Gao Jie watched Dong Xuebing, feeling impressed as he lectured the provincial comrades. She sighed inwardly. Based on their interactions in the office earlier, she realized that Dong Xuebing might hold a position of authority. Still, she hadn't expected him to be a mid-level leader at twenty-five or twenty-six, let alone one at the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

Dong Xuebing continued slowly, "I don't intend to report this matter. It's not a big deal. It just reflects some problems from a certain perspective. I can't turn a blind eye to problems. I hope that in dealing with such issues in the future, you will adopt better and more flexible approaches. Of course, this is just my suggestion. Whether you listen or not is up to you."

Can they not listen?

Even if they're wrong, they still have to listen.

Deputy Provincial Governor Jia didn't express his opinion, and Director Zhou seemed to have softened. The people from the provincial government also lost their momentum for a moment, just

like the comrades from Xiaping City couldn't argue against the provincial inspection team. They couldn't argue against a leader from the provincial inspection team who came to visit.

One second.

Two seconds.

The scene was still silent.

Seeing that no one spoke up, and he had criticized them almost enough, Dong Xuebing turned to the young man from the Provincial Discipline Inspection Commission and said, "Soon, I will go to the Provincial Discipline Inspection Commission. I want to check the asset declaration of some cadres. Please cooperate when the time comes."

The young man agreed repeatedly, "Okay, okay."

The last words of Dong Xuebing carried some threatening implications.

Chapter 1578: The people from the Province left

It's noon.

Things have concluded.

It might not be appropriate to say who won and who lost because using those terms wouldn't quite fit. It's more accurate to say that the balance of power has been determined.

Dong Xuebing said, "That's it, then."

Director Zhou and the young man from the Discipline Inspection Commission didn't say anything.

The other provincial officials looked towards Deputy Provincial Governor Jia.

Deputy Provincial Governor Jia glanced at Dong Xuebing, reached out to shake his hand, and finally spoke, "We will accept the criticisms and suggestions from the leaders of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. However, the provincial government and the Provincial Discipline Inspection Commission have not received any notice of inspection from the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection recently."

Dong Xuebing also shook his hand out of politeness, "Then you can understand it as a covert visit."

Deputy Provincial Governor Jia nodded slightly, "I see. Then, I also represent the province in welcoming the supervision of the leaders of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection." His tone was a bit stiff, but it wasn't surprising. After being criticized by Dong Xuebing for so long, it would be strange if he were cheerful. After all, he was a deputy provincial governor, and in terms of rank, he was much higher than Dong Xuebing. Even if Dong Xuebing could exert some pressure on him with his position, the other party probably wouldn't fear him. It's just that there were some concerns, so there was no need to be as polite to Dong Xuebing like that the young man from the Discipline Inspection Commission.

"We will. You can continue." Dong Xuebing said.

Deputy Provincial Governor Jia grunted, then turned and continued the inspection with Director Zhou.

Dong Xuebing also turned around and looked at Xie Huilan and Mayor Xia and others, smiling, "I've been talking all this time. Sorry for delaying the work of the comrades in Xiaxing City. I've said everything I need to say, so you can continue your work. There's nothing for me here. Secretary Xie, Mayor Xia, I'm leaving." Speaking as if he didn't know Xie Huilan, but it should be said like this. The meaning of Dong Xuebing's words was to express his attitude, telling others that he wasn't criticizing them because they criticized his wife but because of his role as a cadre of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. Of course, this was just a show of face; everyone knew that Dong Xuebing was angry because of his wife's situation.

Finally, Dong Xuebing turned and went into the office building.

People upstairs and downstairs stared at his back.

"Mr. Dong."

"Dong, Director Dong."

Dong Xuebing smiled, nodded at a few people, took the elevator upstairs, and returned to the party secretary's office. He looked down at the situation below. This time, the people from the provincial inspection team didn't nitpick again. They were pretty wary of Dong Xuebing. After walking around, they reviewed all the areas that needed inspection. It felt rushed, and only about twenty minutes had passed. Dong Xuebing saw Deputy Provincial Governor Jia and Director Zhou leading the group towards the Audi cars. It seemed like they were about to leave.

"Governor Jia."

"Director Zhou, it's already noon, lunch—"

"We're not eating. We have to go to the next place."

"The food is ready, why don't we—"

"Next time, let's all get back to work."

The leaders of Xiaxing City exchanged a few polite words, and then they didn't stay.

One by one, the provincial officials got into their Audi cars without much courtesy, and the cars drove out of the compound of the City Party Committee. Their departure felt a bit awkward. These past two days of inspection, every time they entered and left with arrogance, every place they went, they were accompanied by carefulness. However, Xiaxing City made them hit a wall, which embarrassed many people. Deputy Provincial Governor Jia had no expression and couldn't tell what he was thinking, but Director Zhou's emotions were quite obvious. After getting in the car, he wore a dark expression and remained silent.

Upstairs.

Closing the window, Dong Xuebing sat back on the sofa and poured himself a cup of tea, thinking that these people from the province still had some insight to retreat like this, which could be considered giving him face. If these people still insisted on picking faults with Xiaxing City, then Dong Xuebing wouldn't hesitate to deal with them. As a deputy Inspector in the Eighth Division, although Dong Xuebing's authority wasn't great, he could still handle a few people. Even if it was Deputy Provincial Governor Jia, Dong Xuebing couldn't touch him directly, but couldn't he still

deal with one of his trusted aides, a cadre from the Discipline Inspection Commission? There were many methods to check on him, making anyone anxious occasionally.

Ring, ring, ring.

The phone rang.

Dong Xuebing answered, "Hello, Huilan."

Xie Huilan asked, "Where are you?"

"In your office, are you done?" Dong Xuebing replied.

"I'm done. Wait for me. I'm coming with Mayor Xia." Xie Huilan hung up.

Dong Xuebing put down the teacup and looked downstairs. Xie Huilan and Mayor Xia were walking into the office building together. A few minutes later, the door opened, and they entered the room.

Dong Xuebing smiled, "Welcome back."

Mayor Xia stepped forward first, extending his hand to shake Dong Xuebing's. "Director Dong, hello. Let me introduce myself formally. I'm Xia Hui, the mayor of Xiaxing City."

"Hello, Dong Xuebing," Dong Xuebing replied.

"Previously, I didn't know that you were here to inspect Jiangnan Province, and I didn't come to greet you. It's our fault for not doing our job well. Please forgive us," Mayor Xia said.

Dong Xuebing waved his hand, "It's not that serious, Mayor Xia. Although I'm here with a mission to inspect some cadres' property declaration and public disclosure, it's also a task from above. But I'm also here because my wife has been on a research trip for a few days. There's no outsider in the room, so Mayor Xia, you don't need to be so polite, and don't call me Director Dong all the time. Just call me Xuebing. My wife has been telling me these past two days that she needs to familiarize herself with the situation in Xiaxing City, and you've helped her a lot. We're not strangers."

Mayor Xia smiled, "It's nothing. Secretary Huilan has always been helping me. That's the truth."

"Hey, it doesn't matter who helps whom. We're all the main leaders of the locality. Helping each other is normal, all for the sake of doing a good job," Dong Xuebing said.

"Yes, all for the sake of work and serving the people," Mayor Xia replied.

After exchanging a few words, Mayor Xia bid farewell with a smile and left. He came here to meet with Dong Xuebing formally. Mayor Xia obviously wouldn't have to do this if it were an ordinary leader's family member. But obviously, Dong Xuebing wasn't an ordinary family member, and he even came down with work to supervise and understand certain situations in Jiangnan Province. From a business perspective, Mayor Xia certainly had to make a statement.

People left.

Only Dong Xuebing and his wife were left in the office.

Xie Huilan sat on the sofa, "Pour me a cup of tea, hehe."

Dong Xuebing glared at her, "Pour it yourself, lazybones."

"Fine, I'll pour it myself," said Xie Huilan, still smiling, as she picked up the teapot and poured herself a cup, then filled Dong Xuebing's cup.

Dong Xuebing took a sip and teased, "It's rare that you know how to serve me for once."

Xie Huilan chuckled, "Yes, today, my little husband performed quite well, with determination, confidence, intelligence, and articulate speech."

Dong Xuebing laughed, "Of course, when have I ever lacked confidence?"

Xie Huilan grinned, "Your confidence used to be all about your fists and tongue. Today, it's different from before. Your confidence today comes from within. It's quite impressive. Sister Xie can't help but admire you. Come on, kiss me."

Dong Xuebing chuckled, "Enough of that. It's still daylight out, and hearing you praise me like this once makes me uncomfortable. I'm getting goosebumps all over." He paused, adding, "But it's because they dared to argue with you. You are my wife, and I haven't scolded you, yet they haven't stopped criticizing you. I would have dealt with them if they weren't from the province. They don't know any better. I came all this way for tourism, and they didn't even bother to arrange my flight, let alone inquire about who I, Dong Xuebing, am. They're lucky I'm giving them face. They should take my criticism lightly and watch their behavior in the future."

Xie Huilan clapped exaggeratedly, "Impressive."

Dong Xuebing scowled at her, "Stop being sarcastic."

"Hehe, it's almost noon; let's go; let's get ready for lunch," Xie Huilan waved her hand and took out a mirror to check herself, adjusting her clothes. "The cafeteria food is ready."

Seeing a hair strand fall off her blouse, Dong Xuebing reached out to remove it, "This time, I practically had a falling out with Deputy Governor Jia and Director Zhou. They may have left, but they must be feeling uncomfortable. I've moved, and they can't do anything to me. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine."

"They won't come after you?"

"I have my little husband here, don't I? As long as you're sitting in this position, you'll deter them," Xie Huilan said with a smile. "You did well with the statement about getting the Provincial Discipline Inspection Commission to cooperate with your inspection of the officials' financial declarations. Coupled with your previous criticism, it was well said. If they ever think of targeting Sister Xie or causing trouble for her, they'll have to think twice about my little husband. As long as there's hesitation, I can stand firmly and not fear any obstruction. I've been in this job for ten years; I can handle this."

"Alright, you're amazing."

"Hehe, stop being sarcastic."

"Learn from me." Dong Xuebing also picked up his bag and was ready to go downstairs with her for lunch. "But this time, we cooperated quite well. In the past, you covered for me and held the fort. I didn't expect that I could also support you one day. It feels pretty good. You'd better take good care of me tonight."

Xie Huilan's eyes twinkled with a smile. "Take care of what?"

"What do you mean, 'take care of what'?" Dong Xuebing cheekily squeezed her buttocks.

"You, you rascal," Xie Huilan chuckled. "That's all you've got."

Chapter 1579: Warning from the Party Secretary's husband

City Party Committee.

In the corridor.

Just as he was leaving the City Party Committee Secretary's office, Dong Xuebing's phone in his pocket rang. Looking at the number, it seemed to be a call from Jiangnan Province.

"Who is it?"

"It's from our province."

"It's probably from the province. I'll answer."

"Yeah, you go ahead. I'll be downstairs in a moment."

"Okay, I'll wait for you at the cafeteria entrance. Hurry up."

Xie Huilan met a colleague, chatting with him happily before taking the elevator down together.

Dong Xuebing answered the phone.

"Hello, who is this?"

"Is this Director Dong?"

"Yes, who is this?"

"Hello, I'm from the Discipline Inspection Office of the Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection."

"Oh, what can I do for you?"

"I just heard that the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection leaders are coming to our province for supervision and inspection. I wanted to ask if we need to cooperate with you on anything. Do we need to send someone down to assist you?"

"No need, I can handle it myself. We'll discuss the rest later. If I need anything, I'll contact the comrades from the Provincial Commission for Discipline Inspection."

"Okay, then."

"Well, that's it for now."

"Okay, sorry for bothering you. You're busy."

Dong Xuebing hung up the phone and went to take the elevator.

Downstairs.

In the courtyard.

The cafeteria was just across the way, just a few steps away.

Dong Xuebing slowly approached and saw Xie Huilan and other City leaders standing at the entrance. There were about twenty people, probably all members of the City Committee and leaders

of various departments. Initially, they were prepared to host a meal for the leaders from the province, but since the provincial delegation had left, they couldn't let the food go to waste, so they decided to have it themselves. There were also many junior staff members standing around.

When Dong Xuebing arrived, everyone noticed him, and their gazes shifted towards him. They greeted him one after another, calling him "Director Dong" or "Mr. Dong".

Dong Xuebing smiled and responded to their greetings.

Xie Huilan pointed her finger and said, "Let me introduce you formally. This is my husband, Dong Xuebing."

Dong Xuebing greeted them warmly, "Hello everyone, please don't stand on ceremony. Just call me Xuebing. I work in the Discipline Inspection Commission, but now it's lunchtime, so I'm just Huilan's husband. We're all in the same city, all part of the same family, so don't treat me as an outsider. I'm also a resident of our Xiaxing City."

Everyone laughed.

Many people also had a good impression of him.

Firstly, Dong Xuebing didn't act like a senior Central Discipline Inspection Commission official. Secondly, he had stood up for them when the province had made things difficult for Xiaxing City.

Xie Huilan spoke up, "Let's eat."

The people gradually entered the cafeteria.

The tables were already set, with four or five tables of various sizes, and the dishes were plentiful.

Of course, Dong Xuebing sat at the first table with Xie Huilan. Xie Huilan sat directly at the head of the table without any hesitation, while Dong Xuebing sat beside her. Since this wasn't his workplace, Dong Xuebing didn't assert himself, but even if he did, it would be to boost his wife's confidence.

Let's eat.

There were dishes and wine.

But now it was working hours, and no one dared to drink.

However, Dong Xuebing poured himself a full glass and stood up, raising his glass to the people at the first table and the tables behind him. "We can't drink during working hours, but as a family member, I don't have so many restrictions. I'll raise a glass to all of you. I appreciate your support of my wife's work, and I hope we can support each other and understand each other in the future. So, cheers everyone. I'll drink first."

Gululu, Dong Xuebing drank up his cup and toasted.

"Mr. Dong, you're too kind."

"It's necessary, it's necessary."

"Mr. Dong, you have a good drinking capacity."

Everyone quickly raised their glasses with tea or other beverages instead of alcohol.

Since she took office, many of the subordinates who had leaned toward Xie Huilan didn't think much of it. Still, those who belonged to Mayor Xia's faction or other neutral subordinates felt a bit uncomfortable. There was no other reason but that the husband of the City Committee Secretary was too dominant, both in personality and in his workplace. It felt like he thanked everyone for supporting Secretary Xie by having a Central Commission for Discipline Inspection leader toast to them. It seemed like he was implying something to them.

Mayor Xia remained composed and even chatted with Dong Xuebing with a smile.

However, a few City committee members in Mayor Xia's camp felt slightly bitter when they sipped their tea, and their mood wasn't very high. Some of them even started to think.

Following suit, neutral subordinates or leaders who were previously aligned with the former secretary began to communicate actively with Xie Huilan and Dong Xuebing. Evidently, their attitudes had changed, and they were more polite to Secretary Xie. This incident, where Dong Xuebing intimidated the provincial authorities, was not just about intimidating the province but also about intimidating Xiaping City. He dared to criticize even the officials from the provincial inspection team.

The situation in Xiaping City had subtly changed.

Dong Xuebing and his position brought about all of this.

Seeing this situation, Dong Xuebing was also quite satisfied. He came here to support his wife, and if he could help her stand firm and develop smoothly, that would be his most outstanding achievement. Now, it seemed that the effect had been achieved. He didn't say much more. Sometimes, saying a few words was enough, and saying too much would have the opposite effect. Huilan will handle the remaining matters herself.

"Come, let's eat."

"Mr. Dong, I'll toast to you."

"I can't handle alcohol well. Let's all use tea instead."

"Alright, feel free. Here's to you."

The meal was lively, and Dong Xuebing remained the center of attention. Firstly, because of his rank and status, and secondly, his performance today was too eye-catching.

After the meal.

An afternoon passed.

Some of the subordinates who weren't at the City Committee and most of the government officials gradually heard about what happened in the City Committee courtyard that morning. When they heard that the provincial inspection team had criticized Secretary Xie, and then Secretary Xie's husband had promptly revealed his position in the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and criticized the provincial leaders, the officials in Xiaping City were all amazed. It had been many years since such a dramatic scene had occurred in the city. Many officials wished they had been there to witness it. After all, seeing the provincial leaders being scolded and leaving in embarrassment was quite impressive.

Moreover, many officials also sensed something unsettling:

The new City Committee Secretary's husband is a Central Commission for Discipline Inspection leader.

And he is in charge of Jiangnan Province, which oversees their province.

This matter couldn't be kept secret. In the blink of an eye, it spread like wildfire.

Chapter 1580: Meeting classmate at the airport

Three days later.

Noon.

Jiangnan Province, the provincial capital.

A taxi stopped outside the airport. Dong Xuebing paid and got out. He had no luggage, just a tiny bag, and he strolled into the airport. Checking the time, the boarding time wasn't far off. Dong Xuebing regretfully glanced at the beautiful scenery outside the airport. There was no time to explore the provincial capital now. It would be better to go to Macau first, and if there was time after returning, he could tour the provincial capital.

Inside the terminal.

Dong Xuebing went to complete the check-in procedures.

Ring ring ring, his wife's number popped up on his phone.

Dong Xuebing checked his pocket and answered, "Have you arrived?"

"I just got off the plane. I'm here." Xie Huilan chuckled. "How about you?"

"I haven't boarded yet; I just got my boarding pass. You're quite fast," Dong Xuebing said.

Xie Huilan chuckled, "Morning flight, how could it not be fast? Take your time. We'll go to the hotel first."

Dong Xuebing nodded, "Send me the address later. I'll find you when I arrive."

"Do you want Sister Xie to arrange a car to pick you up and then come to the hotel to greet you?" Xie Huilan suggested.

Dong Xuebing shook his head. "Forget it. You're here for study and observation, and bringing family members is a perk. Let's not make it special; it might not look good to others. Deputy Governor Jia is leading the tour this time, so we need to be even more cautious. This trip is mainly for leisure. I don't want to create unnecessary trouble."

"Heh, it was supposed to be him."

"What was supposed to be him?"

"I just got the news this morning: Deputy Governor Jia isn't feeling well and won't be coming."

"Oh, is he really unwell or just pretending?"

"I don't know. There shouldn't be any other officials leading the tour this time."

"Well, that's not bad. Anyway, you don't have any activities in the afternoon, right?"

"I'm not sure yet. It might be study tours or dinners. Quite a few local officials are receiving us, so there will definitely be some socializing, but it doesn't involve family members."

"We'll just have free time."

"More or less. Let's leave it at that. The car is waiting for me."

"Alright, go ahead, see you later."

After hanging up the phone, Dong Xuebing went through security. He didn't have a good impression of Deputy Governor Jia, so it was better that he didn't come.

Today was the day for the Macau study tour. Xiaping City's small airport didn't have flights to Macau, so they had to fly to the provincial capital first. It was called a study tour, but it was a leisure trip, an annual benefit. High-ranking officials from various cities in Jiangnan Province participated, but the number of places was limited. At least the top leaders couldn't all leave. Otherwise, it would be troublesome if something happened in the city. The Secretary and Mayor could only choose one to go or neither. Each city had a few rotationally allocated places for deputy mayors or department heads. For example, Xiaping City sent the Secretary, two deputy mayors, and the heads of three departments. Although the number of leadership positions was limited, it might not seem like a lot, but each leader brought one or two family members, making the group quite large. That was also why Huilan and the others couldn't get tickets for the morning flight. It was said that more than ten family members from the province couldn't get tickets, so they had to take later flights. Dong Xuebing was the same. He was also cautious after revealing his position in the Commission for Discipline Inspection in Xiaping City. He didn't let Xie Huilan ask the staff of the City Committee Office to arrange tickets for him. Instead, he bought his ticket with his money and didn't intend to claim reimbursement. It was to prevent others from gossiping. Dong Xuebing's position could intimidate many people, but he also had to pay special attention to party discipline and regulations.

After a while.

In the airport lounge.

Dong Xuebing found a vacant spot to sit down, crossed his legs, and watched the planes take off and land outside the window while listening to music with his earphones.

One minute, three minutes, five minutes, and the boarding gate still hadn't opened.

Dong Xuebing was a little impatient, tapping his leg with his hand.

Suddenly, it seemed like someone was coming from the opposite direction. "Hey, isn't this Xuebing?"

The music playing in Dong Xuebing's ears wasn't deafening, and he heard it. He looked up in surprise, not expecting someone here to recognize him. After a moment, he was also stunned. "Hou Wen?"

"Haha, it's you."

"Why, it's you."

"I was wondering how come you're here."

"You've changed. I wouldn't recognize you if you didn't call me."

"You're terrible at talking. It's only been a few years, and I've gained a little weight, but not enough to be unrecognizable."

"Haha, it's like dozens of pounds."

"But you haven't changed. Still so skinny."

Coming up was a young man, about the same age as Dong Xuebing, with a round face and several pimples. He was a bit chubby but not too fat, just average. However, during their college years, he had the same skinny figure as Dong Xuebing, so Dong Xuebing hesitated to recognize him. This was Hou Wen, Dong Xuebing's college classmate and his roommate for four years. During his schooling years, Dong Xuebing was relatively low-key and didn't like to socialize much. He had few close friends, but Hou Wen counted as one. After all, they had lived together for four years, and those youthful years were always memorable. So, it was pretty exciting for Dong Xuebing and Hou Wen to meet here unexpectedly.

Dong Xuebing stood up to greet him. "What a coincidence."

Hou Wen lightly patted his chest. "You've disappeared for three years and didn't even contact me after graduating."

Dong Xuebing laughed. "How could I not contact you? You went to the south right after graduation, and I couldn't see you in person. Long-distance calls were expensive, and I didn't have that much money."

Hou Wen said, "I called your home several times, but no one answered."

Dong Xuebing coughed. "I haven't lived on Heping Street for two years."

"Anyway, you didn't contact me. I remember that. Let's exchange phone numbers soon. You must treat us to a meal." Hou Wen said confidently.

Dong Xuebing chuckled. "You changed your phone number without telling me. Why am I the one treating you to a meal? Bullshit. You should be the one treating me to a meal. No, it's two meals. You promised to treat us before graduation, but right after graduation, you went to the South without seeing us. You still have the nerve to ask me to treat you. I won't mention this matter anymore."

Roast donkey meat was their favorite dish in college. Whenever there was a celebration, everyone in the dormitory would eat roast donkey meat. Now it seemed like it wasn't expensive, just an ordinary dish. But back then, they were all poor students. Eating roast donkey meat was as enjoyable as dining at the Shangri-La Hotel. They were happy in those days.

Hou Wen coughed. "At that time, there were urgent matters. My dad arranged a job for me, and the reporting time was set. I couldn't delay."

"Admitting defeat?"

"Alright, it's my fault, it's my fault."

"What do you mean it's your fault? Haha, it's your fault."

"Okay, I'll treat. Stop embarrassing me. I miss our group of classmates."

"Then why didn't you come for the school anniversary?"

"What school anniversary? I had no idea."

"It was the anniversary of the university. I only found out when I ran into Teacher Jiang. I even saw Ruhua, Zhao Meng, and Le Haidong."

"How are they?"

"They're doing fine. Some married, some joined the system, and some joined state-owned enterprises. Anyway, they're all doing well. Come, let's sit down and talk slowly."

"Let's talk later. My mom is behind me. Have you met her?"

At this point, Dong Xuebing noticed a middle-aged woman walking towards them, not in a good mood. Hou Wen also looked a lot like his mother. Dong Xuebing had seen Hou's mother when they just entered freshman year, Hou's mother had brought him in. But the memory wasn't very clear, after all, it had been so many years, so seeing her now felt a bit unfamiliar, but he still went over to greet her.

"Auntie," Dong Xuebing said.

Hou's mother glanced at him. "Who is this?"

Hou Wen put his arm around Dong Xuebing's shoulder. "He's my college classmate, Dong Xuebing."

"Oh." Hou's mother nodded indifferently to Dong Xuebing and sat in the rest area.

In Dong Xuebing's memory, Hou's mother seemed like this, so nothing was unexpected. He had always heard during college that Hou Wen's father was a senior official in the south, but Hou Wen never mentioned what specific position his father held. He was usually low-key and easy-going, warm and friendly to everyone. From his appearance, you couldn't tell he was the son of an official. Probably only a few of their dorm mates knew some details.

Seeing Hou Wen, Dong Xuebing also sat down opposite him. "Which flight are you waiting for?"

"This one," Dong Xuebing pointed.

"Oh, you're going to Macau too?" Hou Wen exclaimed.

Dong Xuebing blinked. "You too on this flight? What a coincidence."

Hou Wen was thrilled. "Then we'll have a lot to talk about this time. It's over an hour on the plane. What's your seat number? Let me check." After checking, they weren't seated together, and the seats were quite far apart. Hou Wen said, "Boarding will start soon. It's okay. I'll switch seats later. We must have a good chat. There's so much to say. You have no idea how happy I am to see you. I've been reminiscing about our college days day and night, but you changed your phone number, and I couldn't reach you."

Dong Xuebing felt warm inside. "Me too, three years without seeing each other."

"Yeah, three years." Hou Wen sighed a bit. "After starting work, I realized how good the school was and how good our group of brothers were."

Dong Xuebing said, "The friends we make now always feel a bit shallow, not as genuine as ours."

Hou Wen slapped his thigh. "You're damn right."