

PAW 1800

Chapter 1800

The next day.

Around seven in the morning.

Chengguan Police Station, a small room on the first floor.

This was a duty room at the police station, sometimes used by officers working overtime to rest or for detainees brought in after a night of drinking. Every police station has a few such rooms, but this particular room was requisitioned yesterday afternoon. A few officers and staff quickly cleaned it up, as Chief Chang Lin personally instructed it. The officers understood that this room was designated for someone important, so they didn't dare be lax, even replacing the old steel bed with a new one, changing the bedding, and bringing in some daily necessities.

Dong Xuebing was brought in as a suspect. Although he was formally cooperating with the investigation, the police certainly did not want him to cooperate. However, since Dong Xuebing refused to have the case withdrawn and readily admitted to hitting someone, the police had no choice but to respect his wishes. Now that they had taken such a high-ranking official into custody, it was difficult to ask him to leave. They could only follow the rules and comply with the county Party Secretary's wishes. It was impossible to arrange for Dong Xuebing to stay in the detention room or a small black room, so they opted for this solution and cleared the duty room for him.

In the room.

Dong Xuebing woke up, climbed down from the steel bed, yawned, looked at his watch, and then grabbed his toothbrush, toothpaste, and a cup. He casually draped a towel over his shoulder and strolled out of the room, humming a tune as he walked towards the bathroom.

Ring, ring.

The phone rang.

Dong Xuebing answered, "Hello, Mom."

Luan Xiaoping's voice came from the other end, "Have you arrived?"

"I'm in Jiaoning County. Just got here yesterday," Dong Xuebing replied.

Luan Xiaoping said, "It's good that you arrived safely. I heard you drove there. I'm still a bit worried. Have you found a place to stay?"

Dong Xuebing cheerfully responded, "I found one. It's quite nice."

Luan Xiaoping said, "That's good. Take care of yourself, eat more vegetables, and drink less alcohol. Don't neglect yourself."

Dong Xuebing said, "When have I ever not been alone when starting a new job? I'm fine. I'll take care of myself."

"Oh, you're just saying that. You never take care of yourself properly. There's always something that happens," Luan Xiaoping huffed. "Don't cause trouble, do you hear me?"

"Got it. You and Uncle Yang should also take care of yourselves. If anything serious happens, call me immediately. You know how good I am with medical stuff." Dong Xuebing didn't mention yesterday's incident to his mother, preferring to share good news rather than worries. His mother was getting older, and he didn't want her to be constantly worried about him.

After hanging up, Dong Xuebing arrived at the bathroom.

The bathroom was also on the first floor. It was a medium-sized public restroom.

When Dong Xuebing entered, someone was already inside, a young man in a police uniform, though Dong Xuebing didn't pay him any attention. He went straight to the sink, squeezed toothpaste onto his brush, and began brushing his teeth loudly, making quite a noise. This caught the attention of the officer next to him.

Initially, the officer didn't pay much attention, figuring that restrooms always have people. But the loud brushing noise made the officer glance over while relieving himself, and upon seeing Dong Xuebing, the officer nearly wet his pants.

“Damn.”

“It’s the new county Party Secretary!”

The police officer stiffened, and the urge to urinate vanished instantly. He stammered, trying to greet Dong Xuebing, but didn’t dare speak up.

Dong Xuebing didn’t even glance at him. After brushing his teeth and washing his face, he leisurely draped the towel over his shoulder and walked out, humming, "The East is Red."

The officer, who had been trying to relieve himself, could not do so. After finally pulling up his pants and wiping the sweat from his forehead, he realized that he had never felt so uneasy about using the restroom before. Damn it, he was just a small officer, newly inducted into the civil service. He hadn’t expected to share a restroom with a county Party Secretary and see such a casual side of him. Although he was excited, the reason for Dong Xuebing staying at the police station made it hard for him to smile. Everyone in the station knew about the incident from the previous day. Given Dong Xuebing’s demeanor, it was clear he wasn’t planning to leave anytime soon. They were unsure how this would be resolved. It was said that the Public Security Bureau Chief Chang-Lin had already started addressing the issue, and many personnel were under investigation. It was sure that many would face trouble, but the extent of the repercussions remained unclear.

Soon after.

At work.

Dong Xuebing had changed into his clothes and put on a coat in the duty room. He aimlessly walked out, enjoying his time off and not needing to go to work. He was unusually relaxed, wearing winter slippers, making a distinct "thud" sound as he walked out of the office.

It was time for work, and police station personnel were arriving.

Dong Xuebing walked out as they walked in, causing them to collide head-on.

Unfazed, Dong Xuebing walked out gracefully without any sign of awkwardness. He looked like an ordinary citizen rather than a leader. His slippers made a smooth, rhythmic sound as he walked.

Others, however, had a different view.

The officers who witnessed this could only exchange helpless smiles. They were at a loss for what to do. When did the police station become a hotel? Was he not planning to leave? Why was he wearing slippers early in the morning? Was he going for breakfast or a stroll? It was too casual, and while Dong Xuebing might be relaxed, they were left in a difficult situation. Honestly, it was very awkward. Previously, they would have seen close contact with a county Party Secretary as a good opportunity, but now, seeing Dong Xuebing's behavior, no one felt that way. The pressure was immense.

"Secretary."

"Secretary Dong."

"Good morning, Secretary."

Not only the police officers but many people in the county had heard about the incident. Of course, the police officers recognized Dong Xuebing and had to greet him.

Dong Xuebing didn't respond, as if he hadn't heard, and leisurely walked out to find a roadside breakfast stall.

"Boss."

"Yes, what would you like to eat?"

"Do you have any local specialties?"

"Not really. Most breakfast items are similar nationwide."

"Alright then, just something simple. I'm eating alone."

Although Dong Xuebing hoped to try some local specialties, he ended up with baozi (steamed buns) for breakfast. Thankfully, the soup was spicy hot soup, adding some local flavor. Although Dong Xuebing had eaten this soup in Beijing before, as the stall owner said, popular local snacks are available everywhere. It's more about authenticity in taste and preparation.

After finishing breakfast, Dong Xuebing felt much warmer.

He settled the bill and asked, "Boss, where can I buy some vegetables around here?"

The owner, quite helpful, pointed in a direction and said, "There's a vegetable market over there, but it's a bit small, and they don't have everything. You can check it out."

"Alright, thanks." Dong Xuebing said and left.

Sometimes, understanding a country's situation is that simple: eating breakfast, chatting a bit, and strolling around the streets provides the most direct and genuine feedback.

Up ahead.

At the vegetable market.

Dong Xuebing planned to stay at the police station for a few days. He wasn't going to retract what he said. He was waiting for a resolution, one that would satisfy him. However, he didn't mention how he expected Chang Lin to handle the situation. He wasn't planning to use his status to dictate terms; instead, he demonstrated his stance through his actions. Dong Xuebing decided that the rest was not his concern. Although he claimed not to use his status, it was inevitable that people would take his position into account. Dong Xuebing didn't care much about that. He thought, "So what if you're using my status to pressure people? You've crossed me, and now you've got to deal with it. I don't care who you are or what you do."

"Let's see the vegetables."

"How much for this?"

"Five yuan per jin (500 grams)."

“Can you make it cheaper? I need to buy other things, too.”

“You can pick out what you want.”

“This one, and this one too, and a bit of that. Just grab a handful. No need to pack too much.”

Dong Xuebing usually didn't haggle over prices. Whether spending millions or just a few RMB, he was indifferent. However, bargaining was a way of life for him. Being alone in this place gave Dong Xuebing a sense of living and presence.

At the police station.

Around nine o'clock.

Soon, several officers in the courtyard saw Dong Xuebing coming back with a bag of vegetables, and they were utterly speechless.

He went to buy vegetables?

Is he going to cook?

Does he really think of the police station as his home?

Everyone who saw Dong Xuebing carrying vegetables had particularly expressive reactions.

Dong Xuebing was nonchalant. He didn't seem to consider himself an outsider at all. Cooking and doing laundry were all part of his plan. If he said he was staying here, he meant it. Dong Xuebing had always been someone who stood by his word.

But others had a different take.

They were further understanding the temperament of this new county Party Secretary. With his bag of vegetables, his tendency to resort to violence over disagreements, and his impressive

strength to overturn a minibus, everyone internally shouted, “What kind of county Party Secretary have they sent to us? This is completely out of the ordinary!”

“Does it have to be like this?”