

## PAW 1805

Chapter 1805

Morning.

Jiaolin County.

All the leaders of Jiaolin County had gathered at the County Party Committee compound. Those who arrived late hurried to join the group.

“Minister Ma!”

“Minister Ma!”

Everyone greeted him.

Ma Wei nodded slightly, “Everyone's here.”

A middle-aged man with a receding hairline stepped forward. He was quite overweight, possibly around 160 pounds, and short in stature, which made him appear even rounder. He had a beaming smile on his face. “Minister Ma, sorry we’re late. I had people keeping an eye out, but it seems there was a delay in the report from over there. We only learned about your arrival when you were almost here. I’ll be sure to reprimand them later.”

Ma Wei smiled, “It’s alright.”

The plump middle-aged man turned to Dong Xuebing and said, “You must be Secretary Dong.”

Ma Wei replied, “Yes, this is Comrade Dong Xuebing. You’ll work together as a team in the future, so cooperate and communicate well.”

The plump man was County Mayor Zhang Dongfang.

Zhang Dongfang smiled warmly, “Hello, Secretary Dong.”

Dong Xuebing shook hands with him and smiled, “Hello, Mayor Zhang.”

Zhang Dongfang said, “Secretary Li has been gone for quite some time. We’ve been waiting for you to take over and guide us. We’ve been eagerly anticipating your arrival.”

Dong Xuebing smiled and replied, “Mayor Zhang, you’re too kind. I’ll need your guidance on many matters. It’s good that we’ve met today and should communicate more in the future.”

Zhang Dongfang responded, “Of course.”

The two exchanged pleasantries. Even though Dong Xuebing harbored some biases against Zhang Dongfang, given their different ranks and previous incidents, he didn’t show it. Zhang Dongfang had never visited the police station or contacted Dong Xuebing proactively, which naturally led to some speculation. However, on this occasion, it was important to keep things diplomatic. With the leaders from the city’s Organization Department and many local officials present, it was not the time to express any dissatisfaction. There would be plenty of time to address any issues later.

However, the scene felt somewhat off to the onlookers. The age difference between the two was striking—Dong Xuebing was in his mid-twenties, while Zhang Dongfang was in his forties, making it a gap of about twenty years. More dramatically, the younger Dong Xuebing was the top leader, while the older Zhang Dongfang was a deputy. The higher-ranking officials maintained their composure, but some lower-ranking or junior officials couldn’t hide their reactions. A few even peeked out from windows to glimpse the new county party secretary, their expressions reflecting a mix of complexity.

He’s so young.

Moreover, recent rumors about Dong Xuebing, including reports of him assaulting police and kicking over a minibus on his first day, have led to further doubts. Many questioned whether someone like him could effectively manage a county. In the bureaucracy, seniority and experience were highly valued, and it wasn’t unusual for people to be skeptical. It was even reported that Dong Xuebing was previously a director at the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), a high-ranking department. Though both positions were at the same level in terms of formal rank, a CCDI director was generally considered to have a higher status and more significant authority. The fact that Dong Xuebing had come to their county, and reportedly at his request, puzzled many, leaving a lingering question about his real intentions.

Everyone knows what kind of place it is at the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI). Many people are eager to get in, but only a few get the chance. Not to mention others, even the county party secretaries in their city would be thrilled to be appointed as a director at the CCDI. Yet, Dong Xuebing declined such a position and actively sought to work at the grassroots level in a place like Jiaolin County, which is neither particularly good nor particularly bad. This decision is almost incomprehensible.

Why?

No one knows for sure.

Perhaps only Dong Xuebing himself knows the reason. No matter how hard they try, others cannot fathom his intentions because they cannot foresee the future.

Ma Wei said, "Secretary Dong, let me introduce you."

Dong Xuebing replied, "Sure, thank you, Minister Ma."

Despite their somewhat tense interaction in the car, formalities must be observed in this setting.

Ma Wei pointed to a middle-aged man behind him and said, "This is Wei Zhixuan, the Deputy Secretary of the County Party Committee. Old Wei has been working in Jiaolin County since he entered the system. He's quite easygoing, though he tends to work obsessively."

Wei Zhixuan stepped forward and shook hands with Dong Xuebing. "Hello, Secretary Dong."

Dong Xuebing smiled and shook hands with him. "Secretary Wei, I'm new here. You've been with Jiaolin County for a long time, so I'll need your guidance on many matters."

Wei Zhixuan responded, "You're too kind, Secretary Dong. We'll follow your lead."

Ma Wei continued the introductions.

"This is Chang Lin, the Political and Legal Affairs Committee Secretary."

“This is Han Wu, the Minister of the Organization Department.”

“This is Sun Changzhi, the Minister of the Propaganda Department.”

“This is Xu Zhuang, the Executive Deputy County Head.”

“This is Song Hefe, the Deputy County Head.”

“This is Wang Binheng, the Secretary of the Discipline Inspection Commission.”

“This is Li Niu, the United Front Work Department Minister.”

“This is Meng Hanmei, the County Party Committee Office Director.”

In addition to Dong Xuebing, Jiaolin County has ten members on the County Party Committee. Ma Wei introduced each of them, indicating his familiarity with the county.

Dong Xuebing’s memory of faces wasn’t strong, but he managed to remember a few key individuals: Zhang Dongfang, the County Mayor, was someone he needed to remember. Chang Lin, whom he had already met and had socialized with a few times, was another. Lastly, Meng Hanmei, the County Party Committee Office Director, stood out. She was a woman in her forties who was not exceptionally beautiful but had a striking figure for her age.

Dong Xuebing had a habit of remembering women, especially those who made a strong impression, a quirk he couldn’t shake.

After the introductions, everyone shook hands and got acquainted.

Soon, Ma Wei said, “Are we ready?”

County Mayor Zhang Dongfang replied, “Everything is set. The auditorium has been prepared.”

“Alright then, let’s go. I’ll announce the appointment,” Ma Wei instructed.

The group proceeded to the office building and headed toward the small auditorium on the top floor. By the time they had finished talking in the courtyard, everything was ready in the auditorium, and all the necessary people were in place, knowing that Dong Xuebing was coming to take office that day.

When Dong Xuebing walked in, he found the interior just as dilapidated as the exterior. Unlike his previous experiences, where the office buildings were shabby on the outside but well-maintained inside, Jiaolin County was the opposite: the inside matched the rundown condition of the outside. The auditorium's ceiling even had water stains from melted snow, with several visible leaks, clearly showing years of neglect. It looked quite hazardous.

Dong Xuebing glanced up at the ceiling.

Noticing Dong Xuebing's gaze, Chang Lin, who was familiar with him, said, "The new County Party Committee building is nearly finished and we should be moving soon. They do regular repairs here yearly, but since we're moving to a new place, there hasn't been any maintenance this year."

Dong Xuebing nodded.

The auditorium was nearly full, and as soon as Dong Xuebing entered, all eyes were on him. Having faced similar situations many times before, Dong Xuebing was unperturbed and confidently walked up to the podium with Ma Wei.

"Quiet, please," Ma Wei said, taking the microphone.

The murmurs in the crowd gradually subsided.

After clearing his throat, Ma Wei read Dong Xuebing's appointment on behalf of the City Organization Department.

Everyone applauded, and Ma Wei handed the microphone to Dong Xuebing. Dong Xuebing took it with a smile and spoke confidently, delivering a speech filled with formalities and grandiose statements. Dong Xuebing was very articulate; he would have needed a prepared speech in the past, but now he could handle such speeches spontaneously without any prior preparation.

After his speech, there was a round of applause.

The county leaders also applauded without exception.

At that moment, Dong Xuebing had indeed assumed his new position. Looking at the respectful applause from the crowd, Dong Xuebing's face was serious, but he felt pretty satisfied. In previous appointments, Dong Xuebing had to consider the reactions of other leaders and was often cautious. But this time, as the top leader of a county, he was the highest-ranking person in the room. Even if they were unhappy, everyone had to show him respect, which was an indescribable feeling.