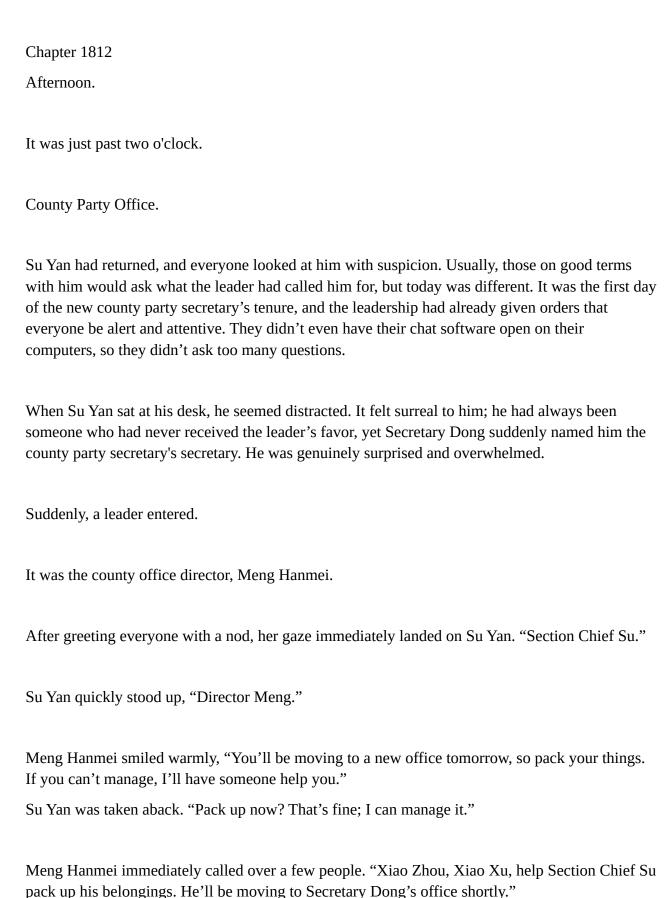
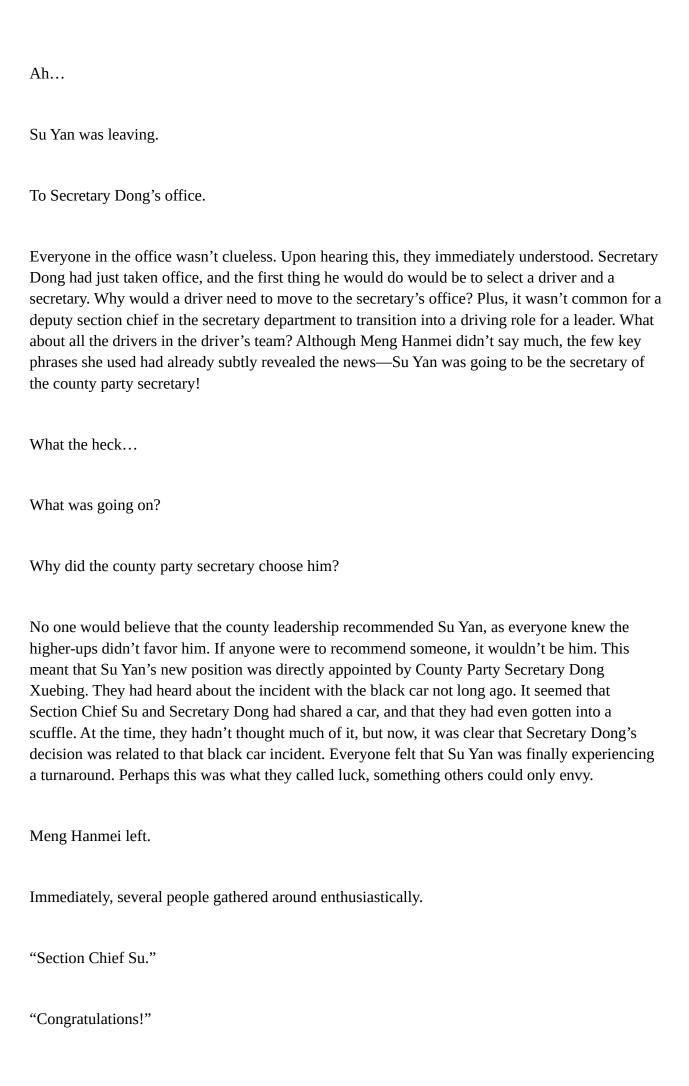
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"Section Chief Su, you must treat us to a meal!"

Before long, nearly everyone in the office had come to congratulate him.

Su Yan had decent relationships with his colleagues but didn't think they were that good. Especially those who hadn't been very friendly with him before also came over to warmly congratulate him on his promotion, which made Su Yan feel a bit out of place. Nevertheless, he thanked everyone one by one. Since things hadn't been finalized yet, he didn't dare say too much; he expressed his gratitude.

Once everything was sorted out, the people called by Meng Hanmei helped Su Yan move his belongings to the outer room of Secretary Dong's office and chatted with him for a while.

Word spread quickly.

No one expected Secretary Dong to appoint Su Yan as his secretary. Everyone was quite surprised; this truly caught many people off guard.

After work.

Everyone packed up their things and headed home.

There were no secrets in the office. When Su Yan exited the office building, many people in the courtyard greeted him—some acquaintances. In contrast, others were people he didn't even recognize, clearly folks he had never spoken to before, but they were now all politely saying hello. Su Yan understood the reason behind this change and didn't let it inflate his ego; he hurried away after responding to a few greetings.

He didn't go home first.

The first thing Su Yan did was head to a small library in the county town. He browsed for a long time and bought several books, one about the Beijing dialect. Since things were more or less settled, Su Yan needed to prepare for his future work. He felt he had many shortcomings, and to repay Secretary Dong's trust, he naturally needed to put in extra effort. Su Yan thought it was essential to understand the Beijing dialect because Dong Xuebing was a native of Beijing. Some

people say that the Mandarin in Beijing is the best in the country, but Su Yan doesn't quite agree. While Mandarin is derived from the Beijing dialect and is broadly similar, there are also many differences. People from other regions often have a significant difference between their dialects and Mandarin, so they take formal Mandarin courses in school with a systematic learning process. However, people from Beijing don't have that; no schools in Beijing teach Mandarin. Therefore, although Mandarin and the Beijing accent share a lot in common, the Mandarin spoken by Beijingers can sometimes be less standard than that of others—especially someone like Dong Xuebing, who grew up in the alleys, where the accent is even stronger.

For instance, "不儿" means "not," and "我告儿你" means "I tell you."

Su Yan found the accent relatively unfamiliar; he often couldn't understand many phrases because Dong Xuebing tended to slur his words. Many characters were replaced directly with their rhyming sounds, and there were certain unique colloquialisms from Beijing that Su Yan couldn't even analyze the meanings of. Therefore, he felt it was essential to strengthen his learning in this area. Otherwise, if the leader spoke for a long time and Su Yan didn't understand or grasp some of the meanings, how could he fulfill his role as a secretary? Every word from the leader was incredibly important, and he couldn't afford to misunderstand even a single word. That was a mistake Su Yan did not want to make.

He never thought of asking the leader to speak more Mandarin.

He couldn't suggest that unless he genuinely wanted to quit. The only solution was for him to improve himself and learn and adapt to the characteristics of the Beijing dialect. That way, there would be no barriers to communication in the future.

These language barriers in communication are common in many places. No one knows where the newly appointed leader comes from, and leaders are usually older, so their Mandarin isn't as smooth as that of younger people. Subordinates must adapt to the leaders; it's unreasonable to expect leaders to cater to their subordinates.