

## PAW 1813

Chapter 1813

Evening.

County Government Residential Compound.

In Dong Xuebing's dormitory.

The room was spacious, located on the top floor of a duplex apartment with two levels. The guest room included three bedrooms, with two bathrooms—one on each floor. The second level even had a small open-air terrace. Overall, the apartment was expansive and well-lit. Although Dong Xuebing owned a villa and a traditional courtyard house, he had never lived in such an upscale residence in the government compound throughout his years of service. While he wasn't thrilled about it, having stayed in many nice places before, he was quite satisfied. As someone new to the area, it wouldn't have been appropriate for him to purchase a house immediately. He would have made do if the environment had been subpar, but now it seemed unnecessary. Dong Xuebing was content with his current living situation.

The duplex was fully furnished with all the necessary home appliances.

The blankets, mattresses, and pillows were all brand new.

Even the refrigerator was fully stocked with various vegetables and meats.

Dong Xuebing was about to prepare dinner. After opening the fridge and taking a look, he nodded slightly. He wasn't someone who sought luxury, but the treatment he was receiving was a recognition of his work achievements over the years. Dong Xuebing reached this point through hard work. Sometimes, people are looking for an acknowledgment of their value in society. Dong Xuebing didn't know about others, but it made him feel like his efforts over the years had been worth it. This sense of fulfillment kept him going and motivated him to keep fighting and working hard.

He cracked some eggs.

Sliced some tomatoes.

Dong Xuebing made a bowl of tomato noodle soup, brought it to the second floor, and carried it straight to the terrace without worrying about the cold outside. He sat on a bamboo lounge chair, which creaked as he sat down. Glancing to the side, Dong Xuebing gazed at the county's night view while eating his noodles.

After dinner.

His phone rang constantly. Dong Xuebing answered a few calls—some discussing business, others inviting him to dinner. However, he turned them all down. Today, he didn't want to see anyone. This wasn't due to work or political considerations but simply his mood. He wanted a quiet day. Anything that needed handling could wait until tomorrow—it wouldn't make a difference if it were dealt with a day later. So, Dong Xuebing put on his coat and went downstairs. He wanted to take a more direct look at Jiaolin County, immerse himself in this city, and find a sense of belonging.

Five minutes.

Ten minutes.

Half an hour.

Dong Xuebing wandered, not knowing where he was heading. He only noticed that the surroundings were becoming more remote. A road sign read Hengchang Road.

Hengchang Road.

It seemed familiar.

Dong Xuebing thought for a moment. He recalled seeing this road name earlier today while reviewing Su Yan's file. It seemed to be the address of his new secretary's house. Looking around, Dong Xuebing realized he didn't know how to return. No taxis were in sight, and he didn't feel like calling a driver. He had just sent Xiao Wang away that afternoon, and it wouldn't be appropriate to call him out again now—he was probably having dinner.

So, Dong Xuebing called Meng Hanmei, the head of the county office.

She answered with a smile, “Hello, Secretary.”

Dong Xuebing said, “Can you give me Su Yan’s address?”

“Oh, Secretary Su? Please hold on a moment. I’ll send it to you via text right away,” Meng Hanmei didn’t ask any more questions. When a leader gave instructions, she just carried them out.

Dong Xuebing chuckled, “Alright, thanks, Sister Meng.”

A moment later, an address arrived: it was indeed Hengchang Road, No. 37 Compound.

Without informing Su Yan, Dong Xuebing headed to the compound. After all, he was just taking a walk, so there was no need to be formal.

Meanwhile.

In a household within the same residential compound.

Ding-dong, ding-dong, Su Yan rang the doorbell.

The door opened, and an elderly woman with quite a bit of gray hair frowned from behind it, complaining, “Why are you coming home so late? Do you even know what time it is?”

Su Yan smiled and waved a bag of books in the air. “I went to buy some books.”

His mother, still displeased, said, “Even so, you should’ve called home. You didn’t even say a word. We’ve been waiting for you to have dinner. The food’s gone cold.”

Su Yan squeezed into the house, swallowing his hunger. “I’m starving.”

In the living room, Su Yan’s father was still eating. He glanced back, “You’re home.”

“Yes, Dad, I’m back.” Su Yan put down the books, clearly in a good mood.

His mother nudged him, "Alright, go wash your hands and hurry up for dinner. I'll reheat the food for you."

Su Yan replied, "Mom, let's heat it later. I left in such a rush this morning that I didn't even have time to shower. I've been uncomfortable all day, so I must wash up first, haha."

His mother looked at him. "What are you grinning about? What's got you in such a good mood?"

His father said, "Just the other day, he got into a fight with someone. What good news could he possibly have?"

At work, Su Yan had kept his emotions in check because he knew that showing too much enthusiasm before things were finalized might give the wrong impression to his superiors, making him seem immature. But at home, there were no such restrictions. Although the final result hadn't been announced yet, the decision had already been made, and Su Yan couldn't hold in his excitement any longer.

"Dad, Mom, I've got something to tell you," Su Yan said thoughtfully as he sat on the sofa, clearing his throat. "My position is going to change."

His mother was startled. "You've been demoted?"

His father's face also darkened. "They've sent you away?"

Su Yan couldn't help but laugh. "What are you talking about?"

His mother shook her head. "Your leaders have never favored you. Do you expect a promotion if they haven't sent you away?"

Su Yan grinned. "It's true. I've been promoted. The leader has already spoken to me. It'll happen in the next day or two. I'll be deputy director of the county office."

His mother was shocked. "Really?"

Su Yan replied, "Of course it's true! Why would I lie about this?"

Now somewhat excited, his father exclaimed, "Wow, that's great news! That's a real promotion to a deputy-level position! My son is finally making his way up!"

Su Yan interrupted, "Wait, I'm not done yet. The deputy director role is just a title. I won't be working there."

His father, confused, asked, "Then where are you going?"

With pride in his voice, Su Yan said, "You know the new county party secretary, right? Well, Secretary Dong specifically requested me to be his secretary."

"What? A secretary?"

"The county party secretary's secretary?"

Both his father and mother were stunned.

Su Yan's father had worked in a state-owned enterprise before retiring. Although he was no longer in the workforce, he still understood the workings of government agencies. He knew exactly how valuable a county party secretary's position was—it was the top secretary in the county. Sometimes, that position held more influence than even a deputy county mayor. But knowing all this only made Su Yan's father more incredulous. He asked, "That's impossible. How could such a good opportunity fall into your lap? The county party secretary just took office—how could he have noticed you? Your record isn't even that impressive!"

Su Yan felt awkward and said, "There's something I didn't tell you guys. Do you know when I hit the unlicensed taxi driver? Secretary Dong was in the car, sitting right next to me. So, we talked back then, but I had no idea he was the county party secretary. Later, when I found out, I was terrified. I've been on edge ever since, worrying about it. Who would've thought Secretary Dong would specifically request me to be his secretary? I didn't see that coming at all."

Su Yan's father still felt uneasy. "Is it confirmed?"

Su Yan nodded. "Both the secretary and Director Meng have spoken to me. It's a done deal. I'm not going back to the secretary's office tomorrow. I've packed my things and will report directly to Secretary Dong."

His mother slapped her thigh and burst into laughter. "Great! Our son has made it this time. The first secretary! That's incredible! Oh, now I get it. No wonder this afternoon, when I was coming home with groceries, Liu's daughter-in-law and Aunt Han were suddenly so friendly to me, offering to carry my groceries upstairs. They've never been that warm, and we've never been that close. I was confused, but now I realize they must have heard the news. We've benefitted from our son's success!"

Su Yan's father thought about it and sighed, "I also got two calls from old colleagues earlier. We haven't been in touch for seven or eight years. Now it makes sense."

His mother said, "If they've already heard, it's settled."

Su Yan gave a wry smile. "Secretary Dong said it himself. There's no mistake."

Excited, his mother said, "No, this meal won't do. It's all vegetarian! I'll make something special to celebrate properly!"

Su Yan waved her off. "Please, don't. That'd be such a waste. This is fine. Anyway, I'm going to take a shower now. My hair is itching."

His mother beamed and said, "Go ahead, son." As Su Yan walked away, she gave him a playful slap on the backside and said, "My good boy! I've always said my son would make something of himself. Look at that! Before, those leaders just didn't have the vision. But see? A leader from the capital comes along, and what sharp eyes he has! He recognized your talents right away. Xiao Yan, do your best from now on, okay?"

Su Yan closed the bathroom door and replied, "Got it, got it."

His father chuckled, "Look how proud you are."

His mother rolled her eyes. "My son's success came overnight. Of course, I'm proud! Oh, should we invite the county party secretary for a meal? Hmm, maybe not. We probably couldn't manage that, given his status." She muttered for a while, then suddenly smirked and said, "Hmph, go

ahead and eat. Make sure to reheat the food for our son after his shower. I'm going to call some relatives and share the good news. Oh, and the Zhang family from that blind date—they looked down on our Xiao Yan, saying he had no future. They're blind as bats! Wait until I tell them over the phone; they'll be fuming!"

Su Yan's father said, "Let's keep the peace. No need to stir things up."

His mother retorted, "Their daughter pointed at our son's nose and scolded him. Forget about peace!"