

PAW 1817

Chapter 1817

It's Nine O'Clock

The sky was getting darker, and the moon was completely covered.

"Auntie, Uncle, it's getting late, so I'll head back," Dong Xuebing said, feeling satisfied after a good meal and a few drinks. He glanced at the time and bid them farewell. "You two should get some rest."

Su's mother cheerfully replied, "Stay a little longer."

Su's father, also pleased, said, "Have another cup of tea."

Dong Xuebing responded, "I won't impose any longer. I'll come again when I have time."

Su Yan said, "Dad, Mom, Secretary Dong still have lots of work."

"Alright then, come over for a meal anytime if you can. Treat this place like your own home; don't be polite. Next time, Auntie will let you taste her cooking again," Su mother said with a smile.

Dong Xuebing stood up and said, "Alright then, I'll take my leave."

Su father, feeling a bit lightheaded, got up as well. "We'll see you off."

"No, you've both had enough to drink. Don't come out. It's cold outside," Dong Xuebing insisted. "Let Xiao Su see me out."

However, Su's father and Su's mother still walked him to the door.

"Secretary Dong, come often," Su's mother waved goodbye.

Su father also said to Dong Xuebing as he was about to head downstairs, "If Xiao Yan does anything foolish or makes mistakes, please feel free to criticize him. I'm sorry for the trouble he's caused you."

Dong Xuebing chuckled, "You're making it sound serious. It's not that bad. You two should head back."

After exchanging pleasantries for a while, Dong Xuebing finally stepped out of the Su family's hallway, and a rush of cold air hit him, clearing his head from the effects of the alcohol.

Su Yan quickly followed behind, "Secretary Dong, should I call a car for you from the office?"

Dong Xuebing waved his hand, "No rush, walk with me for a bit. We can hail a taxi when we see one. It's late at night; they might be resting. Let's not disturb the drivers."

Su Yan sensed that Dong Xuebing probably had something to discuss with him and didn't mention anything else.

This was Su Yan's home, not a government housing complex. He hadn't had the qualifications to stay in the official housing before, but he would in the future. However, this was still his family's old house in an old neighborhood, so he did no need to be too cautious. Aside from a few familiar old neighbors, no one knew about Su Yan's situation, and there were hardly any people around in the neighborhood at this late hour. It was still convenient to talk.

Dong Xuebing turned his head to look at Su Yan, "I came by today since it was on the way, and I got a bit lost. I also wanted to ask you about the situation in our county."

Su Yan's expression grew serious, and he lowered his voice, "Are you asking about the leadership level?"

"Yes." Dong Xuebing spoke frankly, "Help me sort out the relationships among these leaders."

Su Yan responded cautiously, "I haven't held a high position before, so I don't know much. Everyone knows some common knowledge, and some might not be entirely accurate."

Dong Xuebing said, "That's fine. Just tell me what you know."

Tomorrow he would officially start working and would have to begin addressing various issues, so Dong Xuebing naturally wanted to understand the local situation better. He had turned down many social engagements. He hadn't asked Meng Hanmei, who had shown interest in getting close to him, about these things simply because today was the first time he had met them, and they weren't familiar yet. Their work relationship wasn't that close either, so Dong Xuebing hadn't asked anyone. However, Su Yan was different; he was his secretary. Dong Xuebing had had contact with Su Yan not long ago. They had met and communicated before. It was most appropriate to ask Su Yan. Even if Dong Xuebing hadn't passed by their home tonight, he would have called Su Yan in the morning to inquire. During the days he had stayed in the neighboring county, he had only gotten a rough understanding of the general environment there; he was still completely unaware of the factions and relationships among the county leaders. He needed to have a clearer picture.

Su Yan organized his thoughts, "What I know is about the situation in the county before you arrived. At that time, the top leader was Li Guian, who has now been transferred to be the secretary of the neighboring county. Secretary Li was the top leader in Jiaoling County;. However, he had only been in that position for a few years, and he generally understood the situation in Jiaoling County. However, it wasn't thorough, after all, Zhang Dongfang, the county mayor, is a local official with deep roots in the area. Our county's third-in-command, Deputy Secretary of the County Party Committee Wei Zhixuan, has worked in Jiaoling County for over a decade and has a close relationship with Mayor Zhang. Secretary Li could only manage the voting among the Standing Committee members, so it's hard to say who is stronger or weaker; they've been in a constant struggle, but it hasn't escalated into open conflict. The county has always maintained this dynamic."

Dong Xuebing nodded and asked, "What's Zhang County Mayor's background?"

Su Yan pondered for a moment, "He's from the city. I've heard he has an excellent relationship with the city party secretary."

Dong Xuebing looked at him, "What about the previous Secretary Li?"

"Secretary Li has a background in the province. I'm not sure about the specifics," Su Yan replied honestly. "Anyway, the political struggles between the province and the city sometimes spill over into our county."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "What about the others?"

Su Yan listed them: “County Party Committee Deputy Secretary Wei Zhixuan, Minister of the Organization Department Han Wu, Executive Deputy County Mayor Xu Zhuang, and Standing Committee Deputy County Mayor Song Hefe, all of whom are part of Mayor Zhang's faction and have been very supportive of him, putting in considerable effort. The internal cohesion is strong.”

Counting Zhang Dongfang, that makes five.

Dong Xuebing asked, “What about the others?”

Su Yan responded, “The others are from the previous Secretary Li's faction: Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission, Chang Lin; Minister of the Propaganda Department, Sun Changzhi; Secretary of the Disciplinary Inspection Commission, Wang Bin; and Minister of the United Front Work Department Li Niu. Oh, and the director of the County Party Committee Office, Meng Hanmei. But now that the old secretary has been transferred, I'm unsure about the current situation.”

There are a total of eleven Standing Committee members.

Li Guian's side has six members.

Zhang Dongfang's side has five members.

This advantage isn't too noticeable.

This means that it's almost impossible to win over Zhang Dongfang's people, leaving Dong Xuebing with only the other few Standing Committee members.

Dong Xuebing roughly understood the situation and realized that his days ahead might not be easy. Zhang Dongfang has connections with the city party secretary, while he, on the other hand, has nothing. Not only does he have nothing, but he is also on the blacklist of both provincial and city leaders. The relationship between the Xie family and the Fang family is poor, and Dong Xuebing's relationship with the Fang family isn't good either. Now that he is in the territory controlled by the Fang family, it would be strange for them to treat him well. The fact that the city only sent an Executive Deputy Minister from the Organization Department to take Dong Xuebing on board is already telling; it shows that the province or city has likely already placed him on the list of marginal figures. This is a signal and an attitude that many in Jiaoling County should be able to read, further creating significant obstacles for Dong Xuebing's work in the future. As for the remaining five Standing Committee members, Dong Xuebing had no idea how many he could

win over. If he couldn't win them over, even if he managed to get four of them, it would be challenging for him to implement his policies because he wouldn't have enough votes.

Although the previous Secretary, Li Guian, didn't have an obvious advantage, he still managed to control the situation. If Dong Xuebing only had five votes in the Standing Committee, that would make him equal to Zhang Dongfang. Zhang Dongfang would have six votes if that last person remained neutral or abstained. In that scenario, Dong Xuebing, as the County Party Secretary, would be very passive, allowing a second-in-command to press down on him, which is definitely not the outcome he wanted to see. Therefore, it was essential for him to understand more.

Dong Xuebing said, "Could you roughly tell me what the personalities of Secretary Li's former Standing Committee members are like?" He was starting to focus on the matter.

Su Yan replied, "I don't know much, but I can share what I've heard and seen."

Dong Xuebing nodded. They had already walked out of the community, waiting by the roadside for a taxi while he listened to Su Yan.

Five minutes passed.

Ten minutes passed.

Two taxis drove by, but Dong Xuebing didn't flag them down. Instead, he listened intently, even pulling out a couple of cigarettes to smoke.

The Secretary of the Disciplinary Inspection Commission, Wang Bin, is cautious in character.

The Minister of the Propaganda Department, Sun Changzhi, is indecisive.

His frown deepened as Dong Xuebing listened to the character traits of the county Standing Committee members he wanted to win over. This made him feel that his job would be even more challenging, and the number of uncertainties increased, making things difficult. While listening to Su Yan, Dong Xuebing also thought about how to win over the remaining Standing Committee members. He had to ensure this was foolproof; otherwise, if he became passive right after taking office, it would surely lead to a vicious cycle. In that case, Zhang Dongfang would seize control, and Dong Xuebing would become a laughingstock. At that time, it would be questionable whether he could remain in Jiaoling County when the ancient tomb was excavated. If a county mayor

forever suppresses a county Party Secretary, his tenure as the top leader would likely end soon, let alone the fact that both the city and the province had a poor impression of him, eager for him to roll out. At that point, it would be equivalent to giving the city a reason to replace him, something Dong Xuebing would never allow.

Why was he here?

He was here to fight for a chance at a deputy department-level position.

He wanted to seize this rare opportunity to take on a deputy department role while helping the local people with some practical matters and ideally improving the local economic situation and development. That would be the best outcome. Therefore, he would show no mercy to anyone obstructing his goals.

Su Yan finished speaking.

A vacant taxi had finally arrived.

Dong Xuebing had heard what he needed, and since Su Yan probably didn't know much more, he didn't ask any further questions. He flagged down the taxi, got in, and said, "Let's go, Xiao Su."

Su Yan told the driver the address of the county party committee's family compound and watched as the taxi drove away before returning home.

In the car.

Dong Xuebing's mind was racing.

In the past, he had to pay attention to others' expressions since he was at a lower level, but this time, he was the top leader, and he absolutely couldn't continue like this.