

## PAW 1819

Chapter 1819

Morning.

Before 10 a.m.

The County Committee Standing Committee meeting was about to be held, and Secretary Dong initiated it.

Upon hearing this news, many people were puzzled about what Dong Xuebing was thinking. Everyone had already noticed that the city and provincial authorities resisted him—this was no secret. Plus, with Zhang Dongfang's people spreading the word, it quickly became common knowledge. Without support from higher authorities and being an outsider parachuted into this position, things didn't look good for Dong Xuebing, even though he held the top spot. In everyone's eyes, no matter what the surface dynamics between Dong Xuebing and Zhang Dongfang were, they would eventually clash. At present, it was clear that County Mayor Zhang Dongfang, a local official, had the upper hand and a slight advantage. If Zhang had taken this opportunity at the Standing Committee meeting to give Secretary Dong a hard time, Zhang would have already won a significant portion of the battle.

Because of this, most leaders in Dong Xuebing's position would try to delay the meeting as long as possible. They would take a few days to get familiar with the environment, communicate with key leaders who could be won over, and wait until the time was right to hold the meeting. This would be Secretary Dong's best chance to take the initiative if things went well. Everyone saw it that way.

But Dong Xuebing didn't do that!

Instead, he actively called for the Standing Committee meeting on the very first morning of his first official day on the job. Not only did he not delay, but he seemed eager!

Meng Hanmei and Su Yan were both worried. What if Zhang Dongfang pulled something at the meeting? How would Secretary Dong handle it? With what resources? Dong hadn't even had private conversations with the other county leaders yet, and his political power was far from consolidated. If things continued like this, he would only find himself in a passive position. The first contest is the most crucial in these political battles. It could determine many future outcomes and the control of power. If Dong lost the first round, the people below him would shift their

loyalties accordingly, leading to a downward spiral. It would be hard to recover from that, and Dong Xuebing would be labeled weaker than Zhang Dongfang. Looking further ahead, if a County Party Secretary couldn't control the overall situation in the county, his transfer out wouldn't be far off. At that point, Zhang Dongfang could push Dong Xuebing aside and take the position of County Party Secretary for himself.

It seemed too rash.

Too poorly considered.

People with even a bit of political wisdom were quick to judge Dong Xuebing, saying he was still too young and too impetuous.

...

In the County Mayor's office.

Zhang Dongfang was still sitting there, deep in thought. Han Wu, the head of the County Organization Department, knocked and walked in.

"County Mayor," Han Wu's expression was somewhat unusual.

Zhang Dongfang acknowledged him with a sound, "You're here?"

Han Wu pointed out, "Secretary Dong is calling for a Standing Committee meeting? So soon?"

Zhang Dongfang glanced at his chubby arm and the watch on it. "Yes, in ten minutes."

"What is he thinking?" Han Wu couldn't understand. "Is it just to approve the appointment and promotion of his secretary? A quick meeting could handle that. It's not even urgent—his appointed secretary would still be his secretary, even without formal promotion procedures. Why rush to the Standing Committee?"

Zhang Dongfang pondered momentarily and shook his head slightly, "I don't know. I'm still not familiar with his working style or methods."

Han Wu paused, "I think he's just too young, can't stay calm."

Zhang Dongfang neither agreed nor disagreed and said, "Who knows? Let the meeting happen."

Han Wu blinked, "So, do you think we should... give him a hard time?"

Without hesitation, Zhang Dongfang waved his hand, "That's unwise. Let's wait and see. If he's impatient, we need to stay calm, right?"

Han Wu didn't quite understand. "So we're just going to let this good opportunity slip by?"

Zhang Dongfang glanced at him, "I said it's not appropriate to give him a direct slap in the face, but I didn't say we couldn't use a gentler approach. By the way, the Deputy Director of the Finance Bureau position is still vacant, right? Old Liu retired. Have the personnel evaluations been done?"

Han Wu immediately understood, "The evaluations are complete."

Zhang Dongfang didn't say much more, "That's fine then."

The two had worked together for many years and understood each other without needing to say much.

Knock, knock. There was a knock on the door, and the Deputy Party Secretary of the County Committee, Wei Zhixuan, walked in slowly. "Oh, Minister Han is here too?"

Han Wu greeted him with a smile, "Secretary Wei."

It seemed that Wei Zhixuan and Zhang Dongfang had a great relationship. Without saying much, he directly sat down and looked at Zhang Dongfang, "So, what's the plan?"

Zhang Dongfang said, "Let's probe first."

Wei Zhixuan nodded, seemingly already in the loop.

None of them had expected Dong Xuebing to call a Standing Committee meeting so soon, so they hadn't made any preparations and could only meet last minute to discuss it.

...

10:00 sharp.

The small meeting room of the County Committee.

The door was open, and people had trickled in early.

One minute after County Mayor Zhang Dongfang entered the room, Dong Xuebing finally arrived, deliberately late. As the top official, he naturally had the privilege of arriving last. If he came earlier than the others, how would he assert his position as County Party Secretary? There was a hierarchy in everything, including seating arrangements, who arrived first and left last—there were always unspoken rules in the system.

As Dong Xuebing entered, his secretary, Su Yan, closed the door.

After Dong Xuebing sat down, Su Yan, holding a notebook, sat in the corner. As the secretary to the County Party Secretary, he was entitled to take meeting notes.

Dong Xuebing glanced around the room, smiled, and said, "Is everyone here? Alright, let's begin the meeting. There's nothing too important today; the purpose of this Standing Committee is simply to formally introduce myself to everyone so we can get to know each other and work better together. Let me start by saying a few words..." He then briefly introduced himself without bragging about his past achievements, as there was no need. He just shared some ordinary things.

After speaking, Dong Xuebing looked at Zhang Dongfang, who had been quietly sitting with half-closed eyes, "Mayor Zhang, would you like to say a few words?"

Zhang Dongfang nodded slightly, "Alright, I'll introduce myself too..."

The eleven County Committee members each introduced themselves, all speaking conservatively. Many weren't focused on the introductions; they wanted to know what would happen next. They were curious to see how Mayor Zhang would make his move and how Secretary Dong would respond. After all, Mayor Zhang still held the advantage, and the way Secretary Dong had initiated this Standing Committee meeting led some to underestimate him, thinking he seemed a bit immature. Even before Secretary Dong took office, some had already concluded that the outcome was inevitable. This young man might be capable of leading a department or serving as a deputy mayor or deputy secretary but as County Party Secretary? Some still felt he wasn't quite qualified.

Once the introductions were finished, it was time to move on to official business.

Han Wu, the head of the Organization Department, handed out several files and documents, saying, "The Organization Department has conducted some evaluations, mainly to fill some vacant positions. It is proposed that Comrade Su Yan, Deputy Section Chief of the Secretariat, be promoted to Deputy Director of the County Committee Office."

Su Yan was listening quietly from behind and didn't say anything.

Dong Xuebing slightly nodded, pretending to browse through Su Yan's file. "Shall we all discuss?"

Meng Hanmei was the first to speak: "Section Chief Su is diligent and hardworking, friendly with others, and serious about his work. This position suits him perfectly."

Deputy Secretary Wei Zhixuan added, "Little Su is not bad."

Finally, County Mayor Zhang Dongfang also said, "I agree."

Dong Xuebing replied calmly, "That's Good. Then it's settled. Let's move forward with the procedures as soon as possible."

Han Wu responded and made a note on the document.

No one objected to this appointment because the County Party Secretary selected a secretary. Even if relations were tense, Zhang Dongfang's people wouldn't directly oppose it. Such an act would not only show disrespect to Dong Xuebing but also to the organizational authority that appointed him. If Zhang Dongfang strongly denied it, it would bring the conflict into the open, and within a short time, one of them would have to leave—most likely Zhang Dongfang. This was something

he would not do. He wouldn't make a scene at the Standing Committee meeting even if he wanted to find issues. He would likely look for Su Yan's private problems and propose that the Discipline Inspection Commission investigate them, which would be the appropriate procedure. This was just an example; although the leaders didn't regard Su Yan highly, they mostly understood that this young man wouldn't have any economic issues.

The appointment was approved.

Han Wu then brought up the next item, saying, "Also, the Deputy Director of the Finance Bureau has retired, and this position is still vacant. Recently, the Organization Department evaluated candidates. Initially, there were three candidates, but one had family issues and took a long leave, leaving only two: Liu Ping, the office director of the Finance Bureau, and Sun Anshi, the department head of the Audit Bureau. The evaluation concluded that Liu Ping is more suitable since he's already from the Finance Bureau and can start working immediately without needing to familiarize himself. His age, qualifications, and work capability are all quite fitting. Sun Anshi is also a good candidate, but he's a bit... younger."

Younger?

This statement made people feel a bit uncomfortable.

Meng Hanmei frowned and glanced at Dong Xuebing.

Su Yan felt uneasy as well. What did this mean? Was it a subtle criticism of Secretary Dong? Was it implying that Dong Xuebing was inexperienced and lacked qualifications due to his youth?

But Dong Xuebing just listened with a smile, showing no reaction. Perhaps he was absorbing more information from the context.

Some of the other leaders understood the situation as well. This Standing Committee meeting was initially supposed to be a communication session and a confirmation of the secretary's appointment, yet Han Wu had raised another appointment.