

## PAW 1838

Chapter 1838

Construction Site.

Outside the New County Party Committee Compound.

Dong Xuebing was completely stunned. It wasn't that he was making a fuss or hadn't seen much, but the scene before him was completely unexpected.

This was the work unit.

It was simply a palace.

The compound's outer walls were made of red bricks and tiles, and the buildings inside were just as extravagant. Looking around, there was a large three-story building at the far end, and on the right side were several "office buildings." But these weren't ordinary office buildings; they had an architectural style similar to the Forbidden City—particularly retro, almost like stepping into a royal palace. The intricate details and decorations on the buildings were especially elaborate, some even painted in gold, with eaves sculpted with dragons and phoenixes. Although these “palaces” weren't tall, they were densely packed with many buildings. Each department seemed to have already been assigned its specific office location, and the whole layout was extravagant and grand.

Dong Xuebing tilted his head. "This is it?"

Su Yan wiped his sweat. "Yes... uh, I hadn't seen it like this before. My position was lower when I came here before, so I didn't know the details."

Dong Xuebing asked, "Who came up with this plan?"

"It was the previous Secretary Li," Su Yan answered.

Dong Xuebing clicked his tongue. "How much did this cost? Is our county that rich?"

Su Yan shook his head. "Not very rich, but this is how things are done here. For example, the surrounding counties also have luxurious county party committee compounds or residential complexes. Our neighboring county even built a luxury office building with over twenty floors."

Dong Xuebing didn't reply. He understood that the twenty-something-story building probably didn't cost as much as these small buildings because each of these "palaces" was meticulously detailed. The money spent on these buildings could have been used to build offices elsewhere. Not to mention the many buildings densely packed in the compound. This was just wasting money, with no place to spend it, and the impact was bad. Even though this place was remote, they still couldn't afford to spend money like this recklessly.

When Dong Xuebing took office in the past, the buildings were mostly ordinary and low-key, with luxury hidden inside. The exterior was unremarkable, and no one could find faults. But this time, Dong Xuebing was left speechless.

It was too showy.

Too extravagant.

It was as if they were no longer concerned about the actual cost of living.

Dong Xuebing couldn't help but feel speechless. He went inside first. There weren't any construction workers around. No one stopped them, and they easily walked in. Looking at the materials on the ground and the decorations, Dong Xuebing clearly understood. There was no chance of cost-cutting here. On the contrary, the materials used were abundant, and they were not worried about wasting materials. Everything was extremely meticulous and detailed.

He had feared there might be shady construction practices.

Who would've thought that they had done such a thorough job?

Dong Xuebing didn't know what to say. The quality was solid, there were no structural issues, and the construction seemed flawless. So Dong Xuebing had nothing to critique. However, he still felt it was highly inappropriate and risky, but what could he do? The buildings had already been built. The county made this decision before he came, and Dong Xuebing didn't have a way to change it.

The money was spent.

The buildings were constructed.

There was no way to tear it all down now.

Dong Xuebing wandered inside and outside the compound, constantly shaking his head. Ultimately, he lost the mood to look any longer and, together with Su Yan, got in the car to head back.

On the way, he made a phone call to Meng Hanmei. "Director Meng."

"Secretary, you weren't in your office. I just went to find you," Meng Hanmei said.

Dong Xuebing replied, "I wasn't there. I just visited the new County Party Committee compound. Doesn't this construction plan seem a bit problematic? Who approved it at the time?"

Meng Hanmei paused for a moment. "It was discussed at the county committee's standing meeting. Everyone voted and approved it."

Dong Xuebing mused, "Was it passed with a unanimous vote?"

"Well, not exactly," Meng Hanmei continued. "Secretary Li strongly pushed for this plan. He also referenced the decoration of office buildings in neighboring counties. After some discussion, it seems that Mayor Zhang didn't fully agree, but in the end, the meeting passed. The budget was a bit much, but the city didn't raise any objections then."

"A bit much?" Dong Xuebing thought. "That's an understatement. With this much money, why not spend it on something else?"

Those rows of palaces weren't a matter of just a few million; they were a billion-dollar project.

But then again, Dong Xuebing realized this was just a mess left by his predecessors. He had no choice, even if he didn't want to take it on. The buildings were already done. What could he do?

Meng Hanmei asked, "Secretary, do you think there's something wrong with it?"

Dong Xuebing responded, "It's too extravagant. There was no need for this. It's just a place for the county committee and government to work. Why make it so luxurious?"

Meng Hanmei chuckled bitterly. "Everyone's been through a tough time. The old office building leaks and the paint is peeling. So, Secretary Li wanted to build something better at the time."

Dong Xuebing nodded. "I understand."

Meng Hanmei remembered something. "By the way, Secretary, we've been getting reports from below about many problems with the office building. Some areas have cracks, and the storage room on the roof even has a corner that's collapsed. People are getting worried, saying the whole building might collapse anytime. There's no sense of security. They're anxious. Could we move into the new County Party Committee compound sooner after its inspection?"

Dong Xuebing furrowed his brows. "Is the problem serious?"

"It's quite serious. I went down to check myself. In the storage room on the roof, you can even see the sky when you look up. Debris keeps falling, and that was from the heavy rain yesterday. The old building hasn't been repaired in years, and many issues exist. The cafeteria's roof is collapsing, too. It looks like more of it has caved in. Only about two-thirds of the roof remains. Now, everyone avoids walking near the cafeteria. No one dares to get too close, fearing it might collapse and hurt someone," Meng Hanmei said, clearly worried. She was concerned for others, as well as herself because the area was becoming more unsafe by the day.

At this point, what else could Dong Xuebing say?

Although Dong Xuebing didn't particularly like the new palace-like County Party Committee compound, he couldn't just let everyone continue living in the old building, surrounded by danger. If this situation dragged on, people would start getting frustrated, and no one could focus on their work. Dong Xuebing could only say, "Alright, have the relevant departments conduct the inspection as soon as possible. If the quality checks out, arrange for trucks to move the offices in a few days. Each department from the county committee and government can move over gradually."

Meng Hanmei responded, "Okay, I'll contact them immediately."

After hanging up the phone, Dong Xuebing put it away and looked at the sky. He closed his eyes slightly and pondered. He couldn't shake the uneasy feeling in his heart.

So, this was how it would be handled.

But was it the right thing to do?