

PAW 1854

Chapter 1854

The next day, Friday morning, it was just a little past 6:00 AM.

In the family compound's duplex, Dong Xuebing got up early. After brushing his teeth and washing up on the second floor, he hummed a little tune as he went downstairs and into the kitchen, planning to treat himself to a nice breakfast. He made a rather elaborate meal: fried sausages, toasted bread, scrambled eggs, and a bowl of red date porridge. The combination was a bit messy, but since he was the one eating, he didn't mind—it was a fusion of Chinese and Western styles.

When the meal was ready, Dong Xuebing brought it to the dining table. Seeing the time, he picked up the remote and turned on the TV, tuning into the local news from Jiaolin County.

"Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the morning news." It was exactly on time, and the host appeared.

Dong Xuebing took a big bite of the bread with sausage and eggs and ate while watching TV.

Since it was a county TV station, there were no elaborate setups like in the big stations. It was simple and straight to the point. "Yesterday, a piece of online news caused great concern in the province. It was about the new county office complex. Our reporter learned yesterday that the public has been very active in discussing the issue, with many controversies surrounding it. The focus of the debate is the construction costs of the Baohong City three-county office. Many people are questioning why so much money was spent here. They argue that it would have been more meaningful if it had been used to improve residents' security and related welfare than building a family compound or a county office complex. Last night, we were fortunate to interview County Party Secretary Dong Xuebing."

The screen flickered, and Dong Xuebing's figure appeared on camera. At that time, he was still directing the demolition of the building, just his back visible.

The camera zoomed in as the reporter and cameraman approached. "Secretary Dong, hello. I'm from the county TV station. What is your opinion on the currently hotly debated issue of the new county office complex?"

"My opinion?" Dong Xuebing looked directly at the camera. "After discussions with the county's main leaders, I ordered the relevant departments to demolish the new county office complex on Wednesday. It's already been leveled. Well, that's my view. I share the same opinion as the people. Although I've only been in office for a few days, I know the public discussions and voices. This kind of building is inherently unreasonable. It wastes the people's money, and there's no need for it. So, of course, it had to be demolished. And as the county party secretary, I also owe an apology to the people. I'm sorry, but this isn't something that can be solved with just an apology. In a few days, our county will implement new policies—reforms and welfare focused on people's livelihoods. Please stay tuned. Our leadership team will take real action to show everyone our determination to fight corruption and our commitment to the people..."

Dong Xuebing spoke non-stop, almost in a torrent of words.

Usually, when leaders speak in front of the camera, they talk slowly, sometimes even stuttering. It might seem like they're struggling with words, but it's not because they're slow speakers. Their language skills can't be that bad at such a high level—it's not like they're actually stuttering. They appear hesitant because they are careful not to say anything wrong. At that level, their words carry weight, and every gesture matters. One wrong word could lead to misunderstandings or even social consequences. This is a political matter, and there's no room for carelessness. So, leaders speak carefully, slowly, and deliberately. This cautiousness has become a regular part of political life.

But for Dong Xuebing, it was completely different. His eloquence was extraordinary, and he didn't have to worry about saying anything wrong. He spoke nonstop, even avoiding any stuttering as if reading from a prepared speech. Watching this news, people would think the new county party secretary was very different from others. Not to mention anything else, just how he spoke so clearly and confidently made people feel incredibly comfortable, filled with confidence, and, most importantly, sincere. The ordinary people liked that.

Next, the scene switched to an interview with some residents.

The reporter's voice came through. "Hello, ma'am. Can I ask what you think about the county's decision to demolish the new county office complex?"

The woman, a middle-aged mother holding a child, looked a little nervous when she saw the camera. "I don't know, but I think it should be demolished."

Reporter: "You think it should be demolished?"

"Yes." The woman said, holding her child.

"Do you agree with the county's decision?" the reporter asked.

The woman replied, "Wasn't the old leadership proposing building the new county office complex? It seems like it wasn't Secretary Dong who came up with that idea. Secretary Dong decided to demolish it, and I think it's a decision that is very much in line with public opinion. After all, the building was already there when he came in, right? So, of course, the county's decision was correct."

Then, the woman walked off with her child.

The camera cut again, this time to an articulate middle-aged man.

When he heard the question, he became excited and spoke directly to the camera, "Of course, it should be demolished, and it was done well, decisively. If the demolition had only happened after the provincial news broke, there would have been a problem—it would have felt like closing the barn door after the horse had bolted. But now, the county decided to demolish it a day before the news even came out. This shows that Secretary Dong's leadership after taking office is correct, very far-sighted, and, more importantly, he cares about the people. He knows what we need. The last time, on Qing'e Mountain, Secretary Dong was the first to rush to the front line and save people in the rain, right? I saw the news and was moved. You can tell from these small actions that Secretary Dong truly values the people. Now, I have great confidence in our county. Under Secretary Dong's leadership, our county's economy and overall development will surely reach new heights."

At home, Dong Xuebing couldn't help but smile as he watched. He thought, "This guy knows how to talk—well said! So well said!"

Meanwhile, back in the studio, the female host said, "As we've seen, our reporters interviewed many residents yesterday, and the answers were almost all the same. The people feel that the county's decision was correct. Of course, it's a bit wasteful to suddenly demolish a building that cost over a hundred million yuan. However, after interviewing so many residents, we feel that the situation cannot simply be judged from the waste perspective. At least from what I saw... it's the county's determination and attitude. I believe the people felt that, too, which is why they gave such responses. The residents didn't doubt the county's decision; this decision has made them trust and believe in the county more."

Next, a few more people were interviewed.

For example, Zhang Dongfang, the county magistrate, who had no credit in this matter, spoke cautiously: "Secretary Dong proposed the decision to demolish the complex, which was the decision of our county's main leadership."

Then there was Meng Hanmei, who said, "We firmly support Secretary Dong's decision. I think Secretary Dong said something particularly important. In the beginning, many of us felt that demolishing such an expensive county office complex was heartbreaking, but Secretary Dong said, 'If the people need us to tear this down, then we must do it. No words are needed. We cannot allow the people to have even the slightest doubt about our county committee or government. We can work from the row houses if the county office complex is gone. We can work in tents in the open if there are no row houses. No matter what, we can make do and still do our work. But if we lose the people's trust, it doesn't matter if we work from a high-end villa in the sky or the cosmos, it's meaningless.' These were Secretary Dong's exact words. I don't know what others think, but I was deeply moved when I heard them." As someone from Dong's faction, Meng Hanmei was much more skilled at speaking than Zhang Dongfang or those from Zhang's camp.

Dong Xuebing nodded slightly as he listened. It seemed like he had said those words yesterday, though most had slipped his mind. His speech had come naturally—he didn't need to think about it, just spoke off the cuff. That was the power of someone with natural verbal eloquence. He had this innate ability. Now, hearing Meng Hanmei recount his words on TV, Dong Xuebing found himself impressed by his speech, even moved by it.

The morning news segment had been prearranged by Dong Xuebing and the publicity department head, Sun Changzhi, the day before. Since the public needed an explanation, the segment had to be planned carefully. Dong Xuebing didn't use Sun Changzhi's initial proposal because he thought it was too ordinary and lacked impact. Growing up in the capital, Dong Xuebing had been influenced by the media, so he took a page from the capital's media playbook. He decided to use interviews—interviews with the public and with leaders. This approach would feel more authentic and convincing than a host offering a conclusion. Additionally, it wasn't too challenging to execute—if ten people were interviewed, even if a few had unclear attitudes or opposing opinions, those could be left out. They would broadcast the interviews that aligned with the message they needed to convey.

Simple, authentic, and highly convincing.

It might require a bit more work, but not too much.

Now, watching the news, Dong Xuebing felt satisfied. He thought his decision had once again paid off. Compared to the dry explanations, this approach—using interviews and summarizing them through the host—was more profound and more moving.

This was the power of public opinion.

Once you controlled this, you controlled one of the most critical positions.

Of course, Dong Xuebing genuinely cared about the people. He didn't feel like he was manipulating anyone. His words and actions were heartfelt.