

PAW 1883

Chapter 1883

The next day.

Tuesday morning.

Dong Xuebing arrived at work just on time. Since a lot was happening yesterday, he stayed up late and even bought breakfast on the way to the office. This temporary office wasn't located in the city center but was far from it. Though a meal delivery service provided lunch boxes, there was no breakfast option available, so he either had to bring something from home or buy it from the city center, as there were no breakfast stalls nearby.

In the office yard,

Everyone was heatedly discussing what had happened the previous evening. The atmosphere was quite lively, with almost everyone talking in hushed voices.

"Ah..."

"It's the Secretary."

"Shh, be quiet."

"Stop talking, stop talking, the Secretary's here."

The discussions halted, and the looks thrown his way were mixed—some were complicated, some admiring, some excited, and some worried.

Dong Xuebing noticed the gazes but didn't react. He had already heard the chatter—talk about hundreds of thousands, hotel bookings, driving away the foreign guests and city government staff—and knew what everyone was talking about. He wasn't surprised; if they hadn't been discussing it and had gone on with their business as usual, he would have been surprised. This was typical in government offices—nothing could truly be kept under wraps, and any exaggerated event would be spread throughout the office by the end of the day.

In the temporary office,

Dong Xuebing walked in as if nothing had happened, acting like yesterday's events had never occurred. He sat down and began eating his breakfast.

Soy milk.

Fried dough sticks.

He ate with relish.

Though the soy milk here wasn't as rich as the ones from Beijing's breakfast stalls and seemed watered down, and the fried dough sticks had a slightly strange taste, Dong Xuebing was content. He had had a hard time finding this breakfast stall. Very few places were selling soy milk and fried dough sticks in his county, so he couldn't afford to be picky. After days of eating meat-filled buns and spicy soup, he had had enough of them.

The door was left open.

A deputy director from the county party office walked up to the door. "Secretary."

"Oh, come in," Dong Xuebing waved him in, continuing to eat.

The deputy director said, "Director Meng's child is sick. She took half a day off this morning. She called and asked me to check with you. The foreign guests were supposed to discuss with our county today, but now..."

Dong Xuebing replied, "Don't worry about them. Just focus on our work."

The deputy director blinked. "So we don't need to contact them proactively?"

"They'll contact us if they want to come. They want to bring in investment, not because we're begging them but because they need us. We don't need to encourage their bad habits. If they come properly and humbly, we'll treat them accordingly, but if they act arrogantly or try to show off, they can go far away. Jiao Lin County doesn't welcome people like that."

It wasn't a public setting, and Dong Xuebing didn't mince his words. It was clear that he had a strong prejudice against these people.

The deputy director understood. "Understood, Secretary."

Dong Xuebing added, "I bought too much food. Feel free to have some."

The deputy director hurriedly responded, "Thank you, Secretary, but I've already eaten."

He then bid his farewell and left. This was his first time having direct contact with Dong Xuebing. Usually, he just followed behind Meng Hanmei, observing without much involvement. But today, when Dong Xuebing spoke to him face-to-face, he felt the intense pressure from across the desk. His legs seemed stiff, and he could feel the weight of Dong Xuebing's imposing presence. He had never met a county party secretary with such a bad temper.

The whole morning passed.

The foreign guests did not show up.

The city government officials didn't contact them either.

This didn't surprise anyone. Dong Xuebing had already anticipated this outcome. Having made these people look so embarrassed in his county, even driving them away, it would have been strange for them to take the initiative to contact Jiao Lin County for a meeting. Even the foreigners didn't have that much nerve. Since they didn't make contact, Jiao Lin County wouldn't reach out either. Dong Xuebing had already set the tone—his county did not welcome these people.

At the same time,

In the city, at the City party headquarters.

In the office of the City party secretary.

Knock knock, the secretary entered, "Secretary."

The City party secretary, Qian Litao, didn't even raise his head, simply murmuring a response.

The secretary quickly said, "Secretary, the foreign guests are still at the City party guesthouse. They didn't go anywhere this morning. They're about to have lunch now. What should we do?"

Qian Litao replied indifferently, "You go accompany them, contact a few city leaders, I won't go."

"Understood. I'll arrange it right away." The secretary took a small notebook and quickly jotted down the leader's instructions. This was his habit and a way to show respect.

Qian Litao glanced at him. "Weren't they supposed to go down to the grassroots for an exchange and meeting this morning?"

"They didn't go," the secretary sighed. "They were supposed to leave in the morning but changed their plans at the last minute. I think they heard something, and from this morning, they've been reporting that they were treated coldly and unfairly in Jiao Lin County. The city government office is trying to mediate and handle it. The foreign guests reported this to the province and are quite angry about what happened yesterday. The foreign guests don't plan on leaving this afternoon either. They seem determined to resolve this issue, and the people coordinating are feeling the pressure."

Qian Litao gave a slight grunt but didn't speak further.

The secretary blinked and, seeing no further instructions, exited.

After dealing with some work, Qian Litao frowned, put down his pen, and thought for a long time. Finally, he pulled out his phone, dialed a number, and connected to a provincial leader.

"Hello, Director Yan?" Qian Litao said.

"Old Qian," came the response from Director Yan.

Qian Litao continued, "I've heard that the foreign guests have reported some issues to the province."

Director Yan replied, "Yes, I received the news this morning. How come your people are so careless with their work?"

Qian Litao said, "I've already given orders. The main issue is with Jiao Lin County. Specifically, the new county party secretary there, Dong Xuebing, has been uncooperative and dismissive of the foreign guests."

Director Yan paused for a moment, "Dong Xuebing?"

"Yes, him," Qian Litao confirmed.

"That guy... well, never mind," Director Yan's tone seemed to imply something unspoken.

After hearing this, Qian Litao had a general understanding. "Rest assured, Director Yan, we will give the foreign guests an explanation. The responsible individuals will be dealt with."

Director Yan replied, "Mm, you handle it as you see fit."

Once the call ended, Qian Litao no longer had any hesitation. He knew that Dong Xuebing was not liked by many in the province, even to the point of being openly hostile. As the City party secretary, he had some knowledge of this, although he wasn't entirely sure why several top provincial leaders disliked Dong Xuebing. Despite not fully understanding who Dong Xuebing was, or why he evoked such animosity, he had received the leaders' stance. This was also the fundamental reason Baohong City had made life difficult for Dong Xuebing since his arrival—they were following the province's instructions. But at the same time, Qian Litao had many doubts. If the province's prominent leaders opposed this person, why was he still sent to Baohong City? If the leadership was against it, Dong Xuebing wouldn't have even been able to get here. Moving a person like him from the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) to a county in their province involved several steps, and any one of those could have blocked him from coming. This situation was odd, and Qian Litao couldn't figure it out.

Despite being disliked by provincial leaders and not welcomed by anyone, Dong Xuebing had been moved here without issue. This situation seemed illogical, and Qian Litao couldn't understand the reasons behind it—what kind of person or what hidden backstory could have led to this?

Qian Litao was unsure, which was why he made the call to test the waters. After hearing the response from the provincial leader, who had advised them to "handle it themselves," he got the clear message. While Qian Litao couldn't fully understand the situation, he didn't have the energy to dwell on it. He understood the province's attitude, and to him, a mere county party secretary like Dong Xuebing, especially one who was new and had no connections, wasn't something to worry about. Dong Xuebing was not involved in any factional struggles, so dealing with him was simple for Qian Litao.

A small official.

With a record.

Handling him would be easy enough.

Qian Litao had steadily risen through the ranks because he had always followed the province's orders and attitude. Whatever the province said, he did. Whatever the province wanted, he made sure it was taken care of, often in advance. In short, he had always walked in lockstep with the province. Even when it meant sacrificing some of Baohong City's interests, Qian Litao never hesitated. He had always been at the forefront of implementing provincial directives. This was why, when a major incident occurred in Baohong City not long ago. The provincial investigation team bypassed the city and directly investigated at the grassroots level, Qian Litao and other city officials had not been implicated. The reason was simple: the province was satisfied with the leadership in Baohong City.

With this new situation, the province's stance was clear enough.

Naturally, Qian Litao had no objection. He didn't particularly like Dong Xuebing's unpredictable temperament; such a leader was too hard to control. So, Qian Litao made a call and summoned his secretary into the office. He said, "Notify the City Discipline Inspection Commission to investigate the foreign guests' and the city government's complaints against Jiao Lin County's Party Secretary, Dong Xuebing."

The secretary responded, "Understood."

Qian Litao instructed further, "Tell them to start immediately and handle the case quickly. We need to explain to the foreign guests. The province is paying close attention to this matter. This time, we need to set a typical example with Jiao Lin County." After a pause, he set the tone, "For Dong

Xuebing, at the very least, he should be given a party warning. If other issues are found, we may consider removing him from office."