

PAW 721

Chapter 721: Why?!

Subdistrict Office Family Quarters. Geng's family apartment.

Geng Yuehua's father reads the newspaper on the sofa while her mother peels beans beside him.

Ding dong... ding dong.... The doorbell rang.

Geng Yuehua's mother puts down the beans. "Xinke is back."

Geng Yuehua's father is looking terrible. "So what if he is back?!"

"Stop showing that face." Geng Yuehua's mother frowned.

"I am disgraced and embarrassed by this useless son!"

"That incident had been settled." Geng Yuehua's mother said. "What else do you want our son to do?"

Geng Yuehua's father continues to read his newspaper. "I will just read my newspaper."

"Go ahead!" Geng Yuehua's mother mumbled as she went to open the door. "I.... all my life is spent worrying about you and our son. Sigh.... Having a daughter is so much better. Look at Yuehua. She did not let us worry since young. If Xinke is half as good as her, I would not worry so much...."

"You asked me to stop, yet you are talking about this." Geng Yuehua's father grumbled.

"Fine.... I will stop talking about him."

The door opens, and Geng Xinke enters. "Mum, Dad."

"You are back." His mother closed the door. "I am preparing dinner. Is your sister coming back?"

Geng Xinke changed into slippers. "I think so. Didn't she say she will be back this morning?"

"Ok. Then I will wait for her first before frying the vegetables." Geng Xinke's mother saw him looking gloomy and asked. "What happened? Did other people at your workplace know about the video recordings?"

Geng Xinke shook his head and sat on the sofa. "No."

Geng Xinke's mother was surprised. "Didn't you say it will spread in the Subdistrict?"

"I think sister had stopped the news from spreading. Everything is fine, and no one seems to know about it." Geng Xinke drank a cup of water and sighed in relief.

Geng Xinke's mother looks at him. "This is good news. Your sister had recovered the DVDs and videotapes, and no one knows about it. You should be happy about it. Why are you looking so gloomy? Is it because you had fought with Dong Xuebing? Did the District Government punish you for that?"

Geng Xinke paused for a second. "I am not punished."

Geng Xinke's father puts down his newspaper. "You are not punished after what you did?!"

"Maybe Sis had stopped them. I did not hit Dong Xuebing after all, and it's not that serious."

"That's good to hear." Geng Xinke's mother said. "You must thank your sister later when she is here. If she had not helped you to clean your mess, you would be in trouble now."

"I know." Geng Xinke is grateful to his sister and has caused many problems this time. At the same time, his anger with Dong Xuebing intensified. "Luckily, Sis is around this time. Or else, Dong Xuebing would have sent the DVD to the Commission for Discipline Inspection. Even if nothing happens to me, I will be a laughing stock. Furthermore, many people will have seen Pingping's body. How is she going to live?"

Geng Xinke's mother heard it and got mad. "This Dong Xuebing is a scum. Which leader will do such things?! You are dating, and what has it got to do with him?! He is trying to create trouble for everyone. I met him earlier on my way home, and he still greeted me as if nothing had happened. I ignored him and walked away!"

Geng Xinke's father shook his head and did not comment.

Geng Xinke's mother carried on complaining. "Dong Xuebing had been creating trouble for us. I will talk to your sister. She is the District Mayor, and she can easily bring down a Subdistrict Office Director. We cannot allow this to carry on."

Geng Xinke looks like he got something to say.

"What is it?" Geng Xinke's mother asked. "What do you want to say?"

Geng Xinke sighed. "Mum, I don't know what Sis is thinking. I got a feeling that she has been getting closer with Dong Xuebing recently. She used to keep quiet when I talked about him. But recently, she will get angry and scold me for other things when I talk about him. I wonder what is going on...."

Geng Xinke's mother waved her hand. "Impossible. Your sister can't wait to kick him out after what he had done to you."

"That's why I am confused." Geng Xinke said. "I received news that the District Government had issued funds to our Subdistrict Office for Dong Xuebing's earthquake response exercise. This is ridiculous."

"The District Government had issued fund?!"

“It was Sis who approved it.”

“Your sister?!” Geng Xinke’s parents frowned. “What is Yuehua thinking?”

Although Geng Xinke’s parents felt their son is responsible for this video recording incident, they will side with him. They scolded him for two days and still sided with him. They are angry with Dong Xuebing for trying to blow up this matter and the previous grudges between him and their son. Now, their daughter had turned around and supported him.

Suddenly, the door opens, and Geng Yuehua steps in.

Geng Xinke immediately walks over to greet her. “Sis, you are early today.”

Geng Yuehua nodded. “There’s not much work. Did you all have dinner?”

“Not yet. We are waiting for you.” Geng Xinke looks at their mother. “Mum, you can start cooking.”

Geng Xinke’s mother remained in her seat and looked at her daughter. “Yuehua, come here. I have something to ask you.”

Geng Yuehua put down her handbag and sat on the sofa. “What is it?”

Geng Yuehua’s mother looks angry. “You should know what happened between Dong Xuebing and your brother. It’s fine if you are not helping your brother, but why are you getting closer with Dong Xuebing?!”

Geng Yuehua frowned. “What are you talking about?”

“Stop feigning ignorance. Xinke had told me everything.” Geng Yuehua’s mother stares at her. “Did you approve the funds for his earthquake response exercise?!”

Geng Yuehua replied emotionlessly. “Let’s not talk about this and have dinner.”

“I am asking you now. Answer me first!” Geng Yuehua’s mother pulled her and stopped her from walking away. “What are you thinking.”

Geng Yuehua turns to her mother. “I know what I am doing. Stop interfering.”

Geng Yuehua’s mother got angrier. “Dong Xuebing had almost tarnished your brother’s reputation, and you are telling me you know what you are doing?! If you know what to do, you should be bringing him down now!”

Geng Yuehua waved her hand. “I don’t want to talk about this today. Can we start dinner?”

Geng Xinke saw his sister and mother were about to fight. “Mum, Sis, let’s have dinner first.”

“No!” Geng Yuehua’s mother shouted. “No one is going to have dinner if your sister doesn’t give us an explanation!”

Geng Xinke looks at his sister. “Sis, I should not be the one saying this. But don’t you think the earthquake response exercise is a bit unnecessary? Why are we conducting this exercise when nothing has happened? This will let others think we are doing this for formalities. Why did you allow Dong Xuebing to carry on and provide funding?”

Geng Yuehua's parents are looking at Geng Yuehua.

Everyone is waiting for Geng Yuehua to explain herself.

Geng Yuehua got mad. "I don't want to mention some incidents because it is over. Why?! Do you still want to know why?! Fine! I will tell you all why!" She stares at Geng Xinke. "Did you think I was the one who suppressed the DVD incident for you and stopped news of it from spreading in your Subdistrict and the District Government?!"

Geng Xinke was surprised. "Isn't this what happened?"

Geng Yuehua coldly replied. "Even I am the District Mayor, I cannot stop people from gossiping! Do you think news of this incident will not leak because I said something? Do you think this is possible?!"

"Then...."

"The moment this incident started, Xiao Dong and your Subdistrict Office's Disciplinary Work Committee Secretary contained it and stopped it from spreading. After that, he came to see me and gave the DVD to me. Besides both of us, Dong Xuebing and your Subdistrict Office's Disciplinary Work Committee Secretary are the only ones who know about this. This is why you can still go to work peacefully, and there are no rumors about you!"

Geng Xinke is shocked.

Their parents are also shocked.

Geng Yuehua looks at her brother. "Let's talk about the videotape and the DVDs. Did you think I was the one who recovered all the DVDs? Did you think I was the one who investigated this incident? It was Xiao Dong. He knows it is inconvenient for me to interfere, and he skipped lunch and went straight to Dong Hai District to settle it. He spent the whole afternoon investigating this incident and brought back all the recordings. He was the one who prevented this incident from blowing up."

Geng Xinke is speechless. "This...."

Geng Yuehua looks at him coldly. "Let's talk about you hitting Xiao Dong. Do you know why it ended so fast and quietly? Why didn't the District Government punish you for what you did? Do you think it is a small matter? Xiao Dong told Commission for Discipline Inspection Secretary Wu Liang that you did not hit him or grab his collar. He said you all had only argued because of some differences at work. That's why you can sit here peacefully with me. This is why you are not punished!"

Geng Yuehua's mother gasped. "Yuehua... he...."

"Sis...." Geng Xinke couldn't believe what he heard. "Is it real?"

Geng Yuehua continues. "Xiao Dong had been clearing your mess, and you still dare to raise your hands on him?! Touch your heart. You what to know why I supported him with his exercise?! What do you think?! Tell me!"

Geng Xinke slapped his forehead.

So, this is what happened.

Chapter 722: Geng Family apologized

Geng's family apartment living room.

Geng Yuehua's words made her parents and brother speechless.

No one said a word for a few seconds.

After a while, Geng Yuehua's mother asked. "Yuehua, is it true?"

"Yes." Geng Yuehua poured a cup of tea and drank it.

Geng Xinke looks at his sister. "Sis, why didn't you tell me about this earlier?"

Geng Yuehua coldly replied. "Xiao Dong asked me not to tell you."

"But...." Geng Yuehua's father frowned. "Why did he help Xinke?"

Everyone looks at Geng Yuehua, waiting for her reply. That's right. Why is he so helpful?

Geng Yuehua paused for a second and put down the teacup. "Xinke is Xiao Dong's subordinate, and Lin Pingping is his former subordinate. He will be affected if anything happens to you. I cannot say he is not doing this for himself, but he put aside his grudges to help you. He let you off after you grabbed his collar and went to Dong Hai District to clear your mess. I think you all are biased against him. I had met him several times these few days, and I can tell he is not a scheming person."

Geng Xinke smacked his lips.

Geng Yuehua's mother sighed. "Yuehua, you should have told us earlier. I had ignored Dong Xuebing when he greeted me earlier."

Geng Xinke felt terrible. Dong Xuebing had invited him to have dinner earlier, and he rejected him.

"No matter what, it was Dong Xuebing who helped us." Geng Yuehua's father said.

"We cannot let him think our family is unreasonable."

Geng Yuehua's mother nodded. "Yuehua, help me thank him when you see him again."

Geng Yuehua replied emotionlessly. "I had thanked him."

"Thank him for you?!" Geng Yuehua's father said. "We are staying in the same building. Can't you thank him yourself? Why must you ask Yuehua to be the messenger?"

Geng Yuehua's mother gave him a stare. "How am I supposed to thank him after showing him that attitude earlier?"

Geng Yuehua's father ignored her and looked at his son. "Speak up. Why are you keeping quiet?"

Geng Xinke doesn't know what to say. He hated Dong Xuebing to the core and swore to go against him in the future. But it was Dong Xuebing who put aside their grudges and saved him. His anger

towards him disappeared. If Dong Xuebing had not helped, those DVDs would have been sent to various departments, and countless people would have seen them. His assault case against Dong Xuebing would also not be settled so quickly.

Geng Xinke said. "Dong Xuebing had invited me to have dinner together this afternoon. How about we call him over to have dinner together?" He is not an ungrateful person and wants to thank him.

Geng Xinke's mother nodded. "Alright. Yuehua, give Xiao Dong a call."

Geng Yuehua sat there as if she had not heard anything.

Geng Yuehua's mother asked again. "Yuehua, did you hear me?"

Geng Yuehua's father frowned. "Can you be more sincere? How can you ask Yuehua to call him? Ask Xinke to go upstairs to invite him."

Geng Xinke nodded. "I... I will go upstairs and invite him."

"Fine... fine.... I am not sincere like you all." Geng Yuehua's mother grumbled and stood up. "I will prepare dinner now."

Stairwell.

Geng Xinke called Lin Pingping after he stepped out of his apartment.

"Hello, who is it?"

"Pingping? It's me."

Lin Pingping paused for a second. "How did you know my number?" Although they had slept together, she had not given him her number.

"I got it from someone. It's easy to get it since I know you are working in Yan Tai County Investment Promotion Agency."

"Stop calling me in the future."

"Ok. Have you taken your dinner? What are you doing now?" Geng Xinke asked.

"I am cooking now. What is it you want?"

"I just want to tell you that everything is settled." Geng Xinke said embarrassedly.

"You are right. I don't know anything about Dong Xuebing. He was the one who recovered the recordings and suppressed this issue. I had misunderstood him."

Lin Pingping paused for a second. "What did he do?"

"It's like this...." Geng Xinke told Lin Pingping what had happened.

Lin Pingping sighed in relief. "Chief Dong had helped me a lot when he was with the Investment Promotion Agency. Sigh.... I owe him another favor." She is not surprised that Dong Xuebing stepped in to help her as she knows he is very protective of his subordinates.

"I am going to invite Dong Xuebing to come to my house for dinner. I will thank him for you." There's an underlying meaning in this sentence.

Lin Pingping got the underlying message. "No need. I will thank him myself."

"Err... Alright."

"Bye."

"Ok. Please take care of yourself."

"I know."

Lin Pingping treats Geng Xinke formally like an ordinary friend, and there's nothing Geng Xinke can do. They split after they graduated and he had dated other women after that. But those women could not give him the same feeling he felt when he was with Lin Pingping. He regrets breaking up with her and tries to call her again. But she had changed her number, and they lost contact until two days ago.

Geng Xinke ended the call and went upstairs to Dong Xuebing's apartment. He is troubled and feels uncomfortable doing this. This is difficult for him as he had to put aside his pride.

Geng Xinke hesitated for a while before pressing the doorbell.

Ding dong... ding dong.... The door opened, and Dong Xuebing stepped out. "Eh? Secretary Geng? Why are you here? Come in."

Dong Xuebing was watching TV alone when Geng Xinke knocked on his door.

Geng Xinke smiled. "I will not go in. Director, have you taken your dinner? My parents had prepared dinner, and they are inviting you over."

Dong Xuebing is puzzled. "I have not eaten, but I will not bother uncle and auntie. I am about to cook dinner now."

"It's not a bother. My family will be glad if you can join us." Geng Xinke said this with difficulties.

"Haha.... Alright. Let me switch off the TV first."

Dong Xuebing returned to his apartment to switch off the TV and grabbed two cartons of cigarettes before going downstairs with Geng Xinke. He slowly understands why Geng Xinke changed his attitude towards him. Yuehua must have told her family what happened.

It's not a bad thing if they know about it.

Dong Xuebing doesn't mind having a good relationship with Yuehua's family.

Geng Family apartment.

"Xiao Dong, you are here." Geng Yuehua's father puts down his newspapers.

Geng Yuehua's mother also comes over to greet him. "Xiao Dong, come in."

Dong Xuebing smiled politely. "Uncle, auntie, I was not prepared and didn't have any good gifts. Haha.... But it is bad to turn up empty-handed. Here are two cartons of Zhong Hua Cigarettes." He placed the cigarettes on the table.

Geng Yuehua's father replied. "Why are you bringing gifts?"

“That’s right.” Geng Yuehua’s mother added.

Dong Xuebing laughed. “It’s a small token, and this is my first time visiting you all. Gifts are a must.”

Geng Yuehua’s mother smiles. “You all Beijing people are so polite. Fine. We will accept it, but don’t bring anything next time.”

“Ok.” Dong Xuebing changed to slippers and entered the living room. “Mayor Geng.”

Geng Yuehua nods at Dong Xuebing and continues watching TV.

Dinner.

Everyone sat at the dining table, and Geng Yuehua’s father took out a few bottles of alcohol.

“Here, Xiao Dong.” Geng Yuehua’s mother raised her glass of plain water. “I can’t drink, and I will drink this instead. Let me give you a toast. I heard everything from Yuehua. Thank you.”

Dong Xuebing cannot allow elders to offer him toasts. “No.... no.... Auntie, don’t mention it. That’s what I should do.”

Geng Xinke added. “Let me have a toast with Director Dong instead. Thank you.”

Dong Xuebing reached out to stop him. “Stop toasting with me. The first glass should be me toasting with uncle and auntie. I cannot let elders offer a toast to me, and Xinke’s matter is a simple matter. That’s what I should do, and I did not do much too. Lastly, I was too rash and impulsive in the past, and it caused some misunderstandings. It’s all my fault, and here is a toast to both of you. I hope you will not blame me for what happened in the past.”

Dong Xuebing knocked his glass against Geng Yuehua’s parents’ glasses.

Geng Yuehua’s mother is smiling brightly. “You are too modest. It was my son who had”

Geng Yuehua’s father interrupts. “Stop talking about it.”

“Yes... yes....” Geng Yuehua’s mother said. “It’s all in the past. Let’s not talk about it anymore. Let’s eat.”

Chapter 723: The daring Xiao Dong

A crescent moon hangs in the sky with countless stars. The dinner in Geng’s family apartment is still ongoing. Empty beer bottles are on the table, and Geng Yuehua’s father takes out a bottle of Bai Jiu.

“Xiao Dong, it’s been a while since our house is so happy.”

“Pour another glass for Xiao Dong. We will drink to our fill today.”

“Auntie, Uncle, I am almost at my limit.”

“Don’t be modest. I heard from my son that you can drink Bai Jiu from the bottle.”

“Ah.... That’s because my condition was good that time.”

“No.... finish this glass first. I will drink with you. Xinke, Yuehua, you two must also drink.”

“Mum, stop drinking.”

“It’s just one glass.”

Tonight’s dinner is a feast.

Dong Xuebing had helped the Geng family settle their problems, and he wants to mend their relationship. That’s why he positioned himself lower and tried to be modest. This made Geng Yuehua’s parents feel bad for treating him poorly in the past. After drinking a few glasses, both sides become friends. Geng Xinke is slightly drunk. “Director Dong, I will offer you a toast as an apology for what I did.”

Dong Xuebing knocked his glass. “Don’t say that. I had forgotten what happened.” Geng Xinke laughed. “Then let’s erase everything and start afresh. Brother Dong bottoms up.”

“Don’t call me Brother Dong. You are older than me, call me Xuebing.”

“Alright. Xuebing, let’s drink.” Geng Xinke replied.

“Cheers!” They finished their glasses, and Geng Yuehua’s mother felt tipsy after one glass of Bai Jiu. “Xiao Dong, are you married?”

Dong Xuebing was surprised by this question. “Not yet.”

“Do you have a girlfriend?”

“Yes. I am getting married at the end of this year or early next year.” Dong Xuebing replied honestly. He had told Geng Yuehua about this before and had nothing to hide. Geng Yuehua’s mother nodded. “Good.... You will be more stable after you set up a family.” She turns to her son. “Xinke, you should also think about your future and stop making us worry. You are not young anymore. Pingping is a good girl, and what happened between you two? Are you two dating or what? Let’s set a date to meet her parents.” Geng Xinke is speechless. “Mum, let’s talk about this another time.” His father had drunk a lot, but he is still sober. He gave his wife a stare to stop her from talking in front of their guest. But Geng Xinke’s mother did not stop. “Can’t you be more anxious?!”

“Alright.... I know.” Geng Xinke replied. Geng Yuehua did not interrupt them and continued to watch TV from the dining table. She doesn’t like to chat, and Dong Xuebing has never seen her talk about non-work stuff. Her mother saw Geng Yuehua and got mad. “Yuehua, do you think this is not related to you? You are in your thirties and are still a woman. When are you going to get married?” Geng Yuehua looks at her mother. “You are drunk. I will help you into your room.” Her father added. “Help

your Mum into the room. She is nagging nonstop after one glass." He turns to Dong Xuebing. "Xiao Dong, let's carry on." Geng Yuehua's mother pushed her hands away. "Sit! I am not drunk!"

"You are nagging about the same thing every day." Geng Yuehua's father grumbled. "We have a guest with us." Geng Yuehua's mother kept quiet and stopped talking about her son and daughter's marriages.

Dong Xuebing continues eating and drinking. He accidentally stepped on a foot when he stood up to offer Geng Yuehua's father a toast. He looked down and saw it was Geng Yuehua's foot. "Sorry, Mayor Geng. I stepped on your foot accidentally." Geng Yuehua shook her head and continued to watch TV.

Dong Xuebing noticed Geng Yuehua's position. She is sitting away from him, but his feet are quite near him. After drinking alcohol, he got bolder. He looks at Geng Yuehua's parents and brother's sitting position and knows they can't see what is going on under the table.

Dong Xuebing quietly reached under the table and started moving towards his right.

Ah.... Dong Xuebing touched something soft and smooth. It's stockings. Mayor Geng is wearing a skirt today.

Geng Yuehua frowns and looks at Dong Xuebing. One second.... Two seconds.... Three seconds.... She did not say anything and continued watching the news.

Dong Xuebing got more daring and started to stroke and caress her legs.

Geng Yuehua remains still and does not show any emotions.

"Xiao Dong, what's wrong?" Geng Yuehua's mother said. "Continue eating."

Dong Xuebing quickly reply. "Yes...."

"Try this. This is my best dish."

"Thank you, Auntie." Dong Xuebing used his chopsticks and ate one piece. "It's delicious. How did you make this sauce?" Geng Xinke laughed. "My Mum can make this dish well." His mother laughed. "I had only added Chinese haw in it. Eat more if you like it."

"Sure. I will help myself."

Dong Xuebing puts down his chopstick after eating and continues to stroke Geng Yuehua's thighs. He even pinched it lightly and pushed her skirt higher. His hand reaches her inner thighs and starts kneading them. After a while, he reached her back and squeezed her butt.

Dong Xuebing stopped when he was satisfied.

No one notices what he did other than Geng Yuehua and Dong Xuebing. Her parents could never imagine him teasing their daughter in front of them.

Chapter 724: Countdown to the earthquake

One day....

Five days....

Ten days....

It's getting nearer to the earthquake.

Under Dong Xuebing's supervision, Guang Ming Subdistrict Office went all out to promote earthquake disaster response knowledge and evict those living in high-risk illegal buildings. He carried out his plan step by step and will stick his hands into the areas where deaths are reported in the future newspaper. Work is proceeding steadily in every neighborhood and household. He disregarded all objections and complained and continued to push them.

There's progress every day.

Dong Xuebing wishes his Subdistrict could become a fortress and achieve zero casualties during the earthquake.

The Subdistrict Office had also changed a lot.

The earthquake response exercise will continue as planned despite numerous complaints from many people. The exercise date is set, and even Guang Ming Subdistrict Office staffs find it ridiculous. They wonder why Director Dong is doing this as he has no reason to do it. To everyone's surprise, the District Government approved it and issued funds to support them. Mayor Geng approved this. What's more surprising is Deputy Work Party Committee Secretary, Geng Xinke, did not object to this exercise during their Work Party Committee meeting. Geng Xinke and his men even helped to procure the relief supplies.

This shocked everyone.

Zhou Yanru, Wang Yuling, and the rest are stunned.

Everyone, including the whole of Nan Shan District, knows about Dong Xuebing and Geng Xinke's grudges. They heard about Geng Xinke grabbing Dong Xuebing's collar outside the District Party Committee Building, and why are they working together? They are also spotted chatting and joking outside of work. What is going on?

The God of Plague had shocked everyone again.

It is easy to persuade a neutral staff to join your faction.

But it is almost impossible to persuade someone from an opposing faction who had grudges against you to join your side. Furthermore, Geng Xinke's sister is District Mayor Geng.

Director Dong can always do unbelievable things.

Many people in the Subdistrict Office are discussing him privately. They are impressed by Dong Xuebing's abilities, but they are still doubtful about the exercise. This will be a large-scale exercise involving the whole Subdistrict. Where did Director Dong get this idea from?

Guang Ming Subdistrict Office's actions had affected the surrounding Subdistricts residents, and many Subdistrict Offices complained to the District Government. They claimed Dong Xuebing's action had caused panic among their residents. But their complaints did not get a response from the

District Government. Ping An Subdistrict Office Director, Chu Qinghua, did not complain or do anything. He watched what Dong Xuebing did and waited to see him embarrass himself.

No one thinks an earthquake will happen.

No one thinks Fen Zhou City will become a disaster-hit zone. Major earthquakes had not happened in their area for decades, and nothing will happen in the future.

Such a mindset had become the norm. Anyone who always thinks disasters will happen will be treated as paranoid or crazy.

Of course, Dong Xuebing is neither paranoid nor crazy.

Afternoon.

Subdistrict Office's Work Party Secretary Office.

Dong Xuebing had received numerous feedbacks from his residents, other Subdistrict Offices, and the District Government departments, and the pressure is mounting. He can understand how everyone feels, but he cannot explain himself. He ignored all these noises and continued with his plan. He will not stop what he has been doing because of these complaints.

This is Dong Xuebing's determination.

Dong Xuebing can stand fearless in front of a landslide, let alone these complaints. These people will not deter him.

This is Dong Xuebing's biggest merit and also his biggest flaw. He will do whatever it takes to achieve what he set his mind on and disregard everything. He will not regret it even if he is proven wrong and loses his job in the end. He had entered the government service and got promoted because of this mindset. He can make mistakes but never go against his conscience or ditch his dignity. He will never treat the residents' lives lightly.

That's why Dong Xuebing must conduct this earthquake response exercise.

Dong Xuebing took out that copy of the future newspaper and looked at the headlines with a cigarette between his lips. 9.25 Earthquake.

Sept 25th.

That is three days later.

Dong Xuebing only has three days left. He could feel the nerves and took a deep breath. He picks up his pen and rereads the earthquake response exercise proposal. He checked every sentence and signed it. After that, he called Zhou Yanru to make copies and distribute them to every neighborhood committee and Subdistrict Office department.

The exercise date is set on Sept 25th, which is when the earthquake happens.

Zhou Yanru doesn't know why Dong Xuebing picks this day but does not ask anything.

Dong Xuebing exhaled loudly after giving out this task.

The Subdistrict Office is ready. It might not be foolproof, but Dong Xuebing had done his best. He had eliminated all the dangers he could think of and had nothing much to do now. There are only

three days left, and he will implement the final step of his plan. This is an extremely risky and vital task. He is going to warn the whole city!

Dong Xuebing had decided to risk it all.

Chapter 725: Earthquake Administration's test result

Next day.

Saturday.

It's a clear day, and birds are chirping on the branches.

Elderly folks are exercising and taking strolls in a garden. It is a quiet and peaceful scene.

These will be gone in two days.

Dong Xuebing, who is not working today, looks out of his windows. He is thinking about the final step of his plan. It is a risky move, but he will do it even if he must sacrifice everything. He plans to publish an article on the biggest newspaper in Fen Zhou City. He needs everyone to be ready. However, he needs an excuse. Something that can convince the majority. Or else people will see him as an idiot.

What excuse should he use?

Having a friend in the Earthquake Administration will not work, as it will be exposed with a phone call.

Asking the Earthquake Administration to conduct tests will not work as their technology is limited. They won't find anything.

Dong Xuebing was distracted by a commotion when he was thinking. People are shouting, and a dog is barking.

"Hey! Watch your dog!"

"Sorry.... Sorry.... Are you bitten?"

"No, but it gave me a scare. "

"I'm sorry. I don't know what's wrong with my dog. It seems it had gone crazy today and kept barking non-stop."

"Is it rabies? Oh, my cat is also snarling and growling this morning."

"I will bring my dog to the vet later. I hope he is not sick."

Dong Xuebing slapped his lap when he saw this. Pets and animals will demonstrate weird behaviors before an earthquake. This can be a warning.

The earthquake is coming.

That newspaper is correct.

Dong Xuebing is afraid this is a coincidence and rushed out in his slippers.

Dong Xuebing overheard someone shouting at his barking dog in the stairwell.

“Pipi, stop barking!”

“Woof! Woof!”

“Don’t be naughty!”

“Woof... woof... woof....”

Dong Xuebing got worried. Although he knows the earthquake is happening, it is still worrying.

The earthquake is around the corner.

No one can stop the earthquake from happening.

Dong Xuebing saw Zhou Yanru, in her pajamas, on his way downstairs. She is holding a garbage bag and seems to be going out to throw it. She saw him and smiled. “Director.”

Dong Xuebing stopped. “Good morning. You are early.”

Zhou Yanru nodded and waved the garbage bag in her hand. “I woke up earlier to clear the trash. I wonder what happened last night. My fish jumped out of the fish tank and died. It stank this morning.

Even the fishes are behaving weirdly.

Zhou Yanru notices Dong Xuebing looks terrible after hearing what she said and asks. “Director, is anything wrong?”

Dong Xuebing replied. “Dogs in the building had been barking the whole morning. I saw many dogs barking and cats snarling outside earlier. Now, your fishes....”

Zhou Yanru doesn’t understand. “Err.... Dogs and fishes?”

Dong Xuebing took a deep breath and said. “I got a bad feeling about this.”

Other people might not think much about this. Still, Guang Ming Subdistrict Office has been educating its residents on earthquake prevention and mitigation measures for the past few days. Zhou Yanru immediately knows what Dong Xuebing is talking about. She gasped and turned pale. “Are you saying... it’s an earthquake?”

Zhou Yanru has a loud voice and attracts many people’s attention.

Qu Yiqiang walked out of the apartment opposite hers. “Huh? What happened?”

Someone downstairs opened the door. “Sister Yanru, what happened?” It is Wang Yuling.

Dong Xuebing shouted. “Get all Subdistrict Office staffs to come over for an emergency meeting now.”

Zhou Yanru quickly returns to her apartment to call others.

Dong Xuebing did not waste time and started giving out instructions. “Director Wang, go to the garden and see if those stray dogs and cats are behaving abnormally. Old Qu, a few of the residents at the south building rear pigeons. Go and ask them if their pigeons had returned to their nests.” Zhou Yanru returned after calling the other Subdistrict Office staff. Dong Xuebing looked at her and said. “Director Zhou, check the fish market on the west side.”

Wang Yuling is puzzled. What's going on? "Why do we have to look at the animals?"

Zhou Yanru quickly pulls her along. "Hurry up. I will tell you on the way."

"Oh, remember not to cause any commotions." Dong Xuebing instructed. "Just check the animals and don't cause panic among the residents."

"I know." Zhou Yanru, Qu Yiqiang, and Wang Yuling quickly run downstairs.

A few moments later, Geng Xinke came down. "Did something happen?"

Dong Xuebing walked up the stairs. "Let's go to my place first."

Half an hour later.

Dong Xuebing's apartment. All Subdistrict Office's leaders had arrived. The living room is filled with cigarette smoke as all the guys are chain-smoking. Everyone is looking terrible.

"Is this a coincidence?"

"I think so too. It might be a natural occurrence."

"I will be terrible if this is true."

"Eh, Director Wang and Director Zhou are back."

Everyone stopped talking and looked towards the door.

Dong Xuebing snubbed his cigarette. "How is it?"

Zhou Yanru looks grave. "I went to the fish market. Most of the fish in the stores behave normally, except for the fish in two tanks. The fishes are jumping about in the tanks, and I asked the store owners. They said the fishes might be suffocating due to a lack of oxygen. But I don't think so as the fishes continued to jump after they put air pumps into the tanks."

Wang Yuling continues. "Only two dogs are barking non-stop in the gardens. The other seven to eight dogs I saw, the rest are behaving normally, and most stray cats are normal except for one. That stray cat refuses to eat its food and keeps hissing at others."

Dong Xuebing turns to Qu Yiqiang. "Old Qu, what about your side?"

Qu Yiqiang replied. "All the pigeons are in their nests. They seem fine."

Everyone is relieved after hearing their reports.

Yu Rongfeng said. "Since most animals are not showing weird behaviors, it should be fine."

Zhou Yanru retorted. "Animals can predict earthquakes, and their behaviors are peculiar today. Why are so many dogs barking today? I had reared my fish for four to five years, and why did they decide to jump out of the fish tank today? I worry that an earthquake is going to happen."

Wang Yuling added. "I am getting anxious after hearing it from you."

Qu Yiqiang thought for a while and said. "I don't think this is a problem. Maybe the animals are behaving weirdly due to the changes in the weather recently."

“That’s right. It is only a small percentage of the animals, and we cannot use it to judge the situation.”

“Yes. If all animals are behaving weirdly, then....”

Dong Xuebing interrupts. “Everyone will know an earthquake is coming if all the dogs in the city will bark before it. But many earthquakes remained undetected before they happened. Not all animals can feel an impending earthquake. Director Zhou is right that a small portion of the animals behaving weirdly means there is a problem. What if an earthquake happens?”

The No. 1 of the Subdistrict Office had set the tone, and the rest did not continue.

But most of them felt earthquakes would not happen. How can a few dogs and cats barking and growling indicate an earthquake is happening? Dong Xuebing is overreacting.

Dong Xuebing instructed. “Director Zhou, write a report and report the situation to the District Government immediately.”

“Yes, Sir.” Zhou Yanru replied.

“Director Wang.” Dong Xuebing continues. “Contact the Provincial Earthquake Administration. If they refuse, drive there and invite some professionals over to conduct tests here.”

“Yes. I will call them now.” Wang Yuling replied.

Dong Xuebing continues to give out orders to his men. He knows the earthquake will happen, and there’s no need to conduct tests. But he can’t decide this by himself and needs evidence. Some animals are behaving weirdly, and he will be using it as an excuse. Although this is not convincing, he can openly tell everyone about the earthquake. Even if one or two dogs out of one hundred are barking, it is an indication, and he cannot be accused of spreading earthquake rumors.

The Subdistrict Office’s staff left, and Dong Xuebing started to write the article on his PC.

Dong Xuebing is writing this article seriously and recorded the chicken, ducks, dogs, cats, fishes, etc., behaviors in it. He included his findings and conclusions. He spent the whole morning writing this article.

Afternoon.

Dong Xuebing decides to contact the newspaper agency first before getting approvals from the higher-ups. Wang Yuling called. “Director, the Earthquake Administration’s test result is out.”

Dong Xuebing is surprised. “So fast?!”

Wang Yuling replied. “I called them this morning, and they immediately send people over.”

“How’s the rest result?”

“They say it’s fine.”

“Fine? What do they mean?”

“They checked and said there are no indications of an earthquake happening. Those dogs, fishes, etc., behaviors have nothing to do with earthquakes, and they couldn’t find anything on their instruments.”

No indication of earthquakes?!

All the Subdistrict Office Leaders are relieved after hearing the Earthquake Administration findings.

But Dong Xuebing got mad. F**k! What experts are you all?! I will be screwed if I believe your findings!

The earthquake is happening in two days, and you all are saying there’s no indication of an earthquake?!

You all are creating problems for me!

Do you all need the earthquake to happen before you all can confirm?! What’s the point of getting you all to check?!

Chapter 726: The Article

It is autumn, but it is still hot outside.

Dong Xuebing sat in his living room alone. He hates those experts from the Earthquake Administration to the core for disrupting his plans. He had planned to report the animal's weird behavior to the higher-ups and publish the article in the papers. This will alert everyone to be prepared. But the test result from the Earthquake Administration experts did not detect any earthquake movements. He doesn’t believe this outcome.

The earthquake is happening in less than two days.

What should I do now?

Ring... ring... ring.... Zhou Yanru called from the Subdistrict Office. “Director, I heard the Earthquake Administration concluded that everything is fine.”

Dong Xuebing sneered. “Can you trust their words?”

Zhou Yanru paused for a second. “I think so. They had brought their equipment with them.”

Dong Xuebing can’t be bothered to explain. “Have you submitted the report to the District Government?”

“Yes.” Zhou Yanru replied. “But they had not given us any replies. I heard the District Government knows about the Earthquake Administration’s findings, and District Party Secretary Wang Anshi has been discharged.”

“Secretary Wang has recovered?”

“Yes.”

“Alright. I know.”

It’s another piece of bad news. Dong Xuebing felt he was down on his luck these few days.

Dong Xuebing took a deep breath and thought about it. He must warn everyone about the earthquake even if no one believes him. He kept the article in his bag and left it for Fen Zhou Daily's office.

Fen Zhou Daily News Agency.

Dong Xuebing parked his car and asked around for News Department Su Jia's office location before finding her.

Knock... knock... knock.... Dong Xuebing knocks on the door.

"Come in." Su Jia said.

Dong Xuebing enters the office. "Sister Su. Are you busy?"

Su Jia is alone in her office and smiles when she sees Dong Xuebing. "Xuebing? Why are you here? Have a glass of water."

Dong Xuebing sat opposite Su Jia. "No thanks. I am here to ask for a favor."

Su Jia laughed. "You can just call me and don't need to come over yourself."

Dong Xuebing replied seriously. "This is a grave matter, and I must talk to you. Sister Su, my Mum and your Uncle are getting married, and we are a family. Other than you, I don't know anyone in Fen Zhou City's media industry. That's why I am here to ask for help." He took out the article he wrote this morning and gave it to her. "Look at this first, and I hope you can help me."

"Let me read it." Su Jia nodded and started reading the article. Her face changed when she saw the header and looked at Dong Xuebing before reading.

Su Jia finished reading the article after a while.

Dong Xuebing asked. "What do you think?"

Su Jia rubbed her forehead. "Earthquake? Are you oversensitive?"

"I had researched on abnormal animal behaviors, and I hope I am imagining things. But I am not."

"Did you report this to the Earthquake Administration? Let their experts conduct checks first."

"I had reported, and they had checked. But they say everything is normal, and there's no indication of earthquakes happening."

Su Jia has the same reaction as most people. She sighed in relief. "Then it should be fine. After all, they are the experts in this field."

Dong Xuebing coldly replied. "They are experts, but have they predicted any earthquakes before? Can their findings be trusted?!"

Su Jia hesitated and asked. "How do you want me to help you?"

"I want this article to be published on tomorrow's Fen Zhou Daily, and let all Districts and Counties be prepared."

“What?!” Su Jia shook her head. “Xuebing.... You must not do this. It’s not that I don’t want to help, but this will get you into trouble.”

Dong Xuebing looks at Su Jia. “This is helping me and not harming me.”

“This is a serious matter. I heard your Subdistrict had recently been doing Earthquake prevention and mitigation awareness promotion. It is fine if you are doing it in your Subdistrict, but publishing it in the papers will affect the city and its surroundings. This article is not only promoting earthquake prevention. It is telling everyone that an earthquake is coming. You can be charged for spreading earthquake rumors!”

Dong Xuebing replied. “Sister Su, I will not harm you.”

“No. This is not about harming me.” Su Jia replied. “I don’t mind what will happen to me, but this matter will influence a large area. Such article cannot be published without any scientific proof.”

“Abnormal dogs and cats’ behaviors are scientific proof.”

“But the Earthquake Administration’s test result is out. What will others think?”

Dong Xuebing smacked his lips. “I know I am putting you in a difficult spot, but you got to trust me. You should know me well. I will never put you in trouble.”

Su Jia smiled warily. “I have to be honest with you, Xuebing. It’s not. I don’t want to help you. It is because I don’t have the authority to do it. Even if I submitted your article, the Chief Editor would not approve it. The article might not even get past my supervisor, let alone get through to the Chief Editor. I might be the News Department’s Chief, but I have limited powers.”

She is right.

Dong Xuebing starts frowning.

Su Jia paused for a second and said. “The abnormal animal behaviors you mentioned did frighten me, and I think it’s good to be prepared for a disaster. Xuebing, I will submit your article to the higher-ups under your name and try to get it published. But I have a suggestion. If you want this article to be approved, you must....” Su Jia lowered her voice. “You must get my Uncle’s approval. He has influence in the City and the Publicity Department. Chances of it getting approved is higher once he agrees.”

Your Uncle?!

City Party Committee Organization Department Minister, Yang Zhaode.

Dong Xuebing nodded. “Alright. Thank you, Sister Su. I will speak to him.”

Su Jia nodded. “I will amend your article and submit it for approval.”

“Thanks a lot.” Dong Xuebing knows Su Jia will be blamed if it turns out to be a false alarm, and he is very grateful to her.

“Don’t thank me. I find your findings believable, and we must take precautions for earthquake disasters.”

After leaving the news agency, he looks at the time and is about to call Yang Zhaode.

Dong Xuebing hesitated. He had spoken to Yang Zhaode about this issue before, and it did not work. This time, he decided to ask his Mum to help.

Ring... ring.... Luan Xiaoping answered. “Hello, Son.”

Dong Xuebing asked. “Mum, is Uncle Yang working today?”

“It’s Saturday, and it’s his off day. I am at Uncle Yang’s house preparing dinner now. Do you want to come over for dinner tonight?”

“No. Mum, have you shown Uncle Yang the earthquake information and DVDs?”

“I did.” Luan Xiaoping replied. “I will not forget what you asked me to do, and I even showed it to him several times. But your Uncle Yang is not interested, and I didn’t bring it up again.”

“Mum, I need you to help with one more thing.”

“What is it?”

“You have high blood pressure, and you must remain calm when you hear this.”

“What happened?”

“There might be an earthquake happening in our City soon.”

“What did you say?!” Luan Xiaoping gasped.

Dong Xuebing immediately told his mother about the abnormal animal behaviors this morning. He told her about his worries and analysis. “I am very confident that a major earthquake is happening, and it will be at least 7.8 on the Richter scale.”

“How... how is that possible?”

An earthquake of almost eight on the Richter scale?! Many old buildings will collapse!

Luan Xiaoping did not question Dong Xuebing like the others. She trusted her son, and she would believe whatever he said.

Dong Xuebing sighed. “The problem is no one else believed me and thought nothing about it. Everyone felt I am talking nonsense. That’s why I hope you can convince Old Yang. I don’t need him to support me. I only hope he can approve my article. I gave Su Jia the article, and she will submit it to her higher-ups. I need Uncle Yang to pull his strings and get it approved. My article will increase everyone’s awareness and be better prepared.”

“This....”

“Mum, can you talk to Uncle Yang?”

“Alright. I know.”

“Then I leave it to you. Thank you, Mum.”

“Don’t worry. I will settle this for you. Wait for my call.”

Dong Xuebing doesn’t know if his Mum can succeed, but she is his only hope. This article must be published to prepare the residents, and it will help Yang Zhaode, Su Jia, and everyone else. This article will cause panic and chaos, but everyone will be grateful once the earthquake happens. They will thank him for raising this alarm.

Chapter 727: Uproar caused by the Article

City Party Committee family quarters.

Afternoon. Yang Zhaode’s apartment.

Luan Xiaoping sat on the sofa and put her phone down. Yang Zhaode walked out of the kitchen in his apron.

“Xiaoping, who called you?”

“Xiao Bing.”

“Oh, ask him to come over for dinner. It is almost ready.”

“He is at work.”

“What happened? Why are you looking so gloomy?”

“How can I be cheerful when something big is going to happen?”

Luan Xiaoping immediately tells Yang Zhaode about what her son said.

Yang Zhaode frowned. “How come I overlooked the dogs in our estate barking? It is normal for dogs to bark and barking cannot prove anything.”

Luan Xiaoping got mad. “Are you saying my son is lying?!”

Yang Zhaode quickly explains. “No. I don’t mean that. Dogs barking and cats growling do indicate an earthquake is going to happen. But there must be lots of dogs and cats. I think Xiao Bing’s analysis is wrong, and it might be a coincidence.”

Luan Xiaoping retorted. “My son says an earthquake is happening, and it will happen. My son will not joke about such matter!”

“Xiao Ping.” Yang Zhaode felt helpless. He knows Luan Xiaoping well. She trusts her family. “If that’s the case, I will call the Earthquake Administration to conduct another test.”

“They will not find anything.”

“Then what do you want me to do?”

“Get someone to approve and publish my son’s article.”

“This is not a small matter, and it is not as easy as you think.”

Luan Xiaoping looks at him. “Old Yang, are you afraid you have to be held responsible if the earthquake did not happen?”

Yang Zhaode replied. “What are you talking about? I am not scared of anyone, and Xiao Bing is my son. I don’t want him to be in trouble.”

“There will be an earthquake. If you don’t get my son’s article published, you will be putting him in trouble.”

Yang Zhaode is speechless. He poured a glass of water for Luan Xiaoping. “We got to think over this. We must not be rushed.”

“How can I not rush it? My son says the earthquake is happening in the next few days.”

My son... my son.... Yang Zhaode finally knows where he stands in Luan Xiaoping’s heart, and he has no choice. “Xiao Ping, I will tell you the truth. There’s nothing to fear as it’s about time for me to move to the backend at my age. I am not scared of losing my position, but it is different for Xiao Bing. He is still young and a Section Chief at 25 years old. He has a bright future. If the earthquake doesn’t happen after the article is published, his future will be gone. Have you thought about it?”

Luan Xiaoping calmed down.

Yang Zhaode continues talking. “This is for him. We, as parents, are willing to do everything for our children. I hope you and Xiao Bing can calm down and think it through. If you two insist on doing this, I will call to publish his article. I have the authority to do this, and I will take responsibility for it.”

Luan Xiaoping’s eyes turned red, and he held his hand. “Old Yang....”

“Why are you crying?” Yang Zhaode wiped her tears.

Luan Xiaoping is touched. “Thank you.”

“Haha.... Have you made your decision?”

“Yes.” Luan Xiaoping replied. “Call the Publicity Department.”

Yang Zhaode nodded. “Ok.”

Luan Xiaoping calls her son when Yang Zhaode is on the phone in the room.

“Hello, Xiao Bing. It’s settled. Your Uncle Yang agreed to help you.”

Dong Xuebing is astonished. “Really?!” He did not expect Yang Zhaode to agree so fast.

“Yes. He is talking to the Publicity Department and the news agency now.” Luan Xiaoping looks into the room. “Xiao Bing, you must be good to your Uncle Yang in the future. He treats you like his own son.”

“Of course.”

“Old Yang is going to retire, and you must treat him like he is your father.” Luan Xiaoping said.

“Don’t worry. Once Uncle Yang used his connections to publish this article, everything settled. He will be promoted to Bureau Director soon. He might even move up to Ministerial level, and his retirement will be extended.”

“You are exaggerating.”

“He is saving everyone in the City.”

“That means you will be getting the biggest credit as you had written that article.”

“I am not thinking about the credits now. Saving lives is my top priority now. Mum, bring Su Jia and Old Yang’s family back to Beijing tomorrow. Oh, don’t forget Sister Yu and Qianqian. You have their numbers, right? Don’t forget to call your friends and our relatives. Tell them I am treating them to go for a vacation. I will pay for everything. You need to bring them to Beijing and wait there.” Dong Xuebing doesn’t have many friends and relatives, and it’s not a hassle for his mother to help him contact them.

“I can contact them and ask them to go to Beijing. But Old Yang cannot leave, and I....”

“Mum, you are making me worry. You must leave!”

“Alright.... Alright.... I will go to Beijing, and you must be careful.”

“Even an air crash cannot kill me. Do you think I am scared of an earthquake?!”

“Stop boasting.”

Next day.

The latest copy of Fen Zhou Daily is out.

This is the most influential newspaper in Fen Zhou City, and its circulation covers all districts, counties, and villages. All government bodies and state-owned enterprises in Fen Zhou City subscribe to this newspaper.

This is the power of Fen Zhou Daily.

An article on the second page of today’s Fen Zhou Daily created an uproar.

The header states. “Be prepared for an earthquake.”

“Earthquake?!”

“What does this mean?”

“Is an earthquake going to happen? A real earthquake?”

“How is it possible?”

This is a sensitive topic, and it created panic among the residents.

A storm in Fen Zhou City is brewing because of Dong Xuebing's article.

Chapter 728: In the teeth of the storm

Fen Zhou Daily had created the most significant uproar since it started.

An article asking people to be prepared for an earthquake had shocked the whole city.

The article states the following. "Based on our reporter's findings, Guang Ming Subdistrict Office's Director Dong had noticed some abnormalities during his Subdistrict's earthquake prevention and mitigation awareness campaign recently. Director Dong told our reporter. "Our subdistrict had been educating our residents on earthquake prevention and mitigation awareness recently, and we have become quite sensitive to some situations. This morning, we are alerted to a few dogs barking. Those dogs behave differently from other days, and we immediately look into it. We found behavioral abnormalities among many pets. For example, dogs barking for no reason, cats growling, fishes jumping out of the fish tanks, animals refusing to eat, restlessness, etc. These are signs of an earthquake. We expanded our search to the City and saw the same abnormal behaviors. We confirmed that an earthquake might be happening these few days. Please be prepared and don't panic or create chaos. Leave for a safer region or get to a safe place if possible."

The rest of the article is basic disaster relief knowledge.

Most readers stopped reading after the first part. They were shocked.

Almost all households are panicking.

"An earthquake is happening!"

"Ah.... We got to leave!"

"We don't know if this is true. How can someone predict an earthquake?"

"How can this be false?! It's published in Fen Zhou Daily!"

"But why is it not reported on TV or printed on the first page of the papers?"

"Who cares if it is real or fake? I don't care. I am going back to my hometown in the south."

"This article reminded me of my dog's weird behavior last night. My dog had been barking and howling yesterday, and I thought he was not feeling well. No... I got to pack and leave now."

"You all can go ahead. I don't believe this will happen."

"I will wait and see. If an earthquake happens, the Government will evacuate us."

The article spreads fast. Many, who don't read Fen Zhou Daily, also heard about the earthquake. Even the surrounding Cities and Provinces know about it. If a major earthquake hits Fen Zhou City, the surrounding region will be affected.

Everyone is worried.

Dong Xuebing had asked everyone not to panic in his article, but how is it possible?

Earthquake is a natural disaster, and many families immediately leave the city that night. Of course, these families are only a tiny portion, and the majority are hesitating and waiting for the latest news from the Government. Most residents had lived in Fen Zhou City all their lives and are reluctant to leave. They will only leave when the local authorities order them to evacuate.

Yan Tai County, County Government Building.

Mayor's secretary Hu Silian rushed into the Mayor's office.

Xie Huilan listened to a department head's report when Hu Silian rushed in without knocking. She looks at her. "What is it?"

Hu Silian took a deep breath. "Mayor Xie, this is important."

Xie Huilan nodded and looked at Chief Liu with a smile. "Old Liu, let's stop here."

"Ok. I will go back to work." Chief Liu looked at them and left.

"What happened?" Xie Huilan looks at Hu Silian.

Hu Silian took out a copy of Fen Zhou Daily and flipped to the second page. "Look at this article."

Xie Huilan read the article and threw it on her desk. She smiles wearily. "This brat.... Haha.... He can't stop creating troubles. How can he publish such an article? What's the reaction on the ground?"

Hu Silian replied. "I made some calls, and some of our County's residents had started to evacuate."

Beep.... Beep.... Beep.... Cars are sounding their horns outside. Xie Huilan and Hu Silian looked out the window and saw a massive traffic jam outside.

Panic and fear start to spread.

Xie Huilan stopped smiling and turned to Hu Silian. "How reliable do you think about Xiao Bing's earthquake prediction?"

Hu Silian hesitated and answered. "I think the possibility is quite low. I heard the Provincial Earthquake Administration had sent experts to conduct a test. There are no abnormalities or indications of an earthquake. If they had found something, the City would have ordered an evacuation. Mayor Xie, you...."

Ring... ring... ring.... The phone on the desk rang.

At the same time, Xie Huilan's mobile phone also rang.

Xie Huilan quickly answers the phone and looks at Hu Silian. "It's a mess outside and is getting out of control. Secretary Xiang had called for an emergency meeting, and I got to attend. Xiao Hu, drop all your work and investigate the animals' abnormal behavior mentioned by Xiao Bing. Check if it is true, and I want a detailed report about it."

"Yes."

At the same time.

Nan Shan District Party Committee Building.

Geng Xinke is with his sister in the District Mayor's Office. "Sis, I am impressed with Dong Xuebing's guts."

Geng Yuehua threw the newspaper on her desk and did not say anything.

"He had created a big mess for himself." Geng Xinke slapped his forehead. Dong Xuebing had dragged all of them into this mess, and the City Government might punish everyone in Guang Ming Subdistrict.

Dong Xuebing had spread earthquake rumors and ignored the Earthquake Administration's findings. It is a serious crime even if he had spread rumors secretly, let alone publishing it on the papers. What's worse is he published it on Fen Zhou Daily! That's the most popular newspaper in Fen Zhou City!

Who dares to do such things in Fen Zhou City?!

Dong Xuebing is the only crazy person who dares!

A short article, consisting of a few hundred words, had pushed Dong Xuebing in the teeth of the storm. The Subdistrict Offices, District Governments, City Governments, and all department leaders got to know the crazy Dong Xuebing through this article.

Chapter 729: I will take responsibility!

The sun is setting.

This is the last night.

The earthquake will happen tomorrow.

Dong Xuebing sat in his car, looking at his article on Fen Zhou Daily. His phone had been ringing non-stopped the whole day. However, he only answered a few and made a few calls.

"Chief Dong, I am Liu Dahai. Is it true about the earthquake?"

"Yes. Old Liu, you should send your family away as soon as possible."

"Chief, I am Luo Haiting. I read the papers and...."

"Sister Luo, hurry up and leave with your family."

"But what if there's no earthquake?"

"Listen to me and leave. You all must leave tonight."

"Alright. I will listen to you."

"Aunt Qian. It's me, Xiao Dong."

"The article you published on the papers had caused chaos."

"Let it be as long as the residents are safe. Aunt Qian, you and Uncle Liu must be careful. I had asked my mother to contact Sister Yu and Qianqian. She will bring them to Beijing tonight."

"Alright. We will feel at ease if they are in Beijing."

"Hello, Xuanxuan. It's me."

"I can tell from your voice."

"Be serious. Are you due soon?"

"Yes. The due date is estimated to be on first October."

"Ok. You must leave your current building now. Book a suite at the hotel and bring your parents there for a few days."

"Huh? Why?"

"A major earthquake is going to happen. Beijing might feel the tremors, and it might not be safe."

"What earthquake? How come I don't know anything about it?"

"I can't explain now. Just do what I say."

"Hello, Xiao Dong."

"Sister Xu."

"It's so hard to get through your line. I had to call for almost ten minutes."

"I am busy with the earthquake and am about to call you. Leave before it's too late."

"Everyone can leave except for me. If the earthquake is happening like what you predicted, then the more I must stay here. I am calling you about other things. Fen Zhou City Government had contacted us to ask about you. Your article had caused fear and panic in the City. They want the State Security to arrest you for investigation. But I have delayed it for you. I can stop them temporarily for a few days. You better be prepared."

"They had mobilized the State Security!?"

"The commotion you created had crossed the line. I don't know what to say about you. Why can't you use your brains before you do anything?"

"Sorry to trouble you."

"It's fine on my side. I am afraid something might happen to you."

“Don’t worry about me. I am confident about the situation. You need to be careful these two days and stay away from those old buildings.”

“Ok. I will take note of it.”

Dong Xuebing spent an hour and a half making these calls.

The streets are packed with cars and people lugging their suitcases. These people are evacuating, and a few residents have set up tents in the garden at the heart of the Subdistrict. They are going to spend the night outside in the garden. These people are the ones who believe an earthquake is going to happen.

Dong Xuebing is glad that some residents believed him.

The situation is in his favor.

Dong Xuebing had successfully alerted everyone.

Suddenly, Dong Xuebing’s phone rang again. It’s the District Party Secretary Wang Anshi’s secretary.

Secretary Cang said coldly. “Secretary Wang wants you to come to the District Party Committee Building’s meeting room now.”

Dong Xuebing knows the time has come for him to face the pressure. He doesn’t know if he can withstand it, but he must hold on until tomorrow at 11 am.

District Party Committee Building’s small meeting room.

Dong Xuebing took a deep breath and knocked softly before entering.

More than a dozen District Government Leaders are in the meeting room. District Party Secretary Wang Anshi, District Mayor Geng Yuehua, District Commission for Discipline Inspection Secretary Wu Liang, Executive Deputy District Mayor Shen Fei, etc. All the District Party Committee members are seated at the meeting table, and other District Government Department Leaders are seated at the back. Dong Xuebing also saw Chu Qinghua and other Subdistrict Office Directors among them.

Everyone is at this meeting.

Dong Xuebing closed the door and entered the meeting room.

Everyone turns and stares at Dong Xuebing.

Only Geng Yuehua and Wang Anshi are not looking at him. Their eyes are glued to a TV in the meeting room.

The news is playing on the TV. “An article on Fen Zhou Daily had caused an uproar in Fen Zhou City today.” The footage switched to Dong Xuebing’s article. “This article was posted by Nan Shan District’s Guang Ming Subdistrict Office Director, and it is about abnormal animal behaviors. He claimed the animal behaviors are indications of an earthquake happening soon. But our reporter had checked with the Provincial Earthquake Administration experts. They told us they had conducted checks in Nan Shan District and did not find any signs of earthquakes. They cannot verify if this article is true and hope everyone can remain calm. The related authorities had started investigating this matter.”

Wang Anshi waved his hand, and Secretary Cang switched off the TV.

The meeting room becomes quiet, and everyone's attention turns to Dong Xuebing. They know Dong Xuebing is in trouble this time. He had not learned his lesson after offending the District Party Secretary Wang Anshi, he still created this mess for himself and his Subdistrict. The whole city is in chaos because of his article.

Even the City Government Leaders are furious with him.

Wang Anshi started talking. "Fen Zhou City Government had ordered to investigate this matter, and I am suspending Guang Ming Subdistrict Office Director Dong Xuebing now."

Suspension.

This is not a surprise.

Dong Xuebing's heart sinks, and he stares at Wang Anshi. "Secretary Wang, I will follow the Party's decision. But you must give me a reason for suspending my duties."

Wang Anshi coldly replied. "Are you not satisfied with this decision?"

Dong Xuebing laughed. "Yes. I am not satisfied."

No one had ever seen a Section Chief staff opposing the decision made by the District Party Committee.

Wang Anshi frowned. "You had spread earthquake rumors and caused fear and panic. This is the reason for your suspension."

Dong Xuebing retorted. "I disagree with spreading rumors. Animals' abnormalities are indications of an impending earthquake. This is scientifically based, and I had reported to the District and City Governments. How can you say I am spreading rumors? I discovered these abnormalities and reported them. If I am not allowed to report it, what should we Subdistrict Offices report? What's the point of setting up Subdistricts, Districts, Counties, and Provinces? The Central Government can govern everything. If we are not even allowed to report our findings, they should do away with the local authorities.

Furthermore, as a citizen and a Party Member, I must report to the higher-ups when I discover anything suspicious! Are you saying that I cannot report to the higher-ups when I discover an earthquake will happen?! I can only keep it to myself and wait for the earthquake to happen?! Are you telling me to wait for people to die in the disaster? How can I continue to be a Party Member?!" Dong Xuebing is good at arguing.

Wang Anshi got mad. "Is this the way you report to the higher-ups?! You published it through the newspapers without any verifications! This is irresponsible! How dare you argue now?! You should reflect on your actions!"

Dong Xuebing looks at Wang Anshi. "I don't think I should reflect on my actions. In fact, I think everyone here should be the ones reflecting. I don't believe I am the only one who saw the weird animal behaviors. All of you should have seen it. Yes, the Earthquake Administration did not find any signs of an approaching earthquake, but how reliable are their findings? Many of you are afraid of being held responsible if we start evacuating the residents. What if the earthquake did not happen? Someone must be held responsible. Suppose we ignore it and an earthquake happens. In

that case, the Earthquake Administration will be responsible because they did not detect the earthquake. All of you don't need to worry as you all don't need to take the blame!"

Some things cannot be said openly, but Dong Xuebing said it!

Everyone looks at Dong Xuebing and thinks to themselves. This guy dares to say anything. Wang Anshi and the rest of the District Government Leaders are looking terrible.

"Just because you all are afraid of being held responsible, you all are going to pretend not to see the abnormalities. This is disregarding the lives and safety of our residents! You all are betting our residents' lives!" Dong Xuebing continues. "You all can do such things, but I can't! I am not afraid of being held responsible for it! I don't care about the City Government orders or who is going to suspend me! Even if I am suspended, our Guang Ming Subdistrict residents must evacuate! I will bear all responsibilities!"

Dong Xuebing shouted and stormed out of the meeting room. No one can stop him!

He must save his residents even if he is fired!

Chapter 730: Dong Xuebing's words!

District Party Committee Building's meeting room.

Dong Xuebing slammed the door as he stormed out of it.

Wang Anshi is looking terrible. He had summoned Dong Xuebing here to make him answer and apologize for what he had done. He needs to explain to the City Government Leaders for causing this alarm. But Dong Xuebing showed no remorse and scolded all the District Leaders for doing nothing. He is revolting against the District Government!

Dong Xuebing! How come a scum like him can enter the Government Service?!

Dong Xuebing is behaving like a hooligan today. No one has expected him to say these things. He is burning his bridge, and he cannot remain in the Government Service if there's no earthquake.

No one felt an earthquake would happen.

Wang Anshi doesn't believe it will happen, and Dong Xuebing's actions had disrespected him. "Talking back to the Leaders, disobeying the District Government's orders! Dong Xuebing is too much. Secretary Wu Liang start an investigation against him. Arrest him when necessary. Stabilizing the situation is our top priority now! The publicity Department got to stop the rumors and stop the people from panicking. All other departments got to increase manpower to maintain law and order. We must stop this earthquake rumor!"

"Yes, Sir."

"Don't worry. We will do our best."

The Leaders acknowledge.

Suspending Dong Xuebing and stopping the rumors are standard procedures. There's nothing wrong with it as the Earthquake Administration had said there will not be any earthquakes. They are the experts compared to abnormal animal behaviors.

But some Leaders felt Dong Xuebing is right. Although the chances of an earthquake happening are slim, no one can confirm it. What if the District Party Committee treated this as a rumor and an earthquake happened?

Meeting dismissed.

District Mayor Geng Yuehua had not expressed her views during this meeting.

The District Commission for Discipline Inspection Secretary Wu Liang went up to Geng Yuehua after leaving the meeting room. "Mayor Geng, I need to speak to you in your office."

Geng Yuehua nodded and went downstairs with him.

Geng Yuehua and Wu Liang sat on the sofa in the District Mayor's Office.

"Mayor, I don't agree with Secretary Wang's way of handling this." Wu Liang had been close to Geng Yuehua and is a member of her faction. He sighed. "I did not feel anything before the meeting, but Dong Xuebing's words touched me. I admit that I dislike him for being reckless, but I felt ashamed after hearing what he said. We cannot eliminate the possibility of an earthquake happening, and I had heard of cats and dogs behaving differently. However, no one wants or dares to bear this responsibility, and everyone pretended not to see it."

Dong Xuebing had changed Wu Liang's perception of him in the meeting room. Wu Liang even respected him for risking his career for the people.

Geng Yuehua looks at Wu Liang. "What do you think are the chances of an earthquake?"

Wu Liang thought for a while. "I think it is at least 10%."

The office becomes silent again. No one said a word, and the only sound was the second hand on the wall clock.

Geng Yuehua said after a while. "10% is not low."

Wu Liang hesitated and asked. "You mean..."

Geng Yuehua replied emotionlessly. "The City Government will not support or agree with Dong Xuebing, and I don't have the authority to order an evacuation. But we can still do something." She took out her phone and called her secretary. "Hello, contact the TV station immediately. Tomorrow morning, I want the second channel to play earthquake prevention and mitigation awareness and earthquake responses promotional videos. Contact all the Subdistrict Offices and ask them to prepare for earthquake disaster responses. Don't ask any questions and do what I said. That's it!"

Wu Liang's heart skipped a beat. He had wanted to discuss with Geng Yuehua and did not expect her to be so decisive. Once she sets her mind, she does things swiftly without hesitations.

The District Party Secretary wants to stop the rumors and stabilize the situation.

The District Mayor wants the residents to be wary and take precautions against an earthquake.

This is a war between District No. 1 and 2. Wu Liang knows either Wang Anshi or Geng Yuehua will leave after this incident.

An earthquake is going to happen within the District Government. This is not the geology earthquake. It is a political earthquake.

At the same time.

Guang Ming Subdistrict Office.

It's nighttime, but the subdistrict Office's lights are on.

Dong Xuebing called for an emergency meeting. He called all the Subdistrict Office Leaders and most of the staff back. Even the neighborhood committee staff are called to this meeting. There are almost one hundred participants at this meeting. It is almost all of Guang Ming Subdistrict Office available manpower.

Everyone is talking about the situation before the meeting start.

"Did you hear about it? The whole Fen Zhou City is in chaos now."

"Yes, and it's caused by our Director Dong's article."

"I heard our Director was suspended. Sigh.... This had blown out of proportion, and it's too late to salvage the situation."

"What should we do? Is our Subdistrict Office going to be implicated? Director Dong had kicked the hornets' nest this time."

"Is there anything that our Director doesn't dare to do?"

"Have you all heard what happened at the District Party Committee Building meeting room? Director Dong was summoned to the meeting. He scolded District Party Secretary Wang and all the Leaders for being timid."

"Damn! Are you serious?!"

"It's real. I heard this from a friend in the District Party Committee office."

"No one can imagine what Director Dong will do."

"Do you all think an earthquake will happen?"

"I don't know, but I had sent my family away. I would rather believe it than the risk it."

Screech!!! The microphone on the podium squealed as it was switched on, and everyone stopped talking. Everyone is wondering why they, including the neighborhood committee members, are called to this emergency meeting. Director Dong must be going to announce or do something shocking.

Geng Xinke, Zhou Yanru, Wang Yuling, and the other Subdistrict Office Leaders are seated at the front. Some of them are anxious, and some are frustrated. Too many things had happened today.

Dong Xuebing walked up the podium and looked at everyone with complicated emotions.

Everyone is looking back at him.

Dong Xuebing took a deep breath and said. "I believe most of you have heard that the District Party Committee had suspended me, and I should not and don't have the authority to be standing here. But there are things I must say because it concerns the lives of countless people."

Someone among the audience asked. "Director, is there going to have an earthquake?"

This is the question in everyone's mind.

Dong Xuebing looked at everyone and replied calmly. "I don't know either."

"Huh?" Many people are shocked. "You also don't know if there is an earthquake going to happen?!"

Geng Xinke, Zhou Yanru, and the rest are shocked. They thought Dong Xuebing was confident that an earthquake would happen, and that's why he did those crazy things. But even he doesn't know if an earthquake will happen or not.

"This...."

"Director, you...."

"Ah... how is this possible?"

Dong Xuebing raised his voice. "I don't know if an earthquake is going to happen or not, and I don't dare to say those dogs and cats' abnormal behaviors are indications of an impending earthquake. But I am the Subdistrict Office Director, a Party Member, and a Government Official! I am responsible for the lives of almost one hundred thousand residents in our Subdistrict! I got to do something if our residents are in danger! This is my duty and the duty of our Subdistrict!"

Everyone kept quiet.

Dong Xuebing continues. "I cannot tell you all if an earthquake is going to happen. But I cannot gamble, even if there's a slim possibility of it happening. I cannot gamble with our residents' lives. Even if I lose my position, get fired from the government service, and have my Party Member status revoked, I will not risk our residents' lives! They must be safe from harm! What's the point of having our Subdistrict Office, Neighborhood Committees when we are not going to do anything to help our residents during this time?!"

Dong Xuebing paused for a second and continued. "I am suspended today and might be removed from my position tomorrow. My Party Member status might be revoked the day after tomorrow. This might be my last time standing before all of you. The City and District Government doesn't believe an earthquake will happen, and I know most of them are afraid of being held responsible for making mistakes. They are afraid, but I am not! I am Guang Ming Subdistrict Office Director, and I must protect my residents!"

Dong Xuebing looks at everyone. "I am going to evacuate all residents living in old buildings in our Subdistrict. I repeat this. This is not an exercise, and this order is not approved by the District Government or the City Government. This is my decision, and I will bear full responsibility for it! Those who are with me, come forward. Those that are afraid of being held responsible can leave quietly. I will not blame you all."

