

PAW 1821

Chapter 1821

In the small conference room.

The atmosphere had become incredibly tense.

Everyone's expressions were far from natural; some looked shocked, some were surprised, some had darkened faces, and others wore complex expressions.

Only Dong Xuebing smiled as if nothing had happened, as if his previous words were casually thrown out without any sense of importance or impropriety. When it came to keeping calm, Dong Xuebing's skill was unparalleled; he could maintain a smile even in life-and-death situations, let alone in this scenario. This composure was honed through years of experience. Moreover, his previous remarks were not spontaneous; he had been planning them since the morning and even had thought of them while in a taxi after leaving Su Yan's house the night before. So, he was naturally prepared.

He was prepared, but the others were not.

Everyone was utterly incredulous, momentarily stunned to even consider whether Dong Xuebing's move was a misstep. It was just too unexpected.

Holding a standing committee meeting while at a disadvantage.

In a disadvantageous standing committee meeting, publicly wrestling with the county chief.

Even after encountering resistance, he demanded a vote without hearing other opinions.

Any county party secretary would find it impossible to pull off even one of these three actions. After all, this wasn't a joking matter; it concerned the future leadership's authority in the county and who would hold more sway in future work, especially the last point about voting. It was utterly unimaginable. You're a newly appointed county party secretary who hasn't grasped the situation yet, hasn't even spoken with the other standing committee members, and you dare to ask for a vote directly? Your audacity is astonishing; this gamble is far too reckless.

This meant it was time to form factions.

Or rather, to force everyone to take sides through voting.

You're moving too fast; it's only your first day in office!

The people aligned with County Chief Zhang felt they couldn't keep up with Dong Xuebing's thought process; the shifts were too drastic to process. Those three missteps were the mistakes even leaders with some political savvy wouldn't make. But Dong Xuebing? He managed to deploy all three missteps within half an hour, each one coming right after the other, all with a smile on his face.

But were they missteps?

Zhang Dongfang reacted quickly, his eyes darting around as he intensely scrutinized Dong Xuebing. For the first time, he felt that this county party secretary, two generations younger than him, might not be easy to deal with. At least, he was certainly not as dull as they had imagined. Zhang Dongfang had been baffled when he first heard that Dong Xuebing wanted to hold a standing committee meeting, and he had underestimated him. After Dong Xuebing rejected his proposal and called for a vote, Zhang Dongfang thought the newly appointed county party secretary was too young. However, upon further reflection, Zhang Dongfang suddenly felt a jolt in his heart, realizing that he had greatly underestimated this county party secretary.

The three moves seemed like poor choices individually, but combined, they might not be because there's a significant issue at play: Dong Xuebing's strategy appeared unreasonable to others. However, Zhang Dongfang and all the standing committee members were unprepared because of this. They didn't expect Dong Xuebing to act this way; they hadn't even had time to communicate among themselves. Li Guian, the old secretary and former subordinate, was no exception. Dong Xuebing hadn't discussed things with them, nor had Zhang Dongfang effectively communicated with them. Now, Dong Xuebing had suddenly and without warning forced everyone to take sides, which introduced significant uncertainty. Even Zhang Dongfang found himself unable to predict the voting outcome; he was left unsure of how to respond to Dong Xuebing's actions and could only accept the choices made by others and the voting results. Since Dong Xuebing was the county party secretary, his call for a vote had to be heeded. Moreover, the leader held veto power, which, although not to be used lightly—a double-edged sword—still put pressure on Zhang Dongfang's faction and might create pressure on those who had yet to choose sides.

Decisive.

Firm.

Not giving anyone time to think.

Dong Xuebing's move was indeed ruthless, with a high-stakes gamble.

However, Dong Xuebing was clear in his mind: rather than drag out a battle with Zhang Dongfang, it was better to be straightforward. Dong Xuebing was not a procrastinator; he is direct and prefers to make snap decisions. Thus, this scene unfolded. He didn't know the outcome in advance, but he felt that he needed to do this.

Thinking this and thinking that.

Worrying about this and worrying about that.

This was not Dong Xuebing's style at all.

"Take sides, and stop wasting my time! No nonsense here. Let's lay everything out and reach a conclusion today."

This reflected Dong Xuebing's character.

A rogue who disregards reason, rules, and procedures.

But Dong Xuebing didn't care; he had continuously operated this way. If he had followed the rules and protocols step by step, he wouldn't have reached his current level and position; he might still be mingling with grassroots civil servants. So, Dong Xuebing never bothered with that. He had his working methods and characteristics. If people viewed him as an ordinary leader, that would be a grave misunderstanding. Just like the surprised expressions on everyone's faces now, Dong Xuebing was already shaking his head inwardly. Did they think it was surprising? On his first day in a neighboring county, he had already caused a commotion with the police, making his personality and governing style clear. If they didn't take it to heart, they couldn't blame him for not giving them a heads-up. He didn't know how others governed or worked, but this was just his damn way of working.

Seemingly carefree, Dong Xuebing had considered everything in great detail. He knew he didn't have the time or energy to engage in a long-term struggle with Zhang Dongfang. He recognized Zhang Dongfang's political experience was superior, and his conventional tactics would undoubtedly outmatch his own. Ultimately, the outcome was uncertain, especially since Zhang Dongfang already held a certain advantage. Thus, Dong Xuebing decided on an unconventional approach that left the undecided standing committee members with no space to think.

Communication.

Dialogue.

Not necessary.

"If you want to side with me, then do it. I won't say a word if you want to align with Zhang Dongfang. I'm the county party secretary and don't need to beg you for your support. Don't expect me to talk to each of you individually and make promises. That's not my character." Dong Xuebing believed he had expressed this very clearly in his previous remarks.

The meeting room fell silent for a long time.

Everyone looked at each other, not saying a word.

At this moment, Meng Hanmei began to grasp Dong Xuebing's intention behind his decisive move. She couldn't help but look at him in surprise. This tactic was indeed risky, but it also represented a strategic maneuver. This first standing committee meeting would be a resounding success if it worked.

Several temporarily neutral standing committee members exchanged glances.

Seeing this, Zhang Dongfang finally said, "Now the provincial office is doing anonymous voting; let's use the ballot box. Everyone can vote anonymously, and..." Zhang Dongfang's intention was clear: he wanted to alleviate the pressure on the other neutral members and prevent them from feeling rushed to take sides. With five people on his side, he had five votes secured. As long as the others did not hastily take sides—even if just one abstained—Zhang Dongfang could tie the vote with Dong Xuebing. In this way, he would have already gained the upper hand. Moreover, under pressure from Dong Xuebing, this softer approach could also sway the neutral members toward his side.

But Dong Xuebing interrupted him, “This isn’t about anything else; it’s simply an appointment for personnel. Personnel appointments must be public and fair. Given the current scrutiny, otherwise, there will always be people gossiping. A public vote also holds us accountable for our choices. If this person encounters issues later, we’ll know who voted for him, right?”

Dong Xuebing maintained his assertive stance.

After speaking, Dong Xuebing waved his hand, “Let’s hear everyone’s stance. I’ll start: I believe the position of deputy director of the finance bureau is better suited for Sun Anshi.”

At this point, everyone was compelled to vote, even if they didn’t want to. Dong Xuebing’s demeanor left no room for abstention. While they technically could abstain, everyone understood that if they did not support Dong Xuebing’s proposal, it would be seen as taking a side, effectively yielding the same result. Abstaining might be even worse, as it signified a lack of clear stance or allegiance. If they abstained now, especially after Dong Xuebing and Zhang Dongfang were already at odds, they risked displeasing both sides. Even if they didn’t join Dong Xuebing’s camp, Zhang Dongfang might not take them seriously.

Thus, there were only two choices left:

Support Dong Xuebing or support Zhang Dongfang.