

PAW 1833

Chapter 1833

The rain stopped.

A gust of wind blew, and the dark clouds gradually dispersed.

Dong Xuebing closed the umbrella and handed it to his secretary, Su Yan. He looked up at the gradually clearing sky and then glanced at the city rescue personnel who had just been scolded into silence. He took off his wet coat and twisted it hard, water pouring out. None of the people present, including those from the Jiaolin County rescue team working tirelessly on the front lines, were as drenched as Dong Xuebing. He was the most bedraggled one because he had given his rain gear to the rescuing children, leaving him completely soaked.

Su Yan started to take off his coat. "Secretary, you wear mine."

Dong Xuebing shook his head. "No need, it's cold; you keep yours."

"It's precisely because it's cold that you should wear mine." Su Yan was insistent. He was genuinely worried about Dong Xuebing. Under such heavy rain, even the rescue team members hadn't worked as hard as Secretary Dong—he directed the rescue, searched for students, rescued people, and escorted students down the mountain. Dong Xuebing had done the work of six or seven people, and now he was drenched. How could this be acceptable?

Dong Xuebing pressed on Su Yan's coat, not allowing him to take it off. "Come on, you know your body, and I know mine."

Su Yan's figure was indeed broader than Dong Xuebing's, but when it came to physical condition, Su Yan knew he couldn't compare to Secretary Dong. Still, as the secretary to the county party secretary, Su Yan hurriedly said, "Then you should hurry back and change clothes; this isn't good for you."

Dong Xuebing had been stern-faced earlier, but after scolding the city officials, he felt much more relaxed. He smiled slightly and said, "I'm fine; what's a little rain?" Dong Xuebing genuinely didn't take it to heart. Even if a rain of bullets fell on him, he wouldn't blink, let alone worry about this little rain. His physical condition was beyond what they could imagine.

Several officials nearby, eager to flatter him, started to take off their coats as well.

But Dong Xuebing refused each of them and thanked them for their kindness. He didn't need it, and with cameras around, it wouldn't look good if his subordinates took off their jackets and got cold while giving their coats to the county party secretary. Dong Xuebing tossed his wet coat to Su Yan and said to the people around him, "The mission is accomplished; thank you all for your hard work today." He didn't say anything extra, as the mission of the rescue team was to rescue, and the officials' mission was to protect the public's safety—that was expected. In a few days, there would be discussions about commendations, and those who participated in the rescue would be rewarded directly through meetings or bonuses to acknowledge their work. However, there were some exceptions, as some local community members and non-public servants who spontaneously organized rescue teams might find it hard to receive rewards in other forms. Dong Xuebing was very concerned and attentive to them; he hadn't forgotten about them. "What about the rescue personnel organized by the community?"

Su Yan pointed to a spot not far away. "They're over there; it seems they're about to leave."

Dong Xuebing immediately quickened his pace to catch up. As he moved, the media workers and officials from Jiaolin County followed suit.

"Everyone, please hold on!" Dong Xuebing called out loudly.

About ten people were taking off their raincoats, which were of various bright colors—clearly not the uniform rain gear of the rescue team. They had intended to leave, but they turned back upon hearing the voice behind them.

"Secretary Dong!"

"Secretary Dong!"

After their previous encounters, everyone recognized who Dong Xuebing was. They genuinely admired him from the bottom of their hearts. Just carrying two children down the mountain in the pouring rain, without regard for danger, was something ordinary people couldn't do, let alone a high-ranking county leader.

Dong Xuebing walked over, looked at them, and directly extended both hands to shake the first person's hand. "On behalf of all the officials and citizens of Jiaolin County, thank you."

The person was a bit taken aback. Initially, he only extended one hand, but upon seeing Secretary Dong coming with both hands, he paused momentarily and quickly added his other hand to shake. “Secretary Dong, you’re too kind. There’s no need for thanks; I’m also a citizen of Jiaolin County. It’s only natural.”

Dong Xuebing then shook hands with the next person, a woman who looked to be in her thirties or forties. She appeared to be a working professional but showed great physical strength during the rescue. She was probably an athlete and was no less capable than the men. “Thank you, sister.”

The woman shook hands with him using both hands. “It’s nothing; my child is about the same age as these students. Seeing something like this, how could I not help?”

Next.

Next.

Again, another one.

“Thank you.”

“Thank you all.”

“You’ve all worked hard.”

Dong Xuebing was unfazed by the trouble and shook hands with each of these community members who had helped with the rescue, continuously expressing his gratitude. The reporters behind him recorded this scene but couldn’t understand why Dong Xuebing placed such importance on it. The reason was quite simple: officials are paid from public funds, and so are rescue teams; it is their duty. It’s part of their responsibilities even if they come to the rescue. But the community members were different—they had no obligation to take such risks. They could have gone home to have dinner or spent time with their families but chose to stay and help with the rescue. This was something entirely different. This was humanity’s most beautiful and shining aspect, and Dong Xuebing certainly valued it and felt very happy. When he first arrived, he was disappointed by Jiaolin County’s poor police work, which did not meet his expectations. But now, seeing so many citizens spontaneously organize to go up the mountain to help rescue people,

people who had no personal connection to those students or teachers yet still chose to do so, warmed Dong Xuebing's heart.

The reporters were merely accustomed to filming and photographing the event.

Other citizens were watching the excitement from the side.

But Meng Hanmei, seeing all this, couldn't help but smile. She felt her previous evaluation of Secretary Dong was quite inappropriate. At first, everyone might have felt he wouldn't put on a show, but now, who would still say that? That was not correct; Meng Hanmei thought Dong Xuebing was not performing for the show but genuinely expressed himself, unlike Zhang Dongfang's empty formalism. For a moment, she felt she hadn't misjudged him. This county leader from the capital seemed truly different—he didn't have so much of an air about him, no bureaucratic tone, and none of the grandstanding or pretentiousness. Instead, he was very pure and genuine, revealing himself to them without reservation. His flaws, his rough edges, all showed without hesitation. While it might seem a bit immature and not conventional, upon careful thought, Meng Hanmei suddenly felt this type of person was very reliable. Although she had only known Dong Xuebing for a little over a day, she knew he was the kind of leader who wouldn't throw his subordinates under the bus or betray others. Following such a leader might be nerve-wracking, but it gave one a sense of security.

This thought was quite contradictory.

Yet, at this moment, Meng Hanmei truly had such a notion. He was such a young secretary, unpredictable, and clearly, someone who could directly scold city officials in front of many reporters and media. Still, Meng Hanmei genuinely felt that being with Dong Xuebing was even more reassuring than with Secretary Li Guian. As for why, Meng Hanmei couldn't quite put it into words; she was becoming more and more interested in Secretary Dong.

Reason

There may not be any particular reason.

This might be one of the most interesting aspects of human interaction.

A few minutes later.

Several tourist buses and rescue vehicles carrying nearly a hundred teachers and students began to leave. The students and teachers were mostly unharmed, and the vehicles headed directly to the city to drop off the students. Many parents followed in their private cars, but some stayed behind.

“Secretary Dong!”

“You are Secretary Dong, right?”

“We didn’t dare approach you earlier when you were busy.”

“Yes, now we might have a chance to speak with you.”

A few parents of students rushed over.

Dong Xuebing looked at them and nodded. “I’m Dong Xuebing.”

One of the women suddenly started crying. She reached out and shook Dong Xuebing’s hand vigorously. “Thank you, thank you! My child was saved thanks to your timely help getting them down the mountain. I just called the hospital; they said it’s acute pneumonia and some complications. Before the fever peaked, it was already around 40 degrees Celsius! The consequences would have been unimaginable if we had waited longer to get down the mountain.”

Dong Xuebing immediately understood; this was the family member of one of the two children he had carried down the mountain. “As long as they’ve been sent to the hospital, that’s good. They’re still running a fever?”

The woman replied, “It has gone down a bit.”

Dong Xuebing nodded. “As long as there’s improvement.”

The woman sobbed, “It’s all thanks to you.”

Another family member said, “Thank you, thank you!”

Nearby, someone else added, “Secretary Dong, I just heard my daughter say that she almost slipped and fell down the mountain. You saved her! I want to thank you.”

Dong Xuebing smiled and said, “There's no need to be polite; this is our job. It's what we should do. Everyone should head back now. Let's go.”