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Chapter 218: I'll Take This Mission for You

Qi Taiguo was moved by Cheng Su's words and began to contemplate his future path. To advance and climb the ranks, not only did he need his own strength and military achievements, but of course, connections were crucial.

The old him was forthright and straightforward, disdainful of forging relationships and relying on backdoor dealings, focusing solely on his own capabilities. His temperament was unwaveringly candid, but after the military downsizing, his thinking had changed.

Before Old Zhou left, the conversation they had also left Qi Taiguo feeling quite emotional.

"Being a soldier is something I have always taken pride in my whole life; I am willing to dedicate my life and my being to it. However, times have changed. My passion cannot overcome the power of connections and backdoor dealings. Taiguo, I'm not persuading you to take sides, but if you truly want to make a career out of the military, to reach the top, my advice to you is that you must accumulate military merits, and you need to develop your network as well. I'm not asking you to flatter or fawn over anyone—if that's how you reach the top, I, Old Zhou, would disdain to associate with you. What I'm saying is, in these times, an additional person, an additional path, also means an additional advocate for you—and that is absolutely true."

Old Zhou's words deeply shook him. If Old Zhou had a solid backing, would the one promoted to deputy battalion commander today be him?

Just as Qi Taiguo was about to go and have a word with Regimental Commander Mai, he saw Long Shaoguang from the third platoon emerge from Regimental Commander Mai's office with a worried look on his face, and Qi Taiguo couldn't help but call out to him.

"What's wrong? You're about to become a dad and still look like this?" Qi Taiguo asked with a smile.

Long Shaoguang forced a bitter smile and said, "My wife's due date is in a few days; this is my first time becoming a father, and I really want to be there when the child is born. But just my luck, there's a mission I need to undertake, and I'm afraid I'll miss the birth."

"What mission?" Qi Taiguo oh-ed.

"In Xiangxi, a gang of tomb robbers has emerged, extremely vicious and cruel. They've killed several local villagers and two policemen. The local Public Security Bureau has requested our assistance in the apprehension," Long Shaoguang briefly explained.

Qi Taiguo nodded thoughtfully, "You don't want to go?"

Long Shaoguang bit his lip, his voice tinged with shame as he whispered, "I, I really am not a qualified soldier."

His words also indirectly told Qi Taiguo that he didn't really want to undertake this mission.

"Come on, as soldiers, we don't get to pick and choose our posts. Even if it means death, we must obey orders. I'm just letting off some steam," said Long Shaoguang as he patted Qi Taiguo's shoulder.

"That's perfectly natural. After all, it's your first time being a dad," Qi Taiguo said with a smile. "Here's what we'll do: you go home and wait; I'll go ask Regimental Commander Mai to see if I can take this mission for you."

Long Shaoguang stared at him in astonishment. "You'll take my place?"

Qi Taiguo raised an eyebrow, intentionally joking, "What, you don't like that? Afraid I'll steal the glory?"

"What nonsense are you talking, 'steal the glory'? Whoever undertakes the mission gets the credit, naturally. It's just that you, too, have been out on several missions this year!" Long Shaoguang hesitated, "And that place, with the locals from Xiangxi, I've heard they're quite xenophobic and skilled with gu insects and gu poison. Those tomb robbers are like mice; once they get into the tombs, we, with no experience, might not come out—it's very dangerous."

"No problem; I've been feeling full of energy lately, just looking for a chance to get some practice," Qi Taiguo said with his eyes narrowed.

Long Shaoguang opened his mouth to refuse, but thinking of his wife's swollen belly and her struggles to turn over at night, he gritted his teeth, "If Regimental Commander Mai agrees, brother, I owe you a big favor."