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Chapter 294: Second to None in the Limelight

In view of Cheng Su forcing Qi Taiguo to put on a display of affection in front of all the soldiers in the barracks, the next day everyone was giving him ambiguous smiles with raised eyebrows, saying how he and his "sister-in-law" had such a great relationship, making others envious. This turned Qi Taiguo's face dark as a pot's bottom, and in a mix of personal grudge and public duty, he added a ten-kilometer weighted run.

Summoned to Regimental Commander Mai's office by his order, Qi Taiguo couldn't escape yet another laughing bout: "Everyone says you and Comrade Cheng Su are very affectionate; they say even a man of Hundred-Refined Steel has his days of softness around his finger!"

Qi Taiguo was quite depressed and, with a hardened scalp, said, "Regimental Commander, please stop teasing me, I, this..."

He was so embarrassed he could hardly stand it, and not knowing what to say, his depression grew. He had to go back and give that woman a good talking to about principles; a man outside the home must look the part. Look at him now, his millennia of cultivation gone in one day!

Regimental Commander Mai spotted his embarrassment and said with a smile, "You don't have to be embarrassed and blush; you are lawful husband and wife, a couple in love, which is something others envy and can't hope for. Besides, a good relationship between husband and wife signifies peace in the back home, which can only benefit a man's career in the front. Throughout history, hasn't it been the same for officials? Comparatively, who has more advantage between a peaceful and a troubled household?"

Thinking about it, Qi Taiguo said, "That's true, I know. It's just that sometimes my wife can be so stubborn, insisting on going against me! I just can't argue with her!"

Regimental Commander Mai burst out laughing, "I think Comrade Cheng Su is quite a character, even Chief Ning praises her; you're a lucky man!"

Hearing this made Qi Taiguo puff out his chest, his eyes brimming with pride.

"Take a seat!" After some small talk, Regimental Commander Mai and Qi Taiguo sat separately on the office sofas for a conversation.

Qi Taiguo sat upright and proper.

"You did very well on your last mission; you've added another merit for the nation. This achievement will be recorded to your credit. When the next deputy battalion commander is promoted, you won't be overlooked," Regimental Commander Mai said with a smile.

Qi Taiguo's eyes gleamed, and his heart was filled with joy, but his face showed no sign of it. He replied modestly, "Serving the country and the people is our duty as soldiers; it's only right."

"Proud but not arrogant—that's good; I see great potential in you!" Regimental Commander Mai patted his shoulder and said meaningfully, "Taiguo, even Chief Ning appreciates you. You must constantly be vigilant and remind yourself not to be complacent or impatient; we wouldn't want to be disappointed in you!"

Qi Taiguo's heart tightened, and he stood up at attention, his feet together, saluting, "Rest assured, Regimental Commander, I will strictly discipline myself and dedicate my heart to the nation."

"Look at you, sit down!" Regimental Commander Mai laughed, "The military merit is yours to keep; nobody can take it from you. If you see yourself clearly, nobody will ignore it. That includes me, even Chief Ning; we all have high hopes for you!"

Qi Taiguo smiled modestly, yet inside he was full of questions, though he didn't ask any.

"The Health Camp is almost ready; by the end of the month at the latest, military doctors and nurses will be stationed in our regiment. With several ladies among them, you must maintain good order in the military, keep these lads in check, and avoid any unseemly jokes, got it?" Regimental Commander Mai added.

Qi Taiguo quickly showed his determination.

After talking a while longer, Qi Taiguo finally left Regimental Commander Mai's office, only to run into Dong Jun, who had just been promoted to deputy battalion commander. Dong Jun looked at him with a somewhat mocking smile, "Commander Qi seems to be the center of attention lately!"

Qi Taiguo raised an eyebrow, responding with a slight smile.

"Winter's approaching, and the wind's getting strong; it might make one's face ache. Commander Qi should take care!" Dong Jun said with a profound look, patting his shoulder before entering Regimental Commander Mai's office.

Qi Taiguo's eyes narrowed.