

48 Hours 801

Chapter 801: Bullfighting Performance

This would be the day the Romans would remember for many years to come.

Not only did they get to enjoy a grand gladiatorial show to celebrate the enthronement of the new emperor of the empire, but they even got to witness an authentic western cowboy bullfighting show in the Amphitheatrum Flavium for the first time.

This might not be rare entertainment for the later generations. After all, the golden age of western pop culture had subsided in the 21st century. However, in the second century AD, watching the bullfighting performance was as shocking as witnessing a Quidditch game or coming across a wild Pikachu in a park.

This was especially true after seeing Zhang Heng dangerously evading the attacks from the bison again and again. Zhang Heng even leaped into the air and rode on the bison in front of everyone. This scene had managed to capture everyone's heart. Almost every person at the stand was awestruck by Zhang Heng's performance as if an invisible hand was manipulating the audience's emotions in the stands. Sometimes, they were amazed by what they saw, and sometimes, they are worried about Zhang Heng. And then sometimes they overjoyed.

And Commodus was one of them. Mark Reuss, however, was the one that worried Zhang Heng the most. As Zhang Heng and the gladiator school owner, he had been in this business for quite some time and had seen thousands of gladiators, but none of them could compare to Zhang Heng. The thing this Asian man could do had way exceeded his imagination.

In less than a day, he provoked Sartonilos, his rival, for no reason. It caused Mark Reuss a tremendous headache. Then, after half a day, Zhang Heng put down his identity as a gladiator and asked to fight with a bison. Mark Reuss almost collapsed and was on the verge of yelling at Zhang Heng.

'Can't you win the damn championship without causing any troubles? Why do you have to initiate so many unnecessary things? What good will it do to you?!

Zhang Heng was his most valuable asset right now. And Mark Reuss realized that he cherished Zhang Heng more than his wife and daughter. But Zhang Heng did not seem to appreciate it at all. He repeatedly challenged Mark Reuss's bottom line, causing him to lose the confidence he had when he talked to Gaby. He began to realize that no one, not just him, could ever control people like Zhang Heng. Even Commodus himself would also find it extremely difficult to tame this beast.

And his face was darkened now. However, Mark Reuss still had to rely on Zhang Heng to win the championship for him. Once Zhang Heng won the championship, he would inevitably become more and more out of his control, which worried Mark Reuss.

After several rounds of fights with the bison, Zhang Heng gradually figured out the beast's battle pattern. And at the same time, he figured that the audience should now be satisfied by what they had seen. So he prepared himself to end this battle.

With Zhang Heng's current speed and strength, all those risks that he just took were actually unnecessary. Or perhaps it should be said that it was thanks to his existing skills that allowed him to

make the whole performance look so thrilling without threatening his life substantially. It was like a play made deliberately in a movie, its purpose to stimulate the audience and deeply satisfy them.

And the method Zhang Heng used to end the battle would be dramatic as well. When the bison charged towards him again, he jumped on the back of the bovine, causing it to keep flailing its hind legs. It was doing everything possible to flick Zhang Heng off its back. When all conventional methods failed, it rushed towards the edge of the arena again.

But this time, it failed to get what it wanted. When the side of its body collided with the big net, Zhang Heng had already moved to the other side of its body and was firmly holding onto its fur to prevent himself from falling.

And there was a burst of applause from the stands. When the bison ran back to the center of the arena, Zhang Heng freed his hands to put the rope on the bison's head. The more the bison struggled, the tighter the rope was. And the rope almost strangled it. After running a while, the bison's gasping became louder and louder. Although it was not willing to give up, it had to surrender eventually in order to survive.

Zhang Heng then loosened the ropes a little. However, the bison broke out again, moved even more violently, trying to throw the nasty human off its back. Fortunately, Zhang Heng had experienced dealing with this kind of violent creature. Hence, he was more than ready when he saw that the bison was about to run wild. After another round of fierce wrestling, the bison knelt down again. This time, it could not fight back anymore, and it had to keep on kneeling on the ground because Zhang Heng used a rope to tie its legs.

In the end, the bison had no second option other than surrender.

And when Zhang Heng got down from the back of the bison, he received the biggest cheer since the completion of Amphitheatrum Flavium. Every single audience, including Commodus, stood up. The cheering sound flooded the entire arena to the extent that no one except Queen Christina could hear what Commodus was talking about.

Sprinkles of flowers and copper coins rained down from the stands. This exhilarating, novelty bullfighting performance would definitely become the most popular topic of discussion in Rome for some time to come. And those who had the honor to witness this fight would be revered. This trip was worth it.

Because of this performance, a new form of entertainment would emerge in a future Rome. And that was bare-handed bullfighting. However, without professional training, many brave slave bullfighters would be killed by bison. It would also turn out to be the performance with the highest mortality rate.

Zhang Heng did the same thing after he defeated the bison. He did not stay in the arena for too long. After bowing at Commodus, he turned and walked toward the lounge. Until now, Zhang Heng's goal had been over-fulfilled. After these few battles, Commodus's interest in him had also risen to its apex. When the performance was over, Commodus would definitely contact him. After that, he would need to figure out how to ask the whereabouts of Altrus.

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Unlike what happened outside, there was a deathly silence in the lounge at this moment.

Inside, the gladiators had different expressions. Habitus and Sartonilos were no fools. Although they had not seen the bullfighting performance, they knew from the outrageous cheers that Zhang Heng had completely conquered the arena. And now, the gladiatorial performance had not even ended yet. They had no idea how Zhang Heng did it.

The people who would fight on the stage after Zhang Heng had it the worst. Zhang Heng had completely snatched their limelight. Now, they did not know what they should do to capture the spectators' hearts, and this greatly frustrated them.

Chapter 802: Only Somewhat Alike?

The gladiatorial performance on the first day, in all fairness, was a rather remarkable spectacle. The participant gladiators were rather formidable fighters, and they were also quite famous in their respective schools or the places they had come from. During their fight, they would not hesitate to use their signature skills to deal with their opponents. All in all, the spectators were pleased by what they saw.

Those battles had all happened before Zhang Heng stepped into the arena.

Both of Zhang Heng's performances managed to elevate the spectators' experience to another level. Hence, the gladiators who fought after him were unlucky. No matter how hard they fought or how much blood they spilled, they still could not get the audience to cheer for them. That was because most were still indulging in the previous bullfighting performance.

When they turned their attention back to the gladiatorial performance, they found that those battles were not as exciting as before. Since they had made Zhang Heng return to the arena for the second time, it would not be nice to ask him to return for the third. After the performance ended, Rome's people started inquiring more into things related to this mysterious Eastern Gladiator.

So on this day, only one name echoed in the streets and alleys of Rome. The audience had completely ignored all the other gladiators who fought on that day. Unfortunately, the internet did not exist in this era, or Zhang Heng would have become famous throughout the Roman Empire with only two fights.

Zhang Heng even welcomed an unexpected guest after the performance on the first day ended.

The unexpected guest was Commodus.

According to Zhang Heng's original plan, he expected Commodus to visit him two days after the performance. He did not expect that after watching the bloody bullfighting performance, Commodus was unable to calm down for a long time. On that night, he traveled to where Mark Reuss's gladiator school was located.

Since this was a private visit, Commodus had put on ordinary clothing and brought only four guards. When he showed up, he almost scared Mark Reuss to death. The gladiator school owner then hurriedly asked someone to prepare refreshments, only to be refused by Commodus.

Commodus then rubbed his hands in glee. "I'm here to find Zhang Heng. Is he here?"

"Of course! I will send someone to summon him, Your Majesty," replied Mark Cruz respectfully.

“No, no, no, I’m a guest. I should go and find him. You can look for someone to lead me to his residence. I want to chat with him alone.”

“About that...” Mark Reuss was stunned when he heard what Commodus said. The thing he dreaded most had happened. Zhang Heng had now captured Commodus’s attention and interest. Controlling him from now would be extremely hard, to say the least.

Mark Reuss was still in the Gladiator School and had not returned home. He came to see Zhang Heng take advantage of the fact that he had not gained the emperor’s full attention by winning the championship, and he wanted to find a way to bring him under his control again.

For now, Mark Reuss was not going to treat Zhang Heng as his personal cash cow. As long as Zhang Heng was willing to work for him for three years, he was willing to return his freedom to him. There was no second option. Although it was a painful decision to make, Mark Reuss had to admit that after repeated evaluations, this might be the best one at this moment.

On Zhang Heng’s side, he was not worried that Zhang Heng might reject his offer because he was still the master of Zhang Heng. He was the one that controlled Zhang Heng’s life and death. Even Commodus could not say no to this. If things went south and insisted on killing Zhang Heng, the judge would still rule that he did nothing wrong even if this case was brought to Basilica Julia.

Although this was legally right, it did not mean that Mark Reuss would dare to offend Commodus, the emperor of the Roman Empire. Both were on a different level altogether. In the gladiator school, Mark Reuss was like a king. However, when he stood in front of the royalty, everything that he said carried no weight. If Commodus did come tonight, Mark Reuss could still pretend that he knew nothing about it. Since Commodus was nowhere in sight, Mark Reuss’s plan could take a different turn now.

In other words, Mark Reuss had now lost his last chance to threaten Zhang Heng. These were the thoughts that flashed through his head. Mark Reuss would never dare to refuse Commodus’s request, so he quickly found someone to lead Commodus to see Zhang Heng.

When Commodus stood outside Zhang Heng’s house, Zhang Heng’s slave girl happened to come out to collect clothes. Since the emperor and his guards wore nothing that revealed their identity, the slave-girl thought that they must be Zhang Heng’s avid fans, and they must be trying to sneak in to see their favorite gladiator.

These things had happened before. As the hottest idol of this era, gladiators would inevitably encounter all manner of harassment. The slave girl was unqualified to watch today’s gladiatorial performance, but she heard that Zhang Heng had done amazingly well. While she felt proud of him, she also felt the burden on her shoulders becoming heavier.

The time she lived with Zhang Heng was also her happiest. Born in Rome, her family was not wealthy, but they were not considered poor as well. However, the good times did not last long. Her father committed a crime not long after she was born. When he passed on, and his wife and daughter were sold as slaves.

She never thought her life was miserable, though. Maybe she was too young to feel the pain caused by the significant change. She had been a slave since she became a little more mature, which was why she

could accept her current circumstance easily. At one point, she could even foresee her own fate. So when she was assigned to serve Zhang Heng, much mental preparation had already been made.

However, she did not expect her new owner to be someone this special.

Zhang Heng might look cold from the outside, and he said little when he came home. Recently, he had asked her if she felt cold when she slept on the floor. After that, Zhang Heng took out the time to build a small bed for her. And she was flattered. Since then, she had been smiling for several days. She decided that she would take even better care of Zhang Heng.

So she stood very firm in front of Commodus and others, and she said fiercely, "Stop, stop, who are you, and where are you from? Do you know that outsiders are now allowed to come here?"

"Who are we?" Commodus raised his eyebrows, and she amused him. He then took out a Sestertius from his pocket and threw it to the slave girl.

"You can't bribe me." The slave girl saw the coin, and she was unmoved by it.

"It's not a bribe. Look at that coin. This is a sample coin. If everything goes well, all the new coins will be minted according to this sample coin."

"Huh?" The slave girl looked down at the copper coin in her hand, wondering, "Now why does this person on the coin look like you... somewhat?"

"Just somewhat?" Commodus frowned, "It looks like I have to make a few more versions to compare."

Chapter 803: Attack Me

Zhang Heng heard the quarrel outside, and he immediately recognized Commodus's voice. So he walked out of the house.

"Your Majesty."

"Your Majesty?" The slave girl was taken aback. "Wait. Are you really..."

"No one in Rome dared to pretend to be the emperor." Commodus waved his hand for his guards beside him to step aside. And Zhang Heng also asked the slave girl to go back to the house first.

"Your majesty, why did you come to visit me at such a late hour?"

This was a good question. Not even Commodus knew why he wanted to see Zhang Heng so much.

After watching the bullfighting show in the afternoon, he was unable to calm himself for a very long time. Zhang Heng's heroic figure, standing behind the bison, kept cropping up in his mind. Other than that, he had just received bad news. It seemed some from the Senate weren't very happy with him. Some greeted him with a smile when they saw him, but were in fact, colluding against him in private, scheming something malicious. Feeling a little irritated, Commodus left the palace and walked here.

Of course, he would not tell these things to an outsider. Commodus was about to congratulate Zhang Heng for his great achievements in the previous gladiatorial performances. But before he could speak, Zhang Heng continued, "Your Majesty seems to be having some trouble."

“How did you know? Do you know how to read minds?” Commodus asked in surprise.

Zhang Heng did not answer the question. Instead, he turned around and walked back to his house. After a while, he took out two training swords, throwing one to Commodus.

“Huh?” Commodus grabbed the wooden sword, somewhat surprised.

“Attack me,” said Zhang Heng, the other wooden sword in his hand.

“Uh, I don’t know how to fight.” Commodus was anxious, and he immediately wanted to return the wooden sword to Zhang Heng as if he had picked up hot iron.

“You are the one who led the army. You should have practiced how to fight.”

“Of course!” Commodus seemed quite proud of it. “A qualified emperor needs to learn how to lead his soldiers in battle. Although I don’t need to go on the battlefield to fight most of the time, I’m confident enough to say that my combat skills are actually quite good. I can take down two ordinary soldiers alone. Although my father complimented me about it, I am still nowhere as good as you.”

“That’s fine.” Zhang Heng then put on a defensive posture. “I don’t know what troubles you, but I think I can help you forget your troubles temporarily.”

“No, no,” Commodus waved his hand, “I can’t; I’m the emperor. I shouldn’t do this kind of thing. If someone else sees it...”

“There is no one else here. As long as I don’t tell others, no one will know. Come on, a fight with me shouldn’t be harder than going to Dior’s house for dinner, right?”

Commodus laughed. “Haha! Senator Dior is the most powerful person in the Senate. If I want my reign to be stable, I will need his support. However, I don’t like him at all. This old fox wants to take more power from me. But this is how politics works, doesn’t it? What’s the matter? Did I not put on a good show that night? How did you see through my acting? By the way, I remember that rumors were swirling around that you were a prince or general of the Han Empire. Is this true?”

“Those sorts of things are not important anymore. Now, I am only a slave in the city of Rome,” Zhang Heng said.

“Okay.” Commodus finally made up his mind. He held the wooden sword in his hand. “Then, let’s fight for a while. Let me first tell you something. I still have a lot of things to do, and I can’t stay here for too long.”

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Commodus did not expect that he would spar with Zhang Heng for an hour.

It was a fact that he could not beat Zhang Heng. This fight could not be considered a gladiatorial battle. Instead, it was like a gladiatorial lesson. Commodus never thought it was as dull as the sword training he had gone through before. On the contrary, he felt a force pushing him, motivating him to learn more from Zhang Heng, and it made him forget the passage of time. During the fight, Zhang Heng deliberately controlled his strength, using only a little more than Commodus.

Since Commodus felt that he was close to claiming the victory, he kept trying to figure a way to beat Zhang Heng. He would constantly reflect on his wrong moves and how he could make further improvements. When he finally figured out his mistake and reaped the satisfaction, there would be a new challenge waiting for him.

It was a pity that Commodus would never get to play "Sekiro Died Twice." Otherwise, he would find out that the difficulty of the challenge he was encountering highly coincided with its difficulty curve. Not only that, Zhang Heng, a person who understood history quite well, knew that Commodus liked to fight. One of the main reasons why Commodus gave up on himself and decided to go all out to become a gladiator was because of Lucilla's betrayal. Still, his love for gladiators had been in him since he was a child. It was hard trying to hide something like this. Even Dior could see it last night, let alone Zhang Heng.

When Commodus dropped the wooden sword in his hand and collapsed on the ground due to exhaustion, he realized that the time had flown by. And as Zhang Heng said before, most of his worries had indeed disappeared, replaced by a sense of satisfaction after he discovered his improvements.

"This is my first time finding out how interesting it is to be in competition!" Commodus gasped.

Commodus, however, did not know about the grueling process a slave had to go through before he became a real gladiator. Most gladiators in the schools were slaves, and they had to risk their lives when they performed a fight. Then, they would be eliminated if they did not perform well during the training. The unfortunate ones would be sent to mines. All of them had to try really hard to survive, so no one could genuinely enjoy gladiatorial teaching like Commodus would.

Zhang Heng did not say a single thing. He could see that Commodus was in the mood and wanted to utter nothing that would ruin the atmosphere. At the same time, Zhang Heng gradually figured out Commodus's temperament during the time that he spent with him.

History might have remembered him as a tyrant, but Zhang Heng noticed that the twenty-year-old Commodus displayed no traits of harming the country and the people. On the contrary, the current Commodus was working hard to become a good emperor. Having a father that excelled in ruling the empire, he had been living all this while under his old man's shadow. No matter what happened, the first thing that would cross his mind was what his father would have done.

In an attempt to keep the vow he made when his father died, his goal was to become a qualified leader and continue the glory of Rome. However, he did not know how to do it. Aurelius did train him well, but at that time, he was still under his father's wing. Hence, everything had gone by smoothly. However, once Aurelius died, Commodus realized that the political situation there was far more complicated than he thought upon his return to Rome from the front lines.

He needed to deal with pressure and probing from all the parties alone, and the worst part was that his sister was now his only family left in this world. The latter, unfortunately, seemed to have no interest in helping him. His mother was gone before his father died. In other words, there was no one to advise him on how he should deal with the political situation here. It was the reason why Commodus always hesitated when he made a decision. Sometimes, he would even doubt himself.

Zhang Heng now understood why the Balance Blade had to kill Altrus.

Under this circumstance, the advisors and friends around Commodus had a great influence on him. Zhang Heng did not believe in the oracle at all. Obviously, some people thought that Altrus' influence on Commodus was too significant. That was why they wanted to hire Balance Blade to get rid of him.

Chapter 804: Conspiracy

After the battle, Commodus felt more relaxed physically and mentally. After he changed into a new set of clothes, the emperor hurriedly left the gladiator school in the dark. After Zhang Heng watched his back disappear, he turned around and walked back to his house. He then saw his slave girl peeking at them through the door's crack.

Since the slave girl had gotten used to Zhang Heng's company, she was now more relaxed around him, no longer reserved like when she met him for the first time. When she realized that Zhang Heng had caught her, she did not blush. Instead, she asked curiously.

"Wow! Is that man really the Roman emperor?"

"Don't you have the copper coins he gave you?" Zhang Heng asked.

"Hmm, I looked at it again, and the person in the coin looks very similar to him." The slave girl nodded, "I can't believe it. Even the emperor has come to see you. How famous are you now? Ah, have you caught up with Sethnets?"

"Not yet," Zhang Heng said, "Sethnets's reputation is one accumulated over the years."

The slave girl heaved a sigh of relief. She knew that Mark Reuss valued his trump card very much. If Zhang Heng became even more famous, Mark Reuss might send him more female slaves. By that time, she might have been already sent off to serve other gladiators.

Before she got to enjoy the happiness, Zhang Heng added, "I should be able to surpass Sethnets's popularity by winning the championship of this gladiatorial show."

"Huh?" The little slave girl almost jumped up, "So fast?!"

"Well, it's the grand gladiatorial show held at the Amphitheatrum Flavium after all. Many spectators will attend it, and they will help spread around news about my victories," Zhang Heng said. "What's the matter? What are you thinking about?"

"Nothing... Nothing..." the girl slave shook her head quickly and denied. She did not dare to speak out her thoughts.

And after that, Zhang Heng did not ask her any more questions. He then reminded her, "I'm fine that you are now more relaxed around me, but the next time someone visits me, you shouldn't peek at us again. Some people's identities are very sensitive, especially the powerful ones. They might kill you even if you only hear a few words from them."

"Is it really that bad?" The slave girl didn't know why and she felt a little frustrated in her heart. Clearly, she did not want Zhang Heng to know what she was thinking but was very disappointed when she saw that Zhang Heng did not care much about her.

Perhaps she was no different from the other slave girls. Even if she were to be replaced one day, Zhang Heng might not even notice it. As she dwelled deep in her thoughts, Zhang Heng had already gone to fetch water by himself. He took a quick cold shower to wash off all the sweat and went to bed early in anticipation of the gladiatorial show the next day.

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Compared with the first day, the atmosphere of the arena on the second day was obviously different.

Even Sartonilos, the giant Teruelos, and the Thracian Danaos, who were in the limelight on the first day, could feel that the audience's enthusiasm for them had reduced by a lot. After last night, they knew what Zhang Heng had done to his opponents in both of his earth-shattering battles.

They all knew that they would not be able to do what Zhang Heng did yesterday. Other than the speedy victory he achieved in the first round, he also defeated a bison with his bare hands. In the spectators' opinion, those were some incredible feats. As a matter of fact, even the most arrogant Sartonilos could feel a strong sense of crisis.

Zhang Heng had now become their biggest obstacle to winning the championship. Judging from the fact that he had topped the leaderboard and his odds for betting had changed, it was enough to prove that he was everyone's biggest threat now.

He used his strength to siphon all the attention that other famous gladiators should receive onto himself. And he turned it into his one-man show. That was why it was hard for all the other gladiators to like him.

Bach was probably the only exception since he was the first gladiator that witnessed Zhang Heng's true strength.

Maybe it was because he had accepted the fact that he was never going to be strong enough to defeat Zhang Heng. He did not feel upset that he was never going to win the championship. He came out of the training room and yelled at Zhang Heng, "I heard that some guys want to join forces to deal with you. You'd better be careful."

"Really?" Zhang Heng raised his eyebrows and glanced at Habitus and others on the other side. If something terrible would happen to Zhang Heng, the gladiators from the Victor Arena should have sided with him. However, that did not seem to be the case. Zhang Heng had seen Habitus being summoned by another gladiator. And he returned to his seat after that. Habitus obviously knew that other gladiators were conspiring against him. However, since he did not remind Zhang Heng about it as he did for Bach, he was very likely involved in it.

Zhang Heng was not too bothered by it.

Sometimes, it was hard to make everything go his way. Since he wanted to capture Commodus's attention with his strength, he would naturally become other gladiators' threat. Fortunately, Zhang Heng was confident enough that he could beat all the other gladiators with his strength. As compared to when he first entered this dungeon, he was now a completely different person.

At that time, he might have to consider the measures he should take to reduce other gladiators' hostility towards him. But now, even if Zhang Heng knew that Sartonilos and others wanted to join forces to go against him, he was not going to do anything about it for now.

The reason was straightforward. He was strong enough now.

Due to the extra 24 hours that he had, Zhang Heng's growth rate had already surpassed the dungeon's difficulty level, thanks to the time flow rate's amplification. In fact, the ordinary dungeon after the Whistleblower's dungeon was no longer dangerous to Zhang Heng. In this dungeon, he could focus on learning new skills. That was why he chose to join the Balance Blade.

Zhang Heng certainly knew the risks of becoming an assassin. But after weighing the risks, he decided to take this risk. This was due to his confidence in his own strength. The final mixed-fight was limited by the rules that the gladiators could only do one-on-one battle. However, it did not affect Zhang Heng. With his lv4 swordsmanship and the newly learned assassin's footsteps, Zhang Heng did not think anyone was strong enough to defeat him.

This was evident in the gladiatorial performance on the second day.

Zhang Heng won both of the battles fast and clean. No matter what strategy his opponent adopted, Zhang Heng still could bring despair to his opponents with his two Persian swords. The moment he stepped foot on the arena, every single audience would shout his name rhythmically. And the pressure that he brought to his opponent was immense.

The gladiators who earned the right to fight in this arena were star gladiators from their respective gladiator schools. They were used to the audience cheered for them. It was rare for them to see themselves as villains. And the worst part was there was nothing they could do about it.

Chapter 805: Peacemaker

The gladiatorial performance on the second day ended peacefully. No drama or unexpected incidents happened during the fight. All the powerful gladiators that everyone had high hopes for had entered the final list for the third day of the performance. However, ten unexpected gladiators had also entered the list, differing from everyone's predictions before the performance.

Among them, the gladiators from various gladiator schools in the city occupied most of the positions. As for the schools outside the city, save for Terifelos, the talented Giant, only a dozen of their gladiators made it to the final battle list.

This was not the outcome the gladiators from outside the city expected. Just like the unlucky gladiator who provoked Sartonilos had said, the gladiators outside the city had to go on a tour to perform and challenge the other gladiators all the time. Technically speaking, their combat experience should be more affluent than those "pampered" gladiators in the city. And since their living environment was challenging, they should be tougher than the gladiators from inside the city.

However, the reality was often ruthless.

The gladiators who had the highest win rate were gladiators called "ladies' toys" and lived in Rome's city. This is actually quite normal. The living conditions of these gladiators in the city were much better than those outside. Naturally, they had more time for training instead of wasting their time and energy,

traveling back and forth to perform. This made them better and stronger. Besides, they had specialized doctors to deal with their injuries and illnesses.

The most crucial point was that gladiators' value in the city was generally higher than those outside the city. In terms of average price, their price had doubled against them.

Therefore, slave traders were naturally willing to sell better and stronger gladiators to the gladiator schools in the city. Some gladiators from outside the city were even sold to the city's gladiator schools at a high price after becoming famous. In contrast, the gladiators' combat experience from outside the city was not enough to close the gap between them and the gladiators from inside the city.

Therefore, this outcome was something that everyone expected. After the performance, Zhang Heng took the school's donkey cart back to his residence as usual.

He had deliberately chosen a later time to return home because he wanted to wait for most of the audience to leave the arena first. By doing that, he could avoid the harassment of some extreme admirers. Habitus, Bach, and others were also with him.

By the end of the second day, only four gladiators were left fighting for the Victor Arena. They were Zhang Heng, Bach, Habitus, and a veteran gladiator called Murkazan. Although everyone was from the same gladiator school, there was not much conversation between them as they made their way home. Perhaps they knew that they would fight against each other tomorrow. Hence, the atmosphere was a little quiet.

After a while, Zhang Heng did not expect Habitus to speak first.

"Sartonos and Danaos were discussing how to deal with you."

Bach sneered, "Is it a bit late to build a relationship? Everyone knows about this matter now."

"But you guys don't know what Sartonos's and Danaos's plans are," Habitus said.

"Oh?" Zhang Heng leaned back and readied himself to listen to what Habitus had to say.

"I know you don't like me, and honestly, I don't like you either." Habitus looked into Bach's eyes, "If I have a chance, I want to punch your stupid, arrogant face, and you," Habitus looked at Zhang Heng again. "You think you are better than everyone. You look down on us. All of us are from the same school, but Victor Arena's attendance rate would definitely increase if you win the championship. Although I don't want to admit it, it will actually do me a lot of good if there is more audience."

"So?"

"So I pretended to become a part of Sartonos's plan, just to see what sort of plan they had for you," Habitus said. "They plan to mix some herbal medicine that can weaken your body, and they are going to put it in your lunch at noon tomorrow secretly."

"There is such an herb?" Bach was a little surprised when he heard what Habitus said.

"This is Rome, not the poor place a barbarian like you comes from. There are so many things you haven't seen and heard before," sneered Habitus.

Bach was furious when he heard what Habitus said. "We barbarians who crawl out of our poor villages do not use dirty tricks on our opponents. A victory like this is meaningless."

Habitus did not take it seriously. "If you have been a gladiator long enough and have experienced enough battles, you will know that staying alive is the most important thing. And the best way to survive is always to win."

"No wonder I don't like you when I see you. Although you are quite powerful, you disgust me," Bach spat.

"You better keep your mouth clean," Habitus's face darkened. "Otherwise, you better pray that you will not fight me tomorrow."

"Oh, I have been waiting for a long time to repay the grudge that we had when we met for the first time." Bach stood up from his seat without fear.

Another gladiator named Murkazan saw that the situation was deteriorating and decided to be the peacemaker. He stood up to stand in front of Bach and Habitus and said, "Okay. Everyone, stop arguing, calm down. If you have any grievances, you can resolve them at the arena tomorrow."

Bach snorted. Just when he was about to sit down, Murkazan took a dagger out of nowhere and stabbed it into Bach's chest.

"This has nothing to do with you. You better don't move," Murkazan warned.

When Murkazan stabbed Bach, Habitus also took out a small razor and rushed to Zhang Heng on the other side.

All of this happened in a split second. Just a moment ago, Habitus confessed that he had pretended to partner up with Sartonilos and the others to find out how he planned to deal with Zhang Heng. And in the next moment, he attacked Zhang Heng without any warning.

He and Murkazan had planned this attack earlier. One of them would control Bach, while the other attacked the defenseless Zhang Heng.

When Habitus looked into Zhang Heng's eyes, he had a bad feeling because he saw that Zhang Heng was not panicked.

He was just looking at him calmly.

Habitus immediately saw the light reflecting from the knife, and two of his fingers holding the razor blade fell on the ground. When blood started to gush out from the cut, Habitus began to feel the pain.

He knew that Zhang Heng was an extremely powerful warrior. Initially, he planned to use his words to lower Zhang Heng's guard. After that, he would attack him when the Asian man no longer suspected him. However, he did not expect Zhang Heng to mount a counterattack with his lightning-speed swords.

Chapter 806: You'd Better Be Closing Your Eyes

In the blink of an eye, Habitus had lost two fingers. However, he decided to ignore the pain, gritted his teeth, and jumped off the donkey cart. When he landed, he could not stand firmly and almost fell into a puddle.

After that, Zhang Heng decided not to go after Habitus because Bach was still in Murkazan's hands. The latter felt that the plan would fall apart soon, not expecting that Habitus would fail to kill Zhang Heng. Now that he was left alone and Habitus had escaped, he was stuck in a dilemma.

He wanted to jump off the donkey cart too. However, Bach, now under his control, was glaring at him. Once he retrieved the knife in his hand, the latter would definitely pounce on him immediately.

Not to mention that Zhang Heng was next to him.

"Don't come near me, or I will kill him," Murkazan warned Zhang Heng.

"I'm not even close to him." Zhang Heng slowly drew out another Persian sword as he spoke.

Murkazan was speechless.

He knew that Zhang Heng had a good gladiator friend and that his name was Varo. He did not participate in the gladiatorial show at the Amphitheatrum Flavium this time. Before Zhang Heng showed his true strength, the two had spent a lot of time together. Now, if the person in front of him was Varo, he might use him to threaten Zhang Heng. As for Bach, he had been spending most of his time with his Germanic allies. Zhang Heng and Bach did not have too many interactions except for their fight that night.

When Murkazan came up with the plan with Habitus, he wanted to restrain Bach first, worried that Bach would be too stubborn to cooperate with them. Now that the plan had failed, Murkazan was stuck in an awkward circumstance. He couldn't let Bach go because he knew that Bach would definitely beat him up. If he held on to this posture, however, Zhang Heng would stab him with his Persian sword.

Murkazan was so frustrated that he almost cried. But fortunately, Bach solved this problem for him afterward.

When Murkazan was distracted, Bach became violent suddenly, and he kicked Murkazan's chest. The latter also subconsciously grasped the knife in his hand. As a result, Murkazan fell backward, and at the same time, he was swinging the knife. Murkazan managed to slash Bach's chest, and fortunately, the knife did not penetrate deep into the flesh. Though it looked bloody, it did not hurt much.

Bach could not be bothered by his wounds. He stood up and immediately rode on Murkazan and began to teach the latter a lesson with his fist. An eye for an eye and blood for blood had always been Bach's way of living.

However, he was stopped by Zhang Heng after he landed a few punches on him.

Bach frowned. "Why? This guy has just joined forces with the bastard Habitus in plotting against you. Where is the rage that you had when you fought against the bison? Bring it out now. If you don't want to get your hands dirty, I can beat him up for you."

"I'm not saying you shouldn't beat him, but we have something more important to do now. Lift your head and look around," replied Zhang Heng helplessly.

Bach then raised his head, and he found out that the donkey cart had stopped at a random place. The driver had disappeared without a trace. Their current location was kind of remote. It seemed like they were located behind a few warehouses, and there are no other people nearby them.

When Bach was about to ask Zhang Heng what just happened, he saw a group of masked men charging at them from the small lane between the two warehouses.

Bach rolled his eyes when he saw this. "Do you think it's funny, Sartonilos? Do you really think that we can't recognize you just because your face is covered by cloth?"

The masked man in the lead smiled. "It doesn't matter if you recognize me... I'm good as long as no passersby can see my face."

Bach was shocked when he heard this. "You are shameless. You colluded with Habitus and brought us here, but Habitus was unable to do anything to us. So, you brought a group of people to deal with us instead. Are you planning to work together to beat us up? Aren't you ashamed of yourself? What's more, you are the most powerful gladiator in Rome after Sethnets retired."

"Wrong." Sartonilos shook his head. "You are wrong. I am no longer the most powerful gladiator in Rome. Although the final result has not been released yet, I know that all of us will eventually lose the battle. All the fame we accumulated over the past few years has now become the stepping stone for others. Now, everyone knows that the man beside you is the most powerful gladiator in Rome."

"So who are you trying to blame? No one asked you to be weaker than others." Bach sneered, and he looked at everyone around him. Other than Sartonilos, he recognized a few men that he was familiar with. Bach was secretly surprised by them, not expecting so many famous gladiators would be willing to put down their honor like Habitus. Most of them were renowned veteran gladiators. Now they were gathered here shamelessly to eliminate their opponents.

"We don't have a second way out. It's not right to ask us to sit back and wait. We have to do something about it before the bad things come to us." Sartonilos spread his hands, "Other than that, you are wrong about one thing. We are not going to fight the two of you at the same time."

"Why? Are you trying to be a gentleman now? Taking turns to fight with us is just as shameless," Bach snorted.

"No, no, no. We only want to fight him. As for you, you can stand aside and watch us."

"No! Don't let him go. He knocked out my teeth!!!" Murkazan, who was under Bach, suddenly screamed.

Bach then punched him again, and two more of his teeth fell out. Murkazan suddenly became quiet again.

"What do you think? As far as I know, your relationship with him is very ordinary. Right now, the gap in strength is too wide. There is no need to make yourself suffer," Sartonilos continued.

"Yes. I'm different from the despicable human beings you guys are," Bach grinned. "Besides, do I look like a fool to you? Since you are all determined to eliminate Zhang Heng, I don't think you guys will keep me alive after you deal with him."

Sartoniilos laughed, "Habitus was right. You just look stupid, but you are not easy to deceive. It seems like I'll have to go all out this time."

"Come on!" Bach picked up his weapon and shield as he spoke and jumped off the donkey cart. When he looked back, he saw Zhang Heng putting away the Persian sword.

"Huh? Didn't you see their determination? Even if you surrender now, they won't let you go," Bach reminded.

"I didn't want to surrender, but there is no need to fight face-to-face," Zhang Heng said.

"Are you scared?" Bach asked rhetorically.

"Kind of. I'm not worried about myself. If a fight breaks out, I'm afraid I wouldn't be diverting my attention to you. I am worried that you will be killed by one of them. Besides, these people are still useful to me. What he said before is true. I need them to be my stepping stones and use their honor and fame that they have accumulated to send me to the top. The last big show has not started yet. I can't kill all of them right now."

"Are you going to act so arrogantly before you die?" Sartoniilos sneered, "Look at your surroundings. There is no way for you to leave this place now. You have to kill us all if you want to leave this place safely. But the question is, will you be able to do it?"

Before he could even finish, Zhang Heng replied to him, "Who says there is no way out?"

While Zhang Heng was talking, the shadow from a pair of enormous wings appeared on the wall behind him. And it was slowly spreading out.

"You'd better close your eyes later," Zhang Heng said to Bach, who was still confused by the current circumstance.

Chapter 807: God's Incarnation

Sartoniilos's smile gradually solidified at the corners of his mouth.

The worship of gods was widespread in the city of Rome. There were temples and believers everywhere. Everyone had a god that they believed in. Now, the scene before them had gone entirely beyond everyone's imagination.

That pair of wings made of shadows was like a nightmare invading the real world. All the gladiators, including Sartoniilos, suspected that they were dreaming at this moment. However, no matter how they slapped their cheeks, they could not wake up from this nightmare. They could only watch the shadow wings spread out. At the same time, they thought they saw a shadow feather falling from the sky. Their mouths were wide open, and they had a look of shock on them.

Zhang Heng did not stay in the same place for too long. He did not forget that the pair of wings behind him could only be activated for twelve seconds every day. So the next moment he quickly grabbed Bach with him. Bach felt that he was getting lighter, and eventually, his feet were lifted off the ground. At the same time, his body was rose to the sky.

Even though Zhang Heng had reminded him about it before this, Bach could not help but let out a strange yelp. The fearless Germanic began to struggle in horror. There were no airplanes or hot air balloons in this era. Except for the unlucky ones that had to play Icarus, getting launched into the sky and falling to their death; no one had ever experienced flight. Bach had been living on the island since he was born into this world. When he felt that he was lifted into the sky, a great sense of insecurity rushed into his heart.

It was then that Zhang Heng learned that Bach was afraid of flying. Judging by his current reactions, it seemed like he would rather fight Sartonilos and others, desperately not wanting to leave his beloved land.

In the end, Zhang Heng had to speak up, "Stay put. I will let you go once we reach a safe place."

Zhang Heng did not know if his advice actually worked on Bach or because the two were already quite high above the ground. Bach had finally stopped kicking and calmed down. However, his body seemed very stiff at the moment. Bach's hands clung to Zhang Heng's arms tightly. Zhang Heng took Bach and flew over the two warehouses. He then found a spot with no one there and landed on the ground.

After the previous practice, he was now more and more comfortable with the controls of the pair of shadow wings behind him. Before he accepted this quest, he did practice flying while carrying some heavy stuff. This pair of weightless shadow wings seemed to be quite good at bearing heavy loads. Zhang Heng could carry about 250 kilograms of weight when he took off, which was the weight of almost two ordinary people. And that was the limit.

Besides, too much weight would affect his flying speed and maneuverability. Take this incident as an example: if people on the ground started to throw weapons at him, Zhang Heng would be forced to use Bach as a shield. Fortunately, Sartonilos and the others seemed to be completely terrified and stupefied. There they stood motionless, watching the two flying over their heads.

And as soon as they landed, Bach immediately ran to the wall and started to vomit.

"I didn't expect you to react like this. We didn't even fly for long." Zhang Heng was stunned when Bach vomited. Since Bach was quite heavy, their airspeed was actually relatively low. And since there were no bumps along the way, Zhang Heng immediately realized that this might not be physical discomfort but his fear of flying.

And Bach had also unknowingly become the first person to suffer from flying in the second century AD. All that aside, he was still a strong gladiator. After vomiting for a while, Bach got better, but the way he looked at Zhang Heng had changed. It was a look mixed with fear and reverence. "Are you... which god incarnate are you? Are you Mars, the god of war? Or Pluto, or Hades, wait... You wouldn't happen to be the king of all gods, Jupiter, right?"

Zhang Heng was not at all surprised that Bach would ask such a question.

After all, there were many incarnations of gods in ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Their history and mythology were mixed, explaining why the scene just now had shocked Sartonilos and others so much. Besides telling others that they witnessed a god incarnate, they could find no other explanation to explain what they had just seen.

This was also the reason why they did dare to go after them until now. They dared to unite and go against a mighty foreign gladiator, but they would never dare to go against a god.

Zhang Heng did not answer Bach's questions. Sometimes, leaving questions unanswered would make the person more credible and deadly. In the end, Zhang Heng just signaled Bach to keep things to himself.

Not long after landing, the time limit of twelve seconds had passed. And Zhang Heng's shadow wings retracted, and his body had returned to normal. However, after experiencing flying through the clouds and fog, Bach was convinced that Zhang Heng had to be the incarnation of a certain god.

And now, Bach had found a perfect excuse of why he could not beat Zhang Heng in the first place.

"You are a god. It is no wonder I couldn't defeat you. Hold up, no one in this world can defeat you," Bach suddenly realized this cold-hard fact, and he quickly, "Oh, sorry. I forgot about it. I can swear that I will never reveal your true identity in front of others."

"Actually, it doesn't matter. Today, other than you and our enemies, no one else saw me using my supernatural powers," Zhang Heng said. "Anyway, every gladiator has their legendary tale. I guess I can count this one in."

This was also the reason why Zhang Heng did not mind using his trump cards here. Even if Sartonilos and the others were stupid enough to tell others about it, most people would only think they were making excuses for their incompetence. Zhang Heng figured that he had put the fear of God into them. Still, Zhang Heng could not guarantee that they would not tell others about it.

After that, Zhang Heng and Bach brazenly returned to the street. No suspicious men came to attack or follow them. The two returned to their residences with no hiccups. The other gladiators in the gladiator school told Zhang Heng that Habitus had also gone home, and he asked someone to inform the school that he would travel to the arena by himself tomorrow.

Bach sneered when he heard those words. "This guy still dares to show up tomorrow?"

"There is nothing he can do if he doesn't show up. The contract he made with the school has not been fulfilled, and he can't leave," Zhang Heng said, "But tomorrow, he will be in big trouble."

"Hmm?"

"I've cut off two of his fingers. It should affect him greatly. After all, it is impossible for him to hold a weapon tight with only three fingers," replied Zhang Heng casually.

Chapter 808: The Final Battle

Being one of the gladiators from outside of Rome city, Terufelos had naturally been discriminated against by the gladiators native to the city. Sartonilos, however, valued his strength a lot, and he even sent someone to convince him to join his plan. After a while, Sartonilos had to give up on him because he received no response. Hence, Terufelos did not participate in the assassination last night.

When Terufelos walked into the lounge in the early hours of the morning, he was shocked by the weird atmosphere. The atmosphere in the lounge had always been hostile. Ultimately, he knew that Sartonilos had been recruiting other gladiators to work on eliminating Zhang Heng. As usual, Zhang Heng calmly

entered the lounge. If it were a day before, they would not have hesitated to draw their swords and fight each other. Terufelos could feel the tension in the atmosphere.

But today, the tense atmosphere was gone.

Terufelos was a little baffled. When he looked at Sartonilos, he saw that the latter was disappointed and nervous about something. He looked like a rookie that was about to enter the arena for the first time. From time to time, he would move around and touch the things around him.

'What the hell is going on?' Terufelos frowned. After the previous rounds of elimination, the only players left were the masterful elite gladiators. The climax of this gladiatorial show was about to happen soon. Trump cards of the respective arenas would fight against each other. Despite all that, it seemed Sartonilos was unprepared to fight his final battle. One could see that he was distracted.

And he was not the only one who behaved like that. A few more gladiators acted as such, too, including champions like Danaos and Aixoyo. They looked weak and appeared to have not slept well the night before.

Zhang Heng, on the other hand, sat there all too calmly. Nothing appeared to have happened to him last night. To Terufelos, this nothing less but a herculean man. He had heard of Zhang Heng's glorious battle records, and other than fighting the bison empty-handed, he had managed to end his battle almost instantly. So far, no one had been able to make more than ten moves against him. Being a renowned veteran gladiator, it made no sense to Terufelos that Sartonilos could've lost the courage to fight with Zhang Heng.

Yesterday, Sartonilos and others began distancing themselves from Zhang Heng because they were plotting against him. Now, Terufelos could feel that they must be avoiding him because they were afraid of him.

It was like the instinctive fear of a mouse meeting a cat.

Among them, Bach looked the worst. He and Zhang Heng had come from the same arena, but he too sat far away from him. And his face looked so pale as if no blood flowed within his veins. At the same time, he kept placing his right hand in front of his chest.

Terufelos could not figure out what had happened between them. In just one night, almost every gladiator in the lounge had changed for the worse. Suddenly, someone ran into his back. Before Terufelos could say anything about it, the person seemed frightened, and he kept on apologizing.

When Terufelos turned around, he saw the swollen nose on Murkazan. He then asked in surprise, "What's wrong with your face?"

"I, I... I fell." Murkazan insisted that what happened to him was an accident. Not only because he was afraid of Zhang Heng, but he also knew that if what they did yesterday was exposed, they would be severely punished by the authorities. Upon realizing that they were not strong enough to defeat their opponent, they decided to eliminate their opponents outside the arena. By doing that, it meant they were challenging the iron rule set by the show's organizer. And the organizer of this gladiatorial show was the emperor of Rome.

This problem would not be their concern if Zhang Heng were dead. Unfortunately, Zhang Heng was not dead. Whenever Murkazan thought of what happened last night, he wanted to cry. Initially, he wanted to work with other gladiators to eliminate their biggest threat in this show. However, not only did they fail to deal with the threat, they now thought that they had messed with a god.

The incarnation of the gods in this world was an ancient legend. Other than the demigods, no human beings could apparently defeat such an entity.

“You fell down?” Terufelos’s gaze was filled with suspicion. “How many times did you have to fall before you knocked out half of your teeth?”

Murkazan was speechless and could only put on an embarrassing smile. Fortunately, this embarrassment did not last long. Soon, the crippled Slav, in charge of welcoming gladiators from various schools, walked in again. “Get ready. After the beastmaster’s performance is over, all of you will fight your final battle.”

Terufelos nodded. He then raised the trident in his hand. “I’m ready to show you my strength,” he proclaimed.

Now that Zhang Heng was here, the other gladiators did not dare talk about claiming the championship. He was surprised that no one seemed affected by his positive spirit even after having said something encouraging and inspiring. Sartonilos and others were still half-dead. Terufelos started to wonder if they were weeping because their wives had died yesterday.

...

However, no matter how unwilling Sartonilos and other gladiators were, they had no way of avoiding the final battle. Zhang Heng stood up from where he was sitting, and the time in the lounge paused for a second. After that, Zhang Heng picked up his two Persian swords.

“Everyone, see you in the arena.”

Bach, on the other side, grinned and put on his helmet.

On the lift, the gladiators consciously left the middle position to Zhang Heng because they knew who the audience’s focus would be on today. Zhang Heng was probably the first gladiator who conquered the Amphitheatrum Flavium before the gladiatorial show was over.

The position next to Zhang Heng should have been reserved for Sartonilos, a promising candidate to win the championship himself. Other than Terufelos and Bach, who stood next to Zhang Heng, Sartonilos, Danaos, and others insisted on standing at the outermost area. And at the same time, they kept their eyes trained on Zhang Heng’s movements. They were so skittish to the point they seemed they would jump off an elevator to flee if Zhang Heng made a move on them.

Although there were several lines of people between them and Zhang Heng, they still looked anxious.

Terufelos wanted to ask them if Zhang Heng could suddenly fly to them after standing so far away from him. And the next moment, the elevator began to rise. The slaves pulled the winches, sending the day’s protagonists from the gloomy underground to the arena.

The 90,000 seats in the Amphitheatrum Flavium were fully occupied, and the colorful satin on the poles fluttered in the wind, producing a pleasant sound. Throngs of people without tickets had also gathered outside the arena since early that morning, all there to witness the legend's birth for the first time.

The entire city of Rome was empty on this day.

Not even when Sethnets was at his peak could bring out such a scene. And when the seventy-two gladiators finally appeared in the arena, the entire Amphitheatrum Flavium was flooded by the audience's cheers.

Chapter 809: Damn, Such A Coincidence

The three-day gladiatorial performance had finally entered its final stage. This would also be the climax of the entire gladiatorial performance. Seventy-two gladiators from different gladiator schools with different skillsets were gathered in the arena today. They would compete with each other until the final champion was determined.

Unlike the previous twelve-men brawl in the Victor Arena, there were more gladiators this time, and they were stronger. Instead of fighting in a team, they would have to fight one-on-one. The loser team would not be granted a second chance to fight again. In other words, any minor mistakes could cause the gladiator to be eliminated.

The audience had been looking forward to this epic battle for a long time now. When the gladiators appeared on the stage, they screamed and cheered nonstop.

At this time, Sartonilos and others finally came back to their senses, realizing that they were now standing on the highest pedestal of the gladiatorial performance. All of them represented their respective gladiator schools. After going through yesterday's horrifying events, they were now extremely fearful of Zhang Heng. However, that did not mean that they would give up on the final battle.

This performance was of paramount importance to all the gladiatorial schools. It would determine their rise and fall for the next few years or even exceeding ten years. Therefore, the owners of the gladiator schools had given their gladiators a fight-or-die order. Other than asking them to fight for the championship, they had set a minimum goal for them as well.

Sartonilos and other gladiators had not acquired their freedom. If they failed to achieve their goals, they would also face a lot of pressure. So, they could not give up now. After all, they were powerful and famous gladiators. Even if they could not beat Zhang Heng, they still had the upper hand against other gladiators.

Hence, they only needed to pay attention to avoid Zhang Heng in the next battle. However, when the battle started, the audience in the stands was surprised to find out that the powerful gladiators they had high hopes on had failed to threaten Zhang Heng's current position. Their performance was worse than what the spectators were expecting.

Sartonilos and others were deeply affected by what they saw yesterday. The horrifying experience affected them physically and mentally. Compared with other gladiators that were fully prepared for today's battle, most of them were rejuvenated. However, Sartonilos and other gladiators who had

attacked Zhang Heng stayed up the whole night. And the lack of sleep had also weakened their mental state. Their reaction and cautiousness had deteriorated to varying degrees. Other than that, they were distracted by Zhang Heng when they fought, worried that they might have to face him in their next battle. Thanks to that, they were unable to unleash their full potential.

Still, the fear in their heart did not take away the skills that they had mastered. Under normal circumstances, they could control the rhythm of the battle. However, their opponents were not ordinary gladiators. These were the elites that survived the previous rounds of battles. Even if there was a large gap of strength between them, the difference was not that significant.

As a result, the audience in the stands was shocked by what they saw. The gladiators who were well-known in Rome could no longer fight like they used to. Some spectators familiar with Sartonilos and Danaos could not help but wonder if they had decided to lose on purpose during the battle's early phase. Otherwise, no one could explain their unbearable performance.

On the other hand, among the group that attacked Zhang Heng yesterday, Habitus performed the best. He lost two fingers and ran away alone after he realized his sneak attack had failed. As a result, he missed the scene where Zhang Heng ascended to the sky. That was why his mental condition was fairly stable. He did not perform as well as he used to because his physical strength had deteriorated. As Zhang Heng said earlier, the loss of two fingers greatly impacted how he handled his weapon.

However, Habitus found a solution to overcome this problem. He switched to holding the sword in his left hand and holding the shield in his right hand. The hand with fewer fingers was holding a shield. With that, he did not need to perform too many complex movements with his right hand.

Of course, he did not dare to use his shield to block his opponent's attack. He was worried that he might drop the shield if the opponent's attack was too powerful. Fortunately, he was a flexible gladiator. Not too long ago, he had learned some footwork from Dadatis, and even though he had not mastered it, it was enough to cope with the current battle. Eventually, he would gain the upper hand in his battle.

Habitus did try his best to fight this time. Not want the reputation that he had accumulated over the years to be wasted, he gritted his teeth and exerted all his strength. He even changed some of his previous fighting styles by cutting down some skills to attract the audience's attention. He had to play safely in his first round of battle. After a while, he finally defeated his opponent successfully and claimed his first round of victory.

Like others, Habitus was monitoring Zhang Heng's movement closely as well. Seeing that Zhang Heng was still quite a distance from him, Habitus hurriedly ended the battle and started the next. However, when he saw this second opponent, he was shocked.

Bach grinned at him, showing his two rows of teeth, "Oh, isn't it a coincidence? It seems that the grievances between us can finally be solved."

Habitus was only paying attention to Zhang Heng earlier. He had completely forgotten about Bach. Paying attention to only one person was his limit. He did not have enough energy to pay attention to two people at the same time.

Before the incident that happened yesterday, Habitus was afraid of fighting against Bach. Bach's disadvantage was that he was too young and inexperienced. Compared with Habitus, he had more

experience in battling against other gladiators. And he was at least 70% confident that he could defeat Bach.

But now, the circumstance had changed. Two of his fingers were missing. Although both his left and right hands could still hold a sword to fight, his left hand was not as flexible as his right hand. Moreover, he barely won the previous tough fight just now. And it forced him to spend a lot of his energy to claim the victory. In contrast, Bach had an easy fight just now.

Bach was determined to fight against Habitus in the final battle. Earlier, he could have claimed the victory, but he deliberately delayed it until Habitus finished his fight. He wanted his revenge.

Habitus then looked at the judge on the side. "We are from the same gladiator school. It doesn't make sense for me to run into him so early."

However, the judge ignored him and signaled them to start the fight. Immediately, Bach charged at him with a grin. Although the two did not like each other, Habitus still thought that Bach was almost as powerful as him. When the two met for the first time, he won the fight against Bach easily. However, there were many factors that contributed to his victory. First, Bach was tired and hungry. At the same time, he did not know much about him. And he underestimated his enemy as well. That was why he lost in that battle.

But this time, Bach came prepared. As soon as the battle started, Bach did not hesitate to deliver a heavy blow to Habitus. Instead of targeting Habitus's weakness, he intended to make sure that Habitus couldn't jump to dodge his attack. Hence, he would have to block his attack head-on.

Habitus was unlucky. Only after blocking two attacks, he felt that he was about to drop his shield. And this time, he did not have a solution to overcome this problem. So, Bach made use of this opportunity and continued to deal heavy damage to him. Bach's attacks were not fancy, nor could they be considered as combat skills. All he did was used all his strength to attack Habitus brutally.

Chapter 810: Legend

In the end, Habitus did not manage to dodge Bach's attack. His three fingers could no longer hold the shield tightly, and Bach's brutal force sent it flying away. The thing that angered Habitus was that Bach had no intention to stop attacking him. Instead, he took a step closer and slashed his head with his sword. Habitus was helpless. For now, he had to temporarily give up the idea of dropping his weapon and surrendering. He used the sword in his left hand to block the attack, and at the same time, distanced himself from Bach.

However, just when he thought he had finally earned a chance to surrender, Bach made a shameless move, utterly stunning Habitus. He saw Bach throwing his small round shield aside before charging at him violently with the sword in his hand.

Habitus was now wholly overtaken by fear. He had to continue to fight because he was worried that the audience would want to execute him if he surrendered. At the same time, he lowered his voice and said to Bach, "Time to stop. I have already lost the battle. You can now take advantage of me to increase your reputation. All the reputation that I have accumulated so far now belongs to you."

"Not enough," Bach said.

“Damn, what else do you want from me? Do you want me to pay you? I’ve been a gladiator for so many years, and I have saved a lot of money. I can pay you if let you let me surrender.”

“No, no, I have no interest in your money. I just want to end your life,” Bach replied with sincerity.

“Are you f*cking sick in the head?!” Habitus could not help but yelled at last, “Don’t forget that we are gladiators from the same gladiator school. What are you going to tell Mark Reuss if you kill me?”

“Why should I care about what a retarded middle-aged Roman thinks?” Bach asked.

Habitus had almost run out of options to stay alive. So he could only lower his posture again and say, “Listen, we did not target you yesterday. You should know that. I just wanted to stop and prevent you from interfering in our business. As for the first time we met, Gaby asked me to beat you up to discipline you. You can see that there is actually no unsolvable enmity between us.”

“It makes sense.” Bach nodded.

Habitus was about to turn his sorrow into joy, but the very next moment, he could feel a cold-hard slash on his neck. Bach made sure that he slashed him fast enough. When he nodded just now, Habitus put down his guard for a brief moment. That was all it took for his throat to be slit. The latter knelt on the ground and desperately pressed his bloody neck. His eyes were filled with horror and confusion.

“There is nothing complicated about it. I’m just unhappy with you,” Bach grinned. “Since we are from the same school, I don’t want to see you wandering in front of me again.”

“...”

Habitus seemed to try to coax out a reply, but he could now no longer speak.

Just as Bach and Habitus fought fiercely, Zhang Heng had already defeated three opponents. His performance was similar to what the audience had expected. As always, he was invincible, and he achieved flawless victory in every battle. No matter who the opponent was, they could not make more than ten moves against Zhang Heng.

In fact, Zhang Heng spent most of his time waiting for his next opponent to appear. However, when he saw his fourth opponent, the audience was left in a huge shock. For the first time, some of them started to worry for him.

That was because his next opponent was an archer gladiator.

There was no limitation to the type of gladiators in this performance. Hence, some overpowered gladiator professions were also mixed in this final battle. And archer gladiators was one of them. The archer gladiator’s circumstance was quite unique here. If their opponents were gladiators that wore heavy armor, they would surely lose the battle. However, if they faced light-armored gladiators, they would turn into the merciless death that reaped their souls.

Unfortunately, Zhang Heng was the kind of gladiator that wore light armor. And the worst part was he did not even have a shield with him. Other than that, he had also left his helmet in the lounge. In other words, he did not have a single piece of defensive equipment on him.

After analyzing his opponent, the archer gladiator opposite him had his hopes relit. And he was extremely excited about it. He knew that the gladiator that stood in front of him was the main attraction of the entire performance. If he could kill Zhang Heng here, he would undoubtedly become famous. Even if he failed to win this show's championship, he would still become famous throughout the entire Rome.

Even if he could not become a legend, it was not too shabby to become a legend's terminator. So when the judge signaled them to start the battle, he instantly drew an arrow and put it on the bowstring.

But his opponent Zhang Heng, like the previous few battles, made no special preparations. All he did was charge at his opponent. The archer gladiator could not believe what he was seeing. Why was there such a stupid person in this world now?

Even though there was a high chance that he would claim the victory, the archer gladiator still decided to be patient and did not fire the arrow until Zhang Heng got closer. When Zhang

Heng was ten steps away from him. The archer gladiator knew that there was no way that he would miss the target. So, he fired the arrow at Zhang Heng.

At the same time, Zhang Heng began to make his move as well. Since he possessed Lv2 archery skills himself, he could roughly judge where the arrow would land from the way his opponent fired. Ultimately, he still relied on his Lv4 swordsmanship. Zhang Heng did not even stop moving. All he did was swing his swords randomly.

And the next moment, his swords slashed the flying arrow with pinpoint accuracy.

The audience heard a loud bang, and they saw Zhang Heng's sword deflecting the oncoming arrow.

On the other hand, the archer gladiator was left in complete bewilderment. He was wondering how that happened. He did not take his last opportunity to shoot another arrow. All he did was stood there with an empty mind. It looked like he had given up on fighting back. This was probably the deadliest mistake made by a gladiator since the start of this final battle. There was not a single audience who blamed him for giving up fighting back. That was because all the audience who saw this scene were left in shock without exception.

It was not until Zhang Heng rushed in front of the archer gladiator and placed his Persian sword in front of the latter's neck. He then realized that he had been eliminated. As compared to his defeat, the scene where Zhang Heng deflected his arrow had a bigger impact on him. It even destroyed his confidence and common sense.

And this scene further fortified the beliefs of Sartonilos and the others. The oriental man in front of them must be the incarnation of some god. Otherwise, there was no way to explain his outrageous strength. While thinking about it, Sartonilos and the others, who had lost the will to fight, deteriorated even further. They had now almost lost to the ordinary opponents in front of them.