

Perish 141

Chapter 141: The Roman Army is Coming

Usually, the Illyrian Pirates would disguise themselves and sneak into the ports and towns of Italy by boat to purchase grain. After all, due to the supply from various provinces, grain prices in Italy have always been quite cheap. However, this year is different from previous years. The rebellion sparked by the gladiators has nearly swept through the entire southern part of Italy, causing massive destruction to farms, cutting off trade routes, and showing no signs of being quelled in the short term. Naturally, this has led to a rise in grain prices in various towns, and merchants have also begun to hoard and manipulate prices. It's now impossible for the Illyrian Pirates to easily buy grain.

Alakosia soon returned with Pigeris following behind him. As soon as he entered the room, he said with a smile, "Karsipengpas, long time no see. Thank you for bringing another Illyrian friend to us!"

Karsipengpas responded, shook Pigeris's outstretched hand, and took the opportunity to introduce Onomabatis.

After some small talk, Pigeris quickly got to the main point, saying seriously, "I just heard from Alakosia that you want to buy some grain from us..."

To be truthful with you, hundreds of people join our troops every day, so our demand for wheat is enormous. Therefore, the goods we trade at the port with you and other foreign merchants, apart from iron ore, are primarily wheat. Moreover, Romans have increased their patrols near Sarabia Port with their warships; future trades with foreign merchants might be cut off—"

He intentionally paused for a moment, noticing a look of disappointment on Karsipengpas's face, then emphasized, "However, our Leader Maximus is an Illyrian, and he is very concerned about his fellow people. He once specifically told me, 'If you encounter difficulties, as long as we can, we must help you solve them.' Thus, I decided that you don't need to buy wheat. We will donate a batch of grain to solve your tribe's food shortage problem."

Karsipengpas displayed a look of disbelief and, usually quick-witted, he was now stammering: "This... this is... too generous! ... But there's no need to donate... we have money... we can buy..."

"Karsipengpas, thanks to your help during this time, we have had a sufficient supply of iron ore. These grains are our gratitude to you, so please don't refuse!" Pigeris said in an uncompromising tone: "Is ten thousand pounds of wheat enough?"

The reason Pigeris specified this amount is that through multiple dealings with Karsipengpas, he knew the population of the pirate captain's tribe was less than 400, and this amount would last them several months.

"Enough! More than enough!" Karsipengpas expressed his heartfelt gratitude, took a deep breath, and resolutely said, "You in Free Italy have been so good to me, so I won't say more thanks. I swear by Ares! If you need my services in the future, please just say the word. I, Karsipengpas, will do everything possible for you!"

After sending Karsipengpas and his companion off, Pigeris asked, "How many Illyrian Pirate Captains has Karsipengpas introduced to us so far?"

"Should be the 7th one now," Alakosia calculated and replied.

"This Karsipengpas indeed has a wide network and genuinely wants to engage with us. So, spending some grain to win his friendship is definitely worth it," Pigeris muttered to himself with a hint of self-satisfaction.

Alakosia couldn't help but ask, "Pigeris, Capito manages our grains, will he agree to donate 10,000 pounds to him?"

"Do you think I was lying when I said what Leader Maximus said earlier? These were the points the leader emphasized repeatedly in meetings. Capito wouldn't dare disagree unless he wants to go against the leader..."

As Pigeris spoke, he was lost in thought, "Why does the leader value these Illyrian Pirates so much? From the start, he had me select you from the army specifically to manage trade with them, telling me to find ways to help them and befriend them... it can't just be because he carries Illyrian blood, right?"

Alakosia listened quietly beside Pigeris but felt firmly in his heart: Leader Maximus is an Illyrian, of course, he stands with us Illyrians!"

"Oh, it's getting dark, I must hurry and find Capito to finalize the grain donation, then I'll send someone to notify you. You can then gather some labor to weigh out ten thousand pounds of wheat at the warehouse, set it aside so that Carlsiphengpas and his crew can quickly load it onto their ship at first light to be returned to his tribe smoothly."

"Understood, Pigeris, I will wait here for your notification and then handle the subsequent matters properly. Don't worry."

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Under the city of Metapontum, the sound of battle was deafening. The rebel army launched a fierce attack from the east, west, and north simultaneously. Numerous soldiers used ladders and assaulted the city walls like ants, pushing siege carriages to hit the city gates, and even built a siege tower intending to climb directly onto the city walls...

The soldiers of Metapontum stood on the city walls, vigorously defending. The citizens all took action, tirelessly delivering stones, wood, and oil. Additionally, ships full of reinforcements from nearby city-states like Tarentum, Heracleia, Croton, and Turi entered the port to support this town...

Chapter 142: The Roman Army is Coming_2

Under the command of Spartacus, the rebel army exerted all its strength, with one team after another launching relentless attacks. The battle raged from dawn until dusk, but countless soldiers perished beneath the city walls without ever breaching the parapet...

"Leader Maximus!" A messenger came galloping, loudly announcing, "Spartacus orders the attack to cease, retreat back to camp!"

Maximus had been waiting for this order and immediately told the bugler, "Sound the retreat horn quickly!"

"Woo! Woo! Woo! Woo!..." The urgent sound of the copper horn rang out.

Maximus breathed a sigh of relief as Quintus's voice reached his ears: "The order to retreat should have been given long ago. The morale of the Metapontum people is high, and they can keep receiving reinforcements from other towns. Even if we attack several more times, we won't be able to conquer it."

Maximus detected the dissatisfaction in his words, although he had not supported the decision to attack Metapontum earlier. Still, he defended himself, saying, "We didn't expect these few southern towns to unite and support Metapontum."

"These southerners, though timid and unwilling to fight in the open field, can still put up a fight with the tall city walls as their shield."

As a former Roman, Quintus held contempt for the Greeks of Southern Italy. Stroking his chin, he added, "I think it must have been Metapontum's administrative officer who, after killing Enomai, foresaw our potential revenge and persuaded other towns to support them, and prepared their defenses well. With our current strength, it's impossible to conquer it, and there's no need to waste our forces here; it's best to retreat early."

"Yes, you are right." Maximus stopped arguing and changed the topic: "However, this time, even if we didn't take Metapontum, our Free Italy troops have gained significant training. At first, as you saw, over twenty thousand men were in chaos. Especially the forces of the leaders who joined later, unfamiliar with the orders, they attacked or retreated at will..."

Now it's much better; within just over ten days, all soldiers have been merged into a team, obeying commands during the siege, advancing and retreating smoothly. Spartacus has put in tremendous effort."

"In this regard, there is some benefit to us, but despite our full-scale assault, we still couldn't take Metapontum City, and many soldiers were killed or wounded. It might have a significant impact on morale!" Quintus reminded him.

Maximus remained silent as he watched the retreating troops in front of him: Leading the way were Oluus and Pequot, followed by most soldiers who were once Enomai's subordinates, and just joined Maximus's army with Pequot not long ago. Therefore, Maximus didn't bring in any more troops from Sarabia but temporarily mixed the five hundred guards with these over two thousand former Erromyi

soldiers, led by Oluus and Pequot respectively, as the siege force. Some new soldiers were determined to avenge Enomai, openly dissatisfied with the initial probing attacks. But now, they were battered and bleeding, supporting each other like beaten dogs, with no trace of arrogance left.

Perhaps the blow to their morale from the failed siege is beneficial to me... Maximus thought to himself, immediately adopting a solemn expression, riding forward, and loudly saying, "Brothers, although we failed to take the city this time, among all the siege forces, you fought the longest and were the bravest, almost reaching the parapet. I am proud of you all!"

Maximus paused for a moment, seeing the soldiers gradually lift their heads, their eyes focusing on him. He continued with concern in his voice, "Now you must be tired and thirsty. I've already had ample food and hot soup prepared at the camp! I also had the Medical Team prepare enough herbs, waiting outside the camp. Every injured brother will receive excellent care and treatment!... Let's hurry back to camp, once we return, everything will be fine!"

The retreating soldiers looked at Maximus as he vigorously waved his arms, and, hearing his heartfelt words, seemed to gain some strength in their weary bodies.

At this moment, they saw Maximus jump down from his horse, quickly walking to a pair of wounded soldiers supporting each other, loudly saying, "You're injured yourself, how can you hold your comrade! Let me help!"

Saying that, he supported a wounded soldier's body, hoisting his arm onto his shoulder, walking slowly forward.

The numerous soldiers were profoundly moved by this scene, knowing that as the rebel army rapidly grew, the status and prestige of the leaders also increased rapidly. Even Spartacus no longer mingled with ordinary soldiers as he did at the beginning of the uprising, let alone the somewhat arrogant Cross and Enomai. Yet this young leader still showed such concern for ordinary soldiers...

"What's your name?"

"Diocles."

"That sounds like a Greek name."

"I'm from Poseidon, and joined the ranks when Leader Enomai's army passed by."

"You haven't been with our Free Italy for long, but I see the courage you showed during the siege is no less than that of veteran soldiers!"

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Unknowingly, the soldiers all followed behind Maximus, listening to the conversation between the two. One soldier couldn't help but shout, "Leader, I also joined the ranks at Poseidon!"

"Oh, your injuries are also substantial, it seems you were valiant in battle too!"

"Leader, I'm from Croton. Upon hearing the fame of Free Italy, I rushed to Turi to join the ranks."

"Oh, it seems that even in the southernmost part of Great Greece, there are warriors daring to resist Rome and pursue freedom!"

"Leader Maximus, I'm a gladiator from Capua."

"I remember you, Kumo, the cheetah from Mauritania..."

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Pequot watched as Maximus was surrounded, chatting and laughing with the soldiers, his expression complex and changeable.

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Back at the camp, Maximus settled the troops, and the post-battle statistics were out: over 750 casualties.

For the Maximus Army, with just over 2500 troops here, this was already a significant blow.

But Maximus didn't take it to heart. After dinner, he received a notice to rush to Spartacus's camp for a military meeting.

After each siege battle, Spartacus would convene the leaders to discuss, summarize experiences and improve siege methods, which was also the main reason why he could consolidate the team and enhance combat effectiveness so quickly.

As he entered the tent, all the other leaders were already there. Maximus saw that everyone's faces looked a bit grim and thought it was because they were upset about the losses from the failed siege today. But then Spartacus looked at him and said solemnly, "We just received word from a messenger sent by Cross—the Roman Army is coming!"

Despite being mentally prepared for the arrival of the Roman Army, hearing this now, Maximus's heart couldn't help but thump rapidly. He hurriedly asked, "How many are in the Roman Army? Where are they?"

"According to the messenger, Cross's cavalry captured a southbound caravan and learned from the merchants that the Roman Governor, Publius Crassus, is leading an army of about forty to fifty thousand, which has already passed Campania and is heading south along Ania Avenue," Hamilcar reported.

"Forty to fifty thousand?!" Maximus's heart pounded even more intensively. Although he knew from historical records in his previous life that the rebel army eventually repelled the Roman attack, being part of it was still nerve-wracking. Who knows if things might change in this lifetime.

Chapter 143: Orders Issued in the Morning, Rescinded by Evening

"At least seven Roman legions!" Antonix's expression grew even graver. "The combat power of the Roman legions is not something that the city guards can compare to!"

Hamilcar immediately added, "Furthermore, Cross believes that the Romans must have informed the towns near Turi of their troop movements in advance via sea routes, because he has noticed unusual activity in those towns in recent days. Not only have they shown signs of recruiting soldiers, but they've also sent scouts to spy on his camp..."

"If the Romans can use sea routes to command the towns near Turi to join in attacking Cross, it's likely they can also command Tarentum and its surrounding towns to do the same!" Attutmus reminded.

"Spartacus, what should we do now?!" Several leaders, including Atmidonos, asked nervously, almost in unison.

"Don't worry too much." Spartacus said firmly, his tone steady and unhurried. "When Free Italy had just over ten thousand men, we annihilated one Roman legion in Campania. This time, the Roman forces have increased seven to eight times, but our soldiers have also grown to over 100,000. We can defeat the Roman army again, just as we did before!"

Spartacus didn't raise his voice, but his words were filled with confident strength, calming the nerves of Atmidonos and the others.

"Spartacus, how should we handle the impending arrival of this Roman army?" Atmidonos asked again.

Spartacus looked intently at everyone in the military tent. Clenching his fist, he said solemnly, "We'll focus all our forces and confront the Roman army's advance head-on! As for the gathering point, the specific location is yet to be decided. My suggestion is to concentrate our troops in the territory of Tarentum and engage the Romans there. However, Cross's suggestion is to hold the battle on the Turi Plain. What are your thoughts on this?"

Antonix was the first to respond. "Engaging the Romans near Tarentum is undoubtedly better. We have more troops nearby, and it's easier for us to concentrate our forces there."

"I also think fighting in Tarentum's territory is best. These days, we've witnessed it ourselves—Metapontum is very close to us, and camping 20,000 men here has already consumed a considerable amount of provisions. If we were to move to the Turi Plain, it might collapse our supply chain," Hamilcar raised a logistical concern that garnered the leaders' attention.

"I agree that facing the Romans here in Tarentum is the right choice." Maximus said.

Attutmus then promptly echoed Spartacus's suggestion, easing Hamilcar's earlier worries. Hamilcar had been concerned that Maximus might propose gathering the troops in Apulia instead.

Of course, Hamilcar had no way of knowing Maximus's inner thoughts. Maximus had his own reasoning: Since the rebel army in his previous life had achieved victories during this period, he only needed to follow Spartacus's lead and obey his orders. There was no need to make unconventional moves and risk disrupting history.

"Earlier, we decided to assemble our troops to attack Metapontum, but Chief Cross hasn't followed the command and still hasn't brought his troops here. Now he wants us all to move to the Turi Plain to help him defend his camp. Isn't he thinking too much of himself?" Phitodorus's sarcastic remark brought up an issue that everyone had deliberately avoided discussing.

Spartacus immediately issued a solemn warning. "Phitodorus, the Roman army is about to arrive. We must focus everything on confronting them head-on. Don't say things that could disrupt unity!"

"Leader Spartacus, I didn't mean anything else. Now that everyone has agreed to fight the Romans in Tarentum's territory, will Chief Cross—who isn't here—agree to leave the Turi Plain and lead his troops to Tarentum to join your camp?" Phitodorus raised a concern that was on everyone's mind.

Spartacus replied without hesitation, "He will!"

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The following morning, Spartacus issued the order for a retreat. Although the leaders temporarily kept the information about the imminent arrival of the Roman army confidential as instructed, the hasty conclusion of the siege still caused considerable unrest.

Maximus paid no attention to the impact the termination of the siege had on troop morale. He led his troops directly north along the main road and returned to Sarabia only two days later, where he convened an emergency meeting with all the heads of the forces.

First, he introduced Pequot and the over a thousand soldiers he led who joined the army (600 of whom had perished during several battles for Metapontum). Then, he shared the news about the imminent arrival of a Roman army, comprising seven to eight legions. He also announced that, after discussions at the officers' meeting, the various rebel divisions would concentrate their forces in Tarentum's territory to confront the Roman army.

This news made everyone present nervous, but Maximus assured them with unwavering confidence: The rebel army would surely defeat the incoming Roman forces!

At the same time, he solemnly reminded everyone to prepare themselves for the possibility of an immediate retreat, just in case.

The Maximus Army originally started as a humble supply team despised by many in the rebel ranks. It grew rapidly under Maximus's leadership, becoming a significant force within the rebel army. All the heads in the room had risen to their positions because of Maximus's recognition and support. Now, Maximus had complete command over this force. Despite some heads worrying about the upcoming battle, none of them objected to Maximus's instructions at this critical moment. Instead, they began fulfilling their duties as ordered.

Chapter 144: Morning Decree, Evening Change_2

But when the news that "the Roman Army is about to invade" spread throughout the entire camp, it caused unrest in the ranks, especially among those soldiers who had joined the troop only after leaving Campania; they felt panic.

Fortunately, Maximus exercised strict control over the army, with each subdivision stationed in independent camps. Under the leadership of their team officers, they carried out daily training, patrol tasks, and adhered to set routines. Unauthorized outings were prohibited, so no major incidents occurred.

However, a small number of deserters emerged among the personnel from the two major logistical departments: the kitchen and the warehouse.

Because of this, Maximus had to strengthen oversight across all departments and personally visited various locations for several consecutive days, working with supervisors to reassure personnel and boost morale.

After much effort stabilizing the situation, Maximus was preparing to lead the First and Second Legions south to Tarentum when he suddenly received urgent news from Fesaros, the Legion Commander of the First Legion, stationed near Bari City: A significant number of soldiers from the Free Italy forces had entered the Bari Territory with their families, claiming they planned to retreat north... and asking Maximus whether they should be expelled.

Maximus's first thought was that Spartacus and his forces had changed their plans—not fighting the Roman Army at Tarentum but instead opting to move north temporarily to avoid the Roman Army's onslaught.

But upon reflecting further, he found this implausible, as this was not Spartacus's usual style. Even if Spartacus intended to do so, he would at least convene a meeting with the officers to reach a consensus, rather than act arbitrarily. Thus, it was far more likely that some soldiers from the Free Italy forces feared the Roman Army and fled north on their own accord.

Realizing this, Maximus couldn't sit still. He immediately led the cavalry along the main road, racing toward the First Legion's camp.

Before reaching the camp, Maximus encountered rebel soldiers from the south—or perhaps it would be more accurate to call them peasants. With their families in tow, scattered across the Bari Territory, they were not organized into units and were clumsily fleeing north.

Maximus dispatched his cavalry to question these fleeing peasants, and their answers were largely similar: the invading Roman Army was overwhelmingly strong, and the ill-equipped rebel forces stood no chance. It's better to retreat first and avoid the conflict.

When asked which units they belonged to, their responses varied greatly. Some were from various troops, including Spartacus's forces, but many were unaffiliated peasants. These were mostly elderly, infirm, and disabled individuals not officially integrated into the rebel army when they enlisted, but they didn't leave; instead, they stayed near the rebel camps, inhabiting the crude, impoverished settlements Maximus had seen during his first expedition south.

Faced with this scene, Maximus's expression turned grim. After pondering for a moment, he issued an order: "Akegu, immediately return to Sarabia and inform Vallerus. Tell him, it's my command: have him send messengers to notify all towns that are under our control to evacuate the civilians outside their city

walls back into the towns for shelter. Also, express our apologies to them; we can no longer fulfill the promises we made."

Akegu, puzzled and shocked, asked, "Leader, we have to... apologize to them?!"

"Even though these towns have likely received the news of the Roman Army's arrival and may even be secretly preparing to oppose us, they have upheld their commitments for the past two or three months. And ultimately, we were the ones who broke our promise—unable to stop people from other troops from trampling their lands. Offering an apology is deserved. This concerns our credibility," Maximus said earnestly.

Half of the cavalry escorted Akegu back while Maximus hurried to the First Legion's camp.

As soon as Fesaros saw him, he immediately knelt down: "Leader, I violated your orders— I didn't command the soldiers to expel these people who entered Bari Territory—"

Before he could finish, Maximus gripped his arms and forcibly pulled him up. "You did the right thing. The situation has changed now; we can no longer stop them. Assemble the soldiers immediately, abandon this camp, and follow me to Tarentum!"

"Are we going to engage the Romans?!" Fesaros asked nervously, albeit with some excitement.

"That remains to be seen," Maximus replied ambiguously.

On the way south, the northward stream of people never ceased, and it seemed to be growing larger. Maximus was fortunate to encounter a messenger sent by Spartacus, who informed him that Cross had led his troops away from the Turi Plain and into Tarentum Territory. Furthermore, Spartacus and the other leaders had left Uriya and gathered near Tarentum's northern border to urgently convene a military officers' meeting.

Maximus grew contemplative upon hearing that the meeting would be held even closer to Apulia.

The meeting location was a temporary camp set up by Cross's forces. Maximus lifted the curtain and entered the military tent to find the scene unchanged from last time—apart from him, all the other leaders were already present.

Compared to the last meeting, the atmosphere inside the tent was unusually tense. Each person's face looked grim, especially Cross, who was sitting on the ground with a reckless posture, holding an unsheathed short sword. With a ferocious expression, he repeatedly struck the soil in front of him.

Seeing Maximus enter, Cross immediately vented his fury: "Maximus, every time, you're the last to arrive, making us wait so long! Do you even deserve to be called a leader anymore?"

Maximus was taken aback, not understanding why Cross suddenly targeted him with such hostility. Without overthinking, he retorted sharply: "Compared to someone who refuses to follow the decisions of meetings and sends no troops to attack Metapontum, I believe I am very much deserving of being a leader!"

All but Spartacus and Hamilcar burst into laughter, with Phitodorus even chiming in: "Well said!"

Cross drew his short sword and flicked it. With a flash of cold light, half the blade embedded itself in the soil before Phitodorus, causing him to cry out in shock and fall backward.

Cross sneered, his wolf-like ferocity sweeping across the faces of Maximus and the other leaders. "So, are you all teaming up against me today?" he hissed angrily.

"Knock it off!" Spartacus roared furiously, a rare display of anger. "The Romans' army is already right before us, and you still have the mind to bicker here! Finish this meeting properly and quickly decide our next military action for Free Italy!"

Spartacus's outburst prompted Phitodorus to quickly sit upright, while the other leaders fell silent. Only Cross let out a heavy snort, sarcastically saying, "Spartacus, is there really any point in holding a meeting? Don't all decisions come down to you alone? The Romans are here, and if you say we should face them head-on, we all agree to fight head-on. If you say we should focus all forces on Tarentum, I give up the Turi Plain camp and bring all my warriors here painstakingly. But now you're telling me to avoid the Romans and retreat north—"

"Chief Cross, I believe you're not being entirely truthful." Cleonis couldn't help but interject, "If I recall correctly, when the messenger conveyed our collective decision to 'face the Romans at Tarentum' to you in the Turi Plain, your initial response was to refuse to comply with the resolution!

The reason you ended up here is because the Roman Army advanced on the Turi Plain, and the Greek towns south of the plain gathered an army of no less than ten thousand, putting you in a position of being attacked from two sides. That's what forced you to come here—"

Chapter 145: Infighting and Division

Cross, having been hit where it hurts, jumped up fiercely and strode over, grabbing Cleonis by the collar and lifting him up, roaring, "Who the hell do you think you are, daring to spout nonsense here! When I was slaying Romans mercilessly in Campania, you were probably begging for food somewhere..."

The towering Cross glared fiercely at Cleonis at close range, his eyes flashing with a ferocious light, like a giant beast ready to devour a man.

Cleonis, who could rally the southern Calabrian civilians and form a team to join the rebel army, was not lacking in ability and courage. Yet, at this moment, he was so intimidated by Cross's daunting presence that he forgot to resist.

Spartacus rushed forward just in time, forcibly separating Cross, and shouted in an equally angry voice, "Cross, didn't you hear what I said just now! Go back to your seat and discuss our next moves with everyone. If you dare to act recklessly again, I will not be polite to you!"

With a crisp "pop," Cross forcefully knocked aside Spartacus's hand from his chest and said with hatred, "I'm causing trouble here today, so what! Spartacus, what trick will you come up with to deal with me!"

Hearing this, Spartacus clenched his fists tightly, his chest heaving dramatically, but he bit his jaw, controlling his rising fury.

The two faced each other, glaring angrily.

Hamilcar, seeing that things were not right, quickly got up and persuaded, "Cross—"

"Shut up!" Cross angrily pointed at Hamilcar, "You accomplice of Spartacus, always helping him come up with bad ideas, making everyone foolishly follow your instructions. I've long wanted to beat you up!"

"You, too, Antonix, Spartacus' lackey, besides nodding and agreeing with him, what else can you do!"

"And you——" Cross pointed at Maximus, "A traitor to the gladiators, having caused so many brothers to die, yet you still became a leader!"

Maximus, who still hadn't figured out why all this was happening upon entering, decided to watch and wait in the face of Cross's accusations.

"And you, Attutmus, someone who's never killed a man, yet can still..." Cross cursed out each leader in the tent, venting his long-held anger, then bent down furiously to pick up the short sword stuck in the ground.

Others instinctively drew their short swords and pointed them at him.

Cross looked around, stepped back two paces, then raised his sword and shouted, "What, want to gang up and kill me here?!"

"Cross, don't slander us, you were the one who drew the short sword to threaten us first!" Antonix retorted.

Cross angrily said, "I knew long ago, you guys have joined hands to deal with me! Fine! Fine! Let the officer's meeting go to hell, I won't stick with you cowards, go be deserters if you want, I absolutely won't leave! I'll stay here with my brothers——"

Cross stared directly at Spartacus and said firmly, "Without you, I, Cross, can still defeat the Romans, you just watch!" Having finished, he sheathed his sword and strode out of the tent.

Spartacus's face turned successively red and white, evidently infuriated, but after hesitating for a moment, he still chased after Cross.

Hamilcar hurriedly followed.

The others in the tent looked at each other, with uneasy expressions on their faces.

"Attutmus, what exactly is going on? Why did Cross suddenly break with us?" Maximus approached Attutmus and whispered.

"You just arrived, you wouldn't know, this wasn't sudden, ever since that guy brought his troops here, he's been arguing with Spartacus and these leaders over whether to retreat north. Before you came in, he was shouting and jumping around, almost ready to hit someone. If Spartacus hadn't stopped him, we would have beaten him down long ago!" Attutmus said resentfully, having been yelled at by Cross earlier, he was also bottling up anger.

It seems Cross's angry departure had nothing to do with me arriving late to the meeting..... Maximus didn't feel relaxed and continued to ask, "Wasn't it agreed to face the battle here, why suddenly change to want to retreat north?"

"Ah, it's really no choice." Attutmus glanced at the others, then said quietly, "After we returned from withdrawing our army from Metapontum, news quickly spread that the Roman Army would come here. The majority of the soldiers led by these leaders are Great Greeks, they are extremely afraid of the Romans, and were very panicked upon hearing the news.

They believe that although our Free Italy has a large number of people, we lack armor and weapons, and couldn't even take a small town like Metapontum, it's absolutely impossible to defeat the Roman Army.....

Spartacus and they went to the various camps, trying to reassure the soldiers to no avail, and even the civilians who were attached to us but not incorporated into various teams and scattered on the periphery had started to flee north in succession.

Later, after Cross brought his troops here, the Roman army also arrived on the Turi Plain, making people even more panicked here. They protested to Spartacus and the others, refused to fight the Romans, and demanded an immediate retreat.....

This is why Spartacus urgently convened the meeting. Actually, not just here, although my side is a bit farther, the reaction of those soldiers who joined later is much the same, coupled with seeing the continuously northward fleeing people, where else would they have the courage to fight the Romans, I hurried here actually intending to discuss this with Spartacus, is it the same situation on your side?"