

## Perish 166

### Chapter 166: Defeat\_2

"The Romans should launch an attack on Maximus soon. From here... the distance is less than ten miles," Attutmus pointed toward the northeast.

"I'll take some men to scout first." Okmar waved his hand and led the cavalry away hurriedly.

After quite a while, a long procession emerged in Attutmus's field of vision, led by Spartacus himself.

Even while listening to Attutmus's brief recounting of the earlier defeat, Spartacus didn't halt his advance.

After hearing the explanation, he frowned and asked, "So... forty to fifty thousand Roman troops are currently besieging Maximus's forces. Do you think he can hold out until we arrive to rescue them?"

Attutmus wanted to say it was impossible, but upon seeing Spartacus drenched in sweat, along with the soldiers around him in a similar state, he opened his mouth but revised his response: "Perhaps he can."

"Maximus is extremely capable; he's created miracles many times before. He will surely persevere!" Spartacus spoke resolutely. It wasn't that he had unwavering faith in Maximus but that he needed to reassure himself; this was the hope for the rebels' victory.

Suddenly, Spartacus raised his right hand high, vigorously gesturing forward, and shouted, "Brothers! Maximus's troops are fiercely battling ahead. They desperately need our reinforcements! We must pick up our pace, reach them in time, defeat the Romans, and secure our survival!"

Spurred on by Spartacus's rousing call, the rebel soldiers, trudging forward for a slim chance at life despite their fatigue, overcame their wavering resolve after seeing the defeated remnants of Attutmus's forces. Spartacus's words injected strength back into their weary bodies.

Watching the reinforcements, now breaking into a jog, Attutmus felt deeply stirred. He said to his men, who had retreated to the roadside, "We'll follow them too!"

...

On the southern plains downstream of the Womans River, the Roman Army and the rebel forces were locked in a ferocious showdown. The battle had reached its climax.

The riverside, trampled back and forth by soldiers on both sides and soaked with blood from the river, had turned into a mire. Soldiers frequently stumbled and fell, becoming mud-covered figures as they fought. Swinging swords often led to slips, forcing them to rely more on shields and shoving into their opponents. The fight had devolved into a melee wrestling match.

Due to the Military Law Team's enforced supervision, Roman soldiers, who had been standing knee-deep in the river for hours and were utterly exhausted, had no choice but to keep charging at the rebel army's defensive lines.

The outnumbered rebel army's First Legion began to retreat under the relentless pressure exerted by the enemy. Despite this, every soldier fought desperately to hold the line, driven by the hoarse and persistently shouting voices of women behind them.

Among those women were individuals the soldiers loved, those who had treated their wounds, and those who had cared for them in the past. As Leader Maximus had said, "These women are your sisters. They are family!" As men, they had to fight to the death to defend them!

The Second Legion of the rebels was also struggling to hold out. Although their advance had gradually turned into defense, the thickness of the enemy's formation in front of them prevented them from breaking through quickly. Over time, as the Roman Army's chaotic formation began to reorganize, the Romans regained their footing and started pressing harder.

Despite being at a disadvantage, the Second Legion soldiers continued to fight doggedly. For them, the women's cheering voices behind them remained a crucial source of courage and strength.

While the First and Second Legions fought desperately, the Third Legion presented a stark contrast—they dominated the battlefield. The Romans were pushed back repeatedly, and signs of panic began to emerge... The enemy line eventually collapsed entirely...

Soldiers of the Third Legion began chasing after the retreating enemy forces.

Oluus originally intended to command the First Battalion to switch focus and attack the Roman forces fighting against the Second Legion at their flank. However, the Third Legion was neither well-trained nor experienced in warfare. Caught up in the exhilaration of victory, they fixated entirely on the fleeing enemy before them. In no time, their entire line scattered wildly in pursuit. Oluus's calls were completely drowned out by the deafening noise of the battlefield, failing to stir even the faintest ripple.

Victory! The Third Legion was victorious!... Upon hearing the news, Maximus clenched his fists tightly in excitement. For a long time, the northern and northwestern fronts had weighed heavily on his heart. He had even sent the remnants of his Guard soldiers—who had crushed the Mateninum City Guard—to provide reinforcement despite knowing it was only a drop in the ocean.

"This is great news!" Flinitus's furrowed brows finally relaxed as he remarked, "Let's hope the Third Legion's triumph can swiftly undermine Roman morale and alleviate pressures faced by the First and Second Legions."

"Leader, please order Camillus and Oluus to rally their forces immediately and assist the Second Legion in crushing the enemy front!" Quintus suggested. An unease lingered in his heart: why was it that, despite the First and Second Legions starting out with advantages, they now faced such difficulties, yet the Third Legion's assault had gone so smoothly?

"Good! Let's proceed with that plan!" Maximus promptly instructed Akegu to deliver the orders.

No sooner had Akegu departed than a scout rode in hurriedly from the southwest. "Leader, bad news! The Third Legion has been defeated!"

"What?!" Maximus was shocked.

"The cunning Romans had hidden a reserve force in the rear. While the Third Legion pursued their fleeing troops, they were ambushed. As a result—"

Before the scout could finish, Maximus felt his hands and feet turn cold as a buzzing sound filled his head. Instinctively, he turned to Quintus and Flanitnus.

Both wore equally grim expressions as they shook their heads and sighed deeply.

Maximus's forces had played all their cards, holding on through sheer willpower—but now, there was no turning the tide.

.....

After receiving Governor Crodianus's orders to attack, Antonius devised a new strategy after careful deliberation.

Initially, when the two Roman governors divided their forces in Rome, each gained four legions. Crodianus expanded his troops by conscripting City Guards along his route, effectively doubling his army to a strength of 50,000. Before the offensive against the rebels began, he had Antonius take two legions and a force of town soldiers which was one-and-a-half times larger than usual, intending for a swift victory over the rebels near the Womans River upstream.

Since the Roman Legions had undergone months of rigorous training, their combat effectiveness was markedly enhanced. Consequently, both commanders prioritized having the Roman Legions spearhead the attacks while stationing the Italian Town Soldiers in the rear as support. However, this time, Antonius decided to deploy the Italian Town Soldiers at the front while concealing the two Roman Legions behind the Roman troops engaging the rebels' Second Legion, allowing them crucial time to rest and recuperate.

The Italian Town Soldiers under Antonius's command, already weakened in battle and suffering from exhaustion after extended marches, faced unfavorable terrain, leading to a quick and predictable defeat. However, their rout caused the Third Legion to completely lose formation during its pursuit, exposing their vulnerabilities to the ambushed Roman forces lurking nearby.

Antonius immediately ordered one legion to ambush the pursuing rebel forces. Meanwhile, he led the other legion himself, preparing to bypass the friendlies ahead and outflank another rebel unit engaged in combat.

Diverging into two directions—east and south—the legions struck simultaneously. Though the Roman soldiers were fatigued, they relied on orderly centurion column formations that swiftly dismantled the disorganized Third Legion of the rebels.

#### Chapter 167: Turnaround

Everything was progressing smoothly according to plan. Riding a warhorse at the rear of the legion, Antonius only wished the soldiers could move a bit faster to crush another rebel army ahead, so he could claim victory in this battle!

At that moment, he heard a loud shouting behind him, overpowering all the commotion on the battlefield, like an avalanche.

He turned around in astonishment to see the Italian Town Soldiers, who were initially fleeing west due to the pursuit of rebels, now running back in terror. Behind them was a dense crowd, like a roaring flood, crashing towards them with overwhelming force...

.....

"Report to the leader, Spartacus has arrived with reinforcements and is attacking the enemy from the west!"

"Report to the leader, Antonix is leading reinforcements along the coastal road and hopes that our northern troops can make way for them to attack the enemy!"

"Report to the leader..."

...

This day's battle constantly kept Maximus on edge. The collapse of the Third Legion at the last moment had left him in despair; suddenly learning that reinforcements had arrived to turn the tide thrust him into euphoria — nothing in life is more tumultuous.

When the news of final victory arrived, physically and mentally exhausted, Maximus only wanted to fall to the ground and sleep well, but this was just a wishful thought because many post-battle affairs needed immediate handling.

By dusk, the entire battle had concluded.

Through the reconnaissance of Okmar's Cavalry, Spartacus had previously learned about the battlefield's situation and the Roman Army's deployment. He divided the reinforcements he led into two parts, quickly advancing east along the two banks of the Womans River. The Roman Army had been entangled with the Maximus Army for nearly two hours, and they had no additional strength to resist the assault from rebel reinforcements, almost collapsing at the first blow.

Subsequently, Antonix's reinforcements arrived along the coastal road. Seeing the deteriorating situation from the northern bank, Governor Crodianus abandoned his troops and fled in panic, further worsening the rout of the Roman Army. If Antonius had not led the only controllable Roman Army resisting desperately by relying on his own prestige, the rebel reinforcements would have quickly formed an encirclement. Nearly 20,000 Roman and Italian Town Soldiers managed to escape, but eventually, nearly 30,000 Roman Army soldiers were either killed or captured, and Antonius perished on the battlefield...

As the setting sun hid behind the mountains, the twilight sky was blood-red, silkily hanging in the dim western sky. The lower plain of the Womans River was littered with corpses, and its waters were completely stained red with blood...

Such a terrifying post-war scene did not frighten the 50,000 rebel army soldiers; instead, excited by a great victory, they stood in formation on the south bank of the lower Womans River, with their feet on the crimson soil, intently watching Spartacus on the opposite bank.

Standing on the northern bank of the Womans River, Spartacus was not joyous despite the victory; instead, he had a solemn expression. His voice, like a great bell, struck the soldiers' eardrums: "Brothers, we have won! But this victory is not your credit; it should be attributed to the armies led by leaders Maximus and Attutmus! When the Roman Army came, they did not flee out of fear but bravely stayed to

fight the Romans! It is their brave fight that allowed us to persist until our arrival, gaining the final victory!

Are the Romans strong? If they were not strong, how could they have destroyed our City State and tribes, making us slaves! Are the Romans terrifying? If not terrifying, how could they have killed our relatives and friends while we suffered! But is this really the case? Let me tell you the truth! —"

Spartacus made a forward motion with his arm, and his Guard immediately brought up over a hundred prisoners. These prisoners were stripped naked, standing on the riverbank, some of them were fat and flabby, some were thin with no meat, some had overly fair skin, and a few were tall and strong (carefully selected by Spartacus, most of them being Italian Town Soldiers)... Because these prisoners had fought all day without food to replenish energy, their naked bodies were shivering under the cold, damp evening river breeze, each crouched over and shaking like a sieve.

Spartacus drew his short sword, slapping it against the protruding belly of one prisoner, who, terrified, knelt and begged for mercy.

"Open your eyes and look at these fragile guys! These are the enemies that made you too scared to fight, abandoning your own encampments! These are the enemies that forced you to march day and night without proper sleep! These are the enemies that were about to surround us and kill us all!

Brothers, today's battle is over, but there will be many battles like this in the future. Do you have confidence in achieving victory on your own, shattering the Romans' plan to destroy us, and gaining complete freedom?!"

Looking at these "Roman Soldiers" trembling under the sharp sword and listening to Spartacus's hopeful questioning, the self-esteem of the rebel soldiers on the south bank was aroused, and they roared in unison: "We have confidence to defeat the Romans with our own hands!!!..."

Spartacus still wore a stern expression: "It's not enough to talk; I need to see your actions in the future!"

## Chapter 168: Reversal\_2

Spartacus finished speaking and forcefully thrust the short sword backward. Accompanied by a piercing scream, the blade pierced the prisoner's abdomen and then sliced downward, causing intestines to spill out along with a flood of blood...

The gruesome scene terrified the other prisoners and drew gasps from some of the rebel soldiers.

Spartacus swept his icy gaze over the soldiers across from him and harshly commanded, "Next, it will be your turn to execute these Roman prisoners!..."

Spartacus had used a similar method last year, and now he had no choice but to repeat it. He wanted the tens of thousands of new recruits who had joined the forces in Great Greece to personally kill all the prisoners captured in this battle, so they would no longer fear killing.

Compelled by the situation, Spartacus had to resort to brutal measures.

While the reinforcing rebel soldiers were slaughtering countless enemies and staining Mateninum's coastal waters red with blood at Womans River, the soldiers of Maximus's army had already returned to camp to rest. They were utterly exhausted after the battle. Meanwhile, the medical camp had become busy; there were so many wounded soldiers that they found it difficult to cope.

Upon learning this during his visit to the medical camp to comfort the wounded soldiers, Maximus immediately ordered that a dozen tents in the camp be vacated for the medical camp's use. He also instructed Capito to assign more personnel to assist the medical team in treating the wounded.

Afterward, he returned to the command tent to hear the casualty reports from Akegu, Casius, and the others regarding their forces during the battle.

"...The First Legion suffered 198 deaths and 356 injuries, of which 53 were serious; the Second Legion suffered 231 deaths and 262 injuries, including 116 serious injuries; the Third Legion endured 444 deaths, including two Centurions, and 572 injuries, with 212 of them serious—" Akegu's voice grew increasingly subdued, his face filled with sorrow. Perhaps among these fallen soldiers were friends he had known well.

Maximus cleared his throat softly and said in a grave tone, "On the battlefield, there is no mercy for weapons. Death is inevitable. The fortunate thing is that this time we were victorious. Their deaths ensured our survival. Even in death, they will be remembered by us forever! When it's your turn to fight someday, will you be able to display the same courage and wisdom as they did to achieve victory and secure a better life for everyone?!"

"We will!" Akegu, Casius, and several other young attendants, emboldened by his words, stood tall and responded loudly.

"Good. I look forward to the day you become heroes!" Maximus nodded and said, "Now, continue with your report."

"...The Guard suffered the loss of 119 soldiers, with 214 injured, 75 of them seriously. The cavalry lost two soldiers, and 13 were injured, all with minor wounds," Akegu said, his voice gradually returning to normal.

Maximus fell into deep thought after hearing the report: overall, the army had achieved a victory against overwhelming odds, and the casualties were not too severe. The Third Legion, however, suffered the heaviest losses, with over 1,000 casualties out of a total of 4,000 soldiers. This was primarily due to an ambush they encountered while pursuing fleeing enemies.

The Guard also had a high casualty rate. This group, which had only joined the ranks less than a month ago, lacked the long-term rigorous training that other legions had undergone. During battle, they were not adept at relying on organized formations to withstand assaults and instead depended more on their individual bravery. This nearly led to their collapse under the relentless attacks of far more numerous Roman soldiers.

Nevertheless, the First and Second Legions, despite being at a disadvantage in the final stages, maintained relatively low casualties in formation-based engagements. Presumably, the Romans had a similar experience. Once a side is routed, however, tens of thousands can disappear in the blink of an eye...

These lessons are worth reflecting on! ... Maximus snapped back to the present, noticing the attendants' gazes still fixed on him. He then said, "You've done well. It seems I can entrust you with even more responsibilities in the future."

The attendants smiled brightly, one by one.

Maximus's words were heartfelt. From the beginning, when he gathered these children to impart knowledge and systematically assigned them tasks, to later selecting older ones to serve by his side as

scribes and orderlies, to now asking them to handle post-battle casualty statistics for the first time, they had performed admirably. This gave Maximus confidence in his plan to develop the army's younger generation. Although they couldn't transform into frontline soldiers in a short time, they might soon occupy critical roles in Maximus's larger strategy.

"Alright, go summon Volenus, Capito, Acronis, Flanitus, Quintus, the three Legion Commanders, Oluus, and Pequot."

"Yes!"

.....

"Leader, Acronis cannot come. She's busy directing her subordinates to prepare food. Tonight, we'll be feeding not just ourselves but also over 50,000 reinforcements," Capito reported.

"If not for their timely arrival today, we'd all be done for. A life-saving debt is worth at least a feast, wouldn't you say? Haha, we mustn't be stingy," Maximus said, half-joking but with a deliberate undertone. He then asked, "What was the damage from the commotion in the camp earlier?"

"Minimal," Capito replied. "Five tents were damaged, and three mules ran off but were later recovered. About a dozen people sustained minor injuries. As for the Sarabians who incited the disturbance and attempted to escape, we killed four of them and captured the rest."

Maximus looked at him and asked, "Do you believe we should execute these escapees as per military law?"

"We cannot execute them!" Capito replied firmly. "Military law applies to our people, not to the prisoners. Besides, these troublemakers who tried to escape are blacksmiths, potters, charcoal makers, and gold and silver craftsmen. They're extremely valuable to us!"

Smart thinking! ... Maximus silently approved, though he voiced a stern response. "But these people have caused us a great deal of trouble and must be punished! In the future, whether we're marching or resting, tie them up with ropes, assign guards to watch over them, and halve their food rations. Also,

take them to the riverbank where the executions are taking place. Let them witness the consequences and learn a lesson!"

"Understood."

Maximus then turned to Pequot, whose right arm was wrapped in linen, and asked with concern, "Pequot, how's your injury?"

Pequot moved his bandaged right arm slightly, his expression indifferent as he said, "Just a slash from a Roman. I went to the medical camp earlier; it's nothing serious. I just need a few days to recover."

"That's good to hear!" Maximus sighed in relief. Looking at the army's officers, he raised his voice to commend them. "This time, when the Roman army attacked, you led your troops in stubborn resistance and held out until reinforcements arrived, achieving a major victory! This victory has changed the precarious situation of Free Italy and given us a chance at survival. Everyone should thank you for this!"

"Leader, since we've achieved such a great feat, shouldn't there be some rewards?" Fesaros asked earnestly. "For example... distributing the armor and weapons stripped from the Roman soldiers to our troops. After all, it's thanks to our soldiers fighting for their lives that we won this victory. We can't let the other units take all the spoils!"

It turned out that after the victory, Maximus's soldiers, exhausted beyond measure, had returned directly to camp to rest, leaving cleanup and battlefield salvage largely to the reinforcements.

Maximus smiled and said, "Don't worry. Spartacus is a reasonable man. I've already discussed this with him in advance. He has agreed to allocate 10,000 sets of Roman legionary weapons and armor to us. Once they're done executing the prisoners, they'll send the equipment over. Fesaros, you'll be in charge of receiving it later."

## Chapter 169: Proactive Strike

"Great! Now every one of our brothers can wear armor, have shields, and wield short swords!" Fesaros exclaimed happily, high-fiving Torrelugo. Even the usually grim Camillus and Oluus managed a slight smile, although Pequot looked at Fesaros with a complex expression.

"Camillus, Oluus, I am very saddened by the heavy losses suffered by the Third Legion!" Maximus's words quickly wiped the smiles off Camillus and Oluus's faces.

"I have discussed this with Quintus and Flanitnus; it's not your fault. Anyone in your position couldn't have done better. Our only mistake was not having enough forces to prevent the enemy's surprise attack, and that's my responsibility, not yours!" Maximus's sincere words gave them some comfort.

"The Guard is the same, fighting bravely despite being outnumbered!" Maximus loudly praised them. He wouldn't openly criticize the Guard's tactics for causing heavy casualties, but he planned to rigorously train them later.

Pequot interjected, "No, the Guard did not perform well! If they had strictly adhered to discipline like the three legions and formed a tight defensive formation in battle, there wouldn't have been so many casualties! Leader, can we start assigning some instructors to the Guard from tomorrow to conduct military training whenever they have free time?"

Maximus didn't expect Pequot to make such a proactive request. Seeing his serious expression, it was clear he wasn't just paying lip service but seriously asking for it, which pleased Maximus and gave him a new perspective on Pequot: "Of course! Flanitnus, take charge of training the Guard."

"Yes, Leader."

Maximus quickly suppressed his smile, his expression becoming solemn, and he spoke in a low voice, "The brothers who died in battle today are all heroes. Tomorrow, I will hold a public funeral for them so that everyone can pay their respects!"

Holding a public funeral for those who died in battle was a method Maximus learned from Spartacus.

"Moreover, whenever we have the opportunity, I will fully replenish the Third Legion and the Guard with soldiers, allowing these two brave units to fully exert their combat power!"

Maximus's promise began to dispel the gloom on the faces of Camillus, Oluus, and Pequot.

"Quintus, Flanitus, after this battle, what do you think we should do next?" Maximus asked again.

The two almost replied in unison, "Of course, eliminate the Roman Army to the south!"

.....

"What we need to do next is attack this Roman Army that is pursuing us!"

At night, in Maximus's tent, the leaders held a Military Commander Conference. Spartacus spoke passionately, "Today, we achieved a great victory. More importantly, the soldiers have overcome their fear of the Roman Army and have gained the courage to fight the Romans. In contrast, the Romans originally planned to annihilate us with a pincer attack from the north and south, but now that we've taken out the northern Roman Army, only the southern one remains—"

Spartacus stretched out both arms, illustrating his point, "In the past few days, this army has accelerated its march and is getting closer to us. Today, before we came to reinforce, this Roman Army had already reached the areas of Palanum and Tenobra, less than a day away from our position. This was originally a bad thing but has now become an opportunity.

Previously, when we left Tarentum, the intelligence reported that this Roman Army numbered around 50,000. Later, although they won while fighting Cross's army, they must have suffered at least thousands of casualties.

Today, we learned from the prisoners that this Roman Army is not entirely composed of the Roman Legions. They only have four Roman Legions, totaling over 20,000 troops, and the rest are conscripts from various towns, not as strong as we imagined, and our forces are twice theirs. We are fully capable of crushing them!

As long as the Governor leading this Roman Army is not a fool, upon learning that we defeated the northern Roman Army, he would retreat immediately to avoid our attack. Therefore, we must seize this advantageous moment, leading all troops southward at dawn tomorrow to engage them in a decisive battle to avenge Cross! Once this nuisance is dealt with, nothing can stop us from freeing Italy!"

As Spartacus passionately spoke, he clapped his hands against his thighs, the sound echoing with a crisp "snap," "Do you agree?"

In previous meetings, it was often Hamilcar who was the first to respond to Spartacus's proposal, but this time, he was leading the remaining main forces and didn't make it. Maximus assumed this role, "I agree with Spartacus's proposal. Let's swiftly deal with the southern Roman Army so our advance northward will be unhindered!"

"As long as the soldiers no longer fear the Romans, we can definitely defeat them, just like we did in Campania before." Antonix, usually cautious, also expressed agreement.

"This Roman Army has been chasing us for so long, it's time for them to taste our might!" Attutmus followed closely.

#### Chapter 170: Proactive Attack\_2

"Previously, the soldiers feared the Romans mainly because many of them lacked armor and weapons. Today's victory has improved this situation. I believe the soldiers are eager to achieve another victory to completely solve the problem of weapon shortage." Tormas's words both agreed with the suggestion and subtly explained why they chose to retreat initially.

At this moment, Cleonis said loudly, "Leader Spartacus, although I don't have the right to vote yet, I agree with your proposal. I think Phitodorus and Depeitimas would not oppose it either."

Phitodorus and Depeitimas could only nod in agreement.

A major victory completely changed the attitudes of all the leaders, and Spartacus's proposal smoothly passed.

Riding on the momentum, he continued, "I know that today's victory was achieved with significant casualties to the forces of Maximus and Attutmus. However, our greatest advantage over this Roman Army lies in the number of soldiers, so I hope you two can dispatch parts of your forces to join us in advancing south against the Roman Army and concentrate as much strength as possible to quickly crush them!"

"I am willing to lead all soldiers to fight in the south," Attutmus replied without hesitation. So far, he had gathered 15,000 scattered soldiers. Although Spartacus openly claimed today's major victory was mainly due to the steadfastness of his and Maximus's armies, he felt guilty inside and his troops were in urgent need of achieving a victory personally to boost morale, which is why he showed such enthusiasm.

"Today's battle caused many casualties among my soldiers, urgently needing rest. But defeating the Roman Army is now the top priority, and I am willing to send 6,000 men to participate," Maximus agreed, partly as he truly said, to defeat the Roman Army, and partly to further train the troops, improving combat power and shaping the military spirit through one victory after another.

"Great!" Spartacus smiled, "Next, let's discuss how to advance southward tomorrow?"

The leaders finished discussing the southward combat plan, and at the same time discussed the proposal that "Phitodorus, Depeitimas, and Cleonis join the Military Commander Conference as official members," which was also passed.

After the meeting ended, everyone left, except for Attutmus, who remained in the military tent.

He said with a guilty face, "Maximus, I couldn't hold back the Romans, causing your army to suffer—"

"Attutmus, don't say that!" Maximus quickly stopped him and sincerely said, "If it weren't for you blocking the Romans upstream of the Womans River, buying me a lot of time, I wouldn't have been able to hold on until Spartacus and the others arrived.

Moreover, your army's position was unfavorable for defense, and it was natural for the Romans to focus their attack on you first, which was normal for your troops not to hold on. Didn't my forces also collapse in the end, if not for—"

As he said this, Maximus's mind immediately flashed back to the scene of "soldiers collapsing like a landslide, him powerless," causing a burst of panic, prompting him to change the subject quickly: "Over the past six months, you and I have cooperated very tacitly, there's no need to be so polite between us. By the way, have all your soldiers returned to the ranks? Since you are leading troops south tomorrow, how about I send my subordinates to help gather any scattered soldiers?"

Attutmus was thrilled: "Maximus, if that's possible, I would be very grateful!"

"See, there you go being polite again."

.....

After Attutmus left, Maximus called the various leaders in the army. After discussion, it was decided that the First and Second Legions would each draw out three cohorts, totaling 6,000 men, led by their respective Legion Commanders to fight in the south.

Centurion Stags lifted the tent flap, walked into the military tent, and hearing the continuous snoring inside, shouted loudly, "Still asleep, get up!"

"Who is it? Yelling and waking me from my beautiful dream!"

"Sounds like the captain."

"Captain?! It's not even daylight, what's he doing here?"

...

"Everyone quiet!" Stags roared, and the complaints suddenly ceased: "The Legion Commander just gave us a mission. Tomorrow, we are to go south with Leader Spartacus's main force to fight against the Roman Army following us."

"Another battle? Can't we just have a good rest?" someone complained.

"Want to rest, huh? Then go to another team, anyway, this time we're only sending half the force, there's plenty of people to replace," Stags said, pretending to leave.

The soldiers immediately shouted again: "Who the hell wants to rest; I just want to fight the Romans now. Although we won today, we were too tired to enjoy the thrill of pursuing the enemy, and we can't miss it next time."

"That's right, those Roman soldiers weren't that great. We fought them to a standstill despite being outnumbered, and with Spartacus's main force, the next battle will definitely be another victory."

Stags nodded: "Since you all understand, prepare to set off early tomorrow morning. If you lack armor or weapons, or have damaged ones, you can now go to the Supply Camp to get new ones."

At these words, the tent suddenly erupted into a frenzy.

A voice emerged, "Captain, can I also get weapons and armor?"

Stags recognized it as Casaridaoa's voice and smiled, "Of course, you performed very well today!"

He indeed did, because Casaridaoa had saved Stags's life.

In battle, when the already weary Stags lost control and fell, a Roman Soldier's short sword was about to cut down on his head when Casaridaoa, standing in the rear, quickly thrust the javelin without a spearhead into the Roman Soldier, knocking him down, and then yanked Stags up from the mud, saving him from a perilous situation.

"Great, now I can finally have armor and weapons!" Casaridaoa cheered, arm-waving and foot-stomping in delight.

"You're really lucky, joining the team not long ago and getting weapons and armor, unlike me, joining for months, only now getting this chance."

"Leonidas!" Stags called out.

"Present!"

"Organize your team, line up, and go to the Supply Camp to change armor. There are torches along the way; don't walk randomly. If you cause any disturbance, there will be military law punishment!"

"Yes!"

.....

Before Crodianus deployed his forces, to prevent Publilius from learning and coming to steal the glory, not only was Ascoli Port blockaded to prevent anyone from reporting, but the Brindisi Fleet was also required to pause information delivery to Publilius. As a result, Publilius was completely unaware of the battle at Womans River that day.

In fact, because of reconnoitre report that the rebel army split most of their forces to speed up their march, Publilius presumed this to be a sign of the rebel army gathering forces for a massive assault on Ascoli Camp.

Out of concern for his comrades, he urged his troops to hasten their march, leading to the bivouac being set in the wilderness at dusk instead of choosing a town or port, and his army being only half a day behind the forward rebel army.

On the next morning, Hamilcar, after receiving the swift communication from Spartacus, did not proceed north but first informed his soldiers of the victory in yesterday's battle, boosting everyone's morale, and then quickly led his army south.