

# Rome Must Perish

## #Chapter 1

### Rebirth - Read Rome Must Perish Chapter 1 Rebirth

#### Chapter 1: Chapter 1 Rebirth

In 78 BC, the Roman Dictator Sulla died, and the Roman Republic entered the Post-Sulla Era.

In 76 BC, the Roman Senate decided to dispatch the twenty-nine-year-old Pompey to lead an army to the Spain Province to suppress Sedulius's rebel army. This was the first time in Roman Republic's military history, after Scipio, that a Roman became a Commander before the age of thirty-nine.

In the same year, the twenty-four-year-old Caesar went to Rhodes Island to study but was kidnapped by pirates on the way. He voluntarily paid a ransom of fifty talents. Once safely ashore, he immediately recruited men, trained an army, and made a surprise attack on the pirates who had landed, successfully capturing them all and reclaiming his money.

Also that year, the thirty-seven-year-old Crassus earned a large amount of money in Rome through loans and real estate, but also tarnished his reputation in the process. Unwilling to see the younger Pompey shine so brightly, he began to make moves, preparing to run for the Legal Officer of the Roman Senate in the following year.

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Xu Tianyu deeply regretted agreeing to a meal invitation from his high school classmates. As a result of drinking quite a bit during the meal, his high school classmate got into a conflict with the guests at the next table. While trying to mediate, he was accidentally pushed and hit the back of his head on the table corner, immediately losing consciousness.

As he lost consciousness, a thought flashed through his mind: Too bad I haven't even played the old game "Total War: Rome 2" that I just bought!

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No one knew how much time had passed, but the noisy sounds awakened his consciousness: "Cross, you hit too hard, Maximus was killed by you!" someone exclaimed.

"Just one punch and he's dead? Serves this traitor right; he betrayed us. I wish I could tear him apart!" came a loud, hate-filled voice.

"It's not entirely Maximus's fault. Batiatus must have heard some rumors ahead of time, which is why he called Maximus to inquire. Facing that wicked wolf, not everyone has the courage to keep a secret, and Maximus could have kept silent after he returned, but he chose to confess to us immediately, thus preventing us from falling prey to the wicked wolf without knowing it. In this regard, he did us a great favor. Cres, you shouldn't have been so impulsive!" came a deep, gentle voice.

"Hmph, this coward ruined our plan and put us all in danger. Are we supposed to thank him?!"

"Spartacus, Cross, you two stop arguing. The situation is critical now, what should we do?!" a clear voice sounded.

"Antonix, don't panic. We originally planned to take action soon. Although Batiatus has found out, he surely doesn't know that Maximus has already told us the truth. We need to act immediately. While that wicked wolf is unprepared, we should gather everyone, defeat the guards here, and escape!" The gentle voice now brimmed with a stirring power.

The harsh voice immediately responded: "You're right, we must act now! We must quickly inform the brothers!"

As soon as the words fell, "Clang! Clang! Clang!..." a series of ear-piercing metallic sounds resounded, followed by a cold voice echoing in Xu Tianyu's ears: "Spartacus, Cross, the master wants to see you two to discuss the upcoming arena match the day after tomorrow!"

"Damn, Attiatus is surely planning to take you two out!" that clear voice said anxiously in a low tone.

"We were just worried about how to open that iron gate, and here they come!" The gentle voice was now filled with joy.

The harsh voice, understanding the plan, spoke in a low tone: "Exactly, I and Spartacus will pretend to follow orders, but once we step beyond that iron gate, we'll act immediately to take out those two lackeys outside!"

"But those two lackeys outside the iron gate are not only well-equipped, but they're not weaklings either, while you two are unarmed—"

"So when Cross and I launch the attack, Antonix, you must immediately lead the brothers from the other rooms to charge out together. Whether we gain freedom depends on how fast you act!"

"I got it, rest assured, Spartacus!"

The gentle voice then shouted loudly: "Got it, Cross and I are coming now!"

As the footsteps faded away, Xu Tianyu was perplexed: Spartacus, Cross... Could it be that they are playing that old American TV series "Spartacus: Blood and Sand"? But these voices seem to be happening right beside me! And they weren't speaking in English; it was a foreign language, yet I could understand it. What is going on?!

He struggled to open his heavy eyelids, but suddenly a flood of information surged into his mind: '...Maximus is a house-born slave of a new Roman knight family, the son of an Illyrian slave and a Thracian slave. From a young age, he showed a gift for languages. Observing his intelligence and wit, his master decided to let him study alongside his own son so that Maximus could manage the estate and business, becoming a capable assistant to his son in the future. Year after year, Maximus excelled in his studies and remained loyal to his young master, fulfilling his master's expectations.

However, when Maximus was thirteen, Sula led his army into Rome, became a Dictator, and started a purge of the Civilian Faction. Unfortunately, his master was on Sula's list of those to be purged, and shortly after, the entire family was slaughtered by mobs. Maximus was sent to the slave market in Capua to be sold and was eventually purchased by Batiatus's Gladiator School.

Always keen on purchasing barbarian war prisoners from slave traders as gladiators, Batiatus had his reasons for buying Maximus. Perhaps due to the 'hybrid' advantage, the not-yet-fully-grown Maximus was tall and robust, seemingly good material for a gladiator; in addition, Maximus, a house-born slave, was obedient and docile, unlike those wild barbarians, making him easier for Batiatus to control; moreover, Maximus was fluent in several barbarian languages, and could read and write, enabling him to collect information for Batiatus when mingling with the barbarian gladiators to prevent any unexpected incidents; after all, these untamed barbarians tended to cause trouble from time to time and were much harder to manage than those Romans who voluntarily became gladiators due to debt.

Batiatus's plans were well thought out, but who would know that after Maximus became a gladiator, he would be inspired by Spartacus, joining his rebel faction. Using his relatively free status, Maximus secretly communicated between the gladiator quarters, informing Spartacus and the other gladiator leaders of external developments to help refine their revolt plan.

However, over two hundred gladiators trying to launch a rebellion together was impossible to keep completely secret, and Batiatus heard some wind about it, so he called Maximus for questioning.

Under his relentless questioning, Maximus's ingrained obedience took effect; he succumbed and confessed to Batiatus the truth about the gladiators planning a riot. To

prevent the gladiators from becoming wary, Batiatus warned Maximus: After returning, he must not inform anyone that Batiatus knew about this, and if he complied, Batiatus would forgive him for his current mistake.

Maximus agreed wholeheartedly, but when he saw Spartacus, he couldn't suppress the guilt and sadness, thinking of how this father-like warm man who had always cared for him could possibly die because of this. Spartacus noticed his shameful and sorrowful expression and, upon repeated questioning, Maximus revealed the truth, and in a rage, Cross violently punched him, causing his head to hit the uneven stone wall and collapse to the ground unconscious...'

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(The protagonist will henceforth be referred to as Maximus.)

## **Chapter 2: Chapter 2 Riot (Part 1)**

I've been reborn? Reborn as this gladiator named Maximus?!... Maximus realized something, but he was unwilling to believe it was true. He preferred to think it was just a dream. However, when he struggled to open his eyes, what appeared before him was a dark and cramped room—no windows, no wooden door, only uneven stone walls, a dusty dirt floor, a shabby wooden bed with a straw mattress on it... The air was filled with a sickening smell of sweat, urine, and feces. What a terrible living environment!

Even worse, his ears were filled with piercing shouts. In his vision, countless grim-faced, bare-chested strong men were clamoring and rushing toward the iron gate...

This is not a dream! ... Maximus subconsciously clenched his fist, but felt a sharp pain in his chest, where Cross had struck him. However, he had no time to attend to this: Spartacus... Cross... Gladiator School... Batiatus... Could it be that I've been reborn into the era of the Spartacus revolt in Ancient Rome? And right now is the crucial moment when Spartacus leads the gladiators in a rebellion at the Gladiator School?!

With these thoughts, Maximus realized he must follow these gladiators and escape, or else he would face the crucifixion punishment.

Maximus used his hands to support himself on the ground and struggled to stand up. His head was still a bit dizzy, and he staggered to the doorway.

Outside the door was a narrow corridor, with a few scattered torches mounted on the stone walls above on both sides. The weak and solitary torchlight cast some brightness into the dim corridor, yet the dancing shadows added to a more sinister and terrifying atmosphere.

On either side of the corridor were many parallel small rooms, similar to dogholes carved into the stone wall, barely enough space for a person to lie down. Thinking that

the original owner used to live in such a terrible environment, Maximus couldn't help but shiver, resolutely deciding to escape from there.

He watched the gladiators running ahead, and stumbled after them. Gradually... his head was no longer dizzy, and his body became agile...

A barred iron gate sealed off the entire corridor ahead, with thick iron bars deeply embedded into the ground and stone wall. Its sturdiness was despair-inducing, but fortunately, the iron gate in the middle was already open. Maximus ducked through the gate and saw three bodies lying at the bottom of the steps outside, trampled into a heap of mud by countless people.

The bloody and horrific scene terrified Maximus, who came from a peaceful era, so much that he didn't dare to look again. Yet, his body didn't respond with disgust or vomiting. Yes, the original Maximus, though a mediocre gladiator, had been there for several years, fought in the arena, killed people, and witnessed bloody scenes before. It was nothing new to him...

Maximus ran up the steps, feeling his breathing invigorate as the air became fresh and the light gentle and bright. Overhead was a sky adorned with dazzling sunset clouds. However, countless gladiators were crowded in front, preventing him from moving further, while a voice kept shouting: "Brothers, give it one last push! Push away those dogs blocking us, and we will be free!..."

In the original owner's memory, after exiting the corridor and ascending the steps, one would reach the training ground—an area large enough to accommodate three hundred gladiators training together. Yet now, they were crammed at the entrance, unable to move forward.

"Brother, what's happening up ahead?" Maximus couldn't help but ask a gladiator in front.

"Batiatus's guards are blocking us—" The gladiator had just turned his head to say this when Maximus saw a black shadow flash by. The gladiator screamed and fell to the ground, with an arrow piercing his neck.

"Watch out for arrows!" Someone shouted hoarsely, causing a commotion among the crowd.

Maximus, frightened to the core, crouched down like the others, cautiously watching the oblique upper direction: On the other side of the training ground, a three-story building towered. On the second-floor balcony stood two guards holding bows and arrows, and on the third-floor balcony, a middle-aged man with a distorted face in a light gray draped robe was waving his fists and shouting loudly. This man was the Lanista of the Gladiator School—Batiatus.

Accompanied by his shouting, the guards on the balcony shot arrows again, felling two more gladiators. Meanwhile, screams erupted from the front line, indicating that the guards blocking the gladiators also wielded their short swords.

The gladiators, despite their overwhelming numbers, were unarmed, whereas the guards were fully armed. With Batiatus's consent, they struck without hesitation, continuously stabbing the gladiators attempting to crash through with their short swords, injuring and knocking them down, preventing them from forming a collective force and breaking through the defense line.

The gladiators' cries of pain rose and fell back and forth, yet they did not frighten their comrades, as their profession was to kill or be killed. Most gladiators were long inured to life and death, and their injuries and deaths only fueled their ferocity.

"Brothers, Batiatus wants to kill us! Let's fight them!"

"Charge, knock them down, I want to bite through these dogs' throats with one gulp!"

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Gladiators roared like beasts, disregarding the enemies' short swords and arrows. Rear gladiators pushed against the backs of those in front, advancing one step at a time. People occasionally fell, but others continuously filled in...

The guards, continuously pushed back, exposed a gap in their shield-formed defense line.

"Hamilcar, quickly take the brothers to the kitchen to get weapons!" A deep and resonant voice drowned out all the noise, presumably Spartacus speaking.

But Maximus, from the original owner's memory, felt puzzled: Were there weapons in the kitchen?

Then he suddenly realized: The kitchen knives, forks, and cooking pots in the kitchen were weapons themselves, and the benches and wooden tables in the adjacent dining room could also be used as weapons.

Hamilcar was a lean, aged-looking gladiator. While waving his arms to signal, he was the first to dash through the gap. An arrow immediately shot toward him.

Though not the foremost gladiator ranking at this Gladiator School, Hamilcar was a seasoned veteran, having battled archers several times in team fights in the arena with rich experience. He kept his eyes on the archer on the balcony while running. At the moment the opponent drew the bowstring, he immediately performed a forward roll to make an arrow miss him, followed by a side roll to avoid another arrow...

Indeed, both archers targeted him. Unfortunately, once Hamilcar charged into the training ground, he had enough space to dodge.

As the archers were reloading, some gladiators followed into the training ground, racing toward the building where Batiatus was situated.

According to the original owner's memory, Maximus knew that the gladiators' kitchen and dining room were on the first floor of that building, though there was no direct pathway to the second and third floors.

Seeing the two archers target the gladiators running toward the dining room, Maximus didn't charge out but kept watching because he knew that breaking the current stalemate depended on those gladiators retrieving weapons.

Soon, Maximus saw Hamilcar and several others appear under the eaves after entering the ground floor kitchen. They moved swiftly, crossing two steps forward, then turning to swing their hands upwards in one fluid motion.

Then, Maximus saw one of the archers on the second-floor balcony clutch his neck and collapse, scaring the other archer to quickly crouch down and hide behind the railing.

Other gladiators also rushed out of the dining room one after another, some holding kitchen knives, some with cooking spatulas, some carrying benches, charging toward the guards still fighting fiercely at the dormitory entrance.

Among these over twenty guards, some were retired veterans, some were former gladiators who had gained freedom. Not only were they responsible for the school's safety, but some of them were also the instructors training these gladiators, possessing rich combat experience. Moreover, with helmets, breastplates, shin guards, long shields, and short swords, they were fully equipped. However, being overwhelmed by the gladiators' counter-encirclement, they were ultimately outnumbered and taken down one by one.

### **Chapter 3: Chapter 3 Riot (Part 2)**

Some of the training instructors fell to their knees, begging for mercy. Unfortunately, this Gladiator School run by Batiatus had long been notorious for its harsh training. Over the years, many gladiators had died on the training grounds. There was no bond of camaraderie between instructors and gladiators—only endless resentment. This was a main reason why they were willing to join Spartacus in rebellion. Thus, without hesitation, they mercilessly stabbed the pleading guards to death, one by one.

"Batiatus has fled!" someone shouted.

Maximus instinctively looked up. Indeed, Batiatus's figure was nowhere to be seen on the balcony of the third-floor building.



"Forget that wicked wolf. Night is falling—we need to escape quickly," Spartacus said in a somber voice. "Antonix, take a few brothers to the kitchen and pack up everything edible."

"Got it."

"Cross, gather some brothers who can fight, and have them put on the armor and weapons from these men."

"Alright."

"Enomai, call a few strong brothers to come with me and break down the main gate," Spartacus continued. "Hamilcar, lead the others to help bandage the wounded comrades. Once the gate is open, bring them along when it's time to leave."

This rebellion had been planned for some time by the gladiators in the school, with Spartacus established as their leader, supported by Cross, Antonix, Hamilcar, and Enomai as key figures. After Spartacus gave his orders, everyone promptly set out to execute their tasks.

Maximus worried that Cross might see him and publicly berate him for betraying everyone—something that could ignite shared anger and turn the crowd against him. To avoid trouble, he spotted a wounded gladiator lying nearby and crouched beside him, pretending to show concern. "Brother, how's your injury?" he asked.

"...Oh, Maximus, help me! My right thigh took a sword thrust, deep and painful—it hurts so much that I can't stand..." the gladiator groaned while crying to Maximus.

His face looked very familiar, and, digging through the original host's memories, Maximus recalled his name—Fesaros. Once a young Illyrian pirate, Fesaros had ended up here. In recent years, Illyrian pirates had run rampant, frequently plundering ships traveling to and from Italy. Rome had to dispatch warships to patrol Italy's waters day and night to eradicate these pirates. Fesaros's pirate ship was captured by Roman vessels, with the lead captain executed on the spot. The remaining crewmembers became slaves, sold to towns across Italy. For slaves like them, Romans usually wouldn't buy them as household servants; instead, they were sent to mines or gladiator arenas.

In truth, Fesaros had a lively and cheerful disposition but had been forced into piracy to survive. When he first arrived at the Gladiator School half a year ago, he couldn't adapt to the grueling training. Luckily, Maximus, who had half Illyrian blood, helped him multiple times, forming a bond of friendship.

Seeing Fesaros's muscular right thigh streaked with fresh blood from the sword wound, Maximus pressed gently around the injury based on the original host's memories.



Fesaros gritted his teeth, suppressing the pain while letting out faint hissing sounds.

"The bleeding isn't too severe, so it probably hasn't cut any major blood vessels. Your foot can still move, meaning the tendons likely weren't severed either. You've been lucky—give it some time to heal, and you'll recover," Maximus said, putting on a look of relief for him. To gladiators, killing was their profession. Apart from honing combat skills, their instructors also taught them some basic anatomy to help them defeat opponents and preserve their own lives.

Fesaros, however, wasn't comforted by Maximus's reassurance. Worried, he asked, "Maximus, I'm injured—I can't run away. Will you all abandon me?"

Maximus hesitated briefly. Deep inside, he had just arrived in this world and felt no emotional attachment to anyone here. Given his currently precarious situation, he could hardly afford to be concerned about others. That said, based on the original host's memories, Fesaros was one of the few gladiators who genuinely respected him.

The reason for this respect was somewhat complicated. Although the original host had lived in the Gladiator School for several years and was considered a veteran there, he was still under twenty years old. While fit and skilled in combat, his mild temperament and lack of ferocity often led him to lose during training against other gladiators. On top of that, Batiatus had a soft spot for him and deliberately avoided scheduling him for high-risk one-on-one gladiatorial matches. As a result, although he got along well with his peers on the surface, deep down, many gladiators held him in contempt.

Even his nickname reflected this sentiment. "Maximus" wasn't his real name; it was given mockingly by the other gladiators. Meaning "the greatest," the name ironically contrasted his unimpressive fighting record. The nickname became his common name over time, replacing his original one since gladiators seldom used their own names, often adopting nicknames given by spectators or chosen by themselves.

Fesaros, newly arrived and treated kindly by the original host—plus being from the same homeland—regarded him differently from others.

Though new to this world and feeling overwhelmingly alone, Maximus instinctively didn't wish to undermine Fesaros's trust in him face-to-face. Quickly, he replied, "Don't worry. Spartacus certainly won't abandon the injured. When the time comes, I'll support you as you walk."

"Maximus, thank you!" Fesaros said emotionally, on the brink of tears.

Guilt twinged in Maximus's heart. He had only said this to soothe him; deep down, if Spartacus chose to abandon the wounded gladiators, he wouldn't oppose the decision. In fact, he'd feel relieved since an injured Fesaros would slow his escape. Feeling flustered, he avoided meeting Fesaros's grateful gaze and covertly surveyed his surroundings.

Cross had already gathered over twenty gladiators. They were stripping the guards' armor and putting it on themselves...

Clearly, Cross's efficiency stemmed from ignoring Spartacus's instructions to carefully select fighters. Instead, he had handed the armor and weapons to the Gaul Gladiators under his command. This school was primarily composed of Gauls and Thracians, with Cross as the leader of the Gaul Gladiators.

The others were busy tending to their wounded comrades. Among the crowd, Maximus spotted someone familiar. His eyes glinted as he leaned toward Fesaros and whispered, "Look, Pequot is over there. Thank heavens he's uninjured."

Fesaros turned to look and couldn't help but call out, "Pequot!"

The gladiator named Pequot had bronzed skin and a stout, muscular build. Hearing Fesaros's call, he strode over without hesitation. Saying nothing, he tore off his linen undershirt and began wrapping Fesaros's wound.

Based on the original host's memory, Pequot was Fesaros's fellow pirate from the same ship and one of the only two Illyrians in the school. Unlike Fesaros, Pequot had been a pirate for many years. Quiet and reserved, he was brutal and fierce during training, matching his grim appearance. Even veteran gladiators avoided provoking him. Though the original host had tried to win him over, Pequot remained indifferent toward him. However, Pequot maintained a close bond with his former comrade, Fesaros.

Some time later, Spartacus, Cross, Antonix, Enomai, and Hamilcar reconvened in the center of the training ground.

"The gate has been smashed open," Spartacus said directly. "Hamilcar, how much food did you find?"

"Just five sacks of barley and one hand-sized piece of smoked meat," Hamilcar replied. "I also had the brothers bring the copper pots and pottery jars from the kitchen."

"With that miser Batiatus, the kitchen wouldn't have had much worth taking," Cross said bitterly.

#### **Chapter 4: Chapter 4 Spartacus**

"As long as it's enough for everyone to have a meal." Spartacus looked at Cross and asked, "Have the brothers all changed into weaponry and armor?"

"All changed." Cross grinned widely, pointing behind him, "Twenty brothers have all changed into infantry gear, plus you and I took down the gate guard at the iron gate, changed into this set, and there's an archer who fell off the balcony... Now we have

twenty-two infantrymen and one archer. Anyone who tries to stop us can be crushed like an ant!"

"Roar!" The fully armed gladiators behind him followed with a roar, causing others in the training ground to look back in astonishment.

Spartacus glanced at these fully armed gladiators and noticed they were all Gauls. He nodded and said calmly, "During our escape, if we encounter any more enemies, we'll have to rely on you."

"Don't worry, I'll lead them to charge ahead," Cross confidently replied.

"How are the brothers' injuries?" Spartacus turned to Antonix.

Antonix replied in a low voice, "Twenty-one dead, eleven seriously injured, thirty-two lightly injured..."

The gladiator leaders simultaneously fell silent: the school had a total of 295 gladiators, all of whom were mobilized in this revolt, resulting in sixty-four casualties, more than one-fifth...

Spartacus quickly gathered his composure and said solemnly, "For the lightly injured, have the brothers take turns carrying them; for those seriously injured and beyond help... let them leave peacefully."

"Got it." Cross responded and went with his subordinates to carry out the order.

Thus, Maximus saw these gladiators come to their grievously injured and unconscious companions, mutter a few words with closed eyes, and then drew their short swords, stabbing directly into their chests.

No one stopped them, nor did anyone object. Since the day they became gladiators, they had been dealing with death and had long become accustomed to it.

But this deeply shocked Maximus and equally startled Fesaros, who was injured beside him.

At this time, Spartacus loudly proclaimed, "Brothers, through bloody battle, we have broken the cage Batiatus set for us! The gate is open now, but when you escape this school, never forget that many of the guards you killed were Roman citizens! That coward Batiatus, who fled in fright, has certainly already pleaded for help from the officials of Capua. The Romans are always cruel to slaves who betray their masters, and they will surely dispatch armies to hunt us down, capture us, and then nail us to the cross to torment us to death!

Never forget the strength of the Romans; all of Italy, the entire Mediterranean, is under their control. Trying to escape alone and hide is not feasible. We must stay tightly united, gathering all our strength to overcome one challenge after another to ultimately attain true freedom!"

As soon as he finished, a gladiator shouted, "Spartacus, rest assured, I will not run away, I will always follow you!"

"That's right, Spartacus, you are the most resourceful, we trust you and will fight alongside you!"

"Spartacus, you are our leader, and under your guidance, we will tear apart any Romans who dare to obstruct us!"

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The gladiators' shouts gradually arose, finally merging into an excited roar: "Spartacus! Spartacus!!..."

Maximus curiously gazed at the Spartacus standing ahead: This real Spartacus bore no resemblance to the actors who portrayed him in movies and TV dramas of previous generations. He was tall, muscular, but not bulky, with sweat-soaked brown curly short hair plastered neatly on his broad forehead, a long oval face, slightly pointed chin, a straight nose, large bright eyes, notably expressive brown pupils, complemented by long thick eyelashes and a reserved smile...

A phrase flashed through Maximus's mind: "A face as gentle as a lamb." This appearance hardly matched his physique, but it was precisely this contradiction that evoked a strong feeling of intimacy, and perhaps, it was also because of this that this undefeated number one gladiator in the arena commanded such trust and following.

Spartacus put on the Roman-style helmet left by the gate guard he had killed. The glow of the twilight cast a hazy halo on it, making it especially dazzling. With firm eyes, he waved forcefully: "Follow me, let's get out of here!" With that, he led the charge towards the gate, with armed gladiators following closely behind, and then the other bare-handed gladiators carrying the wounded companions...

Pequot, without hesitation, carried Fesaros on his back. Maximus beside him said, "Pequot, if you get tired of carrying him, you can let me carry him."

Pequot ignored him.

This gladiator school was surrounded by stone walls over four meters high, with a sturdy oak gate secured by a large iron lock, meant to be heavily fortified. At this moment, the iron lock on the gate was not opened, but the wooden gate had been smashed into a large hole, with the hole neatly cut out with a short sword.

Remembering the original's memories of Enomai and the incredible strength of those Germanic men, Maximus was not surprised.

Through the hole in the gate lay a narrow, winding alley...

Capua was once the capital of the twelve-city alliance of Campania and remains the region's chief city to this day. Gladiator games are immensely popular here, and it is one of the first towns under Roman rule to build gladiator arenas. Some Capua people even proudly claim that "gladiator games originated in Capua," so there are more than ten privately operated gladiator schools here.

The Capua people love watching gladiator games, but they don't want to live alongside these killing monsters, and the constant din of fighting from the gladiator schools is annoying. Therefore, many years ago, the citizens of Capua collectively demanded that all gladiator schools be moved outside the city. But schools with hundreds or thousands of gladiators could not be without daily supervision, so eventually, these schools were required to be built near the city walls, where soldiers patrolling the city could always see.

As the Romans expanded and conquered, Rome became the center of the Mediterranean, and immense wealth and slaves poured into Rome. Numerous foreigners and poor people came to Rome seeking opportunities for survival and development. Capua, not far from Rome, with rich sustenance and a better environment, also became a sought-after destination for them to settle. The inner city of Capua could not accommodate the large influx of outsiders, so they gradually built houses outside the city. Due to the lack of unified planning, combined with the self-indulgence of the new residents, the housing in the outer city of Capua became disordered, with narrow alleys and poor roads, resembling a large maze.

Usually, Spartacus and the others entered the arena in the city directly under the watchful eyes of Batiatus's guards and were brought back to the school immediately after the competition ended. Batiatus never granted them the right to go out alone, which was also because the vast majority of them were criminals or prisoners of war.

The sky had already dimmed, the road was narrow and winding, and after running for a while, the gladiators suddenly stopped, for a wall appeared in front of them - it was a dead-end!

Spartacus couldn't help but feel a bit anxious as he scanned the row of tightly closed wooden doors along the alley, and said harshly, "Break open a door, and grab two people to lead the way!"

"No need for that trouble, I know the way, I'll lead!" someone shouted from the crowd.

Spartacus looked in the direction of the voice, surprised: "Maximus? You're still alive?!"

"I just passed out. Later, I woke up and saw you fighting the guards at the entrance of the training ground, so I joined the fight..." Maximus said as he walked towards Spartacus. The reason he dared to step forward at this moment was that he realized the actions of the original character were too outrageous, and it was hard to imagine what might happen if the gladiators found out. Therefore, he couldn't remain inactive and had to actively earn credit to gain Spartacus's protection while reducing the disfavor among the others.

## **Chapter 5: Chapter 5 Acting as a Guide**

"You traitor, how dare you show your face!" Cross immediately rushed over, grabbed him by the chest, and raised his fist as big as a bowl. His scarred face had eyes like a wolf's, emitting a murderous gleam. He said viciously, "You got so many of our brothers killed, now—"

"Enough, Cross, now is not the time for infighting. We need Maximus' help!" As expected, Spartacus quickly stepped forward to intervene.

"Pah!" Cross spat a thick wad of phlegm on Maximus' face before begrudgingly being pulled away by Spartacus.

Maximus wiped the spit off his face, feeling relieved for the moment: if it wasn't for Spartacus stepping in, he was truly afraid Cross might beat him to death, because in the original owner's memory, this guy, although the second gladiator of the school, in the matches he participated in, his opponents were either dead or severely injured, and even during regular training, he often injured his companions. This guy was a dangerous person who viewed human lives as nothing.

Even though Cross had let go, his sharp gaze remained fixed on Maximus, as if a sharp knife was piercing his heart, making him regret standing out.

"Maximus, do you really know the roads around here?!" Spartacus asked very seriously.

Maximus composed himself and confidently said, "I grew up in Capua, here I can find my way even with my eyes closed! With me leading, we'll be out of here soon, but—"

Maximus paused for a moment, a bit theatrically, and said, "We're currently in the south of the city. There are two avenues leading south from Capua: one is the Appian Way heading southeast toward the Samnium Mountain Area; the other is the Ania Avenue heading south across the whole Campagna Plain. Which one shall we take?"

To the south of Rome, Capua is a rare large city crossed by two Roman roads. It's an important transportation hub, so not only is agriculture developed, but trade is also quite prosperous.



"We should head for the mountains, it's easier for us to hide." Antonix suggested from the side.

"It's almost dark. Going to the mountains at this time isn't safe, and the Samnites are not to be trifled with. We should head south." Although the uprising was sudden and a bit hasty, Spartacus already had a plan in mind, but he didn't intend to reveal it at this moment, so he found another reason.

Everyone agreed it made sense, as the Samnium Mountain Area isn't far to the east of Capua. The Samnite mountain people were poor and fierce, a major source of Octolatus (the term for Roman citizens who voluntarily became gladiators). Although their gladiator school didn't have any, as opponents, they had encountered them often in the arena, and their strength was not to be underestimated. So no one objected further.

Maximus, however, drawing on the original owner's memory, bravely suggested, "If we take Ania Avenue southbound, there's a Flora Temple about seven or eight li from Capua along the avenue. By nightfall, we can rest in the temple." (Flora, an Italian goddess of vegetation and its flourishing).

"We'll see when the time comes." Spartacus said noncommittally.

Maximus turned to walk towards the end of the group. The gladiators were already looking at him a bit differently, showing that Collins' angry scolding had an effect.

Cross followed closely behind Maximus, dark-faced, with a short sword in hand, clearly aiming to monitor him and prevent him from deliberately leading them astray.

Maximus felt a bit apprehensive, but upon seeing Spartacus beside him, he steadied his mind again.

The team set off again, and although they were delayed for a bit, the alley they went through was still empty. The nearby residents had already realized the unusual situation at the gladiator school, but no one dared to organize a team to stop these murderous monsters; instead, they closed their doors and hid away one after another.

Under Maximus' lead, the gladiators quickly exited the maze-like neighborhood and stepped onto Ania Avenue, and many breathed a sigh of relief as the wide and solid road speeded up the group's progress.

While running, Maximus glanced around. Although he had the original owner's memory, experiencing the famous Roman Road firsthand, he couldn't help but be amazed: a smooth and solid paved surface, deep drainage ditches on both sides, trees along the way with an abundance of branches and leaves, soft dirt paths for walking, and even simple benches for resting occasionally seen on the sidewalk... It possessed every



element of modern city roads, and it was built a hundred years ago, maintained with care, still functioning well today, giving a hint of Rome's power.

How could such a strong nation be defeated by just a group of gladiators!... A strong wave of unease suddenly struck Maximus.

The sun had set in the west, the afterglow gradually fading, and nightfall was imminent. Typically, at this time, there would still be some pedestrians along the avenue, but these terrifying gladiators scared people far away, though the carriages on the road couldn't avoid being blocked by the gladiators. A donkey cart carrying flour was stopped, causing the gladiators to cheer, "Finally, we can eat fragrant bread!"

Gladiators need to consume a lot of food to train and compete, but the school needed to make money, so they couldn't eat well. Apart from occasionally eating some meat from animals killed in gladiator matches, their main food was cheap, bland-tasting barley, high in calories but in abundant supply, which gave gladiators the derogatory nickname of "barley men," yet it was still better than the irregular meals of the poor.

Delighted gladiators let the owner of the donkey cart go.

After a while, a large carriage came in the front, and the owner of the carriage, realizing something was wrong, hurriedly turned the horse around.

Enomai and a few brothers sprinted over to stop it, and soon he excitedly shouted, "Spartacus, come quickly, there are lots of weapons on the carriage!"

Spartacus was invigorated and, along with Cross, rushed towards the intercepted carriage.

The carriage was packed with short swords, longswords, long spears, square shields, round shields, helmets, shin guards, and even some fishing nets, but there were no breastplates, as these were all gladiator equipment.

Touching the cold shield, Spartacus excitedly told the gladiators, "Brothers, our actions have been blessed by Ares, he has sent us weapons!"

The gladiators erupted in cheers, and someone even shouted, "With weapons, we fear nothing, let's turn back and take down Batiatus!"

Someone immediately retorted, "Fool, Batiatus has already fled into the city, we can't catch him."

...

Spartacus ignored their quarrels, turned back and said, "Hamilcar, you carefully count how many weapons there are?"

Before Hamilcar could respond, Maximus jumped in saying, "Let me count them."

This was another chance to prove himself. Seeing that Spartacus didn't object, Maximus leaped onto the carriage and began counting earnestly.

Meanwhile, Spartacus walked over to the driver, who quickly begged for mercy, and he asked solemnly, "Tell me, where were these gladiator weapons sent from, and where are they headed?"

"Sent... to the city arena..." the driver stammered in panic, "because the day after tomorrow is Capua's founding day... the administrator wants to host a large gladiator match to celebrate... afraid there aren't enough weapons and equipment... so... so I was ordered to transport some from Napolet..."

Spartacus and Cross exchanged glances. Actually, the gladiator school they were in had also received an invitation from the city lord's office, reportedly with quite a generous reward. Without this uprising, quite a few brothers might have fallen in the arena to satisfy the bloodthirsty desires of Capua's audience.