

Rome Must Perish

#Chapter 14 Building the Team Initially - Read Rome Must Perish Chapter 14 Building the Team Initially

Chapter 14: Chapter 14 Building the Team Initially

Hamilcar led Maximus into the farmstead; their task, assigned by Spartacus, was to take an inventory of the estate's supplies.

The farmstead was quite large, though compared to the one they had stayed at last night, it had fewer buildings. There was no manure pile nearby, no granary or pens for pigs, sheep, or even horses, thus lacking the usual odors.

The center of the courtyard was a flat stone surface, not for threshing grain but for drying grapes. In the middle was a pool, constructed for collecting rainwater. On one side of the courtyard were two winemaking rooms filled with presses and various sizes of wooden barrels. On the other side were several wine cellars, sealed rooms that stored massive wine jars in some areas and wooden barrels in others... This farmstead only had one relatively small warehouse that contained flour, barley, and a modest amount of smoked meat. Clearly, this was a farm dedicated to winemaking.

Finally, the two entered the estate's sole residential building. Its ground floor housed quarters for the slaves, cramped and crowded. The upper floor was for overseers and guards—spacious and comfortable.

In the largest room, Maximus noticed a piece of papyrus placed on the wooden table, next to a torn envelope.

He walked over and casually picked it up. The Latin written on it was something he could understand.

"What does it say?" Hamilcar, illiterate, asked curiously.

After reading it, Maximus carefully pondered and then spoke in a deep voice: "That man wasn't lying. This farmstead indeed belongs to a Roman Elder. He wrote this letter to inform the overseer here that wine prices in Rome have risen, and he demanded the prompt shipment of twenty barrels of wine to Rome. Here's his signature—"

Maximus read aloud, word by word: "Marcus Porcius Cato."

Hamilcar asked casually, "Who is this person?"

"I don't know much about him myself, though I vaguely recall my former master mentioning his name. This Cato family is quite influential in Rome!" Maximus said solemnly. In truth, he knew nothing about the sender of the letter but was familiar with the name of the Porcian family. From his knowledge of historical records in his previous life, two individuals from this family had left a lasting impression on him: once common Roman citizens, the family rose to prominence during Old Cato's campaigns against Hannibal. Known for his infamous declarations in the Senate that 'Carthage must be destroyed,' Old Cato eventually led Rome to annihilate Carthage. Another figure, Little Cato, was steadfast in his opposition to Caesar... This family seemed to possess a certain indomitable quality—once they set their sights on a goal, not even the strength of nine oxen could pull them away.

"We must report this to Spartacus!" Hamilcar's expression turned grave as he turned to leave the room.

Maximus moved to follow, but his peripheral vision caught sight of a stack of papyrus resting on the bed. He immediately walked over and picked it up.

"What's this?" Hamilcar paused to ask.

Maximus scanned the contents of the first page and replied, "It seems to be a guide for growing crops and raising livestock."

"Oh." Hamilcar dismissed it casually and left the room.

Maximus, however, diligently searched the entire bed, gathered scattered pages, stacked them neatly, and carefully placed them into his pocket before exiting the room.

After the gladiators eliminated the resistance, they gathered the farmstead's slaves. Spartacus invited them to join their ranks but also generously proclaimed: anyone unwilling to join could leave freely without repercussions.

As a result, nearly thirty slaves chose to stay.

As everyone sprawled across the courtyard to rest, Spartacus, Cross, and several other leaders convened in the room where they had earlier discovered the letters to discuss plans.

After hearing Hamilcar and Maximus' report, Spartacus, with a solemn expression, addressed the group: "Brothers, while we now have a temporary respite and a growing force from the slaves joining us, the Romans will soon learn that we've seized their farmstead and taken their slaves. They will quickly dispatch troops against us. Do we stand and fight here, or rest for a few days and then continue fleeing south?"

"Of course, fight the Romans here!" Cross declared loudly without hesitation. "We've only been here half a day, and nearly two hundred have joined us! This area is full of

slaves—if we kill the Roman overseers on these estates and invite the slaves to join us, our numbers will soon reach thousands! Besides, these farmsteads are stocked with ample food supplies, so we won't face starvation. If we abandon such an advantageous position and flee south instead, that would be a foolish choice!"

"Cross is right. Since we've resolved to resist Rome, battling the Roman Army is inevitable. The earlier we win, the quicker we establish our reputation and draw more people to our side. Only then will we no longer fear Rome!" Antonix, usually cautious, now spoke with sparks of determination in his eyes.

"Fight Rome? We Germanics never shy away from battle!" Enomai stated firmly.

Spartacus glanced at Hamilcar.

Hamilcar nodded.

"Good! Since everyone agrees, we will fight the Romans here!" Spartacus passionately announced, scanning the room. "However, the Roman Army is far superior to the forces in Capua—highly organized and disciplined. I've served as an auxiliary soldier in Little Asia and am well aware of their capabilities. If we want to fight Rome effectively, we can no longer fight in chaos. We must structure and train our brothers to maximize our strength. I have a proposal.

"Our forces now exceed 400 men. Cross, Antonix, Enomai, and I will each lead a hundred. Each unit will consist of half old comrades and half newly joined slaves, so the experienced brothers can guide the newcomers to avoid poor performance. Additionally, every ten men will elect a small squad leader, ensuring order in battle and minimizing confusion. What do you all think?"

"Spartacus' suggestion is correct. This way, our battles will be far more organized." Antonix quickly expressed his support.

"I'm on board." Enomai agreed without hesitation.

Only Cross hesitated.

Spartacus noticed his concerns and persuaded him: "Cross, there are only so many old brothers, but the new recruits will keep growing. Eventually, they'll take up ranks as Centurions or even Great Captains, commanding troops in battles against Rome. If you overly protect them now and prevent them from gaining experience, they may one day accuse you of having held them back."

Cross felt a jolt of realization: among the gladiators, more than a hundred were Gauls, and he always considered himself their leader, reluctant to let others interfere. Yet Spartacus made an indisputable point—these proud individuals would inevitably resent

it if less capable comrades were elevated to leadership positions while they remained ordinary soldiers under command...

Reflecting on this, Cross finally nodded. "I have no objections."

Spartacus smiled. "Great! Let's proceed with that plan. Cross, you'll choose your hundred first when the time comes."

Cross showed no hesitation and nodded in agreement.

Spartacus continued, "We also need to form a cavalry unit to scout around, especially monitoring any Roman Army movements. What do you think?"

"I agree."

"How many men should be in this cavalry unit?"

"Let's start with five for now."

"But we currently need all existing horses for pulling carts; we don't have spares," Hamilcar pointed out.

"With all the farmsteads in this area, there's no shortage of horses. If we seize additional horses, they'll be prioritized for the cavalry," Spartacus suggested.

Everyone agreed.

Chapter 15: After the modification: Chapter 15 Maximus's New Position

"As for the captain of the cavalry..." Spartacus thought for a moment and looked at Antonix: "The gladiator who first noticed the Capua army's movement and rushed back to inform us when you went scouting was called..."

"Oh... Omacle." Antonix interjected, "He's quite clever and a good rider."

"I suggest he lead the cavalry," said Spartacus.

Cross hesitated for a moment. Although Omacle was a Gaul, he was one of the few who didn't quite listen to him. But not wanting to appear envious or narrow-minded, he said reluctantly, "I... have no objections."

Spartacus continued, "We now have quite a few things, and we will gain more spoils in the future. To prevent everyone from fighting over them and creating chaos, we need to manage these spoils well. Also, we have more and more people now. Ensuring everyone is well-fed is not easy. We need to form a supply team to manage resources and provide enough food for everyone. I suggest appointing Hamilcar as the supply

team captain, with Maximus assisting, temporarily managing twenty people. What does everyone think?"

Everyone agreed to this. The gladiators were passionate about fighting and killing, and they knew nothing about logistics and supply. They were eager for someone to take on these complex tasks. So Cross just glanced at Maximus without further insult and said seriously, "Spartacus, our biggest problem now is the lack of weapons and armor. Hamilcar just mentioned that after occupying this manor, apart from getting ten sets of City Guard equipment from the guards we killed, we haven't found any other weapons. At least half of the joined slaves have no weapons. Are we to let them fight the Romans barehanded?"

Spartacus was about to speak when Maximus coughed, "Can I say a few words?"

"If you have a solution, speak out," Spartacus, interested, watched Maximus. This young man's understanding of Italy was something other gladiators did not have, and this was why he was tolerant and valued him. Of course, his half-Thracian blood also played a part.

"I don't have a solution, I just want to tell everyone—" Maximus combined his knowledge from his past life about Ancient Rome with the protagonist's personal experiences and said seriously, "Decades ago, all City State citizens in Italy with some means had one or two sets of weapons at home, always ready to respond to their City State's call, to fight alongside the Roman army. But since Rome began recruiting unemployed people with money and directly providing weapons to form armies, these Italians no longer needed to prepare weapons themselves. Therefore, there are probably no weapons in the homes and farms of the people in the Campagna region, only in towns where City Guards are formed as per Rome's requirements, they have armories providing weapons for City Guards."

"You mean... we should attack the towns to seize their armories..." Antonix frowned.

"No, I'm only telling you about the weapon distribution in the Campagna region, to give you an idea," Maximus explained quickly.

"The Campagnians are not good at fighting, but neither are we good at sieging. To avoid heavy casualties, we won't consider sieging for now," Spartacus pondered. "We can only try to collect more weapons after attacking these farms. Slaves without weapons can use sharpened sticks and wooden swords, like we did in training before, those can also kill people."

Everyone nodded and resonated with this.

"However, Maximus, what you said reminded me that City State citizens throughout Italy have not equipped themselves with weapons for decades, so they likely haven't trained for combat either. They surely don't have the capability to fight us. As long as we can

defeat the Roman army, we won't have anything to worry about!" Spartacus said with great enthusiasm.

Everyone was infected by his passion and was very excited.

Cross shouted, "No wonder those Capua People fight like women, turns out that's the reason. The Romans are hateful, but they did well in this regard."

Everyone laughed.

Maximus also laughed along, but he thought of the historical end of Spartacus and others.

Spartacus said with a smile, "Today we have found a place to settle and have so many new brothers joining us, we should celebrate! Hamilcar, Maximus, your first task as the supply team is to prepare us a lavish dinner and bring up dozens of bottles of good wine from the cellar for everyone to enjoy!"

"I agree wholeheartedly!" everyone shouted excitedly.

Maximus was equally delighted because he had earned Spartacus and the others' recognition through his efforts and gained some authority. Even though he was only assisting Hamilcar in the supply team, it was a significant step forward.

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Gaius Claudius Grabo, from the illustrious Claudius family in Rome, was the youngest of the eight Legal Officers in the Roman Senate. Although he had only been a Legal Officer for a short time, he was not lacking in war experience. In his youth, he had followed the Roman Army to Little Asia to fight against the King of Pontus and later marched with Sula into Rome. While he was not yet entrusted by Sula like Lucullus and Pompey, he was nonetheless valued, ensuring a relatively smooth career in Roman politics over the years.

As a Legal Officer, he wished to advance further—to become a Governor. However, there were many competitors, and he lacked notable battle achievements or strong support, and even receiving a nomination seemed difficult, leaving him at a loss. But in recent days, he discovered an opportunity.

A group of low-status gladiators caused an upheaval at the Capua Gladiator School and then escaped to the Vesuvius Volcano Region. They seized the highlands, raided farms, killed locals, and rallied slaves, growing ever larger and disrupting the entire Vesuvius Region's peace, even threatening nearby towns and the safety of the Roman Road. More importantly, they harmed the interests of Roman Elders and Nobles in the area. Consequently, recently Elders had proposed dispatching troops to eliminate these rebels, quickly passing the resolution.

Although the news suggested that these bandits had grown to several thousand, the Elders only permitted deploying half a legion, indicating that they did not take these bandits seriously. Nonetheless, if he could swiftly defeat them and restore peace to the Vesuvius Region, it would undoubtedly earn him some goodwill from most Elders and recognition of his abilities.

Seeing this, Grabo actively campaigned to lead the troops.

According to regulations, a Legal Officer had command authority, and other Legal Officers were not inclined to garner the minor achievement of quelling a small group of rebels, so Grabo easily took on this task. However, there was no existing army in Rome, so he had to first issue a recruitment notice on the square. The news quickly spread throughout the city, and a large number of unemployed poor flocked to the War God Square.

For his first time as a commander, Grabo was cautious. Based on the information he had collected, although most in the rebel group were a motley crew of slaves, the leading group were gladiators. While the gladiators were not adept at military strategy, their personal combat skills were formidable. When the Germanic Cimbri invaded, the Roman Army suffered consecutive defeats, prompting the Senate to urgently appoint Marius. Marius considered the recruits too inexperienced to fend off the ferocious barbarians and learned from his colleague Rutitius Rufus to train some gladiators' methods on his soldiers. The process was extremely rigorous, with soldiers continuously getting injured, but after a few months, the new recruits greatly improved their personal combat abilities, laying a solid foundation for eventually defeating the Cimbri.

Chapter 16: Chapter 16 The Active Maximus

It was precisely considering these factors that Gaius Claudius Gracchus instructed the recruitment officers to try their best to enlist soldiers with combat experience.

Gracchus had a good plan, but the problem was that years ago Marius' subordinate Quintus Seditius had stirred up rebellion in Iberia, repeatedly achieving victories. Later, he joined forces with the remnant army of the Civilian Faction's former governor Rebid, significantly increasing their military strength. In order to suppress the rebellion, Rome even violated centuries-old political tradition by allowing Pompey, who was only 30 years old, neither a legal officer nor a governor, to lead troops in the expedition. Furthermore, Pompey was granted reinforcements twice. As a result, the pool of experienced and excellent soldiers in Rome had long been depleted.

Gracchus had no choice but to lower his standards and recruit some veterans. These veterans had been part of Sula's army, following him on the march into Rome years ago. After Sula became dictator, he kept his promises, vigorously building colonial towns in Italy (such as Florence), distributing land to his soldiers, and settling them well. However, these soldiers, having spent years fighting wars, had no idea how to farm

once their short swords were replaced by hoes. Year after year, many faced bankruptcy from failing to operate their farms, falling into poverty and having to flock back to Rome to make a living. Now, it had been ten years since they marched on Rome; the remaining veterans who were not recruited by Pompey were all over forty years old.

Gracchus did not look down upon them; instead, he appointed these veterans as centurions and captains to help manage the newly recruited soldiers.

In just a few days, the recruitment was completed, and then the army was assembled within a few more days. Without training, Gracchus led the army directly into action.

Rome was approximately 400 miles away from Mount Vesuvius. Even with the Ladina and Ania Avenue routes, a land journey would take four to five days. Traveling by sea would undoubtedly save time, but Gracchus opted for land in order to train the new recruits through marching and camping during the journey.

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"My name is Pro, I come from Egypt, and I lived on the banks of the Nile River. I used to own my land—all very fertile soil! At the end of the flood season, I would build mud dikes to trap the remaining water in the fields and then begin planting. During harvest, the fields were filled with heavy bundles of wheat...

But then, war broke out in Egypt. The village chief, who had long coveted my family's land, accused me of colluding with the rebel army. Without investigating the truth, the City Lord imprisoned my entire family and later sold us to Roman slave traders. We were confined in a crowded, furnace-hot shiphold on our way to Italy... My wife... my children... they fell sick and died..."

Standing in the middle of the courtyard, wearing torn clothing and looking as thin as a skeleton, the man spoke with tears streaming down his face. Around him sat many others, all with heavy expressions, listening intently and empathizing. Some even shed tears.

At that moment, Maximus, sitting on the ground in the front row, stood up, his voice full of emotion as he shouted, "Pro is just like us—all victims of oppression by those wealthy and powerful men. We've lost our homes, lost our families, and in the end, we're forced to work our lives away under their whips. Brothers, is that fair?!"

"Unfair!!!" the surrounding people shouted in unison.

"Yes, it's absolutely unfair." Maximus's expression turned serious. After a moment of silence, he raised his voice again: "Fortunately, he has now joined us—a team of brothers, all of whom have suffered and endured like he did. Here, there is no oppression, no abuse, only mutual care and support. We are bound together like blood

brothers, united to resist the Romans, overthrow the rich, and claim the freedom and happiness we desire. Brothers, am I right?!"

"Right!!!"

"Welcome to our group, Pro, our brother!" Maximus said sincerely, giving him a tight hug before leading him to the crowd. Everyone came forward to embrace him warmly.

At this moment, Pro was still teary-eyed but deeply moved.

The courtyard buzzed with noise and excitement for a while before gradually settling down again.

Maximus turned his eyes toward another slave who had recently joined the Supply Team. The man's face was aged, his estimated age over fifty. So far, most of those who joined the rebellion were young slaves; older ones like him were uncommon. Maximus was naturally curious and said aloud, "Let's invite the next new brother to share his story."

The elderly man stepped into the center of the courtyard. Compared to Pro's initial nervousness, he seemed much calmer. "I'm Vorenius, a Samnite. I became a slave when I was very young. My master, Titus Longus, was a Roman knight. I grew up accompanying him, and he treated me well, like family. Later, he even spent money to grant me freedom and sent me here to manage his farm..."

Upon hearing this, most of the slaves looked displeased. They came from various farms in the Vesuvius region and had suffered much hardship primarily due to the overseers and farm managers.

"...I managed the farm very well, and my master was pleased, preparing to apply for Roman citizenship for me... But then Sula—that damned Sula!" The old man abruptly raised his voice, his face twisted with anger. "He led his army into Rome, slaughtering many Civilian Faction members. Someone falsely accused my master of conspiring with Rebid. In truth, they just wanted to seize my master's farms in Vesuvius. That despicable tyrant didn't even bother investigating, immediately executing my master. I was falsely accused of frequently acting as a messenger for my master, delivering information to the Civilian Faction, and was stripped of my free status, made a slave again! My family... my family was sold off to different places. I don't know if they are alive or dead... Ten years! These ten years, I've cursed Sula and the Roman Senate every day and night! I've constantly dreamed of revenge!"

Initially, I wanted to join your rebellion, but the guards on the farm watched us tightly. In my old age, I didn't dare to act rashly until today when you stormed the farm where I worked. I was the first to respond to Spartacus's call to arms. I swear to Jupiter, I might not have the ability to fight Romans, but I'm willing to do anything in my power to help this group defeat them!"

At this point, the attitude among the slaves shifted. Hearing Maximus shout, "Good!" they all clapped enthusiastically (clapping and cheering, a habit they learned from Maximus), expressing their goodwill toward Vorenus.

"That concludes the self-introductions of our new brothers in the Supply Team today. Starting tomorrow, you will work alongside everyone else to get familiar, and then our team leader, Hamilcar, will assign specific tasks to you. Understood?" Maximus asked warmly.

Vorenus, Pro, and the others nodded.

"Reyus."

"Present!" a thin man in his forties responded.

"The arrangements for their accommodations are up to you."

"Understood."

Maximus looked around the courtyard, which was now packed full, clearly having grown significantly in numbers, presumably with people sneaking in from other teams. This delighted him, and he exclaimed loudly, "Brothers, what should we do next?"

"Story time!!" the slaves shouted enthusiastically.

"That's not right. Before story time, we need to study first!" Maximus said seriously. "Yesterday, we learned addition and subtraction within the number ten. Today, before learning anything new, let's do a review. Akegu, Casius, you two go bring the blackboard."

"Yes." Two young slaves immediately carried a wooden board to the center of the square.

One side of the wooden board was coated with black paint. Maximus picked up a piece of chalkstone and announced, "Here's an example: there are five bags of wheat in the courtyard, and we've brought in four more bags from an outside farm. How many bags of wheat are there in total now?" While speaking, he wrote "5+4" on the blackboard and asked, "Who can solve this math problem?"

Chapter 17: Chapter 17: Supply Team Captain

"Me!" two young slave boys immediately shouted excitedly.

"You two have answered the most questions in the past, so let's give this opportunity to others today," Maximus said, looking around.

"Quite a few people want to answer the questions!" Spartacus, watching from outside the courtyard gate, whispered in surprise.

"That's because Maximus set a rule: as long as you study seriously and can correctly answer his questions, you get extra meat or an extra cup of wine for the next day's dinner, so these guys are quite diligent in learning what Maximus teaches," Hamilcar quietly explained beside him.

"Your Supply Team shouldn't use your position to give yourselves extra meals," Spartacus reminded with a mock sternness.

"We have no choice," Hamilcar immediately lamented. "The supplies we're getting are increasing, and the people you assigned to us are okay for work, but most are illiterate and don't know arithmetic. Maximus and I have to check the supplies late into the night every day. Maximus said to me, 'Our team isn't that big yet, and we're already this busy. When we have thousands of people in the future, we might work ourselves to death...' So he suggested using our spare time in the evening to teach everyone arithmetic and literacy. That way, when they learn it, we won't be so busy.'

I agreed with his idea, but implementing it has not been easy. Many people are unwilling to exert effort to learn, so Maximus came up with the idea of using food as an incentive. He even added storytelling, and devised simple symbols to represent numbers. So the brothers are eager to gather around the fire and study seriously after dinner. You see, they've even attracted brothers from other teams..."

"Why have the new brothers share their experiences in public?" Spartacus asked curiously.

"As you know, these slaves joining our team come from all over: Little Asia, Northern Greece, Iberia, Greece, Egypt, Nubia, Gaul, Germanic lands, Italy, Illyria..." Hamilcar counted them on his fingers: "Different customs, personalities, languages—it's unavoidable that conflicts will arise when they're all together. Here, with fewer people, it's manageable, but I've heard there are frequent fights in other teams, which must be a headache for you and Cross?"

Spartacus nodded, signaling Hamilcar to continue.

"Maximus found a way to solve this issue! He told me, 'Our brothers, though from different backgrounds, are all lowly slaves oppressed by wealthy nobles and Romans. They have all endured tragedies. If they share their pasts publicly, it'll easily resonate with everyone, fostering mutual acceptance and making them close comrades in arms...' I followed his suggestion and had him start implementing this method. It's been very effective so far! You've seen it too—our Supply Team is the most united, and there haven't been any fights or brawls.

"...This method seems good—it can be promoted in other teams. Once you take over military affairs, you can handle this matter," Spartacus said thoughtfully. "Regarding the person to replace you as the Supply Team Captain..."

Hamilcar said anxiously, "Spartacus, I've brought you to observe secretly for so long—are you still not reassured? Maximus, though young, is capable, knowledgeable, and eager to learn. After being with me for so many days, he not only learned how to manage the Supply Team and meet the team's needs, but also made many improvements. These past few days, I've been able to help you with military affairs because Maximus has been handling everything in the Supply Team alone. To be honest, right now, Maximus's influence in the Supply Team is higher than mine. Everyone is willing to listen to him, so if you assign someone else to be the captain, it might cause trouble!"

Listening to Hamilcar's reminder, Spartacus looked towards the center of the courtyard: Maximus was busily writing and drawing with chalk on a wooden board while explaining loudly. The slaves around him were watching intently, listening carefully...

Hamilcar, seeing Spartacus silent, couldn't help but add, "Spartacus, could you still be uneasy about the past incident where Maximus was forced to inform on others?"

Spartacus first shook his head, then nodded, "Maximus's behavior during this period has been enough to earn everyone's trust! However... the informing incident still bothers Cross deeply, and some of the Gladiators have opinions about him, including Enomai."

"So what? As long as you and I support him in the meeting, and Antonix also supports him, even if Cross and Enomai oppose, the minority will yield to the majority, and Maximus will become the new captain of the Supply Team."

Spartacus was about to speak when suddenly there was a unified shout from the courtyard: "Maximus, tell a story! Tell a story!! Tell a story!!!..."

"Okay! Okay!" Maximus smiled, pressing his hands downward to signal for everyone to quiet down, and the shouting immediately stopped: "You've all been very diligent in your studies tonight, so how about I continue telling the story of Troy?"

"Yes!!!"

Spartacus watched the joyous scene in the courtyard and finally made up his mind, saying to Hamilcar: "Let's do as you suggested. Tomorrow, we'll discuss letting Maximus take over as the Supply Team Captain, and you come manage the military affairs. Although we have more people now, most are untrained. You must quickly focus on military training, or else we may have trouble when facing the Roman Army!"

"Alright, I'll get to it as soon as possible," Hamilcar replied solemnly, fully aware of the urgency of the matter.

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"Please come in, Maximus, we're all waiting for you." Hearing Spartacus's words, Maximus entered the room.

Spartacus said directly, "After our discussion, we unanimously decided to appoint you as the captain of the Supply Team."

Hearing this, Maximus felt a surge of joy in his heart: all his efforts over the past month had not been in vain!

Maximus scanned the room: Spartacus looked at him expectantly, Antonix was full of enthusiasm, Cross appeared indifferent, Enomai's brow was slightly furrowed...

Finally, his gaze fell on Hamilcar, the Gladiator he was closest to, who was smiling at him...

He quickly suppressed his excitement, feigning concern as he asked, "What about Hamilcar?"

"He will manage military affairs and assist us in organizing the ever-growing team," Spartacus said, looking at him seriously, "So, do you have confidence in managing the Supply Team by yourself?"

"Of course, no problem!" Maximus replied confidently and loudly, knowing he couldn't show weakness at this moment.

"Hmph, let's see if that's true after some time passes," Cross interjected coldly.

Maximus pretended not to hear Cross's sarcastic remark.

"Food and other supplies are critical to us, so from now on, when we discuss matters concerning the whole team, you must participate, providing us with updates on the supply reserves. You can also offer suggestions, and we'll discuss them together, understand?"

"Understood!" Maximus couldn't contain his joy any longer, smiling broadly: he had now become one of the leaders of this rebel army! Although he managed the fewest people, he was still one of the Six Giants of the rebel army!

During this period, under the proposals of Spartacus and Hamilcar, a Military Commander Conference was established to manage the growing team and handle various complex matters. The Military Commander Conference was headed by Spartacus, Cross, Hamilcar, Enomai, and Antonix, the original leaders of the Gladiator revolt. Additionally, when vital matters concerning the entire army arose, a Soldier Conference had to be held for decision-making.

Chapter 18: Chapter 17 Military Commander Conference

When the vast majority of gladiators were still indulging in daily killing, looting, and feasting, Maximus had already keenly realized that the Military Commander Conference had become the highest authority in the entire force. He began to find ways to become a part of it as soon as possible, thereby gaining greater influence over the rebel army. Now that he had finally achieved his goal, how could he not be delighted.

"Don't be too happy! Although you can participate in the Military Commander Conference, you are only a participant, allowed to make suggestions but without decision-making power!" Cross said coldly.

Cross's words were like a cold shower for Maximus, whose face stiffened slightly, then he turned to look at Hamilcar.

Hamilcar nodded.

"Sit down, we still have matters to discuss." Spartacus urged without further explanation.

Maximus let out a breath, exhaling his frustration: Just being present is good enough for now, at least I've made it in. I'll work on becoming an official member later.

Maximus composed himself and found an empty wooden stool to sit on.

"Everyone has just agreed to start training the troops, but we still need to come up with a plan on how to conduct the training." Spartacus looked at the others in the room and asked, "What suggestions do you have?"

"Training the troops is simple." Enomai replied, "After dinner each day, while the sun is still up, let the gladiator brothers in each unit act as instructors and train the other brothers using the school's training methods. I believe within two to three months, the combat abilities of the new recruits will greatly improve."

"The school's training methods are too harsh, and doing so may cause dissatisfaction among the new recruits. Recently, fights and brawls within the team have been troublesome enough. If it leads to conflicts and even armed struggles, then..." Antonix said worryingly.

"Let the brothers lower the requirements; they don't have to be as strict as the school. Moreover, once Spartacus's mentioned method is implemented, everyone will certainly become more harmonious, so you don't have to worry about it." Cross was referring to Maximus's "grievance movement" initiated in the supply team. Out of some psychological reason, he only briefly mentioned it and quickly shifted the topic: "But the main problem is that even if we lower the requirements, training will be quite exhausting."

The brothers are already quite fatigued from their daytime activities, and if they have to train at night, they may not be able to keep up."

"Lately, our forces have been constantly expanding, and the resources we've obtained have been increasing. We've basically taken over the nearby farms..." Spartacus said seriously, "I think we no longer need to rush to send all the teams down the mountain every day. We can let different units take turns attacking those farther farms, while the ones left at the base can train. This way, we have enough time to organize the troops. Some of our centurion brothers don't even know how many men they have under them, let alone getting familiar with them, calling them by name, and leading them to fight against the Romans. This won't work; we need to make changes quickly!"

The others in the room sensed Spartacus's urgency. As leaders, they deeply felt it as well, and they all expressed their agreement.

Then, Hamilcar made his suggestion: "I believe that focusing only on training the brothers' personal combat abilities is somewhat inappropriate. In a battle involving thousands of soldiers, the side with better organization and discipline often wins, even against a courageous but chaotic force. Therefore, in addition to personal training, we also need to conduct collective drills for all teams, teaching them how to assemble, march, form ranks, change formations, follow orders for combat, or retreat in time."

"I agree." Spartacus was the first to respond, as this was something he had discussed with Hamilcar.

"I agree too." Antonix followed quickly.

Cross did not respond immediately, but asked, "Hamilcar, what kind of collective drills do you plan to conduct?"

"Train the brothers using Roman tactics and formations. I was once with Spartacus in the Roman Army and have some understanding of it," Hamilcar answered.

"Why fight using Roman methods?!" Enomai said with some dissatisfaction, "We might as well practice our Germanic wedge-shaped charge tactics. Once mastered, we can definitely defeat the Romans with ease!"

"The Romans are neither very strong nor tall, but they can defeat many races and now dominate the Mediterranean, mainly relying on their set of tactics." Spartacus patiently explained, "Enomai, I've heard you speak of your Germanic tactics before, and they are indeed excellent. However, most of our brothers in the team are not as strong and tall as we gladiators, nor do they have rich combat experience. They have been abused, their bodies are weak, and they lack the strength to break through the Romans' dense defenses and shield formations. Therefore, Roman tactics are suitable for them. Think about it: when the brothers have mastered Roman tactics and possess courage and hatred far exceeding that of the Romans, can the Roman Army still defeat us!"

Enomai scratched his head and fell silent.

Cross thought for a moment and said, "Training both the brothers' personal combat abilities and conducting collective drills will result in significant physical exertion throughout the day. Can the brothers endure it?"

"I've considered your concern, and we can provide them with an additional meal at noon. If the brothers are well-fed, they naturally have the strength to continue training," Hamilcar said, looking at Maximus, "How much food do we currently have in reserve?"

"We have 600 tons of wheat, 200 tons of barley, 2000 lbs of smoked pork, 1500 lbs of smoked fish, 240 sheep, and 23 cattle..." Maximus responded quickly without needing to think, "If we calculate based on 5000 men, it's enough to last us six months. If we add an extra meal at noon to ensure that the brothers are well-fed and have the strength to continue training, it would last us more than three months. Moreover, we will continue to capture new farms and acquire more food, so there's no need to worry about running out."

Looking at everyone, Maximus confidently suggested, "We can even increase the amount of meat in the lunch and provide watered-down wine. This way, the brothers, being well-fed and satisfied, will be more willing to train."

"Hmm, that's a good idea. Since you're now the Supply Team Captain, you'll be responsible for this," Hamilcar said.

"Alright." Maximus nodded quickly to show his respect for the elder leader.

No one else opposed, and the matter of military training was settled.

"We've robbed all the nearby farms. Next, we should discuss which direction to attack," Cross reminded.

"Don't go to the south for now; it's close to the coast with several towns. Although they may not dare to attack us from the towns, they will make us cautious when attacking farms and transporting supplies. As for the east, it's a long journey and requires detouring around Vesuvius. Let's head north first. Once our strength increases, we can consider other options," Spartacus had already thought over.

Though Cross and Enomai often boast to their subordinates about easily defeating any invader, deep down, they still feared the Roman Army. That's why they initially agreed to establish the base on the mountainside. Now, with the Roman Army potentially coming at any time, they were even more reluctant to lead the army far from the main force, near hostile towns, and thus naturally had no objection to Spartacus's suggestion.

Enomai added, "If we attack the east, we can have Omacle monitor Ania Avenue. If any carts carrying weapons pass by, we can intercept them and distribute them among the brothers. We have too few existing weapons!"

Chapter 19: Chapter 18 The Shameless Maximus

Although Enomai's ideas were somewhat naive, given the chaos caused by the uprising forces in the northern Vesuvius area, the neighboring Ania Avenue had become desolate. Encountering good fortunes like before was nearly impossible. Nevertheless, the issue he raised was indeed the most concerning for everyone: it had been a month since they fled Capua, and their ranks had swollen to nearly 5,000 people, yet those equipped with rudimentary weapons numbered fewer than 500 (namely, wielding wooden shields, short swords, or long spears).

During this time, everyone had tried numerous methods, but the weapon shortage dilemma remained unchanged.

After a brief silence, Spartacus said gravely, "Enomai's suggestion is still good; we can let Okmar send his men to try. However, our priority should be to start intensively training our brothers tomorrow to improve their combat skills as quickly as possible. That way, when the Roman Army arrives, we will be able to defeat them and seize their weapons and equipment. If they don't come soon, we shouldn't foolishly wait for Rome to gather a massive force to encircle us. We must strike first by attacking smaller towns like Pompey to seize their armories and equip our brothers. Only then will we stand a chance against the Roman Army."

Both defeating the Roman Army and capturing cities were formidable challenges, but everyone recognized that there was no alternative for the uprising forces. In the end, they all expressed their agreement.

After the meeting concluded, Hamilcar convened all Supply Team personnel in the courtyard and announced: Maximus would be their new captain!

Cheers immediately erupted all around, accompanied by vigorous applause from some.

Hamilcar turned to Maximus and said, "We made the right decision; it seems everyone wanted you to be this captain."

"That's only because of your full support, teacher, and how selflessly you've taught me so much during this time!" Maximus said sincerely. Ever since he began assisting Hamilcar and frequently seeking his guidance, he started addressing Hamilcar as "teacher." At first, Hamilcar found it uncomfortable, but as Maximus persisted, he eventually accepted it silently, which led him to trust Maximus more deeply and often let him act independently. Hamilcar's proactive recommendation of him to Spartacus was one of the key reasons Maximus was appointed.

"It's all for the good of this team. The Supply Team is in your hands now, so make sure to manage it well. Don't let anything go wrong!" Hamilcar advised solemnly. "If you encounter any issues you can't resolve, feel free to come to me, and we'll discuss and solve them together."

Maximus immediately took the cue and said, "Teacher, I already have a problem that I need your help with."

"You're really not shy, huh?" Hamilcar muttered a curse, though not displeased. After spending time with this young man, he had grown accustomed to Maximus's thick skin. "Alright, tell me, what's the issue?"

"The Supply Team lacks manpower!" Maximus hurriedly explained, afraid Hamilcar would object. "Although the team seems large, with about 200 people, and it's growing daily, you must understand the makeup of these people. There are over 50 women, more than 30 elderly over 40 years old, over 20 children, and while there are over 80 adult men, many are frail or physically impaired... In short, most of the new additions to our team are essentially the old, weak, sick, and vulnerable—"

"You should understand that the Roman Army could attack at any moment. The enslaved brothers joining our ranks must first be assigned to combat units—it's not the right time to prioritize the Supply Team!" Hamilcar finally interrupted him, reminding him firmly.

"I understand this, but when Spartacus and the others fight, we in the Supply Team will still have to move along with them. While attacking farms and gathering food during peacetime hides this issue, during the intense action of battle, our current team members will struggle to adapt. They will not only fail to play their intended role but may even become a burden!"

Maximus spoke with a solemn expression, having already considered the matter thoroughly. He even preempted potential countermeasures Hamilcar might suggest: "Even if combat units are assigned to assist our team during battles, they aren't familiar with Supply Team operations, which could lead to chaos. Furthermore, there's no guarantee they'll obey commands. If they abandon us during critical moments to join the fight, the Supply Team would be in grave danger... That's why assigning some strong enslaved brothers to the Supply Team would be the best solution."

After hearing Maximus's argument, Hamilcar's expression became serious. He contemplated deeply for a while before responding, "Alright, I'll bring this up with Spartacus. As the Supply Team captain, you can now participate in Military Commander Conferences. Bring it up during the next meeting. But even if it's approved, don't expect too many reinforcements."

"A few would be enough," Maximus said, breaking into a smile.

"Any other issues?" Hamilcar asked, blinking.

"None for now," Maximus replied cheerfully. He did have additional proposals but preferred to tackle them one at a time.

Watching Hamilcar walk away, Maximus clenched his fists in excitement. His hard work during this period had finally paid off—he had become the Supply Team captain! Although this had much to do with his literacy and numeracy skills, as well as the lack of competitors among gladiators beside himself and Hamilcar, his demonstrated competence had also earned recognition. Otherwise, even with Hamilcar's recommendation, the Military Commander Conference would not have approved his appointment. To those gladiators who only valued brute strength, the Supply Team was seen as a haven for the weak. Yet, when Spartacus appointed Hamilcar as the Supply Team captain and granted him the ability to participate in conferences to discuss military affairs, Maximus immediately realized that as a young man lacking prestige and carrying a tarnished reputation, joining the Supply Team and becoming its captain was undoubtedly the best way to quickly gain enough authority in the uprising forces. His rapid success still exceeded his expectations.

Just as he was feeling overwhelmed with emotion, someone approached him with a bright smile and asked, "Captain Maximus, now that you're in charge, should we celebrate?"

Maximus turned to her.

This woman, around thirty years old, was named Acronis. She hailed from Egypt, and her family had fallen into slavery due to crushing debts, eventually being sold to a large farm in the Vesuvius Region. Her husband had been assigned farming work, while she served as a cook. Two years ago, her eldest daughter was forcibly taken in by the farm manager and discarded after pregnancy. The young girl died of childbirth complications, leaving Acronis and her husband heartbroken. They hastily buried her, not daring to show any animosity toward the manager. Shortly afterward, her husband passed away in despair. Acronis repressed her own grief and carefully looked after her underage daughter, fearing she might also fall victim. For two years, she lived in constant dread until the uprising forces overran the farm, killed the resistant farm manager on the spot, and freed the enslaved workers. Acronis was among the first to fervently join the uprising, even mutilating the manager's corpse with a meat cleaver to vent her rage.

As the Supply Team's numbers grew, Hamilcar decided to appoint a head cook to oversee kitchen operations. His initial choice was another male enslaved worker, but Maximus strongly endorsed Acronis. Being young and often working alongside the team, he noticed Acronis's bold and efficient manner, as well as her charisma among the kitchen crew. Coming from modern society, Maximus held no bias against women, and his insistence led to Acronis becoming the uprising forces' first female head.

Maximus wasn't one to hide his contributions. He ensured word of his advocacy reached Acronis through intermediaries, earning her gratitude.

Now, with a serious expression, he said to Acronis, "Thank you for your kind gesture, but now isn't the time for celebrations. We must first do our work well and prove to our brothers fighting outside that Spartacus made the right decision in appointing me as captain."

Chapter 20: Chapter 19 The Subordinates' Suggestions (Part 1)

Maximus had other considerations he didn't voice: As one of the younger members among the escaped gladiators, having previously betrayed the group, his sudden elevation to the upper echelons of the rebellion, even being part of the often undervalued Supply Team, was likely to evoke jealousy. Hence, he decided to proceed with low-key actions.

Acronis had not thought that far ahead. Out of respect for Maximus, she patted her chest and loudly declared, "Captain Maximus, don't worry, I'll supervise them (her) to do their work well!"

Maximus nodded, looking around the group in the courtyard, and said in a loud voice, "From now on, I am the captain of the Supply Team! There's no need to worry, everything will continue as before, just keep doing what you should do, and then gather in this courtyard at night to learn and hear me tell stories, okay?!"

"Okay!!!" everyone shouted in unison.

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Maximus's statement that "everything in the Supply Team will not change" was just a platitude to stabilize them. After the Supply Team members listened to the story and went their separate ways to rest that night, he gathered several team leaders for a meeting.

The meeting was held in Maximus's bedroom.

Maximus's bedroom was a single room in the main building of the wine farm. Although Maximus was already familiar with the others in the room, he examined them anew under the candlelight tonight: Acronis, the fierce woman in charge of the kitchen; Gaius, responsible for guarding the warehouse and managing materials, a thin and elderly male slave; Pigeris, the leader of the team responsible for transporting materials outside, was quite robust but had a limp on his left leg.

The upper echelons of the Supply Team didn't seem impressive at first glance, but Acronis was skilled in kitchen affairs, Gaius was among the few slaves who could read

and write, and Pigeris had excellent carriage driving skills. They had their expertise, and they shared a common feature—hatred for the Romans.

Acronis needed no elaboration. Gaius was a Sabine, who once had a few acres of self-sustaining land, but after land annexation by Roman nobles, he ended up heavily in debt, losing his family. Pigeris, a Greek from Little Asia, was forced into the war between Pontus and Rome, then captured by the Roman Army after an injury, becoming a slave...

All three were older than Maximus, yet when they looked at young Maximus, their eyes held respect, not only because Maximus had worked with them and taught them knowledge over the past month but also because the gladiators who initiated the revolt were their benefactors, the backbone of their team. From leaders to centurions, even some centurions were gladiators; therefore, to them, it was appropriate for Maximus, as one of them, to hold an important position.

Maximus was pleased by their respectful attitude and straightforwardly asked, "You three have been heading the Supply Team for some time now. What are your views and suggestions on the work you are handling?"

The three were taken aback. They hadn't expected that Maximus called them for a meeting in the dead of night just to ask for their suggestions. The previous team leader, Hamilcar, always issued direct commands and never consulted with them, let alone asked for their advice.

Maximus, seeing their silence, realized their caution. He smiled and said gently, "Spartacus said, 'Once you join our team, everyone is brothers and sisters.' We are all part of the Supply Team, and its matters are everyone's matters. You must have noticed some issues during your work. If we discuss solving them together, we can improve our Supply Team, can we not!"

Maximus's words eased their concerns. Acronis spoke first, "Captain Maximus, then... then I'll speak up."

"Speak boldly!"

Acronis bit her lip and said, "The kitchen... the main problem is there are too many women. They work hard but often get harassed by soldiers from other teams. Though Spartacus once ordered 'No one from other teams to enter the wine farm,' people still frequently sneak in! The patrols guarding the farm don't bother to stop them, especially those from the Second Team often barging into the kitchen, harassing my subordinates, scaring them so they can't work well! Captain, you've got to address this; otherwise, the kitchen will turn chaotic, and nothing will get done!"

Maximus frowned. He was aware of this issue and had brought it to Hamilcar's attention before, but Hamilcar dismissed it, viewing it through the lens of the mostly young male

rebellion members whose high energy made them curious about women. He believed that allowing a little exchange with the Supply Team women helps boost morale, as long as it didn't escalate into actual violations.

Additionally, the Second Team was under Cross's command. Due to Cross's leniency, the team had poor discipline. Spartacus, considering Cross as one of the rebellion leaders, feared their strategy's affection by confronting him on this issue. Naturally, Hamilcar was even more dismissive.

Maximus knew tackling this issue would be difficult, but he seriously noted it down on the wax tablet with his iron pen, then asked, "Very well, any other issues?"

"Yes!" Acronis, now encouraged, spoke louder, "Although we have over a hundred people assigned to the kitchen, they have to cook porridge twice, make soup twice, mill grains, knead dough, bake bread, and distribute food to all the battalion camps... they're busy from dawn till dusk without rest.

Despite the hard work, it's barely satisfying the entire team's needs, and as more people join every day, if we don't get more hands in the kitchen, soon there will be people going hungry. Plus, we need more stoves, ovens, and mills... otherwise, even if we have more people, without those resources, we can't produce enough food."

Maximus solemnly nodded, noting it down on the wax tablet, and asked again, "Is there more?"

"Also our sleeping conditions—" Acronis continued, "Our Supply Team lacks tents. We sleep in the courtyard during clear skies and huddle under the warehouse and main building eaves when it rains. This is inconvenient for all the women in the kitchen and makes illnesses more likely."

Maximus frowned again.

Since Spartacus and several leaders chose this place as their base, with the rapid team expansion, the wine farm couldn't house so many people, so it became a materials base, and the Supply Team responsible for it naturally stayed within the farm. Other than the rebellion leaders, the over four thousand soldiers stationed on the hills and fields around the farm also lacked tents but deemed the Supply Team's lodging conditions better than theirs, and thus wouldn't agree to share even a single tent...

"This is indeed a problem." Maximus knew it wasn't easy to solve, but he maintained a stance of seriousness and noted it down.

"I've said everything." Acronis looked at Gaius and urged, "Old man, if you have any difficulties, hurry up and tell the captain!"

Despite the three Supply Team leaders not knowing each other before joining the rebellion, their similar tragic experiences and frequent work encounters over the past twenty or so days built a good camaraderie.

Gaius nodded at Acronis, then, unhurriedly, said, "There are three issues with the warehouse that need solving. First, others frequently sneak in to pilfer things like smoked fish, meat, and wine. We can't stop them and even get beaten, while the patrols serve no real purpose and sometimes even partake in the theft;

Second, the amount of materials we now acquire is growing, and the few farm warehouses are already overcapacity. Storing them in the courtyard makes it hard to guard, and rain or wind could damage them, on top of the fire risk;

The third issue is... I'm old, and my abilities are dwindling. Managing materials for one farm was challenging but doable, but now we have materials from over ten farms piling up here. My subordinates didn't understand arithmetic before and only learned a bit during this month under your instruction, captain. I need some skilled in arithmetic, otherwise, the Supply Team's accounts will end up in chaos..."