

Rome Must Perish

#Chapter 31 - 30 Night Raid - Read Rome Must Perish Chapter 31 - 30 Night Raid

Chapter 31: Chapter 30 Night Raid

The black night arrived, and under the bright moon and complete silence, the rebel soldiers who had been resting on the ground since afternoon awoke from their slumber. After eating the food carefully prepared by the supply team, they were full of spirit, high in morale, and eager to try.

However, when they arrived at the edge of the eastern cliff led by Spartacus and looked down, their hearts began to pound: the cliff was steep as if carved by a knife, the ground was unfathomable, and the strong mountain wind howled forcefully, blowing the trees below, as if demons were dancing in chaos, ready to devour them at any moment.

This mountain wind also rushed up the mountain wall, blowing at the soldiers standing at the edge of the cliff, making it almost impossible for them to stand.

Just as they were filled with fear, "I'll go first." Spartacus's deep voice echoed in their ears. Without hesitation, he fulfilled his promise. His strong hands tightly grasped a sturdy rope tied to a large rock, and his solid legs stepped firmly into the rock crevices along the mountain ridge. Following the dangling rope, he slowly descended.

Everyone on the cliff held their breath, nervously watching his figure grow smaller and smaller. Every flicker of the rope and every groan he let out tugged at their nerves.

Though the moonlight was bright tonight, the darkness at the bottom of the cliff eventually swallowed Spartacus's figure. Unable to see him, their hearts grew more anxious until the rope powerfully shook three times, then shook three times again—this was the agreed-upon signal.

The soldiers let out a sigh of relief, each with a look of joy on their faces: Spartacus succeeded! He safely reached the ground!!

"It's my turn." Cross stepped forward.

"And me." Enomai also stepped forward. There were two ropes hanging down from the top of the mountain to ensure that the soldiers could descend quickly. Otherwise, at the pace Spartacus descended, it would take a long time to get all five hundred warriors down.

Cross, Enomai, Antonix, and other gladiators successfully descended the mountain one after another, greatly boosting the morale of the remaining warriors on the mountain.

Of course, things weren't entirely smooth. Occasionally, a warrior would slip while descending and crash into the mountain ridge or fall, but the howling wind masked their cries of pain.

But these mishaps weren't enough to instill fear in the warriors again. On the contrary, they were eager to descend and follow Spartacus to hit back at the Romans.

The reason they chose only five hundred warriors to descend and raid the Roman camp was because there were only about 500 short swords and long spears in the rebel army, and genuinely brave and combative warriors also totaled around five hundred. Besides the gladiators, most were Celts from the Iberian Peninsula, who had only recently become slaves, with their wild nature still intact.

Who knew how much time passed, as the warriors had all climbed down the mountain. Those left on the mountain still lay flat at the cliff's edge, peering down, reluctant to get up. Even though the scenery was pitch black and they couldn't see any trace of the team heading to the battlefield, it was their only hope for survival!

"Let's go! We should do our part now!" Hamilcar reminded everyone, taking the lead down the mountain path, with other soldiers following one after another.

Following closely was Maximus, unlike others who were anxious. Memories from a past life convinced him that Spartacus's raid on the Roman camp would succeed.

"Acronis, Gaius, Volenus, take care of the others, don't let them run off!" Maximus loudly reminded his subordinates to avoid making previous mistakes.

"Be careful, Maximus!" The children reluctantly bid him farewell.

"Don't worry, tomorrow you can go down the mountain and continue your studies at the farm!" Maximus waved confidently.

Walking behind him was Pigeris leading the transport team, each leading a packhorse, totaling ten. These horses had their eyes covered, and bits in their mouths, and followed the handlers meekly. When they brought the horses up the mountain, the handlers were reluctant to leave them halfway up, eventually getting them to the top, which caused some soldiers to grumble since they took up a lot of space. But now they might play a crucial role in the upcoming actions.

Behind the transport team were over five hundred rebel soldiers, lined in a long line, carefully stepping down the rugged mountain path. Without torches, they relied solely on moonlight to see their way, so no one was distracted or talking, all attention focused on their feet.

The mountain path grew wider, and as they approached a turning point, the leading Hamilcar and Maximus stopped and crouched down to look ahead: directly ahead was a wide gentle slope, and a few dozen meters down, there was a long trench and earthen wall, with some deer barricades before the trench. Numerous torches were inserted on the earthen wall, illuminating the area, and shadows could be seen moving behind the wall. It seemed the Romans were quite cautious about defending the mountain top, so everyone could only wait.

Uncertain whether the other team could successfully raid the camp, waiting was excruciating. Even Hamilcar became somewhat restless, let alone others, but Maximus remained calm and occasionally consoled the others softly: "Don't worry, Spartacus and his team must have reached the Roman camp. They need time to study the camp layout and devise a surprise attack plan to topple the entire camp in one go."

"Youthful energy is fearsome!..." Hamilcar couldn't help but sigh, just about to praise his modest disciple when he vaguely heard the sounds of fighting from below.

He quickly listened intently, the sounds growing louder and clearer... Due to the wine farm's buildings blocking their view, Hamilcar and his team couldn't see the Roman camp's situation, but they could confirm Spartacus was attacking the Roman camp, which filled everyone's faces with joy and excitement.

Soon they could clearly see the Roman soldiers tasked with guarding behind the earthen wall retreating.

"Brothers, it's our turn!" Hamilcar turned and shouted.

"Leader Hamilcar, hurry with the order, we can't wait any longer!!" Everyone impatiently urged in whispers.

Hamilcar had Pigeris and others lead the horses out onto the slope, spreading them out in a line.

Removing the blindfolds and bits, the handlers gently stroked the horses, reluctant to harm them, but ultimately drew out their short daggers and fiercely stabbed the horses' rumps several times.

The horses whinnied in pain, galloping forward in terror, crashing through the barricades, some falling into the trench, others hitting the earthen wall. The force of their charge directly collapsed the two-meter-high earthen wall.

"Success!..." Seeing this, Maximus couldn't help but wave his fist, as he had proposed the plan to use horses to break the way.

"Brothers, follow me to kill the Romans!" Hamilcar shouted, leading the charge down the mountain.

"Kill the damn Romans!!... Kill the Romans!!" Everyone roared in high spirits; though most were barehanded and thinly clad (many new recruits discarded their weapons while fleeing during the day), their fighting spirit was high. They followed the trail of the packhorses, crossing the trench, dashing through the gap in the earthen wall. The firelight from the wine farm ahead lit up the path where they could clearly see the fighting at the farmhouse's entrance. They shouted and charged over.

In that high-spirited influence, Maximus's blood boiled, forgetting fear as he charged ahead. The meat-cutting knife in his right hand cleaved a Roman soldier's head, and as the soldier cried out, the knife in his left hand swiftly slashed towards another enemy's neck.

The body, conditioned by years of hellish training endured by the original owner, was demonstrating astounding killing power. Maximus, wielding dual knives, charged through the enemy crowd as if there was no one there.

In reality, most of the enemies here had been startled awake from their dreams, unable to don armor or grab their weapons, and fled, attempting to hide in the farmhouse, only to be intercepted by a detachment of rebel soldiers.

Chapter 32: Chapter 31: Victory and Sorrow

Inside the farm, Grabo, upon witnessing the situation, hurriedly dispatched the few soldiers he had left at his disposal. The pincer attack caught the rebel soldiers in a predicament. Just as the Romans were about to regroup and strengthen the farm's defenses, Hamilcar arrived in time with hundreds of men. Although they lacked weapons, these rebels, mostly thin and born of slaves, harbored hatred against the Romans. They charged with their bodies, pounded with their fists, and even bit with their teeth, appearing grotesque and frenzied.

The Roman soldiers collapsed completely amidst the screams.

"Fight your way in! Follow me into the farm!..." Hamilcar shouted, brandishing his sword high.

The Roman soldiers inside the farm, wanting to close the doors, were too late. First, the routed soldiers fled inside. The soldiers hesitated, failing to stab these comrades with their short swords in time, and were quickly thrown into disarray, disrupting the thin defensive array.

The rebel soldiers then flooded in, launching a frenzied attack on the chaotic Romans within the courtyard.

If these Roman recruits fought in formation, they might have, with their superior equipment, withstood the enemy. However, surrounded by chaos, the rebel soldiers'

fierce shouts rang in their ears like death omens. Terrified and jittery, they lost all fighting spirit, kneeling down to surrender.

Grabo, standing on the main building's balcony, quickly diverted his gaze upon seeing this scene. Yet outside the farm, flames raged in the Roman Camp. Those damned slaves, like beasts, madly pursued and slaughtered the escaping Roman soldiers, their screams echoed throughout the camp...

Grabo closed his eyes in agony, then sighed deeply, straightened his uniform, picked up his short sword, and descended the stairs: "I am the Legal Officer of Rome, the Commander of this army, Gaius Claudius Grabo, I am willing to surrender, hoping to—"

Before he finished speaking, someone rushed forward and punched him heavily, knocking him to the ground: "Damn it, you're a captive now, why so much nonsense!"

Maximus recognized the violent man as Torquato.

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Spartacus led his team quietly to the Roman Army's camp. As he had anticipated, there were no defensive facilities on the camp's perimeter, not even sentries, all of whom were sound asleep. Instead of launching an immediate assault, he first tried to gauge the camp's situation. He then instructed Cross, Enomai, and Antonix to lead their squads from three directions to launch attacks. They set the tents ablaze, slaughtered the sleeping Roman soldiers, while Spartacus himself led a small team to infiltrate near the camp's center. Once the killing cries rose and chaos engulfed the camp, they charged directly at the Central Army Tent, killed the guards, and beheaded Vidnius, who was standing in for Grabo to guard the camp, leaving the camp leaderless and incapable of resistance.

The rebel army successfully attacked the Roman camp, completely routing the Roman Army.

But it wasn't over yet. When Spartacus inquired from the captives, he learned that 200 auxiliary soldiers of the Roman Army were stationed at an olive oil farm three miles away and some supplies were stored there.

Despite exhaustion, he immediately led 300 men and charged there.

The Campania auxiliary soldiers stationed there had long seen the flames and heard the killing sounds from the direction of the wine farm. Uncertain of what had occurred, they were too timid to send someone to investigate due to the night, and feared Roman punishment if they fled without orders. Only when the routed soldiers arrived, informing them of the "enemy's surprise attack on the camp and the Roman Army's crushing defeat," did they hurriedly pack up to flee, only to be intercepted by Spartacus and his forces...

When Spartacus led his team, escorting the captives and herding supply-laden carts back to the wine farm, the Eastern sky had already begun to brighten with dawn.

On the hillside, laughter and chatter filled the air, as the rebel soldiers, having fought all night, continued their tireless work: some were boasting of their exploits the previous night, while others donned armor stripped from Roman soldiers, organized tents from the camp, or tested captured warhorses...

Upon seeing Spartacus return with his forces, they all raised their arms and cheered: "Spartacus! Spartacus!! Spartacus!!!..."

Other rebel leaders, upon hearing the commotion, emerged from the farm to greet them.

"Spartacus, it seems you had quite a haul on this trip," Hamilcar said with a smile, looking at the troops behind Spartacus.

"Indeed, we made quite a haul!" Spartacus beamed: "We captured over a hundred Campania auxiliary soldiers, seized a significant amount of food, and obtained a batch of weapons and equipment, all loaded in the carts. Additionally, we captured a batch of Roman Army's slaves."

"That's wonderful! Now we can temporarily not worry about lacking weapons!" Cross exclaimed joyfully.

"How's the situation here? What are our casualties?" Spartacus asked concernedly.

Hamilcar replied: "We lost eighty-six men in battle, with forty-two wounded, but all with minor injuries, killed or wounded over twelve hundred enemies (over half of them were caused by their confusion and stampeding in the darkness), and captured nearly a thousand, including their Legion Commander Grabo... We haven't had time to tally the seized weapons and armor. Most Romans were caught asleep during our surprise attack, and they left most of their weapons and armor in camp, so we're bound to have made a decent haul, though many of our brothers have already donned the Roman armor—"

"Let them wear it; they're all meant for our use anyway. If we had enough weapons and armor before, we wouldn't have lost as many brothers," Spartacus remarked wistfully, causing the others to fall silent.

Spartacus quickly changed the topic: "Maximus, is breakfast ready? We're all hungry."

"Our Supply Team members just returned from the mountain and are busy in the kitchen, but breakfast will take a while," Maximus answered truthfully.

Spartacus jokingly rubbed his stomach: "Oh, we're all starved—"

"Spartacus! Cross! Enomai! Antonix! Hamilcar!" A rider galloped in, yelling anxiously: "Something terrible has happened!..."

"Okmar, don't panic. What's the matter?" Spartacus asked calmly.

"I was just chasing down the routed soldiers fleeing west with some brothers on captured warhorses, when not far from here—" Okmar pointed backward, his expression grief-laden: "We found many, many corpses! The captured Roman told me that, on the Legion Commander's orders, they executed all the captives... our brothers... there yesterday evening; a total of over 900! Over 900 people!"

Spartacus and the others' faces changed drastically.

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A large elliptical pool, surrounded by Roman cement-built stone dikes, used by the large farm for irrigation, now held a heap of corpses piled into a flesh mound: empty eyes, twisted faces, multiple sword wounds on their chests, dried blood covering their bodies, clearly showing they had struggled painfully before death...

Maximus stood silently beside the pit, his attention drawn to a nearby corpse: white-haired, emaciated, with a wrinkled face...

Maximus recognized her; she was a member of the Supply Team named Saraya. When first assigned to the Supply Team, Maximus noted her frail build and, out of sympathy, suggested Hamilcar assign her an easy task in the kitchen. Saraya was always grateful, greeting Maximus warmly every time they met, sometimes offering a cup of sheep milk to quench his thirst. Although sheep milk usually had a strong taste, hers was faintly flavored and somewhat sweet-sour. Maximus hadn't expected this old woman to have such a skill, and after becoming the Supply Team Captain, he even planned to have Saraya specialize in preparing sheep milk in a few days...