

Rome Must Perish

#Chapter 61 - 60 Supply Camp Recruits New Soldiers (Continued 1) - Read Rome Must Perish Chapter 61 - 60 Supply Camp Recruits New Soldiers (Continued 1)

Chapter 61: Chapter 60 Supply Camp Recruits New Soldiers (Continued 1)

Tini Bazus did not take it and spoke with agitation: "I've had enough of war and death. I don't want to be a soldier anymore!"

Torrelugo's smile instantly turned into a frown: "You don't want to be a soldier?! You're neither a woman nor an old man or a child. The fact that Volenus sent you over here shows that you're not some special talent that Maximus needs. It proves you're only fit to be a soldier here with us! Since you've joined us, you should obey our arrangements. If you don't, we'll have no choice but to ask you to leave. Think carefully about your decision!"

Torrelugo's threat made Tini Bazus calm down. He thought for a moment and understood: on this land ruled by the Romans, without the protection of the rebel army, escape would be impossible. If caught by the Romans, his past as a fugitive would surely earn him the harshest punishment...

Thinking of all this, he quickly grabbed the small wooden piece while softening his tone, saying, "I was confused earlier, but now I've figured it out. I want to be a soldier and fight the Romans in the future!"

"That's more like it!" Torrelugo's anger vanished, and he clapped Tini Bazus on the shoulder. "Our ranks are growing fast. Work hard, and you could become a ten captain or even a centurion someday."

"Oh." Tini Bazus acknowledged flatly, showing no joy at Torrelugo's encouragement.

"By the way, among today's recruits, are there any comrades from your days in the Pontus army?" Torrelugo looked at him expectantly.

"Yes, about a few dozen. We were captured and sent to Italy together, then sold to that farm. Over the years... more than ten have already died..." Tini Bazus said with a gloomy expression.

Torrelugo hesitated for a moment before cursing loudly, "Damn Romans!"

Tini Bazus was about to leave when Horace called out to him, pointing at the tattered clothes on the ground: "Put on your outer garment."

Tini Bazus bent down to pick up his clothes, then suddenly remembered something and couldn't help but comment, "Among the newcomers, there are women, right? Are they required to strip for inspection too?"

"Of course they have to strip for inspection. But don't worry; female nurses handle their checks," Horace explained.

Torrelugo added sternly, "Seems you're not entirely trustworthy. Let me warn you—don't harass the women here, or you'll pay for it dearly!"

Though he didn't completely understand, Tini Bazus nodded obediently. Just as he stepped outside, he saw another man in armor brush past him and enter the military tent. Soon, loud voices erupted from within: "Fesaros! It's not time yet. What are you doing here?"

"Torrelugo, you're too greedy! You keep picking the sturdy ones for your squad, leaving Camillus and me stuck with the weaklings!"

"How I choose is my prerogative. Who asked me to win the draw? When the time comes, you can do the same as me."

...

Seeing the slaves ahead of him getting farther away, almost about to cross a wooden gate, Tini Bazus dared not stay idle and swiftly caught up.

Beyond the gate was a courtyard, with no tents but rows of buildings. The line they were in led to the largest house, which resembled a warehouse.

Tini Bazus caught up to the man in front and asked, "Clumsy Ox, where were you assigned?"

The young man known as "Clumsy Ox" was actually named Samoras, a cowherd from the farm responsible for plowing fields, and was acquainted with Tini Bazus. Scratching his head shyly, Samoras said, "I... I forgot... Oh, they gave me this." As he spoke, he handed over the wooden piece he held.

"I can't make sense of this thing. Show it to the people here later."

"Oh." Samoras scratched his head again and then spoke excitedly, "Tini Bazus, someone just told me... told me I could be a great soldier. If I follow orders, I could become a ten... ten captain and command lots of people someday!"

"It's called a ten captain." Tini Bazus glanced at Samoras's burly figure, then his simple-minded grin. He couldn't bear to dampen his spirits but instead encouraged him: "Not bad! When you do become a ten captain, don't forget to take care of me."

"Don't worry, Tini Bazus! I won't let others bully you in the future." Samoras said while thumping his chest.

"Thanks a lot." Tini Bazus smiled teasingly.

"Hey! The big guy over there, hurry up!" A voice called out from the front.

"That's for you!" Tini Bazus nudged Samoras.

Samoras quickly turned and ran forward.

In front of the warehouse gate was a wooden table, at the head of which sat an elderly man with closed eyes, seemingly dozing. Beside him were two young boys, while several other boys and girls stood around the table...

The sight startled Tini Bazus: Did I just walk into a lair full of children?

He was soon taken aback to see the children busily working—writing, fetching items, leading people—each with their own duties. In no time, they finished Samoras's registration neatly.

"Next!" One of the boys sitting at the wooden table called out loudly.

Tini Bazus put away his dismissive attitude and responded formally, "Present!" Then, mimicking what he'd observed earlier, he promptly handed over his wooden piece.

The boy took the wooden piece and read softly, "Fifth Battalion, First Squad..."

The boy beside him immediately flipped to a page in the register in front of him.

"What's your name?" asked the boy.

"Tini Bazus."

"How do you spell it?"

"I... I can't read." Tini Bazus had always been accustomed to his illiteracy, but now, facing these boys and girls, he suddenly felt a pang of shame.

The other boy wasn't surprised by this. Thinking for a moment, he scribbled a few notes in the register.

The boy spoke earnestly, "Following Leader Maximus's orders, every soldier joining the Supply Camp Guard will receive two pottery jars—"

Before he finished, the boy next to him placed two pottery jars on the wooden table.

"These jars are for porridge and soup in the future. You must take good care of them! If they break, there won't be any replacements in the warehouse, and you'll be in trouble," the boy warned with great seriousness.

Tini Bazus nodded to show he understood.

"One linen coat... one linen sleep sheet... one pair of grass sandals... one linen backpack..." Each time he listed an item, the other boy fetched it from behind the warehouse and set it on the table.

In these past two months, many enslaved women had joined the Supply Camp. Maximus had gathered the clever ones to form a Weaving Team, tasked with cutting and sewing plundered linen into coats, backpacks, and bed sheets, while weaving grass into sandals. Due to time constraints, supplies were still limited, and Maximus only allocated them to members of the Supply Camp, a decision that had drawn criticism from other battalions.

"And a training shield and short sword," added the boy. Soon, a crude wooden board and stick were placed on the table.

"That's the short sword and shield?!" Tini Bazus widened his eyes.

"Once you become a qualified soldier in the Guard, you'll naturally receive real shields and short swords," the boy replied confidently. "Besides, these were painstakingly made by the uncles in the weapons warehouse, so take good care of them! We'll be collecting them back later."

Tini Bazus didn't complain further. In truth, he hadn't expected to receive so much upon joining the rebel army. Even when forcibly conscripted by Pontus, their officers hadn't been so meticulous in the beginning.

"Count your belongings carefully and then sign your name or leave your fingerprint here." After speaking, the boy next to him pushed the register forward.

Tini Bazus stared at the rows of written characters in the register, unable to recognize any of them. Following the boy's instructions, he dipped his right thumb in black mud and pressed it onto the blank space.

"Naisuya," the boy called out, "Please take this soldier to the Fifth Hundred-man Team, First Squad."

"Got it, Brother Akegu," a delicate and slender young girl replied cheerfully, walking over to the table. She packed the items into the backpack, slung it over her shoulder, leaving only the wooden shield and stick aside. Then she smiled at Tini Bazus and said, "Follow me, please."

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"Oh, okay." Tini Bazus picked up the stick shield and followed behind the young girl.

Naisuya led him toward the inner courtyard, and Tini Bazus couldn't help but ask, "Are all these children from slave backgrounds too?"

"Not all, some of our companions' fathers were freedmen sailors. Leader Maximus said that whether slaves or freedmen sailors, we are all children from poor, suffering families." Naisuya replied very earnestly.

Tini Bazus was momentarily stunned, then asked again, "Is our Supply Camp short on manpower? Is that why you children are helping out?"

"That's not because our Supply Camp is short-staffed!" Naisuya proudly raised her voice, "This is Leader Maximus's training for us, he believes we can handle it well!"

"Training for you?"

"Yes, Leader Maximus is very kind to us children. He not only feeds us well and clothes us warmly, but he also teaches us literacy and arithmetic. He has us help Grandpa Gaius inventory warehouse supplies, convey his orders to the Guard, distribute supplies to newcomers, which we've been responsible for lately. Today, just because many people joined, we're all here to help." Naisuya said proudly.

"It seems Leader Maximus is truly a good person!" Tini Bazus was moved, asking casually, "Does he only teach literacy and arithmetic to you children?"

"Of course not!" Naisuya loudly argued, "When Leader Maximus first came to the Supply Camp, he taught everyone literacy and arithmetic every night and told us many interesting stories. Now, because there are too many people, he focuses on teaching us children. Leader Maximus also said that once we've learned well, we'll teach the rest of the camp properly..."

After Naisuya finished, Tini Bazus immediately asked with disappointment, "So now besides you, the leader no longer teaches others literacy and arithmetic?"

Though young, Naisuya was perceptive and immediately explained, "Leader Maximus stopped teaching everyone in the evenings because there were too many people, and also many who were unwilling to learn, just muddling through..."

But for those who are willing to learn, Leader Maximus never gives up. He has Grandpa Vorenus and Uncle Capito instruct them every evening in literacy and arithmetic. If you want to learn, you can apply to your team officer, and they should arrange it for you."

"Oh, I see." Tini Bazus's eyes darted about as he continued, "You mentioned earlier that Grandpa Vorenius and Uncle Capito are also from our Supply Camp?"

"Of course, Grandpa Vorenius is the... clerk appointed by Leader Maximus, and Uncle Capito is in charge of military supplies. Both can read and calculate, and know many things. Besides Leader Maximus, they are the most knowledgeable people in our Supply Camp."

The two chatted as they walked forward, passing through a small gate in the back courtyard into the Supply Camp compound.

The original location of the Supply Camp was within the farm, but as numbers increased, it became too crowded. Coincidentally, several battalions were also expanding due to growth, except for the First Battalion and the Supply Camp, which remained at the main site, while the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Battalions each set up nearby within one to two miles. The Supply Camp thus occupied the former bases of the Second and Third Battalions, next to the farm's back courtyard, and adjacent to the Medical Team.

Upon advice from the military advisory group led by Ephramintus, Maximus led the Supply Team to renovate the new camp in the style of a Roman Camp.

So when Tini Bazus entered the Supply Camp compound, the first thing he saw was two-meter-high earth walls and ditches beneath them, a drawbridge and camp gate, as well as a partially completed watchtower beside the gate. Behind the gate was a straight, level dirt road that allowed five people to walk side by side, flanked by several neatly arranged tents. Approximately thirty paces apart were small paths separating the tents, connecting to the main road. Despite the numerous tents, they were empty of people. Further on, without tents, there were many people gathered on pieces of land intersected by paths and roads, with wooden signs erected on the sides of these open spaces...

"I heard Leader Maximus say that this camp was built according to the size of a Roman Army's camp, but because the Supply Camp lacked so many soldiers in the past, most of the camp remains empty," Naisuya explained.

A Roman Army consisted of about 6,000 men... As a former Pontus Soldier, Tini Bazus had some knowledge of the Roman Army. He looked ahead at the vast open spaces and thought to himself: this camp is quite impressively built, but it seems the number of people in the Supply Camp is not many.

"The Fifth Hundred-man Team is here!" Naisuya, who had been silently observing the roadside wooden signs, stopped and turned towards a clearing with quite a few people.

"Uncle Tierks, this is Soldier Tini Bazus assigned to your squad." Naisuya said, then turned to Tini Bazus and introduced, "This is Uncle Tierks, centurion of the first squad of the Fifth Hundred-man Team."

Tini Bazus immediately nodded in greeting to the sturdy and plain-looking man.

Tierks smiled back and gently said to Naisuya, "Little Suya, thank you for your hard work!"

"It's not hard, it's my task. Uncle Tierks, I have to quickly go pick up the next one, I'm off now." Naisuya said, handing the pack to Tini Bazus before dashing back.

"Thank you!" Tini Bazus shouted in gratitude.

Naisuya waved in response.

"This little girl used to hide from people when she first came, very timid, but now she has become so lively all thanks to Leader Maximus!" Tierks said with emotion, watching Naisuya bouncing away.

"Was she very timid before?" Tini Bazus asked curiously.

Tierks glanced at him and became stern: "Our squad is just missing you, quickly put your pack down and come to assemble."

Tini Bazus saw many packs already on the ground and said, "If we leave our things here, what if they get mixed up or someone takes them?"

"Don't worry." Tierks said reassuringly, "Put that wooden tag you received on your pack, and no one will take it by mistake, nor will anyone steal it unless they wish to be punished."

Tini Bazus had no choice but to put down his pack and join the group, where he saw a familiar face smiling at him.

Turns out this big oaf is in the same squad as me... just as Tini Bazus was about to speak to him, he heard Tierks shout, "Everyone in our squad is here. Take your sword and shield, and follow me!"

This isn't any sword and shield... Tini Bazus thought sarcastically as he looked at the wooden boards and sticks in his hands.

Tierks led them onto the camp's main road, walked for a bit, then another road of the same width crossed ahead, perpendicular to the one they had walked. In the center of the crossroad stood a solitary tent.

"This is our Supply Camp leader Maximus's tent!" Tierks spoke with a tone of respect.

Tini Bazus took a glance and found it no different from other tents, quiet as if no one was inside.

Tierks led everyone towards another main road of the camp, continued walking, eventually exiting through a side gate to an open area in front of the camp. The area had many person-high wooden stakes and some soldiers gathered in groups, receiving briefings from their team officers.

"Here it is." Tierks stopped and had the group of nine sit in a circle, then he stepped to the center and smiled, saying, "Everyone, from today, you are soldiers of the first squad of the Fifth Hundred-man Team of the Guard Battalion in the Supply Camp. According to our traditions, every new brother joining us must first share their past experiences. I'll lead by example."

Chapter 63: Chapter 62: Supply Camp Recruits New Soldiers (Continued 3)

"My name is Tierks. I was originally a mountain dweller from Iberia, living freely. But later, some Romans stirred up a rebellion in Iberia, causing war, and the conflict continued. The Roman officials started taxing the various tribes in the mountains. If we didn't pay, we'd be considered accomplices of the rebel army. The taxes were so high that if our tribe paid them all, we wouldn't be able to survive. So, our clan leader kept trying to delay the payments. Eventually, the Roman army suddenly attacked our mountain village one day, killing most of our tribespeople. I was captured, became a slave, and was sold to a farm here, where I worked and tilled the land every day..."

Tierks spoke with a heavy tone as he recounted his past, while lifting his tunic to reveal the crisscross of scars on his chest and back: "At first, I was very unwilling, always thinking of escape. But this is the Roman's territory; where could you escape to? Every time I was caught, I was beaten up and denied food... To avoid beatings and to fill my stomach, I finally surrendered, working like cattle and sheep under the whip's lash. At first, it felt like torment, but later I became numb and felt like I was living dead. Maybe one day I'd just collapse in the field and be tossed into the bushes like garbage by those guards..."

Everyone listened silently, Tierks' experiences resonating with them, with some even having reddened eyes.

"Later—" Tierks' voice suddenly soared, "Spartacus, the leader, led his troops to Vesuvius, and the farm where I worked was the first one they captured. Having gained my freedom, I decided to join the troop and became one of them. After joining, I realized the decision I made back then was the right one! Because in our troop, everyone was poor and suffered like me; there was no oppression among us, everyone treated each other like brothers..."

The first time the Romans attacked us, I was in the troop led by Leader Spartacus. It was our first battle against the Romans, and with no experience, we suffered a defeat. But later, following the advice of Leader Maximus, Spartacus led us down a cliff over a hundred meters high under the cover of darkness, launching a surprise attack on the Romans' camp. The Romans suffered a terrible defeat! I got injured during the battle, but thanks to the careful care of the medical team in the supply camp, I recovered and decided to stay in the supply camp—"

Speaking of this, Tierks' face was full of gratitude, with a faint hint of shyness. He coughed a few times before continuing, "Last night, Centurion Torrelugo told us that the headquarters assigned over 400 slaves to our supply camp. Leader Maximus plans to form several more centurion units but needs to assign some people from the original troop as team officers. I thought it was a good thing, so I volunteered and became the centurion of your small team. That's all about my experience. Who would like to speak next?"

"Me! Me!" Tini Bazus clamored first.

With Tini Bazus taking the lead, the new recruits of the first squad began recounting their stories one after another. Although they came from all over the world, and some, like Samoras, were not fluent in Latin, no one present laughed. Everyone sighed for the sufferings recounted. When everyone finished sharing, they felt a closer bond with each other.

Then Tierks spoke again in a deep voice, "Leader Maximus once said that the reason we became slaves and have been oppressed is essentially due to the greed and expansion of the Romans. Although we've gained our freedom, it is only temporary. As long as the Romans are not defeated, we could become slaves again and fall into darkness at any time. And to defeat the mighty Romans and live freely forever, we should at least achieve the following three points—"

Tierks deliberately paused here, seeing that the new recruits were listening intently, and continued to recount the words that Maximus repeatedly emphasized to the guard, "Firstly, we must be as close as brothers, united as one, only then can we do things efficiently and unleash great power in battle! Can you do it?"

The new recruits glanced at each other and almost unanimously answered, "Yes!"

"Good!" Tierks continued, "Secondly, we must obey the decree of the supply camp. Leader Maximus said that the decree is intended to standardize everyone's behavior within the collective, making the whole team more orderly and preventing chaotic disintegration of our forces. Can you achieve this?!"

"Yes!" the recruits responded in unison again.

"What do you mean 'yes'? You don't even know what the decree is and you're blindly responding!" Tierks jokingly scolded a bit and then said seriously, "Listen up! The first rule of the supply camp decree is to obey orders from superiors. Leader Maximus commands the entire supply camp. We must carry out his orders and obey his command. Do you understand?!"

"Understood!!"

"The second rule..." Tierks laid out the supply camp decrees one by one, and to help the recruits remember, he even cited a few examples of people being punished for violating the decrees, making the recruits tense.

"Have you all remembered these decrees?"

"No...no!!" the recruits answered in unison.

"You can't remember all at once, it's fine. I'll tell you again several times in the evening and then check each of you tomorrow. Those who can't remember will have to face punishment."

Upon hearing this, the new recruits began to feel nervous again.

Tierks noted this without saying much. He surveyed the situation of other small teams around and then loudly announced, "We've mentioned two points just now, and this third point is equally important. The Roman army is extremely powerful. If we want to confront and defeat them, we must undergo military training. Only when each of us becomes a formidable soldier through rigorous training will the entire army become strong. Do you agree?"

"Yes!!"

"Great, it seems everyone is eager. I won't delay any longer. We'll start training right now." Tierks said decisively.

Ah, so soon?!... Only Tini Bazus seemed surprised; the other new recruits were excitedly following Tierks to the wooden stakes.

"First, let's practice chopping the stakes!" Tierks announced loudly.

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Maximus looked at the training ground. At this moment, the number of soldiers on the field far exceeded the past. Under the guidance of the team officers, they were enthusiastically engaged in training, with shouts echoing, creating a lively scene...

Beside him, Flantinus, the head of the military advisory group, was reporting to him, "We've been allocated 456 slaves this time, and after screening, 365 soldiers were selected. Now, the total number of soldiers in our guard has reached 687, so we've added four more centurion units."

Maximus replied upon hearing this, "Just as we expected."

"Yes, luckily we made preparations urgently last night, enabling us to integrate them into the team quickly today and start training right away," Flantillus said.

"It's also thanks to our military training and daily guidance over the past two months. We've been able to draw capable soldiers from the original units to serve as team officers. I hope they'll seize this opportunity to gain better experience, so they can progress to becoming a centurion, a great captain, or even a legion commander in the future..." Maximus said enthusiastically while watching the bustling training ground.

Although the members of the military advisory group have been in the supply camp for over two months and are familiar with each other, a few still regarded the prospect painted by Maximus as mere fantasy. Thus, someone asked, "I wonder if our force that went out today has encountered the Roman army? And what the battle situation is like?"

Chapter 64: Chapter 63 Volenus's Proposal

Maximus understood the implication of his words. Although he had clear memories only of the Vesuvius raid and the final battle, he was not familiar with the detailed combat process of Spartacus' rebellion army. However, he understood one thing: from the Vesuvius raid to their approach to the Alps, Spartacus had hardly faced any defeat. Now, with the help of someone like him who had crossed time, it was impossible for the rebellion army to suffer defeats. Therefore, he confidently said, "Don't worry, once Spartacus encounters the Roman Army, they are bound to win!"

After Maximus finished speaking, he looked at the members of the military advisory group and noticed that some were not convinced.

"Ahem..." Flantinus promptly interjected, "Among the more than 300 slaves joining the ranks today, 67 of them were formerly serving as Phalanx Long Array Soldiers in the Pontus Army, with at least three months of military service."

Upon hearing this, Maximus felt a surge of joy, dispelling his earlier displeasure. He said excitedly, "This is indeed good news. Our Supply Camp often suffers when allocating personnel; this time we've finally gotten lucky. However, with so many veterans in the new team, these newly appointed team officers will have a hard time managing them."

"It's a test for them too," Flantinus remarked.

"You're right," Maximus replied with a hearty laugh, turning to the other side to the clerk, "Vorenus, what's the situation with the remaining 91 slaves? Any good news?"

The clerk Vorenus stepped up immediately, looked at the roster in his hand, and said, "Among these 91 slaves, there are 37 women, 8 children, 25 elderly or disabled men. Ten injured men and three injured women have been sent to the Medical Team for treatment. Additionally, there are three carpenters, one stone mason, one bricklayer, two potters, and two literate and numerate young slaves, whom I've singled out according to past practices."

"Ha, we indeed have quite a few talents," Maximus's smile grew broader, yet still unsatisfied, he asked, "How many of those women can weave or sew grass sandals?"

"According to their own introductions, about 20 people," Vorenus replied after flipping through the roster. "But in the end, we still need to wait for Shemirret, the Weaving Team leader, to assess them before reporting back to you in detail."

Maximus nodded and asked again, "Why are there so many children this time?"

"Mainly because there are five couples among this batch of slaves."

"Oh, then you need to arrange their accommodation well. What about the two potters... can they make high kilns?"

"High kilns?..." Vorenus was puzzled; he was knowledgeable about agriculture but not very familiar with handicrafts.

"Never mind, I'll ask them later," Maximus waved his hand and said, "Assign those carpenters, stone masons, bricklayers, and potters to the construction team, and those two literate slaves under your command. As for the education of those 8 children, start arranging it now..."

"Yes, leader." Vorenus responded respectfully, having fully pledged his loyalty to Maximus.

This young leader appointed him as clerk, giving him charge of all literate personnel in the Supply Camp. The statistics on personnel, the consumption of resources, and all major and minor matters in the camp were first consolidated by him before being reported to Maximus. Once Maximus made a decision, he would have to find people to execute it... This role of conveying information up and down, paying attention to all aspects, resembled the duties he once performed as a steward for his previous master but with greater power and higher demands for capability. It was like a second wind in his career, making him work diligently every day.

"With so many people joining today, do we have enough supplies?" Maximus asked again.

"Pottery jars, outerwear, grass sandals, linen sheets, bags, each of the new slaves can get a set, but there are ten new soldiers without wooden shields or wooden swords."

After Vorenus finished speaking, Maximus instinctively glanced at Capito.

Capito immediately complained, "It's not our fault. My men and I go out every day to cut trees and make these things laboriously, but with so many new recruits arriving at once, they've taken all the wooden shields and wooden swords we've painstakingly accumulated. Our weapons warehouse is still short of people!"

The weapons warehouse was now so empty that mice could run through it; why employ so many people there... Maximus thought to himself but refrained from saying it aloud because he understood Capito. Although Capito was a retired veteran, his temperament was more like a scholar's, somewhat aloof and proud, so Maximus spoke softly, "You're right, it was my oversight. Vorenus, assign two people from the remaining 25 slaves to the weapons warehouse."

"Yes, leader." Vorenus stepped up again and whispered, "The storage of pottery jars and linen is running low, and if more people come to join in the coming days, the Supply Camp won't be able to provide these supplies! ... Leader, about the suggestion I mentioned before—"

Even though Vorenus hadn't continued, Maximus understood what he wanted to say.

The uprising army, which had just risen for less than half a year, still had no production capacity at all. All supplies were entirely reliant on confiscation and pillage. In this fertile land south of Campania, there were many farms but hardly any handicraft workshops like pottery workshops or weaving workshops. Of course, they might exist in towns, but the uprising army currently lacked the capability to conduct siege warfare. As the number of uprising army members expanded rapidly, the consumables like pottery jars and linen collected from various farms could not be replenished in large quantities, hence naturally leading to a deficit.

Vorenus had already discovered this situation and proposed his own suggestion: The Supply Camp's warehouses held a large stock of wine and olive oil, both of which were highly in-demand commodities throughout Italy but rarely used by the uprising army (only consumed during army celebrations or small amounts added during porridge and stew for extra fat for the soldiers). Rather than occupying warehouse space, selling them to Italian merchants to exchange for the much-needed supplies of the uprising army would be better. In other words, it meant engaging in trade with Italian merchants.

In Mediterranean countries, it was a military tradition for merchants to accompany the army in their campaigns to conduct trade, Rome included. However, when Maximus brought up this suggestion at a Military Commander Conference, it was ultimately not approved for a simple reason: the leaders feared letting merchants into the camp for trade might allow them to spy on military situations or secretly engage in sabotage,

potentially causing problems for the uprising army's future battles. Given the rebellion army's current weak and vulnerable state, surrounded by enemies, they had to be cautious and prudent.

Maximus decided not to tell Vorenus that "his suggestion was not approved at the Military Commander Conference." Smiling, he said, "When Spartacus and the rest come back victorious, I will bring this matter up with them, don't worry, this is ultimately something with more benefits than disadvantages, and I believe they'll eventually agree."

"If it passes, we wouldn't have to worry about a lack of supplies anymore. Even weapons and tents for the soldiers could receive additional security!" Vorenus said excitedly in a low voice. As someone akin to the steward of the Supply Camp, he naturally wished for their team to be well-stocked and resource-rich.

"What proposal is it?" Capito, with his sharp ears, immediately asked.

Maximus really didn't want to spread the word before things were settled and was thinking about how to brush it off when he saw Hagux riding over from the front. He immediately raised his voice and asked, "Hagux, is there any enemy situation?"

"Leader, there's no sign of enemy forces around the camp, but a few horse scouts came from Napolet."

"Seems like the Napoletans already know that our main forces have left and want to probe the camp's situation. Given their timid nature, without hearing news of our defeat, they probably won't dispatch troops." Flanitnus said softly.

This time, Maximus was guarding the camp but was no longer as tense as two days ago when he led a team away from the main force and camped at a farmstead. Perhaps it was because he already had experience, or maybe his strength had been augmented, and he appeared relatively calm. After thinking for a moment, he said, "Since that's the case, let's not let those three Centurions sit idle here. Have them conduct armed march training around the camp, make the scale larger if necessary."

Chapter 65: Chapter 64: Anecdotes from the Barracks

The sun was setting in the west, and the sunset cast a golden hue over the now quiet training ground, while the evening breeze rustled the green trees, bringing a refreshing coolness.

Most of the new recruits, who had been training for most of the day, were lying on the grass, enjoying the rare tranquility.

Tierks felt that every part of his body was sore and aching. He thought that having been a soldier before, he would be familiar with military training, but he realized it was a different story once the training began.

In the Pontus army, Tierks was a phalanx spearman, where formation was the most crucial aspect. Therefore, during his initial training, he spent long hours standing in formation and holding a spear, only later advancing with the team with the spear... He didn't even need to practice thrusting because the spear wall formed by the phalanx was the most powerful weapon to block enemy attacks. As long as he knew how to maintain the formation and hold the spear for a long time, he was considered a qualified phalanx spearman.

But the military training here was different, as the rebel army completely imitated the Roman military system. The soldiers were trained following the model of the Roman Legion Soldier. Although formation was emphasized, it wasn't as strict. Due to the requirement for close combat, there was a higher demand for individual combat ability. The first day's training involved chopping wooden stakes and shield collision exercises, interspersed with small team formations and shield holding stances (which actually helped soldiers recover their strength).

The chopping wooden stakes exercise seemed simple, as it just involved striking the stakes with a stick. However, under Tierks' supervision, the recruits had to make a loud noise with each strike, which required them to use all their strength. These stakes were quite solid, and the greater the force used, the greater the counter-shock, causing the recruits' hands to go numb and their arms to ache. At the start of the training, they couldn't hit many times before their palms couldn't grip the stick anymore, and they had to rest before starting again.

If chopping wooden stakes only made hands ache and waist sore, then shield collision training made the whole body hurt. This was because they had to tense all their muscles and root their feet to withstand the opponent's violent collision or exert all their strength to knock the opponent down...

Having been a soldier, Tierks understood without Tierks explaining that soldiers who hadn't undergone such training would struggle to hold their swords during battle and drop them when weapons clashed, and shields would fail to hold up against collisions, losing their lives in a flash... However, understanding it didn't make it any less excruciating... Tierks lay on the ground, not wanting to move.

"Don't just lie there, get up, I'll take you somewhere." Tierks' voice sounded in their ears.

Tierks didn't want to respond, but he couldn't help asking, "Where to?"

"You'll know when you get there." Tierks urged mysteriously, "We have to be quick before other squads beat us to it!"

The new recruits struggled to get up and saw that other squads were already assembling and heading towards the north of the training ground one after another.

After walking some way, Tierks and the others saw a small river ahead. Seeing soldiers from other squads jumping into the river with splashes, Tierks and his sweat-drenched companions got excited.

"Wait a minute!" Tierks shouted loudly, "Before you go down to bathe, remember two things! First, don't drink the river water; it might make you sick. Second, scrub your dirty body clean, and wash your hair thoroughly. You're soldiers now, not slaves, so you must look like soldiers, understand?!"

"Understood!!"

The new recruits jumped into the river, the icy water washing away the heat and soreness, bringing an unprecedented comfort, causing someone to exclaim, "So refreshing— aah!"

A splash of water hit his face; it was Tierks, the last one down the river, playing tricks.

Soon, with Tierks intentionally stirring things up, the new recruits forgot about the rank distinctions, laughing and mingling together.

After getting ashore, Tierks said seriously, "Those rags you're wearing are all torn, stinky, and dirty. Don't wear them anymore, leave them here. When we get back, put on the waistcoat issued to you; that's what a soldier of the first squad of our Fifth Hundred-man Team should look like."

The new recruits had no objections and were not resistant to returning to camp bare-chested, as they often did this while working on the farm.

The new recruits followed Tierks back to the camp, changed into waistcoats, and then sat on the grass in their squad area to rest.

"Technically, we should be setting up the tent, the large tent for ten people that you saw upon entering the camp." Tierks sighed, "But unfortunately, with so many joining us lately, those leather tents are all gone, even the linen tents we made ourselves are gone. So we'll have to make do for a few days, sleeping under the open sky; at any rate, it's still quite warm now, so it's actually cooler this way, right?"

As he finished speaking, Tierks broke in, "Captain, there's no problem sleeping under the open sky. As slaves, we've always slept like this, but the issue now is that we're hungry, when can we eat?"

"Yes, Captain, my stomach is growling, and I don't have any strength left." Samoras added weakly.

"At this time, the kitchen should have already sent the food to the camp, but we have to wait for the soldiers in the squads ahead to get theirs first. We'll just sit here and wait; it shouldn't take long." Tierks reassured them.

"If we let the other squads take theirs first, will there be any food left for us by the time it's our turn?" Samoras said worriedly. When it comes to food, his seemingly dull mind suddenly becomes sharp.

"Don't worry; there might be shortages of other things, but not food here. Besides, the kitchen belongs to our Supply Camp and is so close; there's no way you'll go hungry." Seeing the new recruits sitting down imitating Samoras, clutching their stomachs and lying on the ground, Tierks couldn't help but laugh and scold, "You guys drank a bowl of oily soup and ate a piece of bread at noon, surely you can't be this hungry now!"

Tierks remained silent: indeed, he didn't expect the Supply Camp to send food at noon as well. When he was in the Pontus army, it was always two meals a day; in this respect, a slave-formed army is actually doing better than a regular army of a kingdom!

"It's because we ate at noon that we feel even hungrier now." Samoras replied gruffly.

At this moment, someone suddenly shouted, "The food delivery is here!"

The new recruits, previously groaning, immediately turned over, got up, and looked towards the west. They saw the camp gates open, allowing a cart to enter, followed by another, parking on the avenue in the First Hundred-man Team's area. Then, the soldiers of the First Hundred-man Team quickly emerged from their tents, forming a long line orderly and proceeded to the cart one by one to collect dinner.

"See that, when it's our turn, we need to line up like those veterans. Otherwise, if you don't follow the rules and snatch recklessly, it would be a violation of the decree. Not only will you miss out on food, but you'll also face punishment, so don't do anything foolish!" As Tierks warned everyone, his eyes were on Samoras, not trusting this foolish boy much.

Samoras shook his head quickly in fright.

"But we are the first squad, when it comes to receiving dinner, we'll be at the front of the line." Tierks reassured them again.

Due to the repeated reminders from the officers, whether they were soldiers of the newly formed Fourth or Fifth Hundred-man Teams, they were able to queue up automatically to receive food.

"Acronis Auntie, why did you come in person today?!" Tierks was surprised to see Acronis, the supply camp kitchen chief, standing by the cart.

"Today, so many new brothers joined our Supply Camp, and we had to prepare double the amount of food as before, making manpower a bit tight. Of course, I had to lend a hand, and also take a look; our camp is getting more lively!" Acronis said with a smile; she spoke lightly, but was actually concerned that the large number of new recruits might disrupt the order during food distribution, so she came personally to maintain order.