

HERALD OF STEEL

Chapter 6 Battle Progress

"Hooonk", the loud metallic sound of a horn jolted Alexander's attention. This signaled the time to switch had come.

"I am a metallurgical engineer, not a soldier" Alexander sighed dejectedly at his current circumstances, as he tried moving his aching limbs, pain running throughout his body. The less than an hour of "rest" was barely enough to get back some of his strength.

"My feet are killing me." Camius groaned, using his spear as a support to lean on. "How come those bastards haven't run yet, huh doc?" He then complained offhandedly, clearly frustrated by the tenacious enemy

"....." Alexander ignored his chatty colleague as he focused on the changing formation.

The ways the rows switched places with each other was quite complex and required highly trained soldiers.

First, the soldiers in the last 5 rows would move away from each other so that a gap the size of a man is created between each other.

The middle 5 rows would then rapidly march backward and fill up the created gaps.

Simultaneously, the last rows would march forward to replace the middle rows, hence successfully switching places with each other.

Then the complicated maneuver of switching with the front 5 rows would begin.

First, every even-numbered soldier in the fifth row would retract their spears and start slowly backing away.

At the same time, every odd-numbered soldier in the sixth row would put up their spears and engage the enemy while simultaneously advancing to replace the front half.

This process would be repeated then with the odd-numbered soldiers in the fifth row and hence the fifth row would switch places with the sixth one.

This entire process would be repeated with the other front rows until the latter rows became the front rows.

When the very front rows are being switched, javelins are thrown from the back to suppress any enemy attack that might try to take advantage of the disrupted formation.

Such a maneuver in the middle of a battlefield was extremely risky as the front would be drastically weakened during this time and hence needed soldiers with years of experience to withstand the pressure.

As Alexander was performing this byzantine maneuver with the first rows, a sudden flash briefly blinded him and an ear-splitting boom made him almost jump up.

The weather had just changed and thunder and lightning now ruled the sky.

And this little distraction could not have come at the worst time possible.

Because many soldiers were busy changing rows, this thunderous sound made many lose concentration and they bumped into each other, disrupting the phalanx formation.

The Adhanians didn't lose this opportunity and launched a flurry of thrusts intending to break the weakened front rows.

And in this moment, within this storm of attacks, it happened. A lucky spear strike suddenly managed to get inside the formation and pierce Nestoras's only son Octavius in the heart.

The boy was dead before he hit the ground.

"Noooooooooooo." A painful howl roar echoed across the battlefield. It was Nestoras

He had just lost his only heir and successor and from this day onward he would be without a successor.

His only daughter had no right to his wealth and without a male inheritor, Nestoras would have to give all his possession to his son-in-law.

What was worse that he had suffered a skin infection a few years back and his whole male organ had to be chopped off. A procedure that still haunts to date.

Nestoras had gone red-eyed at and could barely fight off the urge to leave everything and run to his son's side. He was in no position to command a battle.

"Stop theboooooooooom." A roaring thunder suddenly manifested, drowning out whatever command he was about to give.

Without clear instructions, the soldiers in the middle of changing rows soon lost cohesion, many bumping, tripping and falling and destroying the neatly packed array.

The Adhanians clearly had no intention to let go of the enemy when they were in such disarray and hence pressed the offensive even more. giving them not a moment's respite to regroup.

Faced with such a furious counterattack, instead of forming lines. many soldiers chose to desert. These running soldiers collided with the soldiers at

the back and disrupted those formations and a chain effect followed. If this continued the whole phalanx would be finished.

The Adhanians seeing this fought even harder and soon the front two rows were turned into minced meat. They had managed to kill more enemy soldiers just now than they had done in the last two hours. The collapse of this phalanx seemed imminent.

"This is bad. Follow me, Camius." Alexander said urgently, sensing that the front was buckling.

"Ahhhhh " Alexander screamed as he sprinted forward, bulldozing anyone in front of him and launching wide thrusts into the enemy formation.

"Stoop, you're hitting our brothers, you lunatic." Camius shrieked in horror. Alexander's spear made no attempt to evade the fleeing soldiers, stabbing a few of his own allies.

This act horrified everyone on the frontline and many howled and cursed at Alexander.

"I will whip your skin off, you rebellious ingrate." Even Aristotle had completely lost his cool and attempted to throw a javelin towards Alexander.

"These are only cowards and deserters. Anyone who turns his back on his brother is no brother of mine." Alexander roared in reply, drowning out any complaint.

"Fight with me brothers, come fight with me" He roared again as he marched forward, trying to galvanize the disordered troops

"Fight to win, fight for your brothers, fight to live, fight for glory! To me!" Alexander's thunderous roar galloped across the formation and brought all soldiers to their senses. They had finally found a commander and decided to follow him, leading a coordinated counterattack, finally reinforcing the collapsing front and getting the formation in order.

Even Nestoras was snapped out of his daze from hearing Alexander's outburst and hurriedly screamed "Follow Alexander's command, everyone follow Alexander's command."

"Ahhhhhh....." All the soldiers cried out in unison and began to fight back as a team.

But the mercenary group was not the only ones to hear Alexander's proclamations. The Adhanians heard it too. Particularly the commander of the formation took notice and at once set his sight on the young boy. The brat had just ruined the collapse of an elite phalanx formation and immediately his ire landed on the boy.

"Kill the leading brat." He commanded his front row to focus on Alexander and even he himself began to target the boy.

"There's the commander," Alexander muttered as he looked at the man in a golden helmet with a red plum stuck to it like a proud peacock

Coincidentally, he also had decided to kill the commander to cause some confusion in enemy ranks and get some breathing room for the troops. So he sprinted towards the very first row, keeping the commander in the right corner of his eyes.

Soon the two men came close enough to lock eyes and Alexander's cold, chilly blue eyes crossed the furious black ones.

'*Shooou*....*Thrust*'. Multiple spear tips were launched towards Alexander to stop him but he deftly parried them mid-sprint.

Clang, clang As Alexander continued to block the wooden thrusts and charge forward, suddenly a spear tip broke through Alexander's defenses and aimed to pierce his chest.

The sprinting Alexander had no time to stop or dodge, so he ducked to the side, lowering his upper body, and letting the tip go over his shoulder.

Simultaneously, he let go of his shield and quickly stood up. Seeing there was no time to equip the javelin from his back, he held his spear in his right hand, took a firm stand and then threw the three-kilogram mass of wood and iron like a javelin diagonally at the right side of the enemy commander.

The spear flew straight as an arrow, evading all defenses and going past the myriad spears blocking its way to find its mark.

"Pierce." The spear made a soft, dull sound as it punctured through the Adhanian commander's mail and leather armor, penetrating the kidney and sticking 6 inches inside it.

The shield in his left hand had no time to cover his right side and he was fatally hit.

As the commander fell, there was no anger in his eyes, only astonishment. He looked at the boy in utter disbelief, his eyes filled with incredulity.

He never even considered the boy would be so gutsy to discard his own shield and throw his spear in the middle of the battlefield, essentially becoming defenseless, just to kill him.

"Killed, Alexander killed the enemy commander, ohhhhhhh." Camius howled in jubilation and started madly charging towards him, parrying off any spear thrusts made towards his now defenseless friend.

"Brat's got balls like none other. Haahaa....nice kid!" Even the usually stoic Aristotle unreservedly praised Alexander as he joined Camius.

"Fight!." The soldiers also all madly shrieked, furiously trying to protect Alexander.

'Crackle...boom....boom'. Just then, as if to celebrate Alexander's kill, the sky suddenly roared, rapidly turning pitch black and soon a torrential cocktail of rain and hail began to fall.

Alexander too felt the fist-sized hails bruise his body and his hot sweaty body was now being drenched in freezing cold rainwater.

Visibility had become almost zero and the howling winds were rapidly sapping away his body heat.

And just when he thought it could not get worse, it happened.

First, he heard the low sound of a trumpet, and then he saw it. From the woods they appeared, shadows carrying something in their arms.

This was an ambush!