

The Nine Day War

By
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Eig was strong. He knew he was capable of great things and now others knew it too. His gray skin was pliable yet tough - a good warrior's skin. His strength showed through every part of his body, rippling as he moved. His armor was formidable - many enemies struck their last blow upon it before falling to Eig's lethality. His weapon always met its mark, striking as intended and showing no mercy. The recent battles had been tough, very tough for some in their nation. Many lost their lives, but still there were survivors - Eig among them.

As the recognition ceremony began, he felt secure and confident - he was stronger than ever. Eig was called up to stand beside the Prime Minister.

"Our greatest warrior, Eig, is still here." The gathered crowds began chanting. Soon, a deep din of appreciation drowned out the Minister's comments. He continued louder: "Despite the battles he has fought, the tortures he has endured, Eig has survived and still reigns supreme in our eyes and in our nation. He is the best of our most fearsome warriors - those in the top few percent of our armies - and today we honor him. It is with him that our nation goes - unbeaten and steadfast. As he leads, we shall follow!"

The crowds again started cheering and chanting. The Prime Minister turned toward Eig and said solemnly,

"Eig, today we honor you." The Prime Minister bowed to him and Eig bowed in return, very satisfied. The huge gathering of spectators roared, growing louder and louder until Eig could hear nothing except the adoration of the crowds for him.

In the early morning twelve days previous, Eig and his crew had happened upon a fertile land capable of sustaining their needs for quite some time. Eig had sent scouts to set the

perimeter and called for reinforcements when his men were required to vanquish the existing light infantry the scouts found there.

Eig surveyed the landscape, watching his men sever the organs of the few guardians posted in this lush, uninhabited landscape.

“Sir, how can they let such fertile ground lay so lightly guarded?”

Eig responded to the soldier,

“They must not know what they have here, but my intuition tells me its taking may not be so easy. Guard!” Eig barked, “Have perimeter watch stand 24 hours!”

The guard leader saluted and rounded his troops. They began spreading out, from the lit hill over which they just arrived to the dark caverns across the low, small valley. The lands here were humid, a nice change for the men. They were happy to be warm and facing battle again.

Mid-afternoon of the second day, Eig’s suspicions were validated, his spotters called out: “Enemy on the dark front! Infantry and weaponry! Take arms! Take ARMS!”

Eig ordered the first two of his brigades to protect the dark front and started preparations for a flank attack across the lit side. The oncoming army looked different than those routed earlier. Eig’s senses heightened and he tensed. He felt fear in the deepest part of his body – but he did not let it surface.

“Brigades! Brigades! Listen here!” Eig shouted down the left and right flanks. “Eyes up! These are different fighters; keep your wits about you!”

The brigades roared with anticipation and advanced towards the enemy, weapons armed and displayed erect.

The first onslaught was grueling - many of Eig's soldiers began falling - too many. Eig looked up the right line and saw his soldiers fighting enemies outnumbering them two to one. The left line was worse. In the early stages of battle his men were decimated and the Captains started calling retreat. The new enemy’s onslaught was precise and merciless. Eig’s fear grew inside, but he mentally pressed it inward, forcing it down with an emotional punch - he would not let it overtake him.

“Men listen to me!!!” Eig screamed over the din of the battle. Eig wanted his men to hear his voice and know they were still strong, know they were fighting to win, to expand.

“Do not retreat! ... Hang on to your ground!! ... FIGHT!! We have many at home who need this land! Save this land for our new breeding grounds!”

The men rallied again and continued the fight, dying in large numbers, but taking many enemies with them.

This new army took their toll over several days. It seemed that their numbers were limitless, unstoppable. Six days into the battle, Eig led a small group of his best men into a haze of chemical weapons. The attack had taken on a new edge - the enemy was using a chemical weapon that affected the skin of his warriors - making it brittle and flaky. Some of Eig's men started falling in the haze and when they did, their skin would crack severely and they would bleed. The bleeding was unstoppable and the men would lie, dying slowly, with their eyes open and their hearts crying. They wanted to fight, but their exsanguination kept them still. They died in a flood of tears and blood and in massive numbers. Eig watched as the brigades became smaller and smaller still, until they were the size of congregations and then classrooms. He continued to fight; he could not stop. There was no other option.

On the eighth day, Eig noticed that the armies were finally dissipating, that he and his best men were fighting fewer battles and conquering more enemies. By the end of the ninth day, the new army was gone. It was almost like they had grown tired of fighting, grown tired of winning. Eig estimated that 95% of his men had been lost in battle, a number bigger than he had ever experienced. The men that were left were the strongest though; they outlasted the worst of the hideous battle as well as the burning chemical weapons the enemy had poured on them.

“Men, I am proud,” Eig declared to the remaining soldiers gathered around him. “We have survived the attacks of the worst enemy ever encountered; we have beaten them for our nation's sake, for our people. Let’s go back to our nation and tell them the good news - we have a new breeding ground!” The ragged men gathered themselves together and headed back to a waiting nation and a glorious ceremony.

After the ceremony, Eig was appointed to a new territory - one the nation had yet to conquer. With success came additional challenges and his nation was looking to him and his new brigades to help them conquer new lands - new places for them to breed and live. This new, vast territory was well protected; only small slit like entrances, crevasses really, from which enemies could attack. Again, Eig saw only a few guardians stationed in this new land. They were stronger than the guardians in the last territory assuredly, but nothing compared to the armies that they had just faced.

He devised a new strategy this time. His fear gone now, he spread those in his battalions that had been impervious to the chemical weapons, including himself, in key positions around the crevasses. This would provide a better chance of holding the territory they so desperately needed to survive and multiply.

Eig waited. The new battle would begin soon and he was confident he would again be victorious.

The yellow sticker briefly caught her eye: “Be sure to complete the full 10 days of medication - even if you are feeling better.” The remaining pills rattled in the small orange bottle as it settled into the bottom of the bathroom trash can.