

Cinco de Mayo Excerpt, P.1

The Mexicans could hardly believe the French were going to try to take Puebla from the north. Nobody had ever done that before. They turned their artillery around so they would be aiming straight down the hillside at French infantry who were trying to climb the hill on foot. They had been bombarding the French troops for about fifteen minutes before the French artillery even arrived to set up.

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After about an hour, the French artillery notified General Lorencez that half of their ammunition was already used up. It would be gone within the hour. Lorencez was visibly stunned, but he decided he could not afford to lose the momentum. He ordered another infantry charge, straight up the hill.

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Within moments, there were shouts outside the wall of Fort Guadalupe as a few soldiers from the latest wave of French infantry made it to the top of the hill. Gunfire was coming from the woods and the trenches, not from the fort, as the confused Frenchmen tried to place ladders against the wall.

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Then came something they never could have imagined, even in their worst nightmares. As they scrambled through the moat and began to climb their ladders, blood-curdling shrieks and yells resounded throughout the compound. Several dozen Zacapoaxtla Indian warriors, branding machetes, swiftly beheaded each of the enemy soldiers who had reached the uppermost rungs. Not a single one of the invaders lived to tell about it.

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