

Whore

Written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Practice swords clash as the men train under the ever watchful eye of DOCTORE. AGRON presses his younger brother DURO, hammering him. Duro takes a crack across the angry BRAND on his forearm. He GRUNTS in pain, dropping his sword.

DURO

Fuck. Two weeks and the mark is still raw as a whore's cunt.

AGRON

I bear the same, brother. Without pissing about it.

Agron kicks the fallen sword over to him.

DURO

That's because you have the hide of a goat. And almost as much sense.

Duro attacks. Agron meets him, half taunting him with a laugh shared only by siblings attempting to brain each other. As they battle past CAMERA, ADJUST to find

SPARTACUS AND VARRO

sparring. Spartacus is a thing of physical perfection, his two practice swords slicing the air with balletic malevolence. Varro counters, brandishing sword and shield, looking for an opening. He finds one and charges, but

SPARTACUS EASILY DEFLECTS

with one sword, SMACKING Varro across the midsection with the other. Varro grunts, shaking it off. Spartacus circles him.

SPARTACUS

You lower your guard after each assault.

VARRO

I shall see it raised then...

Varro rushes, raining blows at Spartacus. Spartacus counters, each stroke sure and swift. Varro thrusts his shield out to defend. Spartacus quickly rolls off it, using his momentum to spin behind Varro and bring his sword up around his throat. He growls in his ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

Your head is mine. How shall I
mount it?

Varro chuckles in defeat as he pushes the sword away.

VARRO

You move well today.

SPARTACUS

You do not. What distracts you?

Varro's mood deflates.

VARRO

I had Ashur send letter to Aurelia.
More than a week past now, and no
reply.

SPARTACUS

You expect different? A woman
seldom rushes back to the husband
who calls her whore.

VARRO

I said no such thing.
(off Spartacus'
look)

Not in words.

(quickly)

The letter was contrite. I admitted
I reacted poorly to the news of her
being with child.

SPARTACUS

And now she makes you wait. The way
women punish us for being fools.

Spartacus gears up for another round.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

Strike it from your mind. Or find
your brains upon the sand...

Spartacus attacks, hammering Varro. They battle like fucking
gods, WIPING US TO --

INT. TRICLINIUM/VILLA - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

POV - MOVING past a line of SIX BEAUTIFUL NAKED SLAVE GIRLS,
each wearing an exquisite WHITE MASK in the classic
likenesses of Roman Goddesses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LICINIA (O.S.)

These are exquisite...

REVERSE TO REVEAL LICINIA (the Ilithyia-esque beauty from ep. 108). LUCRETIA stands with her, a warm smile bending her lips. NAEVIA hovers in the background.

LUCRETIA

They have been in the family for generations.

LICINIA

So this sort of arrangement happens often?

LUCRETIA

No. But when such requests are made, one must be prepared to offer only the finest quality.

LICINIA

The House of Batiatus does not fall short in that regard.

She smiles wryly, not speaking of the masks at all. Her eyes fall on one of them, striking her fancy.

LICINIA (cont'd)

This one, I think.

LUCRETIA

Diana, Goddess of the Hunt. A fine choice.

She removes the DIANA MASK, revealing MIRA, a voluptuous, sultry house slave in her mid 20's. Lucretia hands the mask to Licinia. She considers it as she moves through the villa, heading out.

LICINIA

Do you think she would approve? When Actaeon saw her bathing, she turned the poor bastard into a stag and set her dogs upon him.

LUCRETIA

How fitting then, that you shall have a stag of your own to play with. Have you decided?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LICINIA

There is only one man I would
invite such peril to know. I will
have Spartacus.

Lucretia forces a smile.

LUCRETIA

The champion, of course.

LICINIA

Is that a problem? If more coin is
required --

LUCRETIA

(instantly regroup)
No, I would not hear of it. The
cousin of Marcus Crassus deserves
no less than the Slayer of
Theokoles, at fair price.

Licinia pauses.

LICINIA

It is not the price that gives
concern. If ever my husband were to
hear of this...

LUCRETIA

The gods themselves would have to
whisper it in his ear. We take the
utmost care regarding the delicate
nature of these arrangements. The
mask will ensure anonymity, but you
must also do your part. Tell no
one. And arrive exactly at the
appointed time, unencumbered.

LICINIA

Absent slaves or attendants?

LUCRETIA

Who may hold your husband's loyalty
truer to value. I would avoid
complications, for you and this
ludus.

ILITHYIA enters with her Slaves, escorted by Batiatus' house
Guards. Licinia quickly hides the mask behind her back.

LICINIA

Ilithyia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA

Oh. Apologies. Am I early?

LUCRETIA

For what purpose?

ILITHYIA

You invited me to midday meal.

LICINIA

(not pleased)

Did you?

LUCRETIA

Yes. For tomorrow.

ILITHYIA

Oh, was it?

(laughs, to Licinia)

I pray I have not interrupted important proceedings.

LICINIA

(covering)

On the contrary. We were only just speaking of you and your gladiator. What was his name? The Celt...

ILITHYIA

Segovax.

LICINIA

Yes, Segovax. Pity. Perhaps you should buy several next time. Until you get the hang of it.

Ilithyia forces a smile. Lucretia intervenes.

LUCRETIA

It is a difficult process. Very few live to see the test, fewer still the arena. My husband demands only the best.

LICINIA

As do we all. Forgive my haste, but my own husband expects me.

She kisses Lucretia on the cheek.

LICINIA (cont'd)

I look forward to our next encounter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Licina exits, giving Ilithyia a measured smile as she passes. Ilithyia eyes her as she disappears down the hall.

ILITHYIA
She favors you.

LUCRETIA
And I her.

ILITHYIA
It warms the heart, to know my
hands are responsible.

LUCRETIA
Let me take them in thanks.

Lucretia takes her hands, moving to kiss her cheek. Ilithyia adjusts, kissing Lucretia on the lips.

ILITHYIA
You should be more careful.

Lucretia eyes her, not sure of her meaning. Ilithyia laughs.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
With Licinia. She is of a strata
above your station, and will not
hesitate to remind you of it if her
mood shifts. And it shifts
frequently.

Lucretia smiles, giving nothing away.

LUCRETIA
I am well versed in dealing with
such people.

ILITHYIA
Of course you are.

She hooks her arm in Lucretia's, strolling through the villa.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
Am I going to be invited?

LUCRETIA
Invited? To what?

ILITHYIA
The masquerade.

Lucretia tenses, tries to cover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
Oh come, you think I had not noticed the mask she was attempting to conceal? Am I to be excluded, then?

LUCRETIA
You are mistaken. There is no masquerade. She merely borrows the visage of Diana.

ILITHYIA
To avoid "complications"?

Lucretia tenses. Ilithyia clocks the reaction with a grin.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
A wealthy woman of status visiting a ludus... Concealing masks and whispering of complications... If I did not know better, I would suspect intent to fuck one of your gladiators.

LUCRETIA
Ilithyia --

Ilithyia squeals in delight.

ILITHYIA
She is, isn't she? That little whore! How positively depraved!

LUCRETIA
(panicked)
I promised discretion. You must not breathe a word of this.

Ilithyia takes Lucretia's arm again, her eyes twinkling.

ILITHYIA
I would never think it. You have been a most valued friend. And this will be our little secret...

Ilithyia smiles warmly. Lucretia forces one of her own, knowing that Ilithyia now has the advantage over her. The only question is how she will use it...

INT. BEDCHAMBER/BATH - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

BATIATUS has just come from the bath. SLAVES dry, perfume, and dress him. He frowns sourly, not caring for the news Lucretia brings.

LUCRETIA
I can control her.

BATIATUS
Ilithyia?
(snorts)
Like you did with her and Segovax?
She had her own man make attempt on
Spartacus, under our very roof. And
you yet speak of control.

LUCRETIA
Spartacus inflames her beyond
reason. Licinia is another matter.
Even Ilithyia has sense enough to
fear reprisal from the cousin of
Marcus Crassus.

BATIATUS
As she should. Jupiter's cock, the
man shits gold! The favor of such
an ally in Rome could pave my way
to a seat in the senate...

LUCRETIA
There is one small obstacle.
Licinia desires the touch of our
champion.

BATIATUS
Spartacus? He will not be
difficult.

LUCRETIA
He is always difficult.

BATIATUS
In a past that no longer exists. I
shall command... and it shall be
done.

He pulls her into a heated kiss, confident and in charge.

INT. TROPHY ROOM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Two GUARDS escort Spartacus in. Batiatus meets him, waves the Guards back.

BATIATUS

The Champion of Capua arrives! A man who so terrifies Jupiter the clouds burst and the heavens weep!

SPARTACUS

My glory is but a reflection of my dominus.

BATIATUS

You flatter!

SPARTACUS

I return in kind.

Batiatus laughs, enjoying that.

BATIATUS

And the gods take notice. Just when I thought we had accrued every accolade possible, yet another falls to us from the heavens. Fair Licinia, cousin of Marcus Crassus himself, has personally requested you.

SPARTACUS

Crassus?

BATIATUS

The richest man in all the Republic.

SPARTACUS

A great honor. Who will be my opponent?

BATIATUS

Opponent?!

(laughs, delighted)

Licinia has no interest in watching you fight. Her desires are of a more... intimate nature.

Spartacus takes that in with a troubled frown.

SPARTACUS

I am to lie with her?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS
And shame all men who follow.

SPARTACUS
(a beat)
Such things are asked of a
champion?

Batiatus senses resistance.

BATIATUS
They are.
(a beat)
You have concern?

A beat. Then Spartacus locks eyes with Batiatus.

SPARTACUS
I am the champion of Capua. I shall
perform all duties required of me.

Batiatus beams, pleased at the response.

BATIATUS
Bring her to satisfaction. And see
our fortunes rise along with your
cock.

Batiatus moves off, WIPING US TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

TIGHT ON STITCHES being removed from a freshly healed wound.

MEDICUS (O.S.)
Is there discomfort?

WIDEN TO REVEAL CRIXUS sitting on a table, being tended by
the MEDICUS. There is obvious discomfort, but Crixus refuses
to let it show.

CRIXUS
None.

Medicus snorts, not believing it.

CRIXUS (cont'd)
How long before I return to
training?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDICUS

The fact that you yet walk among
the living is marvel in itself. To
press the blessing --

CRIXUS

How long?

The Medicus considers the question with a frown.

MEDICUS

A week. Perhaps two --

CRIXUS

Tomorrow.

MEDICUS

No. It is much too soon.

Crixus stands, looming over the Medicus.

CRIXUS

Tomorrow.

The Medicus gauges the situation, nods.

MEDICUS

Tomorrow, then.

ASHUR

A glorious day, too long in coming!

They look over to find ASHUR hobbling in.

ASHUR (cont'd)

Crixus! Risen from the dead! And
Ashur, finally freed of his
shackles, to take up sword again!

Crixus glances at Ashur's leg brace.

CRIXUS

You would resume training? As a
gladiator?

ASHUR

I yet bear the mark.

Ashur holds out his forearm, showing the brand of Batiatus:
the Mark of the Brotherhood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR (cont'd)
And long to stand with my brothers,
once more upon the sands of the
arena.

CRIXUS
Perhaps this time you will have
sense to stay out of my way.

Crixus exits. Ashur glares after him, all trace of
pleasantries replaced by thoughts of vengeance.

ASHUR
(to Medicus)
Take this fucking thing off me.
Now.

The Medicus moves to comply. OFF Ashur, burning with
hatred...

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

CLOSE ON LUCRETIA, lips slightly parted in absent pleasure.

LUCRETIA
He gave you no pause?

WIDEN TO REVEAL Batiatus ramming a SLAVE GIRL from behind as
she goes down on Lucretia. Naevia is absent.

BATIATUS
None. Our dog... is finally
housebroken...

LUCRETIA
You were wise... to put down his
bitch...

They climax together. Batiatus withdraws with a laugh,
pushing the Slave Girl aside.

BATIATUS
Bring us wine.

The Slave Girl exits. Batiatus nestles Lucretia, his lips
finding hers.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
Everything comes to plan. We shall
have Licinia's wet gratitude, and
with it the ear of Marcus Crassus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

If Spartacus performs as promised.

BATIATUS

Every breath he takes is in service
to the glory of this house.

LUCRETIA

I know he is willing. But it has
been many months since he last lay
with a woman. After such a time,
his passion may be... all too
brief.

Batiatus considers that with a frown as the Slave Girl and
Mira enter with the wine, pour.

BATIATUS

That would prove unfortunate.

LUCRETIA

Yet easily avoided, if Spartacus
were to be presented opportunity to
hone his skills beforehand...

OFF Lucretia as she sips her wine, a salacious smile bending
her lips...

OMITTED

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus enters his cell and freezes, tensing. REVEAL
Mira, lounging naked on his bed, eyes smoldering, a sultry
smile on her lips.

SPARTACUS

You have wandered to the wrong
cell.

MIRA

(knowing the answer)
Are you not Spartacus? Bringer of
Rain? I am Mira. I have been sent
to please you.

SPARTACUS

To what end?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRA

Is your pleasure not an end to
itself?

SPARTACUS

I do not care for games. Give your
true purpose.

She hesitates. He yanks her up.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

Find your tongue!

MIRA

Domina fears it has been too long
since you were last with a woman.
That you will be unable to withhold
your seed long enough to please the
Roman woman.

A beat. Spartacus releases her. His manner softens -- but
not his words.

SPARTACUS

The notion offends me. As does your
presence.

He picks her garment up off the bed, shoves it into her
hands. She stares at him, surprised.

MIRA

You do not desire me?

Spartacus removes his towel and climbs into bed, turning
away from her.

SPARTACUS

I desire only sleep. And the
absence of dreams.

He closes his eyes. She stands for a moment, uncertain, then
exits, WIPING US TO --

INT. MESS HALL/PANTRY - BATIATUS' LUDUS/VILLA - NIGHT

HECTOR, a handsome, rugged guard, unlocks the pantry gate
for a now-dressed Mira. She disappears up the stairs to the
villa as he locks the gate and moves off on his rounds. A
beat. ADJUST to find

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NAEVIA

emerging from the shadows of the pantry, having narrowly escaped detection. She presses against the gate, her eyes desperately searching for

CRIXUS,

who appears from the shadows of the mess hall. He quickly steps up to the gate and kisses her passionately through the bars. Crixus grips the iron bars, hissing his frustration.

CRIXUS

The gods grant me strength to tear these bars from their fucking moorings.

NAEVIA

We were fools to think they would favor us.

CRIXUS

We yet share a roof. It would not be so had Dominus sold me to Vibius. Is that not some proof that our union is favored?

NAEVIA

To have you, but not have you. It is a wound beyond healing.

Crixus gently caresses her cheek.

CRIXUS

All wounds heal. Even the deepest.

She takes his hand, tears coursing down her face.

NAEVIA

Would that they had never been inflicted.

CRIXUS

You would wish never to have known my heart?

SOUNDS from the villa above draw her attention. She kisses him quickly without answering, hurries up the stairs. OFF CRIXUS, left uncertain by the exchange...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE/BALCONY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

SWORDS CLASH as the day's training begins. Spartacus and Varro exchange blows. Varro pauses, catching sight of

CRIXUS

as he strides out into the square, looking like he owns the fucking place. The other men pause to watch his triumphant return.

VARRO

The Undefeated Gaul returns.

Spartacus gives Crixus a dismissive glance.

SPARTACUS

Perhaps it is time he chose a new name.

ANGLE ON DOCTORE as he clasps arms with Crixus.

DOCTORE

My spirit soars to see you again upon the sands.

CRIXUS

(a vulpine grin)
The underworld would not have me.

Doctore turns to the men.

DOCTORE

Take note, you worthless fucks! A true champion rejoins the Brotherhood!

He tosses Spartacus a pointed look as half the men hustle over to welcome Crixus back. Agron spits in disgust, snorting to Duro.

AGRON

Champion of ass and balls.

ADJUST off Crixus and the men to

THE BALCONY

where Lucretia watches with an appreciative smile. Naevia hovers nearby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

Has there ever been such a man as
Crixus?

NAEVIA

No, Domina. There has not.

Her eyes fill with longing and regret, unnoticed by Lucretia as Batiatus joins them from the triclinium.

BATIATUS

Praise the gods for his return.

LUCRETIA

May they see him to many victories.

BATIATUS

And our purse filled by such.

LUCRETIA

Yes. Filled to bursting.

Lucretia smiles, but as she turns back to Crixus it is clear that her interest has nothing to do with monetary gain.

TRAINING SQUARE

Crixus slides his arm into a practice shield and takes a wooden sword offered by Doctore. He grips it with deep satisfaction.

DOCTORE

You will spar with Duro --

CRIXUS

The German? He has yet to step in
the arena.

DOCTORE

And you have been long absent.
Prove yourself with the man and see
advancement.

ASHUR (O.S.)

And who shall face Ashur?

They turn to find Ashur striding up with a practice sword, leg brace removed but a slight limp still in evidence.

ASHUR

Choose carefully, for I long for
blood.

Doctore glances at Ashur's leg, locks eyes with a frown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

You train?

ASHUR

I do.

DOCTORE

By whose word?

ASHUR

The Dominus himself promised that I would rejoin the Brotherhood as soon as I was free of that fucking brace --

BATIATUS (O.S.)

Ashur.

Ashur glances up to the balcony. Batiatus motions him up to the villa.

BATIATUS

A word.

Batiatus disappears back inside. Ashur's proud smile wilts. Crixus laughs.

CRIXUS

The master calls his dog to his lap.

A knot of Gladiators laugh as Crixus moves to spar with Duro.

DOCTORE

(to Ashur)

Consider yourself fortunate. The lowest among us would have ended you.

He takes the practice sword from Ashur, WIPING US TO --

INT. ATRIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Ashur follows Batiatus, pleading his case.

ASHUR

What of my victory over Hasdrubal?
How the crowd roared when I clove
his head in two?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

A minor triumph, long forgotten.

ASHUR

Kleitos, then! Or -- or Lysimachos
--

BATIATUS

All many seasons ago. Your days as
a gladiator are past.

ASHUR

Dominus, I beg you. Let me prove
myself yet worthy.

Batiatus pauses.

BATIATUS

You already have. Outside the
arena. Your cunning is far sharper
than any gladiator's sword. I would
not risk it on errand of foolish
pride. We are in agreement?

Despondent but resigned, Ashur nods.

ASHUR

Your will, Dominus.

BATIATUS

Let us turn to business, then.
(continues walking)
I have had thoughts toward
Solonius. I would discuss them on
way to market...

A downtrodden Ashur follows Batiatus into his office, their
motion WIPING US TO --

INT. MASTER BATH - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

A CASCADE of STEAMING MILK pours from an urn over Lucretia's
shoulders as she luxuriates in a MILK-BATH. Naevia washes
her back with a sea-sponge.

LUCRETIA

Did you note any sign of discomfort
as he took to the sand?

NAEVIA

No, Domina.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

He is eager to regain his place. I would not see him overreach, nor hide pain from his recovery. If you notice Crixus attempting to conceal anything from me, tell me immediately.

Naevia averts her eyes, the dangerous irony of that not lost on her.

NAEVIA

Yes, Domina.

Mira enters with a fresh urn of hot milk. She pours it into the tub, nervously avoiding eye-contact with Lucretia.

LUCRETIA

The opposite sex has no sense when it comes to their limits. They must be constantly watched, least they harm themselves in the simple act of being men.

Mira turns to leave.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)

Wait.

Mira turns back, her eyes downcast in respect -- and fear.

MIRA

Domina.

LUCRETIA

How did Spartacus fare last night? Was his cock of impressive size when engorged? How many times did he have you? Speak.

Mira shifts nervously.

MIRA

(soft)
He would not have me.

Lucretia levels a withering gaze. A beat.

LUCRETIA

He would not?

MIRA

No, Domina.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

Yet you wait until now to tell me?

MIRA

I - I was afraid you would be displeased.

LUCRETIA

(a beat)

Take your dress off.

Mira complies, eyes never rising to meet Lucretia's. Naevia subtly averts her own, not wishing to add to the girl's embarrassment as Lucretia assesses her body.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)

Your tits. Your ass, your cunt. They appear without deformity or disease. Which means the fault is not in the flesh, but in the bitch.

MIRA

Apologies, Domina.

Lucretia considers her for a long beat, returns her attention to her bath.

LUCRETIA

Return to his cell tonight. I expect his cock inside you. Or you will find a sword in its place.

Lucretia waves her away. OFF Mira, fear constricting her face as she exits, WIPING US TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

The Gladiators spar and work various training stations. Crixus, intent on proving that he's in full form, viciously presses Duro. Duro gets cracked, stumbles back, fighting to catch his breath.

DURO

This isn't... the arena...

CRIXUS

The world is my arena, pup.

Crixus charges, his sword a blur. Duro struggling to deflect them, fails. Crixus sends him crashing to the sand, dazed and spitting blood. Crixus laughs, turning to Doctore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS (cont'd)
Send me a man to fight, Doctore --

WHAM! Agron slams into Crixus, knocking him off his feet. The two men struggle, throwing punches.

DOCTORE
Stand down! Agron!

He grabs Agron by the hair, hurls him off Crixus. Duro rushes to help him. Crixus leaps to his feet. Doctore restrains him with a palm to his chest.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
Enough.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
(to Agron and Duro)
Half rations for the remainder of the week. Test my patience again and I will see you both to the mines!

Duro and Agron move off, glaring at Crixus as they pass Spartacus and Varro drinking from the rain barrel.

SPARTACUS
Crixus continues making friends.

Varro nods absently, lost in thought as he drinks.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
Yet no word from your wife?

VARRO
And none forthcoming. I have no more coin to pay Ashur for the service of letters.

Spartacus follows Varro's gaze, sees Ashur at the ludus gate with Batiatus, preparing to leave.

SPARTACUS
You will dishonor us, if your mind is not on the games. Tell the jackal I will cover the cost.

VARRO
I will repay you.

SPARTACUS
Quickly. Before he departs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Varro hurries off to catch Ashur.

CRIXUS (O.S.)
Your man has taken afoot.

Spartacus turns to find Crixus coming up, practice sword and shield in hand.

CRIXUS
Perhaps you would care for a real opponent.

Spartacus considers him for a moment.

SPARTACUS
Are you so eager to return to the Medicus?

Crixus' hand tightens round the handle of his sword. But before he can respond Hector the guard interrupts.

HECTOR
Crixus. You are summoned.

Crixus glares at Spartacus.

CRIXUS
Soon.

He turns and follows Hector, WIPING US TO --

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Crixus slams Lucretia, his eyes still smoldering from his exchange with Spartacus. She grips his hair, pulling him into an animal kiss as they climax together. Crixus slides off of her, preparing to go. Lucretia stops him.

LUCRETIA
Tarry a moment.

Crixus registers surprise at the unusual request.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Dominus is yet at the marketplace.
And Ilithyia is not expected for several hours.

Crixus nods, settling back in next to her, unsure of what to make of this. She takes his hand, moves it gently across her stomach.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Is my skin not soft?

CRIXUS
Yes, Domina.

LUCRETIA
I had the slaves draw a milk bath,
recalling how much it pleased you
when we could afford such things...

She begins tracing Crixus' scars with her fingers.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Do they yet cause you pain?

CRIXUS
No, Domina.

LUCRETIA
I wish I could say the same. It
was agony to watch such perfection
marred by Theokoles.... When you
fell to your knees, the giant at
your back... My heart seized in my
chest, threatening to never beat
again. And then you looked up to
the pulvinus. To me. What was of
your mind, in that frozen moment
between life and death?

Crixus considers the question, the memory yet fresh.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ARENA/PULVINUS - CAPUA - DAY (FLASHBACK EP. 105)

[NOTE: ALREADY SHOT] Crixus falls to his knees, bloodied
and defeated. THEOKOLES moves in behind him for the death
blow. Crixus looks up to the pulvinus.

CRIXUS' POV

scanning the crowd. PAUSE BRIEFLY ON Lucretia, gazing at
us, distraught, then MOVE UP AND LAND ON NAEVIA.

BACK TO CRIXUS

as a faint smile bends his lips at the sight of her, the
reason for his own heart to beat.

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Crixus is still in the moment, speaking of the absent Naevia.

CRIXUS

That I welcomed the afterlife,
having lived to know the love of a
goddess.

Lucretia is deeply moved, believing the words meant for her.

LUCRETIA

Not even death could keep us from
each other's arms. You will always
be mine, Crixus.

She nestles in close, her head on his chest.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)

And mine alone.

OFF CRIXUS, the proclamation giving him no comfort...

EXT. MARKET ALLEY - CAPUA - DAY

SOLONIUS negotiates with a GRAIN MERCHANT, examining open sacks of unmilled barley and wheat.

SOLONIUS

The drought recedes and yet your
prices rise. My friend the
Magistrate would surely frown upon
such larceny...

ANGLE ON Batiatus and Ashur observing him from across the market. Batiatus' eyes burn with the cold flame of revenge.

BATIATUS

You are clear to your purpose?

ASHUR

(morose)
Yes, Dominus.

Batiatus considers Ashur's obvious mood.

BATIATUS

I know your desires were toward the
arena. Do not let such
disappointments cloud the matter at
hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR
 (indicating his
 hands)
 They are yours to command, Dominus.

BATIATUS
 Inform when the deed is done.

Batiatus exits through the crowd, away from Solonius. Ashur watches him go, his loyal eyes filling with resentment as he considers his options.

ON SOLONIUS

as he drops coins in the Merchant's hand with a show of disgust.

SOLONIUS
 Five sacks, for the price of ten.
 And see to it they are dry this
 time, shit whore. The last ones
 stank of mold.

ASHUR
 Do not churn, good Solonius.

Solonius turns to find Ashur approaching.

ASHUR (cont'd)
 The thief will suffer when prices
 plummet with the next harvest.

SOLONIUS
 I pray his cock follows the
 decline.
 (looks for Batiatus)
 You are left off leash?

ASHUR
 My master is for his villa. I yet
 have business to attend.
 (a whisper)
 And words, searching for receptive
 ears.

Solonius gauges that, nods as he moves away from the Merchant.

ASHUR (cont'd)
 My situation has shifted.

SOLONIUS
 And with it, your loyalties?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR

Batiatus proves himself unworthy,
as you had divined.

SOLONIUS

Such base character seldom weighs
the true worth of a man.

ASHUR

I trust your scales are more in
balance. I hold valuable news.
Beyond the meager recompense you
offered when last we spoke.

SOLONIUS

(wonders aloud)

I am surrounded by jackals...

ASHUR

It concerns your life. If that is
no cause to loosen your purse...

Ashur starts to turn away.

SOLONIUS

Wait.

Solonius withdraws his purse, slips Ashur a few coins.
Ashur stares at him. Solonius sighs, hands him the entire
purse.

SOLONIUS (cont'd)

You have picked my bones clean.
Speak, before I reclaim the meat.

ASHUR

You fuck the whore Despoina on this
night every week, do you not?

SOLONIUS

Your voice what is already well
known to me.

ASHUR

Send another cock in your place.
Or see it removed along with your
head.

SOLONIUS

(tensing)

Batiatus moves against me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR

I am to pay his agent, and see the order given. You have been warned.

Ashur slips away into the crowd. OFF Solonius, darkening...

INT. BATIATUS' VILLA - SUNSET

Lucretia walks with Ilithyia, who takes in the now opulent villa with appreciation.

ILITHYIA

I really cannot believe the difference. When I first entered your home, I felt great sorrow for the woman forced to live in such conditions. Now look at you. Surrounded by opulence rivaling families of proper heritage.

Lucretia smiles warmly through the veiled slight.

LUCRETIA

Trinkets, not nearly valued as much as your friendship.

ILITHYIA

You have many new friends of late. You and Licinia seem quite at ease with one another.

Lucretia tenses, wishing to avoid the subject.

LUCRETIA

Gratitude for the introduction. Would you care for some wine or --

Ilithyia sighs, flustered.

ILITHYIA

Wine will not still my thoughts. I prattle on with pleasantries, but I cannot pretend indifference to what you revealed about Licinia.

LUCRETIA

I revealed nothing. You leapt to conclusions.

ILITHYIA

And landed on proper footing. Ever since, I can think of nothing else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

With respect, Licinia's passions
are her own concern.

ILITHYIA

(laughs)

My mind falls not to Licinia. It
is filled with baser thoughts. A
vision of brutish hands being laid
upon me... in a manner quite
lacking in my husband's touch.

(breaking from it)

I should not speak of such things.
I dishonor myself.

Lucretia considers this as a welcome surprise. The fly has
at last wandered into the web.

LUCRETIA

Your desires should not shame you.
You are a woman. And our needs are
vast.

ILITHYIA

I must put my mind from it.

LUCRETIA

To the purpose of distraction?

ILITHYIA

Preferred to discovery. Such a
thing would ruin my husband, and
taint my father's name.

LUCRETIA

Such concerns have been voiced by
all those who have partaken of our
wares. Can you name any, save
Licinia?

ILITHYIA

I have heard of none.

LUCRETIA

No. You have not.

Lucretia smiles wryly, her point having been made. Ilithyia
beams at the thought of getting away with such a thing.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)

Shall I make arrangement?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ilithyia teeters on the edge of impropriety, finally pitches over with a scandalous giggle.

ILITHYIA

Yes!

LUCRETIA

You will not be disappointed. May I suggest Varro? You seemed quite taken by the prowess he displayed the eve of the Vulcanalia.

ILITHYIA

Varro? Far too common. The man must equal the risk.

She locks eyes with Lucretia, a knowing smile creasing her lips.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)

A fact well known by your own desires. Ones that I admittedly share...

OFF LUCRETIA, realizing she has been maneuvered...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

AN ORNATE VASE SMASHES against a wall. WIDEN to reveal Lucretia destroying the bedroom in a full-on Citizen Kane rage. Naevia and other SLAVES scamper out of the way.

NAEVIA

Domina --

LUCRETIA

Out! Out of my fucking sight!

She sweeps her perfume and oils from her vanity, the vessels CRASHING to the floor. Naevia and the Slaves comply, passing Batiatus as he hurries in.

BATIATUS

My ears suggest a tempest, but eyes reveal a wife gone fucking mad!

LUCRETIA

Look to that bitch Ilithyia as the cause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Batiatus scowls, picking up the shattered pieces of the ornate vase.

BATIATUS

What new slights have prompted you to such costly eruption?

LUCRETIA

Her cunt overflows at the thought of Licinia bedding a gladiator. She desires equal treatment, and has set her lust upon Crixus!

Batiatus considers that for a moment.

BATIATUS

And her choice drove you to rage?

Lucretia realizes she's slipped, quickly recovers.

LUCRETIA

It was not her choice, but her manner that offended. Honey drips from her tongue, concealing the bite of piss she showers upon us.

BATIATUS

The acrid taste is well familiar...

He strokes her hair, trying to calm her.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

... but we must swallow it, along with our pride until we have secured her husband's patronage.

LUCRETIA

What use is Glaber when Licinia can give us Marcus Crassus?

BATIATUS

Crassus' wealth is undeniable, yet he holds but the rank of senator. Glaber outweighs with that of Legatus. The favor of both coin and title would speed our ambitions.

LUCRETIA

To rise you would have me kneel?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

One day soon we will give Ilithyia a lesson in manners. But for now, necessity dictates we give her Crixus. Make the arrangements.

OFF Lucretia, realizing she has no other choice...

INT. BATH - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Crixus stands like a bronze god as a SLAVE scrapes the grime off his chiseled flesh.

DURO (O.S.)

Fucking Gaul...

REVERSE TO FIND AGRON AND DURO, scraping the dirt off themselves as they glare at Crixus from across the bath.

AGRON

Turn your thoughts. I will have at him soon enough.

Duro moves off for more oil. Agron scrapes, his eyes attempting to incinerate Crixus from a distance.

SPARTACUS

You wish your brother dead?

Agron turns to find Spartacus behind him, SLAVES scraping him.

AGRON

Who speaks such a thing?

SPARTACUS

Your actions.

AGRON

I only look to protect him.

SPARTACUS

And who will do so in the arena, where every man must stand alone? You do him no favors.

Varro's ANGRY VOICE pulls Spartacus' attention to the entrance of the bath.

VARRO (O.S.)

You lie!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Varro slams Ashur against the wall by his throat, eyes wild, intent on further violence.

SPARTACUS

Varro.

Spartacus approaches. Varro hisses to Ashur.

VARRO

Tell him you lie!

ASHUR

(to Spartacus)

I did only what you paid me to do.
I sought out his wife, but she was
not there.

SPARTACUS

The boy?

ASHUR

I saw no one. But there was blood,
spilled upon the floor --

Varro screams, slugging Ashur. Ashur fights back, sending them both careening into the other men. Shouts erupt.

SPARTACUS

Varro! Gain your senses!

Spartacus tries to separate them. Varro screams in rage, his eyes wild. Doctore rushes in.

DOCTORE

Guards! GUARDS!

Chaos reigns as GUARDS rush in, WIPING US TO --

OMITTED

INT. HOLDING CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON HANDS being secured in shackles. POP WIDE to reveal Varro struggling as Guards chain him to the wall. They finish, exit. Varro rails and thrashes, desperately attempting to free himself.

SPARTACUS

They will not break.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spartacus appears from the shadows on the other side of the holding cell bars.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
I have tried.

Varro gives his chains a last violent yank, grunts in frustration.

VARRO
Speak to Batiatus.

SPARTACUS
Towards what purpose?

VARRO
You have his ear. If he would let me leave these walls for but a day or two --

SPARTACUS
He would not allow it.

VARRO
You will not even make attempt?

SPARTACUS
You are fortunate only to be chained. To petition Dominus with such insanity would only provoke further punishment. How would this help your cause?

Varro slumps in defeat.

VARRO
My cause is lost.

SPARTACUS
Ashur saw only blood. No bodies. Which means your wife and child may yet be living.

VARRO
The gods punish me, for failing them.

SPARTACUS
The gods rarely take note of fools. Now pull head from ass and use it for once! Where would your wife and boy flee, if set upon? Think.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OFF VARRO as he gropes for the answer -- and the frail sliver of hope...

INT. MESS HALL/PANTRY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

GUARDS pass by on their rounds. Crixus disengages from the shadows, quickly moves to the pantry gate -- and tenses to find Naevia absent on the other side. His eyes scan the darkness, futilely searching for her.

CRIXUS
(soft)
Naevia?

No reply. He turns from the bars, troubled by her absence.

DOCTORE
The hour is late.

Doctore appears from the ludus.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
You should be in your cell.

CRIXUS
(covering)
I could not sleep. My mind burns with hope and desire... for the arena.

DOCTORE
Embrace the sands of time. As they flow, I harbor no doubt you will again be a champion.

CRIXUS
(bitter)
Capua already has its champion.

DOCTORE
Spartacus bears but the title. I look towards a man of honor to reclaim it.

Crixus registers surprise at that. OFF his smile, realizing he has an unexpected ally in his quest to regain his position...

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus sleeps. PAN to the door as it slowly creaks open. A SHADOW slips in, cautiously creeping toward Spartacus, bending close. WHAM! Spartacus snaps awake, instantly grabbing the intruder by the throat. He freezes, realizing it's Mira.

SPARTACUS
If you value your life... never
awaken a gladiator.

MIRA
Please... Domina sent me...

Spartacus releases her.

SPARTACUS
Return the way you came.

MIRA
Why do you refuse me? Am I not
pleasing...

She lets her gown fall to the floor, revealing her naked perfection. Spartacus never takes his eyes from hers.

SPARTACUS
I have no desire to lie with a
woman who has been commanded to do
so.

MIRA
And what do you think will happen
if I fail such a command?

Spartacus hears the fear in her words, frowns.

SPARTACUS
Stay then.

She smiles, taking a step towards his bed.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
On the floor.

He tosses her a ratty blanket.

MIRA
Is there nothing I can do for the
Champion of Capua...?

Spartacus considers her, a thought forming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

There is one desire I would have serviced. If you are able...

OFF Mira, her sultry smile broadening at the prospect...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE/BALCONY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - MORNING

Spartacus annihilates RHASKOS in the morning's training. Crixus glances over, dissecting the Champion's moves for future reference as he again spars with Duro.

THE BALCONY

Batiatus grins to Lucretia.

BATIATUS

Spartacus breathes fire this morning.

Mira appears, setting breakfast on a table. Lucretia eyes her with a knowing smile.

LUCRETIA

I wonder to the cause. Mira. How did your evening pass with our champion?

MIRA

He made... many demands of me.

BATIATUS

(laughs, impressed)
Many demands!

Batiatus slaps Mira on the ass as she exits.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

So our Thracian is ready to stud.

LUCRETIA

I will make arrangements for this very night.

BATIATUS

And when the sun rises, we will have road to Marcus Crassus.

(kissing her)
What of Ilithyia, and her desire for Crixus?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

I have already set plans to motion.

Lucretia gazes down at Crixus training in the morning sun, her emotions well concealed.

TRAINING SQUARE

Crixus fends off Duro, who is intent on making up for his earlier defeat. Crixus laughs, enjoying the challenge.

CRIXUS

Finally, the pup bares his teeth.

Agron glances over from his own sparring, grins at his brother's performance.

VARRO

is hauled out into the square by Hector and another GUARD and unceremoniously dumped to the sand. Doctore frowns at him.

DOCTORE

Perhaps next time thought will precede tongue. Pair with Spartacus.

Varro wearily complies. Spartacus eyes his friend's ragged condition.

SPARTACUS

(quietly)
Sleep did not come?

VARRO

Nor is it deserved.

SPARTACUS

Embrace dreams when the sun falls.
I have news.

VARRO

(brightening)
Aurelia...?

SPARTACUS

Not yet. But I have dispatched Mira, one of the house slaves, to look for her. And your son.

The encouraging words rally Varro.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRO

How do you manage such a thing?

SPARTACUS

Mira was sent by Domina. To prepare me for... certain duties required of a champion.

VARRO

(laughs)

So the gods throw women at you, now!

As they clash swords, MOVE ACROSS THE MEN to Crixus, expertly deflecting Duro's assault -- until his attention flickers to NAEVIA

in the pantry, talking with Hector. He unlocks the gate from the mess hall and joins her inside. As he shuts the gate behind him, she LAUGHS shyly, lightly touching his arm.

CRIXUS FILLS WITH RAGE,

Duro taking the unfortunate brunt of it. Crixus attacks, brutally dismantling the young gladiator.

AGRON

instinctively moves to protect his brother, but then stops short. He locks eyes with Spartacus, remembering his words from earlier, thinks better of it.

CRIXUS

spins, landing a VICIOUS CRACK TO DURO'S JAW, lifting him off his feet, BLOOD SPRAYING. He CRASHES TO THE HARD SAND. Doctore nods, pleased with the move.

DOCTORE

Your form returns. Pair with Hamilcar.

Crixus, chest heaving, moves to comply. His eyes fall to the pantry as he goes, his heart dropping as he finds Naevia and Hector now gone.

DURO

spits blood as he painfully rises, looking to his brother for support. Agron turns away, continues sparring. Varro catches the silent exchange.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRO

It appears Duro has lost his brother.

SPARTACUS

Better that than his head.

Spartacus slams into Varro, SMASHING US TO --

INT. OFFICE - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

A BLOODY SACK THUNKS onto the table. WIDEN TO REVEAL AULUS (the henchman that killed Sura in Ep. 106) having placed it there, Ashur by his side. Batiatus eyes the sack.

BATIATUS

It is done?

ASHUR

The whore Despoina fucks no more.

AULUS

Nor the man inside her when I slit her throat.

Batiatus shifts his eyes to Ashur, questioning.

ASHUR

It was not Solonius.

Batiatus considers that, opens the sack. He peers in, examining the head inside (which we do not see).

BATIATUS

Whose face do I look upon?

ASHUR

Kastor. One of Solonius' men.

Batiatus considers the head, his face unreadable. He closes the sack and tosses it back to Aulus.

BATIATUS

Send it to Solonius. Let him savor the relief of escaping death. For the moment.

OFF BATIATUS, already planning his next move...

OMITTED

INT. ATRIUM/VILLA - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Hector and another Guard escort Spartacus to the atrium where Lucretia awaits with Naevia. Lucretia waves the Guards off.

LUCRETIA

You will be bedding a proper Roman woman. Far beyond your station. Heed me well, that you not offend her.

SPARTACUS

Yes, Domina.

Lucretia moves through the villa. Spartacus follows, with Naevia in tow.

LUCRETIA

Speak not a word, nor make a sound, save one of pleasure. Follow her lead and anticipate her desires -- then fulfill them. Vigorously.

SPARTACUS

Yes, Domina.

LUCRETIA

In the arena, you are the Champion of Capua. But tonight, you are nothing more than a common slave. To do as commanded. Are we clear?

She stops at a dimly lit chamber where Mira and several other SLAVE GIRLS wait to prepare Spartacus.

SPARTACUS

We are clear, Domina.

Lucretia scrutinizes him for even the slightest sign of resentment or willfulness. Finds none.

LUCRETIA

(re: Mira and Girls)
They will prepare you for the festivities. Wait until summoned.

Spartacus gives her a head-bow and enters the chamber. Mira and the Slave Girls remove his subligaria. Lucretia takes a deep breath, steeling herself for what's to come.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
 (to Naevia)
 Bring our best wine. I wish to see
 my guest well plied when she
 arrives.

Naevia bows, exits. OFF Lucretia, the importance of the evening -- and something deeper -- weighing heavy...

INT. PANTRY - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Naevia descends the stairs. She moves to the wine jugs, searching for the right one. A silent beat, broken by --

CRIXUS
 Where were you?

She whirls, startled to see Crixus standing in the shadows outside the gate.

CRIXUS (cont'd)
 Last night. I waited to the point
 of discovery.

NAEVIA
 (going to him)
 I could not break away. I was
 tending to Domina.

CRIXUS
 Domina...? Or the guard I saw you
 with today.

Naevia half laughs, waving that away.

NAEVIA
 You are mistaken --

CRIXUS
 I am not blind. You laugh and
 touch his arm. The way he gazes at
 you...

NAEVIA
 If you are not blind, then you
 surely see that Hector gazes at all
 women in the same fashion.

CRIXUS
 I give no shit to other women. You
 shame me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She eyes him, her eyes burning that he could think such a thing.

NAEVIA
You shame yourself, with thoughts
of imaginary slights.

CRIXUS
I know what I saw.

NAEVIA
No. You do not. Nor did Hector...

She withdraws the GATE KEY from her robe, dangling from a length of cord. Crixus stares at it in shock.

CRIXUS
You stole his key?!

NAEVIA
The purpose of my smile and my
touch. The only one he received.

She opens the gate.

NAEVIA (cont'd)
I have but a moment before I must
return with Domina's wine. Use it
to apologize for ever thinking --

Crixus is on her as soon as the gate is open, pulling her into a desperate kiss.

CRIXUS
You are my heart... I shall never
doubt the beating of it again...

She kisses him hungrily, forgiving him. OFF their passion...

INT. CHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

QUICK RAMPED POPS as Mira and the Slave Girls rub Spartacus with a mixture of GOLD FLAKES, gilding every inch of his chiseled body. Mira peers up at him with deep longing and tenderness -- clearly this girl is developing feelings for Spartacus. The two lock eyes for just a moment, and then Spartacus looks away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A GOLDEN MASK OF APOLLO

is handed to Mira. SPARTACUS' POV as Mira places the mask over his face, WIPING US TO --

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

GUARDS stand at the periphery, blindfolded, as Spartacus steps into a BROAD SHAFT OF MOONLIGHT. MASKED AND COVERED IN GOLD, he looks every bit the naked, Roman god.

LICINIA

reclines on a nearby sofa, a cup of wine in her hand. She wears nothing except the WHITE PORCELAIN MASK OF DIANA and a loose wrap of diaphanous silk. Her mouth parts in astonishment as she takes in this figure of masculine perfection wrought in living gold.

LICINIA/DIANA RISES,

a goddess in her own right. The cup falls from her hand, forgotten as she joins Spartacus in the moonlight. Her hand trembles in sexual expectation as it touches his chest. An electric beat. She removes her hand, gazing at the gold dust now coating her palm. She looks up at Spartacus.

LICINIA/DIANA

(a whisper)

Take me.

Spartacus hesitates for a fraction of a second, then does as commanded. His hands find her flesh, possessing it as he eases her to the floor and enters her. She gasps in pleasure and pain, loving them both.

SERIES OF DISSOLVES

as Spartacus performs his duties as befitting a champion. She shudders and groans, crying out in rapture, losing herself deep in the animal passion of the illicit moment as she rides Spartacus like a caged beast, finally freed. Spartacus flips her on her back, mounts her. Long, deep, powerful thrusts, her legs wrapped tightly around his waist, hands clawing at his back.

LICINIA/DIANA (cont'd)

Fuck me, you filthy animal. Fuck me --

OTHER DIANA (O.S.)

What is this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They whip around to find Lucretia standing with ANOTHER DIANA, dressed and masked exactly the same.

LUCRETIA
Apologies, Licinia. It seems we've arrived before Ilithyia has finished with Spartacus.

Ilithyia (Licinia/Diana) stiffens, whirling to rip the mask off of Spartacus. She stares up at him in frozen horror.

ILITHYIA
No...

A slight smile of revenge bends Lucretia's lips. Instead of giving Ilithyia Crixus, Lucretia has maneuvered her into fucking the man she hates.

SPARTACUS
Ilithyia...?

Rage flashes across Spartacus' face as he realizes that he just fucked the wife of the man that sent his own into slavery. In a flash his hands are at her throat.

LUCRETIA
(stunned)
Guards! Guards!

The Guards rip off their blindfolds, tearing Spartacus away from Ilithyia. He struggles like a madman, enraged.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)
Remove him! Now!

The Guards haul the struggling Spartacus out of the room. Ilithyia chokes, gasping for air behind her mask. A tense beat -- broken by the Other Diana, aka the real Licinia, laughing as she removes her mask.

LICINIA
Oh, would this not set every tongue in Rome to wagging.

ILITHYIA
Stop laughing...

LICINIA
The wife of Legatus Claudius Glaber!

Ilithyia rises, pulling the mask from her face. Eyes wild and streaked with tears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA

Stop...

LICINIA

Fucking Spartacus, the man who
nearly ruined him!

LUCRETIA

It is a scandal, is it not?

LICINIA

The most splendid I have ever
heard.

ILITHYIA

STOP LAUGHING!

Ilithyia loses it. She smashes Licinia in the face with her mask. The mask shatters, sending Licinia crashing to the floor. Ilithyia pounces on her, repeatedly slamming her head into the floor.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)

Stop laughing! Stop laughing!

LUCRETIA

Ilithyia!

Lucretia pulls Ilithyia back, but it's too late. The back of Licinia's skull is crushed. Bits of brain stain the floor. She gurgles blood, spasms, lays still, eyes open.

A BLOOD SPLATTERED ILITHYIA

collapses into Lucretia's arms, sobbing. Lucretia stands frozen, realizing her little game has gone horribly awry. CAMERA PULLS OUT into an OVERHEAD SHOT: Lucretia cradling a tearful Ilithyia; Licinia, dead on the floor, her head haloed by a SLOWLY EXPANDING POOL OF BLOOD.

INT. BEDCHAMBER/PERISTYLE - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Shell-shocked, Ilithyia sits in the DEEP background on the edge of the bed, rocking mindlessly back and forth. RACK TO FOREGROUND as Batiatus rails at Lucretia in the peristyle.

BATIATUS

(harsh whisper)

What were you thinking?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

She slights me at every turn. I only wished to teach her a lesson.

BATIATUS

By pairing her with Spartacus?!

LUCRETIA

If my husband will not defend my honor, I am forced to do so myself.

BATIATUS

Honor? Is that why the cousin to Marcus Crassus lays dead in our fucking house?!

LUCRETIA

That was not my intent.

BATIATUS

Your intent matters for nothing. Fuck! We are undone!

LUCRETIA

No. Licinia came alone. She told no one of her purpose.

Batiatus freezes, wheels turning.

BATIATUS

No one?

LUCRETIA

Not even her slaves. There is nothing to connect her with the House of Batiatus... Once her body is disposed of.

BATIATUS

What of Ilithyia?

LUCRETIA

Leave her to me.

OFF LUCRETIA, darkening as she turns to Ilithyia in the bedroom...

INT. BATH - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus absently scrapes the gold flecks from his skin, lost in thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (O.S.)

Apologies.

Spartacus looks up to find Batiatus entering, a Guard stationed at the mouth of the bath.

BATIATUS

It was an unfortunate mistake,
coupling you with Glaber's wife.
Know that it was not my intent, nor
of my knowledge.

SPARTACUS

It is I who owes apology. For a
moment my hands were not my own,
but those of a man who no longer
exists.

Batiatus takes this in, nods.

BATIATUS

Let us not speak of this night
again.

He moves to exit, pauses in the doorway.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Spartacus. Your loyalty. It
honors this ludus.

Batiatus exits. OFF SPARTACUS, his body partially covered
in gold, neither man nor god...

INT. BEDCHAMBER - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Lucretia cradles Ilithyia in her arms, soothing the
traumatized woman.

ILITHYIA

I did not mean...

LUCRETIA

Of course you didn't.

ILITHYIA

The way she laughed at me.... You
said I was to lie with Crixus. Why
did you give Spartacus? Why would
you do such a thing?

Lucretia pins her with a hard look. The gloves are off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

You ask what you already know
answer to.

Ilithyia crumbles.

ILITHYIA

My husband will see me dead for
this... You have killed me...

LUCRETIA

No. I have brought us closer. No
one will ever know what happened
this night. And Licinia's body will
not be found. You are protected.

ILITHYIA

They will know. They will all see
the deed in my eyes.

LUCRETIA

Then you will stay here. With me.
Until your eyes are clear.

Ilithyia stares, trying to comprehend that through the
tears.

ILITHYIA

You would do such a thing? For me?

LUCRETIA

We have had our differences,
however veiled. But I have come to
realize what a valuable friend you
are.

She kisses Ilithyia on the mouth, a lingering, Judas-kiss.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)

And this will be our little secret.

Lucretia smiles, using Ilithyia's earlier words against her.
Ilithyia registers the sickening threat they carry, which
only serves to deepen Lucretia's smile...

BLACKOUT.

END OF EPISODE