

Great and Unfortunate Things

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FADE IN:

INT. HUT - THRACIAN VILLAGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

SURA and THE THRACIAN (Spartacus) fall back into bed, both breathing hard -- and smiling the type of smile that only earthshaking sex can elicit.

THE THRACIAN
(laughs)
That was... vigorous.

SURA
You seem the kind of man that could
take it.

THE THRACIAN
I am rather rugged...

She laughs as he kisses her, his hands exploring, gearing up for Round Two. She responds, then suddenly breaks off and slips out of bed.

SURA
The hour is late. Father will be
worried.

THE THRACIAN
As well he should be...

He reaches for her, trying to pull her back to bed. She laughs, moving out of reach to pull on her clothes.

SURA
I have to go.

THE THRACIAN
If you do, my heart will break.

She pauses, considering.

SURA
Ask me to stay.

THE THRACIAN
Stay.

SURA
Ask me. By my name.

The Thracian hesitates. He obviously doesn't know it. Sura laughs, far from angry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SURA (cont'd)
You do not even know it, do you?

The Thracian grins, caught.

SURA (cont'd)
Sura. My name is Sura.

THE THRACIAN
Sura.

He likes the feel of that on his tongue.

THE THRACIAN (cont'd)
As beautiful as the woman herself.
My name is --

SURA
Every woman knows who you are. And
to avoid you.

THE THRACIAN
That bad, am I?

SURA
The worst.

THE THRACIAN
(frowns)
Then why lay with a man of such ill
reputation?

SURA
Because the gods led me to your
bed.

The Thracian laughs.

THE THRACIAN
The gods?

SURA
They come to me. In my dreams.
They showed me the man you could
become.

Spartacus takes that in with a wry grin.

THE THRACIAN
Could?

SURA
If set upon the proper path.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE THRACIAN

And what else did the gods tell you
about my future?

She pauses at the flap to his hut. Radiant in the light, a soft, confident smile bending her lips.

SURA

That you will never love another
woman.

She slips out into the night. OFF THE THRACIAN, his own smile taking hold...

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON SURA'S LIFELESS FACE as a hand gently brushes a stray lock of hair aside. POP WIDE to reveal

SPARTACUS,

grief stricken as he prepares Sura's body for the pyre. He pulls out the PURPLE BINDING, kisses it, then places it in her hands folded across her chest. He pulls a WHITE SHROUD over her body, WIPING US TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus carries Sura's shrouded body towards a pyre in the center of the square. VARRO stands beside it with a torch. DOCTORE and the GLADIATORS ring the square. BATIATUS, LUCRETIA, and NAEVIA watch from the balcony.

SPARTACUS

gently places Sura's body onto the pyre. Varro solemnly hands him the torch. Spartacus gazes at his wife for one last anguished moment. He lights the pyre.

DOCTORE

stands stoically at the edge of the square. Despite his sympathy, he has not forgotten Spartacus' betrayal of drugging his wine (from episode 106).

PIETROS

stares sadly at the flames. His heart heavy with loss now that Barca is gone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GNAEUS

glances at Pietros, a hungry look filling his eyes.

ASHUR

chews seeds as he looks on from the shadows.

BATIATUS AND LUCRETIA

gaze down from the balcony. Lucretia glances at her husband, privy to the secret that Sura's blood stains his hands. But his attention never strays from the pyre, his eyes unreadable as the light from the flames plays across his face.

BACK TO SPARTACUS,

his eyes full of tears. His wife, his reason for living -- gone. SLOW PUSH IN ON SPARTACUS as the flames rise, consuming his heart...

INT. BATH - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A POOL as a steady stream of water fills it. Bloodstained hands dip into it. ADJUST to find Spartacus, alone, mechanically washing his wife's blood from his hands.

BATIATUS (O.S.)

The heart weighs heavy.

Spartacus looks up to find Batiatus has entered.

BATIATUS

So much hope in reunion. To come to such bitter end...

SPARTACUS

How is it so?

BATIATUS

(a beat, soft)

The fault lies with me.

Spartacus stares at him in surprise. But instead of confessing, Batiatus spins.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

The road traveled from Neapolis is known to be treacherous. I should have doubled the guards. Tripled them. I should have delayed

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)
granting Barca his freedom and sent
him along as well. I pray the gods
forgive my error.

SPARTACUS
No.

Anger flares in Spartacus' eyes. Batiatus tenses -- but
Spartacus turns away.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)
There is nothing for you to pray
for. You kept your word. The fault
lies with the men who took her
life. And with Claudius Glaber, who
condemned her to slavery.

BATIATUS
There is nothing to be done to
change what has passed. We must
look towards the future. You are
the Bringer of Rain. The Slayer of
Death. Together we will etch the
name Spartacus into the pillars of
history.

SPARTACUS
(soft)
Spartacus. That is not what she
called me. It is not my name.

BATIATUS
(a beat)
It is now.

Batiatus turns and exits. OFF Spartacus as he sits by the
bath, empty and truly alone...

INT. OFFICE CHAMBER - BATIATUS' VILLA - NIGHT

COINS spill across Batiatus' desk. ADJUST to find AULUS, the
driver of Sura's cart, as he scoops them up.

AULUS
Nearly a year you have me search
for the Thracian woman. Why have me
end her life short of the mark?

He looks up at Batiatus.

BATIATUS
An unfortunate necessity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lucretia appears in the doorway.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
I trust the sum sufficient?

AULUS
(nods)
If other "necessities" arise,
consider me your man.

He bows slightly before exiting. Lucretia watches him go, concerned.

LUCRETIA
A large expense, to have her
delivered all but dead. You could
just as easily have told Spartacus
she had perished abroad.

Batiatus pours two cups of wine.

BATIATUS
She was his life. The heart beating
beneath his chest. No. Such a man
would not believe her gone, unless
his own eyes told him it was so. It
was the only course.

LUCRETIA
(taking the wine)
One you could have told me you were
undertaking.

BATIATUS
I would keep such blood from your
hands, as I have said.

LUCRETIA
They hold yours. Are they not
stained by the touch?

BATIATUS
There has been too much death of
late. I would turn towards more
respectable ventures. With his wife
removed from thought, I will mold
Spartacus into a gladiator the
likes of which the world has never
seen. He has already defeated
Theokoles. Imagine what he will
accomplish once his mind has been
focused on nothing but victory.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCRETIA

You will be the greatest lanista in
all the Republic.

BATIATUS

And on that title we shall climb
beyond our station. Beyond Capua.
Perhaps to the very steps of the
senate itself...

OFF Batiatus, dreaming of such a day...

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON CRIXUS. Unconscious, tormented by fever. POP WIDE
to reveal Doctore looming over him. He casts a concerned
look to the MEDICUS, who mixes herbs into a paste.

DOCTORE

The fever grips him.

MEDICUS

Yet he lives. For the moment.

DOCTORE

I would know if his condition
changes.

MEDICUS

You and everyone else.

The Medicus applies the paste to Crixus' wounds. Doctore
lingers for a moment, turns to leave.

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Doctore moves down the corridor. Pietros falls in step.

PIETROS

A word, Doctore.

Doctore nods.

PIETROS (cont'd)

The birds, left in Barca's cell.
What should I do with them?

DOCTORE

(absently)
Whatever you wish.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pietros nods, his heart obviously broken.

PIETROS
He told me we would release them.
When he gained our freedom.

Doctore pauses.

DOCTORE
He intended your freedom as well?

PIETROS
That was his purpose in speaking
with Dominus. Ashur said the price
was too high for us both.

DOCTORE
Ashur?

PIETROS
He helped negotiate the sum.
(tentative)
Would it be all right if I kept
them? The birds?

DOCTORE
It would not cause notice.

Pietros forces a sad smile, turns and disappears down the
corridor. OFF Doctore, watching him go...

INT. BARCA'S CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

TIGHT ON A PIGEON in a cage being fed bits of stale bread.
POP WIDE to reveal Pietros kneeling by the cage, tears
filling his eyes. A SOUND pulls his attention to the
doorway. GNAEUS

looms there. Pietros eyes him with fear. Gnaeus grins with
lust. He moves in, his sweaty body WIPING US TO --

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - NIGHT

Spartacus sits in his cell, NUMERIUS' THRACIAN KNIFE (from
106) in his hand. A beat as he numbly considers the blade.

VOICE (O.S.)
That is unwise.

Spartacus looks up to find Varro in the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRO

If the guards were to see you with
it...

SPARTACUS

What could they do to me, that
hasn't already been done?

Varro has no response. A beat.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

I never should have left her.

VARRO

You did not leave her. She was
taken from you.

SPARTACUS

Before Glaber and the Romans.
Before I went to war. She asked me
not to go. Instead I prattled on
about blood and honor.

VARRO

You did what you thought was right.
To protect her.

Spartacus barely hears him, lost in his own grief.

VARRO (cont'd)

(re: knife)

You should toss that over the
cliff. Best to be done with such
thoughts.

A long beat. Spartacus doesn't look up.

SPARTACUS

(soft)

I never should have left her.

There's nothing Varro can say. OFF the anguished moment...

INT. BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

The villa is bustling with WORKERS and SLAVES. They hang
expensive FABRICS and place new STATUES. An ebullient
Batiatus strolls through the chaos with Lucretia.

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CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

(to a Slave)

Careful with that! It costs more than your worth.

LUCRETIA

Our house finally becomes livable again.

BATIATUS

Tilt your bow higher! We aim for the heavens! The Palace of Batiatus! Where dignitaries kneel to suck the cock of my good fortune!

LUCRETIA

(kissing him)

They will need to stand in line...

Naevia hustles in with the Medicus in tow. Lucretia breaks from the kiss, tenses with dread.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)

Crixus...?

OFF Lucretia's concern...

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Crixus, weak and his brow slick with sweat, tries to sit up. He grunts in pain.

MEDICUS

I told you to lay still!

The Medicus rushes over, Batiatus and Lucretia trailing him. Naevia stays a respectful distance back.

BATIATUS

Best to heed the advice. For a while we thought you for the afterlife.

LUCRETIA

Not all of us.

Crixus spots Naevia, who lights his soul with a subtle smile. He returns it, making it appear intended for Lucretia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS

When can I resume training?

BATIATUS

(laughs)

The man asks of training!

LUCRETIA

(to Medicus)

How soon?

MEDICUS

The injuries are severe. The fact that he lives is miracle in itself.

That dampens the mood. Lucretia forces a smile.

LUCRETIA

I fear you underestimate the man.

BATIATUS

(positive spin)

As many an opponent has in the arena, to their fatal regret!

(to Crixus)

Worry of nothing but recovery. The crowd will one day again roar the name Crixus!

He glances at the Medicus, his eyes revealing concern.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

A word.

Batiatus moves off into the corridor to consult with the Medicus. Lucretia takes the opportunity to slide in closer to Crixus, whispering in his ear.

LUCRETIA

It would be improper for me to visit you in the ludus. But know my thoughts are with you.

She glances at Batiatus and the Medicus to make sure they aren't looking, steals a quick kiss. Naevia tries not to react.

LUCRETIA (cont'd)

I will send Naevia often to attend your needs.

CRIXUS

A kindness appreciated, Domina.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He smiles in thanks, catching Naevia's eye. The joy of the unintentional excuse for them to be together barely concealed. Batiatus finishes with the Medicus.

BATIATUS

Lucretia?

LUCRETIA

(to Crixus)

Rest now. And worry of nothing.

She exits, Naevia following. OFF Crixus, his smile giving way to the crushing reality of his injuries...

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Spartacus stands at the cliff, looking out across the hills with heavy heart. Behind him the MEN assemble for the day's training.

VARRO

eyes Spartacus from across the square, deeply affected by his friend's loss. Ashur limps past.

VARRO

Ashur? A word.

ASHUR

Couple it with coin and make it a sentence.

VARRO

I would see a message delivered to my wife.

Ashur glances at Spartacus.

ASHUR

The Thracian's loss stirs you to letters. Ten sestercei will see it placed in her hands.

VARRO

Ten?

ASHUR

Five would also see it along. Eventually.

Varro frowns in acceptance. ACROSS THE SQUARE, Pietros hustles up to Spartacus with twin practice swords.

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CONTINUED:

PIETROS

Your swords for practice, Champion.

Spartacus takes them, pauses as he sees Pietros now sports a bruised cheek and a busted lip. Pietros looks away in shame. Doctore breaks the moment with a crack of his whip.

DOCTORE

The day's training begins. Pair up!

Pietros hustles off the sand as men move to comply. Varro heads for Spartacus.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Spartacus! I am your man.

(to Pietros)

Sword and shield!

The men register that with interest. Varro shoots Spartacus a worried look. Pietros hands Doctore a practice sword and shield. Doctore locks eyes with Spartacus as he moves into position.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

(sincerely)

Your wife's passing. It was an
unfortunate thing.

Spartacus nods, too filled with the grief of it to respond.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

As was your plan for escape.

Doctore attacks, the brutality of the assault driving Spartacus back. Varro and the men can't help but glance over during their own sparring. Spartacus recovers. The two men circle each other, eyes burning, voices harsh whispers.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

I have not tasted wine for many
years. Yet a single cup would not
rob me of my senses.

SPARTACUS

The choice was to see you sleep...
Or never awaken.

Doctore attacks. Blows are traded, each man drawing blood. They part, circling. Doctore wipes blood from his lip.

DOCTORE

Your victory over Theokoles... The
peace it brought my heart... It is

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE (cont'd)
the only reason Batiatus does not
know of your treachery. Champion or
no, you would be crucified.

SPARTACUS
Then part lips and see it done!

Spartacus attacks, rage flashing across his anguished face.
The two men exchange thunderous blows. They end up in a
stalemate, their swords both raised to crack each other's
skull. A frozen beat.

DOCTORE
Next time you seek escape... You
had best kill me.

Doctore turns his back on Spartacus and walks away. OFF
Spartacus, his rage draining away, replaced by crushing
grief... and regret that he was forced to betray Doctore...

INT. BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Batiatus greets MERCATO, the rich patron from ep. 103.
Workers and slaves are still working on the villa.

BATIATUS
Good Mercato! You must excuse the
chaos! I had hoped to see such
affairs completed before your
arrival.

MERCATO
(re: villa)
Fortune favors you.

BATIATUS
As it does all of Capua, since the
rains! Come. My day is pressed. Let
us to business.

They stroll.

MERCATO
To the matter then. I secured six
of your men for my games, honoring
the storied history of my family.
Arrangements made before the
Vulcanalia, if you recall.

BATIATUS
As if it were yesterday.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MERCATO

I have decided as highlight to reenact Rome's victory over the Maedi, the Thracian tribe that dared invade Macedonia. They were slaughtered for their insolence by my grandfather, Marcus Minucius Rufus.

BATIATUS

A name that yet carries weight, long after his passing!

MERCATO

I had planned for Crixus to play the very man himself, leading the charge.

BATIATUS

Apologies. Crixus yet recovers from his battle with Theokoles.

MERCATO

As I suspected.

BATIATUS

Perhaps Gnaeus, then?

MERCATO

I turn thought towards Spartacus.

Batiatus chuckles.

BATIATUS

He is much in demand.

MERCATO

The cost of such a thing?

BATIATUS

(considering)
An additional forty percent.

MERCATO

(frowns)
Prisoners to play the Thracians included?

BATIATUS

Consider it done.

Mercato beams, shaking on it (forearm to forearm).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MERCATO

I will see it announced all over
Capua! Spartacus, Slayer of
Theokoles! To assume the mantle of
my grandfather! A great day!

He hustles off, WIPING US TO --

INT. MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Gnaeus laughs at a table with RHASKOS, HAMILCAR, and a knot
of other sweaty men. Spartacus sits alone at another table,
absently eating his midday meal. Varro joins him, eyeing
Doctore who passes from the hall.

VARRO

(soft)
Doctore, then?

SPARTACUS

He knows.

VARRO

And here you sit, yet alive.

SPARTACUS

Yet.

Gnaeus brays, pulling Pietros onto his lap as he passes with
the water jug, causes him to spill it. Pietros squirms,
making Gnaeus laugh even harder.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

Pietros. Bring more water

The laughter dies out. Gnaeus stares at Spartacus, a "fuck
you" glinting in his eye.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

Now.

Gnaeus hesitates, releases the boy with a sneer. Pietros
exits. Spartacus goes back to his meal, eating without
thought or enjoyment.

VARRO

Fucking pig. The way he paws at the
boy...

SPARTACUS

The fault lies with Barca. For
leaving him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Varro's attention is pulled away by Ashur limping up.

VARRO
Is it delivered?

ASHUR
As promised.

Spartacus glances at Varro. Varro responds delicately, knowing the subject may be painful considering Spartacus' recent loss.

VARRO
A letter. To my wife.

SPARTACUS
(nods, soft)
Long overdue.

VARRO
(to Ashur)
Do you bring reply?

ASHUR
She did not favor me with one.

Varro can't conceal his disappointment.

ASHUR (cont'd)
She insisted on bringing you
message herself.

Ashur indicates towards the front gate. Varro's wife AURELIA, a young beauty in her early 20s, stands nervously with a Guard. In her arms is Varro's 2-year-old son JANUS. Varro rushes to them, kissing his wife and swinging his son up into his arms.

ASHUR (cont'd)
A tender moment. My heart erupts
with joy.

Ashur hobbles off, not at all touched. Spartacus takes in the reunion, eyes filling with sadness for the family he will never have. He rises to leave, his body WIPING US TO --

INT. HOLDING CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

The gate is closed behind Varro and his family. Varro still carries his son, thrilled to hold him in his arms again. Aurelia eyes her surroundings nervously.

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CONTINUED:

VARRO

How did you gain entry?

AURELIA

Your man Ashur spoke to Batiatus on my behalf.

VARRO

(snorts)

Did he ask coin for the service?

AURELIA

He said he would take the matter up with you.

Varro laughs, swinging his son up into the air.

VARRO

Who cares of coin on such a day!
The boy has grown monstrous! And his mother ever more beautiful...

(kissing her)

I have missed the taste of your lips.

She strokes her son's downy hair. As subtle avoidance.

AURELIA

Your letter came as a surprise. Every day I prayed for word. And that it would not be news of your death in the arena.

VARRO

We agreed no letters, Aurelia. To keep you and the boy far from this. And my mind on the task.

AURELIA

And what has changed?

VARRO

A friend. And his loss.

Aurelia laughs bitterly.

AURELIA

A friend. You are moved by a friend.

VARRO

I am moved by the need to see my wife. To know she is still real,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VARRO (cont'd)
and not the dream of a desperate
man.

(a beat)
Another year, and my debts will be
paid. We can start again. All of
us, together.

Her eyes fill with tears.

AURELIA
We should have just left. To
Pompeii. Or Sicilia.

VARRO
It would not have been honorable.

AURELIA
Honor? Where is the honor in debts
of gambling and chance? Where is
the honor in leaving your wife and
child?

VARRO
Every mistake I have made... I will
set right. I will be the man you
deserve. My life from this moment
on is yours, and yours alone.

She sees the sincerity of his words. Tears spill down her
cheeks.

AURELIA
(soft)
I am with child.

VARRO
Child?

Varro half smiles, not comprehending. His eyes drop to her
flat belly. His smile quickly follows.

VARRO (cont'd)
(hardening)
What is your meaning?

AURELIA
Varro --

VARRO
Your meaning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURELIA

Your absence has been difficult.
The money you send barely enough to
keep us fed and sheltered. Titus
offered assistance.

VARRO

Titus?

AURELIA

An acquaintance, from the
marketplace.

VARRO

And you repay him by spreading your
fucking legs?!

Janus starts crying. Aurelia takes him, trying to soothe
him.

AURELIA

No. I thought him only as a friend.
He forced himself upon me.

VARRO

Why didn't you stop him?

AURELIA

You think I wanted this? Where were
you, Varro? Where the fuck were
you?

That hits Varro hard. His own eyes well with tears.

VARRO

(soft)
Fighting. For us. As you should
have been.

AURELIA

Varro --

He turns away, signaling the Guard to open the gate. Janus
cries. OFF Aurelia, her own tears coursing down her cheeks
as Varro exits...

INT. TROPHY ROOM - BATIATUS' VILLA - DAY

Batiatus leads Spartacus in. Two Guards position themselves
at the entrance.

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CONTINUED:

BATIATUS

The House of Batiatus is filled
with champions.

(indicating statues)

My father's. My grandfather's. Soon
you will stand proud among them.
I've commissioned you to be
immortalized in stone, at great
expense.

SPARTACUS

(absently)

You honor me, Dominus.

BATIATUS

And the laurels do not cease there.
Good Mercato has insisted that
Spartacus be moved to the forefront
of his games! You will take the
guise of his storied grandfather,
Marcus Minucius Rufus!

Spartacus' brow knits in dark recognition.

SPARTACUS

Rufus?

BATIATUS

You know of him?

SPARTACUS

I have heard the name, spoken by my
father when I was a boy.

BATIATUS

You shall be dressed in his very
armor, leading four of our
gladiators bedecked as Roman
Legion.

SPARTACUS

(suspicious)

Our enemy?

BATIATUS

Six prisoners sentenced to
execution, clad in barbaric fashion
of the Thracian hordes of the
Maedi! It will be a grand
spectacle, with you its shining
helm!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

(a beat)

I will not fight.

Batiatus pauses, his genial smile remaining as an after image.

BATIATUS

You misunderstand. I do not ask. I command.

SPARTACUS

I will not dress as a Roman and pretend to slaughter my own people.

BATIATUS

Know your place!

(calming)

You are no longer of Thrace. The time has come for you to release your hold upon the past. You are destined for great and wonderful things, Spartacus. Embrace the path the gods have set you upon.

Spartacus glares, angry and defiant.

SPARTACUS

Dominus --

BATIATUS

Hold your reply. Your mind is clouded by grief. Pause to clear it.

Batiatus signals the Guards. OFF Spartacus weighing the exchange as they move in to return him to the ludus...

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

WIDE ON two Guards standing duty at the entrance. CAMERA MOVES PAST and inside to FIND Naevia gently sponging Crixus.

CRIXUS

(grumbling)

You bathe me as if a child.

NAEVIA

You must rest. And you are less than pleasing to the nose.

He chuckles at that, giving her a warm smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRIXUS
Your touch is welcomed.

NAEVIA
As is your voice. When you did not
awaken, I had feared the worst.

CRIXUS
Which has come to pass, if
Spartacus is now champion.

NAEVIA
The title temporary. Held only
until its true owner reclaims it.

CRIXUS
A feat not done from my backside.

Crixus starts to rise, grunts in pain. Naevia quickly
maneuvers him back down.

NAEVIA
Lay still. You will open your
wounds.

Crixus reluctantly complies, drained by the simple movement.

CRIXUS
I cannot even rise. Yet you promise
former glories.

NAEVIA
In time.

CRIXUS
Always the enemy of a gladiator.

NAEVIA
(whispered)
Yet friend to us now. Domina has
given excuse for us to be together.

She furtively takes his hand.

NAEVIA (cont'd)
Let us pluck blessing from
misfortune.

Crixus locks eyes with her. These two love each other, want
each other, but before things can go any further --

DOCTORE
Crixus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Their hands quickly part as Doctore strides in. Are they discovered?

DOCTORE (cont'd)
You live. My prayers, answered.

CRIXUS
I would have yet more prayer, to
speed me upon the sand amongst the
men.

DOCTORE
You shall rejoin your brothers soon
enough.

CRIXUS
Brothers? None visit me. Not even
Barca.

Doctore shoots Naevia a look. She avoids his gaze.

DOCTORE
Have you not told him?

NAEVIA
The moment has not arisen.

Crixus' face darkens, expecting the worst.

CRIXUS
Fallen, in the arena?

DOCTORE
Far the opposite. He has purchased
his freedom.

Crixus laughs, stunned.

CRIXUS
The Beast of Carthage? What is
Barca if not a gladiator?

DOCTORE
A man. Who now walks free beyond
these walls.

Crixus shakes his head, can't believe what he's hearing.

CRIXUS
The thought is foreign. Barca, the
giant fuck, tending goats and
picking vegetables? Pietros by his
side, ever the doting wife?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

Barca left absent the boy.

CRIXUS

(snorts)

He would sooner part with his own cock! Barca would never leave the boy behind.

DOCTORE

The news found me also surprised.

Naevia shifts, visibly worried as Crixus expresses his doubts. Afraid of where this conversation is heading, Naevia lies per Lucretia's instructions.

NAEVIA

He did not wish it, but had no choice.

CRIXUS

He shared words with you?

NAEVIA

No, but -- I saw his eyes, as he was escorted through the gates.

Doctore stares at Naevia, surprised to learn that she saw Barca off.

DOCTORE

You were there?

She nods. Doctore hesitates, turns his attention to Crixus.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Regain your strength. I would see you again with sword in hand.

Doctore exits. Naevia remembers to breathe. Crixus doesn't notice, lost in his own dark musings.

CRIXUS

Barca gone. Spartacus champion. I awake to a world of shit.

OFF CRIXUS, stewing at the recent turn of events...

INT. BATHS - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus sits with Varro, whose mood is considerably darker after Aurelia's news (which he has not told Spartacus).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rhaskos and several others GAMBLE on the floor in the corner.

VARRO

You are a fool to refuse Batiatus.

SPARTACUS

The man makes unreasonable demands.

VARRO

He is your master. His demands your duty, reasonable or otherwise.

SPARTACUS

I will not be made to slaughter my countrymen.

VARRO

Countrymen in dress only. You share no kinship with these prisoners. They are murderers. Rapists. Their death well deserved.

SPARTACUS

Then let another man's blade grant it.

Varro stops. He's in no mood for Spartacus' hard-headedness.

VARRO

You act as if you have free will in the matter. You are a gladiator.

SPARTACUS

I am a Thracian.

VARRO

You are a slave. To cling to a life beyond these walls is to see your heart parted from your chest. You above all others should know this.

The pain of that flickers across Spartacus' eyes. Varro instantly regrets the statement.

VARRO (cont'd)

I do not think before I speak.

(re: gambling men)

I will remove myself to less deserving company.

Varro turns away to join the gamblers, WIPING US TO --

INT. CORRIDORS - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus moves down the corridor, a ghost in his own body. He passes Pietros moving in the opposite direction, head down. Spartacus glances at him, pauses.

SPARTACUS

Pietros.

The boy turns back, revealing

PURPLE AND BLACK BRUISES

that tattoo the right side of his face, his eye swollen shut. It's a jarring sight. Spartacus darkens.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

Gnaeus' hand?

Pietros averts his eyes, ashamed.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

(tightly)

I shall have a word.

PIETROS

To what end? Will it see Barca's return? Will it see me in his arms, free, as he promised?

SPARTACUS

He promised you freedom?

PIETROS

He promised many things. Yet his swift departure proves each false.

Spartacus' guilt for having left Sura still fresh, he speaks more for himself than for Barca.

SPARTACUS

Fate often takes a man far from his heart. To his regret.

PIETROS

Felt more keenly by the one left behind.

Pietros moves off, broken and empty. Spartacus watches him go, lost in his own thoughts of regret. He turns away,
WIPING US TO --

INT. TRICLINIUM - BATIATUS' VILLA - MORNING

A sumptuous breakfast is spread out. REVEAL Lucretia entertaining ILITHYIA. Naevia hovers, making sure their cups are full.

ILITHYIA

Rome is positively aflutter with news of Theokoles' defeat. No one believed such a thing was possible. Especially at the hands of a Thracian.

She sips her wine, her hatred for Spartacus beyond concealment.

LUCRETIA

The gods truly bless the House of Batiatus. We have even been entertaining thoughts of a patron, to share in our good fortune.

The bait is dangled. Ilithyia absently brushes it aside.

ILITHYIA

And does your good fortune extend downward?

Ilithyia smiles, a twinkle in her eye.

LUCRETIA

I do not follow.

ILITHYIA

The Priestess.

(re: Lucretia's
belly)

Has her fertility rite born any seed?

Lucretia smiles politely.

LUCRETIA

I was unable to conclude the rite within the allotted time.

ILITHYIA

No!

LUCRETIA

My husband was sadly absent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA

What of the other man?

Lucretia shifts uncomfortably. Ilithyia leans in closer, her voice a conspiratorial whisper.

ILITHYIA (cont'd)

You still have not told me anything about him. Is it Solonius? I have seen the way he looks at you.

LUCRETIA

I would rather fuck an eel.

ILITHYIA

The thought of his naked cock is rather distressing. No, a woman as beautiful as you deserves a man. Someone of position maybe...?

LUCRETIA

He is no one of note.

Naevia tempers her reaction in the background, not caring for the dismissal of Crixus.

ILITHYIA

No one of note... Someone more physical, perhaps.
(shocked and
titillated)
A slave?!

LUCRETIA

Your cup is empty.

She motions to Naevia to fill it.

ILITHYIA

It is, isn't it? But not just any slave, not for you. He would have to be forged by Jupiter himself...

LUCRETIA

Let us move from the subject.

ILITHYIA

Of course. To other matters.

She sips her wine, her wheels turning. They come to rest on a likely suspect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ILITHYIA (cont'd)
How fares Crixus?

That catches Lucretia by surprise. Ilithyia's grins, having elicited the response she had hoped for.

LUCRETIA
Crixus?

ILITHYIA
His injuries, suffered against
Theokoles. Is he expected to live?

LUCRETIA
His strength returns.

ILITHYIA
Joyous news. It would be a great
tragedy for such a man to pass from
this world, would it not?

She locks eyes with Lucretia. Lucretia smiles, refusing to confirm what Ilithyia has already divined.

LUCRETIA
It would.

ILITHYIA
Pity he will not take the sand in
good Mercato's games. I long to see
his sword thrust home.

She can't help but giggle. OFF Lucretia, forcing a polite smile...

INT. MESS HALL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

A grotesque stew is ladled into a bowl. WIDEN TO FIND Spartacus being served by the cook (EUCLID). He gives Spartacus an extra portion and a proud grin. Ashur slides in behind him.

ASHUR
(re: meal)
Sheep entrails with beets! Euclid's
finest dish! All thanks to your
glorious victory over Theokoles.

SPARTACUS
I make no such boasts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR

Such modesty. A refreshing change from the previous champion. Our ludus truly fortunate. If ever a need arises; food, wine...

(leans in,
conspiratorially)
Perhaps something to quench a darker thirst...

SPARTACUS

I need nothing from you.

Spartacus heads to a table where Varro sits alone. Ashur grins mirthlessly.

ASHUR

(soft, to himself)
One day you shall, Champion.

ON SPARTACUS as he sits next to Varro.

VARRO

What did the shit want of you?

SPARTACUS

Nothing of import. How did you fare?

Varro frowns, not understanding.

SPARTACUS (cont'd)

Your game of dice and bones.

VARRO

Poorly, as I often have. I will balance the loss at next chance --

He's interrupted by a PIGEON fluttering up on the table. Varro shoos it away, pauses as he spots Euclid fending off several more PIGEONS that have descended on his serving table.

VARRO (cont'd)

It would seem Pietros has lost control of his flock.

PUSH IN ON Spartacus as he eyes the birds, a bad feeling uncoiling in his gut...

INT. CORRIDOR - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

A few more PIGEONS scamper out of the way as Spartacus moves through the corridor with grim purpose. Varro follows. Spartacus reaches Barca's cell where even more birds have congregated.

SPARTACUS

Pietros --

Spartacus freezes at the entrance to the cell. PIETROS HANGS LIFELESS from a beam in the ceiling. Pigeons flutter. Varro comes up behind Spartacus, frowns at the sight.

VARRO

(soft)

The boy has freed himself.

Spartacus' eyes fill with rage. He turns, storming off towards the training square.

VARRO (cont'd)

Spartacus --

Varro hustles after him, WIPING US TO --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Gnaeus spars with Rhaskos. He knocks Rhaskos to the ground, the prongs of his practice trident pointed at Rhaskos' face.

SPARTACUS (O.S.)

Gnaeus!

Gnaeus turns just as Spartacus slams into him. TIME SLOWS as the two smash to the ground. Spartacus unleashes on the stunned Gnaeus, his fists raining down.

THE MEN

laugh and cheer, delighted by the unexpected violence. Varro, having followed Spartacus, frowns nervously.

GNAEUS

shoves Spartacus off and scrambles to his feet. Spartacus attacks, his eyes wild with rage. TIME SLOWS AND ACCELERATES as the two men trade vicious blows. BLOOD SPLATTERS in glorious slow motion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS DRIVES GNAEUS BACK,

coming dangerously close to the edge of the cliff. He rears back to finish him off. THE CRACK OF A WHIP stops him.

DOCTORE

Enough!

Doctore strides up, coiling his whip. The square goes quiet. Doctore's blazing eyes fall on the two offenders.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

What is this foolishness?

SPARTACUS

Pietros. The boy has taken his own life.

Doctore frowns at the news. Gnaeus appears to take the news hard.

GNAEUS

He will be missed.

(a fuck you to
Spartacus)

Especially his lips around my cock.

TIGHT ON SPARTACUS as the world GOES RED behind him with rage. He swings with all his might, launching a fist at Gnaeus. TIME SLOWS as it connects with Gnaeus' jaw, lifting the man off his feet and sending him SAILING OVER THE CLIFF to the jagged rocks below. Stunned silence. Doctore glares at Spartacus. OFF his smoldering wrath...

INT. HOLDING CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

Batiatus rages. REVEAL Spartacus now secured by chains to the wall. Two Guards stand sentry.

BATIATUS

This morning I boasted the top Retiarius in all of Capua! Now I possess nothing more than bones and brains scattered upon the rocks!

SPARTACUS

Apologies.

BATIATUS

Fuck your apologies! I shall have return for the value lost! The price of the man will be subtracted

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)
 from your winnings until the
 remainder balanced!

SPARTACUS
 As you see fit, Dominus.

Batiatus paces back and forth, growing more and more agitated.

BATIATUS
 All of this because of what?
 Pietros? He was nothing. Shit from
 a whore.

SPARTACUS
 He was a man. His life had worth.

BATIATUS
 Half a coin at most. Yet Gnaeus was
 a gladiator! Years of training,
 each mounting to exorbitant cost.
 That is true worth!

SPARTACUS
 (eyes burning)
 He did not deserve to live.

CRACK! Without thinking Batiatus slugs Spartacus in the face.

BATIATUS
 I alone decide who lives! Not you!
 Not a fucking slave!

A tense beat. Batiatus composes himself.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
 My generosity has been boundless,
 yet you defy me still.
 (a beat)
 Good Mercato's games are upon us. I
 expect you to fight as a loyal
 Roman. Or die a Thracian.

Batiatus exits, motioning to the Guards as he goes.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
 See him to the Medicus.

The Guards move in, WIPING US TO --

INT. INFIRMARY - BATIATUS' LUDUS - DAY

TIGHT ON PIETROS, dead, red welts around his neck from where he hung himself. ADJUST to find Naevia standing over him, eyes filled with tears. Crixus looks on from where he lies recovering.

CRIXUS
You shed tears for the boy?

NAEVIA
His passing saddens me.

CRIXUS
(a beat, not unkind)
The boy was weak. Without Barca to protect him --

NAEVIA
Not all of us can be strong.

She exits quickly, seized by emotion as she passes Spartacus being ushered in. Crixus glares at him as the Medicus hustles over to tend the injury.

CRIXUS
(snorts, re: face)
Still making friends, are we?

SPARTACUS
A minor disagreement with Gnaeus.

CRIXUS
(loving this)
From which you emerge the mangled cunt. Did his little net prove too fierce an opponent?

SPARTACUS
Question the man himself. If you can scrape enough of him from the cliffs for reply.

Crixus stares in angry surprise.

CRIXUS
Gnaeus dead?
(furious)
What cause have you to claim his life?

SPARTACUS
My reasoning lies forever silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spartacus' eyes fall on Pietros' body.

CRIXUS

Your actions betray us all. Gnaeus was a gladiator!

(re: his brand)

A brother.

SPARTACUS

He was no brother of mine.

CRIXUS

You swore the oath. Every man here is your brother, deserving of an honorable death in the arena. I am shamed to have fought by your side.

SPARTACUS

You speak as if you had choice in the matter.

CRIXUS

I did. I chose not to end you in the arena and be done with your shit. A decision I presently regret.

Crixus locks eyes with Spartacus, expecting a fight or harsh words in return. But instead --

SPARTACUS

(soft)

As do I.

OFF Spartacus, the crushing weight of events numbing his very existence...

INT. CORRIDOR/BARCA'S CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Naevia gently places a pigeon back in its cage. Doctore appears in the doorway behind her.

DOCTORE

You knew Pietros well?

She turns, startled.

NAEVIA

Only in passing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE
Yet you tend to his pets. A duty
not required of you.

NAEVIA
A foolish gesture.

DOCTORE
Born of a kind heart.

Naevia smiles at the compliment. Doctore approaches, drawing close as he eyes the pigeon in the cage.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
It surprises that Barca would claim
freedom, yet leave the things he
loved in captivity.

Naevia shifts uncomfortably. Doctore picks up on this.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
Did he speak to you of his plans
for life outside the ludus?

NAEVIA
We did not exchange words.

DOCTORE
Even as he left the gates?

NAEVIA
No.

Doctore nods, seemingly paying more attention to the bird than the line of questioning.

DOCTORE
Did he exchange words with Ashur?

NAEVIA
(confused)
Ashur?

DOCTORE
He was present, was he not?

Trapped in a lie, Naevia's not sure how to respond.

NAEVIA
I do not recall.

Doctore turns his penetrating gaze to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

Surely if you set your mind to the task...

NAEVIA

It was late, my head clouded with slumber.

(eager to go)

Apologies, but I must return to the villa. Domina awaits.

Naevia moves to exit. Doctore does not let her pass.

DOCTORE

The fear in your eyes betray the lie on your tongue.

NAEVIA

(whispers)

Your questions place me in harm's way. Please. Let me pass.

Doctore sees the absolute panic in her eyes, and steps aside. Naevia hustles out, two Guards waiting in the corridor join her. OFF DOCTORE'S rising suspicion...

INT. BATHS - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Slaves scrape the Gladiators after a hard day's practice. Ashur sits amongst the men, grimacing as he removes his leg brace. He grunts to Varro being oiled up nearby.

ASHUR

The day approaches when I'll be free of this.

VARRO

(snidely)

Perhaps you can fashion a proper cock from it.

Doctore appears before Ashur can respond.

DOCTORE

Remove yourselves.

The men know not to argue, all heading for the exits. Ashur stands with a grunt. Doctore pins him with a hard glare.

DOCTORE (cont'd)

Remain. There is a matter I wish to discuss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHUR
Whatever your needs, Ashur
provides.

DOCTORE
I seek information.

ASHUR
On what subject?

DOCTORE
Barca.

Ashur smiles pleasantly, giving nothing away.

DOCTORE (cont'd)
I understand he placed wager upon
the match with Theokoles.

ASHUR
(sighs)
And won a small fortune, applied
towards his freedom.

DOCTORE
With no thought towards Pietros?

ASHUR
Not enough coin remained to
liberate him. Barca's eyes filled
with tears, although spurred by
regret or impending freedom, I know
not.

Doctore nods, satisfied.

DOCTORE
It is a stirring sight. To see the
bonds of servitude lifted.

ASHUR
I confess my own eyes swimming as
Barca took leave of the villa.

DOCTORE
Who else offered farewells?

ASHUR
Only our masters and myself.

Doctore locks eyes with Ashur.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTORE

Naevia claims to have escorted Barca to the gate. She did not mention your presence.

ASHUR

She is a simple thing, her mind easily --

Lightning fast Doctore grabs Ashur's neck and pins him against the wall.

DOCTORE

Stories in conflict give me concern. If I discover there is more to the matter of Barca's departure... we shall have words.

Doctore releases Ashur and strides out. OFF ASHUR, gasping for air as he glares after Doctore...

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - NIGHT

Spartacus stands with Numerius' Thracian dagger in his hand. He considers the blade, his face consumed by grief. He squeezes his eyes shut against it, only to be met with

FLASHES OF SURA

from their first encounter. Happy. Flush with the promise of love. Her radiant smile now a dagger in his chest.

SPARTACUS DROPS TO HIS KNEES,

overcome by the memory, tears streaming down his face. He clutches the knife as if preparing to take his own life. SLOW PUSH IN on the gleaming blade as it catches the light, the FLARE TRANSITIONING US TO --

EXT. PLAINS - THRACE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

ADJUST off the dying campfire to find a makeshift lean-to. The Thracian (Spartacus) curled with Sura, post-coital. [NOTE: This is the same location as in ep 101, scene 14. After Spartacus rescued Sura from the Barbarians, but before being captured by the Romans.]

THE THRACIAN

You still believe in them? The gods?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SURA

Yes.

THE THRACIAN

Why?

A beat as she considers the question.

SURA

Our village is gone. Everyone we held close, dead. If there are no gods... if there is nothing to shape what happens in our lives... Then there is no meaning to any of it.

The Thracian absorbs this, troubled.

THE THRACIAN

Then you must believe I am cursed.

SURA

Why would you say such a thing?

THE THRACIAN

Your dream of the Red Serpent, before I left for war. You said it was a vision from the gods, that I was destined for great and unfortunate things.

SURA

(a beat)

A warning, perhaps. But far from a curse.

THE THRACIAN

Everything that has happened is because of me. The Romans... Our village... If I am not cursed, I know not the word.

SURA

I cannot believe the gods would lead me to you... to bless me with such love... only to make me bare witness to your suffering. No. There is a deeper purpose to the path you have been set upon. One that has yet to be revealed.

The firelight dances across The Thracian's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE THRACIAN

(soft)

I wish I had your faith.

SURA

You lay next to me. My heart, and
what it holds, is yours.

He pulls her closer.

THE THRACIAN

I will never see you from my side
again. Without you, there is no
reason for breath.

SURA

There is always reason to live.

THE THRACIAN

I would be lost.

SURA

No. The gods would set you on the
proper course. All you need do is
close your eyes... and place
yourself in their hands.

She nestles in close, sleep beckoning as she closes her
eyes. OFF The Thracian, still troubled, his own eyes
remaining open...

INT. SPARTACUS' CELL - BATIATUS' LUDUS - MORNING

The cell door opens, revealing Batiatus backlit like a god.
Spartacus still kneels on the floor, his tears long since
dried, the knife in his hand (his back towards Batiatus,
blocking view of the blade).

BATIATUS

We leave for the games. Is your
decision made?

SPARTACUS

(soft)

It is.

Spartacus rises, turning towards Batiatus with the knife.
Batiatus tenses, but Spartacus flips the knife over,
extending the handle to him.

BATIATUS

What sort of answer is this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

A gesture.

BATIATUS

I care not for its means of
delivery.

SPARTACUS

Perhaps you will find its meaning
more agreeable.

BATIATUS

Out with it, then.

SPARTACUS

Sura spoke often to me of the gods.
She believed in them. I never
truly have.

BATIATUS

The cock on you, daring to doubt
the gods!

SPARTACUS

And I have suffered much for it.
But no longer. From this moment
forward... I give myself over to
her beliefs... and embrace my fate.

A slow smile spreads across Batiatus' lips.

BATIATUS

Your words give my heart great joy.
Enough even to erase questions of
how a blade belonging to the
Magistrate's son came to your
possession. Let us place the past
truly behind us. Mercato's games
await you.

SPARTACUS

I have but one condition.

BATIATUS

Condition? You kiss my cheek only
to finger my ass?! Speak! Before I
carve out your fucking tongue.

SPARTACUS

I will take to the sands against
the spectre of my countrymen. But I
will face them alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Not what Batiatus expected.

BATIATUS

Six to your one? I will not risk the Champion of Capua to such absurdity.

SPARTACUS

If this is my fate, if this is the path the gods have truly set me upon... then they will not see me fall. Not yet.

BATIATUS

And if you are wrong?

SPARTACUS

(a beat)

Then I will give your city a great spectacle of blood... before I join my wife.

Batiatus considers Spartacus. Less than a god, yet far more than a man.

BATIATUS

The gods have brought you this far. I believe they are not done with you yet. Nor am I.

SPARTACUS

You will allow me to fight alone?

BATIATUS

With a condition of my own. When you kill the last of these shits garbed as your countrymen, what remains of the Thracian inside you dies with him. You will embrace this fate of yours... and your destiny as Spartacus, Champion of Capua.

PUSH IN on Spartacus, his face set for grim violence as the background MORPHS behind him, TRANSITIONING US TO --

INT. THE CHUTES - ARENA - DAY

Spartacus stands at the gate, fully dressed as a Roman General, sans helmet. He carries a sword in each hand. (Spartacus now fights as a Dimachaerus like Theokoles in ep.)

CONTINUED:

106.) Spartacus looks out to the arena floor, his eyes cold steel, as --

EXT. ARENA - CAPUA - DAY

The crowd BOOS as the six PRISONERS are led onto the arena's sand. Each dressed as a Thracian soldier, the men's appearance almost identical to that of Drenis and the others Spartacus fought alongside in the auxiliary in 101.

PULVINUS

Batiatus steps onto a podium and raises his hands for an announcement. Mercato, Lucretia, and Ilithyia behind him.

BATIATUS

Citizens of Capua! Today, we honor the noble Marcus Minucius Rufus. A Roman consul and commander unmatched in glory. As tribute, good Mercato has seen fit to re-enact his grandfather's most famous battle against the Thracian hordes!

The crowd CHEERS and Mercato stands and tosses a one-handed salute to his adoring public. Batiatus lets him have his moment, then launches into the story of the re-enactment.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Gaze at the prisoners standing before you. And imagine the Thracian Maedi that invaded Macedonia. Raping and pillaging its noble people. Murdering all in their path... even a Roman governor!

ARENA

The Prisoners react as the crowd BOOS and throws assorted garbage in their direction.

PULVINUS

Batiatus continues his oration, working the crowd, building anticipation with every word.

BATIATUS (cont'd)

Violence and madness swept the land. Echoing into the heavens, where the gods themselves turned
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BATIATUS (cont'd)
 their backs. All seemed lost, until
 Rome dispatched her favored son...
 (dramatic pause)
 Enter Marcus Minucius Rufus!

ARENA

The gates open and Spartacus marches out. An impressive sight. The picture of the Roman Legion's finest.

PULVINUS

Batiatus has set up the event, now he shifts gears to hype his own goods.

BATIATUS (cont'd)
 For the honorable role of Rufus,
 there was but one choice. The
 Bringer of Rain! Slayer of
 Theokoles! And Champion of Capua...
 I present to you -- Spartacus!!!

The crowd goes totally Thunderdome at this announcement. CHANTS of "Spartacus! Spartacus!" reverberate. Ilithyia glowers.

ILITHYIA
 (to Mercato)
 I thought it was your grandfather
 we honor. Yet the crowd chants
 "Spartacus".

Mercato frowns, dissatisfied. Batiatus sweeps in, smoothing the waters.

BATIATUS
 Worry not of details, good Mercato.
 The glory remains your
 grandfather's alone. Come! Give the
 signal to begin his glorious
 victory!

Batiatus steps aside. Lucretia gives him an appreciative grin -- nicely played. Mercato moves to the edge of the pulvinus, beaming with pride.

MERCATO
 In honor of Marcus Minucius
 Rufus... Let blood be shed!

THE ARENA

The crowd ROARS as the Prisoners fan out to attack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPARTACUS

remains motionless, paying them no attention. TIME SLOWS as he turns his head slightly upward to consider the clouds and the heavens.

PULVINUS

Batiatus' face slips into absent worry. This is not what he expected.

ARENA

A sad smile bends Spartacus' lips as feels the sun on his face, the gentle breeze... and closes his eyes, putting his fate in the hands of the gods.

PRISONER #1

steps forward and HURLS HIS SPEAR at Spartacus. It soars through the air -- and CATCHES THE BREEZE, altering its course just enough to miss slamming into Spartacus' face. The gleaming tip draws a thin line across Spartacus' cheek. TIME RESUMES as

SPARTACUS' EYES CRASH OPEN

and hell is unleashed. Spartacus attacks. PRISONER #2 thrusts his sword at Spartacus' neck, but Spartacus deflects it, just in time to sidestep PRISONER #3's assault. As the Prisoner's sword swings through air

SPARTACUS

slices the man's right arm, PRISONER #3 screaming in pain as his blood SPRAYS onto the sand. Spartacus has no time to react as PRISONER #4's sword carves a giant gash across his shoulder blades.

PRISONER #2

sees an opening and advances. Spartacus and Prisoner #2 get tangled up, but before the others can descend, Spartacus slams an elbow into the man's throat. Prisoner #2 hits the sand and Spartacus spins around just in time to see PRISONER #5's

BATTLE AXE

spinning toward his head. TIME SLOWS as Spartacus bends out of the way, the axe rotating lazily an inch from his face. Spartacus needs to get to open space. He barrels towards PRISONER #4, smashing the man's helmet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PULVINUS

Mercato bolts from his seat, thrilled by the hit. Batiatus laughs and swills wine. Lucretia eyes the action with wonder.

LUCRETIA

He moves as a man possessed.

BATIATUS

By the gods themselves.

ARENA

Prisoner #1, having retrieved his spear, attacks. Spartacus counters. Prisoner #1 swings the base of the spear, catching Spartacus across the jaw. Spartacus staggers back, momentarily stunned.

THE PRISONERS REGROUP

stalking towards him. Each prisoner with but one mission -- kill Spartacus. Spartacus eyes them, breathing hard, feeling the odds closing in against him.

PULVINUS

A hush has fallen over the arena. Scattered MURMURS. The crowd concerned that their champion may not survive this battle. Mercato sits panicked as he turns to Batiatus.

MERCATO

You do realize my grandfather won this battle?

Ilithyia is unable to suppress a satisfied smile.

ILITHYIA

Perhaps this day history will not repeat itself.

ARENA

Spartacus surveys the Prisoners in front of him. His face hardens with new resolve. If this is his destiny, let it begin now.

SPARTACUS SPRINTS FORWARD,

a sword gripped tightly in each hand. With his right sword, he stabs Prisoner #2 through the throat. Spartacus releases the sword's grip and ducks just as

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CONTINUED:

PRISONER #4

swings his sword at Spartacus' neck. From the sand, Spartacus clutches his remaining sword with both hands and thrusts it upward, skewering Prisoner #4, who vomits RIBBONS OF BLOOD on Spartacus and the sand below. SPARTACUS RISES

and removes his sword from Prisoner #2's lifeless neck. He then turns and hurls his other sword at Prisoner #5, the blade lodging deep inside the man's skull. Three down, three to go.

PULVINUS

The crowd is in a fervor. Mercato rises from his seat, the thrill and excitement almost too much for him. Batiatus leans forward, eager. His eyes alive with purpose.

THE ARENA

Prisoner #3 and PRISONER #1 attempt to work as a team, circling Spartacus. Finally, the two rush from opposite sides. Spartacus runs his sword through Prisoner #3's stomach as Prisoner #1 thrusts his spear at Spartacus' neck.

TIME SLOWS

as Spartacus leans back, the spear's tip narrowly avoiding his chin. TIME RESUMES. With his right hand, Spartacus grabs the spear's shaft and yanks it out of the Prisoner's hand. He breaks the spear in two across his knee and then

STABS THE POINTED TIP

through Prisoner #1's right ear, the spear, and some brains, exiting his left. The Prisoner's eyes roll back in his empty head as Spartacus turns and looks for the last prisoner.

PRISONER #6 FLEES

to the opposite side of the arena. Looking for a miracle, some sort of way out. He grabs the chute's gate and shakes it... but it's no use. He's trapped. The man turns to face

SPARTACUS,

stalking over, both swords dripping blood onto the sand. A Roman killing machine. Realizing there's nowhere to flee,

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CONTINUED:

PRISONER #6

sprints towards Spartacus, both hands holding his sword above his head. Prisoner #6 brings it down with all his might... but Spartacus easily deflects it. Prisoner #6 loses the sword's handle and is sent crashing to his knees. SPARTACUS' SHADOW descends over the fallen Prisoner. ON SPARTACUS, as he raises his sword, set to deliver the final blow, only to pause when he sees

HIS OWN FACE

staring up at him from the sand. Not Spartacus as he appears now, but as he did when he was a Thracian. Long hair and beard, face bloodied from battle with Solonius' men (from ep 101). The Thracian Spartacus locks eyes with Spartacus. A frozen moment.

TIGHT ON SPARTACUS,

as Batiatus' words echo in his head. Knowing that to kill this man is to kill his Thracian past. Thracian Spartacus looks up with pleading eyes and utters but one word:

THRACIAN SPARTACUS

Don't...

SPARTACUS SNARLS

as he brings his sword down with violent fury, decapitating the defenseless Prisoner. Blood erupts from the Prisoner's neck like a scarlet volcano as his head (not Thracian Spartacus') tumbles to the sand.

PULVINUS

The crowd ROARS. Mercato beams. Ilithyia frowns, disappointed yet again.

MERCATO

A marvelous show!

BATIATUS

An honor to be of service.

Batiatus glows. Lucretia basks in the warmth of it.

ARENA

Spartacus stands exhausted and blood-soaked, absorbing the public's deafening CHEERS. His eyes are hard, but there's a certainty there. He is a man who's accepted his fate. He

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CONTINUED:

throws his arms up to the heavens and shouts for all the world to hear --

SPARTACUS
I... AM... SPARTACUS!!!

The crowd ROARS.

PULVINUS

Batiatus grins in triumph. Spartacus is now truly his.

ARENA

OFF Spartacus, embracing the will of the gods...

BLACKOUT.

END OF EPISODE